THE JERUSALEM BIBLE

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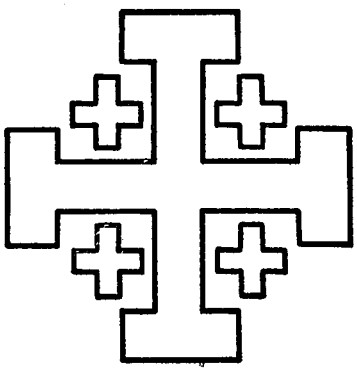

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The introductions and notes of this Bible are, with minor variations and revisions a translation of those which appear in *La Bible de Jerusalem* published by Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, (one volume edition, 1961, but modified in the light of the subsequent revised fascicule edition) under the general editorship of Père Roland de Vaux, O.P. The English text of the Bible itself, though translated from the ancient texts, owes a large debt to the work of the many scholars who collaborated to produce *La Bible de Jerusalem*, a debt which the publishers of this English Bible gratefully acknowledge.

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The form and nature of this edition of the Holy Bible have been determined by two of the principal dangers facing the Christian religion today. The first is the reduction of Christianity to the status of a relic—affectionately regarded, it is true, but considered irrelevant to our times. The second is its rejection as a mythology, born and cherished in emotion with nothing at all to say to the mind. What threatens the mother threatens her two children even more seriously: I mean Christianity's adopted child, which is the Old Testament, and her natural child, which is the New. The Christian faith, after all, has been able without betrayal to adjust itself to the needs of succeeding centuries and decades. The Bible, on the other hand, is of its nature a written charter guaranteed (as Christians believe) by the Spirit of God, crystallised in antiquity, never to be changed—and what is crystallised may be thought by some to be fossilised. Now for Christian thinking in the twentieth century two slogans have been wisely adopted: *aggiornamento*, or keeping abreast of the times, and *approfondimento*, or deepening of theological thought. This double programme must be for the Bible too. Its first part can be carried out by translating into the language we use today, its second part by providing notes which are neither sectarian nor superficial.

This twofold need has long been appreciated, and strong action was taken in France when, under the influence of the late Père Chifflot, Editions du Cerf appealed to the Dominican Biblical School in Jerusalem to meet it. This led to the production of separate fascicules with a full textual critical apparatus for the individual books of the Bible, and with extensive notes. Subsequently, in 1956, a one-volume edition appeared which came to be known popularly as *La Bible de Jérusalem:* a careful system of cross-reference enabled this edition to include all the information from the fascicules which could be useful to the thoughtful reader or to the student. This present volume is its English equivalent. The introductions and notes are a direct translation from the French, though revised and brought up to date in some places—account being taken of the decisions and general implications of the Second Vatican Council.

The translation of the biblical text itself could clearly not be made from the French. In the case of a few books the initial draft was made from the French and was then compared word for word with the Hebrew or Aramaic by the General Editor and amended where necessary to ensure complete conformity with the ancient text. For the much greater part, the initial drafts were made from the Hebrew or Greek and simultaneously compared with the French when questions of variant reading or interpretation arose. Whichever system was used, therefore, the same intended result was achieved, that is, an entirely faithful version of the ancient texts which, in doubtful points, preserves the text established and (for the most part) the inter-

pretation adopted by the French scholars in the light of the most recent researches in the fields of history, archaeology and literary criticism.

The translator of the Bible into a vernacular may surely consider himself free to remove the purely linguistic archaisms of that vernacular, but here his freedom ends. He may not, for example, substitute his own modern images for the old ones: the theologian and the preacher may be encouraged to do this, but not the translator. Nor must he impose his own style on the originals: this would be to suppress the individuality of the several writers who responded, each in his own way, to the movement of the Spirit. Still less must it be supposed that there should be throughout a kind of hieratic language, a uniform 'biblical' English, dictated by a tradition however venerable. There is no doubt that in forfeiting this we lose something very precious, but one hopes that the gain outweighs the loss. It would be arrogant to claim that this present attempt to translate the Bible into 'contemporary' English cannot be improved upon, but at least (one believes) it is in this direction that translations will have to go if the Bible is not to lose its appeal for the mind of today.

The Psalms present a special problem for translators since, unlike other parts of the Bible, the psalter is not only a book to be read but a collection of verse which is sung or chanted. Moreover, many of them are so familiar in their sixteenth century form that any change may seem to be an impertinence. Nevertheless, here too the first duty of a translator is to convey as clearly as he can what the original author wrote. He should not try to inject a rhetorical quality and an orotundity of cadence which belong more truly to the first Elizabethan age in England than to the Hebrew originals. He must avoid the pure bathos of prosy flatness, of course, but he will be aware that there is no longer an accepted 'poetic language' which can be used to give artificial dignity to plain statements. It would certainly be dangerous to give the form of the translation precedence over the meaning.

It is in the Psalms especially that the use of the divine name *Yahweh* (accented on the second syllable) may seem unacceptable—though indeed the still stranger form *Yah* is in constant use in the acclamation *Hallelu-Yah* (Praise Yah!). It is not without hesitation that this accurate form has been used, and no doubt those who may care to use this translation of the Psalms can substitute the traditional 'the Lord'. On the other hand, this would be to lose much of the flavour and meaning of the originals. For example, to say, 'The Lord is God' is surely a tautology, as to say 'Yahweh is God' is not.

An Index of Biblical Themes has been provided in this edition. It is not a luxury or an afterthought; it is a key to a treasure, for the use of serious readers and of preachers. It is for those who are not studying one single book or passage but wish to find out what the Bible as a whole has to say on a particular theological idea. Since the date and provenance of the individual books will have been given in the introductions, this index will be a guide to the historical development of biblical revelation, a pointer to the raw material of a dynamic biblical theology. It is based on the similar index in the *Bible de Jérusalem* but is considerably wider in scope. The compilation of this index was undertaken as a labour of love by members

of the Theological Studies Group of the Newman Association, under the leadership of Mr Martin Redfern. Our sincere thanks must go to all these people who gave their spare time so generously.

The format of this edition has been chosen to make intelligent reading easier, and the single column arrangement has for this reason been adopted. The division of the text by bold-type section headings should enable the reader to see at a glance what is the subject-matter of the pages before him. The poetic passages are printed as verse and the lines with fewer stresses in the Hebrew are indented. Very occasionally there is a word-distribution that does not correspond to the lines in the Hebrew: this has been done deliberately, though reluctantly, for the sake of clearer English.

A list of collaborators will be found in the introductory pages: to all of these we express our thanks, not least because they have been so patient with changes in their manuscript for which the General Editor must accept the ultimate responsibility. As for the work of the publishers, it is here for all to see, but only the writer of this Foreword can fully appreciate their devotion to it. An inadequate word of thanks also to Miss Eva Burnley who typed and, without complaint, often retyped every word of this edition with the greatest accuracy. Certain students of Upholland College in Lancashire were of great help in the early days: may God reward them. But there are many others whose prayers and sympathy and repeated kindness in difficult days have given constant support: we think they will recognise themselves in this poor and vague acknowledgement.

Christ's College, Liverpool
1st June 1966

Alexander Jones

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The books of the Bible in biblical order

Genesis	Gn	Jonah	Jon
Exodus	Ex	Micah	Mi
Leviticus	Lv	Nahum	Na
Numbers	Nb	Habakkuk	Hab
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zephaniah	Zp
Joshua	Jos	Haggai	Hg
Judges	Jg	Zechariah	Zc
Ruth	Rt	Malachi	Ml
1 Samuel	1 S		
2 Samuel	2 S		
1 Kings	1 K	Matthew	Mt
2 Kings	2 K	Mark	Mk
1 Chronicles	1 Ch	Luke	Lk
2 Chronicles	2 Ch	John	Jn
Ezra	Ezr	Acts	Ac
Nehemiah	Ne	Romans	Rm
Tobit	Tb	1 Corinthians	1 Co
Judith	Jdt	2 Corinthians	2 Co
Esther	Est	Galatians	Ga
1 Maccabees	1 M	Ephesians	Ep
2 Maccabees	2 M	Philippians	Ph
Job	Jb	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1 Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2 Th
Ecclesiastes	Qo	1 Timothy	1 Tm
Song of Songs	Sg	2 Timothy	2 Tm
Wisdom	Ws	Titus	Tt
Ecclesiasticus	Si	Philemon	Phm
Isaiah	Is	Hebrews	Heb
Jeremiah	Jr	James	Jm
Lamentations	Lm	1 Peter	1 P
Baruch	Ba	2 Peter	2 P
Ezekiel	Ezk	1 John	1 Jn
Daniel	Dn	2 John	2 Jn
Hosea	Ho	3 John	3 Jn
Joel	Jl	Jude	Jude
Amos	Am	Revelation	Rv
Obadiah	Ob		

The books of the Bible in alphabetical order of abbreviations

Ac	Acts	2 Co	2 Corinthians
Am	Amos	Col	Colossians
Ba	Baruch	Dn	Daniel
1 Ch	1 Chronicles	Dt	Deuteronomy
2 Ch	2 Chronicles	Ep	Ephesians
1 Co	1 Corinthians	Est	Esther

Ex	Exodus	Mk	Mark
Ezk	Ezekiel	Ml	Malachi
Ezr	Ezra	Mt	Matthew
Ga	Galatians	Na	Nahum
Gn	Genesis	Nb	Numbers
Hab	Habakkuk	Ne	Nehemiah
Heb	Hebrews	Ob	Obadiah
Hg	Haggai	1 P	1 Peter
Ho	Hosea	2 P	2 Peter
Is	Isaiah	Ph	Philippians
Jb	Job	Phm	Philemon
Jdt	Judith	Pr	Proverbs
Jg	Judges	Ps	Psalms
Jl	Joel	Qo	Ecclesiastes
Jm	James	Rm	Romans
Jn	John	Rt	Ruth
1 Jn	1 John	Rv	Revelation
2 Jn	2 John	1 S	1 Samuel
3 Jn	3 John	2 S	2 Samuel
Jon	Jonah	Sg	Song of Songs
Jos	Joshua	Si	Ecclesiasticus
Jr	Jeremiah	Tb	Tobit
Jude	Jude	1 Th	1 Thessalonians
1 K	1 Kings	2 Th	2 Thessalonians
2 K	2 Kings	1 Tm	1 Timothy
Lk	Luke	2 Tm	2 Timothy
Lm	Lamentations	Tt	Titus
Lv	Leviticus	Ws	Wisdom
1 M	1 Maccabees	Zc	Zechariah
2 M	2 Maccabees	Zp	Zephaniah
Mi	Micah		

Other abbreviations not in common use

Add.	additional words included by some authorities	Hebr.	Hebrew language/text
Arab.	Arabic	Lat.	Latin
Ch.	the 'Chronicler' (as well as the Books of Chronicles)	LXX	the Greek 'Septuagint'
Ch.	chapter(s)	M.T.	Massoretic Text
Conj.	conjectural reading	Om.	words omitted by some authorities
Corr.	text has been corrected	Theod.	Theodoret
		Var.	variant reading
		Vulg.	Vulgate

THE HEBREW BIBLE

The canon of the Hebrew Bible, fixed by the Palestinian Jews at the beginning of the Christian era, is preserved by modern Jews and, in the case of the Old Testament, by Protestant Christians. It contains only the Hebrew books and excludes the books written in Greek and the Greek supplements of Esther and Daniel.

The Hebrew Bible is divided into three parts, as follows:

I. THE LAW (The Pentateuch)

1. Genesis (called, from the first words of the Hebrew text, 'In the beginning')
2. Exodus ('These are the names')
3. Leviticus ('And Yahweh called Moses')
4. Numbers ('In the wilderness')
5. Deuteronomy ('These are the words')

II. THE PROPHETS

A. The 'Earlier Prophets'

6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. Samuel
9. Kings (I & II together)

B. The 'Later Prophets'

10. Isaiah
11. Jeremiah
12. Ezekiel
13. 'The Twelve' prophets, in the order followed by the Vulgate: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

III. THE WRITINGS (or Hagiographa)

14. Psalms (or 'Praises')
15. Job
16. Proverbs
17. Ruth
18. The Song of Songs
19. Ecclesiastes ('Qoheleth')
20. Lamentations
21. Esther

(These last five are known as the 'five rolls'; they were read on Jewish feast days)

22. Daniel
23. Ezra-Nehemiah
24. Chronicles

The Jewish Bible thus consists of 'twenty-four books'.

THE GREEK BIBLE

The Greek Bible of the Seventy (Septuagint), for the use of the Jews of the Dispersion, comprises the following, of which the order varies according to different MSS and editions:

1. The books of the Hebrew Bible, translated into Greek with variations, omissions and additions (important ones in Esther and Daniel).
2. Books which do not belong to the Hebrew Bible (although several of them reflect a Hebrew or Aramaic origin) and which are part of the Christian Canon ('deutero-canonical'). The Church regards these as being inspired in the same way as the books of the Hebrew Bible. They are indicated in italics in the list below.
3. Books which, although sometimes used by the Fathers and ancient ecclesiastical writers, have not been accepted by the Christian Church ('apocryphal' works). These are placed in square brackets in the list below.

With the exception of these apocryphal books, the content of the Greek Bible is the same as that of the Old Testament accepted by the Church, though different in order. The list on pp. viii-ix shows the books in the usual order.

The list of the books of the Greek Bible of the Seventy is given below as it is found in Rahlfs' edition.

I. LAW AND HISTORY

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

Joshua
Judges
Ruth

The four 'Books of Kingdoms': 1 and 2 = Samuel; 3 and 4 = Kings

The Paralipomena, 1 and 2 (= Chronicles)

GREEK	= J. B.	= VULG.
[1 Esdras]	[1 Esdras]*	[3 Esdras]
2 Esdras ch. 1-10	Ezra	1 Esdras
2 Esdras ch. 11-23	Nehemiah	2 Esdras or Nehemias
	[2 Esdras]*	[4 Esdras]

Esther, with passages peculiar to the Greek
Judith
Tobit

1 and 2 Maccabees (plus the apocryphal 3 and 4)

II. POETIC AND PROPHETIC BOOKS

The Psalms
[Odes]
The Proverbs of Solomon
Ecclesiastes
The Song of Songs
Job
The Book of Wisdom ('Wisdom of Solomon')
Ecclesiasticus ('Wisdom of Sirach')

[Psalms of Solomon]

The Twelve Minor Prophets, in the following order: Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Baruch ch. 1-5
Lamentations
Baruch ch. 6 ('Letter of Jeremiah')
Ezekiel
Daniel ch. 13 ('Susanna')
Daniel ch. 1-12 (3:24-90 is peculiar to the Greek)
Daniel ch. 14 ('Bel and the dragon')

* When referred to in the notes of the Jerusalem Bible

EXPLANATION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL AND REFERENCE SYSTEMS

Chapter numbers

The beginning of a new chapter is usually marked by a large bold numeral. A smaller bold numeral is used when a new chapter begins inside a paragraph, or to mark a fragment of a chapter separated from the main portion by material of a different chapter.

Verse numbers

In the Old Testament, the division into verses follows the Hebrew. The verse numbers are printed in ordinary roman type. Where the verse-numbering of the Vulgate differs, it is given in addition in italic figures. In a few places, italic verse numbers are also used for some of the passages incorporated from the Septuagint, e.g. Dn 3 (cf. notes), of which the numbering duplicates that of neighbouring Hebrew material.

The beginning of each verse is indicated in the line by a dot • preceding the first word except when a verse starts at the beginning of a line or begins a new chapter. When a Vulgate verse begins at a different point, this is not indicated.

Occasionally verse numbers are given a suffix letter a, b or c. This is generally to mark a rearrangement of parts of the verse, or to relate a reference from elsewhere in the Bible to a specific part of the verse.

Italics in the text

The chief use of italic type in the text is to distinguish words which are quotations from, or close allusions to, another book of the Bible. The origins of such quotations are given as references in the margin. (Conversely, where a passage will be found quoted in a later book, its wording is not printed in italics, but the fact is indicated by a reference in the margin, preceded by a ↗ sign, to the place where the quotation will be found: see explanation of Marginal References below.

Italics are also used (as in Est and Dn) to distinguish supplementary passages brought in from the Septuagint, and the inclusion of such material is always specified in a footnote.

Footnotes

In each chapter, footnotes are lettered serially. Footnotes are printed on right-hand pages only, and normally the notes relating to the left-hand page are separated by one or more blank lines from those relating to the right-hand page.

The footnotes assume that the reader has already read the Introduction to the book (or group of books) concerned. From time to time there are 'general' notes which explain special biblical terms that recur, or themes which are of importance, e.g. 'remnant' (cf. note on Is 4:3), 'Son of man' (cf. note on Mt 8:20). These general notes are often interconnected, and a note on one passage may refer the reader to a note on the same theme elsewhere. A guide to these general thematic notes is provided by the index of biblical themes included in this volume, and its uses are explained below.

Punctuation of biblical references

Chapter and verse are separated by a colon, e.g. Ex 20:17. In a succession of references, items are separated by a semi-colon, e.g. Ex 20:17; Lv 9:15. The same practice is followed in a succession of references to different chapters of one book, e.g. Ex 20:17; 21:3 or Ex 15; 17; 20.

Marginal References

The marginal references direct the reader's attention to other passages in the Bible (or to footnotes attached to them) which can contribute to an understanding of the text—sources of quotations, earlier use of special terms, phrases, or images and the explanation of allusions whether explicit or implied. The references often occur in groups all relating to one text line; in such cases, the position of the first reference indicates the line to which the whole group applies. The typographical design of this Bible makes it possible to place two marginal reference lines against each line of text; the first reference of a group may therefore appear slightly above or slightly below the text line.

The end of one group of references and the beginning of a new group is normally marked by a space; where this is not possible, the first line of the new group is printed in italic type.

Within a group of references, the order of items is:

1. References to the sources of italicised quotations from other books.
2. References to other passages in the same book; these are *not* preceded by the abbreviated book name.
3. References to passages in other books of the Bible; these are given in biblical order.

References to different books always begin on separate lines. When one reference line cannot accommodate all the references to one book, the references are continued (without repetition of the abbreviated book name) on new lines which are indented slightly away from the text.

Symbols in biblical references

▲ In some cases, a group of marginal references which begins near the foot of a left-hand page has to be continued at the top of the facing page. The references which are thus displaced from a previous page are distinguished by a solid triangle added to each, to show that they do not relate to the lines opposite which they appear.

= or ‖ These symbols are placed in front of references which call attention to the fact that a literary connection exists between two text passages either because one might be called the 'source' of the other or because both have a common source. When the two passages belong to the same book (i.e. are 'doublets') the symbol = is used; where they belong to different books (i.e. are 'parallels') the symbol ‖ is used. However, in the case of those parts of the Bible which are duplications of another part or which, like the synoptic gospels, recount the same events, the references to all the parallels are usually given only in the book which occurs first in order of printing, and references in the other related books guide the reader to the relevant passage in this first book where further references to other parallels will be found. Thus in the synoptic gospels many references useful in the study of Mark or Luke are given once for all in Matthew, but references in Mark or Luke guide the reader to that point in Matthew at which these other references are given.

p This letter at the end of a reference refers the reader not only to the passage indicated but also to doublets or parallels to which references with the symbol = or ‖ will be found at the passage indicated.

↗ The arrow symbol is used before a reference where the text at this point will be used or quoted in a later book to which the reference relates, and particularly where a passage in the Old Testament will be used by a New Testament writer.

\+ The plus symbol used at the end of a reference indicates that, at the point referred to, the reader will find either a note or further references relevant to the passage he is reading. Apart from the thematic index (see below), this symbol is the principal means of referring the reader to the general notes on key biblical themes and concepts. For example, in prophetic material which relates to the 'remnant of Israel' references will be found to Is 4:3+ where there is a note explaining this concept.

f This letter at the end of a reference signifies 'and following verses'.

Index of biblical themes

Besides the historical and literary comments necessary for the understanding of the text, the notes in this Bible include a great deal of information about the development of theological ideas and themes. An index to this information is an essential key for the reader who wants to study any particular theme and to discover the comments, which are necessarily scattered throughout the whole book. For instance, the use of this index reveals at sight that 'resurrection' is not only a New Testament theme but has an important history in the Old Testament, and that the weight of annotation will be found, not in the Gospels, but in Acts and Romans. When using the notes in this way, it will also often be useful to consult the relevant introduction.

It should be noted that this index is not a concordance or an index of subjects, nor is it a complete index to the notes, but solely a guide to the commentary on theological themes. Subjects and proper names (such as 'Jerusalem' or 'Moses') only occur in it as themes of theological significance, and historical or geographical notes on such subjects are not listed in the index.

THE
OLD TESTAMENT

THE PENTATEUCH

INTRODUCTION TO
THE PENTATEUCH

Titles, divisions, contents

The first five books of the Bible together constitute a unity in themselves, and the group was known to the Jews as the '*Torah*', or the 'Law'. The earliest reliable witness to this title is to be found in the preface to the Book of Ecclesiasticus and when the Christian era opened the term was already in common use (Lk 10:26; cf. 24:44). For this first section of their Bible Hebrew-speaking Jews had another name: 'The five-fifths of the Law'; those who spoke Greek used the corresponding term: '*Pentateuchos*' (sc. *biblos*), 'The five-volume (book)', which in Latin was transliterated *Pentateuchus* (*liber*).

That this division into five books dates back to pre-Christian times is attested by the Septuagint. This Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament designated the books according to their content and the Church adopted its terminology. Thus the book which opens with the story of the beginning of the world is called *Genesis;* the second, which starts the departure of Israel from Egypt, is named *Exodus; Leviticus* contains the law of the priests of the tribe of Levi; the first four chapters of *Numbers* deal with the census; *Deuteronomy* is so styled from the Septuagint rendering of Dt 17:18: 'the second law'. The Jews, however, used and still use the initial Hebrew word of each book—or its first important word—to indicate the whole.

Genesis falls into two unequal parts. Chapters 1-11 deal with primordial history; they introduce us to the story of salvation, the theme that runs through the whole Bible. They search back into the origin of the world and survey the whole human race. They tell of the creation of the universe and man, of the Fall and its consequences, of the increasing human wickedness which earned the punishment of the Flood. The repopulation of the earth starts with Noah but our attention is directed ultimately to Abraham, father of the chosen people, by way of a series of narrowing genealogical tables. Chapters 12-50 deal with patriarchal history; they portray the great ancestors of Israel. Abraham is the man of faith; God rewards his obedience with a promise of posterity for himself and, for his descendants, possession of the Holy Land (12:1–25:18). Jacob is the man of guile who supplants Esau his brother; by a trick he secures the blessing of his father Isaac and he proves himself more crafty than his uncle Laban. But all his cunning would have been useless if God had not preferred him to Esau before his birth or renewed the promise and covenant granted to Abraham (25:19 to ch. 36). The career of Isaac, Abraham's son and Jacob's father, is described more in relation to these two than for its own sake; he is a relatively colourless figure. The twelve sons of Jacob are the ancestors of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The concluding chapters of Genesis (37-50) are entirely

devoted to one of them: Joseph, the man of wisdom. The Joseph-cycle, so different from the foregoing narratives, bears no trace of God's visible intervention, nor does it contain any new revelation. Its absorbing purpose is to drive home the lesson that the virtue of the wise man is rewarded and that Providence turns man's shortcomings to advantage.

Genesis is complete in itself, the history of the ancestors. The three books that follow have for their common framework the life of Moses. They recount the formation of the chosen people and show how its social and religious law was constituted.

Exodus is occupied with two primary themes: The Deliverance from Egypt, 1:1–15:21, and the Sinaitic Covenant, 19:1–40:38. A secondary theme, the Journey through the Wilderness, connects the two, 15:22–18:27. Moses leads the liberated Israelites to Sinai where God's incommunicable name, 'Yahweh', had been revealed to him. Against the background of a majestic theophany God concludes an alliance with the people and proclaims his laws. Almost as soon as it is made this Covenant is broken: the people adore the golden calf. But God forgives the sin and renews the Covenant. There follows a list of ordinances controlling the practice of worship in desert conditions.

Leviticus, taken up almost entirely with legislation, breaks the thread of the narrative. Its contents are as follows: sacrificial ritual, ch. 1-7; ceremony of priestly investiture described in terms of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, ch. 8-10; ordinances relating to clean and unclean, ch. 11-15, concluding with the ritual for the great Day of Atonement, ch. 16; The 'Holiness Code', 17-26, a section which includes a liturgical calendar, 23, and which closes with Blessings and Curses, 26. By way of appendix, ch. 27 lays down the conditions for redeeming persons and animals and goods vowed to Yahweh.

Numbers resumes the account of the Desert Journey. A census of the people, ch. 1-4, and the offering of gifts on the occasion of the Dedication of the Tabernacle, ch. 7, form a prelude to the departure from Sinai. The second Passover is celebrated and, leaving the holy mount, ch. 9-10, the people reach Kadesh after various halts on the way. From here an unsuccessful attempt is made to infiltrate into Canaan from the south, ch. 11-14. After a long stay at Kadesh the people set out once more and reach the plains of Moab opposite Jericho, ch. 20-25. The Midianites are defeated and the tribes of Gad and Reuben settle in Transjordania, ch. 31-32. Chapter 33 lists the encampments on the way from Egypt to Moab. Within this narrative material there are groups of enactments either supplementing the Sinaitic code or preparing for the time when the people will have settled in Canaan.

Deuteronomy has a distinct plan of its own. It is a code of civil and religious laws, ch. 12-26:15, with a long discourse of Moses for its framework, ch. 5-11; and 26:16 to ch. 28. The whole is preceded by a first Mosaic discourse, ch. 1-4, and followed by a third, ch. 29-30. This is followed in its turn by sections dealing with the last days of Moses: Joshua's mission, the canticle of Moses, the blessings he pronounces, his death, ch. 31-34. The code of Deuteronomy is in part a resumption of the laws proclaimed in the desert. Its discourses commemorate the great events of the Exodus, of Sinai and of the early stages of the Conquest; they explain the religious meaning of these events and appeal for fidelity to the Law whose importance they emphasise.

How the Pentateuch came to be written

At least from the beginning of the Christian era Moses has been credited with the composition of this considerable body of literature; nor did Jesus or his apostles question this, Jn 1:45; 5:45-47; Rm 10:5. Nevertheless, the most ancient available traditions never expressly claimed that the whole of the Pentateuch came from Moses' hand. Even when the Pentateuch itself uses the expression 'Moses wrote' (as it very rarely does) it is referring only to particular passages. Now modern Pentateuchal study has revealed a variety of style, lack of sequence, and repetitions in narrative which make it impossible to ascribe the whole work to a single author. At the end of the 19th century, after years of laborious effort, one hypothesis succeeded in rallying the critics, thanks especially to the works of Graf and of Wellhausen. According to this theory the Pentateuch is an amalgam of four documents issuing from different places and times but all much later than Moses. Initially there were, it was held, two narrative sources: the *Yahwistic* (J) which, from the story of Creation onwards, uses the divine name Yahweh that was revealed to Moses, and the *Elohistic* (E) which uses Elohim, the common noun for God. The Yahwistic source was committed to writing in Judah in the 9th century, the Elohistic in Israel a little later. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom these two documents were combined (JE). After the time of Josiah the *Deuteronomic* source (D) was added (JED). The *Priestly Code* (P), made up for the most part of laws, though with a certain amount of narrative matter, was after the Exile joined to the existing compilation which it served to weld and bind together (JEDP). It should be noted that the literary analysis behind this hypothesis was allied with an evolutionary theory of the religious development of Israel.

In a Response dated June 27th 1906 the Pontifical Biblical Commission put Catholic exegetes on their guard against this Documentary Theory and required them to maintain the 'substantial' Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch taken as a whole. The Commission, however, recognised the possibility of pre-Mosaic oral traditions and written documents; it granted, too, that modifications and additions subsequent to Moses may have been made. In a letter to Cardinal Suhard (January 16th 1948) the Commission more explicitly conceded the existence of sources and admitted a gradual growth of the Mosaic laws and of the historical narratives, a growth due to the social and religious conditions of later times.

And indeed the Documentary Theory in its classical form is once more in the melting-pot. Continued effort to give it further precision has served only to show that the task is impossible. Moreover, the literary problem is yielding to the historical: what oral or written sources lie behind the 'documents' is a question now more urgent than the problem when the text assumed its final form. The new approach is less artificial and literary; it is closer to realities and to the conditions of life. It is now beginning to appear that these sources are very ancient indeed. Archaeological progress and our growing knowledge of the history of the neighbouring civilisations have shown that many Pentateuchal laws and institutions had their non-biblical counterparts long before the dates assigned to the 'documents'; they have shown also that not a few Pentateuchal narratives presuppose conditions different from, and more primitive than, those in which the 'documents' are said to have been written.

This is not to say that there is no longer a problem. There are phenomena

which demand explanation: the duplicated passages for instance ('doublets'), the repetitions and discrepancies in which the Pentateuch abounds and which strike the reader right from the opening pages of Genesis. Thus there are two narratives of Creation, 1-2:4a and 2:4b–3:24, two genealogies of Cain-Kenan, 4:17f and 5:12-17, two interwoven accounts of the Flood, ch. 6-8. The attempt to satisfy these data by a theory of assembled 'documents' scissored, reshuffled and recombined by some mechanical process of literary compilation must, it is true, be abandoned. Nevertheless, the facts point at least to the existence of certain 'traditions' which were at first used for recitation in the various sanctuaries; circumstances of time and place, or the influence of some leading personality, brought these traditions together into the groups we find assembled in the Pentateuch.

Similarity of vocabulary, outlook and ideas draws the texts together to form the groups which we find side by side in the Pentateuch. From these text groups we can deduce and distinguish the various streams of tradition. The Yahwistic tradition, so named because it makes use of the divine name Yahweh from the Creation narrative onwards, is lively and vivid in style, but under its picturesque presentation there lies a profound answer to man's most urgent questions, and though God is described in human terms the author has a deep sense of the divine. This tradition originated in Judah; in its essentials it was put into writing perhaps in Solomon's time. The Elohistic tradition, which uses the common noun Elohim for God, is further distinguished from the Yahwistic by a more measured style and a more exacting moral standard; it is also more careful to maintain the distance between man and God. It has no primordial history but starts from the time of Abraham. Probably more recent than the Yahwistic tradition, it is usually credited to the Northern tribes. The Yahwistic and Elohistic traditions have very few legislative texts; of the Priestly tradition, on the other hand, the law is the very centre. This tradition displays a particular interest in the regulation of the sanctuary, in the sacrifices and feasts, in the person and functions of Aaron and his sons. Besides the texts which deal with law or with institutions there are narrative sections but a legal and liturgical mind is discernible behind these also. The Priestly tradition delights in calculation and in genealogy; it is readily recognisable from its style which is usually abstract and repetitive. This tradition emanates from the priests of the Temple of Jerusalem; it took shape during the Exile with the help of ancient material but established itself only after the Return.

So far as the Book of Genesis is concerned it is not difficult to recognise and follow the threads of the three traditions: Yahwistic, Elohistic, Priestly. Nor is it hard to trace the Priestly tradition in the closing chapters of Exodus, in the whole of Leviticus and in the greater part of Numbers; but it is difficult to decide which part of the remainder belongs to the Yahwistic tradition and which to the Elohistic. After the Book of Numbers all three traditions disappear; they are replaced by a single tradition: the Deuteronomic. This is characterised by a most distinctive style which is exuberant and rhetorical; certain clear-cut formulae frequently recur. Its doctrine, too, is characteristic—a doctrine it never tires of repeating: of all the nations Israel has been chosen as God's people by an act of spontaneous divine favour; nevertheless a condition is attached to this choice and to the pact that seals it, namely that Israel must be faithful to the law of its God and to the prescribed worship that is to be

offered in the one and only sanctuary. It may be that the substance of the Deuteronomic tradition basically represents Northern custom as introduced to Jerusalem by Levites after the fall of the kingdom of Israel. This body of law, rediscovered in the Temple during the reign of Josiah, was then promulgated within the framework of a Mosaic discourse. In the first years of the Exile there was issued another edition, new but on the same lines as its predecessor.

It is only in their final, written form that we come to know these traditions, but the important question is: How did they first originate? Now despite their distinctive characteristics the Yahwistic and Elohistic traditions tell much the same story: these two traditions, therefore, have a common origin. Further, they fit naturally into the period of the events narrated and not into the later time presumed for their committal to writing. It follows that they have their origin in the earlier period, the period of Israel's growth into a nation. With certain modifications the same may be said of the legislative passages: Israel's civil and religious law developed as the community developed, but law and people were born together.

Hence the basic elements of the Pentateuch—the substance of the traditions it records and the core of its legislation—reach back to the time when Israel became a nation. Now that period is dominated by one figure: Moses was the nation's organising spirit, its religious leader, its earliest legislator. Earlier traditions that converge on him and memories of what happened under his leadership together went to make the national epic. The Mosaic religion set its enduring seal upon the faith and practice of the nation; the Mosaic law remained its standard. The modifications required by changing conditions interpreted Moses' mind and invested themselves with his authority. The Bible's witness to a certain measure of literary work on the part of Moses and of those around him cannot be set aside, but the question of the literary presentation of the material is less urgent than that of its origin: it is much more important to recognise that the traditions which make up the Pentateuch have in Moses their head and source.

Relation of the narratives to history

From such traditions it would be unreasonable to expect the minute precision of a modern historian: they are not lifeless manuscripts but the living heritage of a nation whose spirit of unity they nourish and whose faith they sustain. But it would be equally unreasonable to refuse them any credence on the grounds that this precision is lacking.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis must be considered separately. They speak in popular style of the origin of the human race; in a simple, pictorial style suited to the mentality of unsophisticated people, they declare the fundamental truths on which the plan of salvation rests. These truths are: the Creation by God at the beginning of time, God's special intervention in the making of man and woman, the unity of the human race, the sin of our first parents, the fall from divine favour and the penalties their descendants would inherit in consequence of the sin. All these are truths which have their bearing upon theological doctrine and which are guaranteed by the authority of scripture; but they are also facts, and the certainty of the truths implies the reality of the facts. It is in this sense that the first chapters of Genesis are called historical.

As for the patriarchal history, it is in the first place a family history: it gathers

together the treasured memories of the fathers, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob and Joseph. It is also a popular history: it likes to dwell upon personal anecdotes and piquant details and makes no attempt to situate its narratives in a wider historical context. And lastly, it is history written from a religious standpoint: each turning-point of the story is signalised by a divine intervention and the hand of Providence is seen in each event — an outlook theologically exact but disregarding the play of secondary causes. Moreover, it is for the purpose of demonstrating a religious thesis that the various facts are introduced, expounded and arranged: they are intended to prove that there is one God, one nation of his making, one country for it to dwell in by God's gift; this God is Yahweh, the nation Israel, the country the Holy Land. Nevertheless, the narratives are historical. It is true that they have their own method of presentation but they deal with events that are real: they give a faithful picture of the origin and migrations of Israel's ancestors, of their geographical and racial background, of their moral and religious way of life. The old suspicious attitude towards these narratives has had to be abandoned under pressure from the data recently provided by the historians and archaeologists of the Near East.

The events described in Exodus and Numbers, and resumed in Deuteronomy, take up the story at a very much later period: they begin with the birth of Moses and end with his death. They cover the Exodus from Egypt, the halt at Sinai, the journey to Kadesh (the texts are strangely silent about Israel's long stay there) and through Transjordania, the settlement in the plain of Moab. Unless we concede that these events really happened and that Moses is truly a figure of history, the subsequent history of Israel, its loyalty to Yahwism and its attachment to the Law will all defy explanation. At the same time, we cannot but recognise that the important contribution of these recollections to the nation's way of life, and the echoes they found in its ritual, have endowed the narratives with the proportions of a national epic (e.g. the crossing of the Red Sea) or with the characteristics of a liturgical act (e.g. the Passover). Israel, therefore, now a nation, makes its appearance on the stage of world history. There is no mention of this in any of the ancient witnesses, if we except the obscure allusion on the stele of Pharaoh Meneptah, but what the Bible relates is in broad agreement with what the texts and the archaeologists tell us about the Hyksos invasion of Egypt (these invaders being for the most part Semites), about Egyptian administration in the Delta, and about political conditions in Transjordania.

Today it is the task of the historian to align these biblical data with the facts of general history. With the prudent reserve dictated by the insufficiency of biblical indications and the uncertainty of extra-biblical chronology, we may put Abraham's stay in Canaan at about 1850 B.C. Joseph's life in Egypt and that of the other sons of Jacob who subsequently joined him there we may date a little after 1700. The date of the Exodus is disputed: one theory, which once held the field and still has its supporters, favours the 15th century when the Eighteenth Dynasty ruled in Egypt; another puts the Exodus in the 13th century under the Nineteenth Dynasty. This second opinion seems to satisfy the historical facts better than the first, namely the residence in the Delta of the Nineteenth-Dynasty pharaohs and their colossal building operations and the loosening of Egypt's hold over Syro-Palestine towards the end of the reign of Rameses II; it also agrees with the archaeological evidence on the setting up

of the Edomite and Moabite kingdoms in Transjordania and on the cultural changes in certain Palestinian towns at the beginning of the Iron Age which would correspond with the proposed date for the occupation by the Israelites.

On such grounds we are inclined to date the Exodus in the reign of Meneptah (1224-1214) and the Oppression in that of Rameses II (1290-1224); or, perhaps preferably, the Exodus in the second half of the long reign of Rameses II (1290-1224) and the beginning of the Oppression in the reign of Seti I (1310-1290).

The Laws

In the Jewish Bible the Pentateuch is called the Law, the *Torah*, and indeed it embodies that whole complex of regulations which governed the nation's moral, social and religious life. To the modern mind the most remarkable feature of this legislation is its religious character. This quality is also to be found in certain other codes of the ancient East but we nowhere find a body of law in which the sacred so pervades the profane: in Israel it is God who dictates the law, it is man's duty to God that the law prescribes, religious motives lie behind all the law's injunctions. For the moral prescriptions that make up the Decalogue or for the ritual laws of Leviticus this may seem natural enough; what is more significant is that civil, criminal and religious enactments should be intermingled in the same corpus and the whole set out as the charter of the Covenant with Yahweh. It is only to be expected that the proclamation of these laws should be linked up with the narratives of what happened in the desert where that Covenant came into being.

We have already said that the basic elements of the legislation date back to the Mosaic period; but since laws are only made to be applied, these had to be adapted to changing conditions of place and time. This explains why, in the groups we are about to consider, we find ingredients of great antiquity side by side with formulations or provisions which reflect the problems of a later age. Besides this, Israel was necessarily indebted to neighbouring cultures. There are some astonishing similarities between some of the clauses in the Code of the Covenant or in Deuteronomy and those in the Mesopotamian Codes, in the Collection of Assyrian Laws and in the Hittite Code. The likenesses are to be explained not by direct borrowing but by the influence of alien constitutions, or else by the existence of a common law partly shared by the peoples of the Near East in ancient times. Furthermore, after the Exodus, Canaanite practice exerted a strong influence on the formulation of laws and on the pattern of ritual worship.

The *Decalogue*, or the 'Ten Words' inscribed on the tablets at Sinai, lays down the fundamental law — which is at once moral and religious — of the Covenant. It is recorded in two places, Ex 20:2-17 and Dt 5:6-18, with not inconsiderable textual differences; these two texts derive from a primitive, shorter form against the Mosaic origin of which there is no cogent argument.

The (Elohistic) *Code of the Covenant*, Ex 20:22–23:19, is the code of a community of shepherds and peasants and therefore suited to Israel while still evolving towards nationhood and beginning to adopt an agricultural way of life. Compared with the Mesopotamian Codes, which are of greater antiquity and reveal points of contact, the Code of the Covenant differs from them by its lack of complexity and by its preservation of certain archaic features. It

comes down to us in a somewhat developed form as is shown by its interest in beasts of burden, in farming, in viticulture, in houses — all of which presupposes that the period of semi-nomadism was at an end; moreover, its two modes of expressing laws (imperative and hypothetical) point to the fact that the collection is composite. The Code as we have it possibly dates back to the time of the Judges.

The (Yahwistic) *Code of Renewal of the Covenant*, Ex 34:14-26, is sometimes called, somewhat inappropriately, the Second or Ritual Decalogue. It is a series of religious injunctions expressed in the imperative mood. It is contemporaneous with the Code of the Covenant but has been touched up under the influence of Deuteronomy.

Leviticus was not given its final form until after the Exile but it contains elements of the greatest antiquity: for example, the food laws, ch. 11, and the regulations governing legal purity, ch. 13-15, are the legacy of a primitive age; similarly the ceremonial for the Day of Atonement, ch. 16, preserves an ancient purification ceremony overlaid by a highly developed concept of sin. Chapters 17-26 constitute a body of law commonly referred to as the *Law of Holiness*; this appears to have been drawn up in the closing years of the Monarchy.

The *Deuteronomic Code* (Dt 12-26) dates back to the same period. Its many ancient ingredients are assembled in rather haphazard fashion but it witnesses to a development in social and religious custom (e.g. the laws relating to the one and only sanctuary, to the altar, to tithes, to slaves); it also reveals that the religious outlook has undergone a change (cf. its tone of warm appeal and the note of exhortation in so many of its injunctions).

The religious lesson

The religion of the Old Testament, like that of the New, is a historical religion: it is based on a divine revelation made to definite individuals at definite times and in definite circumstances, on the intervention of God in history at specific moments of our human story. The Pentateuch, which tells this tale of God's dealings with the world, is the foundation stone of the Jewish religion; it became the canonical book *par excellence*, the Law of Israel.

In the Pentateuch the Israelite found the meaning of his destiny. Not only did he find, in the opening chapters of Genesis, an answer to the questions he shared with every man: the meaning of the world and of life, the problem of suffering and death, but he also found an answer to his own particular question: How is it that Yahweh, the only God, is the God of Israel; that among all the nations of the earth Israel should be his people?

The Pentateuch answers: because to Israel the divine promise was made. The Pentateuch is the Book of Promises: the promise made to Adam and Eve after their fall (the 'Proto-evangel', or first good news of the salvation to come), the promise of a new order of things made to Noah after the Deluge and, above all, the promise to Abraham and again to Isaac and Jacob, a promise that was to affect all their descendants. Israel was to occupy the land, the Land of Promise, where the patriarchs had lived. The promise indeed has this for its immediate object but its significance is deeper and its implications wider: by this promise a relationship is set up between Israel and the God of her Fathers, a relationship of special privilege and, indeed, unique.

In Yahweh's call of Abraham his choice of Israel was already foreshadowed. By an act of free choice, by a loving plan conceived from creation's beginning and pursued despite all man's waywardness, Yahweh formed a nation and made that nation his.

Choice and promise were confirmed by a covenant. If the Pentateuch is the Book of Promises, it is also the Book of Covenants. There is already a covenant with Adam, though there is no explicit mention of it; there is a covenant with Noah, with Abraham and — through the mediation of Moses — with the whole nation. It is not a pact concluded by two equals, since God has no need of pacts and the initiative lies wholly with him; nevertheless, God acknowledges its force and, in a certain sense, is committed to it by reason of the promises he makes. But in return he demands loyalty from his people: if Israel withholds this fidelity, if she sins, the bond may be broken that God's love has made.

It is God himself who defines the terms of this fidelity by legislating for the nation he has chosen. His law makes known their duties to his people, regulates the nation's life as God would have it, and by sustaining the Covenant paves the way for the fulfilment of the promises.

The Promise, the Choice, the Covenant, the Law — these are the golden threads, the warp and woof of the Pentateuch. They run through the rest of the Old Testament also, for the Pentateuch is not the end of the story: it tells of promise but not of fulfilment, since it ends before the entry into the Promised Land begins. Of its very nature it was no closed book because in the first place it is a book of trust in a promised future: when Canaan was conquered the promise might seem to be fulfilled, Jos 23:14, but fulfilment was destined to be thwarted by the nation's sins and the promise remained a promise to comfort the exiles in Babylon. In the second place it is a book of an urgent and lasting law which was to endure in Israel as an ever-present witness against her, Dt 31:26.

So it was until the coming of Christ, the one who gives this long story of salvation all its meaning because to him it was slowly making its obscure way. In Ga 3:15-29 especially, St Paul brings out the significance of that story. The covenants of the old régime were the rehearsals for Christ's new Covenant in which the Christians, made by their faith heirs to Abraham, are by Christ made partakers. As for the Law, its function was to keep the promises intact; it was therefore like the guardian who takes the child to school — to Christ in whom those promises are fulfilled.

The Christian is no longer under the guardian, no longer bound by the Law's observances; but he is not emancipated from its religious and moral teaching, for Christ did not come to do away with the Law, he came to bring it to perfection, Mt 5:17. The New Testament does not cancel the message of the Old but carries that message forward. In the great events of patriarchal and Mosaic times and in the Desert feastdays and ritual (the sacrifice of Isaac, the crossing of the Red Sea, the Passover, etc.) the Church sees the great realities of the New Law (the sacrifice of Christ, baptism, the Christian Easter). But this is not all: there is no fundamental difference between the religious response to which Israel was invited by the narratives of the Pentateuch, or impelled by its commands, and the response demanded by our Christian faith. There is a message here, too, for every Christian soul; each in its journey to God treads

Isarel's path: it breaks with the old way of life, it suffers a time of testing, it emerges purified.

What method should we follow in reading the Pentateuch? Start by taking the narratives, and in order. In Genesis we shall notice how the lovingkindness of the creator contrasts with the ingratitude of his sinful creature; from the subsequent story of the patriarchs we shall learn that trustful faith has its reward; the Book of Exodus sets forth our own redemption in outline; Numbers shows us God instructing and admonishing his children in their time of trial and thus preparing his gathering of the elect. After this we may read Leviticus, either side by side with the concluding chapters of Ezekiel or after we have finished reading Ezra and Nehemiah; it is true that the one sacrifice of Christ has abrogated the Temple ceremonial but Leviticus also legislates for the purity and sanctity of those who serve God — and this is a lesson for all times. Deuteronomy may profitably be read with Jeremiah, who of all the prophets is closest to this book in time as in spirit.

GENESIS

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD AND OF MANKIND

I. THE CREATION AND THE FALL

The first account of the creation[a] 2:4-25 Ps 148

1 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth Jb 38-39 Heb 11:3 Ps 8:104 Si 24:3 Pr 8:22-31 ↗Jn 1:1-3 Col 1:15-17 Heb 1:2-3 Jn 8:12+ 2 Co 4:6
was a formless void,[b] there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit
hovered[c] over the water.
3 God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. 4 God saw that light was
5 good, and God divided light from darkness. 5 God called light 'day', and darkness
he called 'night'. Evening came and morning came: the first day.
6 God said, 'Let there be a vault[d] in the waters to divide the waters in two'. Jb 37:15 Zp 3:5 7:11+ Jb26:10
7 And so it was. 7 God made the vault, and it divided the waters above the vault
8 from the waters under the vault. 8 God called the vault 'heaven'. Evening came Ps 148:4
and morning came: the second day.
9 God said, 'Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass,[e] Jl 2:3
10 and let dry land appear'. And so it was. 10 God called the dry land 'earth' and the
mass of waters 'seas', and God saw that it was good.
11 God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit Ps 104:14
12 trees bearing fruit with their seed inside, on the earth'. And so it was. 12 The
earth produced vegetation: plants bearing seed in their several kinds, and trees
bearing fruit with their seed inside in their several kinds. God saw that it was
13 good. 13 Evening came and morning came: the third day.
14 God said, 'Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide day from night, Jb 26:10 Ps 19:1 Si 43:6 Ba 3:33-35 Jr 31:35 Is 40:26
15 and let them indicate festivals, days and years. 15 Let them be lights in the vault
16 of heaven to shine on the earth.' And so it was. 16 God made the two great lights:[f]
the greater light to govern the day, the smaller light to govern the night, and the Ps 136:7f
17 stars. 17 God set them in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth, 18 to govern
the day and the night and to divide light from darkness. God saw that it was
19 good. 19 Evening came and morning came: the fourth day.

1 a. This narrative, ascribed to the 'Priestly' source, is less concrete and more theological than that which follows, 2:4-25; it aims at a logical and exhaustive classification of beings whose creation is deliberately fitted into the framework of a week which closes with the sabbath day of rest. These beings come forth from nothing at God's command; they emerge in order of dignity: man, God's image and creation's king, comes last. The text makes use of the primitive science of its day. It would be a mistake to seek points of agreement between this schematic presentation and the data of modern science, but it is important to notice that although it bears the stamp of its period this literary form conveys a revelation of one, transcendent God, existing before the world which he created—a revelation valid for all time.

b. In Hebrew *tohu* and *bohu*, 'trackless waste and emptiness': these, like the 'darkness over the deep' and the 'waters', are images that attempt to express in virtue of their negative quality the idea of 'creation from nothing' which reaches precise formulation for the first time in 2 M 7:28.

c. Like a bird hanging in the air over its young in the nest, Dt 32:11.

d. For the ancient Semites the seeming vault of the sky (the 'firmament') was a solid dome holding the upper waters in check; the waters of the Deluge poured down through apertures in it, 7:11.

e. 'mass' thus the Greek; Hebr. 'place'.

f. Their names are omitted deliberately: Sun and Moon, deified by all the neighbouring peoples, are here no more than lamps that light the earth and regulate the calendar.

Jb12:7-10 God said, 'Let the waters teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above 20
the earth within the vault of heaven'. And so it was. •God created great sea- 21
serpents and every kind of living creature with which the waters teem, and every
kind of winged creature. God saw that it was good. •God blessed them, saying, 22
8:17 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply
upon the earth'. •Evening came and morning came: the fifth day. 23
Si 16:30 God said, 'Let the earth produce every kind of living creature: cattle, reptiles,[g] 24
and every kind of wild beast'. And so it was. •God made every kind of wild 25
beast, every kind of cattle, and every kind of land reptile. God saw that it
was good.
5:1,3;9:6 Ps 8:5-6 Ws 2:23;10:2 Si 17:3-4 Jm 3:7 God said, 'Let us[h] make man[i] in our own image, in the likeness[j] of ourselves, 26
and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all
the wild beasts[k] and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth'.

1 Co11:7 Ep 4:24 Col 3:10 God created man in the image of himself, 27
in the image of God he created him,
Mt19:4p Mk 10:6 male and female he created them.

8:17; 9:1 Ps115:16 Ps 8:6-9 Ws 9:2;10:2 Si 17:2-4 Jm 3:7 God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and 28
conquer it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living
animals on the earth.' •God said, 'See, I give you all the seed-bearing plants that 29
9:3 are upon the whole earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this shall be
Ps 104:f Ps104:24 Qo 3:11;7:29 Si39:33-35 Ac 10:15 1 Tm 4:4 your food. •To all wild beasts, all birds of heaven and all living reptiles on the 30
earth I give all the foliage of plants for food.'[l] And so it was. •God saw all he had 31
made, and indeed it was very good. Evening came and morning came: the sixth
day.

Ex20:8+ Ex 20:11; 13:12f Ps 33:6 Heb4:4f 2 Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array. •On the seventh ½
day God completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day
after all the work he had been doing. •God blessed the seventh day and made it 3
holy,[a] because on that day he had rested after all his work of creating.
Jr 10:11f Such were the origins of heaven and earth when they were created. 4

1:1–2:4

The second account of the creation.[b] Paradise

At the time when Yahweh God made earth and heaven •there was as yet no 5
wild bush on the earth nor had any wild plant yet sprung up, for Yahweh God
had not sent rain on the earth, nor was there any man to till the soil. •However, 6
3:19; 6:3 Ps104:29f Qo3:20f;12:7 Jb34:14f; 33:4 a flood was rising from the earth and watering all the surface of the soil. •Yahweh 7
God fashioned man of dust from the soil.[c] Then he breathed into his nostrils a
1 Co15:45 breath of life, and thus man became a living being.

Is 51:3 Ezk 31:9 Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden[d] which is in the east, and there he put 8
the man he had fashioned. •Yahweh God caused to spring up from the soil every 9
Pr 3:18 Rv2:7;22:1-2,14 kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life[e] and the tree
of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden. •A river flowed 10
Ps 46:4 from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided to make four streams.[f]
Si 24:25 The first is named the Pishon, and this encircles the whole land of Havilah where 11
there is gold. •The gold of this land is pure; bdellium[g] and onyx stone are found 12
there. •The second river is named the Gihon, and this encircles the whole land 13
of Cush. •The third river is named the Tigris, and this flows to the east of Ashur. 14
The fourth river is the Euphrates. •Yahweh God took the man and settled him 15
Ps104:14 in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it. •Then Yahweh God gave 16
the man this admonition, 'You may eat indeed of all the trees in the garden.
Nevertheless of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil[h] you are not to eat, 17
3:5,22 Rm 6:23 Tb 8:6 Qo 3:20 for on the day you eat of it you shall most surely die.'
1 Tm2:13 Yahweh God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make 18
him a helpmate.' •So from the soil Yahweh God fashioned all the wild beasts 19
and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would
call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. •The man gave 20

names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no
21 helpmate suitable for man was found for him. •So Yahweh God made the man
fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed
22 it in flesh. •Yahweh God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman,[i]
23 and brought her to the man. •The man exclaimed:

'This at last is bone from my bones,
and flesh from my flesh!
This is to be called woman,[j]
for this was taken from man.'

24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife,
and they become one body.
25 Now both of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no
shame in front of each other.

1Co11:8-9 ↗1Tm2:13 Is 26:12

↗Mt19:5p ↗Mk10:7 ↗1Co6:16 ↗Ep5:31

The Fall

3 1 The serpent[a] was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that Yahweh God
had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from
2 any of the trees in the garden?' •The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat
3 the fruit of the trees in the garden. •But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the
garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death".'
4 5 Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die! •God knows in fact
that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods,
6 knowing good and evil.' •The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and
pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give.
So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who
7 was with her, and he ate it. •Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they

Ws 2:24 Si 25:24 ↗Jn8:44 ↗Rm5:12-21 2Co11:3 ↗Rv12:9; 20:2

2:17;3:22 Is14:14+

g. Lit. 'that which crawls' (or 'glides', v. 21): not only snakes and lizards but also insects and the smaller animals.

h. It is possible that this plural form implies a discussion between God and his heavenly court (the angels, cf. 3:5, 22); our text was thus understood by the Greek version (followed by Vulg.) of Ps 8:5 (quoted in Heb 2:7). Alternatively, the plural expresses the majesty and fulness of God's being; the common name for God in Hebrew is *Elohim*, a plural form. Thus the way is prepared for the interpretation of the Fathers who saw in this text a hint of the Trinity.

i. Collective noun, hence the plural 'Be masters of'.

j. 'Likeness', by excluding the idea of equality, weakens the force of 'image', a realistic term ('something carved') that implies a physical resemblance like that between Adam and his sons, 5:3. This relationship with God marks man off from the animals; moreover, it involves a general similarity of nature: intellect, will, authority—man is a person. It paves the way for a higher revelation: man's share in the divine nature by virtue of grace.

k. 'All the wild beasts' Syr.

l. Description of a golden age when men and beasts were at peace with each other, having plants for their food. 9:3 marks the beginning of a new era.

2 a. The sabbath *(shabbath)* is of divine institution: on that day God himself rested *(shabath)*.

b. This 'Yahwistic' narrative has man and his destiny for its centre of interest. In a figurative way it describes that primordial tragedy the consequences of which were to dominate man's estate and story.

c. Man, *adam*, is of the soil, *adamah*, cf. 3:19, 23. This collective noun is to become, 4:25; 5:1,3, the proper name of the first human being, Adam.

d. 'Garden' is translated 'paradise' in the Greek version and thence becomes traditional. 'Eden' is a geographical name but the place cannot be identified; it may originally have meant 'a plain'. Paradise is pictured here as an oasis in the eastern desert.

e. A symbol of immortality, see 3:22 and note. On the tree of the knowledge of good and evil see the note to v. 17.

f. The purpose of vv. 10-14 is to fix the locality of Paradise. The Tigris and the Euphrates are well known and their sources, in the Armenian mountains, are adjacent; the rivers Pishon and Gihon are, however, unknown. According to Gn 10:29 Havilah is a district of Arabia and, in other passages, Cush means Upper Egypt; but it is uncertain whether the two names have the same sense in this place.

g. An aromatic resin.

h. This knowledge is a privilege which God reserves to himself and which man, by sinning, is to lay hands on, 3:5, 22. Hence it does not mean omniscience, which fallen man does not possess; nor is it moral discrimination, for unfallen man already had it and God could not refuse it to a rational being. It is the power of deciding for himself what is good and what is evil and of acting accordingly, a claim to complete moral independence by which man refuses to recognise his status as a created being. The first sin was an attack on God's sovereignty, a sin of pride. This rebellion is described in concrete terms as the transgression of an express command of God for which the text uses the image of a forbidden fruit.

i. Figurative expression of the close relationship between man and woman, v. 23, which explains their attraction for each other, v. 24 and 3:16.

j. In Hebrew a play on the words *Ishshah* 'woman' and *ish* 'man'.

3 a. The serpent is here used as a disguise for a being hostile to God and an enemy of man; this being is identified with the Adversary or the Devil (Jb 1:6+) in the Book of Wisdom, in the N.T. and in all Christian tradition.

realised that they were naked.[b] So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.

2 S 5:24 1 K 19:12 Jb 13:16 The man and his wife heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the 8
garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from Yahweh God among the trees
of the garden. •But Yahweh God called to the man. 'Where are you?' he asked. 9
'I heard the sound of you in the garden;' he replied 'I was afraid because I was 10
naked, so I hid.' •'Who told you that you were naked?' he asked 'Have you been 11
1 K 21:25 1 Tm 2:14 eating of the tree I forbade you to eat?' •The man replied, 'It was the woman you 12
put with me; she gave me the fruit, and I ate it'. •Then Yahweh God asked the 13
Rm 7:11 woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman replied, 'The serpent tempted
me and I ate'.

Is 65:25 ↗2 Co 11:3 Then Yahweh God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, 14

'Be accursed beyond all cattle,
all wild beasts.
You shall crawl on your belly and eat dust
every day of your life.

Is 9:5 1 Jn 3:8 ↗Rv12:17 I will make you enemies of each other: 15
you and the woman,
your offspring and her offspring.

Rm 16:20 It will crush your head
and you will strike its heel.'[c]

Ws 7:11 1 Co 14:3-4 1Tm2:11-12 To the woman he said:[d] 16

'I will multiply your pains in childbearing,
you shall give birth to your children in pain.
Your yearning shall be for your husband,

2:22+ yet he will lord it over you.'

Jb 5:7 Ps 104:14 Qo 1:13 Rm 5:12 Heb 6:8 Is 11:6+ Ho 4:3+ ↗Rm 8:20 To the man he said, 'Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate 17
from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat,

'Accursed be the soil because of you.
With suffering shall you get your food from it
every day of your life.

Si 36:24 It shall yield you brambles and thistles, 18
and you shall eat wild plants.
With sweat on your brow 19
shall you eat your bread,
until you return to the soil,
as you were taken from it.
2:7 Jb1:21;34:15 Ps 90:3; 104:29 Qo 3:20; 12:7 Ws 15:8 Si 16:30 2 Th3:12 For dust you are
and to dust you shall return.'

Rm 5:12 The man named his wife 'Eve' because she was the mother of all those who 20
live.[e] •Yahweh God made clothes out of skins for the man and his wife, and 21
they put them on. •Then Yahweh God said, 'See, the man has become like 22
2:17+; 11:6 Pr 3:18 Si 37:3 one of us, with his knowledge of good and evil.[f] He must not be allowed to
stretch his hand out next and pick from the tree of life also, and eat some
and live for ever.'[g] •So Yahweh God expelled him from the garden of Eden, 23
to till the soil from which he had been taken. •He banished the man, and in 24
Jb40:19 Ezk 28:14 front of the garden of Eden he posted the cherubs,[h] and the flame of a flashing
Rv 22:1f,14 sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel[a]

4 The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth 1
to Cain. 'I have acquired a man with the help of Yahweh'[b] she said. •She gave 2
birth to a second child, Abel, the brother of Cain. Now Abel became a shepherd

and kept flocks, while Cain tilled the soil. •Time passed and Cain brought some
of the produce of the soil as an offering for Yahweh, •while Abel for his part
brought the first-born of his flock and some of their fat as well. Yahweh looked
with favour on Abel and his offering. •But he did not look with favour on Cain
and his offering,[c] and Cain was very angry and downcast. •Yahweh asked
Cain, 'Why are you angry and downcast? •If you are well disposed, ought you
not to lift up your head? But if you are ill disposed, is not sin at the door like
a crouching beast hungering for you, which you must master?'[d] •Cain said to
his brother Abel, 'Let us go out';[e] and while they were in the open country,
Cain set on his brother Abel and killed him.

Yahweh asked Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' 'I do not know' he
replied. 'Am I my brother's guardian?' •'What have you done?' Yahweh
asked. 'Listen to the sound of your brother's blood, crying out to me from the
ground. •Now be accursed and driven from the ground that has opened its
mouth to receive your brother's blood at your hands. •When you till the ground
it shall no longer yield you any of its produce. You shall be a fugitive and a
wanderer over the earth.' •Then Cain said to Yahweh, 'My punishment is
greater than I can bear. •See! Today you drive me from this ground. I must
hide from you, and be a fugitive and a wanderer over the earth. Why, whoever
comes across me will kill me!' •'Very well, then,' Yahweh replied 'if anyone
kills Cain, sevenfold vengeance shall be taken for him.' So Yahweh put a mark
on Cain,[f] to prevent whoever might come across him from striking him down.
Cain left the presence of Yahweh and settled in the land of Nod,[g] east of Eden.

Ex 34:19
Lv 3:16
25:23
Heb 11:4
1 K 2:15
Si 7:1; 21; 11; 37:3
1 Co 6:12
Jude 11
Ws 10:3
↗ 1 Jn 3:12
18:21; 37:26
↗ Mt 23:35
↗ Heb 11; 4;12:24
Si 36:25
Ps 38:4
Ho 9:17

The descendants of Cain[h]

Cain had intercourse with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch.
He became builder of a town, and he gave the town the name of his son
Enoch. •Enoch had a son, Irad, and Irad became the father of Mehujael;

b. Want had been good is now known as evil: the offence of indecency has been invented.

c. The Hebrew text, by proclaiming that the offspring of the serpent is henceforth at enmity with the woman's descendants, opposes the human race to the Devil and his 'seed', his posterity, and hints at man's ultimate victory; it is the first glimmer of salvation, the *proto-evangelium*. The Greek version has a masculine pronoun ('he', not 'it' will crush...), thus ascribing the victory not to the woman's descendants in general but to one of her sons in particular; the words of the Greek version therefore express the messianic interpretation held by many of the Fathers. The Latin version has a feminine pronoun ('she' will crush...) and since, in the messianic interpretation of our text, the Messiah and his mother appear together, the pronoun has been taken to refer to Mary; this application has become current in the Church.

d. The punishment is appropriate to the specific functions of each: the woman suffers as mother and wife, the man as bread-earner. To this fall from the original condition there is added death, v. 19, and the loss of intimacy with God, v. 23. These *penalties* are hereditary; the doctrine of hereditary *guilt* is not clearly stated until St Paul draws his comparison between the solidarity of all in Christ the saviour, and the solidarity of all in the sinner, Adam, Rm 5.

e. The name Eve, *Hawwah*, is here explained by the root *hayah* 'to live'.

f. Man has sinned, constituting himself arbiter of what is good and what is evil, 2:17+; he has usurped the divine privilege.

g. By nature man is mortal, v. 19; immortality was a pure gift of God which man's disobedience forfeited, 2:17.

h. Babylonian conceptions lie behind this image, cf. Ex 25:18+.

4 a. This narrative presupposes a developed civilisation, an established form of worship, the existence of men who might attempt Cain's life, the existence of a clan that would rally to him. It may be that the narrative originally referred not to the children of the first man but to the eponymous ancestor of the Cainites (cf. Nb 24:21+). The 'Yahwistic' tradition has moved the story back to the period of man's beginning, thus giving it a universal significance: after man's revolt against God we now have man's war on man; against these two evils is directed the double command that sums up the whole Law—the love of God and of neighbour, Mt 22:40.

b. Delight of the first woman who, though the slave of her husband, now finds herself mother of a male child. By a play on words the name Cain *(Qain)* is here connected with the verb *qanah*, 'to acquire', 'get'.

c. The younger is preferred to the elder. This theme runs through the whole Bible and, in Genesis its first appearance here is followed by others (Isaac preferred to Ishmael, Jacob to Esau, Rachel to Leah). Such preference demonstrates the freedom of God's choice, his contempt for earthly standards of greatness, and his regard for the lowly.

d. Approximate translation of a corrupted text. Lit. 'If you do well, is it not elevation? And if you do not well, sin (feminine) is crouching (masc.) at your door and unto you its (masc.) desire, and you shall rule over it.' It seems that the text is speaking of temptation and of the need to overcome it.

e. 'Let us go out' versions.

f. The 'mark of Cain' is not a brand of shame but a protecting sign: it indicates that Cain is member of a clan that will exact blood for blood.

g. The name of this unidentified land recalls the description of Cain as a 'wanderer', *nad*, in the land of *Nod*.

h. Fragment of 'Yahwistic' genealogy. The same names, varying in form, occur in the 'Priestly' genealogy of Seth between the names of Kenan and Lameh, 5:12-28.

Mehujael became the father of Methushael, and Methushael became the father of Lamech. •Lamech married two women: the name of the first was Adah 19
and the name of the second was Zillah. •Adah gave birth to Jabal: he was the 20
ancestor of the tent-dwellers and owners of livestock. •His brother's name was 21
Jubal: he was the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the flute. •As for Zillah, 22
she gave birth to Tubal-cain: he was the ancestor of all metalworkers,[i] in
bronze or iron. Tubal-cain's sister was Naamah.

Lamech said to his wives: 23

'Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,
Lamech's wives, listen to what I say:
I killed a man for wounding me,
a boy for striking me.
Mt18:22p Sevenfold vengeance is taken for Cain, 24
but seventy-sevenfold for Lamech.'[j]

Seth and his descendants[k]

Adam had intercourse with his wife, and she gave birth to a son whom she 25
named Seth, 'because God has granted[l] me other offspring' she said 'in place
of Abel, since Cain has killed him'. •A son was also born to Seth, and he named 26
21:33; 26:25 Ex3:14+ him Enosh. This man was the first to invoke the name of Yahweh.[m]

1Ch1:1-4 **The patriarchs before the flood**[a]

5 This is the roll of Adam's descendants : 1
1:26+ On the day God created Adam he made him in the likeness of God. •Male 2
and female he created them. He blessed them and gave them the name 'Man'
on the day they were created.

When Adam was a hundred and thirty years old he became the father of 3
1:26+ a son, in his likeness, as his image,[b] and he called him Seth. •Adam lived for 4
eight hundred years after the birth of Seth and he became the father of sons
and daughters. •In all, Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years; then 5
he died.

When Seth was a hundred and five years old he became the father of Enosh. 6
After the birth of Enosh, Seth lived for eight hundred and seven years, and 7
he became the father of sons and daughters. •In all, Seth lived for nine hundred 8
and twelve years; then he died.

When Enosh was ninety years old he became the father of Kenan. •After 9 10
the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived for eight hundred and fifteen years and he
became the father of sons and daughters. •In all, Enosh lived for nine hundred 11
and five years; then he died.

4:17+ When Kenan was seventy years old he became the father of Mahalalel. 12
After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived for eight hundred and forty years 13
and he became the father of sons and daughters. •In all, Kenan lived for nine 14
hundred and ten years; then he died.

When Mahalalel was sixty-five years old he became the father of Jared. 15
After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived for eight hundred and thirty years 16
and he became the father of sons and daughters. •In all, Mahalalel lived for eight 17
hundred and ninety-five years; then he died.

When Jared was a hundred and sixty-two years old he became the father 18
of Enoch. •After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived for eight hundred years and 19
he became the father of sons and daughters. •In all, Jared lived for nine 20
hundred and sixty-two years; then he died.

Si 44:16; 49:14 When Enoch was sixty-five years old he became the father of Methuselah. 21
6:9 17:1 Enoch walked with God. After the birth of Methuselah he lived for three 22
hundred years and he became the father of sons and daughters. •In all, Enoch 23
2 K 2:11 Ws4:10-11 Heb11:5 lived for three hundred and sixty-five years. •Enoch walked with God. Then 24
he vanished because God took him.[c]

When Methuselah was a hundred and eighty-seven years old he became the father of Lamech. •After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived for seven hundred and eighty-two years and he became the father of sons and daughters. In all, Methuselah lived for nine hundred and sixty-nine years; then he died.
When Lamech was a hundred and eighty-two years old he became the father of a son. •He gave him the name Noah because, he said, 'Here is one who will give us, in the midst of our toil and the labouring of our hands, a consolation derived from the ground that Yahweh cursed'.[d] •After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived for five hundred and ninety-five years and became the father of sons and daughters. •In all, Lamech lived for seven hundred and seventy-seven years; then he died.
When Noah was five hundred years old he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

17:1

Ps 104:15

Sons of God and daughters of men[a]

6 When men had begun to be plentiful on the earth, and daughters had been born to them, •the sons of God, looking at the daughters of men, saw they were pleasing, so they married as many as they chose. •Yahweh said, 'My spirit must not for ever be disgraced in man, for he is but flesh; his life shall last no more than a hundred and twenty years'.[b] •The Nephilim were on the earth at that time (and even afterwards) when the sons of God resorted to the daughters of man, and had children by them. These are the heroes of days gone by, the famous men.

Jb 1
Ws 14:6
2 P 2:4
Jude 6
2:7
Jb 34:15
Jn 3:5-6
Rm 8:13

Dt 2:10+
Ba 3:26f

2. THE FLOOD[c]

Ps 29:10

The corruption of mankind

Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that the thoughts in his heart fashioned nothing but wickedness all day long. •Yahweh

↗ Ws 14:6-7
↗ Si 16:7
↗ Mt 24:37fp
↗ 1 P 3:20f
Ps 14:2-3
1 S 15:11,35
Si 17:31
Jr 18:10; 26:3

i. 'the ancestor of all metalworkers' corr. The three classes of nomads: shepherds, travelling musicians, tinkers, are credited with three ancestors whose names are similar and suggest their descendants' occupations: Jabal (*ybl* 'to lead'), Jubal (*yobel* 'trumpet'), Tubal (name of a northern race, Gn 10:2, inhabiting a region famous for its deposits of metal). Cain means 'smith' in other semitic languages.

j. This ferocious song, composed in honour of a desert paladin named Lamech, is recorded here as evidence of the increasing ferocity of Cain's descendants.

k. Fragment of another primitive genealogy.

l. The name of Seth (Hebr. *Sheth*) is here explained by *shath* 'he has granted'.

m. 'This man was the first' Greek and Vulg. The 'Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic' traditions put the revelation of the divine name later, in the Mosaic period, Ex 3:14; 6:2f.

5 a. This 'Priestly' genealogy is connected with ch. 1. Its purpose is to fill in the gap between Creation and Deluge just as Shem's genealogy in 11:10-32 bridges the interval between the Deluge and Abraham. Neither history nor chronology is to be looked for here. The names are the fossilised remains of ancient traditions; many of them are to be found also in the 'Yahwistic' catalogue of Cain's descendants, 4:17f. In the Samaritan Pentateuch and in the Greek version the numerical data differ considerably from those of the Hebrew text. The earliest patriarchs are said to have enjoyed phenomenal length of life because it was believed that the human span progressively diminished as epoch followed epoch; ages not exceeding 200-600 are found between Noah and Abraham and no more than 100-200 for the Hebrew patriarchs. It seems that the idea of this decrease was associated with that of increasing sin, because long life is a blessing from God, Pr 10:27, and is to be one of the privileges of the messianic era, Is 65:20.

b. Likeness to God is therefore a quality of human nature, which the first man passes on to his descendants.

c. Enoch is distinguished from the other patriarchs in several ways: his life is shorter but his years number those of the days in a solar year, he therefore attains a perfect age; he 'walks with God' as Noah did, 6:9; like Elijah, 2 K 2:11f, he vanishes mysteriously, taken up by God. Enoch has a prominent place in subsequent Jewish tradition: he is held up as a model of piety, Si 44:16; 49:14, and certain apocryphal books (one of which is cited in Jude 14-15) bear his name.

d. The v. is a fragment of a 'Yahwistic' tradition inserted in this 'Priestly' context. The root *nhm* does not in fact explain the name *Noah;* perhaps the passage originally referred to some other name like Menahem.

6 a. An obscure passage (from the 'Yahwistic' tradition). The author uses a popular story of a race of giants, in Hebr. *Nephilim*, the Titans of eastern legend, born of the union between gods and mortals. The author does not present this episode as a myth nor, on the other hand, does he deliver judgement on its actual occurrence; he records the anecdote of a race of supermen simply to serve as an example of the increasing human malice that is to provoke the Deluge. Later Judaism and almost all the earliest ecclesiastical writers identify the 'sons of God' with the fallen angels; but from the 4th century onwards, as the idea of angelic natures becomes less material, the Fathers commonly take the 'sons of God' to be Seth's descendants and the 'daughters of men' those of Cain.

b. According to the 'Yahwistic' source this is the maximum henceforth allowed by God; for the 'Priestly' tradition see note to 5:1.

c. This section combines two narratives: one 'Yahwistic' which is vivid and picturesque, 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 7-10 (edited), 12, 16b, 17, 22-23; 8:2b-3a,6-12, 13b,

regretted having made man on the earth, and his heart grieved.[d] •'I will rid 7
Ne 1:7 the earth's face of man, my own creation,' Yahweh said 'and of animals also,
Heb 11:7 reptiles too, and the birds of heaven; for I regret having made them.' •But 8
Lk 17:27 Noah had found favour with Yahweh.

This is the story of Noah: 9

5:22; 17:1 Noah was a good man, a man of integrity among his contemporaries, and
Ws 10:4 he walked with God. •Noah became the father of three sons, Shem, Ham and 10
Si 44:17 Japheth. •The earth grew corrupt in God's sight, and filled with violence. •God 11 12
contemplated the earth: it was corrupt, for corrupt were the ways of all flesh on the earth.

Preparation for the flood

God said to Noah, 'The end has come for all things of flesh; I have decided 13
this, because the earth is full of violence of man's making, and I will efface them from the earth. •Make yourself an ark[e] out of resinous wood. Make it 14
with reeds and line it with pitch inside and out. •This is how to make it: the 15
length of the ark is to be three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. •Make a roof for the ark...[f] put the door of the ark high 16
up in the side, and make a first, second and third deck.

↗2 P 2:5 'For my part I mean to bring a flood, and send the waters over the earth, 17
to destroy all flesh on it, every living creature under heaven; everything on
9:9f earth shall perish. •But I will establish my Covenant[g] with you, and you must 18
go on board the ark, yourself, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives along with you. •From all living creatures, from all flesh, you must take two of each 19
kind aboard the ark, to save their lives with yours; they must be a male and a female. •Of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind 20
of reptile on the ground, two must go with you so that their lives may be saved.[h] For your part provide yourself with eatables of all kinds, and lay in a store 21
of them, to serve as food for yourself and them.' •Noah did this; he did all 22
that God had ordered him.

↗Ws 10:4 7 Yahweh said to Noah, 'Go aboard the ark, you and all your household, 1
↗2 P 2:5 for you alone among this generation do I see as good man in my judgement.
Lv 11+ Of all the clean animals you must take seven of each kind, both male and 2
female; of the unclean animals you must take two, a male and its female •(and 3
of the birds of heaven also, seven of each kind, both male and female), to propagate their kind over the whole earth. •For in seven days' time I mean to 4
make it rain on the earth for forty days and nights, and I will rid the earth of every living thing that I made.' •Noah did all that Yahweh ordered. 5

Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters appeared on the earth. 6

1 P 3:20 Noah with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives boarded the ark to escape 7
the waters of the flood. •(Of the clean animals and the animals that are not 8
clean, of the birds and all that crawls on the ground, •two of each kind boarded 9
the ark with Noah, a male and a female, according to the order God gave Noah.)[a]
2 P 3:6 Seven days later the waters of the flood appeared on the earth. 10

2 K 7:2 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, and on the 11
Is 24:18
Mt 24:38 seventeenth day of that month, that very day all the springs of the great deep broke through, and the sluices of heaven opened.[b] •It rained on the earth for 12
forty days and forty nights.

That very day Noah and his sons Shem, Ham and Japheth boarded the ark, 13
with Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons, •and with them wild beasts 14
of every kind, cattle of every kind, reptiles of every kind that crawls on the earth, birds of every kind, all that flies, everything with wings. •One pair of 15
all that is flesh and has the breath of life boarded the ark with Noah; •and so 16
there went in a male and a female of every creature that is flesh, just as God had ordered him.

And Yahweh closed the door behind Noah.

The flood

17 The flood lasted forty days on the earth. The waters swelled, lifting the ark
18 until it was raised above the earth. •The waters rose and swelled greatly on the
19 earth, and the ark sailed on the waters. •The waters rose more and more on
the earth so that all the highest mountains under the whole of heaven were
20 submerged. •The waters rose fifteen cubits higher, submerging the mountains.
21 And so all things of flesh perished that moved on the earth, birds, cattle, wild
22 beasts, everything that swarms on the earth, and every man. •Everything with
23 the breath of life in its nostrils died, everything on dry land. •Yahweh destroyed
every living thing on the face of the earth, man and animals, reptiles, and the
birds of heaven. He rid the earth of them, so that only Noah was left, and those
24 with him in the ark. •The waters rose on the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

The flood subsides

1 8 But God had Noah in mind, and all the wild beasts and all the cattle that Na 1:7
were with him in the ark. God sent a wind across the earth and the waters
2 subsided. •The springs of the deep and the sluices of heaven were stopped. 2 K 7:2
3 Rain ceased to fall from heaven; •the waters gradually ebbed from the
4 earth. After a hundred and fifty days[a] the waters fell, •and in the seventh month,
on the seventeenth day of that month, the ark came to rest on the mountains
5 of Ararat. •The waters gradually fell until the tenth month when, on the first
day of the tenth month, the mountain peaks appeared.
6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the porthole he had made in the ark
7 and he sent out the raven. This went off, and flew back and forth until the
8 waters dried up from the earth. •Then he sent out the dove, to see whether
9 the waters were receding from the surface of the earth. •The dove, finding
nowhere to perch, returned to him in the ark, for there was water over the whole
surface of the earth; putting out his hand he took hold of it and brought it back
10 into the ark with him. •After waiting seven more days, again he sent out the
11 dove from the ark. •In the evening, the dove came back to him and there it was
with a new olive-branch in its beak. So Noah realised that the waters were
12 receding from the earth. •After waiting seven more days he sent out the dove,
and now it returned to him no more.
13 It was in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, in the first month and
on the first of the month, that the water dried up from the earth. Noah lifted
back the hatch of the ark and looked out. The surface of the ground was dry!
14 In the second month and on the twenty-seventh day of the month the earth
was dry.

20-22; the other 'Priestly' which is more precise and sophisticated but also more prosaic, 6:9-22; 7:6-11, 13-16a,18-21,24; 8:1-2a,3b-5,13a,14-19; 9:1-17. The final editor has left unchanged the two traditional accounts without attempting to smooth out their divergencies of detail. There are several Babylonian stories of the Flood which are in some respects remarkably similar to the biblical narrative. This last does not derive from them but draws upon the same source, namely upon the memory of one or more disastrous floods in the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris which tradition had enlarged to the dimensions of a world-wide catastrophe. But there is this fundamental difference: the author has used this tradition as a vehicle for teaching eternal truths—that God is just and merciful, that man is perverse, that God saves his faithful ones (cf. Heb 11:7). The Flood is a divine judgement which foreshadows that of the latter days, Lk 17:26f; Mt 24: 37f, just as Noah's salvation prefigures the saving waters of baptism, 1 P 3:20-21.

d. This 'regret' of God is a human way of expressing the fact that tolerance of sin is incompatible with his sanctity (1 S 15:29 warns us that the phrase is not to be taken too literally); but in a far greater number of passages it means that God's anger is appeased and his threat withdrawn, see Jr 26:3 +.

e. The English word 'ark' comes from the Latin translation *arca* ('box', 'chest'). 'resinous wood', approximate translation. 'reeds' (like the coracle of Ex 2:3) conj.; Hebr. 'nests' (cabins?).

f. The Hebr. 'and in a cubit you shall finish it (the ark)' yields no satisfactory sense.

g. Not an agreement between equals but God's gracious gua antee offered to his chosen ones. This Covenant is to be followed by others: one with Abraham, Gn 15; 17, another with the whole nation. Ex 19:1 +.

h. Man's wickedness has affected the whole of creation, 6:13, and for better or worse the destiny of irrational creatures is now associated with man's. The thought is close to that of St Paul, Rm 8:19-22.

7 a. An addition that combines both narratives: with the 'Yahwistic' tradition it distinguishes clean from unclean animals, with the 'Priestly' it reckons one pair of each.

b. The waters from above and below burst the barriers God has set, 1:7; chaos has come again. According to the 'Yahwistic' narrative torrential rain was the cause of the Flood, 7:4,12.

8 a. 'After a hundred and fifty days' corr.

They disembark

Then God said to Noah, •'Come out of the ark, you yourself, your wife, 15
your sons, and your sons' wives with you. •As for all the animals with you, 16 17
all things of flesh, whether birds or animals or reptiles that crawl on the earth,
1:22,28 bring them out with you. Let them swarm on the earth; let them be fruitful
and multiply on the earth.' •So Noah went out with his sons, his wife, and his 18
sons' wives. •And all the wild beasts, all the cattle, all the birds and all 19
the reptiles that crawl on the earth went out from the ark, one kind after
another.

Noah built an altar for Yahweh, and choosing from all the clean animals 20
and all the clean birds he offered burnt offerings on the altar. •Yahweh smelt 21
Si 17:31; 44:18 Ph 4:18 the appeasing fragrance[b] and said to himself, 'Never again will I curse the earth
because of man, because his heart contrives evil from his infancy. Never again
will I strike down every living thing as I have done.

'As long as earth lasts, 22
sowing and reaping,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
shall cease no more.'[c]

The new world order

1:28;10:32 9 God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply and 1
Si 17:4 Jm 3:7 fill the earth. •Be the terror and the dread of all the wild beasts and all the 2
birds of heaven, of everything that crawls on the ground and all the fish of the
1:29 Dt 12:15f 1 Tm 4:3 sea; they are handed over to you.[a] •Every living and crawling thing shall provide 3
food for you, no less than the foliage of plants. I give you everything, •with 4
Lv 1:5+ this exception: you must not eat flesh with life, that is to say blood, in it. •I will 5
Nb 35:33 demand an account of your life-blood. I will demand an account from every
Ex 20:13+ beast and from man. I will demand an account of every man's life from his
fellow men.

'He who sheds man's blood, 6
shall have his blood shed by man,
for in the image of God
1:26+ man was made.[b]

'As for you, be fruitful, multiply, teem over the earth and be lord of it.'[c] 7
6:18+ God spoke to Noah and his sons, •'See, I establish my Covenant[d] with you, 8 9
and with your descendants after you; •also with the very living creature to be found 10
with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out
of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. •I establish my Covenant with 11
↗ Si 44:18 ↗ Is 54:9-10 you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood.
There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.'

God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you 12
Ezk 1:28 Rv 4:3 and every living creature with you for all generations: •I set my bow in the 13
Si 43:11-12+ clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. •When 14
I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, •I will 15
recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of
every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy
all things of flesh. •When the bow is in the clouds I shall see it and call to mind 16
Is 24:5 the lasting Covenant between God and every living creature of every kind that
is found on the earth.'

God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the Covenant I have established 17
between myself and every living thing that is found on the earth'.

3. FROM THE FLOOD TO ABRAHAM

Noah and his sons[e]

18 The sons of Noah who went out from the ark were Shem, Ham and 10:6
19 Japheth; Ham is the ancestor of the Canaanites. •These three were Noah's sons, and from these the whole earth was peopled.
20 Noah, a tiller of the soil, was the first to plant the vine. •He drank some Ps104:15
21 of the wine, and while he was drunk he uncovered himself inside his tent. Lm 4:21 Hab2:15
22 Ham, Canaan's ancestor, saw his father's nakedness, and told his two brothers
23 outside. •Shem and Japheth took a cloak and they both put it over their shoulders, and walking backwards, covered their father's nakedness; they kept
24 their faces turned away, and did not see their father's nakedness. •When Noah awoke from his stupor he learned what his youngest son had done to him.
25 And he said:[f]

'Accursed be Canaan. Ws12:11
He shall be his brothers'
meanest slave.'

26 He added:

'Blessed be Yahweh, God of Shem,
let Canaan be his slave!
27 May God extend[g] Japheth,
may he live in the tents of Shem,
and may Canaan be his slave!'

28 After the flood[h] Noah lived three hundred and fifty years. •In all, Noah's
29 life lasted nine hundred and fifty years; then he died.

The peopling of the earth[a] Dt 32:8

1 10 These are the descendants of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, 1Ch1:5-23
to whom sons were born after the flood:
2 Japheth's sons: Gomer, Magog, the Medes, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Tiras. Ezk 38:2

b. An anthropomorphism destined to become part of the technical vocabulary of ritual, cf. Ex 29:18,25; Lv 1:9,13; Nb 28:2, etc.

c. The laws of nature are stabilised again. Aware of man's continuing malice God nevertheless preserves what he himself has made and, in spite of man, will lead it to the goal that he has determined.

9 a. In the beginning man was blessed and was consecrated lord of creation; he is now blessed and consecrated anew, but his rule is tranquil no longer. In this new age man will be at war with the beasts and with his fellows. The peace of Paradise will not return until 'the latter days', Is 11:6 +.

b. The blood of every creature belongs to God, cf. Lv 1:5 +, but man's in particular because man was made to God's likeness. God will avenge human blood, cf. above 4:10, and delegates this office to man himself to be exercised either through the state or, Nb 35:19 +, through the individual 'avenger of blood'.

c. 'be lord of it' correction.

d. The Covenant with Noah, the rainbow its emblem, involves the whole creation; Abraham's covenant, whose sign is to be circumcision, embraces his descendants only, Gn 17; under Moses the Covenant is confined to Israel and brings with it an obligation: fidelity to the Law, Ex 19:5; 24:7-8, and to the sabbath observance in particular, Ex 31:16-17.

e. *The 'Yahwistic' tradition is resumed.*

f. The blessings and curses of the patriarchs, cf. ch. 27 and 49, are operative words addressed to the first ancestor and worked out in his descendants. Canaan's race is to be subject to Shem, ancestor of Abraham and of the Israelites who are to enjoy Yahweh's special protection. It is to be subject also to Japheth whose widely scattered progeny is to find hospitality among the Semites. Many of the Fathers see in this a prophecy of the entrance of the gentiles (Japheth) into the Christian community which first emerged among the Hebrews (Shem).

g. The Hebrew plays on the words *Yapheth* and *yapht* 'may he extend, enlarge'.

h. The 'Priestly' source is now resumed.

10 a. In the form of a genealogical tree this chapter draws up a Table of Peoples; the principle behind the classification is not so much racial affinity as historical and geographical relationship. The sons of Japheth inhabit Asia Minor and the Mediterranean islands, the sons of Ham people the lands of the south, Egypt, Ethiopia and Arabia to which is added Canaan in memory of the time when she was Egypt's satellite. In the regions between these two groups live the sons of Shem: Elamites, Assyrians, Aramaeans and the ancestors of the Hebrews. The genealogical tree is 'Priestly' with the exception of some 'Yahwistic' elements (vv. 8-19, 21, 24-30) which somewhat modify the data. This table sums up such knowledge of the inhabited world as Israel would possess in Solomon's time and asserts the unity of the human race which, from a common stock, has split up into various groups. This dispersal is regarded, 10:32, as the result of the blessing mentioned in 9:1; the 'Yahwistic' story of the Tower of Babel takes a less complacent view, 11:1-9; these are two complementary aspects of the one complex subject, namely of the history of a world in which both the power of God and the malice of men play their part.

Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, Togarmah. •Javan's sons: Elishah, 3 4
Tarshish, the Kittim, the Dananites. •From these came the dispersal to the 5
islands of the nations.[b]

These were Japheth's sons,[c] according to their countries and each of their languages, according to their tribes and their nations.

9:18 Ham's sons: Cush, Misraim, Put, Canaan. •Cush's sons: Seba, Havilah, 6 7
Jdt 2:23 Sabtah, Raamah, Sabteca. Raamah's sons: Sheba, Dedan.
K10:1+ Cush became the father of Nimrod[d] who was the first potentate on earth. 8
Is 21:13 He was a mighty hunter in the eyes of Yahweh, hence the saying, 'Like Nimrod, 9
Ezk27:22 a mighty hunter in the eyes of Yahweh'. •First to be included in his empire 10
were Babel, Erech and Accad,[e] all of them in the land of Shinar.[f] •From this 11
country came Ashur, the builder of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, •and Resen 12
between Nineveh and Calah (this is the great city).

Dn 1:2

Jdt 2:23 Misraim became the father of the people of Lud, of Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, 13
Pathros, Cusluh and Caphtor, from which the Philistines came.[g] 14

Canaan became the father of Sidon, his first-born, then Heth, •and the 15 16
Jebusites, the Amorites, Girgashites, •Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, •Arvadites, 17 18
Zemarites, Hamathites; later the Canaanite tribes scattered. •The Canaanite 19
frontier stretched from Sidon in the direction of Gerar and as far as Gaza, then in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, and as far as Lesha.

These were Ham's sons, according to their tribes and languages, according 20
to their countries and nations.

Shem also was the father of children, the ancestor of all the sons of Eber 21
and the elder brother of Japheth.

Jdt1:1;2:23 Shem's sons: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram. •Aram's sons: Uz, 22 23
Hul, Gether and Mash.

Arpachshad became the father of Shelah, and Shelah became the father 24
of Eber. •To Eber were born two sons: the first was called Peleg, because it was 25
in his time that the earth was divided, and his brother was called Joktan. •Joktan 26
became the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, •Hadoram, 27
Ezk27:19 Uzal, Diklah, •Obal, Abima-el, Sheba, •Ophir, Havilah, Jobab; all these are 28 29
sons of Joktan. •They occupied a stretch of country from Mesha in the direction 30
of Sephar, the eastern mountain range.

These were Shem's sons, according to their tribes and languages, and 31
according to their countries and nations.

These were the tribes of Noah's sons, according to their descendants and their 32
9:1 nations. From these came the dispersal of the nations over the earth, after the flood.

The tower of Babel[a]

↗ Ws10:5 ↗ Ac2:5-12 Col 3:11 ↗ Rv7:9-10

11 Throughout the earth men spoke the same language, with the same voca- 1
bulary. •Now as they moved eastwards they found a plain in the land of 2
Shinar[b] where they settled. •They said to one another, 'Come, let us make 3
bricks and bake them in the fire'. — For stone they used bricks, and for mortar they used bitumen. — •'Come,' they said 'let us build ourselves a town and a 4
Si 40:19 tower with its top reaching heaven. Let us make a name for ourselves, so that we may not be scattered about the whole earth.'

Now Yahweh came down to see the town and the tower that the sons of 5
3:22 man had built. •'So they are all a single people with a single language!' said 6
Yahweh. 'This is but the start of their undertakings! There will be nothing too hard for them to do. •Come, let us go down and confuse their langage 7
on the spot so that they can no longer understand one another.' •Yahweh 8
scattered them thence over the whole face of the earth, and they stopped
Is 14:12f Jr 51:53 building the town. •It was named Babel therefore, because there Yahweh 9
Jn11:52; 10:16 confused[c] the language of the whole earth. It was from there that Yahweh scattered them over the whole face of the earth.

The patriarchs after the flood[d]

10 These are Shem's descendants: 1Ch1:17-27

When Shem was a hundred years old he became the father of Arpachshad,
11 two years after the flood. •After the birth of Arpachshad, Shem lived five hundred years and became the father of sons and daughters.

12 When Arpachshad was thirty-five years old he became the father of Shelah.
13 After the birth of Shelah, Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years and became the father of sons and daughters.

14 When Shelah was thirty years old he became the father of Eber. •After the
15 birth of Eber, Shelah lived four hundred and three years and became the father of sons and daughters.

16 When Eber was thirty-four years old he became the father of Peleg. •After
17 the birth of Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years and became the father of sons and daughters.

18 When Peleg was thirty years old he became the father of Reu. •After the
19 birth of Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years and became the father of sons and daughters.

20 When Reu was thirty-two years old he became the father of Serug. •After
21 the birth of Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years and became the father of sons and daughters.

22 When Serug was thirty years old he became the father of Nahor. •After
23 the birth of Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years and became the father of sons and daughters.

24 When Nahor was twenty-nine years old he became the father of Terah.
25 After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived a hundred and nineteen years and became the father of sons and daughters.

26 When Terah was seventy years old he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

The descendants of Terah[e]

27 These are Terah's descendants:

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. Haran became the Jos 24:2
28 father of Lot. •Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in his native
29 land, Ur of the Chaldaeans. •Abram and Nahor both married: Abram's wife was called Sarai, Nahor's wife was called Milcah, the daughter of Haran, father 22:20-23
30 of Milcah and Iscah. •Sarai was barren, having no child. 16:1; 17: 19-21

31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot the son of Haran, and his Jg 13:3 15:7 Tb 4:12 Jdt 5:8
daughter-in-law the wife of Abram, and made them leave[f] Ur of the Chaldaeans to go to the land of Canaan. But on arrival in Haran they settled there.[g]

32 Terah's life lasted two hundred and five years;[h] then he died at Haran.

b. The islands and seaboard of the Mediterranean.

c. These words, omitted by Hebr., are restored in accordance with vv. 20 and 31.

d. A character of popular story (v. 9 records a proverb) derived from a Mesopotamian mythical hero of uncertain identity.

e. Accad: a town situated near the site of Babylon. The name is here used to indicate the southern region of Lower Mesopotamia as opposed to the land of Sumer which lies further north; more commonly it indicates the language and semitic population of the southern region as distinct from the Sumerians.

f. 'all of them' correction.

g. The text places 'and Caphtorim' after 'Philistines', but in fact the Philistines came from Caphtor, Jos 13:2 +.

11 a. This 'Yahwistic' narrative gives a different explanation of the diversity of peoples and tongues: mankind sinned and this was its punishment; it was a sin of overweening pride (v. 4) like that of our first parents, ch. 3. Unity will be restored only in Christ the saviour, cf. the Pentecostal gift of tongues, Ac 2:5-12, and the gathering of all the nations in heaven, Rv 7:9-10.

b. Babylonia, see 10:10; Is 11:11; Dn 1:2.

c. 'Babel' is here explained by the root *bll* 'to confuse'; the name actually means 'gate of the god'.

d. Vv. 10-27, 31-32 resume the 'Priestly' tradition interrupted after 10:32. The genealogy of ch. 5 is continued. The perspective narrows down to Abraham's direct descendants.

e. The story of the chosen race is about to begin and the genealogical table becomes more detailed with a view to introducing its two parents, Abram and Sarai, whose names were later changed to Abraham and Sarah, 17:5,15; it also introduces Nahor, Rebekah's grandfather, 24:24, and Lot, ancestor of the Moabites and Ammonites, 19:30-38.

f. 'made them leave' ancient versions; 'went with them' Hebr.

g. First stage in the journey to the Promised Land. Ur is in Lower Mesopotamia, Haran lies to the north-west of Mesopotamia.

h. Only 145 according to the Samaritan Pentateuch; this would mean that Abraham left Haran only when his father died (cf. 11:26 and 12:4); cf. Ac 7:4.

II. THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

The call of Abraham[a]

Ws10:5 Ac7:2-3 Heb11:8f

15:1;26:2 Ps 45:10 *Ex 32:10*

22:17;24:1 Nb10:29; 14:12 Ps 21:6

22:18 Nb 24:9 Ps 72:17 Si44:21 Jr 4:2 Zc 8:13 Lk 1:5 Ac3:25 Ga 3:8

12 Yahweh said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your family and your father's 1
house, for the land I will show you. •I will make you a great nation; 2
I will bless you and make your name so famous that it will be used as[b]
a blessing.

'I will bless those who bless you: 3
I will curse those who slight you.
All the tribes of the earth
shall bless themselves by you.'[c]

33:18-20; 35:4 Jos 24:26

So Abram went as Yahweh told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was 4
seventy-five years old when he left Haran. •Abram took his wife Sarai, his 5
nephew Lot, all the possessions they had amassed and the people they had
acquired in Haran. They set off for the land of Canaan, and arrived there.

13:4, 15; 15:1, 18; 17:8;23+; 24:7;26:4; 35:12 Ac 7:5 Rm 4:13 Ga 3:16

Abram passed through the land as far as Shechem's holy place, the Oak 6
of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. •Yahweh appeared 7
to Abram and said, 'It is to your descendants that I will give this land'.[d] So
Abram built there an altar for Yahweh who had appeared to him. •From there 8
he moved on to the mountainous district east of Bethel, where he pitched his
tent, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built an altar to
Yahweh and invoked the name of Yahweh. •Then Abram made his way stage 9
by stage to the Negeb.

Abraham in Egypt[e]

=20; =26:1-11 Ps105:14

When famine came to the land Abram went down into Egypt to stay there 10
for the time, since the land was hard pressed by the famine. •On the threshold 11
of Egypt he said to his wife Sarai, 'Listen! I know you are a beautiful woman.
When the Egyptians see you they will say, "That is his wife", and they will 12
kill me but spare you. •Tell them you are my sister, so that they may treat me 13
well because of you and spare my life out of regard for you.' •When Abram 14
arrived in Egypt the Egyptians did indeed see that the woman was very beautiful.
When Pharaoh's officials saw her they sang her praises to Pharaoh and the 15
woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace. •He treated Abram well because of 16
Jb 1:3 her, and he received flocks, oxen, donkeys, men and women slaves, she-donkeys
and camels. •But Yahweh inflicted severe plagues on Pharaoh and his household 17
because of Abram's wife Sarai. •So Pharaoh summoned Abram and said, 'What 18
is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me she was your wife? •Why 19
did you say, "She is my sister", so that I took her for my wife? Now, here is
your wife. Take her and go!' •Pharaoh committed him to men who escorted 20
him back to the frontier with his wife and all he possessed.

Abraham and Lot separate

Jb 1:3

13 From Egypt Abram returned to the Negeb with his wife and all he 1
possessed, and Lot with him. •Abram was a very rich man, with livestock, 2
silver and gold. •By stages he went from the Negeb to Bethel, where he had first 3
pitched his tent, between Bethel and Ai, •at the place where he had formerly 4
12:8 erected the altar. Here Abram invoked the name of Yahweh.

Lot, who was travelling with Abram, had flocks and cattle of his own, and 5
tents too. •The land was not sufficient to accommodate them both at once, 6
36:7 for they had too many possessions to be able to live together. •Dispute broke 7
34:30 out between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and those of Lot's. (The Cana-
anites and the Perizzites were then living in the land.) •Accordingly Abram 8
said to Lot, 'Let there be no dispute between me and you, nor between

9 my herdsmen and yours, for we are brothers. •Is not the whole land open
before you? Part company with me: if you take the left, I will go right; if you
take the right, I will go left.'
10 Looking round, Lot saw all the Jordan plain,[a] irrigated everywhere—this Ps107:34
was before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of
11 Yahweh or the land of Egypt, as far as Zoar.[b] •So Lot chose all the Jordan
12 plain for himself and moved off eastwards. Thus they parted company: •Abram
settled in the land of Canaan; Lot settled among the towns of the plain, pitching
13 his tents on the outskirts of Sodom. •Now the people of Sodom were vicious
men, great sinners against Yahweh.[c]
14 Yahweh said to Abram after Lot had parted company with him, 'Look 28:13 Jr 3:18
all round from where you are towards the north and the south, towards
15 the east and the west. •All the land within sight I will give to you and your 12:7+;15:1 Mt 5:4
16 descendants for ever. •I will make your descendants like the dust on the ground: Lk 1:55
when men succeed in counting the specks of dust on the ground, then they will Nb23:10
17 be able to count your descendants! •Come, travel through the length and
breadth of the land, for I mean to give it to you.'
18 So Abram went with his tents to settle at the Oak of Mamre, at Hebron, 14:13
and there he built an altar to Yahweh.

The campaign of the four great kings[a]

1 14 It was in the time of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar,
2 Chedor-laomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of the Goiim. •These made
war on Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah,
Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).[b]
3 These latter all banded together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt
4 Sea).[c] •For twelve years they had been under the yoke of Chedor-laomer,
5 but in the thirteenth year[d] they revolted. •In the fourteenth year Chedor-laomer
arrived and the kings who were on his side. They defeated the Rephaim at Dt2:10+
Asteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emim in the plain of Kiriathaim,
6 the Horites in the mountainous district of Seir as far as El-paran, which is on

12 a. Ch. 12-13 are a 'Yahwistic' narrative with some 'Priestly' or editorial additions. As a result of God's call and promise of posterity Abraham cuts off all earthly ties and with his childless wife, 11:30, sets out for an unknown land. It is Abraham's first act of faith; it will be renewed when the promise is repeated, 15:5-6 +, and put to the test when God asks for the surrender of Isaac who was the fruit of that promise, ch. 22 +. To Abraham's unquestioning act of faith the chosen people owes its existence and destiny, Heb. 11: 8-19. Not only Abraham's physical descendants but all who, in virtue of this same faith, become his sons will have their share in that destiny as St Paul shows, Rm 4; Ga 3:7.

b. 'that it will be used as' corr.; 'and may you be' Hebr.

c. The formula is repeated in 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14. Its precise meaning is: 'the nations shall say to each other: May you be blessed as Abrahamw as' (cf. v. 2 and 48:20; Jr 29:22); but Si 44:21, the LXX translation and the N.T. take it to mean 'In you all the nations shall be blessed'.

d. The Holy Land is here made over to Abraham.

e. The purpose of this narrative (the same theme recurs in ch. 20, where Sarah figures again, and in 26:1-11 where the story is told of Rebekah) is to commemorate the beauty of the ancestress of the race, the astuteness of its patriarch, the protection that God afforded them. The story reflects a stage of moral development when a lie was still considered lawful under certain circumstances and when the husband's life meant more than his wife's honour. God was leading man to an appreciation of the moral law but this appreciation was gradual.

13 a. Lit. the 'circle', or district about Jordan. The term indicates the sunken river valley reaching to the south of the Dead Sea; the Dead Sea is conceived as not yet existing at the time to which the story refers, cf. 14:3; 19:24f.

b. At the southern end of the Dead Sea, cf. 19:22.

c. A preparatory hint of 18:20-21; 19:4-11. Lot chooses a life of ease and a region where immorality flourishes; for this he will be heavily punished, ch. 19. But the generosity of Abraham in leaving his nephew the choice is to be rewarded by a renewal of the promise of 12:7.

14 a. This chapter does not belong to any of the three great sources of Genesis. Behind it lies a document of great age which has been touched up so as to give greater prominence to Abraham, extolling his bravery and selflessness and calling attention to his connection with Jerusalem. The episode is not improbable provided we understand the campaign as an expedition to clear the caravan route to the Red Sea and Abraham's part in it as a raid on the rear of a column laden with booty. But the narrative does not help to place Abraham historically because the persons mentioned cannot be identified: Amraphel is not, as is often asserted, the famous king of Babylon, Hammurabi. All we can say is that the narrative finds its most natural setting in the conditions of the 19th century B.C.

b. For Sodom and Gomorrah, see ch. 19; for Admah and Zeboiim, Dt 29:23; Ho 11:8.

c. The author imagines the Dead Sea as not yet in existence, cf. 13:10; or else the Valley of Siddim (the name is not met with elsewhere) occupied only what is now the southern part of the Dead Sea, a depression of relatively recent formation.

d. 'the thirteenth year' versions; 'thirteen years' Hebr.

the edge of the wilderness.[e] •Wheeling round, they came to the Spring of 7
Ex17:8+ Dt 7:1+ Judgement (that is, Kadesh); they conquered all the territory of the Amalekites
and also the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar. •Then the kings of Sodom, 8
Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and took
up battle positions against them in the Valley of Siddim, •against Chedor-laomer 9
king of Elam, Tidal king of the Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch
king of Ellasar: four kings against five! •Now there were many bitumen wells 10
in the Valley of Siddim, and in their flight the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah
fell into them, while the rest took refuge in the mountains. •The conquerors 11
seized all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions,
and made off. •They also took Lot (the nephew of Abram) and his possessions 12
and made off; he was living at Sodom.

A survivor came to tell Abram the Hebrew, who was living at the Oak of the 13
13:18 Amorite Mamre, the brother of Eshcol and Aner; these were allies of Abram.
When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he mustered 14
his supporters, the members of his household from birth, numbering three
hundred and eighteen, and led them in pursuit as far as Dan. •He and his servants 15
fell on them by night and defeated them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north
of Damascus. •He recaptured all the goods, along with his kinsman Lot and 16
his possessions, together with the women and people.

Melchizedek

When Abram came back after the defeat of Chedor-laomer and the kings 17
who had been on his side, the king of Sodom came to meet him in the Valley
Ps 110:4 ↗Heb5-7 of Shaveh (that is, the Valley of the King).[f] •Melchizedek king of Salem[g] 18
brought bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High. •He pronounced 19
this blessing:

'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, 20
and blessed be God Most High for handing over your enemies to you'.

And Abram gave him a tithe of everything.

The king of Sodom said to Abram, 'Give me the people and take the 21
possessions for yourself'. •But Abram replied to the king of Sodom, 'I raise my 22
hand in the presence of Yahweh, God Most High, creator of heaven and earth:
not one thread, not one sandal strap, nothing will I take of what is yours; you 23
shall not say, "I enriched Abram". •For myself, nothing. There is only what 24
my men have eaten, and the share belonging to the men who came with me,
Eshkol, Aner and Mamre; let them take their share.'

=17; 12:2.7; 13:14-17 **The divine promises and Covenant[a]**

Ex 6:8 Dt 1:8 Ps 105:9 15 It happened some time later that the word of Yahweh was spoken to 1
Abram in a vision, 'Have no fear, Abram, I am your shield; your reward
will be very great'.

17:9-10 'My Lord Yahweh,' Abram replied 'what do you intend to give me? I go 2
Ac 7:5 childless...'[b] •Then Abram said, 'See, you have given me no descendants; 3
some man of my household will be my heir'. •And then this word of Yahweh 4
was spoken to him, 'He shall not be your heir; your heir shall be of your own
22:17;28:14 Ex 32:13 Dt 1:10 ↗Heb11:12 *1M 2:52* ↗Rm 4 ↗Ga3:6f ↗Jm2:23 flesh and blood'. •Then taking him outside he said, 'Look up to heaven and 5
count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants' he told him. •Abram 6
put his faith in Yahweh, who counted this as making him justified.[c]

11:31 Lk 1:18 'I am Yahweh' he said to him 'who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldaeans 7
to make you heir to this land.' •'My Lord Yahweh,' Abram replied 'how am I 8
to know that I shall inherit it?' •He said to him, 'Get me a three-year-old heifer, 9
a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon'.
Lv 1:14 He brought him all these, cut them in half and put half on one side and half 10
facing it on the other; but the birds he did not cut in half. •Birds of prey came 11
down on the carcases but Abram drove them off.

12 Now as the sun was setting Abram fell into a deep sleep, and terror[d] seized 1 S 26:12
13 him. •Then Yahweh said to Abram, 'Know this for certain, that your descendants ↗ Ac 7:6-7
will be exiles in a land not their own, where they will be slaves and oppressed
14 for four hundred years. •But I will pass judgement also on the nation that Ex 12:40 Jdt 5:9f
15 enslaves them and after that they will leave, with many possessions. •For your ↗ Ac 13:20 ↗ Ga 3:17
part, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a ripe old
16 age. •In the fourth generation they will come back here, for the wickedness 1 Th 2:16
of the Amorites is not yet ended.'[e]
17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, there appeared a smoking
18 furnace and a firebrand that went between the halves.[f] •That day Yahweh Ne 9:8 Ps 105:11 Si 44:21
made a Covenant with Abram in these terms:

'To your descendants I give this land, 12:7+
from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River,

19 the river Euphrates, •the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, •the Hittites, Nb 24:21+ Dt 7:1+
20 21 the Perizzites, the Rephaim, •the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and
the Jebusites'.

The birth of Ishmael[a] 21:8f

1 16 Abram's wife Sarai had borne him no child, but she had an Egyptian 11:30
2 maidservant named Hagar. •So Sarai said to Abram, 'Listen, now! Since
Yahweh has kept me from having children, go to my slave-girl. Perhaps
I shall get children through her.'[b] Abram agreed to what Sarai had said.
3 Thus after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan for ten years Sarai took Pr 30:23
4 Hagar her Egyptian slave-girl and gave her to Abram as his wife. •He went to
Hagar and she conceived. And once she knew she had conceived, her mistress 1 S 1:6
5 counted for nothing in her eyes. •Then Sarai said to Abram, 'May this insult =21:10-19
to me come home to you! It was I who put my slave-girl into your arms but
now she knows that she has conceived, I count for nothing in her eyes. Let
6 Yahweh judge between me and you.' •Very 'well,' Abram said to Sarai 'your

e. Rephaim, Zuzim (or Zamzumim), Emim, Horites, are ancient races of Transjordania, cf. Dt 2:10 + and 2:12 +; their towns lie at intervals along the highway that goes down towards the Red Sea.

f. Mentioned in 2 S 18:18; according to Josephus it lay within a quarter-mile of Jerusalem.

g. Ps 76:2, the whole subsequent Jewish tradition, and many of the Fathers identify Salem with Jerusalem. Its priest-king Melchizedek (the name is Canaanite, cf. Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem, Jos 10:1) worships the Most High God, El-Elyon, a compound name, each of its two parts being the title of a god in the Phoenician pantheon. Elyon is used in the Bible (especially Psalms) as a divine title. In this passage, v. 22, El-Elyon is identified with the true God of Abraham. Melchizedek makes a brief and mysterious appearance in the narrative; he is king of that Jerusalem where Yahweh will deign to dwell, and a priest of the Most High even before the levitical priesthood was established; moreover, he receives tithes from the Father of the chosen people. Ps 110:4 represents him as a figure of the Messiah who is both king and priest; the application to Christ's priesthood is worked out in Heb 7. Patristic tradition has developed and enriched this allegorical interpretation: in the bread and wine offered to Abraham it sees an image of the Eucharist and even a foreshadowing of the Eucharistic sacrifice—an interpretation that has been received into the Canon of the Mass. Several of the Fathers even held the opinion that Melchizedek was a manifestation of the Son of God in person.

15 a. 'Yahwistic' narrative in which perhaps are embedded the earliest recognisable elements of the 'Elohistic' tradition. Abraham's faith is put to the test: there is delay in the fulfilment of the promises which, however, are now renewed and sealed with a covenant.

b. The original text is irrecoverably corrupt: 'and the son of... (unintelligible word) of my house is Damascus Eliezer'. V. 3 gives the general sense. For the first time Abraham expresses misgiving.

c. The faith of Abraham is an act of trust in a promise which, humanly speaking, could never be realised. God acknowledges that this act is worthy of reward (cf. Dt 24:13; Ps 106:31), accrediting it to Abraham's 'rightcousness', namely to that sum of integrity and humble submission which makes a man pleasing to God. St Paul uses this text to prove that justification depends on faith and not on the works of the Law; but since Abraham's faith was the mainspring of his conduct, St James is able to cite this same text when he wishes to condemn 'dead' faith, i.e. faith without the works that spring from it.

d. Here the text adds 'a great darkness', probably a gloss intended to explain the rare word for 'darkness' in v. 17.

e. Explanation of v. 11: the birds of prey were a bad omen (cf. 40:17f) signifying the miseries of Israel's stay in Egypt; the dispersal of the birds symbolises her deliverance.

f. Ancient ritual of covenant (Jr 34:18): the contracting parties passed between the parts of the slain animal and called down upon themselves the fate of the victim should they violate the agreement. The flame symbolises Yahweh (cf. the burning bush, Ex 3:2; the pillar of fire, Ex 13:21; the smoke of Sinai, Ex 19:18); he alone passes between the parts because his Covenant is a unilateral pact, the initiative is his; cf. 9:9 +.

16 a. 'Yahwistic' narrative with some elements from the 'Priestly' source (vv. 1a,3,15-16).

b. According to Mesopotamian law a barren wife could present one of her female slaves to the husband and acknowledge the issue as her own. The same is to happen in Rachel's case, 30:1-6, and Leah's, 30:9-13.

slave-girl is at your disposal. Treat her as you think fit.' Sarai accordingly treated her so badly that she ran away from her.

48:16 Ex 15:22 J84:8:6:11 Mt 1:20 The angel of Yahweh[c] met her near a spring in the wilderness, the spring 7 that is on the road to Shur. •He said, 'Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have 8 you come from, and where are you going?' 'I am running away from my mistress Sarai' she replied. •The angel of Yahweh said to her, 'Go back to your mistress 9 and submit to her'. •The angel of Yahweh said to her, 'I will make your 10 22:17 descendants too numerous to be counted'. •Then the angel of Yahweh said 11 to her:

'Now you have conceived, and you will bear a son,
and you shall name him Ishmael,
for Yahweh has heard[d] your cries of distress.
Jb 11:12 A wild-ass of a man he will be, 12
25:12-18 against every man, and every man against him,
setting himself to defy all his brothers.'[e]

24:62 Hagar gave a name to Yahweh who had spoken to her: 'You are El Roi', 13 for, she said, 'Surely this is a place where I, in my turn, have seen the one who sees me?'[f] •This is why this well is called the well of Lahai Roi; it is between 14 Kadesh and Bered.

✗Ga4:22 Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave to the son that Hagar bore the 15 name Ishmael. •Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael. 16

9:9+; =15 **The Covenant and circumcision**[a]

Rm 4:19 17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old Yahweh appeared to him and 1 5:22.24; 6:9 28:3 said, 'I am El Shaddai.[b] Bear yourself blameless[c] in my presence, •and 2 Nb 24:4 Rt 1:20 I will make a Covenant between myself and you, and increase your numbers greatly.'

Ps68:14a Ezk 1:24 Abram bowed to the ground and God said this to him, •'Here now is my 3 4 *Si 44:19* covenant with you: you shall become the father of a multitude of nations. •You 5 Nc 9:7 ✗Rm4:17 shall no longer be called Abram; your name shall be Abraham,[d] for I make Ps 45:16 you father of a multitude of nations. •I will make you most fruitful. I will make 6 you into nations, and your issue shall be kings. •I will establish my Covenant 7 between myself and you, and your descendants after you, generation after generation, a Covenant in perpetuity, to be your God and the God of your descendants 12:7+ Ex 6:4 after you. •I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land you are 8 living in, the whole land of Canaan, to own in perpetuity, and I will be your God.'

God said to Abraham, 'You on your part shall maintain my Covenant, 9 Ex 12:44 Si 44:20 Ezk 44:7 Lk 1:59 Jn 7:22 yourself and your descendants after you, generation after generation. •Now this 10 is my Covenant which you are to maintain between myself and you, and your ✗Ac7:8;15:1 ✗Rm4:11-12 Ph 3:5 descendants after you: all your males must be circumcised.[e] •You shall circumcise 11 your foreskin, and this shall be the sign of the Covenant between myself and you. •When they are eight days old all your male children must be circumcised, 12 21:4 Lv12:3+ generation after generation of them, no matter whether they be born within the household or bought from a foreigner not one of your descendants. •They 13 must always be circumcised, both those born within the household and those who have been bought. My Covenant shall be marked on your bodies as a Covenant in perpetuity. •The uncircumcised male, whose foreskin has not 14 been circumcised, such a man shall be cut off from his people: he has violated my Covenant.'

=18:9-15 God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, 15 Ga 4:23 but Sarah.[f] •I will bless her and moreover give you a son by her. I will bless 16 her and nations shall come out of her; kings of peoples shall descend from 18:12; 21:6-9 her.' •Abraham bowed to the ground, and he laughed,[g] thinking to himself, 17 Jn8:56+ Rm 4:19 'Is a child to be born to a man one hundred years old, and will Sarah have a child at the age of ninety?' •Abraham said to God, 'Oh, let Ishmael live in your 18

19 presence ' •But God replied, 'No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son whom you are to name Isaac. With him I will establish my Covenant, a Covenant 11:30 Si 44:22 Heb 11:11
20 in perpetuity, to be his God and the God of his descendants after him. •For Ishmael too I grant you your request: I bless him and I will make him fruitful and greatly increased in numbers. He shall be the father of twelve princes, and I 25:13-16
21 will make him into a great nation. •But my Covenant I will establish with Isaac, 18:14
22 whom Sarah will bear you at this time next year.' •When he had finished speaking to Abraham God went up from him.
23 Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, all those born in his household and all those he had bought, in short all the males among the people of Abraham's household, and circumcised their foreskins that same day, in accordance with
24 God's commands to him. •Abraham was ninety-nine years old when his
25 foreskin was circumcised. •Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when his
26 foreskin was circumcised. • That same day Abraham and his son Ishmael were
27 circumcised; •all the men of his household, both those born in the household and those who had been bought, were circumcised with him.

The apparition at Mamre[a]

Jg 13:3

1 18 Yahweh appeared to him at the Oak of Mamre while he was sitting by
2 the entrance of the tent during the hottest part of the day. •He looked up, and there he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them he ↗ Heb 13:2 ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them, and bowed to the ground.[b]
3 'My lord,' he said 'I beg you, if I find favour with you, kindly do not pass your
4 servant by. •A little water shall be brought; you shall wash your feet and lie
5 down under the tree. •Let me fetch a little bread and you shall refresh yourselves before going further. That is why you have come in your servant's direction.' They replied, 'Do as you say'.
6 Abraham hastened to the tent to find Sarah. 'Hurry,' he said 'knead three
7 bushels of flour and make loaves.' •Then running to the cattle Abraham took

c. In the most ancient texts the angel of Yahweh, 22:11; Ex 3:2; Jg 2:1, etc. or the angel of God, 21:17; 31:11; Ex 14:19, etc., is not a created being distinct from God, Ex 23:20, but God himself in a form visible to men. V. 13 identifies the angel with Yahweh. In other texts the angel of Yahweh is the one who executes God's avenging sentence, see Ex 12:23+.

d. The name *Ishmael* means 'May God hear!' or 'God has heard'.

e. Ishmael's descendants are the desert Arabs who are as intractable and vagrant as the wild ass (Jb 39:5-8).

f. *El Roi* means 'God of Vision'; the text of Hagar's words is certainly corrupt. *Lahai Roi* may mean: the well 'of the Living One who sees me'; to this place Isaac was to come, 24:62; 25:11.

17 a. Another covenant narrative ('Priestly'). The covenant confirms the same promises as in the 'Yahwistic' tradition of ch. 15 but this time it not only lays down religious and moral obligations but also imposes circumcision.

b. An ancient divine name of the patriarchal period, 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25, preserved mainly in the 'Priestly' tradition, cf. Ex 6:3, rarely used outside the Pentateuch (except Job). The usual translation 'Almighty God' is inaccurate; 'Moutain God' is the probable meaning.

c. Lit. 'walk before me and be blameless', (cf. 2 K 20:3 = Is 38:3).

d. For the ancients a name did not merely indicate, rather it made a thing what is was, and a change of name meant a change of destiny, cf. v. 15 and 35:10. *Abram* and *Abraham*, it seems, are in fact just two dialectal forms of the same name whose meaning is 'he is great by reason of his father, he is of noble descent'. In this place, however, *Abraham* is interpreted on the strength of its similarity with *ab hamon*, 'father of a multitude'.

e. Circumcision was originally a rite initiatory to marriage and to the life of the clan, Gn 34:14f; Ex 4:24-26; Lv 19:23. Here it becomes a 'sign' which, like the rainbow of 9:16-17, is to remind God of his Covenant and man of the obligations deriving from his belonging to the chosen people. Nevertheless, the legislative texts allude to this injunction only on two occasions Ex 12:44; Lv 12:3; cf. Jos 5:2-8. It is only at the Exile and after that it receives its full prominence, cf. 1 M 1:63; 2 M 6:10. St Paul explains it as the 'seal of the righteousness of faith', Rm 4:11. On the 'circumcision of the heart', see Jr 4:4+.

f. *Sarah and Sarai* are two forms of the same name, which means 'princess': Sarah is to be the mother of kings, v. 16.

g. Abraham's laughter is to be echoed by Sarah's, 18:12, and Ishmael's, 21:9 (see also 21:6); each is an allusion to the name Isaac, abbreviated form of *Yshq-El* which means 'May God smile, be kind' or 'has smiled, has been kind'. Abraham's laughter is a sign not so much of unbelief as of surprise at the extraordinary announcement; his mention of Ishmael, present heir-apparent to the Promise, is an implicit request for reassurance.

18 a. In its definitive form this 'Yahwistic' narrative recounts an apparition of Yahweh (vv. 1,3,10f,13,22) accompanied by two 'men' who, according to 19:1, are angels. As the variants of the Greek and Sam. prove, the text is frequently uncertain in its choice of singular or plural. It would seem that the primitive tradition spoke only of three 'men' and was content to leave their identify mysterious. In these three, to whom Abraham addressed a single act of homage, many of the Fathers saw a foreshadowing of the doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine that was revealed only in the N.T.

b. Not a religious act of adoration but simply a mark of respect. At first, Abraham sees his guests as mere human beings and welcomes them warmly; their superhuman character is only gradually revealed, vv. 2,9,13,14.

a fine and tender calf and gave it to the servant, who hurried to prepare it. Then taking cream, milk and the calf he had prepared, he laid all before them, 8
and they ate while he remained standing near them under the tree.

=15:2-4; =17:15-21 'Where is your wife Sarah?' they asked him. 'She is in the tent' he replied. 9
↗ Rm 9:9 Then his guest said, 'I shall visit you again next year without fail, and your 10
2 K 4:16 wife will then have a son'. Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind
Lk 1:7 him. •Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well on in years, and Sarah had ceased 11
17:17 to have her monthly periods. •So Sarah laughed[c] to herself, thinking, 'Now 12
1 P 3:6 that I am past the age of child-bearing, and my husband is an old man, is pleasure
to come my way again ' •But Yahweh asked Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh 13
Lk 1:37 and say, "Am I really going to have a child now that I am old?" •Is anything 14
17:21 Mt 19:26 too wonderful for Yahweh? At the same time next year I shall visit you again
and Sarah will have a son.' •'I did not laugh' Sarah said, lying because she 15
was afraid. But he replied, 'Oh yes, you did laugh'.

19:27 Jm 5:16 **Abraham intercedes**

Is 1:9 From there the men set out and arrived within sight of Sodom, with 16
Abraham accompanying them to show them the way. •Now Yahweh had 17
Am 3:7 Jn 15:15 wondered, 'Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am going to do, •seeing that 18
12:3+; 28:14 Abraham will become a great nation with all the nations of the earth blessing
themselves by him? •For I have singled him out to command his sons and his 19
household after him to maintain the way of Yahweh by just and upright living.
In this way Yahweh will carry out for Abraham what he has promised him.'
Is 3:9 Rv 18:5 Then Yahweh said, 'How great an outcry there is against Sodom and Gomorrah! 20
How grievous is their sin! •I propose to go down and see whether or not they 21
4:10 have done all that is alleged in the outcry against them that has come up to me.
I am determined to know.'

The men[d] left there and went to Sodom while Abraham remained standing 22
before Yahweh. •Approaching him he said, 'Are you really going to destroy 23
the just man with the sinner? •Perhaps there are fifty just men in the town. 24
Will you really overwhelm them, will you not spare the place for the fifty just
Jg 11:27 Ws 12:15 men in it?[e] •Do not think of doing such a thing: to kill the just man with the 25
sinner, treating just and sinner alike! Do not think of it! Will the judge of
the whole earth not administer justice?'[f] •Yahweh replied, 'If at Sodom I find 26
fifty just men in the town, I will spare the whole place because of them'.

Si 10:9; 17:32 Abraham replied, 'I am bold indeed to speak like this to my Lord, I who 27
am dust and ashes. •But perhaps the fifty just men lack five: will you destroy 28
the whole city for five?' 'No,' he replied 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five
just men there.' •Again Abraham said to him, 'Perhaps there will only be forty 29
there'. 'I will not do it' he replied 'for the sake of the forty.'

Abraham said, 'I trust my Lord will not be angry, but give me leave to speak: 30
perhaps there will only be thirty there'. 'I will not do it' he replied 'if I find
thirty there.' •He said, 'I am bold indeed to speak like this, but perhaps there 31
will only be twenty there'. 'I will not destroy it' he replied 'for the sake of the
twenty.' •He said, 'I trust my Lord will not be angry if I speak once more: 32
Jr 5:1 Ezk 22:30 perhaps there will only be ten'. 'I will not destroy it' he replied 'for the sake
of the ten.'

When he had finished talking to Abraham Yahweh went away, and Abraham 33
returned home.[g]

Ws 10:6 Ezk 16:50 **The destruction of Sodom[a]**

Si 16:8 Is 1:7,9 Zp 2:9 Lk 17:28 Heb 13:2 19 When the two angels reached Sodom in the evening, Lot was sitting at 1
the gate. As soon as Lot saw them he rose to meet them and bowed to
the ground. •'I beg you, my lords,' he said 'please come down to your servant's 2
house to stay night and wash your feet. Then in the morning you can
continue your journey.' 'No,' they replied 'we can spend the night in the open

3 street.' •But he pressed them so much that they went home with him and
entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking unleavened bread,
and they ate.
4 They had not gone to bed when the house was surrounded by the men of Jg 19:22-24 Is 3:1
the town, the men of Sodom both young and old, all the people without
5 exception. •Calling to Lot they said, 'Where are the men who came to you
tonight? Send them out to us so that we may abuse them.'[b] Lv 20:13
6 Lot came out to them at the door, and having closed the door behind him
7 8 said, 'I beg you, my brothers, do no such wicked thing. •Listen, I have two
daughters who are virgins. I am ready to send them out to you, to treat as it
pleases you.[c] But as for the men, do nothing to them, for they have come under
9 the shadow of my roof.' •But they replied, 'Out of the way! Here is one who
came as a foreigner, and would set himself up as a judge. Now we will treat
you worse than them.' Then they forced Lot back and moved forward to break
10 down the door. •But the men reached out, pulled Lot back into the house,
11 and shut the door. •And they struck the men who were at the door of the house
with blindness, from youngest to oldest, and they never found the doorway. 2 K 6:18 Ws 19:17f
12 The men said to Lot, 'Have you anyone else here? Your sons,[d] your daughters
13 and all your people in the town, take them out of the place. •We are about
to destroy this place, for there is a great outcry against them, and it has reached
14 Yahweh. And Yahweh has sent us to destroy them.' •Lot went to speak to
his future sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters. 'Come,' he said
'leave this place, for Yahweh is about to destroy the town.' But his sons-in-law
thought he was joking.
15 When dawn broke the angels urged Lot, 'Come, take your wife and these
two daughters of yours, or you will be overwhelmed in the punishment of the
16 town'. •And as he hesitated, the men took him by the hand, and his wife and
his two daughters, because of the pity Yahweh felt for him. They led him out
and left him outside the town.
17 As they were leading him out he said, 'Run for your life. Neither look behind Mt 24:15f
you nor stop anywhere on the plain. Make for the hills if you would not be
18 19 overwhelmed.' •'No, I beg you, my lord,' Lot said to them •'your servant has
won your favour and you have shown great kindness to me in saving my life.
But I could not reach the hills before this calamity overtook me, and death
20 with it. •The town over there is near enough to flee to, and is a little one.
21 Let me make for that—is it not little?—and my life will be saved.' •He

c. Allusion to Isaac's name, see 17:17 +. The laughter is not from lack of faith: Sarah does not yet know who her guest is; in v. 15 she guesses, and is frightened.

d. I.e. the two 'men', as opposed to Yahweh who stays with Abraham. We shall be told later, 19:1, that they are angels.

e. A perennial problem: must the good suffer along with, and because of, the wicked? The conviction of collective responsibility was so strong in ancient Israel that the question does not here arise whether the just may be spared individually. God will, in fact, save Lot and his family, 19:15-16; but the principle of individual responsibility is not deduced until Dt 24:16; Jr 31:29-30; Ezk 14:12f & ch. 18, see notes. Abraham, therefore, supposing that all are to share a common destiny, asks that a few just men may win pardon for the many wicked. Yahweh's answers approve the part the saints have to play in saving the world. But Abraham's bid for mercy does not venture below the number ten. According to Jr 5:1 and Ezk 22:30, God would pardon Jerusalem even if only one just man could be found there. Finally, in Is 53 it is the suffering of the one servant that is to save the whole race, but this prophecy was destined to remain unintelligible until it was fulfilled in Christ.

f. Cf. Rm 3:6. It would be unjust to condemn the innocent, however few in comparison with the many sinners.

g. Abraham returns on the following day to see what has happened, 19:27.

19 a. This narrative is connected with ch. 18; 18:16-32 leads up to it. The same atmosphere of mystery surrounds the principal figures; the two 'angels' of 19:1 are the 'men' who parted from Yahweh in 18:22 after the visit of the 'three men', 18:2, but in the rest of the chapter (except in v. 15) they are still called 'men'. At times it is in the plural that they speak or are spoken to, at other times the singular is used because they are representatives of Yahweh who does not appear in person. The moral character and the universal monotheism of Israel's religion are already asserted in this ancient text. The dreadful lesson will often be recalled, see especially Dt 29:22; Is 1:9; 13:19; Jr 49:18; 50:40; Am 4:11; Ws 10:6-7; Mt 10:15; 11:23-24; Lk 17:28f; 2 P 2:6; Jude 7.

b. The unnatural vice that takes its name from this incident was an abomination to the Israelites, Lv 18:22, and was punished with death, Lv 20:13; but it was rife among their neighbours, Lv 20:23. Cf. Jg 19:22f.

c. At that period the honour of a woman was of less account, 12:10f +, than the sacred duty of hospitality.

d. Before 'your sons' the text inserts 'son-in-law', an addition suggested by v. 14.

answered, 'I grant you this favour too, and will not destroy the town you
speak of. •Hurry, escape to it, for I can do nothing until you reach it.' That 22
is why the town is named Zoar.[e]

As the sun rose over the land and Lot entered Zoar, •Yahweh rained on 23 24
Ps 9:6;11: 6;107:34 Ezk 10:2 Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh.[f] •He overthrew these 25
towns and the whole plain, with all the inhabitants of the towns, and everything
Ws 10:7 ↗Lk17:32 that grew there.[g] •But the wife of Lot looked back, and was turned into a 26
pillar of salt.[h]

18:16-33 Rising early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood 27
before Yahweh, •and looking towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and across all 28
Is34:9-10 Rv 9:2; ↗14:10-11 the plain, he saw the smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.

Thus it was that when God destroyed the towns of the plain, he kept 29
Abraham in mind and rescued Lot out of disaster when he overwelmed the
towns where Lot lived.

The origin of the Moabites and the Ammonites[i]

After leaving Zoar Lot settled in the hill country with his two daughters, 30
for he dared not stay at Zoar. He made his home in a cave, himself and his
two daughters.

The elder said to the younger, 'Our father is an old man, and there is not 31
a man in the land to marry us in the way they do the world over. •Come let 32
us ply our father with wine and sleep with him. In this way we shall have
children by our father.' •That night they made their father drunk, and the 33
elder slept with her father though he was unaware of her coming to bed or of
her leaving. •The next day the elder said to the younger, 'Last night I slept 34
with my father. Let us make him drunk again tonight, and you go and sleep
with him. In this way we shall have children by our father.' •They made their 35
father drunk that night too, and the younger went and slept with him, but
he was unaware of her coming to bed or of her leaving. •Both Lot's daughters 36
thus became pregnant by their father. •The elder gave birth to a son whom 37
she named Moab; and he is the ancestor of the Moabites of our own times.
The younger also gave birth to a son whom she named Ben-ammi; and he is 38
the ancestor of the Bene-ammon of our own times.[j]

=12:10-20; =26:1-11 Ps105:14

Abraham at Gerar[a]

20 Abraham left there for the land of the Negeb, and settled between Kadesh 1
and Shur, staying for the time being at Gerar. •Of his wife Sarah, Abraham 2
said, 'She is my sister', and Abimelech the king of Gerar had Sarah brought
Jb 33:15 to him, •But God visited Abimelech in a dream at night. 'You are to die' he 3
told him 'because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married woman.'
Abimelech however had not gone near her; so he said, 'My Lord, would you 4
kill innocent people too? •Did he not tell me himself, "She is my sister", 5
and did not she herself say, "He is my brother"?' I did this with a clear
conscience and clean hands.' •'Yes I know' God replied in the dream 'that 6
you did this with a clear conscience, and it was I who prevented you from
sinning against me. That was why I did not let you touch her. •Now send the 7
man's wife back; for he is a prophet[b] and can intercede on your behalf for
your life. But understand that if you do not send her back, you will most surely
die, and all your people too.'

So Abimelech rose early next morning and summoning all his servants 8
told them the whole story, at which the men were very much afraid. •Then 9
summoning Abraham Abimelech said to him, 'What have you done to us?
What wrong have I done you that you bring so great a sin on me and on my
kingdom? You have treated me as you should not have done.' •And Abimelech 10
asked Abraham, 'What possessed you to do this?' •'Because' Abraham 11
replied 'I thought there would be no fear of God here; and the people would kill

me because of my wife. •Besides, she is indeed my sister, my father's
daughter though not my mother's; and she became my wife. •So when God
made me wander far from my father's home I said to her, "There is a kindness
you can do me: everywhere we go, say of me that I am your brother". '
Abimelech took sheep, cattle, men and women slaves, and presented them
to Abraham, and gave him back his wife Sarah. •And Abimelech said, 'See,
my land lies before you. Settle wherever you please.' •To Sarah he said, 'Look,
I am giving one thousand pieces of silver to your brother. For you this will
be compensation in the eyes of all those with you...'[c] •At Abraham's prayer God
healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave-girls, so that they could have children,[d]
for Yahweh had made all the women of Abimelech's household barren on
account of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

The birth of Isaac[a]

21 Yahweh dealt kindly with Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. •So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time God had promised. •Abraham named the son born to him Isaac, the son to whom Sarah had given birth. •Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. •Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. •Then Sarah said, 'God has given me cause to laugh; all those who hear of it will laugh with me'.[b] •She added:

Ga 4:22 Heb11:11
↗ Ac 7:8
17:12
17:17+

'Who would have told Abraham
that Sarah would nurse children!
Yet I have borne him a child in his old age.'

The dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael[e]

=16 ↗ Jn8:31-37
↗ Ga4:22-31

The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham gave a great banquet on the day Isaac was weaned. •Now Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing[d] with her son Isaac. •'Drive away that slave-girl and her son,' she said to Abraham; 'this slave-girl's son is not to share the inheritance with my son Isaac.' •This greatly distressed Abraham because of his son, •but God said to him, 'Do not distress yourself on account of the boy and your slave-girl. Grant Sarah all she asks of you, for it is through Isaac

Jg 11:2

↗ Rm9:7 ↗ Heb11:18

e. The name Zoar is here related to *misear* 'a trifling thing'. The town lay to the S.E. of the Dead Sea, 13:10; Dt 34:3; Is 15:5; Jr 48:34. In the Roman period another earthquake occurred and the town was flooded; it was rebuilt higher up the shore and inhabited until the Middle Ages.

f. Here a gloss adds 'from heaven'.

g. The text enables us to locate the catastrophe (an earthquake) in the southern part of the Dead Sea. The subsidence of the southern half of the Dead Sea bed is known to be recent as geologists reckon, and the whole district is still geologically unstable. The doomed towns are, besides Sodom and Gomorrah (Am 4:11; Is 1:9,10), Admah and Zeboiim (Gn 14; Dt 29:22; Ho 11:8).

h. A popular explanation of some oddly shaped boulder or column of rock-salt.

i. An appendix; the author is perhaps making use of a Moabite and Ammonite tradition, cf. Nb 20:23 +; these peoples may have prided themselves on having such antecedents, cf. Gn 38. Lot's daughters are, like Tamar, not here regarded as shameless; their ruling motive is to perpetuate the race. But the Law condemned incest, Lv 18:6-18, and so the story here becomes a gibe at Israel's foes.

j. Popular etymologies: *Moab* is here explained from *me-ab* 'from a (my) father'; *Ben-ammi*, 'son of my kinsman', is associated with *Bene-ammon* 'the sons of Ammon'.

20 a. An 'Elohistic' doublet of 12:10-20 (cf. notes) but the narrative is here softened down by several indications of a more mature morality.

b. In the wider sense: one of privileged standing before God and therefore inviolable, Ps 105:15, and a powerful intercessor, cf. Dt 34:10; Nb 11:2; 21:7.

c. The following words resist translation; conjecture 'and you will be clear of this affair'. The gift of money is an act of reparation.

d. Abimelech and his harem had been afflicted with impotence.

21 a. Two parallel streams of tradition run together here: vv. 1,2a,6b,7, continuing 18:15, belong to the 'Yahwistic' tradition; the remainder, continuing 17:19-21, to the 'Priestly' tradition.

b. The same play on Isaac's name, cf. 17:17+, but now the laughter expresses joy.

c. Were this narrative a continuation of ch. 16, we should be forced to conclude, by comparing 16:16 with 21:5, that Ishmael is by now more than fifteen years old; but in fact this passage represents him as a child scarcely older than Isaac. The Jewish interpreters, appreciating the difficulty, corrected the text—hence the variations between Hebr. and versions (we follow the latter here); thus, in our Hebr. text, v. 9, Ishmael 'scoffs' (cf. Ga 4:29); v. 14, he is not carried by his mother; v. 16, it is Hagar who weeps. Evidently the episode is an 'Elohistic' parallel to the 'Yahwistic' tradition of ch. 16.

d. Another allusion to Isaac's name, cf. 17:17 +; the one verb means 'to laugh' and 'to play'.

that your name will be carried on. •But the slave-girl's son I will also make 13
into a nation, for he is your child too.' •Rising early next morning Abraham 14
took some bread and a skin of water and, giving them to Hagar, he put the
child on her shoulder and sent her away.

1K19:3-4 She wandered off into the wilderness of Beersheba. •When the skin of water 15
was finished she abandoned the child under a bush. •Then she went and sat down 16
at a distance, about a bowshot away, saying to herself, 'I cannot see the child
die'. So she sat at a distance; and the child wailed and wept.

16:7+ But God heard the boy wailing, and the angel of God called to Hagar from 17
heaven. 'What is wrong, Hagar?' he asked. 'Do not be afraid, for God has heard[e]
the boy's cry where he lies. •Come, pick up the boy and hold him safe, for I will 18
make him into a great nation.' •Then God opened Hagar's eyes and she saw a 19
well, so she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

God was with the boy. He grew up and made his home in the wilderness, 20
and he became a bowman. •He made his home in the wilderness of Paran, and his 21
mother chose him a wife from the land of Egypt.

=26:15-25 **Abraham and Abimelech at Beersheba**[f]

At that time Abimelech came with Phicol, the commander of his army, to 22
speak to Abraham, 'God is with you in all you are doing. •Swear by God to me 23
here and now that you will not trick me, neither myself nor my descendants nor
any of mine, and that you will show the same kindness to me and the land of which
you are a guest as I have shown to you.' •'Yes,' Abraham replied 'I swear it.' 24

Abraham reproached Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants 25
had seized. •'I do not know who has done this' Abimelech said. 'You yourself 26
have never mentioned it to me and, for myself, I heard nothing of it till today.'
Then Abraham took sheep and cattle and presented them to Abimelech and the 27
two of them made a covenant. •Abraham put seven lambs of the flock on one 28
side. •'Why have you put these seven lambs on one side?' Abimelech asked 29
Abraham. •He replied, 'You must accept these seven lambs from me as evidence 30
that I have dug this well'. •This is why they called that place Beersheba, 31
because there the two of them swore an oath.

After they had made a covenant at Beersheba Abimelech went off with Phicol, 32
the commander of his army, and returned to the land of the Philistines. •Abraham 33
4:26+ Is 40:28 planted a tamarisk at Beersheba and there he invoked Yahweh, the everlasting
God. •Abraham stayed for a long while in the land of the Philistines. 34

Ex 13:11
↗ Ws 10:5
↗ Si 44:20
↗ Heb 11:17f
↗ Jm 2:21-22 **The sacrifice of Isaac**[a]

22 It happened some time later that God put Abraham to the test. 'Abraham, 1
31:11; 46:2 Ex 3:4 1 S 3:4f 2 Ch 3:1 Ac 9:10 Abraham' he called. 'Here I am' he replied. •'Take your son,' God said 2
'your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah.[b] There you
shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you.'

Rising early next morning Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two 3
of his servants and his son Isaac. He chopped wood for the burnt offering and
started on his journey to the place God had pointed out to him. •On the third 4
day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. •Then Abraham said to 5
his servants, 'Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there; we
will worship and come back to you.'

Jn 19:17 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering, loaded it on Isaac, and 6
carried in his own hands the fire and the knife. Then the two of them set out
together. •Isaac spoke to his father Abraham, 'Father' he said. 'Yes, my son' 7
he replied. 'Look,' he said 'here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb
for the burnt offering?' •Abraham answered, 'My son, God himself will provide 8
the lamb for the burnt offering'. Then the two of them went on together.

When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built 9
an altar there, and arranged the wood. Then he bound his son Isaac and put

10 him on the altar on top of the wood. •Abraham stretched out his hand and seized
the knife to kill his son.
11 But the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven. 'Abraham, Abraham'
12 he said. 'I am here' he replied. •'Do not raise your hand against the boy' the
angel said. 'Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not
13 refused me your son, your only son.' •Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram Jn 3:16 Rm 8:32 Heb11:17 1 Jn 4:9
caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as
14 a burnt-offering in place of his son. •Abraham called this place 'Yahweh pro-
vides', and hence the saying today: On the mountain Yahweh provides.[c]
15 16 The angel of Yahweh called Abraham a second time from heaven. •'I swear Ex 32:13
by my own self—it is Yahweh who speaks—because you have done this, because Mi 7:20
17 you have not refused me your son, your only son, •I will shower blessings on you, 12:2;15:5; 16:10;26:4; 27:27;28:14
I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand
on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates[d] of their 24:60 Is 14:12
18 enemies. •All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, 12:3+ Si 44:21 Lk 1:55 Ac 3:25
as a reward for your obedience.'
19 Abraham went back to his servants, and together they set out for Beersheba,
and he settled in Beersheba.

The descendants of Nahor[e]

20 It happened some time later that Abraham received word that Milcah, too, 11:29
21 had now borne sons to his brother Nahor: •Uz his first-born, Buz his brother, Jb 32:1
22 23 Kemuel Aram's father, •Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, Bethuel •(and Bethuel 24:15;25:20; 28:2
was the father of Rebekah). These are the eight children Milcah gave Nahor,
24 Abraham's brother. •He had a concubine named Reumah, and she too had
children: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.

The tomb of the patriarchs[a]

49:30

1 2 23 The length of Sarah's life was a hundred and twenty-seven years. •She died
at Kiriath-arba, or Hebron, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in
to mourn and grieve for her.
3 4 Then leaving his dead, Abraham spoke to the sons of Heth: •'I am a stranger 33:19 2S24:18f
and a settler among you' he said. 'Let me own a burial-plot among you, so that Heb11:9,13
5 I may take my dead wife and bury her.' •The sons of Heth gave Abraham this
6 answer, 'Listen, my lord, you are God's prince amongst us; bury your dead in
the best of our tombs; not one of us would refuse you his tomb and keep
you from burying your dead'.
7 Abraham rose and bowed to the ground before the people of the land, the
8 sons of Heth, •and spoke to them. 'If' he said 'you are willing for me to take
my dead wife and bury her, then listen to me. Intercede for me with Ephron,
9 Zohar's son, to give me the cave he owns at Machpelah, which is on the edge of
his land. Let him make it over to me in your presence at its full price, for me

e. Allusion to Ishmael's name, see 16:11 +.

f. Two traditional explanations of the name Beersheba are here combined: *Beer Sheba* is taken to mean either 'Well of the Oath' or 'Well of the Seven (sheep)'.

22 a. The narrative is commonly credited to the 'Elohistic' stream of tradition but it includes 'Yahwistic' elements: vv. 11,14,15,18 and the name *Moriah* in v. 2. It is the basis of the ritual prescription for the redemption of the first-born of Israel: like all 'first-fruits' these belong to God; they are not, however, to be sacrificed but bought back, 'redeemed', Ex 13:11. Lying behind the story, therefore, is the condemnation of child-sacrifice, see Lv 18:21 +, so often denounced by the prophets. In this incident Abraham's faith reaches its climax—the story's second lesson, more profound than the first. In the sacrifice of Isaac the Fathers saw a prefiguring of the Passion of Jesus, the only-begotten Son.

b. 2 Ch 3:1 identifies Moriah with the hill on which the Jerusalem temple was later built. Subsequent tradition accepted the identification.

c. Translated according to the Greek. The text at the end of the verse is uncertain. Hebr. has 'On the mountain of Yahweh he appears'.

d. I.e. their towns, as the Greek understands; cf. 24:60.

e. List of the Aramaean tribes; these are associated with the twelve 'sons' of Nahor, 11:29; cf. the twelve sons of Ishmael, 25:13, and of Jacob, 29:32-30:24; 35:22f. A different tradition is recorded in 10:23.

23 a. The narrative is attributed to the 'Priestly' source but in all probability it makes use of a document of greater antiquity. Abraham acquires proprietary rights in Canaan: the promise of the Land, 12:7; 13:15; 15:7, is beginning to be fulfilled. The 'sons of Heth' are the Hittites, but see Dt 7:1 +.

to own as a burial-plot.' •Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth, and 10
Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth and
of all the citizens of the town. •'My lord, listen to me' he said. 'I give you the 11
land and I give you the cave on it; I make this gift in the sight of the sons of my
people. Bury your dead.'

Abraham bowed before the people of the land •and he spoke to Ephron 12 13
in the hearing of the people of the land, 'Oh, if it be you. . .[b] But listen to me.
I will pay the price of the land; accept it from me and I will bury my dead there.'
Ephron answered Abraham, •'My lord, listen to me. A property worth four 14 15
hundred shekels of silver, what is a little thing like that between me and you?
Bury your dead.' •Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms, and Abraham weighed 16
out for Ephron the silver he had stipulated in the hearing of the sons of Heth,
namely four hundred shekels of silver, according to the current commercial rate.

Thus Ephron's field at Machpelah opposite Mamre, the field and the cave 17
that was on it, and all the trees that were on it, the whole of its extent in every
direction, passed •into Abraham's possession in the sight of the sons of Heth 18
and of all the citizens of the town. •After this Abraham buried his wife Sarah 19
Jdt 16:23 in the cave of the field of Machpelah opposite Mamre,[c] in the country of
Canaan. •And so the field and the cave that was on it passed from the sons of 20
Heth into Abraham's possession to be owned as a burial-plot.

The marriage of Isaac[a]

12:2-3 **24** By now Abraham was an old man well on in years, and Yahweh had blessed 1
him in every way. •Abraham said to the eldest servant of his house- 2
47:29 hold, the steward of all his property, 'Place your hand under my thigh,[b] •I would 3
Jg 14:3 Tb 4:12 have you swear by Yahweh, God of heaven and God of earth, that you will not
26:35 choose a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom
28:1f I live. •Instead, go to my own land and my own kinsfolk to choose a wife for my 4
son Isaac.' •The servant asked him, 'What if the woman does not want to come 5
with me to this country? Must I take your son back to the country from which
you came?' •Abraham answered, 'On no account take my son back there. 6
Yahweh, God of heaven and God of earth,[c] took me from my father's home, and 7
Ex 6:8 from the land of my kinsfolk, and he swore to me that he would give this country
12:7+ Tb 5:17 Dn 2:18 to my descendants. He will now send his angel ahead of you, so that you may
choose a wife for my son there. •And if the woman does not want to come 8
with you, you will be free from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back
there.' •And the servant placed his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham, 9
and swore to him that he would do it.

The servant took ten of his master's camels and something of the best of all 10
his master owned, and set out for Aram Naharaiim[d] and the town of Nahor.
29:2f Ex 2:16f 1 S 9:11 In the evening, at the time when women go down to draw water, he made the 11
camels kneel outside the town near the well. •And he said, 'Yahweh, God of my 12
master Abraham, be with me today, and show your kindness to my master Abra-
1S14:10f ham. •Here I stand by the spring as the young women from the town come out 13
to draw water. •To one of the girls I will say: Please tilt your pitcher and let me 14
drink. If she answers, "Drink, and I will water your camels too", may she be the
one you have chosen for your servant Isaac; by this I shall know you have
shown your kindness to my master.'

22:23 He had not finished speaking when Rebekah came out. She was the daughter 15
of Bethuel, son of Milcah, wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. She had a pitcher
on her shoulder. •The girl was very beautiful, and a virgin; no man had touched 16
her. She went down to the spring, filled her pitcher and came up again. •Running 17
to meet her, the servant said, 'Please give me a little water to drink from your
pitcher'. •She replied, 'Drink, my lord', and she quickly lowered her pitcher on 18
her arm and gave him a drink. •When she had finished letting him drink, she said, 19
'I will draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough'. •She 20

quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran to the well again to draw
21 water, and drew water for all the camels •while the man watched in silence, Tb 10:13
wondering whether Yahweh had made his journey successful or not.
22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing
half a shekel, and put it through her nostrils,[e] and put on her arms two bracelets
23 weighing ten gold shekels, •and he said, 'Whose daughter are you? Please tell me.
24 Is there room at your father's house for us to spend the night?' •She answered,
25 'I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son whom Milcah bore to Nahor'. •And she
26 went on, 'We have plenty of straw and fodder, and room to lodge'. •Then the
27 man bowed down and worshipped Yahweh •saying, 'Blessed be Yahweh, God
of my master Abraham, for he has not stopped showing kindness and
goodness to my master. Yahweh has guided my steps to the house of my master's
brother.'
28
29 The girl ran to her mother's house to tell what had happened. •Now Rebekah
30 had a brother called Laban, and Laban ran out to the man at the spring. •As soon 27:43
as he had seen the ring and the bracelets his sister was wearing, and had heard
his sister Rebekah saying, 'This is what the man said to me', he went to the man
31 and found him still standing by his camels at the spring. •He said to him, 'Come
in, blessed of Yahweh, why stay out here when I have cleared the house and made
32 room for the camels?' •The man went to the house, and Laban unloaded the
camels. He provided straw and fodder for the camels and water for him and his
companions to wash their feet.
33 They offered him food, but he said, 'I will eat nothing before I have said what Tb 7:11
34 I have to say'. Laban said, 'Speak'. •He said, 'I am the servant of Abraham.
35 Yahweh has overwhelmed my master with blessings, and Abraham is now very Tb 10:10
rich. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, men slaves and women
36 slaves, camels and donkeys. •Sarah, my master's wife, bore him a son in his old
37 age,[f] and he has made over all his property to him. •My master made me take
this oath, "You are not to choose a wife for my son from the daughters of the
38 Canaanites in whose country I live. •Curse you if you do not go to my father's
39 home and to my kinsfolk to choose a wife for my son." •I said to my master:
40 Suppose the woman will not agree to come with me? •and his reply was, "Yah-
weh, in whose presence I have walked, will send his angel to make your journey Tb5:17;10:13
successful; you shall choose a wife for my son from my kinsfolk and from my
41 father's house. •So doing, you will be free from my curse: you will have gone to
42 my family, and if they refuse you, you will be free from my curse." •Arriving
today at the spring I said: Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, show me, I Tb 10:13
43 pray, if you intend to make my journey successful. •Here I stand, by the
spring: when a girl comes out to draw water and I say to her: Please let me drink
44 a little water from your pitcher, •and she replies, "Drink by all means, and I will Tb 6:18
draw water for your camels too", may she be the wife Yahweh has chosen for my
45 master's son: •I was still turning this over in my mind when Rebekah came out,
her pitcher on her shoulder. She came down to the spring and drew water. I said
46 to her: Please give me a drink. •Quickly she lowered her pitcher saying, "Drink,
47 and I will water your camels too". •I asked her: Whose daughter are you?
She replied, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, whom Milcah bore to Nahor". Then

b. The phrase is cut short; understand 'who wish it'.
c. The text adds 'namely Hebron', a gloss.
24 a. In the 'Yahwistic' tradition this narrative brought the story of Abraham to a close. Vv. 1-9 presume that the patriarch is on his deathbed, cf. 47:29-31. The original narrative must have made mention of Abraham's death but this has been removed to make room for the inclusion of 25:1-6. A further change has been made: according to vv. 48 and 27 (amended) Rebekah was the daughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother, and this agrees with 29:5; but according to another tradition she was daughter of Bethuel, 25:20; 28:2,5, son of Nahor, 22:22-23.
b. The same gesture as in 47:29; contact with the genital organs is intended to make the oath inviolable. Tradition identifies the unnamed servant with Eliezer, cf. 15:2.
c. 'and God of earth' Greek, cf v. 3; wanting in Hebr.
d. I.e. 'Aram of the Rivers': Upper Mesopotamia where Haran was, the home of Abraham's kinsfolk, 11:31.
e. 'and put it through her nostrils' added with Sam., cf. v. 47.
f. 'in his old age', Sam., Greek; 'in her old age' Hebr.

I put this ring through her nostrils and these bracelets on her arms. •I bowed down and worshipped Yahweh, and I blessed Yahweh, God of my master Abraham, who had so graciously led me to choose the daughter of my master's brother for his son. •Now tell me whether you are prepared to show kindness and goodness to my master; if not, say so, and I shall know what to do.'

Tb 7:12 Laban and Bethuel replied, 'This is from Yahweh; it is not in our power to say yes or no to you. •Rebekah is there before you. Take her and go; and let her become the wife of your master's son, as Yahweh has decreed.' •On hearing this Abraham's servant prostrated himself on the ground before Yahweh. •He brought out silver and gold ornaments and clothes which he gave to Rebekah; he also gave rich presents to her brother and to her mother.

Tb7:14;8: 20;10:7 They ate and drank, he and his companions, and they spent the night there. Next morning when they were up, he said, 'Let me go back to my master'. •Rebekah's brother and mother replied, 'Let the girl stay with us a few days, perhaps ten; after that she may go'. •But he replied, 'Do not delay me; it is Yahweh who

Tb 10:13 has made my journey successful; let me leave to go back to my master'. •They replied, 'Let us call the girl and find out what she has to say'. •They called Rebekah and asked her, 'Do you want to leave with this man?' 'I do' she replied. Accordingly they let their sister Rebekah go, with her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. •They blessed Rebekah in these words:

'Sister of ours, increase
to thousands and tens of thousands!
22:17+ May your descendants gain possession
of the gates of their enemies!'

Rebekah and her servants stood up, mounted the camels, and followed the man. The servant took Rebekah and departed.

16:13-14 Isaac, who lived in the Negeb, had meanwhile come into the wilderness[g] of the well of Lahai Roi. •Now Isaac went walking[h] in the fields as evening fell, and looking up saw camels approaching. •And Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac. She jumped down from her camel, •and asked the servant, 'Who is that man walking through the fields to meet us?' The servant replied, 'That is my master'; then she took her veil and hid her face. •The servant told Isaac the whole story, and Isaac led Rebekah into his tent[i] and made her his wife; and he loved her. And so Isaac was consoled for the loss of his mother.

1Ch1:32-33 The descendants of Keturah[a]

25 Abraham married another wife whose name was Keturah; •and she bore him Zimram, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.—•Jokshan

Is 21:13 was the father of Sheba and Dedan, and the sons of Dedan were the Asshurites, the Letushim and the Leummim.—•The sons of Midian are Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah. All these are sons of Keturah.

Abraham gave all his possessions to Isaac. •To the sons of his concubines Abraham gave presents, and during his lifetime he sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the east country.

The death of Abraham

47:9 The number of years Abraham lived was a hundred and seventy-five. •Then

Jb 42:17 Abraham breathed his last, dying at a ripe old age, an old man who had lived his full span of years; and he was gathered to his people. •His sons Isaac and

23 Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah opposite Mamre, in the field of Ephron the Hittite, son of Zohar. •This was the field that Abraham had bought from the sons of Heth, and Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there.

24:62 After Abraham's death God blessed his son Isaac, and Isaac lived near the well of Lahai Roi.

The descendants of Ishmael[b] ||1 Ch 1:29-3

12 These are the descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham by Hagar, Sarah's
13 Egyptian maidservant. •These are the names of the sons of Ishmael in the order 17:20; 28:9
of their birth: Ishmael's first born was Nebaioth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Is 60:7
14,15 16 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, •Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. •These 1 Ch 5:18
are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, according to their settlements
and encampments, twelve chiefs of as many tribes.
17 The number of years Ishmael lived was one hundred and thirty-seven. Then
18 he breathed his last, died, and was gathered to his people. •He lived in the terri-
tory stretching from Havilah to Shur, which is to the east of Egypt, on the way 16:12
to Assyria. He set himself to defy his brothers.

III. THE STORY OF ISAAC AND JACOB

The birth of Esau and Jacob[c]

19 This is the story of Isaac son of Abraham. Jos24:4
20 Abraham was the father of Isaac. •Isaac was forty years old when he married 22:23; 24:1+
Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramaean of Paddan-aram, and sister of Tb 4:12
21 Laban the Aramaean. •Isaac prayed to Yahweh on behalf of his wife, for she was
22 barren. Yahweh heard his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. •But the
children struggled with one another inside her, and she said, 'If this is the way
23 of it, why go on living?'[d] So she went to consult Yahweh,[e] •and he said to her:

'There are two nations in your womb,
your issue will be two rival peoples.
One nation shall have the mastery of the other,
and the elder shall serve the younger.'[f] 4:5+; 27:29 Nb 24:18 Ml 1:2-5 ↗ Rm 9:12

24 When the time came for her confinement, there were indeed twins in her womb.
25 The first to be born was red, and as though he were completely wrapped in a hairy 27:11
26 cloak; so they named him Esau. •Then his brother was born, with his hand gras- 27:35 Ho 12:4
ping Esau's heel; so they named him Jacob.[g] Isaac was sixty years old at the time
27 of their birth. •When the boys grew up Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the
open country. Jacob on the other hand was a quiet man, staying at home among 27:6
28 the tents. •Isaac preferred Esau, for he had a taste for wild game; but Rebekah
preferred Jacob.

Esau gives up his birthright 27:35f

29 Once, Jacob had made a soup, and Esau returned from the countryside ex-
30 hausted. •Esau said to Jacob, 'Let me eat the red soup, that red soup there; I
31 am exhausted'—hence the name given to him, Edom.[h] •Jacob said, 'First sell me Dt 21:17

g. 'into the wilderness' Sam., Greek; 'from a walk in the direction of' (?) Hebr.

h. A word found only here; meaning uncertain.

i. Here the text adds 'his mother Sarah', a gloss originally intended for the end of the verse.

25 a. This and the two following sections are supplements to Abraham's story; they come from different sources. The Arabian tribes descend from Keturah, amongst them the Midianites (Midian) cf. Ex 2:15, the Sabaeans (Sheba) cf. 1 K 10:1, the Dedanites (Dedan).

b. Ishmael's descendants, 17:20, are the North Arabian tribes.

c. A narrative which is 'Yahwistic' with the possible exception of small insertions and of the chronological framework, 'Priestly' in origin, vv. 19-21,26b.

d. 'living' Syr.

e. On the methods of 'consulting Yahweh' see Ex 33: 7+ and 1 S 14:41+. Here it can only mean a visit to a holy place where Yahweh manifests his presence.

f. Cf. note on 4:5. The struggle of the children in their mother's womb is an omen of the enmity between the two related peoples: the Edomites, descendants of Esau, and the Israelites who were descended from Jacob. The Edomites, Nb 20:23+, were subjugated by David, 2 S 8:13-14, and did not achieve complete liberation until the reign of Jehoram of Judah in mid-9th century, 2 K 8:20-22.

g. Popular etymologies: Esau is red, *admoni*, his other name being Edom, v. 30; 36:1,8; he is like a mantle of hair, *se'ar*, and is destined to dwell in the land of *Se'ir*, Nb 24:18. According to this passage Jacob, *Ya'aqob*, gets his name from gripping the heel *('aqeb)* of his twin; but in 27:36 and Ho 12:4 the name means that the child has supplanted *('aqab)* his brother. In fact, however, the probable meaning of the name (abbreviated from *Ya'aqob-El*) is 'May Yahweh protect!'

h. Because he had eaten the soup which was of a red-brown colour *(adom)*—another play on words.

your birthright, then'. •Esau said, 'Here I am, at death's door; what use will my 32
Heb 22:16 birthright be to me?' •Then Jacob said, 'First give me your oath'; he gave him his 33
oath and sold his birthright to Jacob. •Then Jacob gave him bread and lentil soup, 34
and after eating and drinking he got up and went. That was all Esau cared for his
birthright.

=12:10-20; =20 **Isaac at Gerar**[a]

Ps 105:14 26 There was a famine in the land—a second one after the famine which took 1
place in the time of Abraham—and Isaac went to Abimelech, the Philistine
12:1 king at Gerar. •Yahweh appeared to him and said, 'Do not go down into Egypt; 2
31:3 stay in the land I shall tell you of. •Remain for the present here in this land, and I 3
Dt 1:8
Ps 105:9
Si 44:22 will be with you and bless you. For it is to you and your descendants that I will give
Heb 11:9 all these lands, and I will fulfil the oath I swore to your father Abraham. •I will 4
12:3+; 12: 7+; 22: 17-18+; 28:14 make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven, and I will give them
all these lands; and all the nations in the world shall bless themselves by your
descendants •in return for Abraham's obedience; for he kept my charge, my 5
commandments, my statutes and my laws.' •So Isaac stayed at Gerar. 6

When the people of the place asked him about his wife he replied, 'She is my 7
sister', for he was afraid to say, 'She is my wife', in case they killed him
on Rebekah's account, for she was beautiful. •When he had been there some time, 8
Abimelech the Philistine king happened to look out of the window and saw Isaac
fondling[b] his wife Rebekah. •Abimelech summoned Isaac and said to him, 'Surely 9
she must be your wife! How could you say she was your sister[a]' Isaac answered
him, 'Because I thought I might be killed on her account'. •Abimelech said, 'What 10
is this you have done to us? One of my subjects might easily have slept with your
wife, and then you would have made us incur guilt.' •Then Abimelech issued this 11
order to all the people: 'Whoever touches this man or his wife shall be put to death'.

Isaac sowed his crops in that land, and that year he reaped a hundredfold. 12
Yahweh blessed him •and the man became rich; he prospered more and more until 13
Jb 1:3 he was very rich indeed. •He had flocks and herds and many servants. The Philis- 14
tines began to envy him.

=21:25-31 **The wells between Gerar and Beersheba**

The Philistines had sealed all the wells dug by his father's servants, filling them 15
with earth. These had existed from the time of his father Abraham. •Abimelech 16
said to Isaac, 'Leave us, for you have become much more powerful than we are'.
So Isaac left; he pitched camp in the Valley of Gerar and there he stayed. •Isaac 17 18
dug again the wells made by the servants[c] of his father Abraham and
sealed by the Philistines after Abraham's death, and he gave them the same
names as his father had given them.

Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found a well of spring-water.[d] •But the 19 20
shepherds of Gerar quarrelled with Isaac's shepherds, saying, 'That water is ours!'
So Isaac named the well Esek, because they had quarrelled with him. •They dug 21
another well, and there was a quarrel about that one too; so he named it Sitnah.
Then he left there, and dug another well, and since there was no quarrel about this 22
one, he named it Rehoboth, saying, 'Now Yahweh has made room for us, so that
we may thrive in the land'.[e]

From here he went up to Beersheba. •Yahweh appeared to him that night and 23 24
said:

46:3 'I am the God of your father Abraham.
Do not be afraid, for I am with you.
I will bless you and make your descendants many in number
on account of my servant Abraham.'

4:26+ There he built an altar and invoked the name of Yahweh. There he pitched his 25
tent, and there Isaac's servants sank a well.

The alliance with Abimelech =21:22-23

26 Abimelech came from Gerar to see him, with his adviser Ahuzzath and the Pr 16:7
27 commander of his army, Phicol. •Isaac said to them, 'Why do you come to me
28 since you hate me, and have made me leave you?' •'It became clear to us that
Yahweh was with you:' they replied 'and so we said, "Let there be a sworn treaty
29 between ourselves and you, and let us make a covenant with you". •Swear not to
do us any harm, since we never molested you but were unfailingly kind to you and
30 let you go away in peace. Now you have Yahweh's blessing.' •He then made them
a feast and they ate and drank.
31 Rising early in the morning, they exchanged oaths. Then Isaac bade them
32 farewell and they went from him in peace. •Now it was on the same day that
Isaac's servants brought him news of the well they had dug. 'We have found
33 water!' they said to him. •So he called the well Sheba,[f] and hence the town is
named Beersheba to this day.

The Hittite wives of Esau 36:1-5

34 When Esau was forty years old he married Judith, the daughter of Beeri the
35 Hittite, and Basemach, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. •These were a bitter 24:3f;28:1f
disappointment to Isaac and Rebekah.

Jacob obtains Isaac's blessing by cunning[a] Jos 24:4

1 27 Isaac had grown old, and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see.
He summoned his elder son Esau, 'My son!' he said to him, and the latter
2 answered, 'I am here'. •Then he said, 'See, I am old and do not know when I may
3 die. •Now take your weapons, your quiver and bow; go out into the country and
4 hunt me some game. •Make me the kind of savoury I like and bring it to me,
so that I may eat, and give you my blessing before I die.'
5 Rebekah happened to be listening while Isaac was talking to his son Esau. So
6 when Esau went into the country to hunt game for his father, •Rebekah 25:28
7 said to her son Jacob, 'I have just heard your father saying to your brother
8 Esau, •"Bring me some game and make a savoury for me. Then I shall eat,
and bless you in the presence of Yahweh before I die." •Now my son, listen to me
9 and do as I tell you. •Go to the flock, and bring me back two good kids, so that I
10 can make the kind of savoury your father likes. •Then you can take it to your
father for him to eat so that he may bless you before he dies.'
11 Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, 'Look, my brother Esau is hairy, while I am 25:25
12 smooth-skinned. •If my father happens to touch me, he will see I am cheating him,
13 and I shall bring down a curse on myself instead of a blessing.' •But his mother
answered him, 'On me be the curse, my son! Just listen to me; go and fetch me the
14 kids.' •So he went to fetch them, and he brought them to his mother, and she
15 made the kind of savoury his father liked. •Rebekah took her elder son Esau's
best clothes, which she had in the house, and dressed her younger son Jacob in
16 them, •covering his arms and the smooth part of his neck with the skins of the
17 kids. •Then she handed the savoury and the bread she had made to her
son Jacob.

26 **a.** Isaac scarcely appears except in his father's story, ch. 21, 22, 24, and in that of his sons, 25:19-28; 27; 28; 1-9; 35:27-29. It is only this chapter (26) that treats of him directly; the narrative, however, is drawn from a tradition (basically 'Yahwistic') parallel to 12:10-20 and ch. 20 (see notes) but displaying a more developed moral sense.

b. Isaac (*Ishaq*) fondles (*mesaheq*) Rebekah; another play on words as in 21:9, cf. 17:17; 18:12f; 21:6.

c. 'dug by the servants' versions.

d. The Book of Genesis speaks of many wells made by the patriarchs who were sheep-owners. It was near 'Jacob's well' at Shechem (which Gn does not mention) that Jesus spoke of the true living water to the Samaritan woman. Jn 4:1 +

e. *Esek* means 'quarrel', *Sitnah* 'accusation', *Rehoboth* 'room, space'.

f. Read *sheba'* (or *shebu'ah*), 'oath', in accordance with Greek and context, in place of Hebr. *shib'ah*, 'seven', cf. 21:22 f.

27 **a.** 'Yahwistic' narrative in praise of Jacob's cunning but in its final form modified by a touch of blame for Rebekah's trick and of sympathy for Esau. The morality is immature but the lie reported here mysteriously serves God's purpose; the free divine choice preferred Jacob to Esau, 25:23; cf. Ml 1:2f; Rm 9:12-13.

He presented himself before his father and said, 'Father'. 'I am here;' was the 18
reply 'who are you, my son?' •Jacob said to his father, 'I am Esau your first-born; 19
I have done as you told me. Please get up and take your place and eat the game I
have brought and then give me your blessing.' •Isaac said to his son, 'How quickly 20
you found it, my son!' 'It was Yahweh your God' he answered 'who put it in my
path.'[b] •Isaac said to Jacob, 'Come here, then, and let me touch you, my son, to 21
know if you are my son Esau or not'. •Jacob came close to his father Isaac, who 22
touched him and said, 'The voice is Jacob's voice but the arms are the arms of
Esau!' •He did not recognise him, for his arms were hairy like his brother Esau's, 23
and so he blessed him. •He said, 'Are you really my son Esau?' And he replied, 24
'I am'. •Isaac said, 'Bring it here that I may eat the game my son has brought, 25
and so may give you my blessing'. He brought it to him and he ate; he offered him
wine, and he drank. •His father Isaac said to him, 'Come closer, and kiss me, my 26
son'. •He went closer and kissed his father, who smelled the smell of his clothes. 27
He blessed him saying:[c]

22:17-18
↗Heb11:20
'Yes, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a fertile field blessed by Yahweh.
May God give you 28
2 S 1:21 dew from heaven,
and the richness of the earth,
abundance of grain and wine!
May nations serve you 29
and peoples bow down before you!
25:23+ Be master of your brothers;
49:8 may the sons of your mother bow down before you!
Nb 24:9 Cursed be he who curses you;
blessed be he who blesses you!'

Heb12:17 As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and just when Jacob was leaving 30
the presence of his father Isaac, his brother Esau returned from hunting. •He too 31
made a savoury and brought it to his father. He said to him, 'Father, get up and
eat the game your son has brought and then give me your blessing!' •His father 32
Isaac asked him, 'Who are you?' 'I am your firstborn son, Esau' he replied. •At 33
this Isaac was seized with a great trembling and said, 'Who was it, then, that went
hunting and brought me game? Unsuspecting[d] I ate before you came; I blessed
him, and blessed he will remain!'[e] •When Esau heard his father's words, he cried 34
25:26,29-34 Jr 9:3 Ho 12:4 out loudly and bitterly to his father, 'Father, bless me too!' •But he replied, 'Your 35
brother came by fraud and took your blessing'. •Esau said, 'Is it because his name 36
Is 43:26 is Jacob, that he has now supplanted me twice? First he took my birthright, and
look, now he has taken my blessing![f] But' he added 'have you not kept a blessing
for me?' •Isaac answered Esau, 'See, I have made him your master; I have given 37
him all his brothers as servants, I have provided him with grain and wine. What
can I do for you, my son?' •Esau said to his father, 'Was that your only blessing, 38
father? Father, give me a blessing too.' Isaac remained silent,[g] and Esau burst into
tears. •Then his father Isaac gave him this answer:[h] 39

Nb24:18
Heb11:20
'Far from the richness of the earth
shall be your dwelling-place,
far from the dew that falls from heaven.
You shall live by your sword, 40
and you shall serve your brother.

But when you win your freedom, you shall shake his yoke from your neck.'[i]

=27:46-28:5 Am 1:11 Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him, and thought 41
thus to himself, 'The time to mourn for my father will soon be here. Then I will
kill my brother Jacob.' •When the words of Esau, her elder son, were repeated to 42
Rebekah, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, 'Look, your brother

43 Esau means to take revenge and kill you. •Now, my son, listen to me; go away ↗Ws10:10
44 and take refuge with my brother Laban in Haran. •Stay with him a while, until 24:29
45 your brother's fury cools, •until your brother's anger against you cools and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send someone to bring you back. Why should I lose you both on the same day?'[j]

Isaac sends Jacob to Laban[k] =27:41-45

46 Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I am tired to death because of the daughters of Heth. Jg 14:3 Tb 4:12
If Jacob marries one of the daughters of Heth like these, one of the women of the 24:3f;26:35
country, what meaning is there left in life for me?'

1 **28** Isaac summoned Jacob and blessed him; and he gave him this order: 'You
2 are not to choose a wife from the Canaanite women. •Away now to 26:35
Paddan-aram, the home of Bethuel, your mother's father, and there choose a wife 22:22
3 for yourself among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. •May El 17:1+; 17:4-5
Shaddai bless you; may he make you fruitful and make you multiply so that you
4 become a group of nations. •May he grant you the blessing of Abraham, and your
descendants after you, so that you may take possession of the land in which you
5 live now, which God gave to Abraham.' •Isaac sent Jacob away, and Jacob went to
Paddan-aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel, the Aramaean, and brother of Jdt 8:26
Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Another marriage of Esau[a]

6 Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to choose
a wife there, and that in blessing him he had given him this order: 'You are not to
7 choose a wife from the Canaanite women', •and that in obedience to his father
8 and mother Jacob had gone to Paddan-aram. •Esau saw from this that the women
9 of Canaan were not held in favour by his father Isaac, •so he went to Ishmael and
chose for wife, in addition to the wives he had, Mahalath, daughter of Abraham's 36:2
son Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. 25:12-13

Jacob's dream[b] ↗Ws10:10

10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. •When he had reached a certain 35:1
11 place he passed the night there, since the sun had set. Taking one of the stones Ho 12:5
12 to be found at that place, he made it his pillow and lay down where he was. •He
had a dream: a ladder was there, standing on the ground with its top reaching
13 to heaven; and there were angels of God going up it and coming down. •And ↗Jn1:51
Yahweh was there, standing over him, saying, 'I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham Dt 1:8 Mi 7:20
your father, and the God of Isaac. I will give to you and your descendants the land
14 on which you are lying. •Your descendants shall be like the specks of dust on the 12:3; 13: 14f;15:5f; 18:18;22: 17f;26:4; 32:14
ground; you shall spread to the west and the east, to the north and the south,
and all the tribes of the earth shall bless themselves by you and your descendants. *12:3+*

b. To bring God into the lie seems blasphemous to us but the oriental mentality would see no wrong in it, being used to ascribe every event to God, ignoring 'secondary causes'.

c. This blessing promises a countryman's prosperity to Jacob the shepherd; like that of Esau, vv. 39-40, it affects not the patriarchs themselves but the peoples sprung from them.

d. 'Unsuspecting' conj.

e. Blessings and curses, once pronounced, were regarded as efficacious and irrevocable.

f. A play on the words *bekorah* (birthright) and *berakah* (blessing).

g. 'Isaac remained silent' Greek.

h. Esau (i.e. his descendants) is to dwell outside the fertile country of Palestine (Vulg. gives the wrong sense here) and to be subjected to Jacob (i.e. to his descendants, 2 S 8:13-14). His brother has all, v. 37, and the only blessing remaining to him is 'to live by his sword', a brigand's life of plunder.

i. This last sentence is in prose and may have been added after the Edomites had regained their independence, 2 K 8:20-22. The translation 'you win your freedom' is uncertain.

j. As one who has shed blood Esau is liable to blood-revenge, Nb 35:19 +.

k. The 'Priestly' tradition's equivalent of 27:41-45.

28 a. Continuation of the 'Priestly' source.

b. This narrative appears to combine the 'Elohistic' (vv. 10-12, 17-18, 20-22) and the 'Yahwistic' (vv. 13-16, 19a) traditions, both of which tend to enhance the prestige of the Bethel sanctuary, 1 K 12:29-30 +. Like Philo, several of the Fathers saw in Jacob's ladder an image of the providential care God exercises on earth through the ministry of the angels. Others saw in it a foreshadowing of the incarnation of the Word who linked heaven with earth. The liturgy makes use of v. 17 in the Office and Mass for the Dedication of a Church.

31:3 Be sure that I am with you; I will keep you safe wherever you go, and bring you 15
back to this land, for I will not desert you before I have done all that I have
promised you.' •Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Truly, Yahweh is in 16
Ex19:12+ this place and I never knew it!' •He was afraid and said, 'How awe-inspiring 17
this place is! This is nothing less than a house of God; this is the gate of heaven!'
31:13 Ex23:24+ Rising early in the morning, Jacob took the stone he had used for his pillow, and 18
35:6;48:3 set it up as a monument, pouring oil over the top of it.[c] •He named the place 19
Jg 1:23 Bethel, but before that the town was called Luz.
Jacob made this vow, 'If God goes with me and keeps me safe on this journey I 20
am making, if he gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, •and if I return home 21
safely to my father, then Yahweh shall be my God. •This stone I have set up as a 22
Am 4:4 monument shall be a house of God, and I will surely pay you a tenth part of all you
give me.'

Ho12:13

Jacob arrives at Laban's home[a]

Ws10:10 29 Moving on, Jacob went to the land of the sons of the East. •He looked and 1 2
24:11f Ex 2:16f there in the fields was a well with three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for
this well was used for watering the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well
was a large one; •so they used to gather all the flocks there, and then roll the stone 3
off the mouth of the well, to water the sheep; then they put the stone back in its
place over the mouth of the well. •Jacob said to the shepherds, 'Brothers, where 4
are you from?' They replied, 'We are from Haran'. •Then he asked them, 'Do you 5
Tb 7:4 know Laban, the son of Nahor?' 'We know him' they replied. •Then he asked 6
them, 'Does all go well with him?' 'Yes,' they replied 'and here comes his daugh-
ter Rachel with the sheep.' •Then he said, 'See, it is still broad daylight; it is not 7
yet time to bring the animals in. Water the sheep and go and take them back to
pasture.' •But they answered, 'We cannot do that until all the flocks are gathered 8
and they roll the stone off the mouth of the well; then we shall water the sheep'.
He was still talking to them, when Rachel came with the sheep belonging to 9
her father, for she was a shepherdess. •As soon as Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter 10
of his uncle Laban, and the sheep of his uncle Laban, he came up and, rolling the
stone off the mouth of the well, he watered the sheep of his uncle Laban. •Jacob 11
kissed Rachel and burst into tears. •He told Rachel he was her father's kinsman 12
and Rebekah's son, and she ran to tell her father. •As soon as he heard her speak 13
of his sister's son Jacob, Laban ran to meet him; and embracing him he kissed
him warmly, and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban every thing that
had happened,[b] •and Laban said to him, 'Truly you are my bone and flesh!' 14
And Jacob stayed with him for a month.

Jacob's two marriages[c]

Tb 4:12 Laban said to Jacob, 'Because you are my kinsman, are you to work for me 15
without payment? Tell me what wages you want.' •Now Laban had two daugh- 16
ters, the elder named Leah, and the younger Rachel. •There was no sparkle in 17
Leah's eyes, but Rachel was shapely and beautiful, •and Jacob had fallen in 18
love with Rachel. So his answer was, 'I will work for you seven years to win
your younger daughter Rachel'. •Laban replied, 'It is better for me to give her to 19
you than to a stranger; stay with me'.
To win Rachel, therefore, Jacob worked seven years, and they seemed to him 20
like a few days because he loved her so much. •Then Jacob said to Laban, 'Give 21
me my wife, for my time is finished, and I should like to go to her'. •Laban gather- 22
Jdt 8:26 ed all the people of the place together, and gave a banquet. •But when night came 23
he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he slept with her.
(Laban gave his slave-girl Zilpah to be his daughter Leah's slave.) •When morn- 24 25
ing came, there was Leah.[a] So Jacob said to Laban, 'What is this you have done
to me? Did I not work for you to win Rachel? Why then have you tricked
me?' •Laban answered, 'It is not the custom in our country to give the younger 26

27 before the elder. •Finish this marriage week[e] and I will give you the other one too[f]
28 in return for your working with me another seven years.' •Jacob did this, and
when the week was over, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.
29 30 (Laban gave his daughter Rachel his slave-girl Bilhah to be her slave.) •So Jacob
slept with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. He worked with Dt 21:15-17
Laban another seven years.

The sons of Jacob[g] 35:23-26

31 Yahweh saw that Leah was neglected,[h] so he opened her womb, while Rachel
32 remained barren. •Leah conceived and gave birth to a son whom she named 49:3
Reuben, 'Because' she said 'Yahweh has seen my misery; now my husband will
33 love me'. •Again she conceived and gave birth to a son, saying, 'Yahweh has heard
that I was neglected, so he has given me this one too'; and she named him Simeon.
34 Again she conceived and gave birth to a son, saying, 'This time my husband will
be united to me, for I have now borne three sons to him'; accordingly, she
35 named him Levi. •Again she conceived and gave birth to a son, saying, 'This
time I will give glory to Yahweh'; accordingly she named him Judah. Then she had
no more children.

1 30 Rachel, seeing that she herself gave Jacob no children, became jealous of Pr 30:16
2 her sister. And she said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or I shall die!' •This
made Jacob angry with Rachel, and he retorted, 'Am I in God's place? It is he who 2 K 5:7
3 has refused you motherhood.' •So she said, 'Here is my slave-girl, Bilhah. Sleep 16:2+
with her so that she may give birth on my knees; through her, then, I too shall Rt 4:16
4 have children!' •So she gave him her slave-girl Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with
5 6 her, •and Bilhah conceived and gave birth to a son by Jacob. •Then Rachel said,
'God has done me justice; yes, he has heard my prayer and given me a son'.
7 Accordingly she named him Dan. •Again Rachel's slave-girl Bilhah conceived
8 and gave birth to a second son by Jacob. •Then Rachel said, 'I have fought God's
fight with my sister, and I have won'; so she named him Naphtali.

9 Now Leah, seeing that she had no more children, took her slave-girl Zilpah
10 and gave her to Jacob as a wife. •So Leah's slave-girl Zilpah gave birth to a son by
11 Jacob. •Then Leah exclaimed, 'What good fortune!' So she named him Gad.
12 13 Leah's slave-girl Zilpah gave birth to a second son by Jacob. •Then Leah said,
'What happiness! Women will call me happy!' So she named him Asher. Lk 1:48

14 Going out when they were harvesting the corn, Reuben found some man-
drakes[a] and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, 'Please give
15 me some of your son's mandrakes'. •But Leah replied, 'Is it not enough to have
taken my husband that you should want to take my son's mandrakes too?' So
Rachel said, 'Very well, he shall sleep with you tonight in return for your son's

c. The stone marks the place of God's presence. It becomes a *beth El*, a 'house of God', and is anointed with oil as a formal act of worship. Practices of this kind were common in the Canaanite cult and in the semitic world in general but were subsequently condemned by Law and Prophets, see Ex 23:24. Even in this passage a more spiritual conception goes with the idea of a divine dwelling on earth: Bethel is the 'gate of heaven', God's true home, cf. 1 K 8:27.

29 a. 'Yahwistic' narrative continuing ch. 28; here Jacob's motive is escape, not marriage (unlike the 'Priestly' section, 27:46-28:5).

b. I.e. what had happened between himself and Esau, ch. 27.

c. Narrative attributed (though on slight evidence) to the 'Elohistic' tradition.

d. The success of Laban's stratagem is explained by the custom, which still exists, of keeping the bride veiled until the wedding night, cf. 24:65.

e. The wedding celebrations lasted for seven days, Jg 14; cf. Tb 8:20; 10:7.

f. Marriage with two sisters was not forbidden before the legislation of Lv 18:18.

g. 'Yahwistic' tradition with 'Elohistic' elements. The section connects the tribes of Israel with the patriarchal line by way of Jacob's twelve sons (Benjamin was to be born in Canaan, 35:16f); these sons will all reappear as eponymous ancestors in Jacob's Blessing, ch. 49. The rivalry between Leah and Rachel is used to explain the proper names; some of these popular etymologies are obscure. *Ra'ah be'onyi* 'he has seen my distress', Reuben; *shama'* 'he has heard', Simeon; *yillaweh* 'he will cling', Levi; *'odeh* 'I shall praise', Judah; *dananni* 'he has done justice to me', Dan; *niphtali* 'I have fought', Naphtali; *gad* 'good luck', Gad; *'osheri* 'my happiness' and *'ishsheruni* 'they will count me happy', Asher; *sakar* 'he has hired' and *sakar* 'wages', Issachar; *yizbeleni* 'he will respect me', Zabulon; *'asaph* 'he has taken away' and *yoseph* 'may he add', Joseph.

h. The text reads 'hated' but in this context the word is milder, referring only to the less favoured position of one of the wives in a polygamous household.

30 a. The Hebrew word for 'mandragora', or 'mandrake' is formed from the same root as 'love'; the ancients accounted it an aphrodisiac. Primitive tradition must have associated this fruit with Joseph's birth.

mandrakes'. •When Jacob came back from the fields that night, Leah went out to 16
meet him, saying, 'You must come to me, for I have hired you at the price of my
son's mandrakes'. So he slept with her that night. •God heard Leah, and she 17
conceived and gave birth to a fifth son by Jacob. •Then Leah said, 'God has paid 18
me my wages for giving my slave-girl to my husband'. So she named him Issachar.
Again Leah conceived and gave birth to a sixth son by Jacob, •saying, 'God has 19 20
given me a fine gift; now my husband will honour me, for I have borne six children
to him'. So she named him Zebulun. •Later she gave birth to a daughter and 21
named her Dinah.

Then God remembered Rachel; he heard her and opened her womb. •She 22 23
conceived and gave birth to a son, saying, 'God has taken away my shame'. •So 24
she named him Joseph, saying, 'May Yahweh give me another son!'

How Jacob becomes rich

Tb 12:1 When Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, 'Release me, and 25
then can go home to my own country. •Give me my wives for whom I have 26
worked for you, and my children, so that I can go. You know very well the work
I have done for you.' •Laban said to him, 'If I have won your friendship. . .[b] I 27
learned from the omens that Yahweh had blessed me on your account. •So name 28
your wages,' he added 'and I will pay you.' •He answered him, 'You know very 29
well how hard I have worked for you, and how your stock has fared in my charge.
The little you had before I came has increased enormously, and Yahweh has 30
blessed you wherever I have been. But when am I to provide for my own House?'
Laban said, 'How much am I to pay you?' And Jacob replied, 'You will not have 31
to pay me anything: if you do for me as I propose, I will be your shepherd once
more and look after your flock.

'Today I will go through all your flock.[c] Take out of it every black animal[d] 32
among the sheep, and every speckled or spotted one among the goats. Such shall
be my wages, •and my honesty will answer for me later: when you come to check 33
my wages, every goat I have that is not speckled or spotted, and every sheep that is
not black shall rank as stolen property in my possession.' •Laban replied, 'Good! 34
Let it be as you say.' •That same day he took out the striped and speckled he- 35
goats and all the spotted and speckled she-goats, every one that had white on it,
and all the black sheep. He handed them over to his sons, •and put three days' 36
journey between himself and Jacob. Jacob took care of the rest of Laban's flock.

Jacob gathered branches in sap, from poplar, almond and plane trees, and 37
peeled them in white strips, laying bare the white on the branches. •He put the 38
branches he had peeled in front of the animals, in the troughs in the channels
where the animals came to drink; and the animals mated when they came to drink.
They mated therefore in front of the branches and so produced striped, spotted 39
and speckled young. •As for the sheep, Jacob put them apart, and he turned the 40
animals towards whatever was striped or black in Laban's flock. Thus he built
up droves of his own which he did not put with Laban's flock. •Moreover, when- 41
ever the sturdy animals mated, Jacob put the branches where the animals could see
them, in the troughs, so that they would mate in front of the branches. •But when 42
the animals were feeble, he did not put them there; thus Laban got the feeble,
Tb 10:10 and Jacob the sturdy, •and he grew extremely rich, and became the owner of 43
large flocks, with men and women slaves, camels and donkeys.

Jdt 8:26

Jacob's flight[a]

Pr 16:7 31 Jacob learned that the sons of Laban were saying, 'Jacob has taken every- 1
thing that belonged to our father; it is at our father's expense that he
has acquired all this wealth'. •Jacob saw from Laban's face that things were 2
32:10 not as they had been. •Yahweh said to Jacob, 'Go back to the land of your 3
26:3;28:15 forefathers and to your kindred; and I will be with you'. •So Jacob had Rachel 4
and Leah called to the fields where his flocks were, •and he said to them, 'I can see 5

from your father's face that am out of favour with him now; but the
6 God of my father has been with me. •You yourselves know that I have worked
7 for your father with all my strength. •Your father has tricked me, ten times
8 changing my wages, yet God has not allowed him to harm me. •Whenever he said,
"The spotted ones shall be your wages", all the animals produced spotted young;
whenever he said, "The striped ones shall be your wages", all the animals produced
9 striped young. •Thus God has taken your father's livestock and given it to me.
10 It happened at the time when the animals were on heat, that in a dream I looked
up and saw that the males covering the females of the flock were striped or spotted
11 or piebald. •In the dream the angel of God called to me, "Jacob!" And I answered: 16:7+;22:1
12 I am here. •He said, "Look up and see: all the males covering the females of the
flock are striped or spotted or piebald, for I have seen all that Laban has done to
13 you. •I am the God of Bethel where you poured oil on a monument, and where 28:18-22
you made a vow to me. Now get ready to leave this country and return to the
land of your birth."

14 In answer Rachel and Leah said to him, 'Have we any share left in the inher-
15 itance of our father's House? •Does he not treat us as foreigners, for he has sold
16 us and gone on to use up all our money?[b] •Surely all the riches God has taken Ws 10:10
from our father belong to us and to our children. So do all that God has told you.'
17 Jacob made ready and put his children and his wives on camels, •and he drove
18 all his livestock before him—with all he had acquired, the livestock belonging
to him which he had acquired in Paddan-aram[c]—to go to his father Isaac in the
19 land of Canaan. •When Laban had gone to shear his flock, Rachel stole the house- 31:34
20 hold idols[d] belonging to her father. •Jacob outwitted Laban the Aramaean by Jg 17:5
21 giving him no inkling of his flight. •He fled with all he had and went away, crossing 1 S 19:13
the River[e] and making for Mount Gilead. 2 K 23:24
Ho 3:4

Laban pursues Jacob[f]

22 Three days later Laban was told that Jacob had fled. •Taking his brothers Jg 18:22
23 with him he pursued him for seven days and overtook him at Mount Gilead. •God Ws 10:12
24 came by night in a dream to Laban the Aramaean and said to him, 'On no account 31:42;46:2
25 say anything whatever[g] to Jacob'. •Laban caught up with Jacob, who had pitched
his tent[h] in the hills; and Laban pitched camp on Mount Gilead.

26 Laban said to Jacob, 'What have you done, tricking me and driving my daugh-
27 ters off like prisoners of war? •Why did you flee in secret, stealing away without
letting me know so that I could send you on your way rejoicing, with songs and
28 the music of tambourines and lyres? •You did not even let me kiss my sons and
29 daughters. You have behaved like a fool. •It is in my power to do you harm, but
the God of your[i] father said to me last night, "On no account say anything what- 31:42
30 ever to Jacob". •Now it may be you really went because you had such a longing
for your father's House, but why did you steal my gods?'

31 Jacob answered Laban, 'I was afraid, thinking you were going to snatch your

b. Lit. 'If I have found favour in your eyes'. The phrase is broken off; 'hear me' or 'stay here' is to be understood.

c. The text of vv. 32-43 is difficult to interpret; it is possibly composite of 'Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic' tradition and further obscured by glosses. The story, which can have taken shape only among a semi-nomadic people, is clearly ancient. In Eastern flocks the sheep are usually white, the goats black. For his wages Jacob asks the abnormal animals (black sheep and white-spotted goats); Laban agrees, shrewdly as he thinks. Jacob's plot is briefly this: 1. He sees to it that when the goats mate, vv. 37-39, they are in sight of white-striped rods; this affects the formation of the embryo. 2. At the same time he makes sure that the sheep are looking at the black goats in the flock, v. 40. 3. For this operation he selects the robust strains, leaving the weaker animals and their offspring to Laban. In this way Jacob takes his 'honourable' revenge.

d. Hebr. here adds 'speckled and spotted and every animal', omitted by Greek.

31 a. 'Elohistic' narrative with some 'Yahwistic' remnants (vv. 1,3,21). It emphasises the fact that Jacob is in the right and enjoys the divine protection; this did not appear from the narrative of ch. 30 which is secular in character.

b. It was considered miserly if a father-in-law did not return to his daughter a part of the sum paid over by the husband at the time of marriage.

c. This insertion is a 'Priestly' addition.

d. In Hebrew *teraphim*, small domestic idols; possession of these could constitute a claim to inheritance.

e. The Euphrates.

f. Like the preceding narrative 'Elohistic' (with the possible exception of some 'Yahwistic' fragments, vv. 27,31,38-40?).

g. Lit. 'neither good nor evil', nothing at all.

h. 'his tent' conj.

i. 'you', 'your': singular, Sam., Greek; plural, Hebr.

daughters from me. •But whoever is found in possession of your gods shall not remain alive. In the presence of our brothers, examine for yourself what I have, and take what is yours.' Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. Laban went into Jacob's tent, and then into Leah's tent and the tent of the two slave-girls, but he found nothing. He came out of Leah's tent and went into
31:19 Rachel's. •Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's
Lv15:19-20 litter, and was sitting on them. Laban went through everything in the tent but found nothing. •Then Rachel said to her father, 'Do not look angry, my lord, because I cannot rise in your presence, for I am as women are from time to time'. Laban searched but did not find the idols.

Then Jacob lost his temper and took Laban to task. And Jacob said to Laban, 'What is my offence, what is my crime, that you have set on me? •You have gone through all my belongings; have you found anything belonging to your House? Produce it here in the presence of my brothers and yours, and let them decide between the two of us. •In all the twenty years I have been with you, your ewes and your she-goats have never miscarried, and I have eaten none of the rams from
Am 3:12 your flock. •As for those mauled by wild beasts, I have never brought them back
Ex 22:12 to you, but have borne the loss myself; you claimed them from me, whether I was robbed by day or robbed by night.[j] •In the daytime the heat has consumed me, and at night the cold has gnawed at me, and sleep has fled from my eyes. •These twenty years I have been in your house; fourteen years I have worked for you for your two daughters, and six years for your flock; and ten times you have changed my wages. •If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, the Kinsman of Isaac,[k] had not been with me, you would have sent me away empty-handed.
31:24,29 But God has seen my weariness and the work done by my hands, and last night he delivered judgement.'

A treaty between Jacob and Laban[l]

Laban gave Jacob this answer, 'These daughters are my daughters and these sons are my sons; these sheep are my sheep, and all that you see belongs to me. But what can I do today about my daughters, and about the sons they have borne? Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I. . .,[m] and let it serve as a witness between us.'

Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a monument. •Jacob said to his kinsmen, 'Collect some stones', and gathering some stones they made a cairn. They had a meal there, on the cairn, and •Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha while
Jos 22:34 Jacob called it Galeed.[n] •Laban said, 'May this cairn be a witness between us today'. That is why he named it Galeed, •and also Mizpah, because he said, 'Let Yahweh act as watchman between us when we are no longer in sight of each other. •If you ill-treat my daughters or marry other women in addition to my daughters, even though no one be with us, remember: God is witness between us.' •Then Laban said to Jacob, 'Here is this cairn I have thrown up between us, and here is the monument. •This cairn is a witness, and the monument bears witness: I must not pass this cairn to attack you, and you must not pass this cairn and this monument to attack me. •May the God of Abraham and the god of Nahor judge between us.'[o] Then Jacob swore by the Kinsman of his father Isaac. •He offered a sacrifice on the mountain and invited his brothers to the meal. They ate the meal, and passed the night on the mountain.
Ws 10:12 32 Laban rose early next morning, and kissing his sons and daughters he blessed them. Then Laban left to return home. •While Jacob was going on his way angels of God met him, •and on seeing them he said, 'This is God's camp', and he named the place Mahanaim.[a]

Jacob prepares for his meeting with Esau[b]

36:6 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the countryside of Edom, •with these instructions, 'Say this to my lord Esau,

"Here is the message of your servant Jacob: I have been staying with Laban till
6 5 now, and have acquired oxen, beasts of burden and flocks, and men and women
slaves. I send news of this to my lord in the hope of winning your approval."
7 6 The messengers returned to Jacob and told him, 'We went to your brother Esau,
and he is already on his way to meet you; there are four hundred men with him'.
8 7 Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people with him, and
9 8 the flocks and cattle, into two companies, •saying, 'If Esau comes to one of the
10 9 companies and attacks it, the other company will be left to escape'. •Jacob said,[c]
'O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Yahweh who said
11 10 to me, "Go back to your country and family, and I will make you prosper", •I am 31:3
unworthy of all the kindness and goodness you have shown your servant. I had
only my staff when I crossed the Jordan here, and now I can form two companies.
12 11 I implore you, save me from my brother's clutches, for I am afraid of him; he may
13 12 come and attack us and the mothers and their children. •Yet it was you who
said, "I will make you prosper, and make your descendants like the sand on 22:16-17+; 28:14
14 13 the seashore, so many that it cannot be counted".' •Then Jacob passed that 1 K 5:9
night there.
15 14 From what he had with him he chose a gift for his brother Esau: •two hundred
16 15 she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, •thirty camels
in milk with their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten don-
17 16 keys. •He put them in the charge of his servants, in separate droves, and he told
his servants, 'Go ahead of me, leaving a space between each drove and the next'.
18 17 He gave the first this order: 'When my brother Esau meets you and asks, "To
whom do you belong? Where are you going? Whose are those animals that you
19 18 are driving?" •you will answer, "To your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to
20 19 my lord Esau. Jacob himself is following." ' •He gave the same order to the second
and the third, and to all who were following the droves, 'That is what you must
21 20 say to Esau when you find him. •You must say, "Yes, your servant Jacob himself
is following".' For he argued, 'I shall conciliate him by sending a gift in advance;
so when I come face to face with him he may perhaps receive me favourably'.
22 21 The gift went ahead of him, but he himself spent that night in the camp.

Jacob wrestles with God[d]

Ex 4:24-26
Ws 10:12
Ho 12:4-6

23 22 That same night he rose, and taking his two wives and his two slave-girls and
24 23 his eleven children he crossed the ford of the Jabbok. •He took them and sent

i. According to Ex 22:12 the shepherd is accounted innocent if he can produce the remains of an animal alleged to have been killed by wild beasts, cf. Am 3:12.

k. A name for God that appears only here and in v. 53; Arabic and Palmyrene Aramaic justify this translation; hitherto the phrase has been rendered 'the fear of Isaac'.

l. Two traditions ('Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic') appear to have been combined here: 1. A formal pact regulating the frontier between Laban and Jacob, i.e. between Aram and Israel, v. 52, together with an explanation of the name Gilead = Galed. 2. A private agreement concerning Laban's daughters, wives of Jacob, v. 50, together with an explanation of the name Mizpah 'watch-post' where a stele (*massebah*) is erected. On the other hand it is possible that we have not here two traditions but simply explanations of each part of the traditional composite name Mizpah of Gilead 'watch-post of Gilead'; the place is known from Jg 11:29 and lies south of the Jabbok in Transjordania. The text has been further obscured by glosses.

m. It is probable that some words of the text have been lost.

n. *Jegar-sahadutha* is the exact Aramaic equivalent of *Gal'ed* 'cairn of witness'.

o. Here the text adds 'the god of their fathers', a gloss absent from the Greek and from some Hebr. MSS. In ancient times the gods of each contracting party were invoked as witnesses to a treaty.

32 a. *Mahaneh* 'camp' explains the name *Mahanaim*.

b. Jacob, having reached Esau's territory, takes the usual precautions of a caravan approaching hostile country. These precautions are described in two ways, one following the 'Yahwistic' tradition, vv. 4-14a, the other the 'Elohistic', vv. 14b-22. Both traditions agree on Jacob's meek demeanour before Esau, in accordance with 27:41-45 and with what has been said of the two brothers' characters in 25:27 and 27:40.

c. This prayer strikes a religious note surprising in this purely factual context; moreover, it alludes to the Jordan (instead of the Jabbok, v. 23). it is a later elaboration.

d. This enigmatic story, probably 'Yahwistic', speaks of a physical struggle, a wrestling with God from which Jacob seems to emerge victor. Jacob recognises the supernatural character of his adversary and extorts a blessing from him. The text, however, avoids using the name of Yahweh and the unknown antagonist will not give his name. The author has made use of an old story as a means of explaining the name 'Peniel' ('face of God') and the origin of the name 'Israel'. At the same time he gives the story a religious significance: the patriarch holds fast to God and forces from him a blessing; henceforth all who bear Israel's name will have a claim on God. It is not surprising that this dramatic scene later served as an image of the spiritual combat and of the value of persevering prayer (St Jerome, Origen).

them across the stream and sent all his possessions over too. •And Jacob was 25 24
left alone.

And there was one[e] that wrestled with him until daybreak •who, seeing that he 26 25
could not master him, struck him in the socket of his hip, and Jacob's hip was
dislocated as he wrestled with him. •He said, 'Let me go, for day is breaking'. 27 26
But Jacob answered, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me'. •He then asked, 28 27
35:10 'What is your name?' 'Jacob', he replied. •He said, 'Your name shall no longer 29 28
1K18:31 2K17:34 be Jacob, but Israel, because you have been strong[f] against God, you shall
prevail against men'.[g] •Jacob then made this request, 'I beg you, tell me 30 29
Jg 13:17f your name', but he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' And he blessed him
Ex33:20+ there.

Jacob named the place Peniel, 'Because I have seen God face to face,' he said 31 30
'and I have survived'.[h] •The sun rose as he left Peniel, limping because of his 32 31
hip. •That is the reason why to this day the Israelites do not eat the sciatic nerve 33 32
which is in the socket of the hip;[i] because he had struck Jacob in the socket of the
hip on the sciatic nerve.

The meeting with Esau[a]

Ws 10:12 33 Looking up Jacob saw Esau arriving with four hundred men. Accordingly 1
he divided the children between Leah, Rachel and the two slave-girls. •He 2
put the slave-girls and their children in front, with Leah and her children follow-
ing, and Rachel and Joseph behind. •He himself went ahead of them and bowed 3
Tb7:6;11:9 to the ground seven times before going up to his brother. •But Esau ran to meet 4
him, took him in his arms and held him close and wept.[b] •Then looking up he 5
saw the women and children. 'Who are these with you?' he asked. Jacob answered,
'The children whom God has bestowed on your servant'. •The slave-girls then 6
came up with their children, and they all bowed low. •Leah also came up along 7
with her children, and they all bowed low. Finally Rachel and Joseph came up
and bowed low.

Esau asked, 'What was the meaning of all the company that I have met?'[c] 8
'It is to win my lord's favour' he replied. •'Brother, I have plenty,' Esau answered 9
'keep what is yours.' •Jacob protested,' Please, if I have found favour with you, 10
accept the gift I offer. To speak truly, I came into your presence as into the
presence of God,[d] but you have received me kindly. •So accept the gift I have 11
brought for you; since God has been generous to me, I have all I need.' And he
urged him, and Esau accepted.

Jacob leaves Esau[e]

Esau said, 'Let us break camp and move off; I will lead you'. •But Jacob 12 13
replied, 'My lord is aware that the children are weak, and that I must consider
the sheep and the cows that have calved. If they are driven too hard, even for one
day, the whole drove will die. •May it please my lord to go on ahead of his servant. 14
For my part, I will move at a slower pace, to suit the flock I am driving and the
children, until I join my lord in Seir.' •Then Esau said, 'But I must at least 15
leave you some of the people accompanying me'. 'Why?' Jacob asked 'All I
desire is to win your favour.' •So that day Esau resumed his journey to 16
Seir. •But Jacob left for Succoth, where he built himself a house and 17
made shelters for his livestock; that is why the place was given the name
of Succoth.[f]

Jacob arrives at Shechem

12:6 Jn 4:6 Jacob arrived safely at the town of Shechem in Canaanite territory, on his 18
return from Paddan-aram. He encamped opposite the town •and for one hundred 19
23 Jos24:32 pieces of silver he bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, the
Jg 6:24 piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. •Here he erected an altar which he 20
called, 'El, God of Israel'.

The rape of Dinah[a]

Jg 9:28
Jdt 9:2

34 Dinah, who was Jacob's daughter by Leah, went out to visit the women of that region. •Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite,[b] who was ruler of that region, saw her, carried her off and raped her, and so dishonoured her. •But he was captivated by Dinah, the daughter of Jacob; he fell in love with the young girl and comforted her. •Accordingly Shechem said to his father Hamor, 'Get me Jg 14:2 this young girl, I want to marry her'. •Meanwhile, Jacob had heard how his daughter Dinah had been dishonoured, but since his sons were out in the countryside with his livestock, Jacob said nothing until they came back.

A matrimonial alliance with the Shechemites

Hamor the father of Shechem went out to talk to Jacob. •When Jacob's sons returned from the countryside and heard the news, these men were outraged and 2 S 13:12 infuriated that Shechem had insulted Israel by raping Jacob's daughter—an offence that could not be overlooked. •Hamor said to them, 'The heart of my son Shechem is set on your daughter; I beg you, let him marry her. •Ally yourselves with us by marriage; give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves. Stay with us and the land shall be open to you to live in or move through or own.' Shechem said to the father and brothers of the young girl, 'If only I can win your favour, I will give you whatever you ask. •Demand from me a huge bridal price and gifts; I will give you as much as you ask. Only let me marry the young girl.'

Then came the answer Jacob's sons gave to Shechem and his father Hamor, a crafty answer because he had dishonoured their sister Dinah. •'We cannot do such a thing' they said to them. 'To give our sister to an uncircumcised man would be a disgrace for us. •We can agree only on one condition: that you become like us by circumcising all your males. •Then we will give you our daughters, taking 17:10+ yours for ourselves; and we will stay with you to make one nation. •But if you do not listen to us on this matter of circumcision we shall take our daughter and go.' •Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son, were pleased with what they heard. •The young man did not hesitate about doing this, for he was deeply in love with Jacob's daughter. Moreover he was the most important person in his father's household.

Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their town and spoke to their fellow townsmen saying, •'These men are friendly; let them stay with us in the land, and move about as freely as they like. Let us marry their daughters and give our daughters to them. •But these men will agree to stay with us and become a single nation only on this condition: all males must be circumcised as they are. •Will not their livestock, their goods and all their cattle belong to us, if only we agree to let them stay with us?' •All the citizens of the town agreed to the proposal made by Hamor and his son Shechem, and so all the males were circumcised.

e. Lit. 'a man'.

f. The meaning given by the versions to the verb *sarah* which is found only here and in Ho 12:5. The probable meaning of 'Israel' is 'May God show his strength!', but it is here explained: 'He has been strong against God', a popular etymology.

g. 'you shall prevail' Greek, cf. Vulg.

h. To look upon God is death to man; if he survives, it is by special privilege, see Ex 33:20 +.

i. There is no mention of this ancient food-law elsewhere in the Bible.

33 a. Narrative, for the most part 'Yahwistic', continuing that of 32:4-14a.

b. 'and wept' conj.

c. Not the groups of 32:14b-22 ('Elohistic' tradition) but the first cavalcade of 32:8; Jacob had despaired of it, 32:9, and is now only too glad to offer it as a gift.

d. Another allusion to the name 'Peniel', 'face of God', 32:31.

e. Jacob mistrusts Esau and, letting him go on ahead, takes another direction himself. 'Yahwistic' tradition.

f. The name means a shelter made of branches.

34 a. This chapter combines a domestic and a clan anecdote. In the first, Shechem seduces Dinah and then asks her in marriage; he accepts the required circumcision but is treacherously slain by Simeon and Levi. In the second, Hamor, father of Shechem, proposes a general matrimonial alliance with the sons of Jacob; this is agreed to on condition that the sons of Hamor are circumcised; the agreement is broken by the sons of Jacob who sack the town and slaughter its inhabitants. The anecdotes are attributed respectively to the 'Elohistic' and 'Yahwistic' sources.

b. One of the ancient races of Canaan, 10:17; probably, however, we should read with the Greek 'Horite', one of an enclave of non-semitic, uncircumcised, groups from the north, Dt 2:12 +.

49:6 **The treacherous revenge of Simeon and Levi**

Now on the third day, when they were still in pain, Jacob's two sons Simeon 25
and Levi, brothers of Dinah, took their swords and marched into the town
unsuspected; they killed all the males. •They put Hamor and his son Shechem to 26
the sword, took Dinah from Shechem's house and came away. •Jacob's sons 27
attacked the wounded and pillaged the town because their sister had been dis-
honoured. •They took away their flocks, cattle, donkeys and whatever there 28
was in the town and in the countryside. •They carried off all their riches, all 29
their little children and their wives, and looted everything to be found in their
houses.

Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, 'You have done me harm, putting me in 30
13:7;35:5 bad odour with the people of this land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. I have
few men, whereas they will unite against me to defeat me and destroy me and my
family.' •They retorted, 'Is our sister to be treated like a whore?' 31

Jacob at Bethel[a]

35 God said to Jacob, 'Move on now and go to Bethel and settle there. Make 1
28:10-22 an altar there for the God who appeared to you when you were fleeing from
your brother Esau.'

Jacob said to his family and to all who were with him, 'Get rid of the foreign 2
gods you have with you;[b] wash, and change your clothes.[c] •We must move on and 3
go to Bethel. There I will make an altar for the God who heard me when I was
in distress, and gave me his help on the journey I made.' •They gave Jacob all the 4
Jos 24:26 foreign gods in their possession, and the earrings that they were wearing. Jacob
12:6 buried them under the oak tree near Shechem. •They broke camp; a divine 5
34:30
1 S 11:7 terror struck the towns round about, and no one pursued the sons of Jacob.

28:19;48:3 When Jacob arrived at Luz in the land of Canaan—Bethel, in other words— 6
and all the people with him, •he built an altar there, giving the place the name 7
Bethel,[d] because it was there that God had appeared[e] to him when he was fleeing
from his brother. •Deborah, who had been Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried 8
below Bethel, under the oak tree; so they named it the Oak of Tears.

Once more God appeared to Jacob on his return from Paddan-aram, and 9
32:29 blessed him. •God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob, but from now on you shall 10
be named not Jacob but Israel'. Accordingly they named him Israel.

17:1+ God said to him, 'I am El Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation, indeed 11
Ps 45:16 Ex 32:13 a group of nations shall descend from you. Even kings shall be numbered among
12:7+ Heb 11:9 your descendants. •I give you this land, the land I gave to Abraham and to Isaac; 12
and I will give this land to your descendants after you.' •Then God went up from 13
him.

Jacob raised a monument in the place where he had spoken with him, a stone 14
monument, on which he made a libation and poured oil. •Jacob named the place 15
Bethel where God had spoken with him.

The birth of Benjamin and the death of Rachel

48:7 They left Bethel, and while they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel 16
1 S 4:20 began to be in labour, and her pains were severe. •But in her difficult delivery 17
the midwife said to her, 'Do not be afraid; you have another son here'. •At 18
1 Ch 4:9 the moment when she breathed her last, for she was dying, she named him Ben-oni.
Rt 4:11 His father however named him Benjamin.[f] •So Rachel died and was buried on the 19
Mi 5:17 road to Ephrath, at Bethlehem. •Jacob raised a monument on her grave, and this 20
is the monument of the tomb of Rachel which is still there today.

49:3-4 **Reuben's incest**

Israel left and pitched his tent beyond Migdal-eder. •While Israel was living 21 22
1 Ch 5:1 in that district, Reuben went and slept with Bilhah his father's concubine, and
Israel learned of it.

The twelve sons of Jacob[g] 29:31–30:24

23 Jacob's sons numbered twelve. •The sons of Leah: Jacob's eldest son Reuben, Rt 4:11
24 then Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun. •The sons of Rachel: Joseph 1 Ch 2:1
25 and Benjamin. •The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's slave-girl: Dan and Naphtali. •The
26 sons of Zilpah, Leah's slave-girl: Gad and Asher. These are the sons born to Jacob in Paddan-aram.

Isaac's death[h]

27 Jacob reached the house of his father Isaac at Mamre, at Kiriath-arba—or
28 Hebron—where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. •Isaac was one hundred and 47:9
29 eighty years old •when he breathed his last. He died and was gathered to his people, an old man who had enjoyed his full span of life. His sons Esau and Jacob Jb 42:17 buried him.

Esau's wives and children in Canaan[a]

1 2 36 Here are the descendants of Esau, who is Edom. •Esau married women of Jos 24:4
Canaan: Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, the daughter 26:34; 28:9
3 of Anah, who was the son of Zibeon the Horite, •Basemath, the daughter of
4 Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. •Adah bore to Esau Eliphaz, Basemath bore
5 Reuel, •Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau born to him in the land of Canaan.

Esau's migration[b]

6 Esau, taking his wives, his sons and daughters, all the members of his household, his livestock, all his cattle and all the goods he had acquired in the land of
7 Canaan, left for the land of Seir[c] away from his brother Jacob. •For they had 32:4
acquired too much to live together. The land in which they were at that time could 13:5-9
8 not support them both because of their livestock. •That is why Edom settled Dt 2:5 in the mountainous region of Seir. Esau is Edom.

Esau's descendants in Seir =36:15-19 1Ch1:35f

9 Here are the descendants of Esau, the father of Edom, in the mountainous region of Seir.
10 Here are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah, Esau's wife, and Reuel the son of Basemath, Esau's wife.
11 12 The sons of Eliphaz were: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, Kenaz. •Eliphaz son of Esau had Timna for concubine and she bore him Amalek. These are the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.
13 Here are the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, Mizzah. These are the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.
14 Here are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah son of Zibeon: she bore him Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

The chiefs of Edom =36:9-14

15 Here are the chiefs of the sons of Esau.

35 a. This chapter tells of Jacob's journey from Shechem to Hebron, using this as a framework for traditions drawn from various sources.

b. This means more than discarding the domestic idols Rachel had carried off, 31:19,34; as in Jos 24 (also at Shechem) it is an act of faith in the one God.

c. Purification preparatory to the Bethel pilgrimage; cf. Ex 19:10.

d. Versions; Hebr. 'El Bethel' (God Bethel or God of Bethel), cf. 28:18 +.

e. In Hebr. this verb is in the plural.

f. Ben-oni: 'son of my sorrow'. The father changes this name of ill omen to Benjamin: 'son of the right hand = son of happy omen'.

g. The list comes from the 'Priestly' source.

h. This closes the story of Isaac in the 'Priestly' tradition which defers his death till now (cf. 27:1-2), identifies Mamre with Hebron, and does not mention the dispute with Esau, cf. 36:6f and 27:46-28:2.

36 a. This is the last we shall hear of Esau. Ch. 36 is a collection of traditions (or documents) of Israelitic or Edomite origin; they deal with Esau's descendants but there is no attempt to force them into agreement either among themselves or with what has been already said (see marginal references).

b. The 'Priestly' tradition, which does not speak of the quarrel between Jacob and Esau, 35:27-29 +, here explains their separation in the same way as it explained that of Abraham and Lot and almost in the same terms.

c. 'the land of Seir' Syr.

The sons of Eliphaz, first-born of Esau: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, •[d]chief Gatam, chief Amalek. These are the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom, these are the sons of Adah. 16

And here are the sons of Reuel son of Esau: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These are the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom, these are the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. 17

And here are the sons of Oholibamah, Esau's wife: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah. These are the chiefs of Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah. 18

These are the sons of Esau and these are their chiefs. This is Edom. 19

The descendants of Seir the Horite[e]

Here are the sons of Seir the Horite, natives of the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, •Dishon, Ezer, Dishan, these are the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom. •The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam, and Lotan's sister was Timna. •Here are the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, Onam. •Here are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah, Anah—the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon. Here are the children of Anah: Dishon, Oholibamah daughter of Anah. •Here are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, Cheran. •Here are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, Akan. •Here are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

Here are the chiefs of the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, •chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These are the chiefs of the Horites according to their clans in the land of Seir. 29 30

‖1Ch1:43-50 **The kings of Edom**

Here are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before an Israelite king ruled.[f] •In Edom there ruled Bela son of Beor; his city was called Dinhabah. •Bela died and Jobab son of Zerah, from Bozrah, succeeded. •Jobab died and Husham of the land of the Temanites succeeded. •Husham died and Hadad son of Bedad succeeded; he defeated the Midianites in the country of Moab, and his city was called Avith. •Hadad died and Samlah of Masrekah succeeded. •Samlah died and Shaul of Rehoboth-han-nahar succeeded. •Shaul died and Baal-hanan son of Achbor succeeded. •Baal-hanan died and Hadad[g] succeeded; his city was called Pau; his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, from Me-zahab. 31 Nb20:14 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 2S8:13-14 39

‖1Ch1:51-54 **More chiefs of Edom**

Here are the names of the chiefs of Esau according to their clans and localities, by name: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, •chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, •chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, •chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom according to their residence in the land that was theirs. This is Esau, father of Edom. 40 41 42 43

37 But Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan. 1

IV. THE STORY OF JOSEPH[a]

1 M 2:53 **Joseph and his brothers[b]**

This is the story of Joseph. 2

Joseph was seventeen years old. As he was still young, he was shepherding the flock with his brothers, with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah his father's wives. Joseph informed their father of the evil spoken about them.

Israel loved Joseph more than all his other sons, for he was the son of his old age, and he had a coat with long sleeves made for him. •But his brothers, seeing how his father loved him more than all his other sons, came to hate him so much that they could not say a civil word to him. 3 37:23,31-33 4

5 Now Joseph had a dream,[c] and he repeated it to his brothers.[d] •'Listen' he 42:9
6 said 'to this dream I have had. •We were binding sheaves in the countryside; and 50:17
7 my sheaf, it seemed, rose up and stood upright; then I saw your sheaves gather 49:8
8 round and bow to my sheaf.' •'So you want to be king over us,' his brothers retorted 'or to lord it over us?' And they hated him still more, on account of his
9 dreams and of what he said. •He had another dream which he told to his brothers. Rv 12:1
'Look, I have had another dream' he said. 'I thought I saw the sun, the moon
10 and eleven stars, bowing to me.' •He told his father and brothers, and his father 49:8
scolded him. 'A fine dream to have!' he said to him. 'Are all of us then, myself, your mother[e] and your brothers, to come and bow to the ground before you?'
11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the thing in mind. Dn 7:28 Lk2:19,51

Joseph sold by his brothers[f]

↗ Ws10:13 ↗ Ac 7:9

12 His brothers went to pasture their father's flock at Shechem. •Then Israel
13 said to Joseph, 'Are not your brothers with the flock at Shechem? Come, I am
14 going to send you to them.' 'I am ready' he replied. •He said to him, 'Go and see how your brothers and the flock are doing, and bring me word'. He sent him from the valley of Hebron, and Joseph arrived at Shechem.
15 A man found him wandering in the countryside and the man asked him, 'What
16 are you looking for?' •'I am looking for my brothers' he replied. 'Please tell me Sg 1:7
17 where they are pasturing their flock.' •The man answered, 'They have moved on from here; indeed I heard them say, "Let us go to Dothan" '. So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.
18 They saw him in the distance, and before he reached them they made a plot 42:21
19 among themselves to put him to death. •'Here comes the man of dreams' they
20 said to one another. •'Come on, let us kill him and throw him into some well; we can say that a wild beast devoured him. Then we shall see what becomes of his dreams.'
21 But Reuben heard, and he saved him from their violence. 'We must not take 42:22
22 his life' he said. •'Shed no blood,' said Reuben to them 'throw him into this well in the wilderness, but do not lay violent hands on him'—intending to save him
23 from them and to restore him to his father. •So, when Joseph reached his brothers, 37:4
24 they pulled off his coat, the coat with long sleeves that he was wearing, •and catching hold of him they threw him into the well, an empty well with no water
25 in it. •They then sat down to eat. Tb 3:10
Looking up they saw a group of Ishmaelites who were coming from Gilead, their camels laden with gum, tragacanth, balsam and resin, which they were taking 43:11
26 down into Egypt. •Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What do we gain by killing 4:10

d. The Hebr. here adds 'chief Korah' omitted by Sam.

e. The Horites, Dt 2:12 +, are the ancient inhabitants of Seir; Seir is here personified as their ancestor. The Horites were dispossessed by the Edomites, Dt 2:12,22.

f. I.e. 'before an Israelite king ruled Edom' rather than the sense understood by the Greek: 'before a king ruled in Israel'.

g. 'Hadad' 1 Ch 1:50 and versions.

37 a. With the exception of ch. 38 and 49 the whole of this final section of Gn is a biography of Joseph. This narrative, unlike what has gone before, proceeds without any visible divine intervention and without any new revelation; it is one long lesson: Providence thwarts mens' plots and turns their malice to profit. The lesson is explicit in 50:20 (cf. 45:5-8). Betrayed by his brothers, Joseph is rescued by God who makes the betrayal itself serve the divine purpose, for its result—the arrival of Jacob's sons in Egypt—is the first step in the making of a chosen people. This theme of salvation ('the survival of a numerous people', 50:20) runs through the whole of the Old Testament to be enriched in the New. Here, as later with the Exodus, we have a preliminary sketch of the Redemption. Not a few details in the narrative bear witness to a precise knowledge of Egyptian affairs and customs as known to us from the Egyptian sources.

b. V.2 seems to be a remnant of the 'Priestly' tradition. The rest of ch. 37 combines the 'Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic' traditions.

c. Dreams play a large part in Joseph's story, ch. 40; they are not divine apparitions as in 20:3; 28:12f; 31; 11,24. but premonitions.

d. The text adds 'and they hated him still more', a gloss absent from the Greek.

e. According to 35:19 Rachel is already dead. The narrative must be following another tradition which puts Rachel's death and Benjamin's birth later, v. 3 and 43:29.

f. Two combined sources are discernible here, 'Elohistic' and 'Yahwistic'. According to the former, Joseph's brothers are for killing him but Reuben, hoping to rescue him later, persuades them to throw Joseph into a well instead; trading Midianites who, unknown to the brothers, were passing that way, extricate Joseph and take him to Egypt. According to the second, Joseph's brothers are for killing him but Judah suggests selling him to a party of Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt. After this, the two narratives come together again.

Jb 16:18 Is 26:21 Ezk 24:7 our brother and covering up his blood?[g] •Come, let us sell him to the Ishmael- 2
ites, but let us not do any harm to him. After all, he is our brother, and our own
flesh.' His brothers agreed.

Now some Midianite merchants were passing, and they drew Joseph up out 2
Ps 105:17 Mt 26:15-16 Ac 7:9 of the well. They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty silver pieces, and
these men took Joseph to Egypt. •When Reuben went back to the well there was 2
no sign of Joseph. Tearing his clothes, •he went back to his brothers. 'The boy 3
has disappeared' he said. 'What am I going to do?'

37:4 They took Joseph's coat and, slaughtering a goat, they dipped the coat in the 3
blood. •Then they sent back the coat with long sleeves and had it taken to their 3
father, with the message, 'This is what we have found. Examine it and see whether
or not it is your son's coat.' •He examined it and exclaimed, 'It is my son's 3
44:28 coat! A wild beast has devoured him. Joseph has been the prey of some animal
and has been torn to pieces.' •Jacob, tearing his clothes and putting on a loin- 3
cloth of sackcloth, mourned his son for a long time. •All his sons and daughters 3
Jr 31:15 came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. 'No,' he said 'I will go down
42:38 in mourning to Sheol, beside my son.' And his father wept for him.

Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of 3
Pharaoh's officials and commander of the guard.

The story of Judah and Tamar[a]

38 It happened at that time that Judah left his brothers, to go down and stay 1
with an Adullamite called Hirah. •There Judah saw the daughter of a 2
1 Ch 2:3 Canaanite called Shua. He made her his wife and slept with her. •She conceived 3
46:12 and gave birth to a son whom she named Er. •She conceived again and gave birth 4
to a son whom she named Onan. •Yet again she gave birth to a son whom she 5
named Shelah. She was at Chezib when she gave birth to him.

1 Ch 2:3 Judah took a wife for his first-born Er, and her name was Tamar. •But Er, 6 7
Judah's first-born, offended Yahweh greatly, so Yahweh brought about his
Dt 25:5 Rt 1:11,13 Mt 22:24 death. •Then Judah said to Onan, 'Take your brother's wife, and do your duty 8
as her brother-in-law,[b] to produce a child for your brother'. •But Onan, knowing 9
the child would not be his, spilt his seed on the ground every time he slept with
his brother's wife, to avoid providing a child for his brother. •What he did was 10
offensive to Yahweh,[c] so he brought about his death also. •Then Judah said to 11
his daughter-in-law Tamar, 'Return[d] home as a widow to your father, and wait
for my son Shelah to grow up', for he was thinking, 'He must not die like his
brothers'. So Tamar went back home to her father.

A long time passed, and then Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died. After 12
Jg 14:1 Judah had been comforted[e] he went up to Timnah to the men who sheared his
sheep, himself and Hirah, his Adullamite friend. •This was reported to Tamar, 13
'Listen, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah for the shearing of his sheep'.
Pr 7:10 She therefore changed her widow's clothes, wrapped a veil around her, and sat 14
down, heavily swathed, where the road to Enaim branches off the road to Timnah.
Shelah had now grown up, as she saw, and yet she had not been given to him as
his wife.[f]

Judah, seeing her, took her for a prostitute, since her face was veiled. •Going 15
up to her on the road, he said, 'Come, let me sleep with you'. He did not know
that she was his daughter-in-law. 'What will you give me to sleep with me?' she
asked. •'I will send you a kid from the flock' he answered. 'Agreed, if you give 17
me a pledge until you send it' she answered. •'What pledge shall I give you?' he 18
asked. 'Your seal, your cord and the stick you are holding' she answered. He
gave them to her and slept with her, and she conceived by him. •Then she rose 19
and left him, and taking off her veil she put on her widow's weeds.

Judah sent the kid by his Adullamite friend to recover the pledge from the 20
woman. But he did not find her. •He inquired from the men of the place, 'Where 21
is the prostitute[g] who was by the roadside at Enaim?' 'There has been no prosti-

22 tute there', they answered. •So returning to Judah he said, 'I did not find her.
What is more, the men of the place told me there had been no prostitute there.'
23 'Let her keep what she has' Judah replied 'or we shall become a laughing-stock.
At least I sent her this kid, even though you did not find her.'
24 About three months later it was reported to Judah, 'Your daughter-in-law has
played the harlot; furthermore, she is pregnant, as a result of her misconduct'.
25 'Take her outside and burn her'[h] said Judah. •But as she was being led off she sent
this message to her father-in-law, 'It was the man to whom these things belong
who made me pregnant. Look at them' she said 'and see whose seal and cord
26 and stick these are.' •Judah examined them and then said, 'She is in the right,
rather than I. This comes of my not giving her to my son Shelah to be his wife.'
He had no further intercourse with her.
27 When the time for her confinement came she was found to have twins in her 1 Ch 2:4
28 womb. •During the delivery one of them put out a hand, and the midwife caught
29 it and tied a scarlet thread to it, saying, 'This is the first to arrive'. •But he drew
his hand back, and it was his brother who came out first. Then she said, 'What
30 a breach you have opened for yourself!' So he was named Perez. •Then his Rt 4:12 Lk 3:33 Mt 1:3
brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, so he was named Zerah.[i]

Joseph's early days in Egypt[a]

1 M 2:53

1 39 Now Joseph had been taken down into Egypt. Potiphar the Egyptian, one
of Pharaoh's officials and commander of the guard, bought him from the
2 Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. •Yahweh was with Joseph, and 1S 3:19;10:7;18:14 2 S 5:10 2 K 18:7 ↗Ac 7:9
everything went well with him. He lodged in the house of his Egyptian master,
3 and when his master saw how Yahweh was with him and how Yahweh made
4 everything succeed that he turned his hand to, •he was pleased with Joseph and
made him his personal attendant; and his master put him in charge of his Dn 1:9
5 household, entrusting everything to him. •And from the time he put him in
charge of his household and all his possessions, Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's
household out of consideration for Joseph; Yahweh's blessing extended to all his
6 possessions, both household and estate. •So he left Joseph to handle all his pos-
sessions, with and him at hand, concerned himself with nothing beyond the food
he ate. 1 S 16:12

The attempt to seduce Joseph

7 Now Joseph was well built and handsome, •and it happened some time later
8 that his master's wife looked desirously at him and said, 'Sleep with me'. •But he
refused, and answered his master's wife, 'Because of me, my master does not
concern himself with what happens in the house; he has handed over all his
9 possessions to me. •He is no more master in this house than I am. He has
withheld nothing from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How could I

g. Lest the victim's blood cry to heaven, 4:10, the murderer covered it with earth, Ezk 24:7.

38 a. 'Yahwistic' tradition relating to the origin of the tribe of Judah. Judah dwells apart from his brothers and he associates with the Canaanites. From his union with Tamar, his daughter-in-law, come the clans of Perez and Zerah, Nb 26:21; 1 Ch 2:3f; Perez is David's ancestor, Rt 4:18f, and consequently the Messiah's, Mt 1:3; Lk 3:33. In this way we learn of the mixture of strains in Judah and of its singular destiny among the other tribes (Jg 1:3; Dt 33:7; and cf. all the history that follows).

b. According to 'levirate' law, cf. Dt 25:5+.

c. Yahweh condemns Onan for failing to put his duty to the family and nation before his own self-interest.

d. 'Return', 'she went home again', corr.

e. I.e. 'when he had observed all mourning rites', cf. Jr 16:7.

f. Disguised as a harlot Tamar awaits Judah by the roadside. She is not playing the wanton but is anxious to bear a child of her dead husband's kin. Later, v. 26, Judah will approve her conduct and future generations will praise her, Rt 4:12.

g. Strictly, 'sacred prostitute', priestess of a pagan cult; it will be remembered that the background is Canaanite.

h. Tamar, widow of Er, is—by levirate law—the betrothed of Shelah. Hence, though she lives with her father she is under Judah's jurisdiction and it is Judah who pronounces sentence on her adultery, Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22; cf. Jn 8:15. At a later date, ordeal by fire was reserved for priests' daughters, Lv 21:9.

i. *Perez* means 'breach'. The name *Zerah* evidently alludes to the scarlet thread.

39 a. In the 'Yahwistic' tradition this narrative takes up the story from ch. 37. Ch. 40 ('Elohistic') will tell the same tale somewhat differently. Both traditions have been kept intact but have been unified by means of a few editorial adjustments.

do anything so wicked, and sin against God?' •Although she spoke to Joseph day 10
after day he would not agree to sleep with her and surrender to her.

But one day Joseph in the course of his duties came to the house, and there 11
was not a servant there indoors. •The woman caught hold of him by his tunic 12
and said, 'Sleep with me'. But he left the tunic in her hand and ran out of the
house. •Seeing he had left the tunic in her hand and left the house, •she called her 13 14
servants and said to them, 'Look at this! He has brought us a Hebrew to insult us.
He came to me to sleep with me, but I screamed, •and when he heard me scream 15
and shout he left his tunic beside me and ran out of the house.'

She put the tunic down by her side until the master came home. •Then she 16 17
told him the same tale, 'The Hebrew slave you bought us came to insult me.
But when I screamed and called out he left his garment by my side and made 18
his escape.' •When the master heard his wife say, 'This is how your slave treated 19
Ps105:18f me', he was furious. •Joseph's master had him arrested and committed to the gaol 20
where the king's prisoners were kept.

Joseph in gaol

Dn 1:9 Ac 7:10 And there in gaol he stayed. •But Yahweh was with Joseph. He was kind to 21
him and made him popular with the chief gaoler. •The chief gaoler put Joseph 22
in charge of all the prisoners in the goal, making him responsible for everything
Ac 7:10 done there. •The chief gaoler did not need to interfere with Joseph's administration, 23
for Yahweh was with him, and Yahweh made everything he undertook successful.

1 M 2:53 Ps105:19 Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's officials[a]

40 It happened some time later that the king of Egypt's cup-bearer and his 1
baker offended their master the king of Egypt. •Pharaoh was angry with his 2
two officials, the chief cup-bearer and the chief baker, •and put them under arrest 3
in the house of the commander of the guard, in the gaol where Joseph was a
prisoner. •The commander of the guard assigned Joseph to them to attend to 4
their wants, and they remained under arrest for some time.

Now both of them had dreams on the same night, each with its own meaning 5
for the cup-bearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were prisoners
in the gaol. •When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they looked 6
gloomy, •and he asked the two officials who were with him under arrest in his 7
master's house, 'Why these black looks today?' •They answered him, 'We 8
41:16 have had a dream, but there is no one to interpret it'.[b] 'Are not interpretations
God's business?' Joseph asked them. 'Come, tell me.'

So the chief cup-bearer described his dream to Joseph, telling him, 'In my 9
dream I saw a vine in front of me. •On the vine were three branches; no sooner 10
had it budded than it blossomed, and its clusters became ripe grapes. •I had 11
Pharaoh's cup in my hand; I picked the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's
cup, and put the cup into Pharaoh's hand.' •'Here is the interpretation of it' 12
Joseph told him. 'The three branches are three days. •In another three days 13
Pharaoh will release you and restore you to your place. Then you will hand
Pharaoh his cup, as you did before, when you were his cup-bearer. •But be sure 14
to remember me when things go well with you, and do me the kindness of remind-
ing Pharaoh about me, to get me out of this house. •I was kidnapped from the 15
land of the Hebrews in the first place, and even here I have done nothing to
warrant imprisonment.'

The chief baker, seeing that the interpretation had been favourable, said to 16
Joseph, 'I too had a dream; there were three trays of cakes on my head. •In the top 17
tray there were all kinds of Pharaoh's favourite cakes, but the birds ate them off
the tray on my head.' •Joseph gave him this answer, 'Here is the interpretation of 18
it: the three trays are three days. •In another three days Pharaoh will release you[c] 19
and hang you on a gallows, and the birds will eat the flesh off your bones.'

And so it happened; the third day was Pharaoh's birthday and he gave a banquet 20

for all his officials, and he released the chief cup-bearer and the chief baker in the
21 presence of his officials. •The chief cup-bearer he restored to his position as cup-
22 bearer, to hand Pharaoh his cup; •the chief baker he hanged. It was as Joseph
23 had said in his interpretation. •But the chief cup-bearer did not remember Joseph:
he forgot him.

Pharaoh's dreams[a] 1 M 2:53 Jb 33:15

1 41 Two years later it happened that Pharaoh had a dream: he was standing
2 by the Nile, •and there, coming up from the Nile, were seven cows, sleek
3 and fat, and they began to feed among the rushes. •And seven other cows,
ugly and lean, came up from the Nile after them; and these went over and stood
4 beside the other cows on the bank of the Nile. •The ugly and lean cows ate the
seven sleek and fat cows. Then Pharaoh awoke.
5 He fell asleep and dreamed a second time: there, growing on one stalk, were
6 seven ears of corn full and ripe. •And sprouting up after them came seven ears
7 of corn, meagre and scorched by the east wind. •The scanty ears of corn swallowed
the seven full and ripe ears of corn. Then Pharaoh awoke; it was a dream.
8 In the morning Pharaoh, feeling disturbed, had all the magicians and wise men Ex7:11,22; 8:1-3
of Egypt summoned to him. Pharaoh told them his dream, but no one could
9 interpret it for Pharaoh.[b] •Then the chief cup-bearer addressed Pharaoh, 'Today I Ps105:19
10 must recoll my offences. •Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put myself
and the chief baken under arrest in the house of the commander of the guard.
11 We had a dream on the same night, he and I, and each man's dream had a
12 meaning for himself. •There was a young Hebrew with us, one of the slaves
belonging to the commander of the guard. We told our dreams to him and he Dn 1:17
13 interpreted them, giving each of us the interpretation of his dream. •It turned
out just as he interpreted for us: I was restored to my place, but the other man
was hanged.'
14 Then Pharaoh had Joseph summoned, and they hurried him from prison. He Ps105:20
15 shaved and changed his clothes, and came into Pharaoh's presence. •Pharaoh
said to Joseph, 'I have had a dream which no one can interpret. But I have heard
16 it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.' •Joseph answered
Pharaoh, 'I do not count. It is God who will give Pharaoh a favourable answer.' 40:8
17 So Pharaoh told Joseph, 'In my dream I was standing on the bank of the
18 Nile. •And there were seven cows, fat and sleek, coming up out of the Nile, and
19 they began to feed among the rushes. •And seven other cows came up after them,
starved, ugly and lean; I have never seen such poor cows in all the land of Egypt.
20 21 The lean and ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows. •But when they had eaten them
up, it was impossible to tell they had eaten them, for they remained as lean as
22 before. Then I woke up. •And then again in my dream, there, growing on one
stalk, were seven ears of corn, beautifully ripe; •but sprouting up after them came
23 seven ears of corn, withered, meagre and scorched by the east wind. •The shriv-
24 elled ears of corn swallowed the seven ripe ears of corn. I told the magicians this,
but no one could tell me the meaning.'
25 Joseph told Pharaoh, 'Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same: God has re-
26 vealed to Pharaoh what he is going to do. •The seven fine cows are seven years
27 and the seven ripe ears of corn are seven years; it is one and the same dream. •The
seven gaunt and lean cows coming up after them are seven years, as are the seven

40 a. 'Elohistic' narrative with a few modifications.
b. The Egyptians believed that dreams foreshadowed the future.
c. Lit. 'lift up your head' for the sense of granting a favour cf. 2 K 25:27; Jr 52:31. Here, however, there is a grim play on words: the head of the cup-bearer is to be 'lifted up': he will enjoy the king's favour, v. 13; the head of the baker will also be 'lifted up': he is to be hanged. A gloss here adds 'from you'.

41 a. This narrative follows on the preceding and is from the same ('Elohistic') source with which, however, especially from v. 33 onwards, it combines remnants of a parallel tradition ascribed to the 'Yahwistic' source.
b. Egypt was the land of magicians and sages, Ex 7:11,22; 1 K 5:10; Is 19:11-13, but the wisdom God gives his servants eclipses theirs. This theme recurs in the story of Moses, Ex 7-8. Cf., in a different setting, Dn 2.

shrivelled ears of corn scorched by the east wind: there will be seven years of famine. •It is as I have told Pharaoh: God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is 28
going to do. •Seven years are coming, bringing great plenty to the whole 29
land of Egypt, •but seven years of famine will follow them, when all the plenty 30
in the land of Egypt will be forgotten, and famine will exhaust the land. •The 31
famine that is to follow will be so very severe that no one will remember what
plenty the country enjoyed. •The reason why the dream came to Pharaoh twice is 32
because the event is already determined by God, and God is impatient to bring
it about.

'Pharaoh should now choose a man who is intelligent and wise to govern the 33
land of Egypt. •Pharaoh should take action and appoint supervisors over the 34
47:26 land, and impose a tax of one-fifth on the land of Egypt during the seven years of
plenty •They will collect all food produced during these good years that are 35
coming. They will store the corn in Pharaoh's name, and place the food in the
towns and hold it there. •This food will serve as a reserve for the land during the 36
seven years of famine that will afflict the land of Egypt. And so the land will
not be destroyed by the famine.'

Joseph's promotion

Pr 14:35 Pharaoh and all his ministers approved of what he had said. •Then Pharaoh 37
Dn 13:45 asked his ministers, 'Can we find any other man like this, possessing the spirit of 38
God?' •So Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Seeing that God has given you knowledge 39
Ps 105:21f of all this, there can be no one as intelligent and wise as you. •You shall be my 40
Ac 7:10
Ws 10:14 chancellor, and all my people shall respect your orders; only this throne shall set
Ac 7:10 me above you.' •Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I hereby make you governor of the 41
Est 3:10; 6:9 whole land of Egypt'. •Pharaoh took the ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's. 42
He clothed him in fine linen and put a gold chain round his neck. •He made him 43
ride in the best chariot he had after his own, and they cried before him 'Abrek'.[c]
This is the way he was made governor of the whole land of Egypt.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I am Pharaoh: without your permission no one is to 44
move hand or foot throughout the whole land of Egypt'. •Pharaoh named Joseph 45
46:20 Zaphenath-paneah, and gave him Asenath the daughter of Potiphera, priest of
On,[d] for his wife. Joseph travelled through the land of Egypt.

Joseph was thirty years old when he appeared before Pharaoh king of Egypt. 46
After leaving Pharaoh's presence Joseph went through the whole land of Egypt.
During the seven years of plenty, the soil yielded generously. •He collected 47 48
all the food of the seven years when there was an abundance[e] in the land of Egypt,
and allotted food to the towns, placing in each the food from the surrounding
countryside. •Joseph stored the corn like the sand of the sea, so much that they 49
stopped reckoning, since it was beyond all estimating.

Joseph's sons

Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph: Asenath, the 50
daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore him these. •Joseph named the first-born 51
Manasseh, 'Because' he said 'God has made me forget all my suffering and all
my father's household'. •He named the second Ephraim, 'Because' he said 'God 52
has made me fruitful in the country of my misfortune'.[f]

Then the seven years of plenty that there had been in the land of Egypt came 53
Ps 105:16 to an end. •The seven years of famine began to come as Joseph had said. There 54
✗ Ac 7:11 was famine in every country, but there was bread to be had throughout the land of
Egypt. •When the whole country began to feel the famine, the people cried out to 55
Pharaoh for bread. But Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, 'Go to Joseph and do what
he tells you'.—•There was famine all over the world.—Then Joseph opened all the 56
granaries and sold[g] grain to the Egyptians. The famine grew worse in the land of
Egypt. •People came to Egypt from all over the world to buy grain from Joseph, 57
for the famine had grown severe throughout the world.

The first meeting between Joseph and his brothers[a]

1 **42** Jacob, seeing that there was grain for sale in Egypt, said to his sons, 'Why Jdt 5:10
2 do you stand looking at one another? •I hear' he said 'that there is grain ↗Ac7:12
for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may survive and
3 4 not die.' •So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. •But
Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers. 'Nothing must 42:38
happen to him' he said.
5 Israel's sons with others making the same journey went to buy grain, for there Ac 7:10
6 was famine in the land of Canaan. •It was Joseph, as the man in authority
over the country, who sold the grain to all comers. So Joseph's brothers went and
7 bowed down before him, their faces touching the ground. •When Joseph saw his
brothers he recognised them. But he did not make himself known to them, and he
spoke harshly to them. 'Where have you come from?' he asked. 'From the land
of Canaan to buy food' they replied.
8 9 So Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him. •Joseph,
remembering the dreams he had had about them, said to them, 'You are spies. 37:5-11
10 You have come to discover the country's weak points.' •'No, my lord,' they told
11 him 'your servants have come to buy food. •We are all sons of the same man.
12 We are honest men, your servants are not spies.' •'Not so!' he replied 'It is the
13 country's weak points you have come to discover.' •'Your servants are twelve
brothers,' they said 'sons of the same man, from the land of Canaan. The young-
est, we should explain, is at present with our father, and the other one is no more.'
14 15 Joseph answered them, 'It is as I said, you are spies. •This is the test you are to
undergo: as sure as Pharaoh lives you shall not leave unless your youngest brother
16 comes here. •Send one of your number to fetch your brother; you others will re-
main under arrest, so that your statements can be tested to see whether or not you
17 are honest. If not, then as sure as Pharaoh lives you are spies.' •Then he kept
them all in custody for three days.
18 On the third day Joseph said to them, 'Do this and you shall keep your lives,
19 for I am a man who fears God. •If you are honest men let one of your brothers be
kept in the place of your detention; as for you, go and take grain to relieve the
20 famine of your families. •You shall bring me your youngest brother; this way
your words will be proved true, and you will not have to die!' This they did.
21 They said to one another, 'Truly we are being called to account for our brother. 37:18-27
We saw his misery of soul when he begged our mercy, but we did not listen to him,
22 and now this misery has come home to us.' •Reuben answered them, 'Did I not
tell you not to wrong the boy? But you did not listen, and now we are brought 37:22
23 to account for his blood.' •They did not know that Joseph understood, because
24 there was an interpreter between them. •He left them and wept.[b] Then he went 43:14,30
back to them and spoke to them. Of their number he took Simeon and had him
bound while they looked on.

Jacob's sons return to Canaan

25 Joseph gave the order to fill their panniers with corn, to put back each man's
money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for

c. Characteristically Egyptian tableau of investiture: Joseph is made viceroy of Egypt: he is second only to the Pharaoh; his house is the centre of administration and he is keeper of the king's seal. The runners before his chariot of state cry 'Abrek', which suggests the Egyptian *ib-r-q* 'thy heart to thee', 'beware', 'make way'.

d. Egyptian names: *Zaphenath-paneah* 'God says: he is living'; *Asenath* 'Belonging to the goddess Neith'; *Potiphera*, the same name as the Potiphar of 37:36. = 'Gift of Ra' (the sun-god). Joseph's father-in-law is priest of On = Heliopolis, centre of Ra-worship; its priesthood played an important part in the politics of the country. Joseph had married into Egypt's most exclusive nobility.

e. 'when there was an abundance' Sam. Greek.

f. The name *Menashsheh* is explained by *nashshani* 'he has made me forget', *Ephraim* by *hiphrani* 'he has made me fruitful'.

g. 'all the granaries' Greek, Syr. 'and sold' corr.

42 a. This narrative is almost entirely 'Elohistic'. But the 'Yahwistic' tradition of ch. 43 also knew of a first meeting between Joseph and his brothers, and some small traces of it are to be found here (especially vv. 27-28 and 38).

b. An interest in human emotions is one of the characteristics of the closing chapters of Gn.

them. •They loaded the grain on their donkeys and went away. •But when they 26 27
camped for the night one of them opened his corn-sack to give fodder to his
donkey and saw his money in the mouth of his sack. •He said to his brothers, 28
Tb 3:10 'My money has been put back; here it is in my corn-sack'. Their hearts sank, and
they looked at one another in panic, saying, 'What is this that God has done to us?'[c]

Returning to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they gave him a full 29
report of what had happened to them, •'The man who is lord of the land spoke 30
harshly to us, taking us for men spying on the country. •We told him, "We are 31
honest men, we are not spies. •We are twelve brothers, sons of the same father. 32
One of us is no more, and the youngest is at present with our father in the land of
Canaan." •But the man who is lord of the land said to us, "This is how I shall 33
know if you are honest: leave one of your brothers with me. Take the grain your
families stand in need of, and go. •But bring me back your youngest brother and 34
then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will hand over
your brother to you, and you can trade in the country." '

As they emptied their sacks, each discovered his bag of money in his sack. On 35
seeing their bags of money they were afraid, and so was their father. •Then their 36
father Jacob said to them, 'You are robbing me of my children; Joseph
is no more; Simeon is no more; and now you want to take Benjamin.
All this I must bear.'

Then Reuben said to his father, 'You may put my two sons to death if I do not 37
bring him back to you. Put him in my care and I will bring him back to you.'[d] •But 38
he replied, 'My son is not going down with you, for now his brother is dead he is
42:4 the only one left.[e] If any harm came to him on the journey you are to undertake,
37:35 Nb16:33+ you would send me down to Sheol with my white head bowed in grief.'

Jacob's sons leave again with Benjamin[a]

43 But the country was hard-pressed by famine, •and when they had finished 1 2
eating the grain they had brought from Egypt their father said to them,
'Go back and buy us a little food'. •'But the man expressly warned us' Judah told 3
him. 'He said, "You will not be admitted to my presence unless your brother is
with you". •If you are ready to send our brother with us, we are willing to go 4
down and buy food for you. •But if you are not ready to send him we will not go 5
down, for the man told us, "You will not be admitted to my presence unless your
brother is with you".' •Then Israel said, 'Why did you bring this misery on me by 6
telling the man you had another brother?' •They replied, 'He kept questioning us 7
about ourselves and our kinsfolk, "Is your father still alive?" and, "Have you a
brother?" That is why we told him. How could we know he was going to say,
42:37 "Bring your brother down here"?' •Judah said to his father Israel, 'Send the boy 8
with me. Let us start off and go, so that we may save our lives and not die, we, you,
and our dependants. •I will go surety for him, and you can hold me responsible 9
44:32 for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, let me bear the
blame all my life. •Indeed, if we had not wasted so much time we should have 10
been back again by now!'

45:23 Then their father Israel said to them, 'If it must be so, then do this: take some 11
of the land's finest products in your panniers, and carry them down to the man as
37:25 a gift, a little balsam, a little honey, gum, tragacanth, resin, pistachio nuts and
almonds. •Take double the amount of money with you and return the money put 12
back in the mouths of your sacks; it may have been a mistake. •Take your brother, 13
17:1+ and go back to the man. •May El Shaddai move the man to be kind to you, 14
42:24 and you allow to bring back your other brother and Benjamin. As for me, if
I must be bereaved, bereaved I must be.'

The meeting with Joseph

The men took this gift; they took double the amount of money with them, 15
and Benjamin. They started off and went down to Egypt. They presented them-

16 selves to Joseph. •When Joseph saw Benjamin with them he said to his
chamberlain, 'Take these men to the house. Slaughter a beast and prepare it, for
17 these men are to eat with me at midday.' •The man did as Joseph had ordered,
and took the men to Joseph's house.
18 The men were afraid at being taken to Joseph's house, thinking, 'We are being
taken there because of the money replaced in our corn-sacks the first time. They
will set on us; they will fall on us and make slaves of us, and take our donkeys
19 too.' •So they went up to Joseph's chamberlain and spoke to him at the entrance
20 to the house. •'By your leave, sir,' they said 'we came down once before to buy
21 food, •and when we reached camp and opened our corn-sacks, there was each 42:27-28
man's money in the mouth of his sack, to its full amount. But we have brought it
22 back with us, •and we have brought more money with us to buy food. We do
23 not know who put our money in our corn-sacks.' •'Peace to you,' he replied
'do not be afraid. Your God and your father's God has put a treasure in your
corn-sacks. Your money reached me safely.'[b] And he brought Simeon out to
them.
24 The man took the men into Joseph's house. He offered them water to wash
25 their feet, and gave their donkeys fodder. •They arranged their gift while they
waited for Joseph to come at midday, for they had heard they were to dine there.
26 When Joseph arrived at the house they offered him the gift they had with them,
27 and bowed before him to the ground. •But he greeted them kindly, asking, 'Is your Tb 7:4
28 father well, the old man you told me of? Is he still alive?' •'Your servant our father
29 is well,' they replied 'he is still alive', and they bowed low in homage. •Looking
up he saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son. 'Is this your youngest brother,'
he asked 'of whom you told me?' Then he said to him, 'God be good to you, my
30 son'.[c] •Joseph hurried out, for his heart was moved at the sight of his brother
31 and he was near to weeping. He went into his room and there he wept. •After 42:24
bathing his face he returned and, controlling himself, gave the order: 'Serve the
32 meal'. •He was served separately; so were they, and so were the Egyptians who
ate in his household, for Egyptians cannot take food with Hebrews: they have a
33 horror of it. •They were placed opposite him each according to his rank, from the
34 eldest to the youngest, and the men looked at one another in amazement. •He
had portions carried to them from his own dish, the portion for Benjamin being
five times larger than any of the others. They drank with him and were happy.

Joseph's cup in Benjamin's sack

1 **44** Joseph gave this order to his chamberlain: 'Fill these men's sacks with as
much food as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his
2 sack. •And put my cup, the silver one, in the mouth of the youngest one's sack as
well as the money for his grain.' He carried out the instructions Joseph had given.
3 When morning came and it was light, the men were sent off with their donkeys.
4 They had scarcely left the city, and had not gone far before Joseph said to his
chamberlain, 'Away now and follow those men. When you catch up with them
5 say to them, "Why did you reward good with evil? •Is this not the one my lord
uses for drinking and also for reading omens?[a] What you have done is wrong." '

c. Vv. 27-28 belong to the 'Yahwistic' tradition which makes the brothers discover their money at the first stopping-place and at the top of the sacks, cf. 43:21. According to the 'Elohistic' tradition (cf. v. 35) they found it at the bottom of the sacks when they reached home. Both traditions agree that the discovery filled the brothers with awe; they saw in it the hand of God.

d. In the 'Yahwistic' tradition, see 43:8-9, Judah and not Reuben is surety for Benjamin's return. Similarly, according to the 'Yahwistic' tradition (37:26) it was Judah, according to the 'Elohistic' Reuben (37:22), who intervened on Joseph's behalf.

e. I.e. the only one of the two sons of the beloved Rachel.

43 a. Excepting a few short glosses ch. 43 and 44 are entirely 'Yahwistic'.

b. The chamberlain has been instructed by Joseph 42:25, and knows what Joseph intends.

c. Joseph is evidently much older than Benjamin, see 30:22f and 35:16. It is even possible that there was a tradition according to which Benjamin was born after Joseph had been lost, see 37:10+.

44 a. The way in which water fell into a cup, or the sound it made, or the pattern of oil-drops poured into it, were interpreted as omens. This method of divination was common in the ancient East.

So when he caught up with them he repeated these words. •They asked him, 6
'What does my lord mean? Your servants would never think of doing such a thing. 7
Look, the money we found in the mouths of our corn-sacks we brought back to 8
you from the land of Canaan. Are we likely to have stolen silver or gold from
your master's house? •Whichever of your servants is found to have it shall die, 9
and we ourselves shall be slaves of my lord.' •'Very well, then,' he replied 'it shall 10
be as you say. The one on whom it is found shall become my slave, but the rest
of you can go free.' •Each of them quickly lifted his corn-sack to the ground, and 11
each opened his own. •He searched them, beginning with the eldest and ending 12
with the youngest, and found the cup in Benjamin's sack. •Then they tore their 13
clothes, and when each man had reloaded his ass they returned to the city.

When Judah and his brothers arrived at Joseph's house he was still there, so 14
they fell on the ground in front of him. •'What is this deed you have done?' Joseph 15
asked them. 'Did you not know that a man such as I am is a reader of omens?'
'What can we answer my lord?' Judah replied 'What can we say? How can we 16
clear ourselves? God himself has uncovered your servants' guilt.[b] Here we are
then, my lord's slaves, we no less than the one in whose possession the cup was
found.' •'I could not think of doing such a thing' he replied. 'The man in whose 17
possession the cup was found shall be my slave, but you can go back safe and
sound to your father.'

Judah intervenes

Tb 10:1 Then Judah went up to him and said, 'May it please my lord, let your servant 18
have a word privately with my lord. Do not be angry with your servant, for you
Jos 13:24 are like Pharaoh himself. •My lord questioned his servants, "Have you father or 19
brother?" •And we said to my lord, "We have an old father, and a younger 20
brother born of his old age. His brother is dead, so he is the only one left of his
mother, and his father loves him." •Then you said to your servants, "Bring him 21
down to me that my eyes may look on him".[c] •We replied to my lord, "The boy 22
cannot leave his father. If he leaves him, his father will die." •But you said to 23
your servants, "If your youngest brother does not come down with you, you will
not be admitted to my presence again". •When we went back to your servant my 24
father, we repeated to him what my lord had said. •So when our father said, 25
"Go back and buy us a little food", •we said, "We cannot go down. If our young- 26
est brother is with us, we will go down, for we cannot be admitted to the man's
presence unless our youngest brother is with us." •So your servant our father 27
said to us, "You know that my wife bore me two children. •When one left me, 28
37:33 I said that he been tornto pieces must have. And I have not seen him to this day.
Tb 3:10 If you take this one from me too and any harm comes to him, you will send me 29
down to Sheol with my white head bowed in misery." •If I go to your servant my 30
father now, and we have not the boy with us, he will die as soon as he sees the
Tb 3:10 boy is not with us, for his heart is bound up with him. Then your servants will have 31
sent your servant our father down to Sheol with his white head bowed in grief.
43:9 Now your servant went surety to my father for the boy. I said: If I do not bring 32
him back to you, let me bear the blame before my father all my life. •Let your 33
servant stay, then, as my lord's slave in place of the boy, I implore you, and let
the boy go back with his brothers. •How indeed could I go back to my father 34
and not have the boy with me? I could not bear to see the misery that would
overwhelm my father.'

Joseph makes himself known[a]

45 Then Joseph could not control his feelings in front of all his retainers, and 1
he exclaimed, 'Let everyone leave me'. No one therefore was present with
✗ Ac 7:13 him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers, •but he wept so loudly 2
that all the Egyptians heard, and the news reached Pharaoh's palace.[b]

Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father really still alive?' His 3

brothers could not answer him, they were so dismayed at the sight of him.[c] 50:15
4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me'. When they had come closer
5 to him he said, 'I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. •But now,
do not grieve, do not reproach yourselves for having sold me here, since God 50:19
6 sent me before you to preserve your lives.[d] •For this is the second year there has 50:20 Ps 105:17
been famine in the country, and there are still five years to come of no plough-
7 ing or reaping. •God sent me before you to make sure that your race would have Est 4:14
8 survivors in the land and to save your lives, many lives at that. •So it was not you
who sent me here but God, and he has made me father[e] to Pharaoh, lord of all
his household and administrator of the whole land of Egypt.
9 'Return quickly to your father and tell him, "Your son Joseph says this: God
10 has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me at once. •You shall live 46:28f;47:1-6 Ex8:18;9:26
in the country of Goshen[f] where you will be near me, you, your children and your
11 grandchildren, your flocks, your cattle and all your possessions. •I will provide
for you there, for there are still five years of famine, and I do not want you to be
12 in need, you and your household and all you have." •You can see with your own
eyes, and my brother Benjamin can see too that it is my own mouth speaking to
13 you. •Give my father a full report of all the honour I enjoy in Egypt, and of all
you have seen. Then hurry and bring my father down here.'
14 Then throwing his arms round the neck of his brother Benjamin he wept; and Tb7:6;11:9
15 Benjamin wept on his shoulder. •He kissed all his brothers, weeping over them. 46:31
After which his brothers talked with him.

Pharaoh's invitation

16 News reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, and Pharaoh
17 was pleased to hear it, as were his servants. •Pharaoh told Joseph, 'Say to your
18 brothers, "Do this: load your beasts and go off to the land of Canaan. •Fetch
your father and families, and come back to me. I will give you the best the land
19 of Egypt offers, and you shall feed on the fat of the land." •And you, for your Ws 19:16
part, give them[g] this command: "Do this: take waggons from the land of Egypt,
20 for your little ones and your wives. Get your father and come. •Never mind about
your property, for the best that the land of Egypt offers is yours." '

The return to Canaan

21 Israel's sons did as they were told. Joseph gave them waggons as Pharaoh
22 had ordered, and he gave them provisions for the journey. •To each and every
one he gave a festal garment, and to Benjamin three hundred shekels of silver
23 and five festal garments. •And he sent his father ten donkeys laden with the 43:11
best that Egypt offered, and ten she-donkeys laden with grain, bread and food for
24 his father's journey. •Then he sent his brothers on their way. His final words to
them were, 'Do not be upset[h] on the journey'.
25 And so they left Egypt. When they reached the land of Canaan and their
26 father Jacob, •they gave him this report, 'Joseph is still alive. Indeed it is he who is Tb 10:7
administrator of the whole land of Egypt.' But he was as one stunned, for
27 he did not believe them. •However, when they told him all Joseph had said to
them, and when he saw the waggons that Joseph had sent to fetch him, the spirit
28 of their father Jacob revived, •and Israel said, 'That is enough! My son Joseph Tb 10:11
is still alive. I must go and see him before I die.'

b. This does not mean that they confess a theft, which in fact they had not committed, nor even that they are referring to their original offence against Joseph; it is simply that their present misfortune seems to prove God's anger and shows that they are sinful men.

c. A sign of patronage, human or divine, Jr 39:12; 40:4; Ps 33:18; 34:15.

45 a. The 'Elohistic' and 'Yahwistic' traditions are blended here in the climax of the story.

b. According to Greek.

c. The brothers fear Joseph's vengeance, cf. 50:15f.

d. Taken together with 50:20, vv. 5-8 point the significance of the Joseph-narrative, cf. 37:2+.

e. 'Father' is a title of the vizier, cf. Is 9:5; 22:21; Est 3:13(f) (= Vulg. 13:6); 8:12(1) (= 16:11).

f. Eastern district of the Nile delta.

g. 'give them' Greek, Vulg.

h. The Hebrew verb means 'agitation', no cause specified: anxiety? quarrel? haste?

Jacob leaves for Egypt[a]

Ex 1:1 Jos 24:4 **46** Israel left with his possessions, and reached Beersheba. There he offered 1
31:24 sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. •God spoke to Israel in a vision[b] 2
22:1;26:23-25 at night, 'Jacob, Jacob', he said. 'I am here', he replied. •'I am God, the God of 3
your father', he continued. 'Do not be afraid of going down to Egypt, for I will
make you a great nation there. •I myself will go down to Egypt with you. I myself 4
50:1 will bring you back again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes.' •Then Jacob 5
left Beersheba. Israel's sons conveyed their father Jacob, their little children and
their wives in the waggons Pharaoh had sent to fetch him.

Taking their livestock and all that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, 6
they went to Egypt, Jacob and all his family with him: •his sons and his grand- 7
sons, his daughters and his grand-daughters, in a word, all his children he took
with him to Egypt.

‖Nb26:5f ### Jacob's family[c]

These are the names of Israel's sons who came to Egypt, Reuben, Jacob's first- 8
1 Ch 5:3 born, •and the sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, Carmi. •The sons of 9 10
1 Ch 4:24 Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of the Canaanite
38:3-10 Nb 3:17 woman. •The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, Merari. •The sons of Judah: Er, 11 12
1 Ch 2:5 Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (though Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan),
Jg 10:1 1 Ch 7:1 and Hezron and Hamul, sons of Perez. •The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvah, 13
Jg 12:11 Jashub and Shimron. •The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, Jahleel. •These are the 14 15
sons that Leah had born to Jacob in Paddan-aram, besides his daughter Dinah;
in all, his sons and daughters numbered thirty-three.

1 Ch 5:11 The sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. 16
1 Ch 7:30 The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, with their sister Serah; the sons 17
of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel. •These are the sons of Zilpah whom Laban gave 18
to his daughter Leah; she bore these to Jacob—sixteen persons.

The sons of Rachel, wife of Jacob: Joseph and Benjamin. •Born to Joseph in 19 20
41:45 Egypt were: Manasseh and Ephraim, children of Asenath, the daughter of Poti-
1 Ch 7:6;8:1 phera priest of On. •The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, 21
Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard. •These are the sons that Rachel bore to 22
Jacob—fourteen persons in all.

1 Ch 7:13 The sons of Dan: Hushim. •The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer and 23 24
Shillem. •These are the sons of Bilhah whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel; 25
she bore these to Jacob—seven persons in all.

The people who went to Egypt with Jacob, of his own blood and not counting 26
the wives of Jacob's sons, numbered sixty-six all told. •Joseph's sons born to him 27
in Egypt were two in number. The members of the family of Jacob who went to
Ex 1:5 Dt 20:22 ↗Ac 17:14 Egypt totalled seventy.[d]

Joseph welcomes them

45:10 Tb 11:2 Israel sent Judah ahead to Joseph, so that the latter might present himself[e] 28
to him in Goshen. When they arrived in the land of Goshen, •Joseph had his 29
Tb 11:9 chariot made ready and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. As soon as
he appeared he threw his arms round his neck and for a long time wept on his
shoulder. •Israel said to Joseph, 'Now I can die, now that I have seen you again, 30
and seen you still alive'.

45:15f Then Joseph said to his brothers and his father's family, 'I will go up and 31
break the news to Pharaoh. I will tell him, "My brothers and my father's family
who were in the land of Canaan have come to me. •The men are shepherds and 32
look after livestock, and they have brought their flocks and cattle and all their
possessions." •Thus, when Pharaoh summons you and asks, "What is your occu- 33
pation?", •you are to say, "Ever since our boyhood your servants have looked 34
after livestock, we and our fathers before us". And so you will be able to stay in
the land of Goshen.' For the Egyptians have a horror of all shepherds.[f]

Pharaoh grants an audience

1 **47** So Joseph went and told Pharaoh, 'My father and brothers, along with their flocks and cattle and all their possessions, have come from the land of
2 Canaan and are now in the land of Goshen'. •He had taken five of his brothers,
3 and he now presented them to Pharaoh. •Pharaoh asked his brothers, 'What is your occupation?' and they gave Pharaoh the answer, 'Your servants are
4 shepherds, like our fathers before us'. •They went on to tell Pharaoh, 'We have come to stay for the present in this land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, the land of Canaan is hard-pressed by famine. Now give your servants leave
5a 6b to stay in the land of Goshen.' •Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, •'They may stay in the land of Goshen, and if you know of any capable men among them, put them in charge of my own livestock'.

45:10 Ex8:18;9:26 Ws19:16

Another version[a]

5b Jacob and his sons went to Egypt where Joseph was. Pharaoh, king of Egypt,
6a heard of this and said to Joseph, 'Your father and brothers have come to you.
7 The country of Egypt is open to you: settle your father and brothers in the best region.'[b] •Joseph brought his father and presented him to Pharaoh. Jacob blessed
8 Pharaoh. •Pharaoh asked Jacob, 'How many years of life can you reckon?'
9 'My life of wandering has lasted one hundred and thirty years,' Jacob told Pharaoh 'few years and unhappy, falling short of the years of my fathers in their
10 11 life of wandering.' •Jacob blessed Pharaoh and left Pharaoh's presence. •Joseph settled his father and brothers, giving them a holding in the land of Egypt, and in the best region of the land, namely the land of Rameses,[c] according to Pharaoh's command.

25:7;35:28; 47:28

Ex1:11;12:37

12 Joseph provided his father, brothers and all his father's family with food according to the number of their dependants.

Joseph's agrarian policy[d]

13 There was no bread in the whole land, for the famine had grown so severe that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan were weakened with hunger.
14 Joseph accumulated all the money there was to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in return for the grain which men were buying, and he brought the money to Pharaoh's palace.
15 When all the money in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan had run out, the Egyptians all came to Joseph: 'Give us bread' they said. 'Have we to perish
16 before your eyes? For our money has come to an end.' •Joseph answered, 'Hand over your livestock; I am willing to give you bread in exchange for your livestock,
17 if your money has come to an end'. •So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread, in exchange for horses and livestock, whether sheep or cattle, and for donkeys. Thus he fed them that year with bread, in exchange for all their livestock.
18 When that year was over, they came to him the next year, and said to him,

46 a. In this passage two traditions are reconciled: the 'Yahwistic' tradition makes Jacob-Israel set out from Hebron where it had left him, 37:14; the 'Elohistic' makes Beersheba his starting point.

b. The last of the patriarchal theophanies. God commands Jacob to go down to Egypt (the Exodus is already in view, v. 4) just as he had commanded Abraham to set out for Canaan, 12:1.

c. The 'Priestly' editor inserts here a list of Jacob's family; originally it had nothing to do with the descent into Egypt.

d. The Greek adds five descendants of Ephraim and Manassch, making the total seventy-five as in Ac 7:14.

e. Lit. 'appear before' Sam., Syr.

f. The sentence sounds odd after Pharaoh's remark: it is probably an interpolation. Though giving local colour, it is an anachronism because it suggests the Egyptians' expulsion of the hated Hyksos, the foreign 'Shepherds', which took place at a later date.

47 a. 'Priestly' tradition of the settlement in Egypt.

b. The order here followed (5a,6b,5b,6a) is that of the Greek which adds 'Jacob and his sons...said to Joseph'.

c. Used here the name is an anachronism: it was at a later period that 'Rameses' (either Tanis or Qantir) got its name from Rameses II.

d. This 'Yahwistic' section follows on ch. 41. The Israelites, accustomed to the idea of private property, were surprised by the Egyptian system: almost all the land was crown property. The tradition represented here ascribes the system to Joseph. The moral aspect of confiscation does not interest the author.

'We cannot hide it from my lord: the truth is, our money has run out and the live-
stock is in my lord's possession. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies
and our land. •Have we to perish before your eyes, we and our land? Buy us 19
and our land in exchange for bread; we with our land will be Pharaoh's serfs.
But give us something to sow, that we may keep our lives and not die and the
land may not become desolate.'

Thus Joseph acquired all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh, since one by one the 20
Egyptians sold their estates, so hard-pressed were they by the famine, and the
whole country passed into Pharaoh's possession. •As for the people, he reduced 21
them to serfdom[e] from one end of Egypt to the other. •The only land he 22
did not acquire belonged to the priests, for the priests received an allowance from
Pharaoh and lived on the allowance that Pharaoh gave them. Therefore they
did not have to sell their land.

Then Joseph said to the people, 'This is how we stand: I have bought you out, 23
with your land, on Pharaoh's behalf. Here is seed for you so that you can sow the
land. •But when harvest comes you must give a fifth to Pharaoh. The other four- 24
fifths you can have for sowing your fields, to provide food for yourselves and your
households, and food for your dependants.' •'You have saved our lives' they 25
replied. 'If we may enjoy my lord's favour, we will be Pharaoh's serfs.' •So Joseph 26
41:34 made a statute, still in force today, concerning the soil of Egypt: a fifth goes to
Pharaoh. The land of the priests alone did not go to Pharaoh.

Jacob's last wishes[f]

The Israelites stayed in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen. They 27
acquired property there; they were fruitful and increased in numbers greatly.
47:9 Jacob lived seventeen years in the land of Egypt, and the length of his life was a 28
=49:29-32;50:6 hundred and forty-seven years. •When Israel's time to die drew near he called his 29
24:2+ Tb 14:3 son Joseph and said to him, 'If I enjoy your favour, place your hand under my
thigh and promise to be kind and good to me, do not bury me in Egypt. •When I 30
sleep with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their tomb.' 'I will
1 K 1:47 Tb 14:12 do as you say' he replied. •'Swear to me' he insisted. So he swore to him, and 31
✗Heb11:21 Israel sank back on the pillow.[g]

Jacob adopts Joseph's two sons and blesses them[a]

48 Some time later it was reported to Joseph, 'Your father has been taken 1
ill'. So he took with him his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. •When 2
Jacob was told, 'Look, your son Joseph has come to you', Israel, summoning his
17:1+; 28:19;35:6; 11-12;48:2 strength, sat up in bed. •'El Shaddai appeared to me at Luz in the country of 3
Canaan,' Jacob told Joseph 'and he blessed me, •saying to me, "I will make you 4
fruitful and increase you in numbers. I will make you a group of peoples and give
this country to your descendants after you, to own in perpetuity." •Now your two 5
sons, born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, shall be
mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be as much mine as Reuben and Simeon. •But 6
with regard to the children you have had since them, they shall be yours, and
they shall be known by their brothers' names for the purpose of their inheritance.
35:16-20 'When I was on my way from Paddan, to my sorrow death took your mother[b] 7
Rachel from me, in the land of Canaan, on the journey while we were still some
distance from Ephrath. I buried her there on the road to Ephrath at Bethlehem.'

When Israel saw Joseph's two sons, he asked, 'Who are these?' •'They are my 8 9
sons, whom God has given me here' Joseph told his father. 'Then bring them
to me,' he said 'that I may bless them.' •Israel's sight was failing because of his 10
great age, and so he could not see. Joseph therefore made them come closer to
him and he kissed and embraced them. •Then Israel said to Joseph, 'I did not 11
think that I should see you again, but God has let me see your family as well'.
50:23 Joseph took them from his lap and bowed to the ground.[c] 12
1Ch26:10 Joseph took hold of the two of them, Ephraim with his right hand so that he 13

should be on Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand, so that he should be on
14 Israel's right, and brought them close to him. •But Israel held out his right hand
and laid it on the head of Ephraim, the younger, and his left on the head
15 of Manasseh, crossing his hands—Manasseh was, in fact, the elder. •Then he
blessed Joseph saying:

'May God in whose presence my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, Heb11:21
may God who has been my shepherd from my birth until this day, 49:24
16 may the angel who has been my saviour from all harm, bless these boys, Ps 23:1;80:2-3
may my name live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham 16:7+
and Isaac.
May they grow and increase on the earth.'

17 Joseph saw that his father was laying his right hand on the head of Ephraim,
and this upset him. He took his father's hand and tried to shift it from the
18 head of Ephraim to the head of Manasseh. •Joseph protested to his father, 'Not
19 like that, father! This one is the elder; put your right hand on his head.'[d] •But his
father refused. 'I know, my son, I know' he said. 'He too shall become a people;
he too shall be great. Yet his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his Dt 33:17
descendants shall become a multitude of nations.'[e]
20 So he blessed them that day saying:

'May you be[f] a blessing in Israel; may they say, 12:3+ Ps 21:6
"God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!" '

In this way he put Ephraim before Manasseh.
21 Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Now I am about to die. But God will be with you Jn4:5+
22 and take you back to the country of your fathers. •As for me, I give you a She-
chem[g] more than your brothers, the one I took from the Amorites with my sword
and my bow.'

Jacob's blessings[a] Jg 5 Dt 33

1 49 Jacob called his sons and said, 'Gather together that I may declare to you Dn10:14
what lies before you in time to come.

2 'Gather round, sons of Jacob, and listen;
listen to Israel your father.

3 Reuben, you are my first-born, 29:32 Jos 13:15
my vigour, and the first-fruit of my manhood,

e. 'he reduced them to serfdom' Sam., Greek.
f. 'Yahwistic' tradition with a 'Priestly' annotation, vv. 27-28.
g. Lit. 'bowed himself upon the head of his bed'. Through confusing *mittah* 'bed' with *matteh* 'staff' the Greek version makes Jacob 'bow over his staff'.

48 a. This chapter is an amalgam of several traditions: 'Yahwistic-Elohistic', vv. 1-2,7-22; and 'Priestly', vv. 3-6. These traditions use Jacob's dying bequest to show why it was that Manasseh and Ephraim, sons of Joseph, became fathers of tribes with the same status as that of Jacob's sons, why also their two tribes prospered and why Ephraim's outstripped Manasseh's.
b. 'your mother' Sam., Greek.
c. The children are placed in Jacob's lap (lit. 'between the knees'), evidently part of a rite of adoption, cf. 16:2 and 30:3. Joseph receives them back and prostrates himself to receive with them his father's blessing.
d. The very gestures of blessing are considered efficacious and the right hand is more beneficent than the left.
e. Ephraim did in fact become the most influential of the northern group of tribes and the nucleus of the future kingdom of Israel.
f. 'May you be' Targ., Greek.
g. There is a play on the Hebrew word *shekem* which means 'shoulder' but is also the name of the town and district of Shechem which was to become the property of the sons of Joseph where Joseph himself was to be buried, Jos 24:32. Jacob parcels out the Holy Land just as a paterfamilias, or the presiding personage, assigns the portions in a sacrificial banquet, 1 S 1:4f, the shoulder being one of the choicest parts, 1 S 9:23-24. This is an isolated piece of tradition dealing with Jacob's apportionment of Canaan and an armed conquest of Shechem where, according to 33:19, Jacob had done no more than buy a field.

49 a. These are oracles rather than blessings, cf. v. 1; in words which are themselves operative the patriarch foretells the destiny of his sons, i.e., of the tribes bearing their names. Doubtless the oracles allude to events of the patriarchal age (Reuben, Simeon, Levi) but they deal with a much later historical situation. The high honour assigned to Judah and the tribute paid to the House of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) point to a period when those tribes together played a leading part in the life of the nation; in its final form the poem cannot be earlier than David's time but many parts of it date from before the monarchy. The poem was inserted in Gn at a relatively late date; it is impossible to ascribe it to any of the three great 'sources' with any certainty. Cf. the list of tribes in the (earlier) Song of Deborah, Jg 5, and in the (later) Blessings of Moses, Dt 33.

foremost in pride, foremost in strength,
uncontrolled as a flood: you shall not be foremost, 4
35:22 for you mounted your father's bed,
and so defiled my couch, to my hurt.[b]

Jos 19:1f 'Simeon and Levi[c] are brothers, 5
they carried out their malicious plans[d]
Let my soul not enter into their counsel 6
nor my heart join in their company,
34:25-31 for in their rage they have killed men,
in their fury they hamstrung bulls.
Accursed be their rage for its ruthlessness, 7
their wrath for its ferocity.
I will divide them among Jacob,
I will scatter them among Israel.

27:29 Jos15:1-12 'Judah,[e] your brothers shall praise[f] you: 8
you grip your enemies by the neck,
37:7,9 Nb 24:9 your father's sons shall do you homage,
↗ Rv 5:5 Judah is a lion cub, 9
you climb back, my son, from your kill;
like a lion he crouches and lies down,
or a lioness: who dare rouse him?

Nb 24:17 2 S 7:1+ Ps 60:7 Is9:5f;11:1f ↗ Ezk 21:32 Mi 5:1-3 Zc 9:9 Heb 7:14 The sceptre shall not pass from Judah, 10
nor the mace from between his feet,
until he come to whom it belongs,[g]
to whom the peoples shall render obedience.[h]
He ties up his young ass to the vine, 11
Mt 21:5 to its stock the foal of his she-ass.
He washes his coat in wine,
Rv 7:14; 19:13 his cloak in the blood of the grape;
his eyes are cloudy with wine, 12
his teeth are white with milk.

Jos19:10f Zebulun lives by the shore of the sea, 13
he is a sailor[i] on board the ships,
he has Sidon close by him.

Jos19:17f 'Issachar[j] is a strong ass, 14
lying down in the midst of the sheepfolds.
He saw how good it was to take his ease, 15
how pleasant was the country,
so he bowed his shoulders for the load,
he became a slave to forced labour.

Jos19:40f 2 S 20:18 'Dan is judge[k] of his people 16
like each one of the tribes of Israel.
May Dan be a serpent on the road, 17
a viper[l] on the path,
who bites the horse on the hock
and its rider falls backward.

Is 25:9 'I trust in your salvation, Yahweh.[m] 18

'Gad, robbers rob him, 19
and he, he robs and pursues them.

Dt 33:24 Jos19:24f 'Asher,[n] his bread is rich, 20
he provides food fit for a king.

21 'Naphtali is a swift hind, Jos19:32f
dropping beautiful fawns.[o]

22 'Joseph is a fruitful creeper near the spring, ‖Dt33:13-17 Jos16:1f;17:1f
whose tendrils climb over the wall.[p]
23 Bowmen provoked him,
they drew and assailed him.
24 But their bow was broken by a mighty one, 48:15 Ps 18:2
the sinews of their arms were parted
by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, Ps 132:2
by the name of the Stone of Israel,[q]
25 by the God of your father who assists you,
by El Shaddai[r] who blesses you: 17:1+
with blessings of heaven above, Dt 28:2-5
blessings of the deep lying below,[s]
blessings of breasts and womb,
26 blessings of grain and flowers,
blessings of ancient mountains;[t]
bounty of the everlasting hills;
may they descend on Joseph's head,
on the brow of the dedicated[u] one among his brothers.

27 'Benjamin[v] is a ravening wolf, Jos18:11f
in the morning he devours his prey,
in the evening he is still dividing the spoil.'

28 All these make up the tribes of Israel, twelve in number, and this is what their father said to them. He blessed them, giving to each one[w] an appropriate blessing.

Jacob's last moments and his death[x]

29 Then he gave them these instructions, 'I am about to be gathered to my people. 47:29 Jdt 16:23
30 Bury me near my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, •in
the cave in the field at Machpelah, opposite Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which 23
31 Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite as a burial-plot. •There Abraham was
buried and his wife Sarah. There Isaac was buried and his wife Rebekah. There

b. Lit. 'against me' conj. Reuben, the first-born, forfeits the position of honour as a punishment for his incest. The tribe was still important at the time of Deborah's song but in the Blessings of Moses its military strength is considered negligible.

c. The two are cursed for their treacherous attack on Shechem. Both tribes are to be scattered in Israel: Simeon very soon ceased to exist, being for the most part absorbed in Judah; Levi vanished as a secular tribe but Dt 33:8-11 sings the praises of its religious function of which nothing is said here.

d. 'they... plans' Vet. Lat. and Greek.

e. The leadership and power of Judah are declared, vv. 8-9, and a messianic oracle added, vv. 10-12. In Dt 33:7 Judah lives apart from the others: by then the kingdom had split.

f. In Hebrew *yodu*, a play on 'Judah', cf. 29:35.

g. 'he to whom it belongs' (following the versions) i.e. 'to whom the sceptre belongs', a veiled prophecy of a Judan king who is to rule over the nations. The oracle possibly refers to David but to David as a type of the Messiah, as Jewish and Christian tradition understand.

h. Lit. 'to whom the obedience', with Hebr.; the versions read 'the hope', thus making the messianic sense of the passage explicit.

i. 'sailor' conj. Zebulun is to occupy the coast, near Phoenicia (Sidon).

j. Issachar, ensconced in the fertile plain of Esdraelon, lost virility and bowed to the Canaanite yoke.

k. 'Dan is judge' *dan yadin*, play on words as in 30:6.

l. The vicious horned viper.

m. An invocation in the manner of the Psalms; it marks approximately the middle of the poem.

n. 'pursues them, Asher' versions. V.19 is alliterative: *gad gedud yegudenno...yagud*. Gad, settled in Transjordania, had to defend itself from raiding nomads.

o. 'fawns' corr.; 'words' Hebr. and Vulg. Text uncertain.

p. Conjectural translation. Vulg. follows Hebr. very literally.

q. V. 24ab: approximately following the Greek. The 'Stone of Israel': equivalent to the 'Rock' = Yahweh, frequent in Psalms.

r. 'El Shaddai' versions.

s. The subterranean flood whose waters irrigate the earth, Dt 8:7.

t. 'blessings of grain and flowers' corr. 'ancient mountains' following Greek and Dt 33:15.

u. 'dedicated', Hebrew *nazir*, see Nb 6.

v. This picture of a bellicose Benjamin is vindicated by the tribe's subsequent history, cf. Jg 3:15f; 5:14; ch. 19-20 and cf. Saul's career, 1 S.

w. 'to each one' several MSS and Greek.

x. The end of Jacob's life in the 'Priestly' tradition.

I buried Leah. •I mean the field and the cave in it that were bought from the sons 32
of Heth.'[v]

48:2 When Jacob had finished giving his instructions to his sons, he drew his feet 33
up into the bed, and breathing his last was gathered to his people.

Jacob's funeral[a]

46:4 2K13:14 50 At this Joseph threw himself on his father, covering his face with tears and 1
kissing him. •Then Joseph ordered the doctors in his service to embalm his 2
father. The doctors embalmed Israel, •and it took them forty days, for embalming 3
takes forty days to complete.

The Egyptians mourned him for seventy days. •When the period of mourning 4
for him was over, Joseph said to Pharaoh's household, 'If I may presume to enjoy
your favour, please see that this message reaches Pharaoh's ears, •"My father 5
Mt 8:21 made me swear an oath: I am about to die, he said, I have a tomb which I dug for
myself in the land of Canaan, and there you must bury me. So now I seek leave
to go up and bury my father, and then I shall come back." ' •Pharaoh replied, 6
47:29 'Go up and bury your father, in accordance with the oath he made you swear'.

Joseph went up to bury his father, all Pharaoh's servants and the palace digni- 7
taries going up with him, joined by all the dignitaries of the land of Egypt, •as 8
well as all Joseph's family and his brothers, along with his father's family. They
left no one in the land of Goshen but their dependants,[b] with their flocks and their
cattle. •Chariots also and horsemen went up with them; it was a very large retinue. 9

1 S 31:13 On arriving at Goren-ha-atad, which is across the Jordan, they performed 10
there a long and solemn lamentation, and Joseph observed three days' mourning
for his father. •When the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, witnessed the 11
mourning at Goren-ha-atad they exclaimed, 'This is a solemn act of mourning
for the Egyptians'. For this reason they call this place Abel-mizraim[c]—it is across
the Jordan.

His sons did what he had ordered them to do for him. •His sons carried him to 12 13
✗Ac7:16 the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field at Machpelah opposite
Mamre, which Abraham had bought from Ephron the Hittite as a burial-plot.

Then Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, along with all those who 14
had come up with him for his father's burial.

From the death of Jacob to that of Joseph

45:3 Seeing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph 15
intends to treat us as enemies and repay us in full for all the wrong we did
him?' •So they sent this message to Joseph: 'Before your father died he gave us 16
this order: •"You must say to Joseph: Oh forgive your brothers their crime and 17
their sin and all the wrong they did you". Now therefore, we beg you,
37:7-11 forgive the crime of the servants of your father's God.' Joseph wept at the message
they sent to him.

His brothers came themselves and fell down before him. 'We present ourselves 18
before you' they said 'as your slaves.' •But Joseph answered them, 'Do not be 19
45:5 afraid; is it for me to put myself in God's place? •The evil you planned to do me 20
Rm12:19; 8:28 Ph 1:12 has by God's design been turned to good, that he night dring about, as indeed
he has, the deliverance of a numerous people. •So you need not be afraid; I my- 21
self will provide for you and your dependants.' In this way he reassured them
with words that touched their hearts.

So Joseph stayed in Egypt with his father's family; and Joseph lived a hundred 22
Ps22:10; 128:56 and ten years. •Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's children, as also the 23
48:12 children of Machir, Manasseh's son, who were born on Joseph's lap. •At length 24
Ex 12:41 Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die; but God will be sure to remember
you kindly and take you back from this country to the land that he promised on
Ex 13:19 Jos 24:32 Si 49:15 Heb11:22 oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. •And Joseph made Israel's sons swear an oath, 25
'When God remembers you with kindness be sure to take my bones from here'.

26 Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten; they embalmed him and laid Ex 1:6
him in his coffin in Egypt.

y. V. 32 is wanting in Vulg.

50 a. This chapter mingles the 'Yahwistic' and the 'Elohistic' traditions; there is also a trace, vv. 12-13, of the 'Priestly' tradition.

b. The usual translation is 'the small children', but the Hebrew word here and in certain other places has a wider meaning: dependants (43:8; 47:12; 50:21).

c. *Goren-ha-atad* means 'Threshing-floor of the Bramble'; *Abel-mizraim* ('Meadow of Egypt') gives opportunity for a play on words (*'abel* 'meadow' and *'ebel* 'mourning'). Neither locality is known. There are traces here of a tradition other than that relating to the family grave at Machpelah, namely that Jacob had prepared a separate tomb for himself, cf. v. 5 and 48:7.

EXODUS

I. THE LIBERATION FROM EGYPT

A. ISRAEL IN EGYPT[a]

The prosperity of the Hebrews in Egypt

Gn46:1-27 ✗Ac7:14-17 1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went with Jacob to Egypt, 1
each with his family: •Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah, •Issachar, Zebulun 2 3
‖Gn46:27 Dt 10:22 and Benjamin, •Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. •In all, the descendants of 4 5
Gn 50:26 Jacob numbered seventy persons. Joseph was in Egypt already.[b] •Then Joseph 6
Ps105:24 ✗Ac13:17 *Jdt 5:10* died, and his brothers, and all that generation. •But the sons of Israel were fruitful 7
and grew in numbers greatly; they increased and grew so immensely powerful
that they filled the land.

The Hebrews oppressed

Jdt 5:12 Ws19:16 Then there came to power in Egypt a new king who knew nothing of Joseph. 8
✗Ac7:18-19 'Look,' he said to his subjects 'these people, the sons of Israel, have become so 9
Ps105:25 Ac7:19-29 numerous and strong that they are a threat to us. •We must be prudent and 10
take steps against their increasing any further, or if war should break out, they
might add to the number of our enemies. They might take arms against us and
so escape out of the country.' •Accordingly they put slave-drivers over the 11
Israelites to wear them down under heavy loads.[c] In this way they built the
Gn47:11 store-cities of Pithom and Rameses[d] for Pharaoh.[e] •But the more they were 12
crushed, the more they increased and spread, and men came to dread the sons 13 14
2S 12:31 of Israel. •The Egyptians forced the sons of Israel into slavery, •and made
Dt 11:10 Ps 81:6 their lives unbearable with hard labour, work with clay and with brick, all
kinds of work in the fields; they forced on them every kind of labour.

Ws 11:6 The king of Egypt then spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was 15
named Shiphrah, and the other Puah. •'When you midwives attend Hebrew 16
women,' he said 'watch the two stones[f] carefully. If it is a boy, kill him; if a girl,
let her live.' •But the midwives were God-fearing: they disobeyed the command 17
of the king of Egypt and let the boys live. •So the king of Egypt summoned the 18
midwives. 'Why' he asked them 'have you done this and spared the boys?' •'The 19
Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women,' they answered Pharaoh 'they are
hardy, and they give birth before the midwife reaches them.' •God was kind 20
to the midwives. The people went on increasing and grew very powerful; •since 21
the midwives reverenced God he granted them descendants.

Ws11:14; 18:5 Pharaoh then gave his subjects this command: 'Throw all the boys born to 22
the Hebrews into the river,[g] but let all the girls live'.

B. EARLY LIFE AND CALL OF MOSES

The birth of Moses[a]

2 There was a man of the tribe of Levi who had taken a woman of Levi as his
2 wife. •She conceived and gave birth to a son and, seeing what a fine child he
3 was, she kept him hidden for three months. •When she could hide him no longer,
she got a papyrus basket for him; coating it with bitumen and pitch, she put the
4 child inside and laid it among the reeds at the river's edge. •His sister stood
some distance away to see what would happen to him.
5 Now Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe in the river, and the girls
attending her were walking along by the riverside. Among the reeds she noticed
6 the basket, and she sent her maid to fetch it. •She opened it and looked,[b] and
saw a baby boy, crying; and she was sorry for him. 'This is a child of one of the
7 Hebrews' she said. •Then the child's sister said to the Pharaoh's daughter,
'Shall I go and find you a nurse among the Hebrew women to suckle the child
8 for you?' •'Yes, go' Pharaoh's daughter said to her; and the girl went off to find
9 the baby's own mother. •To her the daughter of Pharaoh said, 'Take this child
away and suckle it for me. I will see you are paid.' So the woman took the child
10 and suckled it. •When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter
who treated him like a son; she named him Moses because, she said, 'I drew
him out of the water'.[c]

6:20 Is 63:11 ↗ *Ac7:20f* ↗ Heb11:23 *Ws11:14*

↗ Ac7:21

Moses escapes to Midian[d]

11 Moses, a man by now,[e] set out at this time to visit his countrymen, and he saw
what a hard life they were having; and he saw an Egyptian strike a Hebrew, one
12 of his countrymen. •Looking round he could see no one in sight, so he killed the
13 Egyptian and hid him in the sand. •On the following day he came back, and there
were two Hebrews, fighting. He said to the man who was in the wrong, 'What
14 do you mean by hitting your fellow countryman?' •'And who appointed you'
the man retorted •'to be prince over us, and judge? Do you intend to kill me as
you killed the Egyptian?' Moses was frightened. 'Clearly that business has
15 come to light' he thought. •When Pharaoh heard of the matter he would have
killed Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and made for the land of Midian.[f]
And he sat down beside a well.

↗ Heb11:24-27

↗ Ac7:35

Is 60:6 Ba 3:23 ↗ Ac7:29

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water and
17 fill the troughs to water their father's sheep. •Shepherds came and drove them
18 away, but Moses came to their defence and watered their sheep for them. •When

Gn24:11f; 29:2f 1 S 9:11

1 **a.** Vv. 1-5 are from the 'Priestly' source, the remainder of ch. 1 being ascribed to the 'Yahwistic' (vv. 6-14) and 'Elohistic' (vv. 15f) traditions. The author does not describe the life of the Israelite communities in Egypt; he mentions only what is to his purpose. This purpose is to write a *religious* history: the increase in numbers of Jacob's descendants and the Egyptian persecution are recorded because they lead up to the account of the Exodus and of the Sinaitic Covenant. For the historical setting of these events see Introduction to the Pentateuch.

b. The Greek reads 'seventy-five', cf. Gn 46:27+, and makes 'Joseph was in Egypt' the opening of the verse.

c. For their massive undertakings oriental kings always used forced labour; in Israel, David was to do so, 2 S 20:24, and especially Solomon, 1 K 4:6; 5:28, etc.

d. Residence in the Delta of Pharaoh Rameses II; to be identified either with Tanis or with Qantir.

e. The Egyptian is *Per-aa*, 'the great House', conventional designation of the Palace or Court and, from the 18th dynasty onwards, of the king's own person.

f. The brick couch on which the woman lay while in labour (or possibly the sex organs of the infant?); Syr. 'the two knees'; the Greek interprets freely 'when they are about to give birth'.

g. The word indicates the Nile, the great river of Egypt, but is also used of its main branches.

2 **a.** Attributed to the 'Yahwistic-Elohistic' tradition, or else to the 'Elohistic' alone.

b. The Hebr. has '(saw) the child', a gloss absent from the Greek.

c. Popular etymology of Moses' name (Hebr. *mosheh*) from the verb *mashah* 'to draw out'.

d. Vv. 11-22 (or, as some think, only 15-22) belong to the 'Yahwistic' tradition.

e. Josephus and Philo give legendary details of Moses' education. Ac 7:22 merely observes that he was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

f. Midian lies to the south of Edom and to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba. Gn 25:1-4 connects the Midianites with a group of Arab tribes descended from Abraham's wife Keturah. These nomads frequent the highways of Palestine, Gn 37:28,36, and of the Sinai peninsula, Nb 10:29-32; they raid as far afield as Moab, Gn 36:35, where they later come to blows with the Hebrews, Nb 22:4,7; 25:6-18; 31:1-9; Jos 13:21. They were to be soundly beaten by Gideon, Jg 6-8; cf. Is 9:3; 10:26; Ps 83:9. At 'the end of times' Midian will come and pay homage to Yahweh, Is 60:6.

they returned to their father Reuel,[g] he said to them, 'You are back early today!' 19
'An Egyptian protected us from the shepherds;' they said 'yes, and he drew
water for us and watered the flock.' •'And where is he?' he asked his daughters. 20
'Why did you leave the man there? Ask him to eat with us.' •So Moses settled 21
with this man, who gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage.• She gave birth 22
18:3 Jg 18:30 to a son, and he named him Gershom[h] because, he said, 'I am a stranger in a foreign land'.[i]

THE CALL OF MOSES

God remembers Israel[j]

Ne 9:9 During this long period the king of Egypt died. The sons of Israel, groaning 23
in their slavery, cried out for help and from the depths of their slavery their cry
came up to God. •God heard their groaning and he called to mind his covenant 24
with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. •God looked down upon the sons of Israel, and 25
he knew...[k]

The burning bush[a]

=6:2-13; 6:29–7:7 3 Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law. He led his flock 1
Ac7:30-35 ✗Ac13:17 to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb,[b] the mountain of God.
There the angel of Yahweh[c] appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire, 2
coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing
but it was not being burnt up. •'I must go and look at this strange sight,' Moses 3
said 'and see why the bush is not burnt.' •Now Yahweh saw him go forward 4
to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!'
Gn18:16-17 Ex19:12+ Lv17:1+ Jos 5:15 *Ex33:20+* 1K19:13 ✗Mt22:32p Mk12:26 he said. 'Here I am' he answered. •'Come no nearer' he[d] said. 'Take off your 5
shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. •I am the God of your 6
father,' he said 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.'
At this Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God.[e]

The mission of Moses

1 S 9:16 Ho 12:14 And Yahweh said, 'I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt. 7
I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave-drivers. Yes, I am well aware
Jr2:7;32:22 Ba 1:20 Ezk 20:6 of their sufferings. •I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and 8
bring them up out of that land to a land rich and broad, a land where milk and
Nb13:27; 16:13 honey flow,[f] the home of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites,
Dt 7:1+ Jos 5:6 the Hivites and the Jebusites. •And now the cry of the sons of Israel has come 9
1S14:10+ to me, and I have witnessed the way in which the Egyptians oppress them,
Jg 6:14 1 S 9:16 Ps105:26 so come, I send you to Pharaoh to bring the sons of Israel, my people, out of 10
Egypt.'
Nb11:11; 12:3 Moses said to God, 'Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the sons of Israel 11
Nb16:28 Jos 1:5 out of Egypt?' •'I shall be with you,' was the answer 'and this is the sign by which 12
you shall know that it is I who have sent you...[g] After you have led the people
✗Ac 7:7 out of Egypt, you are to offer worship to God on this mountain.'

The divine name revealed

Then Moses said to God, 'I am to go, then, to the sons of Israel and say to 13
them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you". But if they ask me what
15:3;33:21 Is 42:8+ his name is, what am I to tell them?' •And God said to Moses, 'I Am who I Am. 14
✗Jn 8:24+ Jn17:6,26 Heb 11:6 This' he added 'is what you must say to the sons of Israel: "I Am has sent me
to you".'[h] •And God also said to Moses, 'You are to say to the sons of Israel: 15
Nb 12:2 Ps135:13 Ac 3:13 "Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and
the God of Jacob, has sent me to you". This is my name for all time; by this
name I shall be invoked for all generations to come.

Moses instructed for his mission

16 'Go and gather the elders of Israel together and tell them, "Yahweh, the God 32:34 Zp1:8
of your fathers, has appeared to me,—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of
Jacob; and he has said to me: I have visited[f] you and seen all that the Egyptians
17 are doing to you. •And so I have resolved to bring you up out of Egypt where
you are oppressed, into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, Dt 7:1+
the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land where milk and honey
18 flow." •They will listen to your words, and with the elders of Israel you are to
go to the king of Egypt and say to him, "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has
come to meet us. Give us leave, then, to make a three days' journey into the
19 wilderness to offer sacrifice to Yahweh our God." •For myself, knowing that
20 the king of Egypt will not let you go unless he is forced by a mighty hand,[j] •I shall
show my power and strike Egypt with all the wonders I am going to work there.
After this he will let you go.

The Egyptians to be plundered

21 I will give this people such prestige in the eyes of the Egyptians that when you 11:2-3 12:35-36
22 go, you will not go empty-handed. •Every woman will ask her neighbour and the Ws 10:17
woman who is staying in her house for silver ornaments and gold. With these you Ezr 1:6
will adorn your sons and daughters; you will plunder the Egyptians.'

Moses granted miraculous powers

1 4 Then Moses answered, 'What if they will not believe me or listen to my words 7:8-12 Nb 11:11
2 and say to me, "Yahweh has not appeared to you"?' •Yahweh asked him, Jg 6:17 Mt 13:57
3 'What is that in your hand?' 'A staff' Moses said. •'Throw it on the ground'
said Yahweh; so Moses threw his staff on the ground—it turned into a serpent
4 and he drew back from it. •'Put your hand out and catch it by the tail' Yahweh Ezk 38:16
said to him. And he put out his hand and caught it, and in his hand the serpent

g. Another tradition makes Jethro father-in-law of Moses (3:1; 4:18). Yet another calls him Hobab (Jg 1:16; 4:11). 'Reuel' here may be the result of a mistaken interpretation of Nb 10:29.

h. Popular etymology, accounting only for the first syllable: *ger*, a resident alien, cf. 12:48.

i. Vulg. (following 18:4) adds 'She gave birth to another whom he named Eliezer because, he said, the God of my father is my help, he has delivered me from the hand of Pharaoh'.

j. 'Priestly' tradition.

k. The verse does not yield satisfactory sense; probably the end is missing.

3 a. This first account (3-4) of Moses' call combines 'Yahwistic' with 'Elohistic' elements. There is a second account, 'Priestly', in 6:2-13 and 6:28-7:7.

b. The 'Elohistic' tradition uses this alternative name for Sinai.

c. God himself as manifesting himself to man. Cf. Gn 16:7+.

d. Yahweh.

e. God's majesty is such that no man can gaze on it and live.

f. Description of the Promised Land frequent in the Pentateuch.

g. Some identify the promised sign with the safe arrival at Sinai, but others break the sentence after 'who have sent you' and hold that the sign described in 4:1-9 has been omitted from this place.

h. According to the 'Yahwistic' tradition the worship of Yahweh went back to the days before the Flood: Gn 4:26. According to the 'Priestly' tradition Yahweh revealed himself to the patriarchs under the name El-Shaddai (cf. Gn 17:1+): Ex 6:2-3. In this passage, which belongs to the 'Elohistic' tradition, it is at this time that God reveals the name Yahweh: by this name he wishes to be invoked in future by the children of Israel. This narrative, a peak of Old Testament revelation, presents two difficulties: the first is philological—the etymology of the name Yahweh; the second is exegetical and theological—the meaning of the narrative as a whole and the significance of the revelation that it conveys. 1. The etymology: attempts have been made to explain the name Yahweh (abridged forms like *Yaho, Yah* etc. are found in both biblical and non-biblical texts) from various Hebr. roots but there seems little doubt that it is an archaic form of the verb 'to be'. 2. The interpretation: a. it may be that Yahweh is used here to imply the impossibility of giving an adequate definition of God. In semitic thought, knowledge of a name gave power over the thing named; to know a god's name was to be able to call on him and be certain of a hearing. The true God does not make himself man's slave in this way by revealing a name expressive of his essence; this refusal to reveal is contained in the formula *Ehyeh asher ehyeh* ('I am who I am', 'I am what I am') which, in the third person, becomes Yahweh, 'He is'. Understood in this fashion the name does not define God; nevertheless, for Israel it will always call to mind God's great deliverance of his chosen people and the divine generosity, fidelity and power that prompted it. In Christian thought this interpretation brings out the transcendence of a God for whom man can never find a worthy name. b. Tradition, however, following the Septuagint, has commonly preferred to take *Ehyeh asher ehyeh* as meaning 'I am the One who is', 'I am who am'; the name Yahweh, 'He is', would then express not necessarily the absolute nature of God's essence as a later philosophy and theology were to state it, but at least God's unlimited existence as opposed to the 'nothingness' of the gods. Cf. Is 42:8+.

i. The verb 'to visit' signifies a special divine intervention whether to save or to avenge.

j. 'unless he is forced by a mighty hand' Greek and Vulg.; 'not even by a mighty hand' Hebr.

turned into a staff...[a] •'so that they may believe that Yahweh, the God of their 5
fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has really
appeared to you.'

Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, 'Put your hand into your bosom.' He put his 6
Lv 13:1+ / 2 K 5:27 hand into his bosom and when he drew it out, his hand was covered with leprosy,
white as snow. •'Put your hand back into your bosom.' He put his hand back 7
into his bosom and when he drew it out, there it was restored, just like the rest
of his flesh. •'Even so: should they not believe you nor be convinced by the first 8
sign, the second will convince them; •but if they should believe neither of these 9
two signs and not listen to your words, you must take water from the river and
pour it on the ground, and the water you have drawn from the river will turn to
blood on the ground.'

Aaron, the mouthpiece of Moses

Nb 12:3 / Jr 1:6-10 Moses said to Yahweh, 'But, my Lord, never in my life have I been a man 10
of eloquence, either before or since you have spoken to your servant. I am a
Ps 94:9 / Pr 20:12 slow speaker and not able to speak well.' •'Who gave man his mouth?' 11
Yahweh answered him. 'Who makes him dumb or deaf, gives him sight or leaves
Dt 18:18 / Is 6:8 / Mt10:19-20p him blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? •Now go, I shall help you to speak and tell you 12
what to say.'

'If it please you, my Lord,' Moses replied 'send anyone you will!' •At this, 13 14
the anger of Yahweh blazed out against Moses, and he said to him, 'There is your
brother Aaron the Levite, is there not? I know that he is a good speaker. Here
7:1-2 he comes to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will be full of joy. •You will 15
speak to him and tell him what message to give. I shall help you to speak, and
him too, and instruct you what to do. •He himself is to speak to the people 16
in your place; he will be your mouthpiece, and you will be as the god in-
4:21 spiring him. •And take this staff into your hand;[b] with this you will perform 17
the signs.'

Moses returns to Egypt. He leaves Midian

2:18+ Moses went away and returned to his father-in-law Jethro, and said to him, 18
'Give me leave to go back to my relatives in Egypt to see if they are still alive'.
And Jethro said to Moses, 'Go in peace'.

Mt 2:20 Yahweh said to Moses in Midian, 'Go, return to Egypt, for all those who 19
wanted to kill you are dead'. •So Moses took his wife and his son[c] and, putting 20
them on a donkey, started back for the land of Egypt; and Moses took in his
4:17 / Dt 2:30 / Jos 11:20 hand the staff of God. •Yahweh said to Moses, 'Now that you are going back 21
to Egypt, be prepared to perform before Pharaoh all the marvels that I have
given you power to do. I myself will harden his heart,[d] and he will not let the
Dt1:31;7:6+ / Ws 18:13 / Si 36:11 people go. •Then you will say to Pharaoh, "This is what Yahweh says: Israel 22
is my first-born son. •I ordered you to let my son go to offer me worship. You 23
refuse to let him go. So be it! I shall put your first-born to death". '

Gn32:25-33 ### The son of Moses circumcised[e]

On the journey, when Moses had halted for the night, Yahweh[f] came to meet 24
Jos5:2-3+ him and tried to kill him. •At once Zipporah, taking up a flint, cut off her son's 25
foreskin and with it she touched the genitals[g] of Moses. 'Truly, you are a bride-
groom of blood to me!' she said. •And Yahweh let him live. It was then that she 26
Gn17:10+ said, 'bridegroom of blood' on account of the circumcision.

Moses meets Aaron

Ps105:26 Yahweh said to Aaron, 'Go into the wilderness to meet Moses'. And so he 27
3:1 went, and met him at the mountain of God; and he kissed him. •Moses then 28
told Aaron all that Yahweh had said when he set him his task and all the signs
3:16 he had ordered him to perform. •Moses and Aaron then went and gathered all 29

30 the elders of the sons of Israel together, •and Aaron told all that Yahweh had said 4:2-9 Nb 16:28
31 to Moses, and in the sight of the people he performed the signs. •The people were Jn 2:11
convinced, and they rejoiced[h] that Yahweh had visited the sons of Israel and 14:31
seen their misery, and they bowed down and worshipped.

The first audience with Pharaoh[a]

1 5 After this, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, 'This is what
Yahweh, the God of Israel, has said, "Let my people go, so that they may
2 keep a feast in the wilderness in honour of me." ' •'Who is Yahweh,' Pharaoh
replied 'that I should listen to him and let Israel go? I know nothing of Yahweh,
3 and I will not let Israel go.' •'The God of the Hebrews has come to meet us' they
replied. 'Give us leave to make a three days' journey into the wilderness to offer
sacrifice to Yahweh our God, or he will come down on us with a plague or with
4 the sword.' •The king of Egypt said to them, 'Moses and Aaron, what do you Ws 19:16
mean by taking the people away from their work? Get back to your labouring.'
5 And Pharaoh said, 'Now that these common folk have grown to such numbers,
do you want to stop them labouring?'

Instructions to the slave-drivers

6 That same day, Pharaoh gave this command to the people's slave-drivers and
7 to the overseers. •'Up to the present, you have provided these people with straw[b]
for brickmaking. Do so no longer; let them go and gather straw for themselves.
8 All the same, you are to get from them the same number of bricks as before, not
reducing it at all. They are lazy, and that is why their cry is, "Let us go and offer
9 sacrifice to our God". •Make these men work harder than ever, so that they do
not have time to stop and listen to glib speeches.'
10 The people's slave-drivers went out with the overseers to speak to the people.
11 'Pharaoh has given orders' they said: ' "I will not provide you with straw. •Go
out and collect straw for yourselves wherever you can find it. But your output
12 is not to be any less." ' •So the people scattered all over the land of Egypt to
13 gather stubble for making chopped straw. •The slave-drivers harassed them.
'Every day you must complete your daily quota,' they said 'just as you did when
14 straw was provided for you.' •And the foremen who had been appointed for the
sons of Israel by Pharaoh's slave-drivers were flogged, and they were asked,
'Why have you not produced your full amount of bricks as before, either yesterday
or today?'

The Hebrew foremen complain

15 The foremen for the sons of Israel went to Pharaoh and complained. 'Why
16 do you treat your servants so?' they said. •'No straw is provided for your servants
and still the cry is, "Make bricks!" And now your servants have been flogged!...'[c]
17 'You are lazy, lazy' he answered 'that is why you say, "Let us go and offer
18 sacrifice to Yahweh". •Get back to your work at once. You shall not get any
straw, but you must deliver the number of bricks due from you.'

4 a. V. 4b interrupts Yahweh's discourse which is resumed in v. 5; before v. 5 we must understand 'Do this' or its equivalent.

b. Moses receives his staff back from God (hence his name 'staff of God', cf. v. 20); it is to be an instrument of wonders, 7:20b; 9:22f; 10:13f; etc. Cf. the staff of Elisha, 2 K 4:29.

c. 'his son' corr.; 'his sons' Hebr.

d. Mode of expression common among the Hebrews; it ascribes to God the action of men. Cf. Is 6:10 and Mt 13:10-15p.

e. A mysterious narrative difficult to interpret. We have given the commonly accepted translation. Moses is on his way home and Yahweh is bent on killing him (cf. Jacob's struggle with God, Gn 32:25-33). It seems fairly clear it is because Moses is uncircumcised (on circumcision, cf. Gn 17:10+). Zipporah, therefore, circumcises her son and simulates circumcision for her husband by touching his male organ with her son's foreskin.

f. 'Yahweh'; 'the angel of Yahweh' Greek.

g. Lit. 'the feet', cf. Is 6:2; 7:20.

h. 'rejoiced' Greek; 'understood' Hebr.

5 a. Vv. 1-4 (except 3) are 'Elohistic'; the section 5:5-6:1 is 'Yahwistic'.

b. Chopped straw was mixed with the clay to give consistency to the unbaked brick.

c. The Massoretic text of the last part of the v., 'the sin of your people', does not make sense.

The dilemma of the foremen. Moses prays

The foremen for the sons of Israel saw themselves in a very difficult position 19
when told there was to be no reduction in the daily number of bricks. •As they 20
left Pharaoh's presence they met Moses and Aaron who were waiting for them.
14:12 'May Yahweh see your work and punish you as you deserve!' they said to them. 21
'You have made us hated by Pharaoh and his court; you have put a sword into
Nb11:11 their hand to kill us.' •Once more Moses turned to Yahweh. 'Lord,' he said 22
to him 'why do you treat this people so harshly? Why did you send me here?
Ever since I came to Pharaoh and spoke to him in your name, he has ill-treated 23
this nation, and you have done nothing to deliver your people.' **6** Then Yahweh 1
said to Moses, 'You will see now how I shall punish Pharaoh. He will be forced
to let them go; yes, he will be forced to send them out of his land.'

=3:1-4:23 **Another account of the call of Moses**[a]

God spoke to Moses and said to him, 'I am Yahweh. •To Abraham and Isaac 2 3
Gn17:1+ and Jacob I appeared as El Shaddai; I did not make myself known to them by
my name Yahweh. •Also, I made my covenant with them to give them the land 4
Gn17:7-8 of Canaan, the land they lived in as strangers. •And I have heard the groaning 5
of the sons of Israel, enslaved by the Egyptians, and have remembered my
Ps 81:6 covenant. •Say this, then, to the sons of Israel, "I am Yahweh. I will free you of 6
the burdens which the Egyptians lay on you. I will release you from slavery to
them, and with my arm outstretched[b] and my strokes of power I will deliver you.
2 S 7:24 I will adopt you as my own people,[c] and I will be your God. Then you shall 7
know that it is I, Yahweh your God, who have freed you from the Egyptians'
Gn15:24:7 burdens. •Then I will bring you to the land I swore that I would give to Abraham, 8
and Isaac, and Jacob, and will give it to you for your own; I, Yahweh, will do
14:12 this!" ' •Moses told this to the sons of Israel, but they would not listen to him, 9
so crushed was their spirit and so cruel their slavery.

Yahweh then said to Moses, •'Go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and tell him to 10 11
let the sons of Israel leave his land'. •But Moses answered to Yahweh's face: 12
4:10 'Look,' said he 'since the sons of Israel have not listened to me, why should
Pharaoh listen to me, a man slow of speech?'[d] •Yahweh spoke to Moses and 13
Aaron and ordered them both to go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to bring the
sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

The genealogy of Moses and Aaron

Nb26:5-14 These are the heads of their families: 14

The sons of Reuben, Israel's first-born: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi:
these are the clans of Reuben.

The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, son of 15
the Canaanite woman: these are the clans of Simeon.

Gn46:11 Nb 3:17f; 26:57 These are the names of the sons of Levi with their descendants: Gershon, 16
Kohath and Merari. Levi lived for a hundred and thirty-seven years. •The sons 17
of Gershon: Libni and Shimei and their clans.

1Ch5:28 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. Kohath lived for 18
a hundred and thirty-three years.

1Ch6:14 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of Levi with their 19
descendants.

2:1-2 Nb26:59 Amram married Jochebed, his aunt, who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram 20
lived for a hundred and thirty-seven years.

The sons of Izhar were: Korah, Nepheg and Zichri. 21

And the sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan and Sithri. 22

Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, 23
and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah and Abiasaph. These are the clans of the 24
Korahites.

25 Eleazar, son of Aaron, married one of Putiel's daughters who bore him Phinehas. Nb 25:6-13 Jos 22:13

These are the heads of families of the Levites according to their clans.

26 It was to this same Aaron and Moses that Yahweh had said, 'Bring the sons
27 of Israel out of the land of Egypt in battle order'. •It was they who spoke with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, about bringing the sons of Israel out of Egypt. It was the same Moses and Aaron.

The narrative of Moses' call resumed 3:1;6:2-13

28 29 On the day when Yahweh spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, •he said this to him, 'I am Yahweh. Tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all that I say to you.'
30 But Moses said to Yahweh's face, 'I am slow of speech, why should Pharaoh listen to me?'

1 7 Yahweh said to Moses, 'See, I make you as a god for Pharaoh, and Aaron 4:16
2 your brother is to be your prophet. •You yourself must tell him all I command Dt 11:3 Ws 10:16 you, and Aaron your brother will tell Pharaoh to let the sons of Israel leave
3 his land. •I myself will make Pharaoh's heart stubborn, and perform many 4:21 Ps 135:9
4 a sign and wonder in the land of Egypt. •Pharaoh will not listen to you, and Ac 7:36 so I will lay my hand on Egypt and with strokes of power lead out my armies,
5 my people, the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt. •And all[a] the Egyptians shall come to know that I am Yahweh when I stretch out my hand against Egypt
6 and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.' •Moses and Aaron obeyed;
7 they did what Yahweh commanded them. •Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three at the time of their audience with Pharaoh.

C. THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT[b] — THE PASSOVER

The staff turned into a serpent Ps 78:105 Ws 11:14-20 16-18

8 9 Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, •'If Pharaoh says to you, "Produce some marvel", you must say to Aaron, "Take your staff and throw it down in front 4:2f
10 of Pharaoh, and let it turn into a serpent" '. •To Pharaoh, then, Moses and Aaron duly went, and they did as Yahweh commanded. Aaron threw down
11 his staff in front of Pharaoh and his court, and it turned into a serpent. •Then Pharaoh in his turn called for the sages and the sorcerers, and with their Gn 41:8
12 witchcraft the magicians of Egypt did the same. •Each threw his staff down and Jdt 5:12 2 Tm 3:8 these turned into serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up the staffs of the
13 magicians. •Yet Pharaoh's heart was stubborn and, as Yahweh had foretold, he would not listen to Moses and Aaron.

The first plague: the water turns to blood ↗ Ws 11:6-8

14 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Pharaoh is adamant. He refuses to let the

6 a. 6:2-7:7: 'Priestly' narrative, parallel with 3-4, of the call of Moses. According to this tradition the divine name (v. 2) was revealed in three stages: Elohim, El-Shaddai, Yahweh. The people refuse to listen to Moses (v. 9, cf. 4:31). Aaron will interpret Moses to Pharaoh (7:1) and not, as in 4:10-16, to the people.

b. I.e. 'ready to strike'. Expression frequent in Dt where it is coupled with 'a mighty hand', Dt 4:34; 5:15; 7:19, 26:8, etc.

c. The twin expressions of Israel's election, 'my people', 'your God', occur often in the Pentateuch and in certain of the prophets, e.g., Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

d. Lit. 'uncircumcised of lip'.

7 a. 'all' Sam. and Greek.

b. It is most probable that in this narrative of the plagues we must recognise a variety of traditions, though it is difficult to decide precisely what belongs to each. The 'Priestly' tradition ranges Aaron with Moses against the magicians; the miracles worked by Aaron with the help of the staff are designed to prove that Moses is God's envoy. According to the 'Yahwistic' tradition Moses goes alone to Pharaoh and asks permission to take his people to worship God in the desert; and it is Yahweh himself who inflicts and arrests the threatened plague. It is more difficult to isolate the 'Elohistic' tradition: to it we should perhaps assign the sections in which the miracles are worked by Moses himself, with or without the 'staff of God'. In none of the three traditions thus constituted do we find all ten plagues: the 'Yahwistic' has seven (or six), the others four (or five) each; the death of the first-born is common to all three. The exploit described in the 'Yahwistic' tradition is elaborated in the 'Elohistic' and still further developed in Ps 78 and 105, Ws 11:14-20; 16:1-18:25. Nevertheless, local colour is not lacking, especially in the account of the plagues; these reflect phenomena or natural disasters common in Egypt. But it is more important to note the underlying purpose of the author, namely, to show that these divinely inflicted disasters prove how God's power was being truly exercised on behalf of his people.

people go. •In the morning go to him as he makes his way to the water and 15
wait for him by the bank of the river. In your hand take the staff that turned
into a serpent. •Say to him, "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me 16
to say: Let my people go to offer me worship in the wilderness. Now, so far
Ws 11:6 Rv 11:6 you have not listened. •Here is Yahweh's message: That I am Yahweh you shall 17
learn by this: with the staff that is in my hand[e] I will strike the water of the
river and it shall be changed into blood. •The fish in the river will die, and the 18
river will smell so foul that the Egyptians will not want to drink the water of it." '

Yahweh said to Moses, 'Say this to Aaron, "Take your staff and stretch out 19
your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers and their canals, their
marshland, and all their reservoirs, and let them turn to blood throughout
the land of Egypt, even down to the contents of every tub or jar" '. •Moses 20
Gn 41:8 Ps78:44; 105:29 ✗ Rv16:4-7;8:8,11 and Aaron did as Yahweh commanded. He raised his staff and in the sight
of Pharaoh and his court he struck the waters of the river, and all the water
in the river changed to blood. •The fish in the river died, and the river smelt 21
so foul that the Egyptians found it impossible to drink its water. Throughout
the land of Egypt there was blood. •But the magicians of Egypt used their 22
witchcraft to do the same, so that Pharaoh's heart was stubborn and, as Yahweh
had foretold, he would not listen to Moses and Aaron. •Pharaoh turned away 23
and went back into his palace, taking no notice even of this. •Meanwhile, all 24
the Egyptians dug holes along the banks of the river in search of drinking water;
they found the water of the river impossible to drink. •After Yahweh had struck 25
the river, seven days passed.

The second plague: the frogs

Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and say to him, "This is 26 1
Yahweh's message: Let my people go to offer me worship. •If you refuse to let 27 2
them go, know that I will plague the whole of your country with frogs. •The 28 3
river will swarm with them; they will make their way into your palace, into
your bedroom, on to your bed, into the houses of your courtiers and of your
subjects, into your ovens, into your kneading bowls. •The frogs will even climb 29 4
all over you, over your courtiers, and over all your subjects." '

Gn 41:8 Ps78:45; 105:30 ✗ Rv16:13 Ws19:10 8 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Say this to Aaron, "Stretch out your hand, with 1 5
your staff, over the rivers, the canals, the marshland, and make frogs swarm
all over the land of Egypt" '. •So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of 2 6
Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. •But the magicians did 3 7
the same with their witchcraft, and made frogs swarm all over the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, 'Entreat Yahweh' he said 'to rid 4 8
me and my subjects of the frogs, and I promise to let the people go and offer
sacrifice to Yahweh.' •Moses answered Pharaoh, 'Take this chance to get the 5 9
better of me![a] When I pray on your account and for your courtiers, and for
your subjects, what time am I to fix for the frogs to leave you and your subjects
and your houses, and stay in the river?' •'Tomorrow' Pharaoh said. 'It shall 6 10
be as you say' answered Moses. 'By this you shall learn that Yahweh our God
has no equal. •The frogs will go from you and your palaces, your courtiers 7 11
Si 45:3 and your subjects; they will stay in the river.' •When Moses and Aaron had 8 12
gone from Pharaoh's presence, Moses pleaded with Yahweh about the frogs
with which he had afflicted Pharaoh. •And Yahweh granted Moses' prayer: 9 13
in house and courtyard and field the frogs died. •They piled them up in heaps 10 14
and the land reeked of them. •But as soon as he saw that relief had been granted, 11 15
Pharaoh became adamant again and, as Yahweh had foretold, he refused to
listen to Moses and Aaron.

The third plague: the mosquitoes

Ws 19:10 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Say this to Aaron, "Stretch out your rod and 12 16
strike the dust on the ground: throughout the land of Egypt it will turn into

13 17 mosquitoes" '. •Aaron stretched out his hand, with his staff, and struck the Ps105:31
dust on the ground. The mosquitoes attacked men and beasts; throughout the
14 18 land of Egypt the dust on the ground turned into mosquitoes. •The magicians
with their witchcraft tried to produce mosquitoes and failed. The mosquitoes
15 19 attacked men and beasts. •So the magicians said to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger Lk 11:20
of God'. But Pharaoh's heart was stubborn and, as Yahweh had foretold, he
refused to listen to Moses and Aaron.

The fourth plague: the gadflies

16 20 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Get up early in the morning and wait for Ws 16:9
Pharaoh as he makes his way to the water. Say to him, "This is Yahweh's message:
17 21 Let my people go to offer me worship. •But if you do not let my people go, I shall Ps 78:45
send gadflies on you, on your courtiers and your palaces. The houses of the
Egyptians will be infested with them, and even the very ground they stand on.
18 22 But I shall set apart the land of Goshen, where my people live, on that day; Gn 47:1f
there will be no gadflies there, and so you may know that I, Yahweh, am in
19 23 the midst of the land. •I shall make a distinction[b] between my people and yours.
20 24 This sign shall take place tomorrow." ' •Yahweh did this, and great swarms of
gadflies found their way into Pharaoh's palace, into the houses of his courtiers,
and into all the land of Egypt, and ruined the country.
21 25 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. 'Go' he said 'and offer sacrifice to
22 26 your God, but in this country!' •'That would not be right' Moses answered.
'We sacrifice to Yahweh our God animals which Egyptians count it sacrilege
to slaughter. If we offer in front of the Egyptians sacrifices that outrage them, will
23 27 they not stone us?[c] •We must make a three days' journey into the wilderness to
24 28 offer sacrifice to Yahweh our God, as he has commanded us.' •Pharaoh replied,
'I will let you go to offer sacrifice to Yahweh your God in the wilderness,
25 29 provided you do not go far. And intercede for me.' •'The moment I leave you,'
said Moses 'I will pray to Yahweh. Tomorrow morning the gadflies will leave
Pharaoh and his courtiers and his subjects. Only, Pharaoh must not play false
26 30 again, and refuse to let the people go to offer sacrifice to Yahweh.' •So Moses
27 31 went out of Pharaoh's presence and prayed to Yahweh. •And Yahweh did as Si 45:3
Moses asked; the gadflies left Pharaoh and his courtiers and his subjects; not
28 32 one remained. •But Pharaoh was adamant this time too and did not let the
people go.

The fifth plague: death of the Egyptians' livestock

1 9 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh and say to him, "This is the Am 4:10
message of Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews: Let my people go to offer
2 3 me worship. •If you refuse to let them go and detain them any longer, •you
will find that the hand of Yahweh will fall on your livestock in the fields, horse Ps 78:48
4 and donkey and camel, herd and flock, with a deadly plague. •Yahweh will
discriminate between the livestock of Israel and of Egypt: nothing shall die of
5 all that belongs to the sons of Israel. •Yahweh has fixed the hour. Tomorrow,
6 he has said, Yahweh will carry out this threat in all the land." •Next day Yahweh
kept his word; all the Egyptians' livestock died, but none owned by the sons
7 of Israel died. •Pharaoh had inquiries made, but it was true: none was dead of
the livestock owned by the sons of Israel. But Pharaoh became adamant again
and did not let the people go.

The sixth plague: the boils

8 Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, 'Take handfuls of soot from the kiln,

c. The hand of Moses. God's appointed agent.

8 a. Lit. 'Glory over me'. Alternative translation, according to the Greek 'Let me know clearly when I am to pray...'.

b. 'I shall make a distinction' versions; 'I will set redemption' Hebr.

c. The ram, for example, was sacred to Amon who was adored throughout Egypt. In the Delta there were several gods represented as rams, goats or bulls.

and before the eyes of Pharaoh let Moses throw it in the air. •It shall spread 9
like fine dust over the whole land of Egypt and bring out boils that break into
sores on man and beast all over the land of Egypt.' •So they took soot from the 10
Rv 16:2 kiln and stood in front of Pharaoh, and Moses threw it in the air. And on man
and beast it brought out boils breaking into sores. •And the magicians could 11
not face Moses, because the magicians were covered with boils like all the other
Egyptians. •But Yahweh made Pharaoh's heart stubborn and, as Yahweh had 12
foretold, he refused to listen to them.

The seventh plague: the hail

Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Get up early in the morning and present yourself 13
to Pharaoh. Say to him, "This is the message of Yahweh, the God of the
Hebrews: Let my people go to offer me worship. •This time I mean to send 14
all my plagues on you[a] and your courtiers and your subjects so that you shall
learn that there is no one like me in the whole world. •Had I stretched out my 15
hand to strike you and your subjects with pestilence, you would have been swept
↗Rm9:17 from the earth. •But I have let you live for this: to make you see my power and 16
to have my name published throughout all the earth. •High-handed with my 17
people still, you will not let them go. •Tomorrow, therefore, at about this time, 18
Jos 10:11 Jb 28:23 I will let fall so great a storm of hail as was never known in Egypt from the
day of its foundation. •So now have your livestock, and everything that is yours 19
in the fields put under cover: on man and beast, on all that remains in the fields
and is not brought indoors, the hail will fall and they will die."' •Some of 20
Pharaoh's courtiers, terrified by Yahweh's threat, brought their slaves and
livestock indoors, •but those who disregarded Yahweh's threat left their slaves 21
and livestock in the fields.

Yahweh said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand towards heaven so that hail 22
may fall on the whole land of Egypt, on man and beast and all that grows in
the fields in the land of Egypt'. •Moses stretched out his staff towards heaven, 23
Ps78:47f; 105:32 and Yahweh thundered[b] and rained down hail. Lightning struck the earth.
Yahweh rained down hail on the land of Egypt. •The hail fell, and lightning 24
Ws 16:16 Rv 8:7; ↗16:21 flashing in the midst of it,[c] a greater storm of hail than had ever been known
in Egypt since it first became a nation. •Throughout the land of Egypt the hail 25
struck down everything in the fields, man and beast. It struck all the crops in
Gn 47:1f the fields, and it shattered every tree in the fields. •Only in the land of Goshen 26
where the Hebrews lived, was there no hail.

Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. 'This time' he said 'I admit my fault. 27
Yahweh is in the right; I and my subjects are in the wrong. •Entreat Yahweh 28
Dt 10:14 Ps 24:1 to stop the thunder and the hail; I promise to let you go, and you shall stay
here no longer.' •Moses answered him, 'The moment I leave the city I will 29
stretch out my hands to Yahweh. The thunder will stop, and there will be no
more hail, so that you may know that the earth belongs to Yahweh. •But as 30
for you and your courtiers, I know very well that you have no fear yet of Yahweh
our God.' •The flax and the barley were ruined, since the barley was in the ear and 31
the flax budding. •The wheat and the spelt, being late crops, were not destroyed. 32
Si 45:3 Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He stretched out his hands to 33
Yahweh and the thunder and the hail stopped and the rain no longer poured
down on the earth. •When Pharaoh saw that rain and hail and thunder had 34
stopped, he sinned yet again. •He became adamant, he and his courtiers. The 35
heart of Pharaoh was stubborn and, as Yahweh had foretold through Moses,
he did not let the sons of Israel go.

J12 **The eighth plague: the locusts**

10 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, for it is I who have made 1
his heart and his courtiers stubborn, so that I could work these signs of
12:26;13:8 Dt4:9;6:7. mine among them; •so that you can tell your sons and your grandsons how 2

I made fools of the Egyptians and what signs I performed among them, to let 20-25 ▲ Ps 78:4▲ 8:6
3 you know that I am Yahweh'. •So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. They
said to him, 'This is the message of Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, "How
much longer will you refuse to submit to me? Let my people go to offer me
4 worship. •If you refuse to let my people go, then tomorrow I will send locusts Ws 16:9
5 over your country. •They shall cover the surface of the soil so thick that the soil
will not be seen. They shall devour the remainder that is left to you, all that has
survived from the hail; they shall devour all your trees growing in the fields;
they shall fill your palaces, the houses of your courtiers, the houses of all the
6 Egyptians. •Your forefathers and their ancestors will never have seen the like
since first they lived in the country." ' Then Moses turned away and left Pharaoh's
7 presence. •And Pharaoh's courtiers said to him, 'How much longer is this man
to be the cause of our trouble? Let the people go to offer worship to Yahweh
their God. Do you not understand that Egypt is now on the brink of ruin?'
8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. 'You may go' he said
9 to them 'and offer worship to Yahweh your God. But who are to go?' •'We
shall take our young men and our old men' Moses answered. 'We shall take
our sons and daughters, our flocks and our herds, because for us it is a feast
10 of Yahweh.' •'May Yahweh be with you if ever I let you and your little ones go!'
11 Pharaoh retorted. 'It is plain you are up to no good. •Oh no! You men[a] may
go and offer worship to Yahweh, since that is what you wanted.' And with
that they were dismissed from the presence of Pharaoh.
12 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt Ps 78:46; 105:34
to bring the lousts. Let them invade the land of Egypt and devour all its
13 greenstuff, all that the hail has left.' •And over the land of Egypt Moses
stretched his staff, and Yahweh brought up an east wind over the land and it
blew all that day and night. By morning, the east wind had brought the locusts.
14 The locusts invaded the whole land of Egypt. On the whole territory of ✗ Rv 9:3f
Egypt they fell, in numbers so great that such swarms had never been seen
15 before, nor would be again. •They covered the surface of the soil till the ground
was black with them.[b] They devoured all the greenstuff in the land and all the
fruit of the trees that the hail had left. No green was left on tree or plant in the
fields throughout the land of Egypt.
16 Pharaoh sent urgently for Moses and Aaron. 'I have sinned against Yahweh
17 your God,' he said 'and against yourselves. •Forgive my sin, I implore you,
this once, and entreat Yahweh your God just to rid me of this deadly plague.'
18 19 So Moses left Pharaoh's presence and interceded with Yahweh. •Then Yahweh Si 45:3
made the wind veer till it blew so strongly from the west[c] that it caught up the
locusts and carried them off towards the Sea of Reeds. There was not one locust
20 left in the whole land of Egypt. •But Yahweh made Pharaoh's heart stubborn,
and he did not let the sons of Israel go.

The ninth plague: the darkness ✗ Ws 17:1; 18:4

21 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand towards heaven, and Ws 17:2 Rv 8:12
let darkness, darkness so thick that it can be felt, cover the land of Egypt'.
22 So Moses stretched out his hand towards heaven, and for three days there Ps 105:28
23 was deep darkness over the whole land of Egypt. •No one could see anyone ✗ Rv 16:10 *Ws 18:3*
else or move about for three days, but where the sons of Israel lived there was
light for them.
24 Pharaoh summoned Moses. 'Go and offer worship to Yahweh,' he said

9 a. 'on you' corr.; 'on your heart' Hebr.
b. Lit. 'gave voices'. The 'voice of Yahweh' is the thunder, cf. v. 29; Ps 18:13; 29:3-9; Jb 37:2.
c. Translation uncertain 'hail, and fire in the midst of the hail'. Cf. Ezk 1:4.

10 a. Pharaoh is suspicious, and reluctant to give general permission, v 9; he wants to keep the women and children as hostages.
b. 'the ground was black with them' Hebr.; 'the land was laid waste' Greek; 'laying all waste' Vulg.
c. Lit. 'sea wind'. The term originated in Palestine where the sea lay to the west.

'but your flocks and herds must remain here. Your children may go with you too.' •Moses replied, 'But you must let us have means of offering sacrifices 25
and holocausts to Yahweh our God. •Our livestock, too, must go with us; 26
not one head of cattle must be left behind: it must be from our livestock that we provide for the worship of Yahweh our God; until we reach the place, we do not know ourselves what worship we shall have to offer Yahweh.'

But Yahweh made Pharaoh's heart stubborn, and he refused to let them go. 27
Pharaoh said to Moses, 'Out of my sight! Take care! Never appear before me 28
again, for on the day you do, you die!' •Moses replied, 'You yourself have said it: 29
never again shall I appear before you.'

13:11+ **Moses proclaims the death of the first-born**

11 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'One disaster more I shall bring on Pharaoh 1
and on Egypt, just one. After this he will let you go from here...[a] Indeed,
12:35 Ezr 1:6 he will drive you out! •Instruct the people that every man is to ask his neighbour, 2
3:21 every woman hers, for silver ornaments and gold.' •And Yahweh gave the 3
Ac 7:22 people prestige in the eyes of the Egyptians, while Moses himself was a man of great importance in the land of Egypt, and of high prestige with Pharaoh's courtiers and with the people.

Ws 18:4 Moses said, 'This is Yahweh's message, "Towards midnight I shall pass 4
Ws 18:11 through Egypt. •All the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die: from the first- 5
born of Pharaoh, heir to his throne, to the first-born of the maidservant at the
Ws 18:10 mill, and all the first-born of the cattle.[b] •And throughout the land of Egypt 6
there shall be such a wailing as never was heard before, nor will be again. •But 7
against the sons of Israel, against man or beast, never a dog shall bark, so that you may know that Yahweh discriminates between Egypt and Israel. •Then all 8
these courtiers of yours will come down to me and bow low before me and say: Go away, you and all the people who follow you! After this, I shall go." ' And, hot with anger, Moses left Pharaoh's presence.

Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Pharaoh will not listen to you; so that my 9
Rv 11:6 wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt'. •All these wonders[c] Moses 10
and Aaron worked in the presence of Pharaoh. But Yahweh made Pharaoh's heart stubborn, and he did not let the sons of Israel leave his country.

34:18 Lv 23:5-8 Nb 28:16-25 Dt 16:1-8 Ezk 45:21-24 ↗ Mt 26:17fp Lk 22:15-16 ↗ 1Co 5:7 **The Passover[a]**

12 Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, •'This month[b] is ½
to be the first of all the others for you, the first month of your year.
Speak to the whole community of Israel and say, "On the tenth day of this 3
month each man must take an animal from the flock, one for each family: one animal for each household. •If the household is too small to eat the animal, 4
a man must join with his neighbour, the nearest to his house, as the number of persons requires. You must take into account what each can eat in deciding
Lv 1:3; 22:19 2 Ch 35:7 the number for the animal. •It must be an animal without blemish, a male 5
one year old; you may take it from either sheep or goats. •You must keep it 6
till the fourteenth day of the month when the whole assembly of the community
Ezk 9:4 Rv 7:4 of Israel shall slaughter it between the two evenings.[c] •Some of the blood must 7
then be taken and put on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where it is eaten. •That night, the flesh is to be eaten, roasted over the fire; it must 8
be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. •Do not eat any of it raw 9
34:25 or boiled, but roasted over the fire, head, feet and entrails. •You must not 10
leave any over till the morning: whatever is left till morning you are to burn.[d]
Heb 11:28 You shall eat it like this: with a girdle round your waist, sandals on your feet, 11
a staff in your hand.[e] You shall eat it hastily: it is a passover[f] in honour of
Am 5:17 Yahweh. •That night, I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down all 12
the first-born in the land of Egypt, man and beast alike, and I shall deal out
Lv 1:5+ Ezk 9:4 punishment to all the gods of Egypt, I am Yahweh! •The blood shall serve to 13

mark the houses that you live in. When I see the blood I will pass over you and
14 you shall escape the destroying plague[g] when I strike the land of Egypt. •This
day is to be a day of remembrance for you, and you must celebrate it as a feast
in Yahweh's honour. For all generations you are to declare it a day of festival,
for ever.

The feast of Unleavened Bread

13:3-10;23:15
34:25
↗ 1Co5:7

15 "For seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you are
to clean all leaven out of your houses, for anyone who eats leavened bread from
16 the first to the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel. •On the first day you
are to hold a sacred gathering, and again on the seventh day. On those days no
17 work is to be done; you are allowed only to prepare your food. •The feast of
Unleavened Bread must be kept because it was on that same day I brought
your armies out of the land of Egypt. Keep that day from age to age: it is an
18 irrevocable ordinance. •In the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day
and until the evening of the twenty-first day, you are to eat unleavened bread.
19 For seven days no leaven must be found in your houses, because anyone who
eats leavened bread will be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he be
20 stranger or native-born. •You must eat no leavened bread; wherever you live you
must eat unleavened bread." [h]

Injunctions relating to the Passover

21 Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go and choose
animals from the flock on behalf of your families, and kill the Passover victim.
22 Then take a spray of hyssop,[h] dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and with
the blood from the basin touch the lintel and the two doorposts. Let none of
23 you venture out of the house till morning. •Then, when Yahweh goes through
Egypt to strike it, and sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts,
he will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer[i] to enter your homes
24 and strike. •You must keep these rules as an ordinance for all time for you
25 and your children. •When you enter the land that Yahweh is giving you, as he
26 promised, you must keep to this ritual. •And when your children ask you,
27 "What does this ritual mean?" •you will tell them, "It is the sacrifice of the
Passover in honour of Yahweh who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel
in Egypt, and struck Egypt but spared our houses".' And the people bowed

Ezk9:4-7
↗ Heb11:28

10:2+;13:8
Dt6:20-25
Jos 4:6

11 a. The Hebr. text, amended, has 'then he will let you go altogether'.

b. The 'first-born' of the beasts are added here, borrowing from 12:12, because like the first-born of man they are 'first-fruits' dedicated to the godhead.

c. The first nine plagues.

12 a. The long section on the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread, 12:1-13:16, combines the 'Yahwistic', 12:29-34,38-39, and the 'Priestly' traditions, 12:1-20,43-50, and some editorial additions, 12:24-27; 13:3-16, the style of which is 'Deuteronomic'. With this passage should be compared the liturgical calendars of Lv 23:5-8, Dt 16:1-8, and the legislation of Nb 28:16-25. The two rites may have had separate origins: the Passover is primarily a pastoral feast, offering the first-fruit of the flock; the feast of Unleavened Bread is primarily agricultural, offering the first-fruit of the barley harvest. But they were both springtime festivals and became fused at a very early date. Once associated with a historical occurrence, that decisive event in the history of Israel's election, the deliverance out of Egypt, these rites took on an entirely new religious significance: they recalled how God had saved his people, cf. the explanatory formula accompanying the rite, 12:26-27; 13:8. The Jewish Passover hence becomes a rehearsal for the Christian Passover: the lamb of God, Christ, is sacrificed (the cross) and eaten (the Last Supper) within the framework of the Jewish Passover (the first Holy Week). Thus he brings salvation to the world; and the mystical re-enactment of this redemptive act becomes the central feature of the Christian liturgy, organised round the Mass which is at once sacrifice and sacrificial meal.

b. I.e. of *Abib* (month of 'young ears of corn'), March-April in our calendar. The month was called Nisan after the Exile.

c. I.e., either between sunset and darkness (Samaritans) or between afternoon and sunset (Pharisees and Talmud).

d. To preclude profanation. The Greek adds 'You shall not break a bone of it', cf. v. 46.

e. Equipped as for a journey.

f. Etymology much disputed. Vulg. explains 'that is, the passing'. But this 'passing' of Yahweh is regularly expressed by a different Hebr. term. The word *pesah* (Greek: *pascha*) which is used here means rather that Yahweh 'leaped over' (vv. 13 and 23) the marked houses as one 'skips' names in a list.

g. Or correct to 'and on you (will fall) no stroke of the Destroyer' (cf. v. 23).

h. Aromatic plant used in various rites of purification (Nb 19:6; Ps 51:7; He 9:19).

i. The destroying angel, 1 Co 10:10; Heb 11:28, is the messenger entrusted with the execution of God's vengeance. Cf. Gn 19:1; 2 S 24:16; 2 K 19:35 In these last two places he is called 'angel of Yahweh' but the texts, unlike those quoted in the note to Gn 16:7, distinguish him from God.

down and worshipped. •The sons of Israel then departed, and they obeyed. 28
They carried out the orders Yahweh had given to Moses and Aaron.

11:4-8
13:11+
↗Ws18:5-19

The tenth plague: death of the first-born

Jb 34:20
Ps78:51;
105:36;
135:8;
136:10
Ws18:10

And at midnight Yahweh struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt: 29
the first-born of Pharaoh, heir to his throne, the first-born of the prisoner in his
dungeon, and the first-born of all the cattle. •Pharaoh and all his courtiers and 30
all the Egyptians got up in the night, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for
there was not a house without its dead. •And it was night when Pharaoh 31
Is 52:12 summoned Moses and Aaron. 'Get up,' he said 'you and the sons of Israel, and
get away from my people. Go and offer worship to Yahweh as you have asked
and, as you have asked, take your flocks and herds, and go. And also ask a 32
Ps105:38 blessing on me.' •The Egyptians urged the people to hurry up and leave the 33
land because, they said, 'Otherwise we shall all be dead'. •So the people carried 34
off their dough, still unleavened, on their shoulders, their kneading bowls wrapped
in their cloaks.

3:21-22;11:2

The Egyptians plundered

Ezr 1:6
Ws10:17

The sons of Israel did as Moses had told them and asked the Egyptians 35
for silver ornaments and gold, and for clothing. •Yahweh gave the people such 36
prestige in the eyes of the Egyptians, that they gave them what they asked. So
they plundered the Egyptians.

Israel's departure[j]

33:1-6
Gn47:11
Nb1:46+;
33:3-5
Lv24:10-14
Nb 11:4

The sons of Israel left Rameses for Succoth, about six hundred thousand 37
on the march—all men—not counting their families. •People of various sorts 38
joined them in great numbers; there were flocks, too, and herds in immense
Is 52:12 droves. •They baked cakes with the dough which they had brought from Egypt, 39
unleavened because the dough was not leavened; they had been driven out of
Egypt, with no time for dallying, and had not provided themselves with food
Gn15:13
↗Ac 7:6
↗Ga3:17
Gn 50:24
for the journey.[k] •The time that the sons of Israel had spent in Egypt was four 40
hundred and thirty years.[l] •And on the very day the four hundred and thirty 41
years ended, all the array of Yahweh left the land of Egypt. •The night, when 42
Yahweh kept vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt, must be kept as a vigil
in honour of Yahweh for all their generations.

Ordinances for the Passover

Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, 'This is what is ordained for the Passover:[m] 43
No alien may take part in it, •but any slave bought for money may take part 44
Gn17:10+ when you have had him circumcised. •No stranger and no hired servant may take 45
Nb 9:12
↗Jn19:36
part in it. •It is to be eaten in one house alone, out of which not a single morsel 46
of the flesh is to be taken; nor must you break any bone of it. •The whole com- 47
20:20
2 S 4:3
1 K 8:41f
Ps 39:12
Is 56:3
Ezk47:22
Ep 2:19
munity of Israel must keep the Passover. •Should a stranger be staying with you[n] 48
and wish to celebrate the Passover in honour of Yahweh, all the males of his
household must be circumcised: he may then be admitted to the celebration, for
he becomes as it were a native-born. But no uncircumcised person may take part.
The same law will run for the native and for the stranger resident among you.' 49
The sons of Israel all obeyed. They carried out the orders Yahweh had given 50
to Moses and Aaron. •And that same day Yahweh brought the sons of Israel 51
in their armies out of Egypt.

13:11+

The first-born[a]

Dt15:19-23
Jg 18:5
Lk 2:23

13 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Consecrate all the first-born to me, ½
the first issue of every womb, among the sons of Israel. Whether man or
beast, this is mine.'

The feast of Unleaved Bread

12:1+

3 Moses said to the people, 'Keep this day in remembrance, the day you came
out of Egypt, from the house of slavery, for it was by sheer power that Yahweh
4 brought you out of it; no leavened bread must be eaten. •On this day, in the
5 month of Abib, you are leaving Egypt. •And so, in this same month, when
Yahweh brings you to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Dt 7:1+
Hivites, the Jebusites, the land he swore to your fathers he would give you, a land
6 where milk and honey flow, you are to hold this service. •For seven days you 34:18
will eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there is to be a feast in honour
7 of Yahweh. •During these seven days unleavened bread is to be eaten; no
leavened bread must be seen among you, no leaven among you in all your
8 territory. •And on that day you will explain to your son, "This is because of 10:2+12:26
9 what Yahweh did for me when I came out of Egypt". •The rite will serve as Dt6:8;11:18
a sign on your hand would serve, or a memento on your forehead, and in that
way the law of Yahweh will be ever on your lips, for Yahweh brought you out
10 of Egypt with a mighty hand. •You will observe this ordinance each year at its
appointed time.

The first-born[b]

Gn22:1+ ↗ Lk2:22-24

11 'When Yahweh brings you to the land of the Canaanites—as he swore to 12:29;22:28 Dt15:19-23
12 you and your fathers he would do—and gives it to you, •you are to make over Ne 10:37 Lk 2:23
to Yahweh all that first issues from the womb, and every first-born cast by your
13 animals: these males belong to Yahweh. •But every first-born donkey you will 34:19 Mt 17:5
redeem with an animal from your flocks. If you do not redeem it, you must
14 break its neck. Of your sons, every first-born of men must be redeemed. •And Nb18:15
when your son asks you in days to come, "What does this mean?" you will tell Ps 78:4
him, "By sheer power Yahweh brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of
15 slavery. •When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, Yahweh killed all the
first-born in the land of Egypt, of man and of beast alike. For this I sacrifice
to Yahweh every male that first issues from the womb, and redeem every first-born
16 of my sons." •The rite will serve as a sign on your hand would serve, or a circlet Dt6:8;11:18
on your forehead, for Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.'

j. The information provided by vv. 37 and 40 is from the 'Priestly' tradition, 38-39 take up the narrative from 34.

k. The 'Yahwistic' tradition probably regards this as the origin of the Azymes, or feast of Unleavened Bread. For a different explanation, cf. vv. 8,15,18-20.

l. Sam. and Greek 'the stay of the children of Israel and of their fathers in Egypt and Canaan had lasted four hundred and thirty-five years'.

m. The Passover victim, not the feast, vv. 43-50 lay down the conditions for non-Israelites who wish to join in the paschal meal, and explain how the victim is to be prepared. These instructions complete those of vv. 3-11. In all this the Israelite is considered the 'citizen of the land', i.e. the true inhabitant of Canaan.

n. Like the Athenian *metechon* and the Roman *incola*, the foreigner who settles in Israel (the *ger*) has his own charter. The patriarchs themselves had been resident aliens in Canaan, Gn 23:4, as had the Israelites in Egypt, Gn 15:13; Ex 2:22. After the conquest of the Holy Land the roles were reversed: the Israelites became citizens and played the host to resident foreigners, Dt 10:19. These last were subject to the laws, Lv 17:15; 24:16-22, and bound to observance of the sabbath, Ex 20:10; Dt 5:14. They were allowed to make offerings to Yahweh, Nb 15:15-16; they were also permitted to celebrate the Passover, Nb 9:14, provided they accepted circumcision, Ex 12:48. This laid the foundations of the proselytes' charter of the Greek period, already foreshadowed in Is 14:1. These 'strangers' were the 'economically unstable' protected by the law, Lv 23:22; 25:35; Dt 24 *passim*; 26:12. This last text and Dt 12:12 compare them to the Levites who have no possession in Israel; in Jg 17:7 the Bethlehem Levite is called 'a stranger resident' in Judah; cf. Jg 19:1.

13 a: Vv. 1-2: isolated fragment ('Priestly' tradition?).

b. In Israel's most ancient legal codes, Ex 22:28-29; 34:19-20, the first-born male of men and animals are pronounced God's property. The first-born of beasts are offered in sacrifice, Dt 15:19-20, and a portion goes to the priests, Nb 18:15-18; the donkey is an exception: it is either redeemed or has its neck broken, v. 13; 34:20; Nb 18:15, and this applies to all unclean animals, Lv 27:26-27. The first-born of men are always redeemed, v. 13; 34:19-20; Nb 3:46-47; cf. Gn 22. The texts of Ex 13:14f; Nb 3:13; 8:17 associate this special dedication to God with the deliverance from Egypt and with the tenth plague, Ex 12:29-34. In place of the first-born of Israel, spared on that occasion, the Levites are consecrated to God, Nb 3:12,40-51; 8:16-18.

D. THE CROSSING OF THE SEA OF REEDS[c]

The departure of the Israelites[d]

Jr 2:2 Ho 2:17 When Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not let them take the road to 17
the land of the Philistines, although that was the nearest way.[e] God thought that
14:10-12 Nb 14:1f the prospect of fighting would make the people lose heart and turn back to
Egypt. •Instead, God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness 18
to the Sea of Reeds. The sons of Israel went out from Egypt fully armed. •Moses 19
Gn 50:25 Jos 24:32 took with him the bones of Joseph who had put the sons of Israel on solemn
oath. 'It is sure that God will visit you,' he had said 'and when that day comes
you must take my bones from here with you.'
Nb 33:5-6 From Succoth they moved on, and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the 20
wilderness.
40:36+ Nb 14:14 Dt 1:33 Ne 9:12,19 Ps 78:14; 105:39 Ws 10:17-18;18:3 Si 24:4 Is 4:5 Jn 8:12;10:4 1 Co 10:1 Nb 33:7 Jos 2:10 Ne 9:11 Yahweh went before them, by day in the form of a pillar of cloud to show 21
them the way, and by night in the form of a pillar of fire to give them light:
thus they could continue their march by day and by night. •The pillar of cloud 22
never failed to go before the people during the day, nor the pillar of fire during
the night.[f]

From Etham to the Sea of Reeds

14 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Tell the sons of Israel to turn back 1 2
and pitch camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea,
facing Baal-zephon. You are to pitch your camp opposite this place, beside the
sea. •Pharaoh will think, "Look how these sons of Israel wander to and fro in 3
Ezk 39:21 the countryside; the wilderness has closed in on them". •Then I shall make 4
Pharaoh's heart stubborn and he will set out in pursuit of them. But I shall win
glory for myself at the expense of Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians
will learn that I am Yahweh.' And the Israelites did this.

The Egyptians pursue the Israelites

Ws 19:2 Is 51:10; 63:12 When Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was told that the people had made their 5
escape, he and his courtiers changed their minds about the people. 'What have
we done,' they said 'allowing Israel to leave our service?' •So Pharaoh had his 6
chariot harnessed and gathered his troops about him, •taking six hundred of the 7
best chariots and all the other chariots in Egypt, each manned by a picked team.
Yahweh made Pharaoh, king of Egypt, stubborn, and he gave chase to the 8
sons of Israel as they made their triumphant escape. •So the Egyptians gave 9
Ps 34:7 Ws 19:7 chase and came up with them where they lay encamped beside the sea—all the
horses, the chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen, his army—near Pi-hahiroth,
facing Baal-zephon. •And as Pharaoh approached, the sons of Israel looked 10
round—and there were the Egyptians in pursuit of them! The sons of Israel were
16:2f;17:3; 15:24 terrified and cried out to Yahweh. •To Moses they said, 'Were there no graves 11
Nb 11:1-4; 14:2;20:2; 21:4-5 in Egypt that you must lead us out to die in the wilderness? What good have you
Ps 78:40 done us, bringing us out of Egypt? •We spoke of this in Egypt, did we not? 12
5:21;6:9 Leave us alone, we said, we would rather work for the Egyptians! Better to
work for the Egyptians than die in the wilderness!' •Moses answered the people, 13
'Have no fear! Stand firm, and you will see what Yahweh will do to save you
Is 30:15 today: the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. •Yahweh will do 14
Jg 4:15 the fighting for you: you have only to keep still.'

The crossing[a]

Ps 78:105; 106:114 ✗ Ws 10:18f ✗ 1 Co 10:1-2 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Why do you cry to me so? Tell the sons of Israel to 15
Ps 78:13 2 K 2:8 Is 10:26 march on. •For yourself, raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea 16
and part it for the sons of Israel to walk through the sea on dry ground. I for
my part will make the heart of the Egyptians so stubborn that they will follow 17

them. So shall I win myself glory at the expense of Pharaoh, of all his army, his
18 chariots, his horsemen. •And when I have won glory for myself, at the expense of
Pharaoh and his chariots and his army, the Egyptians will learn that I am Yahweh.'
19 Then the angel of Yahweh, who marched at the front of the army of Israel, 23:20 Gn16:7+
changed station and moved to their rear. The pillar of cloud changed station
20 from the front to the rear of them, and remained there. •It came between the
camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. The cloud was dark, and the night
21 passed[b] without the armies drawing any closer the whole night long. •Moses
stretched out his hand over the sea. Yahweh drove back the sea with a strong Jos 3:17; 4:23
22 easterly wind all night, and he made dry land of the sea. The waters parted •and Ps136:13 Is 43:16 *Is 11:16* 1 Co 10:1
the sons of Israel went on dry ground right into the sea, walls of water to right
23 and to left of them. •The Egyptians gave chase: after them they went, right into Nb 33:3
24 the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. •In the morning
watch,[c] Yahweh looked down on the army of the Egyptians from the pillar of Ps77:16-18
25 fire and of cloud, and threw the army into confusion. •He so clogged their
chariot wheels that they could scarcely make headway. 'Let us flee from the
Israelites,' the Egyptians cried 'Yahweh is fighting for them against the Egyp-
26 tians!' •'Stretch out your hand over the sea,' Yahweh said to Moses 'that the Ps 78:53 Ws 18:5 Is 31:3
waters may flow back on the Egyptians and their chariots and their horsemen.'
27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and, as day broke, the sea returned
to its bed. The fleeing Egyptians marched right into it, and Yahweh overthrew
28 the Egyptians in the very middle of the sea. •The returning waters overwhelmed Dt 11:4
the chariots and the horsemen of Pharaoh's whole army, which had followed
29 the Israelites into the sea; not a single one of them was left. •But the sons of
Israel had marched through the sea on dry ground, walls of water to right and
30 to left of them. •That day, Yahweh rescued Israel from the Egyptians, and Israel
31 saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. •Israel witnessed the great act that 4:31;19:9 Ps106:12
Yahweh had performed against the Egyptians, and the people venerated
Yahweh; they put their faith in Yahweh and in Moses, his servant.

Song of victory[a]

Ps105:43 Ws10:20; 19:9

1 15 It was then that Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song in honour of Rv 15:3
Yahweh:

Jdt 13:11 Ps 77:13

'Yahweh I sing: he has covered himself in glory,
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

c. This is the true beginning of the Exodus, that is to say the journey of God's people through the desert to the Promised Land; the prophets will look back on this time as the first days of God's marriage with his people, Jr 2:2; Ho 2:16+; 11:1f; Ezk 16:8. Throughout the Bible Yahweh will be the one 'who brought his peopleout of Egypt', Jos 24:17; Am 2:10; 3:1; Mi 6:4; Ps 81:10. The second part of Isaiah sees the return from Babylon as a second Exodus, Is 40:3+. In Christian tradition, the crossing of the Reed (or Red) Sea and the forty years in the desert have been seen as types of Christ's baptism and forty days in the desert, and consequently as figures of Christian baptism and progress towards heaven.

d. Here the three traditions mingle.

e. The normal highway running parallel with the coast and going by way of Sileh (the modern el-Kantara); there are wells and military posts at intervals along its course.

f. In the Pentateuch we find the divine presence manifested in various ways: the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire ('Yahwistic' tradition); the 'dark mist' and the cloud ('Elohistic' tradition); finally, coupled with the cloud, the 'glory' of Yahweh, 24:16+, a consuming fire which moves as God moves ('Priestly' tradition), cf. 19:16f+. Mystical theology makes much of these ideas or images.

14 a. Narrative in epic style, made up of various traditions which have preserved and embellished the memory of a decisive act of God in favour of his people. To the 'Yahwistic' tradition is usually attributed the account in which God uses an east wind to drive back the waters; to the 'Priestly' tradition the account in which Moses divides the waters with a gesture of his hand; to the 'Elohistic' tradition the passages in which the angel of God figures. O.T. tradition consistently regards the 'crossing of the Red Sea' as one of the most, if not the most, striking evidence of Yahweh's intervention on behalf of his people; the episode is equally prominent in Christian tradition from the N.T. onwards, as a figure of the decisive 'exodus' effected by Jesus, and particularly of the baptism by which the Christian enters into it. (1 Co 10:1).

b. 'the night passed' Greek. The Hebr. has 'there was a cloud and darkness; and it lit up the night'. Symmachus 'the cloud was dark on one side and bright on the other'. In Jos 24:7 Yahweh sets a thick mist between Israelites and Egyptians. Our translation is conjectural.

c. The last watch of the night, 2-6 a.m.

15 a. The victory chant of v. 21 here becomes a whole psalm of thanksgiving (the first and most famous of the 'canticles' which the Christian liturgy takes from the O.T.); its starting point is the destruction of Pharaoh's army but it goes on to develop the theme of God's power and his care for his people: the wonders of the Exodus, the conquest of Canaan, even the building of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Ps 118:14 ‖ Is 12:2 Si 51:1
Yah[b] is my strength, my song,[c] 2
he is my salvation.
This is my God, I praise him;
the God of my father, I extol him.

Jdt 16:2 3:14+
Yahweh is a warrior; 3
Yahweh is his name.

The chariots and the army of Pharaoh he has hurled into the sea; 4
the pick of his horsemen lie drowned in the Sea of Reeds.

Ne 9:11 Jr 51:63f Rv 18:21
The depths have closed over them; 5
they have sunk to the bottom like a stone.

Dt 3:24
Your right hand, Yahweh, shows majestic in power, 6
your right hand, Yahweh, shatters the enemy.

So great your splendour, you crush your foes; 7
Is 5:24 Ob 18 Na 1:10
you unleash your fury, and it devours them like stubble.

A blast from your nostrils and the waters piled high; 8
Ps 18:15; 33:7; 47:2; 77:13; 146:10
the waves stood upright like a dyke;
in the heart of the sea the deeps came together.

"I will give chase and overtake," the enemy said 9
"I shall share out the spoil, my soul will feast on it;
I shall draw my sword, my hand will destroy them."

Ne 9:11
One breath of yours you blew, and the sea closed over them; 10
they sank like lead in the terrible waters.

Lv 19:1 Dt 3:24; 33:26 2 S 7:22 Ps 86:8; 136:4
Who among the gods is your like, Yahweh? 11
Who is your like, majestic in holiness,
terrible in deeds of prowess, worker of wonders?

You stretched your right hand out, the earth swallowed them! 12
By your grace you led the people you redeemed, 13
by your strength you guided them to your holy house.

Ps 48:6 Hab 3:6
Hearing of this, the peoples tremble; 14
pangs[d] seize on the inhabitants of Philistia.

Nb 20:21; 21:4-13 *Dt 2:1-9,18* Jdt 2:28
Edom's chieftains are now dismayed, 15
the princes of Moab fall to trembling,
Canaan's inhabitants are all unmanned.

On them fall terror and dread; 16
through the power of your arm they are still as stone
Is 11:11 Ep 1:14
as your people pass, Yahweh,
as the people pass whom you purchased.

1 K 8:13 Ps 74:2
You will bring them and plant them on the 17
mountain[e] that is your own,
the place you have made your dwelling, Yahweh,[f]
the sanctuary, Yahweh, prepared by your own hands.

Yahweh will be king for ever and ever.' 18

[g]Pharaoh's cavalry, both his chariots and horsemen, had indeed entered the 19
sea, but Yahweh had made the waters of the flow back on them, yet the sons
of Israel had marched on dry ground right through the sea.

Nb 12:1; 26:59 Jg 11:34 1 S 18:6 Jdt 15:12
Miriam, the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took up a timbrel, and all the women 20
followed her with timbrels, dancing. •And Miriam led them in the refrain: 21

Ps 106:12
'Sing of Yahweh: he has covered himself in glory,
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea'.

II. ISRAEL IN THE DESERT

Marah[h]

Moses made Israel move from their camp at the Sea of Reeds, and they made 22

for the wilderness of Shur where they travelled for three days without finding Gn 16:7
23 water. •They reached Marah but the water there was so bitter they could not Nb 33:8 Rt 1:20
24 drink it; this is why the place was named Marah.[i] •The people grumbled[j] at
25 Moses. 'What are we to drink?' they said. •So Moses appealed to Yahweh, and 14:11+
Yahweh pointed out some wood to him; this Moses threw into the water, and Dt 8:2
the water was sweetened.

> There it was he[k] charged them with statute and with ordinance,[l] Jos 24:25
> there that he put them to the test.

26 Then he said, •'If you listen carefully to the voice of Yahweh your God and Dt 6:2 Ps 81:8 Is 57:18
do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commandments and keep
his statutes, I shall inflict on you none of the evils that I inflicted on the Dt 7:15
Egyptians, for it is I, Yahweh, who give you healing'. Ps 103:3
27 So they came to Elim where twelve water-springs were, and seventy palm trees; Nb 33:9
and there they pitched their camp beside the water.

The manna and the quails[a] ‖Nb 11 Dt 8:3,16 Ps 78:32f; 105:40; 106:13-15 Ws 16:20-29 ✗ Jn 6:26-58

1 16 From Elim they set out again, and the whole community of the sons of
Israel reached the wilderness of Sin—between Elim and Sinai—on the
2 fifteenth day of the second month after they had left Egypt. •And the whole
community of the sons of Israel began to complain against Moses and Aaron in 14:11+
3 the wilderness •and said to them, 'Why did we not die at Yahweh's hand in the Ps 78:20 Ezk 23:27
land of Egypt, when we were able to sit down to pans of meat and could eat
bread to our heart's content! As it is, you have brought us to this wilderness to
starve this whole company to death!'
4 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Now I will rain down bread for you from the
heavens. Each day the people are to go out and gather the day's portion; I propose Dt 8:2
5 to test them in this way to see whether they will follow my law or not. •On the
sixth day, when they prepare what they have brought in, this will be twice as
much as the daily gathering.'
6 [b]Moses and Aaron said to the whole community[c] of the sons of Israel, 'In the
evening you shall learn that it was Yahweh who brought you out of the land of
7 Egypt, •and in the morning you shall see the glory of Yahweh, for he has heard Ps 81:10
your complaints against him—it is not against us you complain, for what are
8 we?' •Moses said, 'In the evening Yahweh will give you meat to eat, in the 1 K 17:6
morning bread to your heart's content, for Yahweh has heard the complaints
you made against him; your complaining is not against us—for what are we?— Lk 10:16
but against Yahweh'.
9 Moses said to Aaron, 'To the whole community of the sons of Israel say this, Ws 16:2
10 "Present yourselves before Yahweh, for he has heard your complaints" '. •As
Aaron was speaking to the whole community of the sons of Israel, they turned
towards the wilderness, and there was the glory of Yahweh appearing in the
11 12 form of a cloud. •Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'I have heard the
complaints of the sons of Israel. Say this to them, "Between the two evenings you 1K 17:12

b. Another form of the name 'Yahweh'.
c. 'my song' Hebr.; 'protects me' (my protection) Greek.
d. Like those of a woman in labour. A common biblical image.
e. The hill of Jerusalem, site of the Temple.
f. 'Yahweh' Sam. and Hebr. MSS; 'Adonai' Hebr.
g. Editorial comment.
h. 'Yahwistic' tradition, or mixture of 'Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic'. V. 26 is Deuteronomic in style.

i. *Marah*: bitter, bitterness; *mar* in Hebr.
j. Israel's complaints punctuate the desert journey; here and 17:3; Nb 20:2f, it is thirst; Ex 16:2; Nb 11:4f, hunger; Nb 14:2f, the risks of war. Israel's wilfulness is already evident, to the point of spurning the favours of God, cf. Ps 78; 106, an image of the soul resisting grace.
k Yahweh.
l. Same terms as Jos 24:25. A rhythmical fragment, alien to the context, which seems to refer to the incident at *Massah* ('trial'); 17:7 explains this name differently.
16 a. 'Priestly' tradition with 'Yahwistic' elements. Flights of quail are common over Sinai; the manna is possibly the juice of some local shrub. The narrative asserts some special intervention, under whatever natural forms, by which God fed his people. The Psalms and the Book of Wisdom gratefully recall the gift of manna which, in Christian tradition (as early as Jn 6:26-58), is a figure of the Eucharist, the spiritual food of the Church, the new Israel on her earthly journey to the Promised Land.
b. Vv. 6-8 should possibly be read after v. 12.
c. Greek *sunagogé*, community.

shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have bread to your heart's content.
Ps 68:9 Ws 19:11 Then you will learn that I, Yahweh, am your God." ' •And so it came about: 13
quails flew up in the evening, and they covered the camp; in the morning there
was a coating of dew all round the camp. •When the coating of dew lifted, there 14
Nb 11:7-9 on the surface of the desert was a thing delicate, powdery,[d] as fine as hoarfrost
on the ground. •When they saw this, the sons of Israel said to one another, 15
1 Co 10:3 'What is that?'[e] not knowing what it was. 'That' said Moses to them 'is the
bread Yahweh gives you to eat. •This is Yahweh's command: Everyone must 16
gather enough of it for his needs, one omer a head, according to the number of
persons in your families. Each of you will gather for those who share his tent.'
The sons of Israel did this. They gathered it, some more, some less. •When 17 18
they measured in an omer what they had gathered, the man who had gathered
↗ 2 Co 8:15 more had not too much, the man who had gathered less had not too little. Each
found he had gathered what he needed.
Moses said to them, 'No one must keep any of it for tomorrow'. •But some 19 20
would not listen to Moses and kept part of it for the following day, and it bred
maggots and smelt foul; and Moses was angry with them. •Morning by morning 21
Ws 16:27 they gathered it, each according to his needs. And when the sun grew hot, it
dissolved.
Now on the sixth day they gathered twice the amount of food: two omers a 22
head. All the leaders of the community came to tell Moses, •and he said to them, 23
'This is Yahweh's command: Tomorrow is a day of complete rest, a sabbath
sacred to Yahweh. Bake what you want to bake, boil what you want to boil;
put aside all that is left for tomorrow.' •So, as Moses ordered, they put it aside 24
for the following day, and its smell was not foul nor were there maggots in it.
'Eat it today,' Moses said 'for today is a sabbath in honour of Yahweh; you 25
will find none in the field today. •For six days you are to gather it, but on the 26
seventh day—the sabbath—there will be none.' •On the seventh day some of 27
the people went from the camp to gather it, but they found none. •Then Yahweh 28
said to Moses, 'How much longer will you refuse to keep my commandments
and my laws? •Listen! Yahweh has laid down the sabbath for you; for this 29
he gives you two day's food on the sixth day; each of you is to stay where he is;
on the seventh day no one is to leave his home.' •So on the seventh day the 30
people abstained from all work.[f]
Nb 11:7 The House of Israel named it 'manna'. It was like coriander seed; it was white 31
and its taste was like that of wafers made with honey.
Moses said, 'This is Yahweh's command: Fill an omer with it, and let it be 32
kept for your descendants, to let them see the food that I fed you with in the
wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt'. •Moses said to Aaron, 33
'Take a jar and put in it a full omer of manna and place it before Yahweh, to be
↗ Heb 9:4 kept for your descendants'. •Accordingly, Aaron put a full omer of manna in the 34
jar,[g] as Yahweh had ordered Moses, and placed the manna before the Testimony,[h]
to be kept there.
Nb 21:5 Jos 5:10-12 The sons of Israel ate manna for forty years, up to the time they reached 35
inhabited country: they ate manna up to the time they reached the frontier of
the land of Canaan. •An omer is one-tenth of an ephah. 36

‖ Nb 20:1-13 Dt 8:15 Ne 9:15 Ps 81:7 Is 48:21
The water from the rock[a]

17 The whole community of the sons of Israel moved from their camp in the 1
wilderness of Sin at Yahweh's command, to travel the further stages; and
Nb 33:12-14 they pitched camp at Rephidim[b] where there was no water for the people to
15:24 drink. •So they grumbled against Moses. 'Give us water to drink' they said. 2
14:11+ Moses answered them. 'Why do you grumble against me? Why do you put
Dt 6:16 Yahweh to the test?' •But tormented by thirst, the people complained against 3
Ws 11:6 Ezk 23:27 Moses. 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt?' they said. 'Was it so that I should
die of thirst, my children too, and my cattle?' •Moses appealed to Yahweh. 4

'How am I to deal with this people?' he said. 'A little more and they will stone
5 me!' •Yahweh said to Moses, 'Take with you some of the elders of Israel and
move on to the forefront of the people; take in your hand the staff with which
6 you struck the river, and go. •I shall be standing before you there on the rock,
at Horeb.[c] You must strike the rock, and water will flow from it for the people
7 to drink.' This is what Moses did, in the sight of the elders of Israel. •The place
was named Massah and Meribah[d] because of the grumbling of the sons of Israel
and because they put Yahweh to the test by saying, 'Is Yahweh with us, or not?'

Nb 14:10
1 Co 10:4
Jn 7:38; 19:34
Nb 20:24
Dt 6:16; 9:22; 32:51
Ps 78:15-16; 95:8-9; 105:41; 106:32
Ws 11:4
Is 43:20

A battle against the Amalekites[e]

8 The Amalekites came and attacked Israel at Rephidim. •Moses said to Joshua,
9 'Pick out men for yourself, and tomorrow morning march out to engage Amalek.
10 I, meanwhile, will stand on the hilltop, the staff of God in my hand.' •Joshua did
as Moses told him and marched out to engage Amalek, while Moses and Aaron
11 and Hur went up to the top of the hill. •As long as Moses kept his arms raised,
Israel had the advantage; when he let his arms fall, the advantage went to Amalek.
12 But Moses' arms grew heavy, so they took a stone and put it under him and
on this he sat, Aaron and Hur supporting his arms, one on one side, one on the
13 other; and his arms remained firm till sunset. •With the edge of the sword Joshua
14 cut down Amalek and his people. •Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Write this
action down in a book to keep the memory of it, and say in Joshua's hearing that
15 I shall wipe out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.' •Moses then built an
16 altar[f] and named it Yahweh-nissi •because he said, 'Lay hold of the banner of
Yahweh![g] Yahweh is at war with Amalek from age to age!'

Nb 14:45; 24:20
Jos 1:1+; 8:18f
1 S 27:8
24:14
Ps 44:4-7
Nb 24:20
Dt 15:17-19
1 S 15:3f
2 Ch 36:13
Jg 6:24

The meeting of Jethro and Moses[a]

1 18 Jethro priest of Midian, father-in-law of Moses, heard of all that God had
done for Moses and for Israel his people, and how Yahweh had brought
2 Israel out of Egypt. •So Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, brought Moses' wife
3 Zipporah—after she had been dismissed[b]—•with her two sons. One of these was
4 named Gershom because, he had said, 'I am a stranger in a foreign land'; •the
name of the other was Eliezer[c] because 'The God of my father is my help and
5 has delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.' •So Jethro, father-in-law of Moses,
came with his son-in-law's wife and children to the wilderness where his camp
6 was, at the mountain of God.[d] •'Here is your father-in-law, Jethro, come to
7 visit you,' Moses was told 'with your wife and her two sons.' •So Moses went
out to meet his father-in-law and bowing low before him he kissed him; and when
8 each had enquired of the other's health, they went into the tent. •Then Moses
told his father-in-law all that Yahweh had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians
for the sake of Israel, and all the hardships that had overtaken them on the way,

2:22+
Jg 18:30
19:1+

d. The meaning of the word is uncertain.

e. Hebr. *man hu*; popular etymology thus explains the word 'manna'.

f. Or 'kept the sabbath'.

g. 'Accordingly... jar', inserted in accordance with v. 33.

h. That is to say, the tablets of the Law placed in the ark. This is an anticipation, unless the manna episode belongs to a later date.

17 a. 'Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic' elements have been noted in this narrative.

b. A valley in the Sinai range. Nb 20:1-13 makes the district of Kadesh the scene of a similar miracle. Both miracles are referred to, either together or separately, in various biblical passages.

c. 'at Horeb', evidently a reader's gloss. In the opinion of certain rabbis the rock followed the Israelites in their wanderings. Cf. 1 Co 10:4. On the term 'Rock' indicating God, see Ps 18:2+.

d. *Massah*: trial; *Meribah*: contention.

e. Attributed to the 'Elohistic' tradition. The Amalekites lived further north in the Negeb and in the mountain country of Seir. Gn 14:7; Nb 13:29; Jg 1:16; 1 Ch 4:42f, which is presumably where Hormah was, Nb 14:39-45, cf. Dt 25:17-19; 1 S 15. Amalek is said to be the grandson of Esau, Gn 36:12 16; it was in fact a nation of great antiquity, Nb 24:20. In the time of the Judges the Amalekites were in alliance with Midianite bandits; they were still formidable in David's day. There is no further mention of them until 1 Ch 4:43 and Ps 83:7.

f. In order to offer thanksgiving sacrifices.

g. 'the banner of Yahweh' corr. in place of 'the throne of Yahweh', Vulg. interpreting Hebr.; this is an etymological explanation of the name 'Yahweh-nissi' here taken to mean 'Yahweh is my banner'.

18 a. Ch. 18, attributed as a whole to the 'Elohistic' tradition, is misplaced: the meeting occurs at Sinai (v. 5) whereas 17:1 and 19:2 place it in Rephidim. The arrangements for the administration of justice (vv.13-26) are better situated at Sinai, as recorded in Dt 1:9-19.

b. The circumstances are not known.

c. Gershom: cf. 2:22. Eliezer: *Eli*—my God—(is) *'ezer*—help.

d. Horeb, 3:1.

and how Yahweh had rescued them. •And Jethro rejoiced at all Yahweh's 9
goodness to Israel in rescuing them from the Egyptians' hands. •'Blessed be 10
Yahweh' said Jethro then 'who has rescued you from the Egyptians and from
Pharaoh, and has rescued the people from the grasp of the Egyptians. •Now 11
Ps 135:5 I know that Yahweh is greater than all the gods...'[e]
Then Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, offered a holocaust and sacrifices to 12
God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to share the meal[f] with the
father-in-law of Moses in the presence of God.

‖Dt1:9-18 **The appointment of judges**

On the following day, Moses took his seat to administer justice for the people, 13
and from morning till evening they stood round him. •Observing what labours 14
he took on himself for the people's sake, the father-in-law of Moses said to him,
'Why do you take all this on yourself for the people? Why sit here alone with the
people standing round you from morning till evening?' •Moses answered his 15
father-in-law, 'Because the people come to me to bring their enquiries to God.
33:7+ When they have some dispute they come to me, and I settle the differences 16
between the one and the other and instruct them in God's statutes and his
Ac 6:3 decisions.' •'It is not right' the father-in-law of Moses said to him 'to take this 17
Nb 11:14 on yourself. •You will tire yourself out, you and the people with you. The work 18
is too heavy for you. You cannot do it alone. •Take my advice, and God will 19
be with you. You ought to represent the people before God and bring their
disputes to him. •Teach them the statutes and the decisions; show them the way 20
Nb11:16-17 they must follow and what their course must be. •But choose from the people 21
Nb 1:16 at large some capable and God-fearing men, trustworthy and incorruptible, and
appoint them as leaders of the people: leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties,
tens. •Let these be at the service of the people to administer justice at all times. 22
They can refer all difficult questions to you, but all smaller questions they will
decide for themselves, so making things easier for you and sharing the burden
with you. •If you do this—and may God so command you—you will be able 23
to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.'
Moses took his father-in-law's advice and did as he said. •Moses chose capable 24 25
Nb 1:16;25:5 men from the ranks of the Israelites and set them over the people: leaders of
thousands, hundreds, fifties, tens. •They were at the service of the people to 26
administer justice at all times. They referred hard questions to Moses, and
decided smaller questions by themselves.
Nb10:30 Then Moses allowed his father-in-law to go, and he made his way back to 27
his own country.

III. THE COVENANT AT SINAI[a]

A. THE COVENANT AND THE DECALOGUE

Ne 9:13 **The Israelites come to Sinai[b]**

18:5 Nb33:15 Dt 33:2 2K17:34 Si 24:23; 45:3 Jr 31:32 Ezk16:18 19 Three months after they came out of the land of Egypt...[c] on that day 1
the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sinai.[d] •From Rephidim they set 2
out again; and when they reached the wilderness of Sinai, there in the wilderness
they pitched their camp; there facing the mountain Israel pitched camp.

Yahweh promises a covenant

24:15 Moses then went up to God, and Yahweh called to him from the mountain, 3
Dt 4:34; 29:2;32:11 Is 46:3 saying, 'Say this to the House of Jacob, declare this to the sons of Israel, •"You 4
yourselves have seen what I did with the Egyptians, how I carried you on eagle's
wings and brought you to myself. •From this you know that now, if you obey my 5
Dt10:14-15 Jr 9:12 voice and hold fast to my covenant, you of all the nations shall be my very own

6 for all the earth is mine.[e] •I will count you a kingdom of priests, a consecrated
7 nation."[f] Those are the words you are to speak to the sons of Israel.' •So Moses
went and summoned the elders of the people, putting before them all that Yahweh
8 had bidden him. • Then all the people answered as one, 'All that Yahweh has
said, we will do.' And Moses took the people's reply back to Yahweh.

Nb 16:3 Dt 14:2 Ps 33:12 Ws 10:15 Jr 2:3 Rv 5:10 *Dt 5:27* Jos 24:16-24

Preparing for the Covenant

9 Yahweh said to Moses, 'I am coming to you in a dense cloud so that the
people may hear when I speak to you and may trust you always'. And Moses
took the people's reply back to Yahweh.[g]

24:16 13:22+; 14:31 Si 45:3

10 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Go to the people and tell them to prepare themselves
11 today and tomorrow. Let them wash their clothing and •hold themselves in
readiness for the third day, because on the third day Yahweh will descend on
12 the mountain of Sinai in the sight of all the people. •You will mark out the
limits of the mountain[h] and say, "Take care not to go up the mountain or to
touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain will be put to death.
13 No one must lay a hand on him: he must be stoned or shot down by arrow,
whether man or beast; he must not remain alive." When the ram's horn sounds
a long blast, they are to go up the mountain.'
14 So Moses came down from the mountain to the people and bade them prepare
15 themselves; and they washed their clothing. •Then he said to the people, 'Be
ready for the third day; do not go near any woman'.[i]

Nb 11:8 Gn 35:2 Lv 11:25, 28,40 19:21; 34:3 Jr 30:21 Ezk 43:7 ↗ Heb 12:20

The theophany on Sinai[j]

16 Now at daybreak on the third day there were peals of thunder on the
mountain and lightning flashes, a dense cloud, and a loud trumpet blast, and

Dt 4:10-12; ‖5:2-5,25-31 2 S 22:8 1 K 19:11 Ps 18:7 Is 6:4; 29:6

e. The end of the v. 'because in the matter in which they dealt arrogantly with thee' is probably incomplete or corrupt.

f. By offering sacrifice Jethro acknowledges Yahweh as God. By inviting Aaron and the elders to the sacred meal (which follows the communion sacrifice), cf. Lv 3: 1+, he strengthens his family ties with Israel.

19 a. The Covenant with Noah involved the whole human race, Gn 9:9. The Mosaic Covenant will set its seal on God's choice of a nation and on the promises made to it, Ex 6:6-8, just as the Covenant with Abraham, mentioned in Ex 6:5, seals the first promises, Gn 17. But the Covenant with Abraham was made with a single individual (though also embracing his descendants) and imposed a single obligation, that of circumcision. The Sinaitic Covenant binds the whole nation and the whole nation receives a Law: the Decalogue and the Book of the Covenant. This Law with its subsequent elaborations is to become the charter of Judaism and Si 24: 9-27 will identify it with wisdom. But the Law is also 'a witness against the nation', Dt 31:26, because its transgression cancels the promises and invites God's condemnation. Its role, as at once instruction and deterrent, will be to prepare for the coming of Christ who concludes the New Covenant. St Paul will later expound this transitional function of the Law in answer to Christians who hanker after their old Jewish observance, Ga 3; Rm 7.

b. In ch. 19 there is a mixture of 'Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic' traditions as well as a number of Deuteronomic elements and editorial additions.

c. The precise time is not given.

d. Tradition locates Mount Sinai in the southern region of the Sinai peninsula at Jebel Musa (7500 ft.) the northern rock-face of which dominates a barren plain surrounded by mountains: the locality admirably satisfies the data of the text. It was at Sinai, called Horeb or Mount of God in the 'Elohistic' tradition (Dt: Horeb), that Moses received his vocation, Ex 3:1-4. 17, and had his second meeting with Jethro, Ex 18. At Sinai the Law was given, Ex 19-40; Nb 1-10 (cf. Lv 27-34) and the Covenant concluded, Ex 24:3-8. At Sinai God placed himself at the head of his people for the journey to the Promised Land, Dt 33:2 and Ps 68:8,17 (cf. Jg 5:4f; Hab 3:3f); it was to Sinai that Elijah the prophet returned as to the pure spring of divine revelation, 1 K 19, cf. Si 48:7. Sinai stands for the Old Covenant that was eventually superseded, Ga 4:24f.

e. Hence God can choose whom he will.

f. The Covenant makes Israel God's sacred possession, Jr 2:3, a consecrated people, Dt 7:6; 26:19 that is to say holy (for the same Hebr. word means 'sacred', 'consecrated', 'holy') as its God is holy, Lv 19:2, cf. 11:44f; 20:7,26. It is also a nation of priests, cf. Is 61:6, because what is sacred is by that very fact related to ritual worship. The promise is to have its complete fulfilment in 'the Israel of God', the Church; there the faithful are called 'saints', Ac 9:13+, and in union with Christ the Priest they offer God a sacrifice of praise, 1 P 2:5,9; Rv 1:6; 5:10; 20:6.

g. Repetition of 8b, out of place here.

h. 'You will mark out the limits of the mountain' Sam. Sanctity and remoteness go together: sanctity involves separation from all that has not the quality of holiness. Where God manifests his presence is forbidden ground, Gn 28:16-17; Ex 3:5; 40:35; Lv 16:2; Nb 1:51; 18:22. For the same reason the ark must not be handled, 2 S 6:7. This idea of the sacred, though primitive, conveys a lesson of enduring worth: that the mystery of God's greatness is impenetrable and his majesty a thing of awe.

i. It is assumed that sexual relations make men unfit for sacred duties. Cf. 1 S 21:5.

j. The thunderstorm is the chosen scene of God's self-manifestation, cf. Ps. 18:7; 29:3f; 77:16f; 97:2f; the gale is his herald's trumpet, the thunder his voice, cf. Ps 29, the cloud ('Elohistic' tradition) and the fire (v. 18; 'Yahwistic' tradition, see 13:22+) the signs of his presence. Cf. the encounter of Elijah with God in 1 K 19:11-12. The purpose of this theophany is not only to show God's mastery of nature but also his majesty (the 'Priestly' tradition speaks of his 'glory' in 24:16f), his sublimity and the religious awe that he inspires. Cf. Dt 5:22f; Jg 5:4f; Ps 68:7f; Hab 3:3-15 recalling this theophany.

▲Mt 17:5 ▲Heb 12: 18-19 inside the camp all the people trembled. •Then Moses led the people out of 17
the camp to meet God; and they stood at the bottom of the mountain. •The 18
Ezk 1:13 Ps 18:7 Heb 12:18-19 Rv 9:2 mountain of Sinai was entirely wrapped in smoke, because Yahweh had descended
on it in the form of fire. Like smoke from a furnace the smoke went up, and
Ezk 10:5 Ps 18:13-14 Si 45:5 the whole mountain shook[k] violently. •Louder and louder grew the sound 19
of the trumpet. Moses spoke, and God answered him with peals of thunder[l].
24:1 Yahweh came down on the mountain of Sinai, on the mountain top, and Yahweh 20
called Moses to the top of the mountain; and Moses went up. •Yahweh said 21
19:12 to Moses, 'Go down and warn the people not to pass beyond their bounds to
33:20+ come and look on Yahweh, or many of them will lose their lives. •The priests, 22
the men who do approach Yahweh,[m] *even these must purify themselves,* or
Yahweh will break out against them.' •Moses answered Yahweh, 'The people 23
cannot come up the mountain of Sinai because you warned us yourself when
you said, "Mark out the limits of the mountain and declare it sacred" '. •'Go 24
down,' said Yahweh to him 'and come up again bringing Aaron with you.
But do not allow the priests or the people to pass beyond their bounds to come
up to Yahweh, or he will break out against them.' •So Moses went down to 25
the people and spoke to them...

34:10-27 ||Dt 5:6-22

The Decalogue[a]

↗ Mt 19: 16-22+ Mt 5 1 Co 8:6 20 Then God spoke all these words. He said, •'I am Yahweh your God who 1 2
brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Dt 4:35;6:4 'You shall have no gods except me.[b] 3

Lv 19:4 Ho 8:6 'You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything 4
Dt 4:15-20 in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; •you shall not 5
23:24;34:7+ Dt 4:24+ bow down to them[c] or serve them. For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God
and I punish the father's fault in the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons
Na 1:2 Ps 109:14 of those who hate me; •but I show kindness to thousands of those who love me 6
and keep my commandments.

Ps 103:17 *Lv 19:12* Zc 5:3 Mt 5:33 'You shall not utter the name of Yahweh your God to misuse it,[d] for Yahweh 7
will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it.

23:12; 31:12-17; 34:21;35:1-3 Lv 19:3;23:3 Nb 15:32-36 Dt 5:12-15 ↗ Lk 13:14 'Remember the sabbath day[e] and keep it holy. •For six days you shall labour 8 9
and do all your work, •but the seventh day is a sabbath for Yahweh your God. 10
You shall do no work that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter
nor your servants, men or women, nor your animals nor the stranger who lives
Gn 2:2-3 Rv 10:6 with you. •For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth and the 11
sea and all that these hold, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why Yahweh
has blessed the sabbath day and made it sacred.

Lv 19:3 'Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the 12
↗ Ep 6:2-3 land that Yahweh your God has given to you.

Gn 20:13 ↗ Rm 13:9 ↗ Jm 2:11 *Mt 5:27* Lv 19:11 'You shall not kill. 13

'You shall not commit adultery. 14

'You shall not steal. 15

Lv 19:12 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. 16

Jb 31:1 Pr 20:20 Mi 2:2 'You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your 17
neighbour's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or
anything that is his.'

Dt 5:23-31 [f]All the people shook with fear[g] at the peals of thunder and the lightning 18
flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the smoking mountain; and they kept
Heb 12:19 their distance. •'Speak to us yourself' they said to Moses 'and we will listen; 19
33:20+ but do not let God speak to us, or we shall die.' •Moses answered the people, 20
Dt 8:2 'Do not be afraid; God has come to test you, so that your fear of him, being
Si 45:5 always in your mind, may keep you from sinning'. •So the people kept their 21
distance while Moses approached the dark cloud where God was.

B. THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT[a]

Law concerning the altar

22 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Tell the sons of Israel this, "You have seen for your- Si 45:5
23 selves that I have spoken to you from heaven. •You shall not make gods of silver or gods of gold to stand beside me; you shall not make things like this for yourselves.

24 "You are to make me an altar of earth, and sacrifice on this the holocausts Lv 1:1+; 3:1+; 17:1-9
and communion sacrifices from your flocks or herds. In every place in which
25 I have my name remembered[i] I shall come to you and bless you. •If you make
me an altar of stone, do not build it of dressed stones; for if you use a tool on it, Dt27:5-6 Jos 8:31
26 you profane it. •You shall not go up to my altar by steps for fear you expose 1 M 4:47 28:42
your nakedness."[j]

Laws concerning slaves

Lv25:35-46+ Dt15:12-18

1 2 21 'This is the ruling you are to lay before them: •"When you buy a Hebrew Lv25:10,39 Jb 31:13 Si 7:21
slave, his service shall be for six years. In the seventh year he may leave;
3 he shall be free, with no compensation to pay. •If he came single, he shall leave
4 single; if he came married, his wife shall leave with him. •If his master gives Jr34:8-16
him a wife and she bears him sons and daughters, wife and children shall belong
5 to her master, and the man must leave alone. •But if the slave declares, "I love Dt15:16-17
6 my master and my wife and children; I renounce my freedom", •then his master
shall take him to God, leading him to the door or the door post. His master shall
7 pierce his ear with an awl, and he shall be in his service for all time. •If a man
sells his daughter as a slave,[a] she shall not regain her liberty like male slaves. Ne5:5

k. 'The mountain shook' Hebr.: 'the people trembled' Hebr. and Greek MSS.

l. Lit. 'with a voice'. Elsewhere the term means thunder, cf. 9:23, but possibly here it means an articulate voice.

m. Anticipatory remark; the investiture of priests has not yet been mentioned, cf. ch. 29 and Lv 8.

20 a. In the book as it stands the Decalogue is not linked to the narrative framework, 19:24-25 and 20: 18-21. The Decalogue (or 'Ten Words', cf. Ex 34:28; Dt 4:13; 10:4) has come down to us in two forms: the 'Priestly' recension here, and the somewhat different 'Deuteronomic' recension in Dt 5:6-21. It is possible that each of the commandments was originally as short as the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th; the enlargements may be due to editors, whether 'Priestly' or 'Deuteronomistic.' Two systems of division have been proposed: (a) vv. 2-3, 4-6,7,8-11,12,13,14,15,16,17, or (b) vv. 3-6,7,8-11,12,13, 14,15,16,17a,17b. The second of these, drawn up by St Augustine following Deuteronomy, has been adopted by the Church. The Decalogue is the core of the Mosaic Law; as instruction and deterrent (see note a, ch. 19) it is still valid in the New Law: our Lord appeals to the commandments, to which he adds the evangelical counsels, Mk10:17-21, as the seal of perfection. St Paul's attack on the Law, Rm and Ga, is not directed against these inescapable duties to God and neighbour.

b. Lit. 'There shall be no other gods for you before my face'. This means either 'no other gods in my presence', an assertion of monotheism for an Israel where God is present; or 'no gods interceding between you and me', a statement of the intimacy of God with his people which makes intercessory gods unnecessary.

c. I.e., before their images.

d. Besides perjury, Mt 5:33, and false witness, v. 16 and Dt 5:20, this can also include every irreverent use of the divine name (as Greek and Vulg. have it, with their translation 'in vain').

e. The biblical texts expressly connect the term 'sabbath' with a root meaning 'to desist, to stop work', Ex 16:29-30; 23:12; 34:21. The sabbath is a weekly day of rest dedicated to Yahweh who rested on the seventh day of creation, v. 11, cf. Gn 2:2-3. But while it does homage to God, it also benefits man, Ex 23:12; Dt 5:14. The sabbath is of very ancient origin but its observance gained particular importance after the Exile and became a distinctive mark of Judaism, Ne 13:15-22; 1 M 2: 32-41. A legalistic outlook took the joy out of the observance, leaving only a burden which Jesus was to remove, Mt 12:1f p; Lk 13:10f; 14:1f.

f. Vv. 18-21 are dependent on the 'Elohistic' tradition; they would come better after 19:19.

g. 'shook with fear' Sam. Greek.

h. The 'Book of the Covenant' (so named on account of 24:7f which, however, refers rather to the Decalogue) has been inserted here since it elaborates the commandments of the Decalogue, showing their applicability to civil and criminal law. It is attributed to the 'Elohistic' tradition and basically goes back to Moses, though later developments have adapted it to a community already passing from semi-nomadism to a settled way of life. In the Book of the Covenant both law (with God for its author) and custom (sanctioned by divine authority) play their part. Points of contact with the Code of Hammurabi, with the Hittite Code and with the Decree of Horemheb, do not necessarily prove direct borrowing but point rather to a common source, namely to ancient common law diversified according to local and racial requirements. The clauses of the Book of the Covenant may be grouped under three heads according to their subject-matter; civil and penal laws, 21:1-22:20; regulation of ritual, 20:22-26; 22:28-31; 23:10-19; social morality, 22:21-27; 23:1-9. According to their literary form one may distinguish: (a) 21:3-11,18-22,26-37; 22:1-16, in the style of ancient eastern jurisprudence; (b) 20:24, 26;22:20,27-29; 23:1-3, 6-9,10-12,14-19, in the style of the Decalogue; (c) 20:25; 21:22,24-26; 23:4-5; (d) 21:14,15-17; 22:17-19.

i. Unlike Dt 12:5, etc., the Book of the Covenant allows more than one place of worship.

j. Presumably the one who offered sacrifice wore only a loincloth, as among the Egyptians.

21 a. I.e. slave and also concubine, cf. following vv.

If she does not please her master who intended her for himself,[b] he must let her be bought back: he has not the right to sell her to foreigners, thus treating her unfairly. 8 •If he intends her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the ruling for daughters.[c] 9 •If he takes another wife, he must not reduce the food of the first or her clothing or her conjugal rights. 10 •Should he cheat her of these three things she may leave, freely, without having to pay any money. 11

Lv 24:17 Nb 35:16-34

Homicide

"Anyone who strikes a man and so causes his death, must die. 12 •If he has not lain in wait for him but God has delivered him into his hands,[d] then I will appoint you 13
1 K 1:50; 2:28-34 a place where he may seek refuge.[e] 14 •But should a man dare to kill his fellow by treacherous intent, you must take him even from my altar to be put to death.
Dt 24:7 "Anyone who strikes his father or mother must die. 15 •Anyone who abducts a man—whether he has sold him or is found in possession of him—must die. 16
Lv 20:9 Dt 27:16 ↗ Mt 15:4 Mk 7:10 Anyone who curses father or mother must die. 17

Blows and wounds

"If men quarrel and one strikes the other a blow with stone or fist so that the man, though he does not die, must keep his bed, 18 •the one who struck the blow shall not be liable provided the other gets up and can go about, even with a stick. He must compensate him, however, for his enforced inactivity, and care for him until he is completely cured. 19

"If a man beats his slave, male or female, and the slave dies at his hands, 20
Pr 19:26 he must pay the penalty. 21 •But should the slave survive for one or two days, he shall pay no penalty because the slave is his by right of purchase.

"If, when men come to blows, they hurt a woman who is pregnant and she suffers a miscarriage, though she does not die of it, the man responsible must pay the compensation demanded of him by the woman's master; he shall hand 22
Gn 4:23 Lv 24:19-20 Dt 19:21 ↗ Mt 5:38-42 it over, after arbitration. 23 •But should she die, you shall give life for life, 24 •eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 •burn for burn, wound for wound, stroke for stroke.[f]
Ps 125:4-5 Jr 50:29 1 Th 5:15 "When a man strikes at the eye of his slave, male or female, and destroys the use of it, he must give him his freedom to compensate for the eye. 26 •If he knocks out the tooth of his slave, male or female, he must give him his freedom to compensate for the tooth. 27

"When an ox gores a man or woman to death, the ox must be stoned. Its flesh shall not be eaten, and the owner of the ox shall not be liable. 28 •But if the ox has been in the habit of goring before, and if its owner was warned but has not kept it under control, then should this ox kill a man or woman, the ox must be stoned and its owner put to death. 29 •If a ransom is imposed on him, he must pay whatever is imposed, to redeem his life. 30 •If the ox gores a boy or a girl, he must be treated in accordance with this same rule. 31 •If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner must pay over to their master a sum of money —thirty shekels— and the ox must be stoned. 32

2 S 12:6 Lk 19:8 "When a man leaves a pit uncovered, or when he digs one but does not cover it, should an ox, or donkey, fall into it, 33 •then the owner of the pit shall make up for the loss: he must pay it sowner money, and the dead animal shall be his own. 34 •If one man's ox harms another's so that it dies, the owners must sell the live ox and share the price of it; they shall also share the dead animal. But if it is common knowledge that the ox has been in the habit of goring before, 35 and its owner has not kept it under control, he must repay ox for ox; the dead animal shall be his own. 36

Theft of animals

"If a man steals an ox or a sheep and then slaughters or sells it, he must pay five oxen for the ox, four sheep for the sheep.

22 "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck a mortal blow, there is to be no blood-vengeance for him, •but there shall be blood-vengeance for him if it was after dawn. Full restitution must be made; if he has not the means, he must be sold to pay for what he has stolen. •If the stolen animal is found alive in his possession, ox or donkey or sheep, he must pay double. Pr6:31

Offences demanding compensation

"When a man puts his animals out to graze in a field or vineyard and lets his beasts graze in another's field, he must make restitution for the part of the field that has been grazed in proportion to its yield. But if he has let the whole field be grazed, he must make restitution in proportion to the best crop recorded in the injured party's field or vineyard.

"When a fire spreads, setting light to thorn bushes and destroying stacked or standing corn or the field itself, the man responsible for the fire must make full restitution.

"When a man has entrusted money or goods to another's keeping and these are stolen from his house, the thief, if he can be caught, must repay double. Should the thief not be caught, the owner of the house must swear before God that he has not laid hands on the other man's property. Lv5:21-26

"Whenever there is breach of trust in the matter of ox, donkey, sheep, clothing, or any lost property for which it is claimed 'Yes, this is it', the dispute shall be brought before God. The person whom God pronounces guilty[a] must pay double to the other.

"When a man has entrusted to another's keeping a donkey, ox, sheep, or any beast whatever, and this dies or is injured or carried off, without a witness, an oath by Yahweh shall decide between the two parties whether one man has laid hands on the other's property or not. The owner shall take what remains,[b] the other shall not have to make good the loss. •But if the animal has been stolen from him, he must make restitution to the owner. •If it has been savaged by wild beasts, he must bring the savaged remains of the animal as evidence, and he shall not be obliged to give compensation. Gn31:39 Am 3:12

"When a man borrows an animal from another, and it is injured or dies in the owner's absence, the borrower must make full restitution. •But if the owner has been present, the borrower will not have to make good the loss. If the owner has hired it out, he shall settle for the price of its hire. Ne 8:14 Ezk45:17

Violation of a virgin

Dt22:23-29

"If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and sleeps with her, he must pay her price[c] and make her his wife. •If her father absolutely refuses to let him have her, the seducer must pay a sum of money equal to the price fixed for a virgin.

Moral and religious laws

"You shall not allow a sorceress to live. Lv 20:6,27

"Anyone who has intercourse with an animal must die. Lv 18:23 Dt18:9-12; 27:21

"Anyone who sacrifices to other gods shall come under the ban.[d] *Nb25:1-5*

b. 'who intended her for himself' Greek.

c. His own daughters.

d. Accidents are attributed to God.

e. In a society where the state had not yet supplanted the individual avenger, the designation of cities of refuge safeguarded the unintentional killer from blood-vengeance, see Nb 35:19+. But right of asylum was not extended to deliberate murderers. Particulars of these cities will be given in Nb 35:11-34; Dt 4:41-43; 19:1-13; Jos 20:1-9; there are to be three in Transjordania and three in Canaan. It is probable that in each of the cities named there was a notable place of worship and that they were chosen for this reason: privilege of asylum normally belonged to a sanctuary, cf. here, v. 14, and 1 K 2:28f.

f. This *lex talionis*, cf. Lv 24:19-20; Dt 19:21. prevents excessive revenge by laying down a punishment equal to the damage, cf. Gn 4:23-24. Jesus will impose forgiveness instead, Mt 5:38f.

22 a. By judicial verdict in the form of ordeal, oracle or oath.

b. Alternative translation 'The owner shall accept the oath'.

c. Hebr. *mohar*, the money handed over by a betrothed man to the family of his future wife.

d. Application of the law of anathema, or 'ban', see Jos 6:17+, to the individual.

12:48+;23:9 Lv19:33f Dt10:18f; 24:17f; 27:19 Ps 146:9 Is 1:17 Ezk 22:7 "You must not molest the stranger or oppress him, for you lived as strangers 20
in the land of Egypt. 21 You must not be harsh with the widow, or with the orphan; 21
if you are harsh with them, they will surely cry out to me, and be sure I shall hear 22
their cry; 23 my anger will flare and I shall kill you with the sword, your own wives 23
will be widows, your own children orphans. 24

Ps 109:9 Lv 25:35-37 Dt 23:20-21 Pr 28:8 "If you lend money to any of my people, to any poor man among you, 24
you must not play the usurer with him: you must not demand interest from 25
him.

Dt24:10-13,17 Jb 22:6; 24:9 Mi 2:10 "If you take another's cloak as a pledge, you must give it back to him before 25
sunset. 26 It is all the covering he has; it is the cloak he wraps his body 26
in; what else would he sleep in? If he cries to me, I will listen, for I am full of 27
pity.

Qo 10:20 ✗ Ac23:5 "You shall not revile God[e] nor curse a ruler of your people. 27 28

First-fruits and first-born

13:11+ Dt26:1+ "Do not be slow to make offering from the abundance of your threshing- 28
floor and your winepress.[f] You must give me the first-born of your sons; 29 you 29
Dt 15:19 must do the same with your flocks and herds. The first-born must remain with 30
its mother for seven days; on the eighth day you must give it to me.

Lv 11:44 Ezk 4:14 Lv17:15-16 Dt14:21 "You are to be men consecrated to me. You must not eat the flesh of an 30 31
animal that has been savaged by wild beasts; you must throw it to the dogs.

Justice. Duties towards enemies

Lv 5:22; 19:16 23 "You must not make false assertions. You must not support a guilty man 1
by giving malicious evidence. 2 You must not take the side of the greater 2
Lv 19:15 Dt16:18-20 number in the cause of wrong-doing nor side with the majority and give
evidence in a lawsuit in defiance of justice; 3 nor in a lawsuit must you show 3
partiality to the poor.[a]

‖Dt22:1-4 Pr 25:21 Si 28:7 "If you come on your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you must lead it 4
back to him. 5 If you see the donkey of a man who hates you fallen under its 5
load, instead of keeping out of his way, go to him to help him.

Dt 1:17 Ps 82:3 Pr 17:5 Dn13:53 "You must not cheat any poor man of yours of his rights at law. 6 Keep out 6 7
of trumped-up cases. See that the man who is innocent and just is not done to
Dt16:19; 27:25 Ps 26:10 death, and do not acquit[b] the guilty. 8 You must not accept a bribe, for a bribe 8
blinds clear-sighted men[c] and is the ruin of the just man's cause.

22:20+ "You must not oppress the stranger; you know how a stranger feels, for you 9
lived as strangers in the land of Egypt.

Lv25:1+ **The sabbatical year and the sabbath**

Lv25:2-7 Dt24:19; 26:12-13 Ezk 1:22 "For six years you may sow your land and gather its produce, 10 but in the 10 11
seventh year you must let it lie fallow and forego all produce from it. Those of
your people who are poor may take food from it, and let the wild animals feed
on what they leave. You shall do the same with your vineyard and your olive
grove.

20:8+ "For six days you shall do your work, but stop on the seventh day, so that your 12
ox and your donkey may rest and the son of your slave girl have a breathing
space, and the stranger too.

Jos 23:7 "Take notice of all I have told you and do not repeat the name of other gods: 13
let it not be heard from your lips.

34:18-23 Lv 23 Dt16:1-16 **The great feasts[d]**

1 K 25 Ezr 3:4 "Three times a year you are to celebrate a feast in my honour. 14 You must 14 15
12:15 celebrate the feast of Unleavened Bread: you must eat unleavened bread, as
I have commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in that
month you came out of Egypt. And no one must come before me empty-handed.
The feast of Harvest, too, you must celebrate, the feast of the first-fruits of the 16

produce of your sown fields; the feast of Ingathering also, at the end of the year
17 when you gather in the fruit of your labours from the fields. •Three times a year
all your menfolk must present themselves before the Lord Yahweh.
18 "You must not offer unleavened bread with the blood of the victim sacrificed
to me, nor put by the fat of my festal[e] victim for the following day. 34:25
19 "You must bring the best of the first-fruits of your soil to the house of Yahweh Lv 22:28 Dt 14:21; 26:1+
your God.
"You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk.[f] 34:26 Dt14:21

Preparatory promises and instructions for the entry into Canaan[g]

20 "I myself will send an angel[h] before you to guard you as you go and to bring 14:19;32:34; 33:2; 34:11
21 you to the place that I have prepared. •Give him reverence and listen to all Dt7:1-26 Is 63:9
that he says. Offer him no defiance; he would not pardon such a fault, Ml3:1
22 for my name[i] is in him. •If you listen carefully to his voice and do all that I say, Dt7:12
23 I shall be enemy to your enemies, foe to your foes. •My angel will go before 2M10:26
you and lead you to where the Amorites are and the Hittites, the Perizzites, Dt 7:1+
24 the Canaanites, the Hivites, the Jebusites; I shall exterminate these. •You must
not bow down to their gods or worship them; you must not do as they do: 20:5 Lv 18:3
25 you must destroy their gods utterly and smash their standing-stones.[j] •You are to *34:13* Nb33:52 Dt7:5;12:3
worship Yahweh your God, and I shall bless your bread and water, and remove
26 sickness from among you. •In your land no woman will miscarry, none be
barren. I shall give you your full term of life. Lv 26:9 Dt 7:14; 28;30:9
27 "I shall spread panic[k] ahead of you; I shall throw into confusion all the
people you encounter; I shall make all your enemies turn and run from you.
28 I shall send hornets in front of you to drive Hivite and Canaanite and Hittite from Dt 7:20 Jos 24:12 Ws 12:8
29 your presence. •[l]I shall not drive them out before you in a single year, or the
land would become a desert where, to your cost, the wild beasts would multiply.
30 Little by little I will drive them out before you until your numbers grow and Dt7:22+
31 you come into possession of the land. •For your frontiers I shall fix the Sea Jg 2:6+
of Reeds and the Philistine sea, the desert and the river;[m] yes, I shall deliver the Dt 11:24 Jg20:1+
inhabitants of the country into your hands, and you will drive them out before
32 you. •You must make no pact with them or with their gods. •They must not 34:12 Dt 6:14
33 live in your country or they will make you sin against me; you would come to *Dt 7:14* Ws14:11
worship their gods, and that would be a snare for you indeed!" '

e. Or 'the gods', probably the judges as here and in 22:7,8; cf. Ps 82:1.

f. Or 'your grapes and your new wine'. Both translations conjectural.

23 a. The verdict must not be swayed by poverty (nor by wealth cf. Lv 19:15).

b. 'do not acquit' Greek; 'for I shall not acquit' Hebr.

c. Or 'eye-witnesses'.

d. The four Pentateuchal traditions have each a calendar of the great religious feasts: Ex 23:14-17 'Elohistic'; Ex 34:18-23 'Yahwistic'; Dt 16:1-16 'Deuteronomic'; and the 'Priestly' tradition of Lv 23 with which the liturgical regulations of Nb 28-29 correspond. In the various texts appear further details of ritual but the three principal feasts remain those laid down by Ex 23. 1. In Spring the feast of the Unleavened Bread, including the Passover, see notes to 12:1 and 11. 2. The feast of Harvest, called 'feast of Weeks' in Ex 34:22; it was held seven weeks, Dt 16:9, or fifty days, Lv 23:16, after the Passover (hence its Greek name 'Pentecost', Tb 2:1) and marked the end of the wheat harvest; at a later date it also commemorated the giving of the Law on Sinai. 3. The feast of Ingathering of grapes and olives in the autumn; it was called the feast of Tabernacles (or Shelters), Dt 16:13; Lv 23:34, because during the week's festivities the people lived in huts made of branches in the manner of grape-gatherers in the vineyards; these shelters reminded the Israelites of their ancestors' tents in the wilderness, Lv 23:43. Of these three feasts the most popular seems to have been Ingathering or Tabernacles, which is called simply 'the feast' in 1 K 8:2,65; Ezk 45:25. Later, other feasts were added: the religious New Year, Lv 23:24; the Day of Expiation, Lv 16 and 23:27-32; and after the Exile: Purim, Est 9:24; Dedication, 1 M 4:59; the Day of Nikanor, 1 M 7:49.

e. I.e. of the passover.

f. Canaanite custom known from the Ras Shamra texts.

g. The original core of this section is attributed to the 'Elohistic' tradition, but has been completed by editors.

h. This angel appears to be distinguished from God himself, cf. Gn 16:7+, though he performs Yahweh's function. This is a guardian angel, Gn 24:7; Nb 20:16, such as figures later in the Book of Tobit, see Tb 5:4+.

i. The 'name' is considered to be, in some way, the representative of the person himself.

j. In the Canaanite cult, *stelae* or standing-stones, Hebr. *masseboth*, were symbols of the male divinity. The Law forbade their worship, cf. this passage and 34:13; Dt 7:5; 12:3; 16:22; Lv 26:1, so also did the prophets, Ho 3:4; 10:1; Mi 5:12. For a purified form of this custom, cf. Gn 28:18 and 22.

k. Lit. 'send my terror' (i.e. the terror that comes from me).

l. Vv. 29 and 30 explain why the conquest took so long; they appear to be a late addition.

m. The desert is the desert of Arabia, the river the Euphrates. The boundaries mentioned are those of Solomon's kingdom as described in 1 K 5:1. Cf. Jg 20:1+.

C. THE COVENANT RATIFIED[a]

19:20;28:1 Nb 11:16

24 To Moses he had said, 'Come up to Yahweh, yourself and Aaron, Nadab 1
and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel and bow down in worship
at a distance. •Moses alone must approach Yahweh; the others must not, nor 2
must the people go up with him.'

Dt 5:27 Moses went and told the people all the commands of Yahweh and all the 3
Jos 24:16-24; 34:27-28 ordinances.[b] In answer, all the people said with one voice, 'We will observe all
the commands that Yahweh has decreed'. •Moses put all the commands of 4
Jos 4:3-9, 20-24; 24:26-27 Yahweh into writing, and early next morning he built an altar at the foot of
1 K 18:31 Zc 9:11 the mountain, with twelve standing-stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. •Then 5
he directed certain young Israelites to offer holocausts and to immolate bullocks
to Yahweh as communion sacrifices. •Half of the blood Moses took up and 6
29:16 put into basins, the other half he cast on the altar. •And taking the Book of 7
the Covenant he read it to the listening people, and they said, 'We will observe
Ps 50:5 all that Yahweh has decreed; we will obey.' •Then Moses took the blood[c] and 8
↗ Mt 26:28p ↗ Heb 9:18; 10:30 cast it towards the people. 'This' he said 'is the blood of the Covenant that Yahweh
1 P 1:2 has made with you, containing all these rules.'

Is 24:23 Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel. 9
33:20+ Ezk 1:26 They saw the God of Israel beneath whose feet there was, it seemed, a sapphire 10
Rv 4:2-3 *1Ch 29:22* pavement pure as the heavens themselves. •He laid no hand on these notables 11
of the sons of Israel: they gazed on God. They ate and they drank.

Moses on the mountain[d]

25:16;31:18; 32:15f 34:1,4,28f Dt 4:13;5: 22;9:9,15; 10:1-5

Yahweh said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain and stay there 12
while I give you the stone tablets —the law and the commandments— that
I have written for their instruction'. •Accordingly Moses rose, he and his servant 13
Jos 1:1+ Joshua, and they went up[e] the mountain of God. •To the elders he had said, 14
17:10 'Wait here for us until we come back to you. You have Aaron and Hur with
19:3 you; if anyone has a difference to settle, let him go to them.' •And Moses went 15
up the mountain.

19:9;29; 43;40:35 Lv 9:6 Lk 2:9

The cloud covered the mountain, •and the glory of Yahweh[f] settled on the 16
mountain of Sinai; for six days the cloud covered it, and on the seventh day
Dt 4:36 Yahweh called to Moses from inside the cloud. •To the eyes of the sons of 17
Israel the glory of Yahweh seemed like a devouring fire on the mountain top.

32:1;34:28 Dt 9:9 1 K 19:8 Si 45:5 Mt 4:2

Moses went right into the cloud. He went up the mountain, and stayed there for 18
forty days and forty nights.[g]

IV. INSTRUCTIONS ON THE BUILDING OF THE SANCTUARY AND ON ITS MINISTERS[a]

35:4-29

Contributions for the sanctuary

2 Ch 24:6

25 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Tell the sons of Israel to set aside ½
a contribution for me; you shall accept this contribution from every man
whose heart prompts him to give it. •You shall accept from them the following 3
contributions: gold, silver and bronze; •purple stuffs, of violet shade and red, 4
crimson stuffs, fine linen, goats' hair; •rams' skins dyed red, fine leather,[b] acacia 5
wood; •oil for the lamps, spices for the chrism and for the fragrant incense; 6
29:45 Rv 11:19 onyx stones and gems to be set in ephod and pectoral. •Build me a sanctuary 7 8
25:40+; 26:30;27:8 Nb 8:4 Ezk 40:4 so that I may dwell among them.[c] •In making the tabernacle and its furnishings 9
you must follow exactly the pattern I shall show you.

37:1-9

The tabernacle and the furnishings. The ark[d]

Nb 3:31 Dt 10:3

"You are to make me an ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, one 10

11 and a half cubits wide, one and a half cubits high. •You are to plate it, inside and Heb 9:4▲
12 out, with pure gold, and decorate it all round with a gold moulding. •You will
cast four gold rings for the ark and fix them to its four supports: two rings on
13 one side and two rings on the other. •You will also make shafts of acacia wood 2 S 6:7+
14 plated with gold •and pass the shafts through the rings on the sides of the ark,
15 to carry the ark by these. •The shafts must remain in the rings of the ark and
16 not be withdrawn. •Inside the ark you will place the Testimony[e] that I shall 24:12+ Dt 10:1-2
give you.

17 "Further, you are to make a throne of mercy,[f] of pure gold, two and a half Lv 16:12-15 Rm 3:25+
18 cubits long, and one and a half cubits wide. •For the two ends of this throne
of mercy you are to make two golden cherubs;[g] you are to make them of beaten 2 S 22:11 Heb 9:5
19 gold. •Make the first cherub for one end and the second for the other, and
fasten them to the two ends of the throne of mercy so that they make one piece
20 with it. •The cherubs are to have their wings spread upwards so that they
overshadow the throne of mercy. They must face one another, their faces towards
21 the throne of mercy. •You must place the throne of mercy on the top of the ark. 26:34
22 Inside the ark you must place the Testimony that I shall give you. •There I shall 29:42; 33:7-11 Lv 1:1; 16:2 Nb 17:19
come to meet you;[h] there, from above the throne of mercy, from between the *30:36* Dt 31:14 Jos 18:1 Rv 15:5
two cherubs that are on the ark of the Testimony, I shall give you all
my commands for the sons of Israel.

The table for the offertory bread[i] 37:10-16

23 'You are to make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, Nb 4:7 1 K 7:48 1M 4:49

24 a. This ch. seems to combine two traditions. In the 'Yahwistic' tradition (vv. 1-2; 9-12) the Covenant is confirmed by a meal in the presence of God; in the 'Elohistic' tradition (vv. 3-8) by the sprinkling of blood in the presence of the people at the foot of the mountain.

b. The commands (or words, *debarim*) which alone are referred to in what follows, may indicate the Decalogue. The ordinances *(mishpatim)* are possibly those of 21:1–22:17.

c. Moses is the mediator between God and the people; he unites them symbolically by sprinkling the blood of a single victim first on the altar, which represents Yahweh, and then on the people. In this way the pact is ratified by blood, cf. Lv 1:5+, just as the New Covenant is ratified by the blood of Christ.

d. Vv. 12-15a and 18b come from the 'Elohistic', vv. 15b-18a (a parallel account) from the 'Priestly' tradition.

e. 'they went up' Greek; 'and Moses went up' Hebr.

f. In the 'Priestly' tradition, cf. 13:22+, the 'glory of Yahweh' is the manifestation of God's presence. This 'glory' is a fire clearly distinguished (here and in 40:34-35) from the cloud that accompanies and surrounds it. The fire and the cloud are images borrowed from the great theophanies with a thunderstorm for their setting, 19:16+, but they have a more profound significance: the brilliant light (which needs no storm for its appearance, 33:22, and which later leaves its glow on the face of Moses, 34:29) stands for God's unapproachable majesty. It fills the newly erected tabernacle, 40:34-35, and will fill the Temple of Solomon, 1 K 8: 10-11. On the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem Ezekiel sees the glory leaving the city, Ezk 9:3; 10:4,18-19; 11:22-23; later he sees it returning to the new Temple, Ezk 43:1f; for Ezekiel the 'glory' assumes a shining, human form, Ezk 1:26-28. In other texts, and particularly in the Psalms, the glory of Yahweh simply expresses God's majesty and the honour due to him, often with eschatological overtones; or else it indicates God's miraculous power, Ex 15:7, cf. the 'glory' of Jesus, Jn 2:11; 11:40.

g. Cf. the forty days' journey of Elijah to Sinai, 1 K 19:8, and Christ's forty days in the desert, Mt 4:2p.

25 a. In chapters 25-31 ('Priestly' tradition) there are elements of great antiquity like the ark and the tabernacle which, with the system of worship itself, certainly go back to the time of Moses; but with these are mixed others which reflect the development of worship in the course of the history of Israel. When the author gathers all together under the formula, 'God said to Moses', he is asserting the divine authority behind the religious institutions of Israel.

b. Lit. '*tahash*-skin': meaning uncertain.

c. God was worshipped in those places where he had specially manifested his presence by means of a theophany, Gn 12:7; 28:12-19, etc. Sinai, scene of the greatest theophany of all is the 'mountain of God', 3:1; 1 K 19:8, his dwelling place, Dt 33:2; Jg 5:4-5; Hab 3:3; Ps 68:8. The ark is the sign of his presence, 25:22; cf. 1 S 4:4; 2 S 6:2, and the tabernacle which houses the ark is the dwelling of Yahweh, v. 9 and 40:34; it accompanies the people on their journey, 2 S 7:6, until at last the Temple of Jerusalem becomes God's house, 1 K 8:10.

d. The ark was a rectangular chest (3 3/4 × 2 1/4 × 2 1/4 feet); it was carried on poles; resting on it was the 'propitiatory' or 'throne of mercy', v. 17, and the cherubs, v. 18. For the history of the ark see especially Jos 3:3; 6:4f; 1 S 4-6; 2 S 6; 1 K 8:1-9. It was the sign of God's presence, cf. note c.

e. I.e. the two tablets on which the Decalogue was written.

f. Or 'propitiatory'; the Hebr. word is *kapporeth*, from the root *kaphar*: 'to cover', but also 'to perform the expiation', 'to obliterate'. Yahweh appears on the propitiatory and there speaks with Moses, 25:22; Lv 16:2; Nb 7:89. On the great Day of Atonement the propitiatory was censed and sprinkled with blood, Lv 16:13 and 15.

g. The word corresponds to the Babylonian *Karibu*, half-human, half-animal tutelary deities guarding the approaches to temples and palaces. Because of their position on the ark Yahweh is said to sit on the cherubim, 1 S 4:4; 2 S 6:2; 2 K 19:15; Ps 80:1; 99:1. In the Temple of Solomon the cherubs cover the ark with their wings, 1 K 6:23-28. In Ezk 1 and 10 they draw God's chariot, and in Ps 18:10 he rides on them; cf. also Gn 3:24.

h. The meeting place of God with Moses and with the children of Israel, 29:42-43; Lv 1:1. Here Yahweh issues his commands and, through Moses his intermediary, answers the requests of his people, 33:7-11; hence the name 'tent of meeting'.

i. Lit. 'loaves of the face'; on these, see Lv 24:5-9 and 1 S 21:5.

and one and a half cubits high. •You are to plate it with pure gold, and decorate 24
it all round with a gold moulding. •You are to fit it with struts, one hand's 25
breadth wide, and decorate these with a golden moulding. •You are to make for 26
Heb 9 it four gold rings and fix these at the four corners where the four legs are. •The 27
rings must lie close to the struts to hold the shafts for carrying the table. •You 28
are to make the shafts of acacia wood and plate them with gold. The table is to be
Nb 4:7 carried by these. •You are to make dishes, cups, jars and libation bowls for it; 29
you are to make these of pure gold. •On the table, before me, you must place the 30
Lv24:5-9 1S21:4-7 bread of continual offering.

37:17-24 Lv24:2-4 **The lamp-stand**

Nb 8:2 1 M 4:49 Zc 42 'You are to make a lamp-stand of pure gold; the lamp-stand must be of 31
beaten gold, base and stem. Its cups —calyx and petals— must be of one piece
with it. •Six branches must extend from the sides of it, three from one side, three 32
from the other. •The first branch is to carry three cups shaped like almond 33
blossoms, each with its calyx and petals; the second branch, too, is to carry
three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with its calyx and petals, and
similarly for all six branches extending from the lamp-stand. •The lamp-stand 34
itself is to carry four cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with its calyx
and petals, •thus: one calyx under the first two branches extending from the 35
lamp-stand, one under the next pair, one under the last pair: corresponding to
the six branches extending from the lamp-stand. •The calyxes and the branches 36
must be of one piece with the lamp-stand, and the whole made from a single
piece of pure gold, beaten out. •Then you are to make lamps for it, seven of them, 37
and set them so that they throw their light towards the front of it. •The snuffers 38
and trays must be of pure gold. •You are to use a talent of pure gold for making 39
25:9+;26:30 Ezk 40:4 Ac 7:44 ↗Heb8:5 the lamp-stand and all its accessories. •See that you make them according 40
to the pattern shown you on the mountain.

33:7-11; 36:8-19 Nb 3:25 Heb9:11,24 **The tabernacle.[a] Fabrics and hangings**

26 'The tabernacle itself you are to make with ten sheets of fine twined linen, 1
of purple stuffs, violet shade and red, and of crimson stuffs; you are to have
these sheets finely brocaded with cherubs. •The length of a single sheet is to 2
be twenty-eight cubits, its width four cubits, all the sheets to be of the same size.
Five of the sheets must be joined to each other, and the other five similarly. 3
You must attach loops of violet stuff to the border of the last sheet in one set, 4
and do the same for the border of the last sheet in the other set. •You are to 5
put fifty loops on the first sheet and, matching them one by one, fifty loops on
the border of the last sheet in the second set. •And you are to make fifty gold 6
clasps to draw the sheets together.[b] In this way the tabernacle will be a unified
whole.

'You are to make sheets of goats' hair to form a tent over the tabernacle; 7
you will make eleven of these. •The length of a single sheet is to be thirty cubits, 8
its width four cubits, the eleven sheets to be all of the same size. •You must join 9
five of these sheets together into one set, the remaining six into another; the
sixth you will fold double over the front of the tent. •You must attach fifty loops 10
to the border of the last sheet in one set, and do the same for the border
of the last sheet in the second set.[c] •You must make fifty bronze clasps and 11
put them into the loops, so as to draw the tent together and make it a unified
whole.

'As one sheet of the tent will be left over, half of this extra sheet is to hang 12
over the back of the tabernacle. •The extra cubit on either side along the 13
length of the tent sheets is to hang over the sides of the tabernacle as a covering
for it.

'For the tent you will further make a covering of rams' skins dyed red, and 14
a covering of fine leather to spread over that.

The framework

15 'You are to make frames of acacia wood for the tabernacle, these to stand Nb 3:35
16 upright. •Each frame is to be ten cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. Is 4:5
17 Each frame must be fitted with twin tenons;[d] for all the frames of the tabernacle
18 you must do this. •You are to make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames
19 for the southern side, facing the south country. •You are to make forty silver sockets for putting under the twenty frames thus: two sockets under the first
20 frame to receive its two tenons, and so on for the other frames. •The other side
21 of the tabernacle, on the north, is to have twenty frames •supported by forty
22 silver sockets, two sockets under each frame. •For the back of the tabernacle, on
23 the west, you must make six frames. •You are to make two frames for the corners
24 at the back of the tabernacle. •These frames must be coupled at their lower end and so to the top, up to the level of the first ring; this for the two frames
25 that are to form the two corners. •Thus there will be eight frames with their sixteen silver sockets: two sockets under the first frame and so on.
26 'You are to make crossbars of acacia wood: five to hold together the frames
27 for one side of the tabernacle, •five to hold the frames for the other side of the tabernacle, and five to hold the frames that form the west end of the tabernacle.
28 29 The middle bar, fixed half-way up, is to run from one end to the other. •The frames are to be plated with gold, and with gold rings on them to take the cross-
30 bars which you are to plate with gold. •This is how you are to erect the tabernacle 25:40+
according to the model shown to you on the mountain.

The veil

36:35-38
Lv 16
Nb 4:5
↗Heb6:19;9:
1-10,24;
10:19f

31 'You are to make a veil of purple stuffs, violet shade and red, of crimson stuffs, and of fine twined linen; you are to have it finely embroidered with cherubs.
32 You are to hang it on four posts of acacia wood plated with gold and furnished
33 with golden hooks and set in four silver sockets. •You must hang the veil from Lv 4:6-7 Nb 18:7
the clasps and there behind the veil you must place the ark of the Testimony, and the veil will serve you to separate the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.[e]
34 The throne of mercy you must place on top of the ark inside the Holy of Holies. 25:21
35 The table you must set outside the veil, and the lamp-stand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table. You must put the table on the north side.
36 For the entrance to the tent you are to make a screen of purple stuffs, violet shade and red, and of crimson stuffs and fine twined linen, the work of a skilled
37 embroiderer. •For this screen you are to make five posts of acacia wood plated with gold, with golden hooks; for these you are to cast five bronze sockets.

The altar of holocaust

38:1-7
1K8:64+
Ezk43:13-17

1 27 'You are to make the altar[a] out of acacia wood, a square five cubits long Nb 3:31 2 Ch 1:5
2 and five cubits wide, its height to be three cubits. •At its four corners you Lv 4:6-7 Am 3:14 Zc 9:5
are to put horns,[b] the horns to be of one piece with it, plating it with bronze.
3 For the altar you are to make pans for the ashes from the fat, shovels, sprinkling 1Ch28:17
basins, hooks, fire pans; you must make all the vessels for the altar out of
4 bronze. •You are also to make a grating for it of bronze network, and on the
5 four corners of this fix four bronze rings. •This grating you must set under the

26 a. The description of the tabernacle, though minute in detail, is not altogether clear on account of its many technical terms.

b. The covering of the tabernacle is therefore in two great sections; this covering has another above it of stronger material, vv. 7-13, over which again there is a further covering, v. 14.

c. Correction in accordance with v. 4.

d. Each base must have had two mortises into which fitted the tenons at the foot of each frame.

e. The veil shuts off the Holy of Holies, dwelling place of Yahweh, from the worshippers. Only the high priest entered this sanctuary, and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement, Lv 16 (applied to Christ by Heb). The same arrangement is found in the Temple of Solomon, 1 K 6:16, and we read of a veil in the Temple of Herod, Mt 27:51p.

27 a. The altar *par excellence*, i.e., of holocaust, 1 K 8:64+.

b. The 'horns' jut out from the four corners of the altar and are considered a particularly sacred part of it. Like the horns on the altar of incense, 30:10, they were touched with the blood of sacrifice, 29:12. By laying hold of them the guilty could escape punishment, 1 K 1:50; 2:28.

altar's ledge, below, so that it reaches half-way up the altar. •And for the altar 6
you are to make shafts of acacia wood and plate them with bronze. •These are 7
to be passed through the rings, so that they are on either side of the altar when
it is carried. •You are to make the altar hollow, of boards; you will make it in 8
the way that was shown to you on the mountain.

38:9-20 Ezk 40:17-49 **The court**[c]

Nb 3:35 'You are to make the court of the tabernacle. Facing the south country, on the 9
southern side, the hangings of the court are to be of fine twined linen, one
hundred cubits long for one side. •Their twenty bronze posts are to be set in 10
twenty bronze sockets and to have their hooks and rods of silver. •So too for 11
the northern side there are to be hangings one hundred cubits long, and twenty
posts set in twenty bronze sockets, with their hooks and rods of silver. •Across 12
the width of the court, on the western side, there are to be fifty cubits of
hangings, carried on ten posts set in ten sockets. •The width of the court on the 13
eastern side facing the sunrise is to be fifty cubits. •On one side of the gateway 14
there are to be fifteen cubits of hangings, carried on three posts set in three
sockets. •On the other side of the gateway there are also to be fifteen cubits 15
of hangings, carried on three posts set in three sockets. •The gateway to the 16
court is to consist of a screen twenty cubits wide made of purple stuffs, violet
shade and red, of crimson stuffs and fine twined linen, the work of a skilled
embroiderer, carried on four posts set in their four sockets. •All the posts 17
enclosing the court are to be connected by silver rods; their hooks are to be of
silver, their sockets of bronze. •The length of the court is to be one hundred 18
cubits, its width fifty cubits, its height five cubits. All the hangings are to be
made of fine twined linen, and their sockets of bronze. •All the furnishings 19
for whatever use in the tabernacle, all the pegs of it and of the court, must
be of bronze.

The oil for the lamps

Lv 24:2-4 Nb 4:16 'You are to order the sons of Israel to bring you pure olive oil for the light, 20
and to keep a flame burning there perpetually. •Aaron and his sons are to set this 21
flame in the Tent of Meeting, outside the veil that is before the Testimony.
30:7-8 It must burn there before Yahweh from evening to morning perpetually. This
1 S 3:3 is an irrevocable ordinance for their descendants, to be kept by the sons of Israel.

Lv 8-10 **The priestly vestments**

24:1 Heb 5:4 28 'From among the sons of Israel summon your brother Aaron and his sons 1
to be priests in my service: Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar,
Si 45:10 sons of Aaron. •For Aaron your brother you are to make sacred vestments 2
to give dignity and magnificence. •You are to instruct all the ablest craftsmen, 3
whose ability I have given them,[a] to make Aaron's vestments for his consecration
to my priesthood. •These are the vestments they must make: pectoral, ephod, 4
robe, embroidered tunic, turban and girdle. They are to make sacred vestments
for your brother Aaron and his sons to be priests in my service. •They must 5
use gold, purple stuffs, violet shade and red, crimson stuffs, and fine twined linen.

39:2-7 **The ephod**[b]

Si 45:8,10 Ho 3:4 'They are to make the ephod of gold, purple stuffs, violet shade and red, 6
crimson stuffs, and fine twined linen, the work of a skilled embroiderer. •It must 7
have two shoulder-straps fitted to it to join its two ends together. •The woven 8
band on it to hold it is to be of similar workmanship and form one piece with it:
this must be of gold, purple stuffs, violet shade and red, crimson stuffs, and fine
39:6 twined linen. •You will then take two onyx stones and engrave them with the 9
names of the sons of Israel, •six of their names on one stone, the remaining 10
six on the other, in the order of their birth. •With the art of a jeweller, of an 11

engraver of seals, you are to engrave the two stones with the names of the sons
12 of Israel, and mount them in settings of gold mesh. •You are to fasten the two 30:16
stones commemorating the sons of Israel to the shoulder-straps of the ephod. Nb31:54
In this way Aaron will bear their names on his shoulders in the presence of
13 14 Yahweh, so as to commemorate them. •You must also make golden rosettes, •and
two chains of pure gold twisted like cord; you are to attach these cord-like
chains to the rosettes.

The pectoral of judgement 39:8-21

15 'You are to make the pectoral of judgement, finely brocaded, of the same work-
manship as the ephod. You are to make it of gold, purple stuffs, violet shade
16 and red, crimson stuffs, and fine twined linen. •It is to be square and doubled
17 over, a span in length and a span in width. •In this you are to set four rows of 39:10-13 Ws 18:24 Ezk28:13 Rv21:19f
18 stones. Sard, topaz, carbuncle, for the first row; •emerald, sapphire, diamond
19 20 the second row; •the third row, hyacinth, ruby, amethyst; •the fourth row,
21 beryl, onyx, jasper. These are to be mounted in gold settings. •They are to bear
the names of the sons of Israel and, like the names on them, are to be twelve
in number. They are to be engraved like seals, each with the name of one of
22 the twelve tribes. •For the pectoral you will make chains of pure gold twisted
23 like cords. •[c]For the pectoral you must make two gold rings and fix them to its
24 two upper corners. •You must fasten the two gold cords to the two rings fixed Nb 8:14; 18:11
25 on the corners of the pectoral. •The other two ends of the cords you must fasten
to the two rosettes, so that they will be attached to the shoulder-straps of the
26 ephod, on the front. •You are to make two gold rings and fix them to the two
27 lower corners of the pectoral, on the inner hem, next to the ephod. •You are to
make two more gold rings and fix them low down on the front of the two
shoulder-pieces of the ephod, close to the join, above the woven band of the
28 ephod. •You must secure the pectoral by passing a ribbon of violet-purple through
its rings and those of the ephod, so that the pectoral will sit above the woven
29 band and not come apart from the ephod. •Thus by means of the pectoral of Ws 18:24
judgement, when Aaron enters the sanctuary, he will bear the names of the
sons of Israel on his breast to call them to mind continually in the presence of
30 Yahweh. •To the pectoral of judgement you will add the Urim and the 1S14:41+
Thummim so that Aaron may have them on his breast when he goes into
Yahweh's presence. Thus in the presence of Yahweh Aaron will continually
bear on his breast the oracle[d] of the sons of Israel.

The robe 39:22-26

31 32 'You are to make the robe of the ephod entirely of violet-purple. •In the centre Si 45:8
it must have an opening for the head, the opening to have round it a border
33 woven like the neck of a coat of mail to keep the robe from being torn. •The
lower hem you are to decorate with pomegranates of purple stuffs, violet shade and
34 red, crimson stuffs, and fine twined linen, with golden bells[e] between: •gold bells Si 45:9
35 and pomegranates alternately all round the lower hem of the robe. •Aaron is
to wear it when he officiates, so that the tinkling of the bells will be heard

c. Consecrated space round the sanctuary. This text describes it as fenced in with wood and hangings. It is the equivalent of the courts in the Temple of Jerusalem, 1 K 6:36; Ezk 40; Mt 21:12p; Ac 21:27-30.
28 a. Lit. 'the wise of heart whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom'.

b. The Old Testament uses the name *ephod* (meaning uncertain) for three different objects: 1. The *ephod* which is an instrument of divination, used for consulting Yahweh, see 1 S 2:28+. 2. The *ephod bad* 'linen loincloth', worn by sacred ministers, see 1 S 2:18+. 3. The *ephod* of the high priest, a kind of breastplate held in position by a belt and shoulder-straps. To this is said to be attached the 'breastplate of judgement', vv. 15f, in which were the sacred lots, the Urim and Thummim, v. 30; Lv 8:7-8, see 1 S 14:41+. In this way the text connects the high priest's ephod with the oracular ephod; but the relationship is artificial because the description given here of the high priest's vestments applies only to the post-exilic period, whereas there is no evidence for the use, after David's time, of the oracular ephod with its sacred lots—cf. also Jg 8:27 +.

c. Vv. 23-28 of the Hebr. have been abridged in the Greek and placed after v. 29.

d. Lit. 'the judgement', i.e., the oracle, the instrument for judging the children of Israel.

e. For the benefit of the congregation outside the sanctuary, v. 35.

whenever he enters the sanctuary into Yahweh's presence, or leaves it; thus he will not die.[f]

39:27-31 **The diadem**

29:6 Ws 18:24 Si 45:12 Zc 14:20 'You are to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it 'Consecrated to 36
Yahweh' as a man engraves a seal. •You will secure this to the turban with a 37
ribbon of violet-purple; it is to be placed on the front of the turban. •Aaron is to 38
wear it on his brow, and so take on himself any shortcomings there may be in
what the sons of Israel consecrate in any of their sacred offerings.[g] Aaron must
always wear it on his brow, to draw down on them the goodwill of Yahweh.
39:27 The tunic you must weave of fine linen, and make a turban of fine linen, and a 39
girdle, the work of a skilled embroiderer.

The vestments of the priests

'For the sons of Aaron you are to make tunic and girdle and head-dress to give 40
30:30 dignity and magnificence. •[h]You will put these on your brother Aaron and his 41
sons. You will then anoint and invest[i] and consecrate them to serve me in the
20:26 Si 45:8 priesthood. •You are to make them linen breeches[j] to cover their nakedness from 42
loin to thigh. •Aaron and his sons must wear these when they go into the Tent 43
of Meeting and when they approach the altar to serve in the sanctuary, as a
precaution against incurring some fault that would mean death. This is an
irrevocable ordinance for Aaron and for his descendants after him.

Lv 8 Heb 7:26-28 **The consecration of Aaron and his sons. Preparations**

29 'This is the ritual you must use for them when you consecrate them to 1
serve me in the priesthood. Take one young bull and two rams without
29:23 blemish, •unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened 2
Lv 2:4 wafers spread with oil, made from fine wheat flour. •You must put these into a 3
basket and present them in the basket, at the same time as the young bull and
the two rams.

Their purification, clothing, and anointing

'You are to bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting 4
and they are to be bathed.[a] •Take the vestments and dress Aaron in the tunic, 5
the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the pectoral, and gird him with the woven
28:36f; 39:30 band of the ephod. •Put the turban on his head, and on the turban fix the sacred 6
30:22-23+ diadem. •Then take the chrism and pour it on his head, and so anoint him. 7

'Next, bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. •Pass the girdles round 8 9
their waists and put the head-dresses on their heads. And by irrevocable ordinance
the priesthood will be theirs. This is how you are to invest Aaron and his sons.

The offerings

'You are to bring the bull in front of the Tent of Meeting. Aaron and his sons 10
are to lay their hands on its head.[b] •Immolate the bull there before Yahweh 11
Lv 1:5+ at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. •Then take some of its blood and with 12
Lv 4:7 your finger put it on the horns of the altar. Next, pour out the rest of the blood
at the foot of the altar. •And then take all the fat that covers the entrails, the 13
fatty mass which is over the liver, the two kidneys with their covering fat, and
burn them on the altar. •As for the bull's flesh, its skin and its dung, you must 14
Lv 4:1+ burn them outside the camp, for it is a sin-offering.[c]

'Next you are to take one of the rams. Aaron and his sons are to lay their 15
24:6 hands on its head. •You are to immolate the ram, take up its blood and pour it 16
out on the surrounds of the altar. •Next, divide the ram in pieces and wash 17
Lv 1:1+ the entrails and legs and put them on top of the pieces and the head. •Then 18
Lv 1:9+ Si 35:5 Ezk 6:13 Ep 5:2 burn the whole ram on the altar. This will be a burnt offering whose fragrance
will appease[d] Yahweh; it will be a holocaust in honour of Yahweh.

19 'Next you are to take the other ram. Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands
20 on its head. •You are to immolate the ram, take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the lobes of his sons' right ears, the thumbs of their right hands, and the big toes of their right feet, and pour out the rest
21 of the blood on the surrounds of the altar. •[e]Then take some of the blood that remains on the altar, together with the chrism, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his vestments and on his sons and their vestments: so that he and his vestments will be consecrated and his sons too, and their vestments.

The investiture of the priests

22 'You are to take the fatty parts of the ram: the tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty mass which is over the liver, the two kidneys with their covering
23 fat and also the right thigh, for this is a ram of investiture. •You are to take a loaf 29:2-3
of bread, a cake of bread made with oil, and a wafer, from the basket of
24 unleavened bread placed before Yahweh, •and put it all into Aaron's hands and
25 those of his sons and make the gesture of offering[f] before Yahweh. •Then you Lv 7:30f; 23:11
are to take them back and burn them on the altar, on top of the holocaust, an appeasing fragrance before Yahweh. This will be a holocaust in honour of Yahweh.
26 'You are to take the breast of the ram of Aaron's investiture and make the
27 gesture of offering before Yahweh; this is to be your portion. •You are to consecrate the breast that has been thus offered, as also the thigh that is set aside —the breast, that is, which has been offered and the thigh that has been set
28 aside from the ram of investiture of Aaron and his sons. •This, by perpetual
law, will be the portion that Aaron and his sons are to receive from the sons of Si 45:21
Israel, since it is the portion set aside, a portion the sons of Israel are to set aside from their communion sacrifices, the portion they owe to Yahweh.
29 'Aaron's sacred vestments are to pass to his sons after him, and they will
30 wear them for their anointing and investiture. •The son of Aaron who succeeds him in the priesthood and enters the Tent of Meeting to serve in the sanctuary must wear them for seven days.

The sacred meal

31 'You are to take the ram of investiture and cook its meat in a holy place.
32 Aaron and his sons will eat the meat of the ram, and also the bread that is in Lv 8:31
33 the basket, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. •They are to eat what was used in making atonement for them at their investiture, their consecration.
34 No layman may eat these; they are holy things. •If any of the meat from the investiture sacrifice, or the bread, should be left till morning, you must put
35 what is left in the fire. It is not to be eaten; it is a holy thing. •For Aaron and
his sons you are to do exactly as I have commanded you: you are to take seven Lv 8:33f
days over their investiture.

The consecration of the altar of holocaust

36 'On each of the days you are also to offer a bull as a sacrifice for sin,

f. Behind this clause lies perhaps the primitive idea, for which there is evidence in Babylonian sources, that the sound of the bells would drive off the demons who haunted the threshold of sanctuaries.

g. The high priest, being consecrated to God, was personally responsible for involuntary ritual shortcomings.

h. The v. anticipates 29:1 and extends to the ordinary priest the anointing reserved to the high priest, 29:7 and Lv 8:12. It is a later addition.

i. Lit. 'you shall fill their hands'. Portions of the victim that the new priest was about to offer were placed in his hands, 29:9; 32:29; Lv 8:27-28; Jg 17:5,12; 1 K 13:33—a symbolic rite to which, in the Roman Ordinal, the 'handing over of instruments' corresponds.

j. For modesty's sake. For the same reason the Book of the Covenant forbids altars with steps, 20:26, though there was to be one in the Temple.

29 a. For the ritual purity required a full bath was necessary, not the washing of 30:19-21.

b. To make the sacrifice their own.

c. Sacrifice for sin, offered for Aaron himself and for his sons.

d. An anthropomorphism for God's acceptance of the offering, cf. also v. 25,41 etc.; Gn 8:21; Lv 1:9; Nb 28:2.

e. Later addition. The Greek puts it before 20b; Sam. after 28; Lv after Lv 8:29 (which corresponds to Ex 29:26).

f. Lit. 'swinging to and fro': the priest held his hand out with the offering and then drew it back.

Ezk43:18-27 in atonement; by offering an atonement sacrifice for sin you will take away sin
from the altar; then you must anoint it, and so consecrate it. •For seven days 37
you are to repeat the atonement sacrifice for the altar and consecrate it. So it will
Lv16:18-20 Nb 4:15,20 2 S 6:6-7 excel in holiness, and whatever touches it will be holy.

‖*Lv6:2-6*+ ‖Nb28:3-8+ 2 K 16:5 Ps 141:2 Ezk46:13-15 Dn 9:21

The daily holocaust

'This is what you are to offer on the altar: two yearling lambs each day in 38
perpetuity. •The first lamb you must offer in the morning, the second between 39
the two evenings. •With the first lamb you must offer one-tenth of a measure 40
of fine flour mixed with one quarter of a hin of purest oil and, for a libation,
one quarter of a hin of wine. •The second lamb you must offer between the two 41
evenings; do this with the same oblation and the same libation as in the morning,
as an appeasing fragrance, an offering burnt in honour of Yahweh. •This is to 42
be a perpetual holocaust from generation to generation, at the entrance to the
25:22+ Tent of Meeting in the presence of Yahweh; that is where I shall meet you[g] and
speak to you.

24:16+; 40:34 'I will meet the sons of Israel in the place consecrated by my glory. •I will 43 44
consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar. I will consecrate Aaron too, and
25:8 Nb35:34 his sons, to be priests in my service. •I will remain with the sons of Israel, and 45
I will be their God. •And so they will know that it is I, Yahweh their God, 46
who brought them out of the land of Egypt to live among them: I, Yahweh
their God.

37:25-28 Nb 4:11 1 K 6:20 ↗Rv8:3-5

The altar of incense

30 'You must make an altar on which to burn incense;[a] you are to make it out 1
Lv 4:6-7 Nb 3:31 1 M 4:49 Ezk41:22 Heb 9:4 Rv 9:13 of acacia wood. •It is to be one cubit long, and one cubit wide —that is 2
to say, square— and to stand two cubits high; its horns are to be of one piece
with it. •The top of it, its surrounding sides, and its horns, are to be plated with 3
pure gold, and decorated with a gold moulding all round. •You are to fix two gold 4
rings to it below the moulding on its two opposite sides: these are to take the
shafts used for carrying it. •These shafts you must make of acacia wood and plate 5
40:5 with gold. •You are to set up the altar before the veil that is in front of the ark 6
of Testimony, opposite the throne of mercy that covers the Testimony, the
27:21 Jdt 9:1 Ps 141:2 Si 24:15 place appointed for my meeting with you. •There Aaron must burn fragrant 7
incense each morning when he trims the lamps, •and between the two evenings, 8
when Aaron puts the lamps back, he must burn it again. You must make these
offerings of incense before Yahweh unfailingly from generation to generation.
You must not offer profane incense on it, —no holocaust, no oblation; and you 9
Heb 9:7 must pour no libation on it. •Once a year Aaron is to perform the rite of 10
atonement on the horns of the altar; with the blood of the sacrifice offered for sin
he is to perform the rite of atonement once a year. And you shall do the same in
the generations to come. This altar of supreme holiness is to be consecrated
to Yahweh'.

38:25-28

The poll tax

Nb 1 Ne 10:33 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'When you take a census and make a 11 12
register of the sons of Israel, each is to pay Yahweh a ransom for his life, so
2 S 24 that no plague comes on them when the census is being made. •Everyone subject 13
to the census must pay half a shekel, reckoning by the sanctuary shekel which
is twenty gerahs, and this half-shekel shall be set aside for Yahweh. •Everyone 14
subject to the census, that is to say of twenty years and over, must pay the sum
↗Mt17:24 1Pt1:18-19 set aside for Yahweh. •The rich man is not to give more, nor the poor man less, 15
than half a shekel as payment of the sum set aside for Yahweh, the ransom for
28:12 Ezk45:13 your lives.[b] •You will devote this ransom money given to you by the sons of 16
Israel to the service of the Tent of Meeting. It will remind Yahweh of the sons of
Israel and will be the ransom for your lives'.

The bronze basin

38:8
1 K 7:23-38

17 18 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'You must also make a bronze basin on a
stand, for washing. You must place it between the Tent of Meeting and the
19 altar and put water in it. •In this Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and
20 feet. •When they are to enter the Tent of Meeting they must wash in water for
fear they die, and when they have to approach the altar for their service, to burn
21 the offering burnt in honour of Yahweh. •They must wash their hands and feet
for fear they die. This is a lasting ordinance for them, for Aaron and his
descendants from generation to generation'.

The chrism[c]

Lv 8:10f

22 23 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Take the choicest spices: of liquid myrrh
five hundred shekels, half this weight of fragrant cinnamon —that is, two hundred
24 and fifty shekels— and of scented cane two hundred and fifty shekels; •of cassia
five hundred shekels (reckoning by the sanctuary shekel) and one hin of olive oil.
25 These you are to compound into a holy chrism, such a blend as the perfumer
26 might make; it is to be a holy chrism. •With it you are to anoint the Tent of
27 Meeting and the ark of the Testimony, •the table and all its furnishings, the
28 lamp-stand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, •the altar of holocaust
29 with all its furnishings, and the basin with its stand. •These you are to consecrate.
30 Thus they will excel in holiness, and whatever touches them will be holy. •You
must also anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them, so that they may be
31 priests in my service. •Then you are to say this to the sons of Israel, 'You must
32 hold[d] this chrism holy from generation to generation. •It is not to be poured
on the bodies of common men,[e] nor are you to make any other of the same
33 mixture. It is a holy thing; you must consider it holy. •Whoever copies the
composition of it or uses it on a layman shall be outlawed from his people" '.

37:29
Nb 4:16
Ps 132:10
Lk 2:27
Ps 133:2
29:37
28:41; 40:15
Ps 133:2
37:29

The incense

37:29

34 35 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Take sweet spices: storax, onycha, galbanum, sweet
spices and pure frankincense in equal parts, •and compound an incense, such
36 a blend as the perfumer might make, salted, pure, and holy. •Crush a part of it
into a fine powder, and put some of this in front of the Testimony in the Tent
of Meeting, the place appointed for my meetings with you. You must regard
37 it as most holy. •You are not to make any incense of similar composition for
your own use. You must hold it to be a holy thing, reserved for Yahweh.
Whoever copies it for use as perfume shall be outlawed from his people'.

Nb 4:16
Si 24:15
25:22+

The craftsmen for the sanctuary

35:30-35

1 2 3 31 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'See, I have singled out Bezalel son
of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. •I have filled him with the spirit
of God[a] and endowed him with skill and perception and knowledge for every
4 kind of craft: •for the art of designing and working in gold and silver and bronze;
5 6 for cutting stones to be set, for carving in wood, for every kind of craft. •Here
and now I give him a partner, Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan;

Lv 19:17
Nb 3:31
2 Ch 1:5

g. 'you' (singular) Sam., Greek; 'you' (plural) Hebr.

30 a. In Solomon's Temple it stood in front of the Holy of Holies, 1 K 6:20-21. Altars of this kind were common in the ancient East.

b. Rich and poor are equal in the sight of God.

c. The directives for the use of chrism, like those for incense (vv. 34-35), are of late origin: all priests are to be anointed but no layman. According to the ancient historical texts only the king is anointed, 1 S 10:1f; 16:1f; 1 K 1:39; 2 K 9:6; 11:12. This anointing makes the king a sacred person: he is the 'anointed of Yahweh', 1 S 24:7; 26:9,11,23; 2 S 1:14,16; 19:22, which is in Hebr. 'the Messiah', in Greek 'the Christ'. In the Psalms the title is often used of David and his dynasty; it came to be used particularly of the King to come, the Messiah, of whom David was the prototype; the New Testament applies the title to Jesus 'the Christ'. According to the ancient 'Priestly' tradition anointing is reserved to the high priest, Ex 29:7,29; Lv 4:3,5,16; 8:12; cf. Zc 4:14. It was later extended to the whole priesthood, 30:30; 28:41; 40:15; Lv 7:36; 10:7; Nb 3:3.

d. Thus the Greek (lit. it shall be for you).

e. I.e. not for domestic use.

31 a. The spirit of God is regarded as the source of outstanding gifts, in this case of technical skill, which is considered as a share in the divine wisdom.

and to all the men that have skill I have given more, for them to carry out all
that I have commanded you: •the Tent of Meeting; the ark of the Testimony; 7
the throne of mercy that covers it, and all the furniture of the tent; •the table 8
and all its furnishings; the pure lamp-stand and all its accessories; the altar of
incense; •the altar of holocaust with all its furnishings; the basin with its stand; 9
the sumptuous vestments —sacred vestments for Aaron the priest, and vestments 10
for his sons— for the priestly functions; •the chrism and the fragrant incense 11
for the sanctuary. In this they are to do exactly as I have directed you'.

20:8-11+ **The sabbath rest**[b]

Yahweh said this to Moses, •'Speak to the sons of Israel and say, "You must 12 13
Ezk20:12 keep my sabbaths carefully, because the sabbath is a sign between myself and
you from generation to generation to show that it is I, Yahweh, who sanctify
Nb15:32-36 you. •You must keep the sabbath, then; it is to be held sacred by you. The 14
man who profanes it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day
shall be outlawed from his people. •Work is to be done for six days, but the 15
seventh day must be a day of complete rest, consecrated to Yahweh. Whoever
does any work on the sabbath day must be put to death. •The sons of Israel are 16
to keep the sabbath, observing it from generation to generation: this is a lasting
Gn 9:9 covenant. •Between myself and the sons of Israel the sabbath is a sign for ever, 17
=20:11 Gn 2:2-3 since in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh
day he rested and drew breath" '.

The tablets of the Law committed to Moses

24:12+ When he had finished speaking with Moses on the mountain of Sinai, he gave 18
him the two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone inscribed by the finger
of God.

||Dt 9:7–10:5 ## V. ISRAEL'S APOSTASY. THE COVENANT RENEWED[a]

The golden calf

24:18 Jr 31:32 32 When the people saw that Moses was a long time before coming down the 1
mountain, they gathered round Aaron and said to him, 'Come, make us
↗ Ac7:40-41 a god to go at the head of us; this Moses, the man who brought us up from
Egypt, we do not know what has become of him'. •Aaron answered them, 'Take 2
Ezk16:17 the gold rings out of the ears of your wives and your sons and daughters, and
bring them to me'. •So they all took the gold rings from their ears and brought 3
them to Aaron. •He took them from their hands and, in a mould, melted the 4
1K 12:28 Ne 9:18 metal down and cast an effigy of a calf.[b] 'Here is your God, Israel,' they[c] cried
Ps106:19f 'who brought you out of the land of Egypt!' •Observing this, Aaron built an 5
altar before the effigy. 'Tomorrow' he said 'will be a feast in honour of
Yahweh.'

And so, early the next day they offered holocausts and brought communion 6
↗ 1Co 10:7 sacrifices;[d] then all the people sat down to eat and drink, and afterwards got
up to amuse themselves.

1 S 28:6 **Moses forewarned by Yahweh**

Jr 31:32 Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, 'Go down now, because your people whom 7
you brought out of Egypt have apostasised. •They have been quick to leave 8
the way I marked out for them; they have made themselves a calf of molten metal
and have worshipped it and offered it sacrifice. "Here is your God, Israel,"
they have cried "who brought you up from the land of Egypt!" ' •Yahweh said 9
33:3;34:9 Dt9:13+ to Moses, 'I can see how headstrong these people are![e] •Leave me, now, my 10
Is 48:4 Zc 7:11 wrath shall blaze out against them and devour them; of you, however, I will
Gn 12:2 Nb14:12 make a great nation.'

The prayer of Moses[f]

11 But Moses pleaded with Yahweh his God. 'Yahweh,' he said 'why should 34:9 Dt 9:26-29 Jos 7:6f Ps 106:23 Ws 18:22 Jm 5:16 *Nb 14:13-16* Dt 9:28 Ezk 20:9,44 Ps 79:9
your wrath blaze out against this people of yours whom you brought out of the
12 land of Egypt with arm outstretched and mighty hand? •Why let the Egyptians
say, "Ah, it was in treachery that he brought them out, to do them to death in
the mountains and wipe them off the face of the earth"? Leave your burning
13 wrath; relent and do not bring this disaster on your people. •Remember Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob, your servants to whom by your own self you swore and made
this promise: I will make your offspring as many as the stars of heaven, and all Gn 15:5; 22:16-17+ 35:11-12
this land which I promised I will give to your descendants, and it shall be their
14 heritage for ever.' •So Yahweh relented and did not bring on his people the Ps 78:38
disaster he had threatened.

Moses breaks the tablets of the Law

15 Moses made his way back down the mountain with the two tablets of the 24:12+
Testimony in his hands, tablets inscribed on both sides, inscribed on the front
16 and on the back. •These tablets were the work of God, and the writing on them 31:18
was God's writing engraved on the tablets.
17 Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting. 'There is the sound of battle
18 in the camp', he told Moses. •Moses answered him:

'No song of victory is this sound,
no wailing for defeat this sound;
it is the sound of chanting that I hear'.

19 As he approached the camp and saw the calf and the groups dancing, Moses,
anger blazed. He threw down the tablets he was holding and broke them at the
20 foot of the mountain. •He seized the calf they had made and burned it, grinding Dt 9:21
it into powder which he scattered on the water; and he made the sons of Israel
21 drink it.[g] •To Aaron Moses said, 'What has this people done to you, for you
22 to bring such a great sin on them?' •'Let not my lord's anger blaze like this'
23 Aaron answered. 'You know yourself how prone this people is to evil. •They said
to me, "Make us a god to go at our head; this Moses, the man who brought us
24 up from Egypt, we do not know what has become of him". •So I said to them,
"Who has gold?", and they took it off and brought it to me. I threw it into the
fire[h] and out came this calf.'

The zeal of the Levites

25 When Moses saw the people so out of hand—for Aaron had allowed them to
26 lapse into idolatry[i] with enemies all round them—•he stood at the gate of the
camp and shouted, 'Who is for Yahweh? To me!' And all the sons of Levi rallied Dt 33:9
27 to him. •And he said to them, 'This is the message of Yahweh, the God of Israel, Ezk 9:5
"Gird on your sword, every man of you, and quarter the camp from gate to gate,
28 killing one his brother, another his friend, another his neighbour" '. •The sons Mt 10:37 Lk 14:26
of Levi carriev out the command of Moses, and of the people about three
29 thousand men[j] perished that day. •[k] 'Today' Moses said 'you have won your-

b. This section has no connexion with the preceding but may have been inserted here to emphasise the part played by the sabbath in official worship.

32 a. Scholars recognise various traditions in 32-34 but cannot decide on the precise contribution of each.

b. What the author contemptuously calls 'calf' was probably the effigy of a bull, one of the symbols of godhead in the ancient East. The usual translation 'fashioned it with a graving tool' misses the exact sense of the Hebr. words and is contradicted by v. 24.

c. The Greek has 'he (Aaron) cried'. It reads the singular in v. 6 also.

d. A sacred meal is an integral part of these sacrifices.

e. V. 9 is absent from the Greek.

f. Moses is shown as the great mediator: at the time of the plagues, 8:4; 9:28; 10:17; on behalf of his sister Miriam, Nb 12:13, and especially on behalf of the people on their desert journey, 32:11-14,30-32; Nb 11:2; 14:13-19; 16:22; 21:7; Dt 9:25-29. This function of his is recalled by Jr 15:1; Ps 99:6; 106:23; Si 45:3. Cf. 2 M 15:14 +. His intercession foreshadows that of Christ.

g. Probably a trial by ordeal like that of Nb 5:11-31.

h. I.e. of the melting-pot.

i. Lit. 'a trifle'; idols are 'nothingness'. Others translate 'For Aaron had let them break loose to the joy of their foes'.

j. Vulg. reads '23,000', possibly following 1 Co 10:8 which is based on Nb 25:1-9.

k. Corrected in accordance with Greek.

Nb25:7-13 Dt33:8-11 selves investiture[f] as priests of Yahweh at the cost, one of his son, another of his brother; and so he grants you a blessing today.'

Moses prays again

On the following day Motes said to the people, 'You have committed a grave 30
sin. But now I shall go upos Yahweh: perhaps I can make atonement for your
sin.' •And Moses returned to Yahweh. 'I am grieved,' he cried 'this people has 31
committed a grave sin, making themselves a god of gold. •And yet, if it pleased 32
Ps 69:28 Rm 9:3 you to forgive this sin of theirs...! But if not, then blot me out from the book
that you have written.' •Yahweh answered Moses, 'It is the man who has sinned 33
Dn 12:1+ against me that I shall blot out from my book. •Go now, lead the people to the 34
23:20+ place of which I told you. My angel shall go before you but, on the day of my
3:16+ visitation, I shall punish them for their sin.' •And Yahweh punished the people 35
for moulding the calf that Aaron had made.

The Israelites ordered to depart

12:37 Lv 19:17 Nb10:11-13 23:20+ 33 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Leave this place, with the people you brought out 1
of the land of Egypt, and go to the land that I swore to Abraham, Isaac
and Jacob I would give their descendants. •I will send an angel in front of you; 2
Dt 7:1+ I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the
Ac 7:51 Hivites, the Jebusites. •Go on to the land where milk and honey flow. I shall 3
32:9+ not go with you myself—you are a headstrong people—or I might exterminate
you on the way.' •On hearing these stern words the people went into mourning, 4
and no one wore his ornaments.

Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Say to the sons of Israel, "You are a headstrong 5
people. If I were to go with you, even for a moment only, I should exterminate
you. Take off your ornaments, then, that I may know how to deal with you!" '
So, from Mount Horeb onwards, the sons of Israel stripped themselves of their 6
ornaments.[a]

25:22+ ### The Tent[b]

18:16;26:1; 36:8 Jg1:1;20:18 Ac 1:26 Moses used to take the Tent and pitch it outside the camp, at some distance 7
from the camp. He called it the Tent of Meeting. Anyone who had to consult
Yahweh[c] would go out to the Tent of Meeting, outside the camp. •Whenever 8
Moses went out to the Tent, all the people would rise. Every man would stand
Ps 99:7 at the door of his tent and watch Moses until he reached the Tent; •the pillar 9
of cloud would come down and station itself at the entrance to the Tent, and
34:34 Yahweh would speak with Moses. •When they saw the pillar of cloud stationed 10
at the entrance to the Tent, all the people would rise and bow low, each at the
33:20+ Nb 12:8 Dt 34:10 Jn 15:15 door of his tent. •Yahweh would speak with Moses face to face, as a man speaks 11
with his friend. Then Moses would turn back to the camp, but the young man
Jos 1:1+ 1Ch 7:27 who was his servant, Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the Tent.

Moses prays

Moses said to Yahweh, 'See, you yourself say to me, "Make the people go 12
on", but you do not let me know who it is you will send with me. Yet you yourself
33:11+ have said, "I know you by name and you have won my favour". •If indeed 13
I have won your favour, please show me your ways,[d] so that I can understand
you and win your favour. Remember, too, that this nation is your own people.'[e]
Nb14:14 ↗Heb4:1 Yahweh replied, 'I myself will go with you, and I will give you rest'.[f] •Moses 14 15
Dt 2:7 said, 'If you are not going with us yourself, do not make us leave this place.
By what means can it be known that I, I and my people, have won your favour, 16
if not by your going with us? By this we shall be marked out, I and my people,
from all the peoples on the face of the earth.' •Yahweh said to Moses, 'Again 17
I will do what you have asked, because you have won my favour and because
I know you by name'.

Moses on the mountain

33:11+

18 19 Moses said, 'Show me your glory,[g] I beg you'. •And he said, 'I will let all my splendour pass in front of you, and I will pronounce before you the name Yahweh.[h] I have compassion on whom I will, and I show pity to whom I please. 20 21 You cannot see my face,' he said 'for man cannot see me and live.'[i] •And 22 Yahweh said, 'Here is a place beside me. You must stand on the rock, •and when my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you 23 with my hand while I pass by. •Then I will take my hand away and you shall see the back of me; but my face is not to be seen.'

1K19:9-18
✗Jn1:14-18+
3:14+; 34:6-7
19:21; 24:10
Gn32:31
Lv16:2,13
Dt4:32-34; 5:24
Jg6:22-23
Is 6:5; 52:8
1Tm6:16

The Covenant renewed.[a] The tablets of the Law

19

1 34 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones and come up to me on the mountain,[b] and I will inscribe on them the words 2 that were on the first tablets, which you broke. •Be ready by morning, and come up to the mountain of Sinai at dawn; await my orders there at the top of the 3 mountain. •No one must come up with you, no one be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and herds may not graze in front of this mountain.' 4 And so Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first and, with the two tablets of stone in his hands, he went up the mountain of Sinai in the early morning as 5 Yahweh had commanded him. •And Yahweh descended in the form of a cloud, and Moses stood with him there.

24:12
Dt10:1-11
19:12f
24:12

God appears

33:18-23

6 He called on the name of Yahweh. •Yahweh passed before him and proclaimed,[c] 'Yahweh, Yahweh, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, 7 rich in kindness and faithfulness; •for thousands he maintains his kindness, forgives faults, transgression, sin; yet he lets nothing go unchecked, punishing the father's fault in the sons and in the grandsons to the third and fourth 8 generation'. •And Moses bowed down to the ground at once and worshipped. 9 'If I have indeed won your favour, Lord,' he said 'let my Lord come with us, I beg. True, they are a headstrong people, but forgive us our faults and our sins, and adopt us as your heritage.'

Dt7:9-10
Lk 6:36
3:14+
Tb 3:3
Ps130:3-4
20:5-6
Nb14:18
Dt5:9-10
Ps 86:15
Jr 32:18
Na 1:3
Jl 2:13
✗Jn1:14
32:11-14
Nb14:14
Dt 20:4
Jos 3:10

The Covenant[d]

Ex20:1+

10 Yahweh said, 'I am about to make a covenant with you. In the presence of

34:27
Si 17:12
✗Jn1:17

h. God, by pronouncing his name, reveals something of himself to Moses, see 3:13-15+.

i. God's sanctity is so removed from man's unworthiness, see Lv 17:1+, that man must perish if he looks on God, cf. Ex 19:21; Lv 16:2; Nb 4:20, or even hears his voice, Ex 20:19; Dt 5:24-26, and 18:16. For this reason Moses, Ex 3:6, Elijah, 1 K 19:13, and even the seraphim, Is 6:2, cover their faces in his presence. The man who remains alive after seeing God is overwhelmed with astonishment and gratitude, Gn 32:31; Dt 5:24, and with awe, Jg 6:22-23; 13:22; Is 6:5. It is a favour God rarely concedes, Ex 24:11; he grants it to Moses his 'friend', Ex 33:11; Nb 12:7-8; Dt 34:10, and to Elijah, 1 K 19:11f, the two who looked on the New Testament theophany, the transfiguration of Christ, Mt 17:3p. Hence in Christian tradition Moses and Elijah (together with St Paul, 2 Co 12:1f) are the three pre-eminent mystics. In the New Testament the 'glory' of God, cf. 33:18 and 24:16+, is manifested in Jesus, Jn 1:14+; 11:40, who alone has gazed on the Father, Jn 1:18; 6:46; 1 Jn 4:12. Man cannot look on God's face except in heaven, Mt 5:8; 1 Jn 3:2; 1 Co 13:12.

34 a. 34:1-28: 'Yahwistic' account of the Covenant, actually parallel with that of 19:1–20:21 but turned into the sequel of the preceding narrative by a reference to the reconstruction of the tablets, vv. 1,4, broken by Moses, 32:19.

b. 'come up to me on the mountain' Greek.

c. Yahweh fulfils his promise, 33:19-23, and reveals his divine attributes, most particularly his loving-kindness.

d. Vv. 10-26 are sometimes called the 'Ritual Decalogue' (though whether ten commandments are to be distinguished is disputed), or better the 'Yahwistic' Book of the Covenant. They lay down the necessary conditions of the Covenant: prohibition of idolatry, observance of the sabbath, as in the Decalogue of Ex 20. Besides these there are ritual ordinances: feasts, first-fruits, sacrifice.

f. I.e. the undisturbed occupation of Canaan.

g. See note to 24:16.

i. Lit. 'you have filled your hands', 28:41+.

33 a. The text is apparently corrupt.

b. In vv. 7-11 Moses speaks face to face with Yahweh (an impossibility according to v. 20); the verses interrupt the dialogue and are from another tradition.

c. I.e. to ask for an oracle through the agency of Moses who converses alone with God in the Tent, cf. above 18:15. Later, this 'consultation' will be effected through a man of God or through a prophet, 1 K 14:5; 22:5,8; 2 K 3:11; 8:8, etc. or by using the sacred lots, see 1 S 14:41+. On trial by ordeal as a means of discovering God's verdict see Nb 5:11f+.

d. I.e. 'of what nature you are'.

e. Conjectural translation. Greek 'If I have found favour in your eyes show yourself to me; let me see you in order to find favour before you and know that this great nation is your people.' Vulg. 'If therefore I have found favour before you show me your face that I may know you and find favour in your eyes; look on this multitude which is your people.'

all your people I shall work such wonders as have never been worked in any land
Dt 2:7 or in any nation. All the people round you will see what Yahweh can do, for
23:20+ what I shall do through you will be awe-inspiring. •Mark, then, what I command 11
Dt 7:1+ you today. I mean to drive out the Amorites before you, the Canaanites, the
23:32-33 Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites. •Take care you make no pact 12
Dt 7:2 with the inhabitants of the land you are about to enter, or this will prove a
23:24 pitfall at your very feet. •You are to tear down their altars, smash their standing- 13
Nb 33:52 Dt 12:3 Is 17:8 stones, cut down their sacred poles.[e]
Dt4:24+ 'You shall bow down to no other god, for Yahweh's name is the Jealous One; 14
he is a jealous God. •Make no pact with the inhabitants of the land or, when they 15
prostitute themselves[f] to their own gods and sacrifice to them, they may invite
Ws 14:12 Si 2:11;16:11 you and you may consent to eat from their victim; •or else you may choose wives 16
for your sons from among their daughters and these, prostituting themselves to
their own gods, may induce your sons to do the same.
20:4+ 'You shall make yourself no gods of molten metal. 17
23:14+; 12:1+ 'You shall celebrate the feast of Unleavened Bread: you shall eat unleavened 18
bread, as I have commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib,
for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt.
13:11+ 'All that first issues from the womb is *mine*:[g] every male, every first-born of 19
flock or herd. •But the first-born donkey you must redeem with an animal from 20
your flocks. If you do not redeem it, you must break its neck. You must redeem
all the first-born of your sons. And no one is to come before me empty-handed.
20:8+ 'For six days you shall labour, but on the seventh day you shall rest, even at 21
ploughing time and harvest.
'You shall celebrate the feast of Weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, 22
and the feast of Ingathering at the close of the year.
'Three times a year all your menfolk must present themselves before the Lord 23
Yahweh, the God of Israel.
1 M 14:6 'When I have dispossessed the nations for you and extended your frontiers, 24
no one will covet your land, if you present yourselves three times in the year
before Yahweh your God.
12:15-20 'You must not offer the blood of the victim sacrificed to me at the same time 25
12:10 as you offer unleavened bread, nor is the victim offered at the feast of Passover
to be put aside for the following day.
Dt26:1+ 'You must bring the best of the first-fruits of your soil to the house of Yahweh 26
your God.
23:19 'You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk.'
24:4;34:10 Dt10:1-11 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Put these words in writing, for they are the terms of 27
the covenant I am making with you and with Israel'.
24:18+ Mt 4:2 He stayed there with Yahweh for forty days and forty nights, eating and 28
drinking nothing. He[h] inscribed on the tablets the words of the Covenant—the
20:1+ Ten Words.

2Co3:7-4:6 **Moses comes down from the mountain**[i]

When Moses came down from the mountain of Sinai—as he came down 29
from the mountain, Moses had the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands—he
did not know that the skin on his face was radiant after speaking with Yahweh.
And when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, the skin on his face 30
shone so much that they would not venture near him. •But Moses called to them, 31
and Aaron with all the leaders of the community came back to him; and he
spoke to them. •Then all the sons of Israel came closer, and he passed on to 32
Jn 1:17 them all the orders that Yahweh had given him on the mountain of Sinai. •And 33
when Moses had finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. •[j]When- 34
33:9 ever he went into Yahweh's presence to speak with him, Moses would remove the
veil until he came out again. And when he came out, he would tell the sons of
Israel what he had been ordered to pass on to them, •and the sons of Israel 35

would see the face of Moses radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he returned to speak with Yahweh.

VI. THE FURNISHING AND BUILDING OF THE SANCTUARY[a]

The sabbath rest

20:8+

35 Moses assembled the whole community of the sons of Israel and said to them, 'These are the things Yahweh has ordered to be done: •Work is to be done for six days, but the seventh is to be a holy day for you, a day of complete rest, consecrated to Yahweh. Whoever does any work on that day shall be put to death. •You must not light a fire on the sabbath day in any of your homes.'

Nb15:32f

The materials are collected

25:2-7

Moses spoke to the whole community of the sons of Israel. 'This' he said 'is what Yahweh has commanded: •Set aside a contribution for Yahweh out of your possessions. Let all give willingly and bring this contribution for Yahweh: gold, silver and bronze; •purple stuffs, of violet shade and red, crimson stuffs, fine linen, goats' hair, •rams' skins dyed red and fine leather, acacia wood, •oil for the light, spices for the chrism and for the fragrant incense; •onyx stones and gems to be set in ephod and pectoral. •Let all the most skilled craftsmen among you come and make all that Yahweh has commanded: •the tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its hooks and its frames, its crossbars, its posts, and its sockets; •the ark with its shafts, the throne of mercy and the veil that screens it; the table with its shafts and all the furnishings for it, and the loaves of offering; the lamp-stand for the light, with its accessories, its lamps, and the oil for the light; •the altar of incense with its shafts, the chrism, the fragrant incense, and the screen for the entrance to the tent; •the altar of holocaust with its bronze grating, its shafts, and all the furnishings for it, the basin and its stand; •the hangings of the court, its posts, its sockets, and the screen for the gateway to the court; •the pegs of the tabernacle and of the court, together with their cords; the sumptuous vestments for service in the sanctuary—sacred vestments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' vestments—for the priestly functions.'

Nb 4:5

Then the whole community of Israel's sons withdrew from Moses' presence. And all those whose heart prompted them to give came, bringing their contribution for Yahweh for making the Tent of Meeting, for all its functions and for the sacred vestments. •They came, men and women, all giving willingly, bringing brooches, rings, bracelets, necklaces, gold things of every kind, all those who had vowed to Yahweh some article of gold. •All those who happened to own purple stuffs, of violet shade or red, crimson stuffs, fine linen, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, or fine leather, brought them. •All who could contribute to the collection of silver and bronze brought their contribution for Yahweh. And all who happened to own acacia wood, suitable for any of the work to be done, brought it. •All the skilled women set their hands to spinning, and brought purple stuffs, of violet shade and red, crimson stuffs and fine linen, from what they had spun. •All the women willingly used their special skill and spun the goats' hair. •The leaders brought onyx stones and gems to be set in ephod and

e. On the *stelae* see 23:24+. The sacred post, *asherah*, was the emblem of Asherah (Greek: Astarte) goddess of love and of fecundity, and from her takes its name.

f. The worship of Yahweh is compared to lawful wedlock, the worship of false gods to prostitution. Cf. Ezk 16 and 23; Ho 1-3; Rv 17.

g. Following Greek we omit the Hebr. 'all your flocks'. 'every male' Greek.

h. Moses, cf. v. 27.

i. Vv. 29-33 ('Priestly' tradition) would aptly follow 31:18a. The face of Moses reflects God's glory. The verb *qaran*, here 'to radiate', is derived from *qeren*, 'horn', hence the literal translation of Vulg. 'his face was horned'.

j. Vv. 34-35 ('Priestly' tradition like 29-33) are an addition: they transfer what happened to Moses at Sinai to his meetings with God in the tabernacle.

35 a. This concluding section of the book, 35-40, is almost a word for word repetition of 25-31; there the orders were given, here they are carried out.

pectoral, •and the spices and oil for the light, for the chrism and for the fragrant 28
incense. •All the men and women whose heart prompted them to contribute to 29
all the work that Yahweh had ordered through Moses to be done—the sons of
Israel brought their free offering to Yahweh.

31:2-6 **The craftsmen for the sanctuary**

38:22 Moses said to the sons of Israel, 'See, Yahweh has singled out Bezalel son of 30
Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. •He has filled him with the spirit of God 31
and endowed him with skill and perception and knowledge for every kind of
craft: •for the art of designing and working in gold and silver and bronze; •for 32 33
cutting stones to be set, for carving in wood, for every kind of craft. •And on 34
him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, he has bestowed the
gift of teaching. •He has filled them with skill to carry out all the crafts of 35
engraver, damask weaver, embroiderer in purple stuffs, of violet shade and red,
in crimson stuffs and fine linen, or of the common weaver; they are able to do
work of all kinds, and to do it with originality'.

36 Bezalel and Oholiab and all the skilled craftsmen whom Yahweh had 1
endowed with the skill and perception to carry out all that was required
for the building of the sanctuary, did their work exactly as Yahweh had directed.

A halt is called to the collection

Moses then summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and all the skilled craftsmen 2
whose hearts Yahweh had endowed with skill, all whose heart prompted them
to offer to do the work. •From Moses they received all that the sons of Israel 3
had brought as contributions for the work of building the sanctuary. As these
continued each morning to bring •their offerings, the skilled craftsmen, busy 4
with the various works on the sanctuary, all left their work •and went to tell 5
Moses, 'The people are bringing more than is needed for the work Yahweh has
directed us to do'. •At Moses' command, therefore, this proclamation was made 6
throughout the camp: 'Let no one, man or woman, do anything more towards
the collection for the sanctuary.' So the people were stopped from bringing any
more; •the material they had was enough, and more than enough, to complete 7
all the work.

26:1-11,14 **The tabernacle**[a]

26:1 All the most skilled craftsmen among the workers made the tabernacle. He[b] 8
made it with ten sheets of fine twined linen, of purple stuffs, violet shade and red,
and of crimson stuffs, finely brocaded with cherubs. •The length of a single sheet 9
was twenty-eight cubits, its width four cubits, all the sheets being of the same
size. •He joined five of the sheets together, and the other five similarly. •He 10 11
attached loops of violet stuff to the border of the last sheet in one set, and did
the same for the border of the last sheet in the other set. •He put fifty loops on 12
the first sheet and, matching them one by one, fifty loops on the border of the
last sheet in the second set. •He made fifty gold clasps and with them drew the 13
sheets together. In this way the tabernacle was a unified whole.

Next he made sheets of goats' hair to form a tent over the tabernacle; he made 14
eleven of these. •The length of a single sheet was thirty cubits, its width four 15
cubits; the eleven sheets were all of the same size. •He joined five of these sheets 16
together into one set, the remaining six into another. •He attached fifty loops to 17
the border of the last sheet in one set, and fifty loops to the border of the last
sheet in the second set. •And he made fifty bronze clasps, so as to draw the tent 18
together and make it a unified whole. •For the tent he made a covering of rams' 19
skins dyed red, and a covering of fine leather to spread over it.

26:15-29 **The framework**

For the tabernacle he made frames of acacia wood, these to stand upright. 20

21 22 Each frame was ten cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. 23 Each frame was fitted with twin tenons; this he did for all the frames of the tabernacle. He made the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the southern side, facing 24 the south country. He made forty silver sockets for putting under the twenty frames: two sockets under the first frame to receive its two tenons, and so on 25 for the other frames. For the other side of the tabernacle, on the north, he made Nb 8:7 26 27 twenty frames and forty silver sockets, two sockets under each frame. 28 For the back of the tabernacle, on the west, he made six frames. 29 And he made two frames for the corners at the back of the tabernacle. These frames were coupled at their lower end and so to the top, up to the level of the first ring; this he did with the 30 two frames that were to form the two corners. 31 Thus there were eight frames with their sixteen silver sockets; two sockets under each frame. He made crossbars of acacia wood: five to hold the frames together that were to form 32 one side of the tabernacle, 33 five on the other side to hold the frames that were to form the end of the tabernacle on the west. 34 He made the middle bar, fixed half-way up, to run from one end to the other. He plated the frames with gold, and put gold rings on them to take the crossbars which he plated with gold.

The veil 26:31-32, 36-37

35 He made the veil of purple stuffs, violet shade and red, of crimson stuffs, and 36 of fine twined linen, skilfully embroidered with cherubs. 37 For hanging this veil he made four posts of acacia wood and plated them with gold, with golden hooks, and he cast four silver sockets for them. 38 For the entrance to the tent he made a screen of purple stuffs, violet shade and red, and of crimson stuffs and fine twined linen, the work of a skilled embroiderer. For the hanging of this he made five posts, and their hooks; their capitals and rods he plated with gold; their five sockets were of bronze.

The ark 25:10-15, 17-20

1 37 Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, one and 2 a half cubits wide, one and a half cubits high. He plated it, inside and 3 out, with pure gold, and decorated it all round with a gold moulding. He cast four gold rings for the ark, attaching them to its four feet: two rings on one side 4 and two rings on the other. He also made shafts of acacia wood plating them 5 with gold; and he passed the shafts through the rings on the sides of the ark, 6 for carrying it. Also he made of pure gold a throne of mercy, two and a half 7 cubits long, and one and a half cubits wide. For the two ends of this throne 8 of mercy he made two golden cherubs; he made them of beaten gold, the first cherub for one end and the second for the other, and fastened them to the two 9 ends of the throne of mercy so that they made one piece with it. The cherubs had their wings spread upwards so that they overshadowed the throne of mercy. They faced one another, their faces towards the throne of mercy.

The table for the offertory bread 25:23-29

10 He made the table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, and one 11 and a half cubits high. He plated it with pure gold, and decorated it all round 12 with a gold moulding. He fitted it with struts, one hand's breadth wide, and 13 decorated these with a golden moulding. He cast four gold rings for it and 14 fixed these at the four corners where the four legs were. The rings lay close 15 to the struts to hold the shafts for carrying the table. He made the shafts of 16 acacia wood and plated them with gold; these were for carrying the table. He made the furnishings of pure gold for the table: dishes, cups, jars and libation bowls.

36 a. In 36:8b–39:43 the Greek, which translates a text somewhat different from ours, also arranges it differently: 36:8; 39:1-3; 36:8-9,35-38; 38:9-20,21-23; 37:1-23; 36:34,36,38; 38:20; 38:1-7; 37:5; 38:8 and 40:30-32; 38:24-31; 39:32; 39:1; 39:33-43 (with internal inversions); 40:1-38.

b. The singular here replaces the plural: the author has reproduced the orders given to Moses himself, with the necessary grammatical changes.

25:31-39 **The lamp-stand**

He made the lamp-stand of pure gold, and made the lamp-stand, base and 17
stem, of beaten gold. Its cups—calyx and petals—were of one piece with it. •Six 18
branches extended from the sides of it, three from one side, three from the other.
The first branch carried three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with its 19
calyx and petals; the second branch, too, carried three cups shaped like almond
blossoms, each with its calyx and petals, and similarly all six branches extending
from the lamp-stand. •The lamp-stand itself carried four cups shaped like almond 20
blossoms, each with its calyx and petals, •thus: one calyx under the first two 21
branches extending from the lamp-stand, one under the next pair, one under
the last pair: corresponding to the six branches extending from the lamp-stand.
The calyxes and the branches were of one piece with the lamp-stand, and the 22
whole was made from a single piece of pure gold, beaten out. •Then he made 23
the lamps for it, seven of them, and its snuffers and trays of pure gold. •He used 24
a talent of pure gold for making the lamp-stand and all its accessories.

30:1-5 **The altar of incense. Chrism and incense**

He made the altar of incense out of acacia wood. It was one cubit long, and 25
one cubit wide—that is to say, square—and two cubits high; its horns were of
one piece with it. •The top of it, its surrounding sides, and its horns, he plated 26
with pure gold, and decorated it all round with a gold moulding. •He fixed two 27
gold rings to it below the moulding on its two opposite sides, to take the shafts
used for carrying it. •These shafts he made of acacia wood and plated with gold. 28
30:22-25, 34-35 He also made the sacred chrism and the pure, fragrant incense, blending it as 29
perfumers do.

27:1-8 **The altar of holocaust**

38 He made the altar of holocaust out of acacia wood, a square five cubits 1
long and five cubits wide, its height three cubits. •At its four corners he put 2
horns, the horns being of one piece with it, and plated it with bronze. •He made 3
all the altar vessels: pans for the ashes, shovels, sprinkling basins, hooks, fire pans;
he made all the vessels for the altar out of bronze. •He made a grating for it of 4
bronze network which he set under the ledge, below, so that it reached half-way
up the altar. •He cast four rings and fixed them on the four corners of the bronze 5
grating to take the shafts. •He made the shafts of acacia wood and plated them 6
with bronze. •He placed these through the rings fixed to the sides of the altar for 7
carrying it, and he made the altar hollow, of boards.

30:18 **The bronze basin**

He made the bronze basin and its bronze support from the mirrors[a] of the 8
1 S 2:22 women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.[b]

27:9-19 **The court**

Ezk 40:5 He made the court. For the southern side of the court, facing the south country, 9
there were one hundred cubits of hangings of fine twined linen. •Their twenty 10
posts with their twenty sockets were of bronze, their hooks and rods of silver.
For the northern side there were one hundred cubits of hangings; their twenty 11
posts with their twenty sockets were of bronze, their hooks and rods of silver.
For the western side, fifty cubits of hangings, carried on ten posts set in ten 12
sockets, with their hooks and rods of silver. •Fifty cubits, too, for the eastern side 13
facing the sunrise. •On one side of the gateway there were fifteen cubits of 14
hangings, carried on three posts set in three sockets. •On the other side—either 15
side of the entrance to the court—there were fifteen cubits of hangings with their
three posts and three sockets. •All the hangings enclosing the court were of fine 16
twined linen. •The sockets for the posts were of bronze and their hooks of silver, 17
like the plating on their capitals. The posts for the court all had their rods of

18 silver. •The screen for the gateway of the court, the work of a skilled embroiderer,
was made of purple stuffs, violet shade and red, of crimson stuffs, and fine
twined linen. It was twenty cubits long and, along the width of it, five cubits high,
19 like the hangings of the court. •Its four posts with their four sockets were of
bronze. The hooks for the posts were of silver, like the plating on their capitals
20 and like their rods. •The pegs for the tabernacle and for the court enclosure were
all of bronze.

The amount of metal used[c]

21 Here is the account of metals used for the tabernacle—the tabernacle of the
Testimony—the account drawn up by order of Moses, the work of the Levites
under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.
22 Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that Yahweh 35:30-35
23 had directed Moses to have made. •His partner was Oholiab son of Ahisamach,
of the tribe of Dan, engraver, damask weaver, embroiderer in purple stuffs, of
violet shade and red, in crimson stuffs and fine linen.
24 The amount of gold used in the work—the entire work for the sanctuary—(this 2 Ch 24:6
was gold consecrated by offering) was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred
25 and thirty shekels (reckoning by the sanctuary shekel). •The silver collected when Nb 1
the census of the community was taken weighed one hundred talents and one
thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels (reckoning by the sanctuary
26 shekel), •one beqa per head, or half a shekel (reckoning by the sanctuary shekel)
for everyone of twenty years and over included in the census. These numbered
27 six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. •The hundred talents of Nb 1:45-46
silver were used for casting the sockets for the sanctuary and for the veil: one
28 hundred sockets out of the hundred talents, or one talent per socket. •With the
one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels he made the hooks for the
29 posts, the plating for their capitals, and their rods. •The bronze consecrated by
offering amounted to seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels,
30 and with this he made the sockets for the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, the
31 bronze altar with its grating of bronze and all the furnishings for it, •the sockets
for the enclosure of the court, those for the gateway to the court, all the pegs for
the tabernacle, and all the pegs for the court enclosure.

The vestments of the high priest Lv 8-10

1 39 From the purple stuffs, violet shade and red, the crimson stuffs, and the
fine linen[a] he made sumptuous vestments for service in the sanctuary. They
made the sacred vestments for Aaron, as Yahweh had directed Moses.

The ephod 28:6-8

2 They made the ephod of gold, purple stuffs, violet shade and red, crimson
3 stuffs, and fine twined linen. •They beat gold into thin plates, and cut these into
fine strips to weave into the purple stuffs, violet shade and red, into the crimson
4 stuffs and the fine linen, as does the weaver of damask. •For the ephod they made
5 two shoulder-straps, joined to it at its two ends. •The woven band on it to hold
it formed one piece with it and was of similar workmanship: this was of gold,
purple stuffs, violet shade and red, crimson stuffs, and fine twined linen,
6 as Yahweh had directed Moses. •They fashioned the onyx stones, mounted in 28:9-12
settings of gold mesh and engraved, as a seal is engraved, with the names of
7 the sons of Israel. •They fastened the stones to the shoulder-straps of the ephod,
stones commemorating the sons of Israel, as Yahweh had directed Moses.

38 a. The mirrors of antiquity were of polished bronze.
b. The problem of their function has not been resolved: servants, pious women (Greek: who fasted), pilgrims?
c. It is clear that this section is a later addition: the Levites were not yet established, Nb 3, the tax was not yet imposed, Nb 1, nor the distinction between the shekels yet made.
39 a. 'and the fine linen' absent from Hebr.

28:15-28 **The pectoral of judgement**

They made the pectoral, finely brocaded, of the same workmanship as the 8
ephod, of gold, purple stuffs, violet shade and red, and fine twined linen. •It was 9
28:17 square and they doubled it over, a span in length and a span in width. •In this 10
they set four rows of stones. Sard, topaz, carbuncle, for the first row; •emerald, 11
sapphire, diamond, the second row; •the third row, hyacinth, ruby, amethyst; 12
the fourth row, beryl, onyx, jasper. These were mounted in settings of gold mesh. 13
They bore the names of the sons of Israel and, like their names, were twelve 14
in number. They were engraved as seals are, each with the name of one of the
twelve tribes. •For the pectoral they made chains of pure gold twisted like cords. 15
They made two gold rosettes and two gold rings, •[b]and they fastened the 16 17
two gold cords to the two rings fixed on the corners of the pectoral. •The other 18
two ends of the cords they fastened to the two rosettes; they were thus attached
to the shoulder-straps of the ephod, on the front. •They made two gold rings 19
and fixed them to the two lower corners of the pectoral, on the inner hem, next
to the ephod. •And they made two more gold rings and fixed them low down on 20
the front of the two shoulder-straps of the ephod, close to the join, above the
woven band of the ephod. •They secured the pectoral by passing a ribbon of 21
violet-purple through its rings and those of the ephod, so that the pectoral would
sit above the woven band and not come apart from the ephod, as Yahweh had
directed Moses.

28:31-35 **The robe**

Then they made the robe of the ephod woven entirely of violet-purple. •The 22 23
opening in the centre of it was like the neck of a coat of mail; round the opening
was a border to keep the robe from tearing. •The lower hem of the robe they 24
decorated with pomegranates of purple stuffs, violet shade and red, crimson
stuffs, and fine twined linen. •They also made bells of pure gold and placed 25
them all round the lower hem of the robe between the pomegranates, •bells and 26
pomegranates alternately all round the lower hem of the robe of office, as Yahweh
had directed Moses.

28:39-40,42 **The vestments of the priests**

Then they made the tunics of finely woven linen for Aaron and his sons, •the 27 28
turban of fine linen, the head-dresses of fine linen, the breeches of fine twined
linen, •the girdles of fine twined linen, of purple stuffs, violet shade and red, 29
and of crimson stuffs, finely embroidered, as Yahweh had directed Moses.
28:36-37; 29:6 They also made the plate, the holy diadem, of pure gold, and engraved on 30
it 'Consecrated to Yahweh', as a man engraves a seal. •They attached to this 31
a ribbon of violet-purple to secure it to the top of the turban, as Yahweh had
directed Moses.

So all the work of the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, was completed. In 32
carrying it out the sons of Israel had done exactly as Yahweh had directed Moses.

The finished work presented to Moses

They brought to Moses the tabernacle, the Tent and all its furnishings: its 33
Nb 4:5 hooks, frames, crossbars, posts, sockets; •the covering of rams' skins dyed red, 34
the covering of fine leather, and the screening veil; •the ark of the testimony with 35
its shafts and the throne of mercy; •the table with all its furnishings, and the 36
loaves of offering; •the lamp-stand of pure gold with its lamps—the lamps that 37
were to be set on it—and all its accessories; the oil, too, for the light; •the golden 38
altar, the chrism, the fragrant incense, the screen for the entrance to the tent;
the bronze altar with its grating of bronze, its shafts and all its furnishings; the 39
basin and its stand; •the hangings of the court, its posts, its sockets, and the 40
screen for the gateway to the court, its cords, its pegs, and all the furniture for
the service in the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting; •the sumptuous vestments for 41

service in the sanctuary—sacred vestments for Aaron the priest, and vestments
42 for his sons—for the priestly functions. •The sons of Israel had done all the work
exactly as Yahweh had directed Moses.
43 Moses examined the whole work, and he could see they had done it as Yahweh
had directed him. And Moses blessed them.

The sanctuary erected and consecrated

1 2 3 40 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'On the first day of the first month you
are to erect the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, •and place the ark of the
4 Testimony in it, screening it with the veil. •Bring in the table, arranging what
is to be set in order on it. Bring in the lamp-stand, too, and set up its lamps.
5 Place the golden altar of incense in front of the ark of the Testimony, and set 30:6
6 up the screen at the entrance to the tabernacle. •Place the altar of holocaust
7 in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting. •Place the basin
8 between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and fill it with water. •Set up the
9 enclosure of the court and hang the screen at the gateway of the court. •Then, Lv 8:10 Nb 7:2
taking the chrism, anoint the tabernacle and everything in it, consecrating it
10 with its furniture, to make it a holy place. •Anoint the altar of holocaust with
all its furnishings; and consecrate the altar which henceforth will be a most holy
11 12 thing. •Anoint the basin with its stand, and consecrate it. •Bring Aaron and his
13 sons to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and see that they bathe. •[a]Then Lv 8-10
clothe Aaron with the sacred vestments, and anoint and consecrate him, to serve
14 15 me in the priesthood. •Next, bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. •Anoint 30:30
them as you have anointed their father, to serve me in the priesthood. This
anointing of them is to confer the priesthood on them in perpetuity from
generation to generation.'

The divine commands are carried out

16 17 Moses did this; he did exactly as Yahweh had directed him. •The tabernacle
18 was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year. •Moses erected Nb 7:1
the tabernacle. He fixed the sockets for it, put up its frames, put its crossbars
19 in position, set up its posts. •He spread the tent over the tabernacle and on
20 top of this the covering for the tent, as Yahweh had directed Moses. •He took 1 K 8:9
the Testimony and placed it inside the ark. He set the shafts to the ark and
21 placed the throne of mercy on it. •He brought the ark into the tabernacle and
put the screening veil in place; thus he screened the ark of Yahweh, as Yahweh
22 had directed Moses. •He placed the table in the Tent of Meeting, on the north
23 side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, •and on it arranged the loaves before
24 Yahweh, as Yahweh had directed Moses. •He put the lamp-stand in the Tent
25 of Meeting, opposite the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; •and he set
26 up the lamps before Yahweh, as Yahweh had directed Moses. •He put the
27 golden altar in the Tent of Meeting in front of the veil, •and on it burnt fragrant
28 incense, as Yahweh had directed Moses. •Then he put the screen at the entrance
29 to the tabernacle. •He put the altar of holocaust at the entrance to the tabernacle,
the Tent of Meeting, and on it offered the holocaust and the oblation, as Yahweh
30 had directed Moses. •He put the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the
31 altar, and filled it with water for the ablutions; •this was for Aaron and his
32 sons[b] to wash their hands and feet: •whenever they entered the Tent of Meeting
33 or approached the altar they washed, as Yahweh had directed Moses. •Moses
then set up the court round the tabernacle and the altar and placed the screen
at the gateway to the court. Thus Moses completed the work.

b. Vulg. omits a few details from 39:17-21 and has two vv. less than Hebr.; the verse numeration does not coincide until the end of the chapter.

40 a. Vulg. here abridges slightly and, from our v. 16 to the end of the chapter, is two verse numbers behind.

b. Hebr. 'Moses and Aaron and his sons'. A reader may have added the name 'Moses' since Moses presented the offerings and performed the functions of a priest (v. 27 and Lv 8) at the investiture of Aaron.

Yahweh takes possession of the sanctuary

25:8+ 1K8:10-11 Ezk43:1-5

The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting and the glory of Yahweh filled the 34
24:16+ ↗Rv15:8 tabernacle. 35 Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because of the cloud that
rested on it and because of the glory of Yahweh that filled the tabernacle.

‖Nb9:15-23 **The cloud guides the Israelites**

Ex 13:21f+ Ps 78:14; 105:39 *Nb 1:51*

At every stage of their journey, whenever the cloud rose from the tabernacle 36
the sons of Israel would resume their march. 37 If the cloud did not rise, they
waited and would not march until it did. 38 For the cloud of Yahweh rested on
the tabernacle by day, and a fire shone within the cloud by night, for all the
House of Israel to see. And so it was for every stage of their journey.

LEVITICUS

I. THE RITUAL OF SACRIFICE[a]

Ex 29:18
2S 6:17
1K 3:15
Ezk 45:15

Holocaust[b]

1 1 Yahweh called Moses, and from the Tent of Meeting addressed him, saying, Ex 25:22+
2 'Speak to the sons of Israel; say to them, "When any of you brings an offering to Yahweh, he can offer an animal from either herd or flock.

3 "If his offering is a holocaust of an animal out of the herd, he is to offer a male 22:18-21
Ex 12:5
1K 8:64
Ps 51:19
Nb 8:12
1 Ch 6:34
without blemish; it is to be offered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, so
4 that it may be accepted before Yahweh. •He is to lay his hand on the victim's
5 head, and it shall be accepted as effectual for his atonement. •Then he must immolate the bull before Yahweh,[c] and the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall offer the blood.[d] They will pour it out on the borders of the altar which stands at the Ex 12:13; 29:12
6 entrance to the Tent of Meeting. •Then he must skin the victim and quarter it. Ezk 33:25
7 The sons of Aaron, the priests, must put fire on the altar and arrange wood on
8 this fire. •Then the sons of Aaron, the priests, are to put the pieces, the head and
9 the fat on the wood on the altar fire. •He is to wash the entrails and legs in water, Ezk 40:38
and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. This holocaust will be a burnt 21:6
offering[e] and the fragrance of it will appeal Yahweh. Ex 29:18+

10 "If his offering is an animal out of the flock, a lamb or a goat offered as a
11 holocaust, he is to offer a male without blemish. •He must immolate it on the 4:24
north side of the altar, before Yahweh, and the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall
12 pour out the blood on the borders of the altar. •Then he is to quarter it, and the priest is to arrange the quarters, as well as the head and the fat, on the wood on
13 the altar fire. •He is to wash the entrails and legs in water, and the priest shall burn all of it on the altar. This holocaust will be a burnt offering and the fragrance of it will appease Yahweh.

14 "If his offering to Yahweh is a holocaust of a bird, he is to offer a turtledove Gn 15:10
15 or a young pigeon. •The priest shall offer it at the altar and wring off its head, which he is to burn on the altar; then its blood is to be drained out on the side
16 of the altar. •Then he shall remove the crop and the feathers; these he is to throw

1 a. Christian tradition from its early days (cf. Heb 8f) has always considered that this elaborate O. T. ritual portended and paved the way for the one redemptive sacrifice of Christ and for the sacraments of the Church.

b. The sacrifice called 'holocaust' ('wholly burned') was celebrated in Israel from ancient times: Gn 8:20; 22; Jg 6:19-21; 11:31; 13:19-21; 1 S 6:15; 7:9; 1 K 18:21-40. In Lv 1 the emphasis is on its expiatory character but the ancient holocaust was a sacrifice of thanksgiving 'or some signal divine intervention.

c. Ezk 44:11 assigns the immolation itself to the Levites.

d. The blood was considered the seat of the life-principle, Lv 17:11; Dt 12:16 and 23, hence its leading part in sacrificial ritual, cf. below *passim*, and in covenant making, Ex 24:8. The slaughter of any animal becomes a cultic act and must be performed on an altar, 1 S 14:32f, and, according to the prescription of Lv 17:3f, in the sanctuary itself. To eat flesh with the blood in it is forbidden, Gn 9:4; Lv 3:17; 7:26; 17:12; 19:26; cf. Ac 15:29. Human blood, shed unjustly, cries out for vengeance, Gn 4:10; Is 26:21; Ezk 24:7; Jb 16:18+.

e. Here the word is applied to holocaust but it is also used for any portion burned in God's honour, whatever the nature of the sacrifice. This rite confers as it were a 'spiritual' character on the thing offered, which can no longer be considered as material food offered to God and shared with him, cf. Dt 18:1+; on the contrary, it dissolves in smoke as incense does and goes up to God 'as an appeasing fragrance', cf. Ex 29:18+.

4:12 1 K 13:5 on the eastern side of the altar, where the ashes from the fat are placed. •He is to 17
divide it in two halves with a wing on each side, but without separating the two
parts. Then the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire.
6:7-11; 7:9-10 This holocaust will be a burnt offering and its fragrance will appease Yahweh.

Nb 15:1-16 Jg 9:9 Ezk 45:15; 46:20 Si 35:2,6 Dn 2:46
The Oblation[a]

2 "If anyone offers Yahweh an oblation, his offering is to consist of wheaten 1
flour on which he is to pour wine and put incense. •He shall bring it to the sons 2
Nb 5:15 of Aaron, the priests; he is to take a handful of the wheaten flour and oil and all
Si 45:16 the incense, and the priest shall burn it on the altar as a memorial,[b] a burnt offering
whose fragrance will appease Yahweh. •The remainder of the oblation is to 3
1 Ch 6:34 Ezk 42:13; 44:14 revert to Aaron and his sons; a most holy portion of the burnt offerings of
Yahweh.[c]

7:9 Ex 29:3 1 Ch 9:31 "When you are going to offer an oblation of dough baked in the oven, the 4
wheaten flour is to be prepared either in the form of unleavened cakes mixed
with oil, or in the form of unleavened wafers spread with oil.

"If your offering is an oblation cooked on the griddle, the wheaten flour mixed 5
with oil is to contain no leavening. •You must break it in pieces and pour oil 6
over it. It is an oblation.

"If your offering is an oblation cooked in the pan, the wheaten flour is to be 7
prepared in oil.

"You must bring to Yahweh the oblation that has been thus prepared, presenting 8
it to the priest, who is to bring it to the altar. •The priest shall take the memorial 9
Si 45:16 from the oblation and burn it on the altar, as a burnt offering whose fragrance
will appease Yahweh. •The remainder of the oblation will revert to Aaron and 10
his sons, a most holy portion of Yahweh's burnt offering.

"None of the oblations that you offer to Yahweh is to be prepared with leaven,[d] 11
6:9+ for you must never burn leaven or honey as a burnt offering for Yahweh. •You 12
may offer them up to Yahweh as an offering of first-fruits, but they must not go
up as an appeasing fragrance at the altar. •You must salt every oblation that you 13
Nb 18:19 Mt 5:13 Mk 9:49 offer, and you must never fail to put on your oblation the salt of the Covenant
with your God:[e] to every offering you are to join an offering of salt to Yahweh
23:14 your God. •If you offer Yahweh an oblation of first-fruits,[f] you must offer roasted 14
Dt 26:1+ corn or bread made from ground corn. •You are to add oil to it and put incense 15
on it; it is an oblation; •and the priest is to burn the memorial from part of the 16
Si 45:16 bread and oil (together with all the incense) as a burnt offering for Yahweh.

19:5-8; 22:21-25 1 S 9:13; 10:8; 11:15 2 S 6:17 1 K 3:15; 8:63 Si 35:1 Ezk 45:15 1 Co 10:16 Heb 13:10
The Communion Sacrifice[a]

3 "If a man's sacrifice is a communion sacrifice, and if he offers an animal from 1
the herd, male or female, whatever he offers before Yahweh must be without
blemish. •He is to lay his hand on the victim's head and immolate it at the 2
9:18-21 entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then the sons of Aaron, the priests, must pour
out the blood on the borders of the altar. •He is to offer part of the sacrifice 3
1 S 2:16 as a burnt offering for Yahweh: the fat that covers the entrails, all the fat that
is on the entrails, •the two kidneys, the fat on them and on the loins, the fatty 4
mass which he is to remove from the liver and kidneys. •The sons of Aaron must 5
burn this part on the altar, in addition to the holocaust, on the wood of the fire.
It will be a burnt offering and its fragrance will appease Yahweh.

"If it is an animal from the flock that he offers as a communion sacrifice for 6
Yahweh, he is to offer a male or female without blemish.

"If he offers a sheep, he is to offer it before Yahweh; •he is to lay his hand on 7 8
the victim's head and immolate it in front of the Tent of Meeting; then the sons
of Aaron shall pour out its blood on the borders of the altar. •Of this communion 9
sacrifice he is to offer the following as a burnt offering for Yahweh: the fat, all
the tail taken off near the sacrum, the fat that covers the entrails, all the fat that
is on the entrails, •the two kidneys, the fat that is on them and on the loins, 10

11 the fatty mass which he will remove from the liver and kidneys. •The priest must
burn this part on the altar as food,[b] as a burnt offering for Yahweh.
12 13 "If his offering is a goat, he is to offer it before Yahweh: •he is to lay his hand
on the victim's head and immolate it in front of the Tent of Meeting, and the
14 sons of Aaron shall pour out its blood on the borders of the altar. •Then this is
what he is to offer as a burnt offering for Yahweh: the fat that covers the entrails,
15 all the fat that is on the entrails, •the two kidneys, the fat that is on them and
on the loins, the fatty mass which he will remove from the liver and kidneys.
16 The priest must burn these pieces on the altar as food, as a burnt offering for Gn 4:4
Yahweh.
17 "All the fat belongs to Yahweh. •This is a perpetual law for all your descendants,
wherever you may live: never eat either fat or blood." '[c]

The Sacrifice for Sin[a]

Ex 29:14
Ezk 46:20

1 4 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
2 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say:
"A man may sin inadvertently against any one of the commandments of Yahweh
and do one of the forbidden things; in such a case:

a. Sins of the high priest

3 "If the one who sins is the anointed priest, thus making the people guilty,[b] Ex 30:22+
then for the sin which he has committed he is to offer to Yahweh a young bull,
4 an animal from the herd without blemish, as a sacrifice for sin. •He is to bring
the bull before Yahweh at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, he is to lay his
5 hand on its head and immolate it before Yahweh. •Then the anointed priest
must take a little of the blood of the bull and take it into the Tent of Meeting. 6:23 Nb 19:4
6 He shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it over the veil of the sanctuary *Ex 26:33+*; 27:2+; 30:1-10+
7 seven times, before Yahweh. •Then the priest must put a little of the blood of
the bull on the horns of the altar of incense that smokes before Yahweh in the Ex 29:12
Tent of Meeting, and he is to pour all the rest of the bull's blood at the foot of
the altar of holocaust at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.
8 "Of all the fat of this bull offered as a sacrifice for sin, this is what he will Si 47:2
9 remove: the fat that covers the entrails, all the fat that is on the entrails, •the two
kidneys, the fat that is on them and on the loins, the fatty mass which he will
10 remove from the liver and kidneys—•exactly as was done with the portion set
apart in the communion sacrifice—and the priest must burn these on the altar of
holocaust.
11 12 "The bull's skin, all its flesh, its head, legs, entrails and dung, •the whole of

2 a. The 'oblation', being an offering of agricultural produce, originates as the rite of a settled population. The burning of the handful of flour 'as an appeasing fragrance' (Ex 29:18 and Lv 1:9+) assimilates the oblation to the holocaust. The oblation is usually accompanied by another, complementary, sacrifice.

b. The *azkarah* or 'reminder': the portion reminding the worshipper of God, or God of the worshipper?

c. A distinction was drawn between holy and most holy offerings; the latter sanctified everything they touched, Ex 29:37.

d. The prohibition of leaven has probably some connexion with the institution of the Passover, Ex 12:15-20.

e. Salt was believed to have a purifying effect, Ezk 16:4; 2 K 2:20; cf. Mt 5:13. The Assyrians used it in worship and nomad tribes in meals of friendship or of covenant.

f. Under 'oblations' vv. 12-16 classify the ancient practice of offering the first-fruits, cf. Dt 26:1+.

3 a. The communion sacrifice (often called 'peace-offering') was widespread in the semitic world and beyond. It was a sacred banquet at which the worshippers ate one portion of the victim, the other—the blood and the fatty parts, as being the most vital— being made over to the deity. It seems to have been the most commonly celebrated sacrifice in ancient Israel and the central rite of her feasts. Since it was a meal 'shared' with God, it expressed better than any other sacrifice the union of God with his faithful.

b. The word 'food' here and in v. 16 has been replaced in the Greek by 'appeasing fragrance', the better to safeguard God's entirely spiritual nature (cf. Ps 50:13; Dn 14; etc.).

c. Man cannot feed on what is God's, see notes to 1:5 and 3:1.

4 a. The 'sacrifice for sin' expiates ritual faults in which the offended person is Yahweh; but the 'sacrifice of reparation' (called also 'guilt-offering'), 5:14-26, deals with infringements of rights either of God or of neighbour. The imposition of hands makes the victim and the offerer one, cf. Lv 16. To the sacrifice for sin Lv gives the greatest prominence; the Books of Chronicles, and eventually the N.T., will give it new significance.

b. The high priest was God's representative before the nation, and he was also the representative of the nation before God; hence any fault of his involved the nation as a whole.

Nb19:3,9 1:16 the bull, must be carried outside the camp[c] to a place that is clean, the place where the ashes from the fat are thrown away, and the bull must be burnt there.

b. Sins of the community of Israel

"If the whole community of Israel has sinned inadvertently, and without being 13
aware of it has done something that is forbidden by the commandments of
Yahweh, •the community is to offer a young bull as a sacrifice for sin, an animal 14
of the herd without blemish, when the sin of which they have been guilty is
discovered. The animal must be brought before the Tent of Meeting; •before 15
Yahweh the elders of the community shall lay their hands on the bull's head,
and it must be immolated before Yahweh.[d]

6:23 "Then the anointed priest is to carry a little of the blood of the bull into the 16
Tent of Meeting. •He is to dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle the veil before 17
Yahweh seven times. •Then he must put a little of the blood on the horns of the 18
altar that stands before Yahweh inside the Tent of Meeting, and then pour
out all the rest of the blood at the foot of the altar of holocaust at the entrance
to the Tent of Meeting.

"Then he is to remove all the fat from the animal and burn it on the altar. 19
He must treat this bull as he did the other for the sacrifice of sin. It is to be treated 20
in the same way; and when the priest has performed the rite of atonement over
the people, they will be forgiven.

"He must have the bull taken out of the camp and burn it as he burned the 21
first one. This is the sacrifice for the sin of the community.

c. Sins of leaders in the community

"When a leader sins and inadvertently does one of the things forbidden by 22
the commandments of Yahweh his God, thus rendering himself guilty •(or if 23
anyone draws his attention to the sin thus committed), he is to bring a goat as

1:11 an offering, a male without blemish. •He is to lay his hand on the goat's head 24
and immolate it in the place where the holocausts are immolated before Yahweh.
This is a sacrifice for sin: •the priest is to take a little of the victim's blood on his 25
finger and put it on the horns of the altar of holocaust.[e] Then he must pour out
its blood at the foot of the altar of holocaust •and burn all the fat on the altar, 26
as with the fat in the communion sacrifice. This is how the priest is to perform
the rite of atonement over this leader to free him from his sin, and he will be
forgiven.

d. Sins of private individuals

"If one of the people sins inadvertently and makes himself guilty by doing 27
something forbidden by the commandments of Yahweh •(or if anyone draws 28
his attention to the sin he has committed), he is to bring a she-goat as an offering
for the sin he has committed, a female without blemish. •He is to lay his hand 29
on the victim's head and immolate it in the place where the holocausts are
immolated. •The priest is to take a little of its blood on his finger and put it 30
on the horns of the altar of holocaust. Then he must pour out all the rest of the
blood at the foot of the altar. •Then he is to remove all the fat, as the fat was 31
removed for the communion sacrifice, and the priest shall burn it on the altar
as an appeasing fragrance for Yahweh. This is how the priest is to perform the rite
of atonement over the man, and he will be forgiven.

"If he wishes to bring a lamb as an offering for this kind of sacrifice, he is to 32
bring a female without blemish. •He is to lay his hand on the victim's head and 33
immolate it as a sacrifice for sin in the place where the holocausts are immolated.
The priest is to take a little of the blood of this sacrifice on his finger and put it 34
on the horns of the altar of holocaust. Then he must pour out all the rest of the
blood at the foot of the altar. •He is to remove its fat as was done for the sheep in 35
the communion sacrifice, and the priest shall burn it all on the altar, in addition

to the burnt offering for Yahweh. This is how the priest is to perform the rite of atonement over the man, and he will be forgiven.

Some cases of Sacrifice for Sin

1 5 "If anyone sins in any of these following cases:[a]
"A man should have come forward to give evidence when he heard the formal adjuration,[b] having seen the incident or known the facts; but he has not spoken out, and so bears the consequences of his fault; Dt 19:15-20 Pr 29:24
2 "or else he touches something unclean, whatever it may be—the dead body of an unclean animal, wild or tame, or of one of the unclean things that swarm—and without realising it becomes unclean, he becomes answerable for it;[c] 11-16
3 "or else he touches some human uncleanness, whatever it may be, and contact with it makes him unclean; he does not notice it, then, realising it later, he becomes answerable for it;
4 "or else a man lets slip some oath to do either evil or good, in any of those matters on which a man may swear unthinkingly; he does not notice it, then, realising it later, he becomes answerable for it; Nb 30:7
5 "if he is answerable in any of those cases, he will have to confess the sin Si 4:26
6 committed,[d] •and he must bring to Yahweh as a sacrifice of reparation for the sin committed a female of the flock (sheep or goat) as a sacrifice for sin; and the priest shall perform the rite of atonement over him to free him from his sin.

Sins of private individuals (continued)

7 "If he cannot afford an animal of the flock, he is to bring to Yahweh, as a sacrifice of reparation for the sin he has committed, two turtledoves or two 14:21 12:8 Lk 2:24
8 young pigeons—one for a sacrifice for sin and the other for a holocaust. •He will
9 bring them to the priest who is to offer first the one intended for the sacrifice for sin. The priest is to wring its neck, but not remove the head. •He must sprinkle
10 the side of the altar with the victim's blood, and then drain out the rest of the blood at the foot of the altar. This is a sacrifice for sin. •Of the other bird he is to make a holocaust according to the ritual. This is how the priest is to perform the rite of atonement over the man for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.
11 "If he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young pigeons, he is to bring a tenth of an ephah of wheaten flour as an offering for the sin committed; he must 7:10 Nb 5:15
12 not mix oil with it or put incense on it, for it is a sacrifice for sin. •He is to bring it to the priest, who is to take a handful of it as a memorial, and burn this in Nb 5:25
13 addition to the burnt offering for Yahweh. This is a sacrifice for sin. •This is how the priest is to perform the rite of atonement over the man for the sin he has committed in any of those cases,[e] and he will be forgiven. In this case, the priest has the same rights as in the oblation." '

The Sacrifice of Reparation[f]

14 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
15 'If anyone is guilty of fraud and sins inadvertently by not observing Yahweh's Nb 5:5

c. The camp is holy ground because of God's presence (he 'goes about inside the camp', Dt 23:15). The animal acts as substitute for the guilty person who should be expelled from the community, cf. the scapegoat, Lv 16:21-22.

d. The same rite is used for the high priest because he is the representative of the community.

e. Neither ruler nor commoner has the sacred rank held by the high priest and by the community, Ezk 44:3; 45:7-12, and the blood of their representative victim is not allowed in the holy tabernacle.

5 a. The words 'any of these (following) cases' appear after v. 4 in the original text but are inserted here for clarity's sake.

b. After summoning the witness the judge calls down a curse on him should he lie or prove evasive.

c. In view of the following paragraphs many correct to 'and, after being ignorant of it, discovers it and becomes guilty'.

d. A solemn, public act.

e. All the cases provided for in 4:22,27.

f. The 'sacrifice of reparation' ('guilt-offering') is closely akin to the 'sacrifice for sin'; it is offered whenever the rights of God or of neighbour are violated. The obligation could be met by a gift of money, 2 K 12:17. In Lv this gift is additional to sacrifice and confession of fault.

5:25;22:16 sacred rights,[g] he is to bring to Yahweh as a sacrifice of reparation an unblemished
Nb 3:47 ram from his flock. This ram is to be valued in silver shekels according to the
rate of the shekel of the sanctuary.[h] This is a sacrifice of reparation. •He must 16
2K12:17 restore what his sin subtracted from the sacred rights, adding one-fifth to the
value, and give it to the priest. The priest shall perform the rite of
atonement over him with the ram for the sacrifice of reparation and he will be
forgiven.

'If anyone sins and without realising it does one of the things forbidden 17
by the commandments of Yahweh, he must answer for it and must bear the
consequences of his fault. •As a sacrifice of reparation he is to bring to the 18
priest an unblemished ram of his flock, subject to valuation. The priest shall
perform the rite of atonement over him for the oversight he has committed
without realising it and he will be forgiven. •This is a sacrifice of reparation; the 19
man was certainly answerable to Yahweh.'[i]

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 20 *1*

Ex22:6-14 Pr 30:9 'If anyone sins and is guilty of fraud against Yahweh by deceiving his 21 *2*
neighbour over a deposit or a security, or by withholding something due to him
or exploiting him;

'or if he finds lost property and denies it; 22 *3*

Ex23:1-2 'or if he perjures himself about any sin that a man may commit;

'if he sins and so becomes answerable, he is to restore what he has taken or 23 *4*
demanded in excess: the deposit confided to him, the lost property that he found,
or any object about which he has perjured himself. He must add one-fifth to the 24 *5*
principal and pay the whole to whoever held the property rights on the day
5:16 when he became answerable. •Then he is to bring an unblemished ram of his 25 *6*
flock to Yahweh as a sacrifice of reparation: it must be valued according to the
rate paid to the priest for a sacrifice of reparation. •The priest shall perform the 26 *7*
rite of atonement over him before Yahweh and he will be forgiven, whatever
the act for which he became answerable.'

Priesthood and sacrifice[a]

a. Holocaust

6 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 1 *8*

'Give these orders to Aaron and his sons: 2 *9*

"This is the ritual for holocaust (that is, the holocaust that stays on the altar
brazier all night until morning and is consumed by the altar fire).[b]

Ezk44:18 "The priest is to put on his linen tunic and cover his body with linen. 3 *10*
Then he must remove the ashes of the fat of the sacrifice consumed by the
altar fire and place them at the side of the altar. •Then he is to take off his 4 *11*
clothes and put on others and carry the ashes to some place that is clean, outside
the camp.

24:2-4 2M1:18-36 "The fire that consumes the holocaust on the altar must not be allowed to go 5 *12*
out. Every morning the priest must make it up with wood. He is to arrange the
holocaust on it and burn the fat from the communion sacrifices. •An undying 6 *13*
fire is always to burn on the altar; it must not go out.

b. The Oblation

2:1-3 "This is the ritual for the oblation: 7 *14*

"One of the sons of Aaron is to bring it into the presence of Yahweh in front
of the altar; •he is to take a handful of the wheaten flour (with the oil and incense 8 *15*
which have been added to it); he must burn the memorial on the altar so that its
10:13 Dn 2:46 2:11 Si 45:21 fragrance will appease Yahweh; •and after all this has been done Aaron and his 9 *16*
sons shall eat the remainder in the form of unleavened loaves.[c] They are to eat it
in a sacred place within the precincts of the Tent of Meeting. •The portion 10 *17*
I give them of my burnt offering must not be baked with leaven. It is a most
holy portion, like the sacrifice for sin and the sacrifice of reparation. •All the 11 *18*

males of Aaron's family may eat this portion of Yahweh's burnt offering (this is a perpetual law for all your descendants; and everyone who touches it will be consecrated)." '

12 19 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:[d] 8-9

13 20 'This is the offering that Aaron and his sons are to make to Yahweh on the day of their anointing: one-tenth of an ephah of wheaten flour as a perpetual
14 21 oblation, half in the morning and half in the evening. •It must be prepared on the griddle and mixed with oil; you must bring the paste as an oblation in several
15 22 places, offering them as a fragrance that will appease Yahweh. •The priest among the sons of Aaron who is to be anointed in his place shall do the same. This is a perpetual law.

16 23 'This entire oblation must be burnt for Yahweh. •Every oblation made by a priest must be a total sacrifice; none of it is to be eaten.'

c. The Sacrifice for Sin

17,18 24,25 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said, •'Say to Aaron and his sons:

"This is the ritual for the sacrifice for sin:

"The victim for the sacrifice is to be immolated before Yahweh in the place
19 26 where the holocausts are immolated. It is a most holy thing. •The priest who offers this sacrifice is to eat it. It must be eaten in a holy place within the precincts 10:17
20 27 of the Tent of Meeting. •Everything that touches the flesh of this victim will become consecrated; if any of the blood splashes on clothing, the stain must be
21 28 cleaned is some holy place. •The earthenware vessel in which the meat is cooked must be broken; if a bronze vessel has been used for the cooking, it must be
22 29 scrubbed and thoroughly rinsed with water. •Any male who is a priest may eat it.
23 30 It is a most holy thing. •But no one may eat any of the victims offered for sin, the blood of which has been taken into the Tent of Meeting to make atonement 4:5,16 inside the sanctuary. These must be thrown on the fire.

d. The Sacrifice of Reparation

1 7 "This is the ritual for the sacrifice of reparation:

2 "It is a most holy thing. •The victim is to be immolated in the place where the Is 43:15 holocausts are immolated, and the priest must pour out the blood on the borders
3 of the altar. •Then he is to offer all the fat: the tail, the fat that covers the entrails,
4 the two kidneys, the fat that is on them and on the loins, the fatty mass which
5 he will remove from the liver and kidneys. •The priest must burn these pieces on the altar as a burnt offering for Yahweh. This is a sacrifice of reparation.
6 Every male who is a priest may eat it. It must be eaten in a holy place; it is a most holy thing.

The rights of the priests

7 "As with the sacrifice for sin, so with the sacrifice of reparation—the ritual is

g. Lit. 'holy things', i.e. offerings either freely made or laid down by law.

h. The 'shekel' here is either a standard of weight or a coin heavier than the one in common use.

i. Alternative translation 'This is a sacrifice of reparation which he must offer as reparation to Yahweh'.

6 a. Ch. 1-5 deal with sacrificial materials, ch. 6-7 with the duties and privileges of the sacrificing priest.

b. According to Ezk 46:13-15 the continual holocaust demands only one daily sacrifice, in the morning: this coincides with the practice of the monarchical period: 2 K 16:15 speaks of the morning holocaust as distinct from the evening 'oblation' of grain (cf. 1 K 18; 29). According to Ex 29:38-42 and Nb 28:3-8 a morning and an evening holocaust are obligatory. In our passage the morning holocaust is laid down in v. 5 and an evening holocaust is implied in the parenthesis of v. 2, though this is awkwardly phrased and apparently a later addition. The fire always burning on the altar symbolises the continuity of the cult; cf. the ever-burning lamp of Lv 24:2-4.

c. Canaanite ritual sought to portray the explosive energy of natural forces (leaven, banquet and dance, orgies). The levitical ritual, on the other hand, though it loses neither relish for life nor gratitude for the gifts of earth, purges out those elements of pagan ritual that blunt the sense of the sacred or threaten the transcendence of God. Thus the oblation is consumed by the priests alone, leaven is prohibited, contact with all that is not sacred is forbidden, the sobriety of psalm and hymn control the chant, sacred prostitution is roundly condemned.

d. Vv. 12-16, missing from the Greek MS. A, deal with the ceremony of investiture, cf. 8:26; 9:4, and interrupt the more general instructions for ritual.

the same for both. The offering with which he has performed the rite of atonement is to revert to the priest. •The skin of the victim presented by a man to the priest 8
1; 2:1-3 to be offered as a holocaust shall revert to the priest. •Every oblation baked in 9
2:4-7 the oven, every oblation cooked in the pan or on the griddle shall revert to the
5:11-13 priest who offered it. •Every oblation, mixed with oil or dry, is to revert to all 10
Nb 5:15
Ezk 44:29 the sons of Aaron without distinction.

e. The Communion Sacrifice

2 Ch 29:31 **(i) Sacrifice with Praise**[a]
Ps 56:13;
116:17,18
Si 35:2
22:21 "This is the ritual for the communion sacrifice offered to Yahweh: 11
"If it is offered with a sacrifice with praise, there must be added to it an 12
offering of unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers spread with oil, and wheaten flour in the form of cakes mixed with oil. •This offering, then, 13
must be added to the cakes of leavened bread and to the communion sacrifice with praise. •One of the cakes of this offering is to be presented as an offering 14
to Yahweh; it shall revert to the priest who pours out the blood of the communion sacrifice. •The flesh of the victim must be eaten on the day when the offering 15
is made; nothing must remain until the next morning.

(ii) Votive or Voluntary Sacrifices

"If the victim is offered as a votive or a voluntary sacrifice, it is to be eaten on 16
the day it is offered and also on the following day; •but on the third day whatever 17
remains of the victim's flesh must be thrown on the fire.

General rules

19:7 "If the flesh offered as a communion sacrifice is eaten on the third day, the 18
man who has offered it will not be accepted. He is to receive no credit for it, it is defiled flesh, and the man who eats it shall bear the consequences of his fault.
"Flesh that has touched anything unclean cannot be eaten; it must be thrown 19
on the fire.
11-16 "Anyone who is clean may eat flesh, •but anyone unclean who eats the flesh 20
of a communion sacrifice offered to Yahweh shall be outlawed from his people.[b]
If anyone touches anything unclean, human or animal, or any foul thing, and 21
then eats the flesh of a communion sacrifice offered to Yahweh, this man shall be outlawed from his people." '
Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said, •'Speak to the sons of Israel, say to them: 22/23
"You must not eat the fat of ox, sheep or goat. •The fat of an animal that 24
has died a natural death or been savaged by beasts may be used for any other purpose, but you must eat it. •Anyone who eats the fat of an animal offered 25
as a burnt offering to Yahweh shall be outlawed from his people.
1:5+ "Wherever you live, you must not eat blood, whether it be of bird or of beast. 26
Anyone who eats blood, whoever he may be, shall be outlawed from his people." ' 27

Dt 18:3 **The priest's portion**

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said, •'Speak to the sons of Israel, say to them: 28/29
1 S 2:13 "Anyone who offers a communion sacrifice to Yahweh is to bring him part
of his sacrifice as an offering. •He is to bring Yahweh's burnt offering—that is, 30
the fat that adheres to the breast—with his own hands. He is to bring it, and
Ep 29:24+ also the breast, with which he must make the gesture of offering before Yahweh.
The priest must burn the fat on the altar, and the breast shall revert to Aaron and 31
his sons. •You must set aside the right thigh from your communion sacrifices and 32
give it to the priest. •This right thigh shall be the portion of the son of Aaron 33
who offers the blood and fat of the communion sacrifice. •Thus, I keep back 34
10:14 this breast and thigh out of the communion sacrifices offered by the sons of
Nb 6:20 Israel,[c] and give these to Aaron the priest and to his sons; this is a perpetual law
binding the sons of Israel." '

Conclusion

35 This, then, was the portion[d] of Aaron and of his sons in Yahweh's burnt
36 offerings on the day he presented them to Yahweh to be his priests. •This is
what the orders of Yahweh bind the sons of Israel to give them on the day
they are anointed: this is a perpetual law for all their descendants. Ex 30:22+
37 Such then is the ritual for holocaust, oblation, sacrifice for sin, sacrifices of
38 reparation, investiture and communion. •This is what Yahweh commanded
Moses on Mount Sinai when he ordered the sons of Israel to make their offerings
to Yahweh in the wilderness of Sinai.

II. THE INVESTITURE OF THE PRIESTS

Ordination rites[a] ‖ Ex 28: 1-29:35; ‖39:1-32; ‖40:12-15 6:13-15

1 8 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
2 'Take Aaron, his sons with him, and the vestments, and the chrism, the bull
for the sacrifice for sin, the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread.
3 Then call the whole community together at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.'
4 Moses followed the orders of Yahweh; the community gathered at the entrance
5 to the Tent of Meeting, •and Moses said to them, 'This is what Yahweh has
ordered to be done'.
6 He made Aaron and his sons come forward, and washed them with water.
7 He put the tunic on him, passed the girdle round his waist, dressed him in the 21:10-15
robe and put the ephod on him. Then he put round his waist the woven band Ex 28:6+
8 of the ephod with which he clothed him. •He put the pectoral on him, and
9 placed the Urim and Thummim in it. •He put the turban on his head, with the Dt 33:38 1S14:41+
golden plate on the front; this is the sacred diadem as Yahweh prescribed it Ezk 21:31
to Moses.
10 Then Moses took the chrism and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, Ex30:22+; 40:9
11 to consecrate them. •He sprinkled the altar seven times, and anointed the altar Si 45:15
12 and its furnishing, the basin and its stand, to consecrate them. •Then he Ezk43:18
poured the chrism on Aaron's head, consecrating him by unction.
13 Then Moses made Aaron's sons come forward; he put the tunics on them,
passed the girdles round their waists and put on their head-dress, as Yahweh
had ordered Moses.
14 Then he had the bull for the sacrifice for sin brought forward. Aaron and his
15 sons laid their hands on the victim's head •and Moses immolated it. Then he
took the blood and with his finger put some of it on the horns round the altar,
to take away its sin. Then he poured out the rest of the blood at the foot of the
16 altar, which he consecrated by performing the rite of atonement over it. •Then
he took all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty mass which is over the liver,
17 the two kidneys and their fat; and he burnt them all on the altar. •The bull's
skin, its flesh and its dung he burnt outside the camp, as Yahweh had
ordered Moses.
18 Then he had the ram for holocaust brought forward. Aaron and his sons laid
19 their hands on its head •and Moses immolated it. He poured its blood out on
20 the borders of the altar. •Then he quartered the ram and burned the head, the

7 a. The communion sacrifice may be offered 'in praise', vv. 12-15, or in fulfilment of a vow or as a voluntary offering, vv. 16-17. It is difficult to determine the exact relationship between the three kinds. See Lv 22:29; Dt 12:6,17; Am 4:5; Jr 17:26; 33:11.

b. For a desert nomad to be outlawed from his people is tantamount to sentence of death; here it is a religious condemnation as well: the guilty man loses his title to the divine promise made to Abraham's race.

c. Lit. 'the breast with which the gesture of offering is to be made and the thigh that is to be offered'.

d. This allusion to the first investiture sacrifice introduces its full description in ch. 8-10.

8 a. The ritual for high-priestly investiture appears here as an account of the investiture of Aaron and his sons. It comprises the robing and anointing, vv. 7-13, followed by a sacrifice for sin, necessary for the consecration of the altar, vv. 14-17, next the holocaust, vv. 18-21, and finally the investiture sacrifice, vv. 22-35, which is the ordination proper. In ch. 9 the priests are inducted into their new duties.

pieces and the fat. •He washed the entrails and legs, and burnt the whole ram 21
on the altar. This was a holocaust whose fragrance would appease Yahweh;
a burnt offering for Yahweh, as Yahweh had ordered Moses.

Then he had the other ram brought forward, for the sacrifice of investiture. 22
Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head •and Moses immolated it. He 23
took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, the thumb
of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot. •Then he made the sons of 24
Aaron come forward and he put some of the blood on the lobes of their right
ears, the thumbs of their right hands and the big toes of their right feet. Next
Moses poured the rest of the blood on the borders of the altar. •Then he took 25
the fat: the tail, all the fat that is on the entrails, the fatty mass which is over the
liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh. •From the basket of 26
unleavened bread placed before Yahweh, he took an unleavened cake, a cake of
bread made with oil, and a wafer; he placed these on the fat and the right thigh,
Ex28:41+ and put it all into Aaron's hands and those of his sons, and made the gesture 27
of offering before Yahweh. •Then Moses took them back and burned them on 28
the altar in addition to the holocaust. This was the sacrifice of investiture[b]
whose fragrance would appease Yahweh, a burnt offering to Yahweh. •Then 29
Moses took the breast and made the gesture of offering before Yahweh. This
was the portion of the ram of investiture that reverted to Moses, as Yahweh had
ordered Moses.

Then Moses took the chrism and the blood that was on the altar and 30
sprinkled Aaron and his vestments with it, and his sons and their vestments.
In this way he consecrated Aaron and his vestments, and his sons and their
vestments.

Ex 29:31 Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons, 'Cook the meat at the entrance to 31
the Tent of Meeting, and eat it there, as also the bread for the sacrifice of
investiture that is in the basket, as I ordered, when I said: Aaron and his sons
Ex29:35 are to eat it. •What remains of the meat and bread you will burn. •For seven days 32 33
you must not leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, until the time of your
investiture is complete; for your investiture will require seven days. •Yahweh has 34
ordered us to do as we have done today to perform the rite of atonement over
you; •and for seven days, day and night, you must remain at the entrance to the 35
Tent of Meeting observing Yahweh's ritual; do this, and you will not die.[c] For
this is the order I received.' •And Aaron and his sons did everything that Yahweh 36
had ordered through Moses.

The priests assume their functions

9 On the eighth day Moses summoned Aaron and his sons and the elders of 1
Israel; •he said to Aaron, 'Take a calf to offer a sacrifice for sin, and a ram 2
for a holocaust, both without blemish, and bring them before Yahweh. •Then 3
say to the sons of Israel, "Take a goat to be offered as a sacrifice for sin, and as
a holocaust a calf and a lamb both one year old and without blemish, •and for 4
communion sacrifices an ox and a ram to be immolated before Yahweh; and
finally an oblation mixed with oil. For Yahweh will appear to you today."'

They brought what Moses had commanded in front of the Tent of Meeting; 5
then the whole community came and stood before Yahweh. •Moses said, 'This is 6
Ex24:16+ what Yahweh has ordered to be done, so that his glory may be visible to you'.
Heb5: 1-4;7:27 Moses then addressed Aaron, 'Go to the altar and offer your sacrifice for sin 7
and your holocaust, and so perform the rite of atonement for yourself and your
family.[a] Then present the people's offering and perform the rite of atonement
for them, as Yahweh has ordered.'

Aaron went to the altar and immolated the calf as a sacrifice for his own sin. 8
Then the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him; he dipped his finger in it 9
and put some on the horns of the altar, and then poured out the rest of the
blood at the foot of the altar. •The fat of the sacrifice for sin and the kidneys 10

and the fatty mass which is over the liver, he burned on the altar, as Yahweh had
11 commanded Moses; •the flesh and the skin he burned outside the camp.
12 Next Aaron immolated the holocaust; his sons handed him the blood and he
13 poured it on the borders of the altar. •Then they handed him the quartered
14 victim, and its head too, and he burned these on the altar. •He washed the entrails
and legs and burned them on the altar in addition to the holocaust.
15 He then presented the people's offering. He took the goat for the people's 10:16
sacrifice for sin, immolated it, and made a sacrifice for sin with it in the same
16 way as with the first. •Then he had the holocaust brought forward and proceeded
17 according to the ritual. •Next he had the oblation brought forward, took a
handful of it and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning holocaust.
18 Finally, he immolated the ox and the ram as a communion sacrifice for the
people. Aaron's sons handed him the blood and he poured it out on the borders 3:1-5
19 of the altar. •The fat of the ox and of the ram—the tail, the fatty covering, the
20 kidneys, the fatty mass over the liver—•all of this he laid on the breasts and
21 burned it all on the altar. •With the breasts and the right thigh Aaron made
the gesture of offering as Yahweh had ordered Moses.
22 Then Aaron raised his hands towards the people and blessed them. Having Sl 50:20
thus performed the sacrifice for sin, the holocaust and the communion sacrifice,
23 he came down •and entered the Tent of Meeting with Moses. Then they came
out together to bless the people and the glory of Yahweh appeared to the whole
24 people—•a flame leaped forth from before Yahweh and consumed the holocaust Jg 6:21; 13:20 1 K 18 2 M 2:10
and the fat that was on the altar. At this sight the people shouted for joy and
fell on their faces.

Complementary legislation[a]

a. A lesson in exact observance

Nb 3:4; 15:1; 17:5

1 10 Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, each took his censer, put fire in it and Nb 26:60
incense on the fire, and presented unlawful fire before Yahweh, fire which 16:1
2 he had not prescribed for them. •Then from Yahweh's presence a flame leaped Nb 16:35 2 K 1:10f
3 out and consumed them, and they perished in the presence of Yahweh. •And
Moses said to Aaron, 'That is what Yahweh meant when he said:

"In those who are close to me I show my holiness,
and before all the people I show my glory".[b]

Aaron remained silent.

b. Removal of bodies

4 Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and
said to them, 'Come and take your brothers far away from the sanctuary, out
5 of the camp'. •They came and carried them away, still in their tunics, out of
the camp, as Moses had ordered.

c. Rules for priestly mourning

6 Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, 'Do not disorder your
hair nor tear your garments;[c] you are not going to die. It is with the whole
community that he is angry; it is the whole House of Israel that must lament
7 your brothers, the victims of Yahweh's fire. •Do not leave the entrance to the
Tent of Meeting, lest you die; for the chrism of Yahweh is on you.' And they
obeyed the words of Moses.

b. 'investiture' lit. 'filling (of hands)', cf. v. 33; see Ex 28:41+.

c. Any infringement of the prescribed ritual is a grave fault, cf. 10:1f.

9 a. Lit. 'your family' Greek; 'the people' Hebr.

10 a. The purpose of the following anecdotes is to introduce various ritual regulations.

b. This couplet is found nowhere else in the Bible. Those who are 'close to' Yahweh (the priests) have a share in his sanctity, cf. Lv 19:2. God's 'glory', cf. Ex 24:16+, is shown (by means of a punitive fire) to all the people.

c. Mourning ritual.

d. Wine forbidden

Yahweh spoke to Aaron; he said: 8

Ezk44:21 'When you come to the Tent of Meeting, you and your sons with you, do not 9
take wine or strong drink; then you will not die. This is a perpetual law for all
your descendants. •And so be it too when you separate the sacred from the 10
profane, the unclean from the clean, •and when you teach the sons of Israel 11
any of the laws that Yahweh has pronounced for them through Moses.'

e. The priests' portion in offerings

Moses said to Aaron and his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, 'Take the 12
oblation that is left over from Yahweh's burnt offering. Eat the unleavened part
6:9-10 of it beside the altar, because it is a most holy thing. •Eat it in a holy place; 13
it is the portion of Yahweh's burnt offering prescribed for you and your sons;
this is the order I have received.
7:34 Nb 6:20 'The breast that was offered up and the thigh that was set aside you will eat 14
in some place that is clean, you, your sons and your daughters with you; this is
the portion of the communion sacrifices of the sons of Israel that is prescribed
for you and your sons. •The thigh that was set aside and the breast that was 15
offered up, when the fat was burnt, revert to you, to you and your sons with
you, after they have been presented before Yahweh by the gesture of offering,
in virtue of a perpetual law as Yahweh has ordered.'

f. A special regulation concerning Sacrifice for Sin[a]

9:15 2 M 2:11 Then Moses enquired about the goat offered as a sacrifice for sin, and found 16
that they had burnt it. He was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's surviving
6:19 sons: •'Why' he asked 'did you not eat this victim in the holy place? For it is 17
a most holy thing given to you to take away the fault of the community, by
performing the rite of atonement over it before Yahweh. •Since its blood was 18
not taken inside the sanctuary, you should have eaten its flesh there, as I ordered
you.' •Aaron said to Moses, 'Today they have offered their sacrifice for sin and 19
their holocaust before Yahweh. If I had been concerned, if I had eaten the victim
for sin today, would that have seemed good to Yahweh?' •And when Moses 20
heard this, he was satisfied.

7:20-21 ## III. RULES CONCERNING THE CLEAN AND UNCLEAN[a]

Gn 7:2 Lv 5:2; 20:25-26 ‖Dt14:3-21 Ezk22:26 ↗Mt15: 10-20p ↗Mk10: 9-16; 11:1-18 Ac 10:14 **Clean and unclean beasts[b]**

a. On land

11 Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron and said to them, •'Speak to the sons ½
of Israel and say:
"Of all the beasts on the earth these are the animals you may eat:
"You may eat any animal that has a cloven hoof, divided into two parts, 3
and that is a ruminant. •The following, which either chew the cud or have a 4
cloven hoof, are the ones that you may not eat: the camel must be held unclean,
because though it is ruminant, it has not a cloven hoof; •the hyrax must be held 5
unclean, because though it is ruminant, it has not a cloven hoof; •the hare must 6
be held unclean, because though it is ruminant, it has not a cloven hoof; •the 7
2 M 6:18 pig must be held unclean, because though it has a cloven hoof, divided into
two parts, it is not ruminant. •You must not eat the meat of such animals nor 8
touch their dead bodies; you must hold them unclean.

b. In water

"Of all that lives in water, these you may eat: 9
"Anything that has fins and scales, and lives in the water, whether in sea or
river, you may eat. •But anything in sea or river that has not fins or scales, 10

of all the small water-creatures and all the living things found there, must be
11 held detestable. •You must hold them detestable; you are not to eat their
12 flesh and you must avoid their carcases. •Anything that lives in water, but has no fins or scales, is to be held detestable.

c. Birds

13 "Among the birds here are those you must hold detestable; they may not be eaten, they are detestable:

14 "The tawny vulture, the griffon, the osprey, •the kite, the several kinds of
15 buzzard, •all kinds of raven, •the ostrich, the screech owl, the seagull, the several
17 kinds of hawk, •horned owl, night owl, cormorant, barn owl, •ibis, pelican,
18 19 white vulture, •stork, the several kinds of heron, hoopoe and bat.

d. Winged insects

20 21 "All winged insects that move on four feet[c] you must hold detestable. •Of all these winged insects you may eat only the following: those that have legs[d] above
22 their feet so that they can leap over the ground. •These are the ones you may eat: the several kinds of migratory locust, solham, hargol and hagab locusts in
23 their several kinds. •But all winged insects on four feet you are to hold detestable.

Contact with unclean animals

24 "By these you will be made unclean. Anyone who touches the carcase of one
25 will be unclean until evening. •Anyone who picks up their carcases must wash
26 his clothing and will be unclean until evening. •Animals that have hoofs, but Ex 19:11 Nb 19:7 not cloven, and that are not ruminant, you are to hold unclean; anyone
27 who touches them will be unclean. •Those four-footed animals which walk on the flat of their foot[e] must be held unclean; anyone who touches their carcases
28 will be unclean until evening, •and anyone who picks up their carcases must wash Ex 19:11 his clothing and will be unclean until evening. You are to hold them unclean.

e. Small ground beasts

29 "These are the small beasts crawling on the ground that you are to hold
30 unclean: the mole, the rat, the several kinds of lizard: •gecko, koah, letaah, chameleon and tinshameth.

Further rules on contact with things unclean

31 "Of all the small beasts, these are the creatures that you are to hold unclean. Anyone who touches them when they are dead will be unclean until evening.

32 "Any object on which one of these creatures falls when it is dead becomes unclean: wooden utensil, clothing, skin, sackcloth—any utensil at all. It must be dipped in water and will remain unclean until evening: then it will be clean.

d. The goat had been sacrificed for the sin of the people, 9:15, and the priests might have been expected to eat it as they ate the other offerings, vv. 12-15, cf. 6: 19-23. But the people's sin is the priest's also, and the same rules have to be applied as in the case of sacrifice for the sin of the high priest. This is probably what Aaron means.

11 a. Behind these regulations lie religious taboos of great antiquity. That is 'clean' which is considered worthy to approach God, 'unclean' whatever makes a person unfit for ritual worship or whatever is in fact excluded from it. The clean animals are those that can be offered to God, Gn 7:2, the unclean animals those which the pagans offered to their gods or which, since they were unpleasing to man, were thought displeasing to God. Lv 11. Other regulations deal with birth, ch. 12, sexual life, 15, death, 21:1,11; Nb 19:11-16; all these are the mysterious province of God, the master of life. A symptom of decay like leprosy, 13:1+, also induces impurity. Because the idea of 'cleanness' is related to worship, it is associated with the idea of sanctity, 11:44 and 17:1+. The prophets, however, will go further and insist on the cleansing of the heart, Is 1:16; Jr 33:8, cf. Ps 51:10, thus preparing the way for the teaching of Jesus, Mt 15:10-20p, who releases his followers from ordinances of which only the formalities have been preserved, Mt 23:24-26p. The ancient legislation, however, establishes an ideal of moral purity, safeguarded by positive observances.

b. The classification is not scientific but empirical: the hare, for example, is classed with the ruminants because the movements of its jaw suggest rumination. The identification of some of the animals mentioned is uncertain.

c. Winged insects are called 'four-footed' to distinguish them from birds. The locust is not impure, v. 21.

d. 'those that have legs' versions; 'those that have no legs' Hebr.

e. This means not only the animals that use the entire foot ('plantigrades') but all hoofless animals.

If the creature falls into an earthenware vessel, the vessel must be broken; 33
whatever the vessel contains is unclean. •Any food that is eaten will be unclean, 34
even if it is steeped in water; any liquid that is drunk will be unclean, no matter
what its container. •Anything on which a carcase of such a creature may fall 35
will be unclean: oven or stove must be destroyed, for unclean they are and
unclean they must be for you •(although springs, wells and stretches of water 36
will remain clean);[f] anyone who touches a carcase of theirs will be unclean.
If one of their carcases falls on any seed whatever, the seed will remain clean; 37
but if the seed has been wet, and a carcase of theirs falls on it, then you must 38
hold it unclean.

"If one of the animals that you use as food dies, then anyone who touches the 39
carcase will be unclean until evening; •anyone who eats the dead meat must 40
Ex 19:11 Nb 19:7 wash his clothing and will remain unclean until evening; anyone who picks up
the carcase must wash his clothing and will remain unclean until evening.

The religious aspect

"Any small beast that crawls on the ground is detestable; you must not 41
eat it. •Anything that moves on its belly, anything that moves on four legs or 42
more—in short all the small beasts that crawl on the ground—you must not eat
these because they are detestable. •Do not make yourself detestable with 43
all these crawling beasts; do not defile yourself with them, do not be defiled
17:1+; 20:7,26; 21:8; 22:32; Ex 22:30; 17:1+; 19:2; 22:33+ by them. •For it is I, Yahweh, who am your God. You have been sanctified 44
and have become holy because I am holy: do not defile yourself with all these
beasts that crawl on the ground. •Yes, it is I, Yahweh, who brought you out 45
of Egypt to be your God: you therefore must be holy because I am holy."'

✗ Mt 5:48; ✗ 1P 1:15-16; ✗ 1Jn 3:3

Conclusion

Such is the law concerning animals, birds, all living creatures that move in 46
water and every creature that crawls on the ground. •Its purpose is to separate 47
the clean from the unclean; creatures that may be eaten from those that must
not be eaten.

Purification of a woman after childbirth[a]

12 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said, •'Speak to the sons of Israel and say: ½
"If a woman conceives and gives birth to a boy, she is to be unclean for
15:19 seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly periods. •On the eighth day 3
Gn 17:10+; ✗ Lk 1:59; 2:21 the child's foreskin must be circumcised, •and she must wait another thirty-three 4
days for her blood to be purified. She must not touch anything consecrated nor
go to the sanctuary until the time of her purification is over.

"If she gives birth to a girl, she is to be unclean for two weeks, as during her 5
monthly periods; and she must wait another sixty-six days for her blood to be
purified.

✗ Lk 2:22-38 "When the period of her purification is over, for either boy or girl, she is to 6
bring to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting a lamb one year old
for a holocaust, and a young pigeon or turtledove as a sacrifice for sin. •The 7
priest is to offer this before Yahweh, perform the rite of atonement over her,
and she will be purified from her flow of blood.

"Such is the law concerning a woman who gives birth to either a boy or a girl.
5:7-13; 14:21; Lk 2:24 If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, 8
one for the holocaust and the other for the sacrifice for sin. The priest is to
perform the rite of atonement over her and she will be purified."'

22:4; Nb 12:10-15; Dt 24:8-9 **Human leprosy[a]**

a. Swellings, scabs, discolorations

13 Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, •'If a swelling or scab or shiny spot ½
appears on a man's skin, a case of leprosy of the skin is to be suspected.

The man must be taken to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests who are
3 his sons. •The priest must examine the disease on the skin. If the hair on the
diseased part has turned white, or if the disease bites into the skin, then it is
indeed a case of leprosy, and after examination the priest must declare the man
4 unclean. •But if there is a shiny spot on the skin without any visible depression
of the skin and without whitening of the hair, the priest is to isolate the sick
5 person for seven days. •On the seventh day he must examine him, and if he sees Nb 12:14
with his own eyes that the disease persists though without spreading over the
6 skin, he is to isolate him for a further seven days •and examine him again on
the seventh. If he finds that the diseased part is no longer shiny and has not
spread over the skin, then the priest is to declare the man clean. It is a scab
merely. Having washed his clothing he will be clean.
7 'But if the scab spreads over the skin after the sick person has been examined
by the priest and declared clean, then he must present himself again to the priest.
8 After examining him and certifying the spread of the scab over the skin, the
priest must declare him unclean: it is leprosy.

b. Chronic leprosy[b]

9 'When a leprous disease strikes a man, he must be taken to the priest, •who
10 must examine him, and if he finds on the skin a whitish swelling with whitening
11 of the hair and an ulcer forming, •then it is chronic leprosy in the skin and the priest
must declare him unclean. He is not to isolate him; he is unclean beyond doubt.[c]
12 'But if the leprosy spreads all through the skin, if it covers him entirely from
13 head to foot so far as the priest can see, •then the priest must examine the sick
person and, if he finds that the leprosy covers his whole body, declare the sick
14 person[d] clean. Since it has all become white, he is clean.• But as soon as an
15 ulcer appears on him, he will be unclean. •After examining the ulcer, the priest
16 is to declare him unclean: the ulcer is unclean, it ls leprous. •But if the ulcer
17 becomes white again, the man must go to the priest; •the priest must examine
him and if he finds that the disease has turned white, he is to declare the sick
person clean: he is clean.

c. Boils

18 'When a boil[e] appears on a man's skin, which, after healing, •leaves in its
19 place a whitish swelling or a shiny spot of reddish white, the man must show
20 himself to the priest. •The priest must examine him, and if he finds a visible
depression in the skin and a whitening of the hair, he is to declare him unclean:
21 it is a case of leprosy that has broken out in a boil. •But if on examination the
priest finds neither white hair nor depression of the skin, but a fading of the
22 affected part, he is to isolate the sick person for seven days. •If the disease has
indeed spread over the skin, he must declare him unclean: it is a case of leprosy.
23 But if the shiny spot is still restricted and has not spread, then it is the scar of
a boil and the priest is to declare the man clean.

d. Burns

24 'If someone has had a burn, and on the burn an ulcer forms, a shiny spot

f. Water is itself life-giving and purifying.

12 a. Childbirth, like menstruation or seminal discharge, ch. 15, is regarded as a loss of vitality; this loss must be made good by ritual means: union with God, the source of life, is thus re-established.

13 a. 'Leprosy' for the ancient Hebrews includes various serious or trivial skin diseases, 13:1-44, and even signs of decay in clothing, 13:47-59, or on walls, 14:33-53. Diagnostic and precautionary directions are codified and their application entrusted to the priests. These practical measures are derived from primitive idea and practice but in Israel they are used to identify ritual uncleanness and so take on a religious significance. Restoration to the community is accompanied by a ritual like that of 'sacrifice for sin', 14:1-31,49-53, the 'sin' being, in this case, an affront to the life-giving power of the God of Israel.

b. This time it is a question of distinguishing not real from apparent leprosy but contagious leprosy from other kinds. It seems that Lv regards only the ulcerous form as contagious.

c. No second examination is necessary. The Greek has the opposite 'will isolate him'.

d. Lit. 'the disease'. When the symptoms spread over the surface it is a sign of recovery: the white scabs will drop off.

e. Alternative translation 'ulcer', 'abscess'.

reddish-white or whitish in colour, •then the priest must examine it. If he finds 25
a whitening of the hair or a visible depression of the mark on the skin, this
means that leprosy has broken out in the burn. The priest is to declare the man
unclean: it is a case of leprosy. •If on the other hand the priest on examination 26
does not find white hair on the mark or depression of the skin, but a fading of
the mark, then the priest is to isolate him for seven days. •On the seventh day 27
he must examine him, and if the disease has spread on the skin, he must declare
him unclean: it is a case of leprosy. •If the mark is still restricted and has not 28
spread over the skin, but has faded instead, this means that it is only a swelling
due to the burn. The priest is to declare the man clean: it is merely a burn scar.

e. Diseases of the scalp and chin

'If man or a woman has a sore on the head or chin, •the priest must examine 29 30
this sore; and if he finds a depression visible in the skin, with the hair on it
yellow and thin, he must declare the sick person unclean. It is tinea,[f] that is to
say, leprosy of the head or chin. •If on examining this case of tinea the priest 31
finds no visible depression in the skin nor yellow hair,[g] he is to isolate the person
so affected for seven days. •He must examine the infected part on the seventh day, 32
and if he finds that the tinea has not spread, that the hair on it is not yellow,
and that there is no visible depression in the skin, • the sick person will shave 33
his hair, all except the part affected with tinea, and the priest is to isolate him
again for seven days. •He must examine the infected part on the seventh day, 34
and if he finds that it has not spread over the skin, and that there is no visible
depression of the skin, the priest is to declare the sick person clean. After washing
his clothes he will be clean. •But if after this purification the tinea does spread 35
over the skin, •the priest must examine him; if he finds that the tinea has indeed 36
spread over the skin, this means that the sick person is unclean, and there is no
need to verify whether the hair is yellow. •Whereas if, so far as he can see, the 37
tinea is arrested and dark hair is beginning to grow on it, this means that the
sick person is cured. He is clean, and the priest is to declare him clean.

f. Rash

'If shiny spots break out on the skin of a man or woman, and if these spots 38
are white, •the priest must examine them. If he finds that these patches are of 39
a dull white, it is a rash that has broken out on the skin: the sick person is clean.

g. Loss of hair

'If a man loses the hair of his scalp, this is baldness of the scalp but the man 40
is clean. •If he loses his hair off the front of the head, this is baldness of the 41
forehead but the man is clean. •If, however, a reddish-white sore appears on 42
scalp or forehead, this means that leprosy has broken out on the man's scalp or
forehead. •The priest must examine it, and if he finds a reddish-white swelling 43
on the scalp or forehead, of the same appearance as leprosy of the skin, •this 44
means that the man is leprous: he is unclean. The priest must declare him
unclean; he is suffering from leprosy of the head.

A regulation for lepers

Nb 5:2 Lm 4:15 Lk 17:13 'A man infected with leprosy must wear his clothing torn and his hair disor- 45
dered; he must shield his upper lip and cry, "Unclean, unclean". •As long as the 46
disease lasts he must be unclean; and therefore he must live apart: he must live
outside the camp.

Leprosy of clothes

'When a piece of clothing is infected with leprosy—woollen or linen clothing, 47
linen or woollen fabric or covering, leather or leatherwork—•and if this clothing, 48 49
fabric, covering, leather or leatherwork appears greenish or reddish, it is a case

of leprosy to be shown to the priest. •The priest must examine the infection
and isolate the object for seven days. •If on the seventh day he observes that the
infection has spread on the garment, fabric, covering, leather or leatherwork,
whatever it may be, it is a case of contagious leprosy and the object is unclean.
He will burn this clothing, fabric, linen or woollen covering, leather article of any
kind, on which the infection has appeared; for it is a contagious leprosy which
must be destroyed by fire.
'But if on examination the priest finds that the infection has not spread on
the clothing, fabric, covering, or leather object whatever it may be, •he is to order
the infected article to be washed and is to isolate it again for a period of seven
days. •After the cleansing he must examine the infection and if he finds that there
is no change in its appearance, even though it has not spread, the article is
unclean. It must be destroyed by fire; it is infected through and through.
'But if on examination the priest finds that the infection has diminished after
washing, he is to cut it out of the clothing, leather, fabric or covering. •But if the
infection reappears on the same clothing, fabric, covering or leather article
whatever it may be, this means that the infection is active and you must destroy
by fire whatever is infected. •The clothing, fabric, covering or leather article
whatever it may be, from which the infection disappears after washing, is to be
clean after it has been washed a second time.
'Such is the law for a case of leprosy in a linen or woollen garment, a fabric
or covering or leather article whatever it may be, when it is a question of
declaring them clean or unclean.'

Purification of lepers

14 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
'This is the law to be applied to a leper on the day he is purified. He must Mt 8:4ᵇ Mk 1:44 ↗ Lk17:14
be taken to the priest, •and the priest must go outside the camp. If he finds on
examination that the leper is cured of his leprosy, •he shall order the following
to be brought for the man's purification: two live birds that are clean, cedar
wood, scarlet and hyssop. •Then he is to give orders for one of the birds to be Nb 19:6
immolated in an earthenware pot over running water. •Then he is to take the live
bird, the cedar wood, the scarlet and the hyssop and he must dip all of this
(including the live bird) into the blood of the bird immolated over running water. Nb 19:6,18
Then he must sprinkle the man who is to be purified of leprosy seven times, and Ps 51:7
having declared him clean, must set the live bird free to fly off into the open
country. •The man who is undergoing purification is to wash his clothing, shave Nb 8:7
all his hair, and wash himself; then he will be clean. After this he may return
to the camp, although he must remain seven days outside his tent. •On the
seventh day he must shave off all his hair—head, beard and eyebrows; he must
shave off all his hair. After washing his clothing and his body he will be clean.
'On the eighth day, he is to take two lambs without blemish, an unblemished
ewe one year old, three-tenths[a] of wheaten flour mixed with oil for the oblation,
and one log of oil. •The priest who is performing the purification is to station
the man who is being purified, with all his offerings, at the entrance to the Tent
of Meeting, before Yahweh. •Then he must take one of the lambs and offer it as
a sacrifice of reparation, as also the log of oil. With these he is to make the gesture
of offering before Yahweh. •Then he must immolate the lamb on that spot inside
the sacred precincts where the victims of the sacrifice for sin and of the holocaust
are immolated. This offering of reparation, like the sacrifice for sin, reverts to
the priest: it is a most holy thing. •The priest must take the blood of this sacrifice
and put some of it on the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and
the big toe of the right foot of the man who is being purified. •Then he is to take
the log of oil and pour a little into the hollow of his left hand. •He must dip a

f. Or possibly eczema.
g. Hebr. 'dark hair', but see v. 32.

14 a. Three-tenths, i.e. of an *ephah*.

finger of his right hand into the oil in the hollow of his left hand, and with this oil make seven sprinklings with his finger before Yahweh. •Then he is to take 17
a little of the oil that remains in the hollow of his hand and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the man who is being purified, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot (this in addition to the blood of the sacrifice of reparation). •The rest of the oil in the hollow of his hand he is to put 18
on the head of the man who is being purified. In this way he will have performed over him the rite of atonement before Yahweh.

'Then the priest must offer the sacrifice for sin, and perform the rite of 19
atonement for uncleanness over the man who is being purified. After this he must immolate the holocaust, •and send up holocaust and oblation on the altar. 20
When the priest has performed the rite of atonement over him in this way, the man will be clean.

5:7-13;12:8 Nb 6:12 'If he is poor and cannot afford all this, he need take only one lamb, the one 21
for the sacrifice of reparation, and it is to be presented with the gesture of offering to perform the rite of atonement over the man. And he is to take for the oblation only one-tenth of wheaten flour mixed with oil, and the log of oil, •and finally 22
two turtledoves or two young pigeons—if he can afford them—one to be used as a sacrifice for sin and the other for the holocaust. •On the eighth day he must 23
bring them to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before Yahweh, for his purification. •The priest is to take the lamb for the sacrifice of reparation 24
and the log of oil, and present them before Yahweh with the gesture of offering. Then he must immolate the lamb for the sacrifice of reparation, take some of its 25
blood and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the man who is being purified, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. •He is to 26
pour the oil into the hollow of his left hand, •and with this oil in the hollow of 27
his left hand he must make seven sprinklings with his finger before Yahweh. He is to put some of it on the lobe of the right ear of the man who is being 28
purified, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, as he did with the blood of the sacrifice of reparation. •The remainder of the oil 29
in the hollow of his hand he must put on the head of the man who is being purified, performing the rite of atonement over him before Yahweh. •Of the 30
two turtledoves or two young pigeons—if he can afford them—he is to offer a sacrifice for sin with one, and with the other a holocaust together with an 31
oblation—if he can afford them. In this way the priest will have performed before Yahweh the rite of atonement over the person who is being purified.

'Such is the law concerning a person afflicted by leprosy who cannot afford 32
the means for his purification.'

Leprosy of houses

Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron; he said: 33

'When you reach the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as an 34
inheritance, if I strike a house with leprosy in the land you are to possess, •the 35
owner must come and warn the priest; he must say, "I have seen something like leprosy in the house". •The priest is to give orders for the house to be emptied 36
before he goes to examine the infection; thus nothing in the house will become unclean. Then the priest must go and look at the house; •and if on examination 37
he finds the walls of the house pitted with reddish or greenish depressions,[b] the priest is to go out of the house, to the door, and shut it up for seven days. 38
On the seventh day he must go back again, and if on examination he finds that 39
the infection has spread over the walls of the house, •he must give orders for 40
the infected stones to be removed and thrown into some unclean place outside the town. •Then he must have all the inside of the house scraped, and the plaster 41
that comes off must be emptied out into an unclean place outside the town. •The 42
stones must be replaced by new ones and the house given a new coat of plaster.

'If the infection spreads again after the stones have been removed and the 43

44 house scraped and replastered, •the priest is to come and examine it. If he finds
that the infection has spread, this means that there is a contagious leprosy in
45 the house: it is unclean. •It must be pulled down and the stones, woodwork and
all the plaster be taken to an unclean place outside the town.
46 'Anyone who enters the house while it is closed will be unclean until evening.
47 Anyone who sleeps there must wash his clothing. Anyone who eats there must
48 wash his clothing. •But if the priest finds, when he comes to examine the
infection, that it has not spread in the house since it was plastered, he is to
declare the house clean, for the infection is cured.
49 'As a sacrifice for the sin[c] of the house, he is to take two birds, cedar wood,
50 scarlet and hyssop. •He must immolate one of the birds in an earthenware pot
51 over running water. •Then he is to take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet
and the live bird, and must dip them into the blood of the bird that was immolated
52 and into the running water. He is to sprinkle the house seven times; •and after
having offered a sacrifice for the sin of the house with the blood of the bird,
the running water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop and the scarlet,
53 he must set the live bird free to fly out of the town into the open country. When
the rite of atonement has been performed over the house in this way it will
be clean.
54 55 'Such is the law for all cases of leprosy and tinea, •leprosy of clothing and
56 houses, •swellings, scabs and shiny spots. It defines the occasions when things
57 are unclean and when clean. •Such is the law on leprosy.'

Sexual impurities[a]

a. Of men

22:4
Nb 5:2

1 15 Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron; he said:
2 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them:
3 "When a man has a discharge from his body, that discharge is unclean. •While
the discharge continues, the nature of his uncleanness is as follows:
"Whether his body allows the discharge to flow or whether it retains it, he is
unclean.
4 "Any bed the man lies on and any seat he sits on shall be unclean.
5 "Anyone who touches his bed must wash his clothing and wash himself and
will be unclean until evening.
6 "Anyone who sits on a seat where the man has sat must wash his clothing and
wash himself and will be unclean until evening.
7 "Anyone who touches the body of a man so affected must wash his clothing
and wash himself and will be unclean until evening.
8 "If the sick man spits on someone who is clean, that person must wash his
clothing and wash himself and will be unclean until evening.
9 "Any saddle the sick man travels on will be unclean.
10 "All those who touch any object that may be under him will be unclean until
evening.
"Anyone who picks up such an object must wash his clothing and wash himself
and will be unclean until evening.
11 "All those whom the sick man touches without washing his hands must wash
their clothing and wash themselves and will be unclean until evening.
12 "Any earthenware vessel the sick man touches must be broken and any wooden
utensil must be rinsed.
13 "When the man suffering from a discharge is cured, he must allow seven days
for his purification. He must wash his clothing and wash his body in running
14 water and he will be clean. •On the eighth day he must take two turtledoves or

b. Left by the mildew staining and rotting the walls.

c. Here again Israel takes over an ancient ritual; its symbolism is expressive but betrays the imperfect idea of God that originally lay behind it.

15 a. The kinds of impurity here dealt with include not only contagious venereal disease but also normal seminal discharge and menstruation. Everything connected with conception and birth is sacred and mysterious, cf. 12:1+.

two young pigeons and come before Yahweh at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, and give them to the priest. •The priest is to offer a sacrifice for sin 15
with one of them, and with the other a holocaust. So the priest will perform the rite of atonement over him before Yahweh for his discharge.

Dt 23:11 "When a man has a seminal discharge, he must wash his whole body with 16
water and he shall be unclean until evening. •Any clothing or leather touched 17
by the seminal discharge must be washed and it will be unclean until evening.
When a woman has slept with a man, both of them must wash and they will 18
be unclean until evening.

b. Of women

12:2 "When a woman has a discharge of blood, and blood flows from her body, this 19
2 S 11:4
Est 4:17w uncleanness of her monthly periods shall last for seven days.
Is 64:5
Ezk 36:17 "Anyone who touches her will be unclean until evening.

Gn 31:34 "Any bed she lies on in this state will be unclean; any seat she sits on will 20
be unclean.

"Anyone who touches her bed must wash his clothing and wash himself and 21
will be unclean until evening.

"Anyone who touches any seat she has sat on must wash his clothing and 22
wash himself and will be unclean until evening. •If there is anything on the 23
bed or on the chair on which she sat, anyone who touches it will be unclean
until evening.

"If a man sleeps with her, he will be affected by the uncleanness of her monthly 24
periods. He shall be unclean for seven days. Any bed he lies on will be unclean.

"If a woman has a flow of blood for several days outside the period, or if the 25
period is prolonged, during the time this flow lasts she shall be in the same state
of uncleanness as during her monthly periods. •Any bed she lies on during the 26
time this flow lasts will be in the same condition as the bed she lies on during
her monthly periods. Any seat she sits on will be unclean as it would be during
her monthly periods. •Anyone who touches them will be unclean; he must 27
wash his clothing and wash himself and will be unclean until evening.

"When she is cured of her flow, she will let seven days pass; then she will be 28
clean. •On the eighth day she is to take two turtledoves or two young pigeons 29
and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. •With one 30
of them the priest is to offer a sacrifice for sin and with the other a holocaust.
This is the way in which the priest will perform the rite of atonement over her
before Yahweh for the flow that caused her uncleanness."

Conclusion

'You must warn the sons of Israel of their uncleanness lest they should die 31
because of it, by being a defilement to my tabernacle which is set amongst them.

'Such is the law concerning a man with a discharge, anyone made unclean by 32
a seminal discharge, •a woman in the uncleanness of her monthly periods, a 33
man or a woman with a discharge, a man who sleeps with an unclean woman.'

23:26-32
Nb 29:7-11
Si 35:3;
45:16;50:5 **The great Day of Atonement**[a]

Heb 9:6-14 16 After the death of the two sons of Aaron who died through offering 1
10:1f unlawful fire before Yahweh, •Yahweh spoke to Moses. He said: 2

Ex 19:12+;
25:17+;
33:20 'Tell Aaron your brother that he must not enter the sanctuary beyond the veil,
Heb 6:19 in front of the throne of mercy that is over the ark, whenever he chooses. He
may die; for I appear in a cloud on the throne of mercy.

'This is how he is to enter the sanctuary: with a young bull for a sacrifice 3
for sin and a ram for a holocaust. •He is to put on a tunic of consecrated linen, 4
wear linen on his body, a linen girdle round his waist, and a linen turban on
his head. These are the sacred vestments he must put on after washing himself
with water.

'He is to receive two goats for a sacrifice for sin and a ram for a holocaust from
the community of the sons of Israel. •After offering the bull as a sacrifice for Heb 5:3
his own sin and performing the rite of atonement for himself and his family,
Aaron must take the two goats and set them before Yahweh at the entrance to
the Tent of Meeting. •He is to draw lots for the two goats and allot one to 17:7+
Yahweh and the other to Azazel.[b] •Aaron is to offer up the goat whose lot was Ba 4:35
marked "For Yahweh", and offer it as a sacrifice for sin. •The goat whose lot
was marked "For Azazel" shall be set before Yahweh, still alive, to perform the
rite of atonement over it, sending it out into the desert to Azazel. 16:22

'Aaron must offer the bull which is to be a sacrifice for his own sin, then he
must perform the rite of atonement for himself and for his family, and immolate
the bull. •Then he is to fill a censer with live coals from the altar that stands Rv 8:5
before Yahweh; and to take two handfuls of finely ground aromatic incense.
He is to take these through the veil •and then to put the incense on the fire
before Yahweh, and with a cloud of incense he must cover the throne of mercy Ex 25:17+ Sl 50:6
that is on the Testimony; if he does this, he shall not die. •Then he must take Ex 33:20+
some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the eastern side
of the throne of mercy; in front of the throne of mercy he must sprinkle this blood
seven times with his finger.

'He must then immolate the goat for the sacrifice for the sin of the people, and
take its blood through the veil. With this blood he is to do as with the blood
of the bull, sprinkling it on the throne of mercy and in front of it. •This is how Ezk 45:18-20 Rm 3:25+
he is to perform the rite of atonement over the sanctuary for the uncleanness of
the sons of Israel, for their transgressions and for all their sins.

'This also is how he must deal with the Tent of Meeting which remains
with them, surrounded by their uncleanness. •Let no one stay in the Tent of Dt 4:7+ Is 6:5
Meeting, from the moment he enters to make atonement in the sanctuary
until the time he comes out.

'When he has made atonement for himself, for his family, and for the whole
community of Israel, •he is to come out and go to the altar which is before Ex 29:37
Yahweh, and perform over it the rite of atonement. He must take some of the
blood of the bull and of the goat, and put it on the horns around the altar.
With this blood he must sprinkle the altar seven times with his finger. This is
how he will render it clean and sacred, purified and separated[c] from the
uncleannesses of the sons of Israel.

'When the atonement of the sanctuary, the Tent of Meeting and the altar is
complete, he is to bring the other goat that is still alive. •Aaron must lay his
hands on its head and confess all the faults of the sons of Israel, all their
transgressions and all their sins, and lay them to its charge. Having thus laid
them on the goat's head, he shall send it out into the desert led by a man
waiting ready, •and the goat will bear all their faults away with it into a desert Tb 8:3 Is 13:21; 34:11; Lk 11:24
place.[d]

'When he has sent the goat out into the wilderness, •Aaron is to return to the
Tent of Meeting and remove the linen vestments he wore to enter the sanctuary.
He must leave them there •and wash his body in a consecrated place. Then he
is to put the vestments on again and go out to offer his own and the people's

16 a. The list of impurities now ends and this chapter describes the yearly ritual that atones for them all. In the editorial process several rites of varying antiquity have been drawn together. The ceremony itself, however, is ancient and, before being assigned to a special day of the year, v. 29, seems to have been attached to the feast of Tabernacles or of New Year. The 'scapegoat' ritual, vv. 8-10,20-22,26, has all the characteristics of high antiquity, see following notes. The yearning for expiation expressed in these ancient rituals is satisfied by the unique sacrifice of Christ, Heb 9:6-14.

b. Azazel, as the Syr. version seems to imply, is the name of a demon; according to ancient Hebrew and Canaanite belief he lived in the desert, the barren region where God does not exert his life-giving activity. Cf. v. 22 with refs., and 17:7+.

c. Lit. 'sanctified', see 17:1+.

d. This goat is dedicated to Azazel, v. 10, not that it is sacrificed to him but that it bears away the sins of the people to Azazel's desert haunts. The handing over of the animal and the rite of expiation are performed 'before Yahweh', v. 10, and at the hands of the priest, v. 21; in this way an ancient popular custom is taken over, and purged of demonolatry.

holocaust. He must perform the rite of atonement for himself and for the people; he must burn up the fat of the sacrifice for sin on the altar. 25

'The man who leads out the goat to Azazel must wash his clothing and his 26
body, and then he can return to the camp. •The bull and the goat offered as a 27
Heb13:11 sacrifice for sin, whose blood has been taken into the sanctuary for the rite of atonement, are to be taken out of the camp where their skin, flesh and dung are to be burnt. •The man who burns them must wash his clothing and his body, 28
and then he can return to the camp.

'This shall be a perpetual law for you. 29

23:27-32 'On the tenth day of the seventh month you must fast and refrain from work, the native and the stranger who lives among you. •For this is the day on which 30
the rite of atonement shall be performed over you, to purify you. Before Yahweh you will be clean of all your sins. •It shall be a sabbath rest for you and you are to 31
fast. This is a perpetual law.

'The rite of atonement must be performed by the priest who has been anointed 32
and installed to officiate in place of his father. He is to put on the linen, the sacred vestments, •and to perform the atonement of the sacred sanctuary, the 33
Tent of Meeting and the altar. Then he must perform the rite of atonement over the priests and all the people of the community. •This shall be a perpetual law 34
for you; once a year the rite of atonement must be made over the sons of Israel for all their sins.'

And it was done as Yahweh commanded Moses.

IV. THE LAW OF HOLINESS[a]

26:1 Ex 20:24 Nb4:15; 10:10 Dt 12:4-28 Jos 24:19 1 S 2:2 Jb 6:10 Ws 5:19 Is 1:4; 57:15 Ezk20:39; 42:14 Am 4:2 Hab 1:12 Jn 17:17 Heb12:10 1 P 1:16 1Jn 2:20 Rv 3:7

Immolation and sacrifice

17 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 1
'Speak to Aaron and his sons and all the sons of Israel and say to them: 2
"This is the word of Yahweh, his command:

Any man of the House of Israel who immolates an ox, lamb or goat, whether 3
inside the camp or outside it, •must first bring it to the entrance to the Tent 4
of Meeting to make an offering of it to Yahweh before his tabernacle;[b] and
1:5+ anyone who fails to do this must answer for the blood that is spilt;[c] he shall be outlawed from his people. •Thus, the sacrifices that the sons of Israel wish to make 5
in the open country will be brought to the priest, for Yahweh, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, and with them they will make communion sacrifices for Yahweh. •The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of Yahweh that stands 6
at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, and he shall burn the fat, and its fragrance
16:8+ will appease Yahweh. •They must no longer offer their sacrifices to the satyrs[d] 7
2Ch11:15 Is 13:21; 34:12-14 Ba 4:35 in whose service they once prostituted themselves.[e] This is a perpetual law for them and for their descendants."

'You will also say to them, "Any man of the House of Israel or stranger living 8
among you who offers a holocaust or sacrifice •without bringing it to the entrance 9
to the Tent of Meeting to offer it to Yahweh shall be outlawed from his people.

1:5+; 19:26 Jdt 10:5 Ezk33:25 "If any man of the House of Israel or stranger living among you eats blood 10
of any kind, I will set my face against the man who has eaten the blood and will outlaw him from his people. •The life of the flesh is in the blood. This 11
✓Heb9:7,21f blood I myself have given you to perform the rite of atonement for your lives at the altar; for it is blood that atones for a life.[f] •That is why I have said to 12
the sons of Israel: None of you nor any stranger living among you shall eat blood.

Nb15:16 Dt 12:15 "If any son of Israel or any stranger living among you catches game 13
or bird that it is lawful to eat, he must pour out its blood and cover it with earth. For the life of all flesh is its blood, and I have said to the sons of Israel: You 14
must not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is in its blood, and anyone who eats it shall be outlawed from his people.

15 "Anyone, native or stranger, who eats an animal that has died a natural death or been savaged by beasts must wash his clothing and wash himself; he
16 shall be unclean until evening, then he will be clean. •But if he does not wash his clothing and wash his body, he must bear the consequences of his fault."' 22:8 Ex 22:30 Dt 14:21 Ezk 4:14

Rules for conjugal relationships[a] 20:8-21

1 18 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
2 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them:
3 "I am Yahweh your God. •You must not behave as they do in Egypt where once you lived; you must not behave as they do in Canaan where I am taking
4 you. You must not follow their laws. •You must follow my customs and keep my laws; by them you must lead your life. 22:31-33 Ps106:35 Ezk20:7 *Ex 23:* 23-24
5 "I am Yahweh your God. •You must keep my laws and my customs. Whoever complies with them will find life in them. Dt 4:1 Ne 9:29 Ezk20:11; 20:21
"I am Yahweh.
6 "None of you may approach a woman who is closely related to him,[b] to uncover her nakedness.[c] I am Yahweh. Lk 10:28 Rm7:10; ✗10:5 ✗Ga3:12
7 "You must not uncover the nakedness of your father or mother. She is your mother—you must not uncover her nakedness. Dt 23:1; 27:20 Ezk22:10
8 "You must not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. Dt 27:22 1 Co 5:1 Ezk22:11
9 "You must not uncover the nakedness of your sister, whether she is your father's or your mother's daughter. Whether she is born in the same house or elsewhere, you must not uncover her nakedness.
10 "You must not uncover the nakedness of the daughter of your son or daughter; for their nakedness is your own.
11 "You must not uncover the nakedness of the daughter of your father's wife, born of your father. She is your sister; you must not uncover her nakedness.
12 "You must not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; for it is your father's flesh.
13 "You must not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister; for it is your mother's flesh.
14 "You must not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother; you must therefore not approach his wife, for she is your aunt.
15 "You must not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; you must not uncover her nakedness. Ezk22:11
16 "You must not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; for it is your brother's nakedness.
17 "You must not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter too; 20:14 Dt 27:23

17 a. Holiness is one of the essential attributes of the God of Israel, cf. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; 21:8; 22:32f. The original conception is one of separateness, of inaccessibility and of awe-inspiring transcendence, Ex 33:20+. This sanctity communicates itself to everything in God's vicinity and to anything consecrated to him: places, Ex 19:12+; seasons, Ex 16:23; Lv 23:4; the ark, 2 S 6:7+; people, Ex 19:6+, and the priests in particular, Lv 21:6; things, Ex 30:29; Nb 18:9, etc. Because 'holiness' is thought of in relation to worship, it is connected with the idea of ritual cleanliness; in Lv 17-23 the 'law of holiness' is also a 'law of purity'. But the God of Israel makes moral demands and under this influence the primitive notion of 'holiness' undergoes a transformation: avoidance of what was ritually impure becomes abstention from sin; ritual purity develops into spiritual purity, cf. Isaiah's inaugural vision, Is 6:3+. See notes to Lv 1:1 and 11:1.

b. The text is longer in Greek and Sam.

c. See 1:5+. But the requirements of Dt 12:15-16 (see note) are more moderate.

d. The Hebr. word means 'goat'; here it indicates beings of animal form who were thought to haunt deserts and ruins, Is 13:21; 34:14. Azazel was reckoned one of their number, Lv 16:8+. Here and in 2 Ch 11:15 the word is used contemptuously of false gods.

e. Classic image of religious faithlessness, see Ho 1-3+.

f. Or 'by reason of the life (which is in it)'. But cf. Dt 19:21.

18 a. This chapter is a literary unit. It is more akin to Dt than the rest of the 'Law of Holiness'.

b. Lit. 'of the flesh of his body'. To express relationship the Hebrews spoke of an identity of blood, flesh or even bone (Jg 9:2), an identity most perfectly achieved in the union of man and wife. For this reason the prohibitions that follow, whether concerned with blood-relationship or relationship by marriage (vv. 8, 14,16), are all grouped under the prohibition against incest: flesh must not fertilise itself.

c. Pejorative phrase for sexual intercourse.

you must not take the daughter of her son or of her daughter to uncover their nakedness. They are your own flesh;[d] it would be incest.

Gn29:27+ Ezk22:10 "You must not take into your harem a woman and her sister at the same time, 18
uncovering the latter's nakedness while the former is still alive.

"You must not approach and uncover the nakedness of a woman who is 19
unclean by reason of her monthly periods.

Ex20:14+ Ezk22:11; 33:25 "You must not give your marriage bed to your neighbour's wife; you would 20
thereby become unclean.[e]

20:2-5 Gn22:1+ 1K16:34 2K 16:3 Is 57:5,9 Mi 6:7 "You must not hand over any of your children to have them passed[f] to 21
Molech,[g] nor must you profane the name of your God in this way. I am
Yahweh.

Gn19:5+ "You must not lie with a man as with a woman. This is a hateful thing. 22

Dt 27:21 "You must not lie with any animal; you would thereby become unclean. 23
A woman must not offer herself to an animal, to have intercourse with it. This
would be a foul thing.

Ezr 9:11 "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these practices, for it was by such 24
things that the nations that I have expelled to make way for you made themselves
unclean.

"The land became unclean; I exacted the penalty for its fault and the land 25
had to vomit out its inhabitants.

"But you must keep my laws and customs, you must not do any of these 26
hateful things, neither native nor stranger living among you. •For all these 27
hateful things were done by the people who inhabited this land before you,
and the land became unclean. •If you make it unclean, will it not vomit you out 28
as it vomited the nation that was here before you? •Yes, anyone who does 29
1Co 5:2 one of these hateful things, whatever it may be, any person doing so must be cut
off from his people. •Keep to my rules; do not observe the hateful practices 30
that were observed before you came, then you will not be made unclean by
them. I am Yahweh your God."'

Ex 15:11 **Worship**[a]

19 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 1
'Speak to the whole community of the sons of Israel and say to them: 2
11:44-45+ Mt 5:48 1P 1:16 "Be holy, for I, Yahweh your God, am holy.

Ex20:12+ "Each of you must respect his father and mother. 3

19:30;26:2 Ex20:8+ *Ex20:4f*+ "And you must keep my sabbaths; I am Yahweh your God.

"Do not turn to idols,[b] and cast no gods of metal. I am Yahweh your 4
God.

3 "If you offer a communion sacrifice to Yahweh, make yourselves acceptable 5
and so offer it. •It must be eaten the same day or the day after; whatever is 6
7:18 left the day after must be burnt. •If eaten on the third day it would be a 7
corrupt offering, it would not be acceptable. •Anyone who eats it must bear the 8
consequences of his fault, for he will have profaned the holiness of Yahweh;
this person shall be outlawed from his people.

23:22 Dt 24:19-22 Rt 2:2 "When you gather the harvest of your land, you are not to harvest to the very 9
end of the field. You are not to gather the gleanings of the harvest. •You are 10
neither to strip your vine bare nor to collect the fruit that has fallen in your
vineyard. You must leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am Yahweh your
God.

Ex20:15+ Dt 24:7; 25:13 *Ex20:16*+ Dt 19:16-21 *Tb 4:14* Si 34:22 Mt 20:8 Jm 5:4 *Dt 27:18* Pr 17:5 *Ex 23:3* Dt 1:17 Si 7:6 [c] "You must not steal nor deal deceitfully or fraudulently with your neighbour. 11
You must not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God. I am 12
Yahweh. •You must not exploit or rob your neighbour. You must not keep back 13
the labourer's wage until next morning. •You must not curse the dumb,[d] nor put 14
an obstacle in the blind man's way, but you must fear your God. I am Yahweh.

"You must not be guilty of unjust verdicts. You must neither be partial to the 15
little man nor overawed by the great; you must pass judgement on your neighbour

16 according to justice. •You must not slander your own people, and you must not
17 jeopardise your neighbour's life.[e] I am Yahweh. •You must not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. You must openly tell him your neighbour of his
18 offence; this way you will not take a sin upon yourself. •You must not exact vengeance, nor must you bear a grudge against the children of your people. You must love your neighbour as yourself. I am Yahweh.

Jude 16▲ Ex 23:1 Ezk 33:1-9+ Mt18:15p Jm 4:11 *Mt 19:19* Mk12:31 Lk 10:27 Jn 13:34 ✗ *Mt5:43; 22:39p* ✗ Rm13:9 ✗ Ga5:14 ✗ Jm 2:8 *Dt22:9-11*

19 "You must keep my laws.

"You are not to mate your cattle with those of another kind; you are not to sow two kinds of grain in your field; you are not to wear a garment made from two kinds of fabric.[f]

20 "If a man sleeps with a woman as though married to her, she being another's concubine slave not yet purchased or given her freedom, then the man is to be answerable for infringement of rights, but he shall not be put to death,[g] since
21 she was not a free woman. •He must bring a sacrifice of reparation for Yahweh
22 to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. This is to be a ram of reparation. •With this ram of reparation the priest must perform the rite of atonement over the man before Yahweh for the sin committed; and the sin he has committed will be forgiven.

23 "Once you have entered this land and planted a fruit tree of any sort, you are to regard its fruits as its foreskin.[h] For three years it shall be a thing uncircum-
24 cised, and you must not eat it. •In the fourth year, all the fruit shall be consecrated
25 to Yahweh in a feast of praise. •In the fifth year you may eat the fruit and gather the produce for yourselves. I am Yahweh your God.

Gn17:10+

26 "You must eat nothing with blood in it. You must not practise divination or magic.

1:5+; 17:10-14 Dt 18:10-12

27 [i] "You are not to round off your hair at the edges nor trim the edges of your
28 beard. •You are not to gash your bodies when someone dies, and you are not to tattoo yourselves. I am Yahweh.

Dt 14:1

29 "Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute; thus the land will not be prostituted and filled with incest.

30 "You must keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary. I am Yahweh.

Ex20:8+ Ezk 22:8

31 "Do not have recourse to the spirits of the dead or to magicians; they will defile you. I am Yahweh your God.

19:26+; 20:6,27 Dt 18:11 1 S 28:7 *Jb 29:8* Ws 2:10 Si 8:6 1 Tm 5:1

32 "You are to rise up before grey hairs, you are to honour old age and fear your God. I am Yahweh.

33 34 "If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. •You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself—for you were once strangers yourselves in Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.

Ex 22:20+ Ezk47:22

35 "Your legal verdicts, your measures—length, weight and capacity—must all be
36 just. •Your scales and weights must be just, a just ephah and a just hin. I am Yahweh who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

Dt 25:13-16 Is 10:1f Ezk45:10 Am 8:5

37 "Keep all my laws and customs, put them into practice. I am Yahweh." '

d. Hebr. and Sam. appear to read 'his flesh', cf. Syr.

e. Adultery is here considered only as a ritual impurity.

f. 'have them passed'. Versions 'have them perish', 'to serve', 'have them lie with'.

g. In Canaanite ritual, children were sacrificed by being 'made to pass' through fire, i.e. by burning; the practice was condemned by the Law, Lv 20:2-5; Dt 12:31; 18:10. The rite found its way into Israel, especially in the valley of Ben-Hinnom to the S. of Jerusalem, 2 K 16:3; 21:6; 23:10; Jr 7:31; 19:5f; 32:35; Ezk 16:21. Several of these texts interpret this practice as an offering of children to the god Molech (= Melech, the 'king', a divine title) but this interpretation is contested and some authors explain *molech* as meaning 'votive sacrifice'.

19 a. This chapter is a literary unit with short introduction and conclusion. Its main theme is the holiness of Yahweh, requiring holiness in his people.

b. Lit. 'things of nothing'.

c. This short paragraph on duty to neighbour is derived from the Decalogue. Similar injunctions are found in all the legislative passages of the Pentateuch.

d. He cannot curse back. Alternative translation 'the deaf'.

e. By a baseless capital charge.

f. Prohibition against magic, with its incongruous compounds, etc.

g. Hebr. 'they will not be put to death'.

h. Circumcision originally celebrated man's achievement of maturity, Gn 17:10+, and an uncircumcised man was unclean. The fruit of a young tree was by analogy 'uncircumcised', and therefore unclean until consecrated to God.

i. This group of instructions is directed against pagan customs practised by neighbouring peoples.

Penalties[a]

a. Offences against true worship

20 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 1
'Tell the sons of Israel: 2

"Any son of Israel or any stranger living in Israel must die if he hands
18:21+ over any of his children to Molech. The people of the country must stone him,
and I shall set my face against that man and outlaw him from his people; for 3
in handing over his children to Molech he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned
my holy name. •If the people of the country choose to close their eyes to the 4
man's action in handing over his children to Molech, and they do not put him
to death, •I myself shall turn my face against him and his clan. I shall outlaw them 5
1 K 11:7+ from their people, him and all those after him who prostitute themselves by
following Molech.

19:26,31; 20:27 Ex 22:17 "If a man has recourse to the spirits of the dead or to magicians, to prostitute 6
himself by following them, I shall set my face against that man and outlaw him
from his people.

11:44f+; 17:1+ "You must make yourselves holy, for I am Yahweh your God. 7

18 **b. Offences against the family**

"You must keep my laws and put them into practice, for it is I, Yahweh, who 8
make you holy. •Hence: 9

Ex 21:17 2 S 1:16 Mt 15:4 Mk 7:10 "Anyone who curses father or mother must die. Since he has cursed his father
or mother, his blood shall be on his own head.

Dt 22:22 Ezk 23:45 Dn 13:22 Jn 8:5 "The man who commits adultery with a married woman: 10
"The man who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife must die, he and
his accomplice.

1 Co 5:1 "The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness. 11
Both of them must die, their blood shall be on their own heads.

"The man who lies with his daughter-in-law: both of them must die; they 12
have defiled each other, their blood shall be on their own heads.

Gn 19:5 "The man who lies with a man in the same way as with a woman: they have 13
done a hateful thing together; they must die, their blood shall be on their own heads.

"The man who takes a woman and her mother to wife: that is incest. They 14
must be burnt to death—he and they: there must be no incest among you.

"The man who lies with an animal: he must die and the animal must be killed. 15

"The woman who approaches any animal to have intercourse with it: you shall 16
kill the woman and the animal. They must die, their blood shall be on their
own heads.

18:17 "The man who takes the daughter of his father or mother to wife: if he sees 17
her nakedness and she sees his, it is a disgrace. They must be executed in public,[b]
for the man has uncovered the nakedness of his sister and he must bear[c] the
consequences of his fault.

"The man who lies with a woman during her monthly periods and uncovers 18
her nakedness: he has laid bare the source of her blood, and she has uncovered
the source of her blood: both of them must be outlawed from their people.

"You must not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or of your father's 19
sister, a man has thus uncovered his own flesh, and they must bear the consequences
of their fault.

Ex 22:17 "The man who lies with the wife of his paternal uncle: he has uncovered his 20
uncle's nakedness, they must bear the consequences of their fault and die childless.

✓ Mt 14:4p "The man who takes to wife the wife of his brother: that is impurity; he has 21
uncovered his brother's nakedness, and they shall die childless.

c. Appendix:[d] **the clean and the unclean**

"You must keep all my laws, all my customs, and put them into practice: thus 22
you will not be vomited out by the land where I am taking you to live. •You 23

must not follow the laws of the nations that I expel to make way for you; they
24 practised all these things and for this I have come to detest them. •I have told
you already: You shall take possession of their soil, I myself will give you
possession of it, a land where milk and honey flow.
25 "I, Yahweh your God, have set you apart from these peoples. •Therefore you
must set the clean animal apart from the unclean, the unclean bird apart from 11
the clean. Do not defile yourselves with these animals or birds, or things that
creep on the ground: I have made you set them apart as unclean.

Conclusion

26 "Be consecrated to me, because I, Yahweh, am holy, and I will set you apart 11:44f+; 17:1+
from all these peoples so that you may be mine.
27 "Any man or woman who is a necromancer or magician must be put to death 19:26,31; 20:6
by stoning; their blood shall be on their own heads."'

The holiness of the priesthood
a. The priests

1 21 Yahweh said to Moses:
'Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them:
"None of them is to make himself unclean by going near the corpse of one of 18:6+
2 his family,[a] •unless it be of his closest relations—father, mother, son, daughter, Ezk44:25
3 brother. •He may also make himself unclean for his virgin sister: if she is still
4 a close relation since she has not belonged to a man.[b] •If a husband,[c] he
must not make himself unclean for his family; in doing so he would profane
himself.[d]
19:27-28
5 "They must not wear tonsures, shave the edges of their beards, or gash their Ezk44:20
6 bodies. •They shall be consecrated to their God and must not profane the name
of their God. For it is they who bring the burnt offerings to Yahweh, the food 1:9+
of their God; and they must be in a holy condition.
7 "They must not marry a woman profaned by prostitution, or one divorced Ezk44:22
by her husband; for the priest is consecrated to his God.[e]
8 You shall treat him as holy, for he offers up the food of your God. He shall
be a holy person to you, because I, Yahweh, am holy, who sanctify you. 11:44f+; 17:1+
9 "If the daughter of a man who is a priest profanes herself by prostitution,
she profanes her father and must be burnt to death.

b. The high priest

10 "The priest who is pre-eminent over his brother, on whose head the chrism 8:7-12
is poured, and who, clothed with the sacred robes, receives investiture, is not to
11 disorder his hair or tear his garments; •he must not go near a dead man's corpse,
12 he must not make himself unclean even for his father or mother. •He must not
leave the holy place, so that he may not profane the sanctuary of his God; for
he bears on himself the consecration of his God, given by the oil of anointing. Nb 6:8
I am Yahweh.
13 "He must take to wife a woman who is still a virgin. •He must not marry a Ezk44:22
14 woman who is a widow or divorced, or profaned by prostitution: only a virgin

20 a. A fresh section dealing with penalties and therefore involving repetition of ordinances already recorded.
b. The only case for which punishment is to be in public.
c. Greek and Sam. read the plural.
d. Terms from ch. 18 recur here.

21 a. Contact with the dead produces uncleanness, Nb 6:9; 19:11-13; 31:19,24; Ezk 44:25-27; cf. Hab 2:13.
b. Marriage, by which woman becomes the 'flesh' of her husband, Gn 2:23, loosens ties of blood.
c. The Greek reads 'suddenly' instead of 'Baal' (husband).
d. Meaning uncertain. 'His family' seems to refer to the wife or one of her relations who become 'his family' by marriage. Other possible translations 'He must not make himself unclean for the sake of a married sister' (this assumes a text-correction); or 'God (here called 'Baal', Master—it can also mean 'husband') must not be made unclean by his people; he would be profaned'.
e. According to Dt 24:1 divorce, it seems, presupposes some physical defect; but in the priest, one flesh with his wife, there must be no defect, vv. 17f.

from his own family may he take to wife. •He must not profane his levitical descendants,[f] for it is I, Yahweh, who have sanctified him."' 15

c. Impediments to the priesthood

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 16

'Speak to Aaron and say: 17

"None of your descendants, in any generation, must come forward to offer
Dt 23:2 the food of his God if he has any infirmity—•no man must come near if he has 18
2 S 5:8 an infirmity such as blindness or lameness, if he is disfigured or deformed, if he has an injured foot or arm, •if he is a hunchback or a dwarf, if he has a 19 20 disease of the eyes or of the skin, if he has a running sore, or if he is a eunuch. No descendant of Aaron the priest must come forward to offer the burnt offerings 21 of Yahweh if he has any infirmity;[g] if he has an infirmity, he must not come forward to offer the food of his God.

"He may eat the food of his God, things most holy and things holy; •but he 22 23 must not go near the veil or approach the altar, because he has an infirmity, and must not profane my holy things; for it is I, Yahweh, who have sanctified them."'

And Moses told this to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the sons of Israel. 24

Holiness in consuming the sacred meal

a. The priests

22 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 1

'Speak to Aaron and his sons: let them be consecrated[a] through the holy 2 offerings of the sons of Israel, and not profane my holy name; for my sake they are to sanctify it; I am Yahweh. •Tell them this: 3

"Any one of your descendants, in any generation, who in a state of uncleanness approaches the holy offerings consecrated to Yahweh by the sons of Israel, shall be outlawed from my presence. I am Yahweh.

13:15 "Anyone of Aaron's line who is afflicted with leprosy or with a discharge 4
Hg 2:13 must not eat holy things until he is clean. Anyone who touches something made unclean by a dead body, or has a seminal discharge, •or is made unclean 5 by touching either some creeping thing or some man who has communicated to him his own uncleanness of whatever kind, •in short, anyone who has had any 6 such contact shall be unclean until evening, and must not eat holy things until he has washed his body. •At sunset he will be clean and may then eat holy things, 7 for these are his food.

17:15
Ezk 4:14 "He must not eat an animal that has died a natural death or been savaged by 8 beasts; he would contract uncleanness from it. I am Yahweh.

"Let them keep my rules and not burden themselves with sin. If they profane 9 them, they shall die: it is I, Yahweh, who have sanctified them.

b. Lay people

"No lay person may eat holy things: neither the guest of a priest, nor his 10 hired servant. •But if the priest has acquired a slave by purchase, the slave may 11 eat them like anyone born in the house; for they eat his own food.

"If a priest's daughter marries a layman, she must not eat the holy portion set 12 aside; •but if she is widowed or divorced and, being childless, has had to return 13 to her father's house as when she was young, she may eat her father's food. No lay person may eat of it; •if someone does eat a holy thing by inadvertence, 14 he shall restore it to the priest with one-fifth added.

"They[b] must not profane the holy offerings which the sons of Israel have set 15
5:14-16 aside for Yahweh. •To eat these would lay on them a fault demanding a sacrifice 16 of reparation; for it is I, Yahweh, who have sanctified these offerings."'

c. Animals sacrificed

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 17

18 'Tell this to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the sons of Israel:
"Any man of the House of Israel or any stranger living in Israel who brings 1:1+
an offering either in payment of a vow or as a voluntary gift, and makes
19 a holocaust with it for Yahweh,[c] •must, if he is to be acceptable, offer a male
20 without blemish, ox, sheep or goat. •You must not offer one that is blemished; Ex 12:5
for it would not make you acceptable.
21 "If anyone offers to Yahweh a communion sacrifice, either to fulfil a vow 3:1+;7:11+
or as a voluntary offering, the animal—from the herd or from the flock—must
22 be without blemish if it is to be acceptable; no defect must be found in it. •You 1:3; 3:1
must not offer to Yahweh an animal that is blind, lame, mutilated, ulcerous, or 21:18-21
Mi 1:8
suffering from skin disease or sore. No part of such an animal shall be laid on the
23 altar as a burnt offering for Yahweh. •As a voluntary offering, you may offer
a bull or a lamb that is underdeveloped or deformed; but such will not be
24 acceptable in payment of a vow. •An animal must not be offered to Yahweh
if its testicles have been bruised, crushed, removed or cut. You are not to do that
25 in your country, •and you are not to accept any such from the hands of a stranger,
to be offered as food for your God. Their deformity is a blemish, and they would
not make you acceptable."'
26 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
27 'A calf, lamb, or kid shall stay with its dam seven days after birth. From the
28 eighth day it will be acceptable as a burnt offering to Yahweh. •But no animal,
whether cow or ewe, shall be immolated on the same day as its young. Ex 23:19
29 'If you offer Yahweh a sacrifice with praise, do it in the acceptable manner; 7:11+
30 it must be eaten the same day, with nothing left till the morning. I am Yahweh.

d. Final exhortation 18:3-5

31 'You must keep my commands and put them into practice. I am Yahweh.
32 You must not profane my holy name, so that I may be proclaimed holy among 11:44f+; 17:1+
33 the sons of Israel, I, Yahweh who sanctify you. •I who brought you out of the *11:45*; 25:38,55; 26:13,45
land of Egypt to be your God, I am Yahweh.'

The ritual for the annual feasts[a] Ex 23:14+

1 **23** Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
2 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them:
(the solemn festivals of Yahweh to which you summon them are sacred assemblies)[b]
"These are my solemn festivals.

a. Sabbath Ex20:8+

3 "You may work for six days, but the seventh must be a day of complete rest, Ezk22:26
a day for the sacred assembly on which you do no work at all. Wherever you
live, this is a sabbath for Yahweh.
4 "These are Yahweh's solemn festivals, the sacred assemblies to which you are
to summon the sons of Israel on the appointed day.

b. The Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread Ex12:1+; 23:14+

5 "The fourteenth day of the first month, between the two evenings, is the
6 Passover of Yahweh; •and the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of

f. By becoming 'one flesh' with a woman who does not belong to the appropriate tribe, the high priest profanes the sanctuary and transmits profane blood to his descendants.

g. Because the priest is to 'come near' to God and to share God's sanctity in a special way, a physical defect in him would be an affront to God who created the physical world without blemish.

22 a. God's acceptance sanctifies the offerings which, in turn, sanctify those who eat them.

b. I.e. the laity.

c. According to the Law of Holiness, holocausts as well as communion sacrifices may be offered either in fulfilment of a vow or as voluntary offerings, cf. 7:11+.

23 a. The moral (ch. 18-20) and ritual (21-22) prerequisites for sacrifice are now (ch. 23) followed by a description of the liturgical cycle. On the various feasts see Ex 12:1+ and Ex 23:14+.

b. This parenthesis is probably a later addition.

Unleavened Bread[e] for Yahweh. For seven days you shall eat bread without leaven. •On the first day you are to hold a sacred assembly; you must do no heavy 7
work. •For seven days you shall offer a burnt offering to Yahweh. The seventh 8
day is to be a day of sacred assembly; you must do no work."'

Dt26:1+ **c. The first sheaf**

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:[d] 9
'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them: 10
"When you enter the land that I give you, and gather in the harvest there,
you must bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest, •and he is to present 11
Ex29:24+ it to Yahweh with the gesture of offering, so that you may be acceptable. The
priest shall make this offering on the day after the sabbath, •and on the same day 12
as you make this offering, you are to offer Yahweh the holocaust of an unblemished
Nb 15:4 lamb one year old. •The oblation for that day shall be two-tenths of wheaten 13
flour mixed with oil, a burnt offering whose fragrance will appease Yahweh. The
2:14 libation is to be one quarter of a hin of wine. •You are to eat no bread, roasted 14
corn or baked bread, before this day, before making the offering to your God.
This is a perpetual law for all your descendants, wherever you live.

Dt16:9-12 **d. The feast of Weeks**

"From the day after the sabbath, the day on which you bring the sheaf of 15
offering, you are to count seven full weeks. •You are to count fifty days, to the day 16
after the seventh sabbath, and then you are to offer Yahweh a new oblation. •You 17
must bring bread from your houses to present with the gesture of offering—two
loaves, made of two-tenths of wheaten flour baked with leaven; these are
first-fruits for Yahweh. •In addition to the bread you must offer seven unblemished 18
lambs one year old, a young bull and two rams, as a holocaust to Yahweh,
together with an oblation and a libation, a burnt offering whose fragrance will
appease Yahweh. •You are also to offer a goat as a sacrifice for sin, and two lambs 19
one year old as a communion sacrifice. •The priest shall present them before 20
Yahweh with the gesture of offering, in addition to the bread of the first-fruits.
These, and the two lambs, are holy things for Yahweh, and will revert to the
priest.
"This same day you are to hold an assembly; this shall be a sacred assembly for 21
you; you will do no heavy work. This is a perpetual law for your descendants,
wherever you live.
19:9-10+ Dt 24: "When you gather the harvest in your country, you are not to harvest to the very 22
19-22+ Rt 2:2 end of your field, and you are not to gather the gleanings of the harvest. You are to
Ex12:48+ leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am Yahweh your God."'

e. The First Day of the Seventh Month

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 23
'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them: 24
Nb10:10 Ezk45:17 "The first day of the seventh month[e] shall be a day of rest for you, a sacred
assembly proclaimed with trumpet call. •You must not do any heavy work and 25
you must offer a burnt offering to Yahweh."'

16:1+ Nb29:7-11 **f. The Day of Atonement**

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 26
16:29-31 'But the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. You 27
are to hold a sacred assembly. You must fast, and you must offer a burnt offering to
Yahweh. •You are not to do any work that day, for it is the Day of Atonement, 28
on which the rite of atonement will be performed over you before Yahweh your
Ac 3:23 God. •Indeed, anyone who fails to fast that day shall be outlawed from his people; 29
anyone who works that day I will remove from his people. •No work must 30 31
be done—this is a perpetual law for your descendants wherever you live. •This 32

is to be a day of sabbath rest for you. You must fast; on the evening of the ninth day of the month, from this to the following evening, you must cease to work.'

g. The feast of Tabernacles Ex23:14+ Dt 16:13-15 Ne 8:14

33 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
34 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them:
"The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of Tabernacles Ps 81:3
35 for Yahweh, lasting seven days. •The first day is a day of sacred assembly; you
36 must do no heavy work. •For seven days you must offer a burnt offering to Yahweh. On the eighth day you are to hold a sacred assembly, you must offer a burnt offering to Yahweh. It is a day of solemn meeting; you must do no heavy work.

Conclusion

37 "These are the solemn festivals of Yahweh to which you are to summon the children of Israel, sacred assemblies for the purpose of offering burnt offerings, holocausts, oblations, sacrifices and libations to Yahweh, according to the ritual
38 of each day, •besides the sabbaths of Yahweh and the presents, and the votive and voluntary gifts that you make to Yahweh.

Recapitulation on the feast of Tabernacles[f]

39 "But on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have harvested the 1 S 1:3 Ne 8:14
produce of the land, you are to celebrate the feast of Yahweh for seven days. On
40 the first and eighth days there shall be a complete rest. •On the first day you shall take choice fruits, palm branches, boughs of leafy trees and willows from the Ps118:27
river bank, and for seven days you shall rejoice in the presence of Yahweh your
41 God. •You are to celebrate a feast for Yahweh in this way for seven days every year. This is a perpetual law for your descendants.
42 "You are to keep this feast in the seventh month. •For seven days you are
43 to live in shelters: all natives of Israel must live in shelters, •so that your descendants may know that I made the sons of Israel live in shelters when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God."'
44 And Moses described the solemn festivals of Yahweh to the sons of Israel.

Complementary ritual prescriptions

a. The perpetual flame

1 24 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said:
2 'Order the sons of Israel to bring you pure olive oil for the lamp-stand, and Nb 8:2 Ex 25:31-40 Lv 6:5-6 Ex27:20f 1 S 3:3
3 keep a flame burning there continually. •Outside the veil of Testimony, in the Tent of Meeting, Aaron is to see to this flame. It shall burn there before Yahweh from evening to morning continually. This is a perpetual law for your descendants:
4 Aaron is to see to the lamps on the pure[a] lamp-stand before Yahweh, continually.

b. The bread on the Golden Table Ex25:23+ 1S21:4-7 Ne 10:34 Mt 12:4 Mk 2:26

5 'You are to take wheaten flour and with it bake twelve cobs, each of two-tenths
6 of an ephah. •Then you must set them in two rows of six on the pure table that 2 Ch 2:3
7 stands before Yahweh. •On each row you shall place pure incense. This will be

e. These two feasts, which seem to merge in Dt 16:1-8, are clearly distinguished here.

d. This new oracle interrupts the enumeration of feasts (resumed in v. 15). Apparently the original text of the Law of Holiness has here been supplemented from Nb 15 and 28. In vv. 23-28 there are other interpolations.

e. The first day of each (lunar) month was long kept as a feast by both Israelites and Canaanites (the New Moon, or Neomenia). 1 S 20:5,24; Is 1:13; Am 8:5. Our passage speaks only of the most important of these feasts, that on the first day of the seventh month (i.e. of the year beginning in spring) which for a long time was the first month (of a year that began in autumn).

f. Unlike vv. 34-36 (prohibition of heavy work) the emphasis of this second text is on the joy of the feast, in the manner of Dt 16:13-16; v. 43 links the feast with memories of the desert journey.

24 a. 'Pure', i.e. ritually; or perhaps 'of pure gold'; same alternative for the 'table' of v. 6.

the food offered as a memorial, a burnt offering for Yahweh. •Continually, 8
every sabbath they shall be set before Yahweh. The sons of Israel are to provide
them by unending covenant. •They will belong to Aaron and his sons, who shall 9
eat them in a holy place, for they are a most holy portion for him of Yahweh's
burnt offerings. This is a perpetual law.'

A case of blasphemy. The law of retaliation[b]

Ex 12:38 There was a man whose mother was an Israelite woman and whose father 10
was an Egyptian. He came out of his house and in the camp, surrounded by the
sons of Israel, he began to quarrel with a man who was an Israelite. •Now this 11
Ex 22:27 son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the name and cursed it. So they brought
him to Moses (his mother's name was Shelomith daughter of Dibri, of the tribe
of Dan). •He was put under guard until the will of Yahweh should be made 12
clear to them.

Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 13

1K21:10 Dn 13:34 'Take the man who pronounced the curse outside the camp. Let all who have 14
heard him lay their hands on his head, and let the whole community stone
him.[c] •Then say to the sons of Israel: 15

"Any man who curses his God shall bear the burden of his fault. •The one 16
Jn 19:7 who blasphemes the name of Yahweh[d] must die; the whole community must
stone him. Stranger or native, if he blasphemes the name, he dies.

Ex 21:12-20 "If a man strikes down[e] any human being, he must die. 17

"If a man strikes an animal down he must make restitution for it: a life for 18
a life.

Ex21:25+ "If a man injures his neighbour, what he has done must be done to him: 19
broken limb for broken limb, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As the injury inflicted, 20
so must be the injury suffered. •The one who strikes an animal down must 21
make restitution for it, and the one who strikes down a man must die. •The 22
sentence you pass shall be the same whether it be on native or on stranger; for
I am Yahweh your God."'

When Moses had said this to the sons of Israel, they took the man who had 23
pronounced the curse out of the camp and stoned him. In this way the sons of
Israel carried out the order of Yahweh to Moses.

Ex 23:10-11 Nb 36:4 Dt 15:1-11 Ne 10:32 **The Holy Years**[a]

a. The Sabbatical Year

25 Yahweh spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai; he said: 1
'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them: 2

"When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land is to keep a sabbath's
rest for Yahweh. •For six years you shall sow your field, for six years you shall 3
prune your vine and gather its produce. •But in the seventh year the land is to 4
have its rest, a sabbath for Yahweh. You must not sow your field or prune your
vine, •or harvest your ungathered corn or gather grapes from your untrimmed 5
vine. It is to be a year of rest for the land. •The sabbath of the land will itself 6
feed you and your servants, men and women, your hired labourer, your guest,
and all who live with you. •For your cattle too, and the animals on your land, 7
all its produce will serve as food.

b. The Year of Jubilee

"You are to count seven weeks of years—seven times seven years, that is to say 8
a period of seven weeks of years, forty-nine years. •And on the tenth day of the 9
seventh month you shall sound the trumpet; on the Day of Atonement you shall
sound the trumpet throughout the land. •You will declare this fiftieth year sacred 10
Ex21:2-11 Dt 15:12-18 Is 61:1-3 Jr34:8-22 and proclaim the liberation of all the inhabitants of the land. This is to be a
jubilee for you; each of you will return to his ancestral home, each to his own
clan. •This fiftieth year is to be a jubilee year for you: you will not sow, you will 11

not harvest the ungathered corn, you will not gather from the untrimmed vine.
12 The jubilee is to be a holy thing to you, you will eat what comes from the fields.
13 "In this year of jubilee each of you is to return to his ancestral home.
14 •If you buy or sell with your neighbour, let no one wrong his brother.[b]
15 •If you buy from your neighbour, this must take into account the number of years since the
16 jubilee: according to the number of productive years he will fix the price. •The greater the number of years, the higher shall be the price demanded; the less the number of years, the greater the reduction; for what he is selling you is a
17 certain number of harvests. •Let none of you wrong his neighbour, but fear your God; I am Yahweh your God.
18 "You must put my laws and customs into practice; you must keep them,
19 practise them; and so you shall be secure in your possession of the land. •The land will give its fruit, you will eat your fill and live in security. 2Ch31:10

The divine guarantee

20 "In case you should ask: What shall we eat in this seventh year if we do not
21 sow or harvest the produce? •I have ordered my blessing to be on you every
22 sixth year, which will therefore provide for you for three years.[c] •You will have the old produce to eat while you are sowing in the eighth year and even as late 26:10 as the ninth year; you will eat the old produce, while waiting for the harvest of that year.

Consequences of the holiness of land and people
a. The land: redemption of landed property

23 "Land must not be sold in perpetuity, for the land belongs to me, and to me Ps 39:12
24 you are only strangers and guests. •You will allow a right of redemption on all
25 your landed property. •If your brother falls on evil days and has to sell his Rt4:1-12 patrimony, his nearest relation[d] shall come to him and exercise his right of redemp-
26 tion on what his brother has sold. •The man who has no one to exercise this right can regain his property in this way: when he has found the means to effect
27 the redemption, •he is to calculate the number of years that the alienation would have lasted, repay to the purchaser the sum due for the time still to run, and so
28 return to his property. •If he cannot find the sum for paying the compensation, the property sold shall remain in the possession of the purchaser until the jubilee year. In the jubilee year, the latter must relinquish it and return to his own property.
29 "If anyone sells a dwelling house that is in a walled town, he shall have the right of redemption until the expiry of the year following the sale. His right of re-
30 demption is limited to the year; •and if the redemption has not been effected by the end of the year, this house in the town shall be the property of the purchaser

b. This section interrupts the series of ritual ordinances.

c. The community, defiled by the curse, will be cleansed by the stoning of the guilty man; hands are imposed on him as on the sacrificial animal which is the community's substitute, 1:4; 16:21.

d. 'the name of Yahweh' Greek; 'a name' Hebr.; 'the name' Sam.

e. Fatally, cf. Ex 21:12. These verses reproduce the earlier injunctions of the Book of the Covenant but explicitly associate resident foreigners with full members of Israel (vv. 16b,20b-22).

25 a. These laws assert God's absolute ownership of the Holy Land: even the soil must observe the sabbath, see Ex 20:8+. The sabbatical year has already been mentioned in the Book of the Covenant, Ex 23:10-11; here the legislation is further defined, Lv 25:1-7. All this supposes a periodical return to the conditions of pastoral life. To this legislation Dt 15:1-11 adds the cancellation of debts. There was also a liberation of Hebrew slaves in the seventh year of their service but not necessarily in a sabbatical year, Ex 21:2; Dt 15:12-18; in fact, however, it rarely took place, cf. Jr 34:8-16. To make it less burdensome this liberation was enforced in jubilee years (Lv 25:8-17) which occurred every fifty years and were so called because announced by a trumpet, *yobel* (cf. the allusion in Is 61:1-2). During this year the fields lay fallow and there was also a general enfranchisement of people and goods: everyone rejoined his own clan and everyone recovered his ancestral property, v. 10. These arrangements made for stability in a society based on the family and on family property. 1 M 6:49-53 shows that the sabbatical year was observed. The Church has taken the custom over and given it spiritual significance: the periodical 'Holy Year' offers special opportunities for Christians to gain remission of their debt to God.

b. This law ensures fair dealing in business; it also attacks the land monopolies denounced in Is 5:8 and Mi 2:2.

c. Three years, i.e. the sabbatical year, the jubilee year and also (since there was no autumn sowing in jubilee year) the following year.

d. Lit. 'his nearest *goel*', cf. Nb 35:19+.

and his descendants in perpetuity; he need not relinquish it at the jubilee. •But houses in villages not enclosed by walls will be considered as situated in the open country; they carry the right of redemption, and the purchaser must relinquish them at the jubilee.

Nb35:1-8 Jos 21 Ezk 48:13-14 "As regards the towns of the Levites, any property in the towns possessed by them shall carry a perpetual right of redemption in their favour.[e] •If it is a Levite who is affected by the right of redemption, at the jubilee he must come out of the property that was sold and return to his house, to the town in which he has a title to property.[f] For the houses in the towns of the Levites are their property in the midst of the sons of Israel, •and the arable land depending on these towns cannot be sold, for it is their property for ever.

b. The people: loans and enfranchisement

Ex 12:48+; 22:24 Dt 23: 20-21+ Ws 2:10 Ezk22:12 "If your brother who is living with you falls on evil days and is unable to support himself with you, you must support him as you would a stranger or a guest, and he must continue to live with you. •Do not make him work for you, do not take interest from him; fear your God, and let your brother live with you. •You are not to lend him money at interest, or give him food to make a profit out of it.

22:33+ 1 S 10:18 I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

"If your brother falls on evil days when he is with you and sells himself to you,[g] you must not impose a slave's work on him; •he shall be like a hired man or a guest, and shall work with you until the jubilee year. •Then he shall leave you, he and his children; he shall return to his clan and regain possession of his ancestral property. •For they are my servants, these whom I have brought out of Egypt, and they must not be sold like slaves. •You must not be a hard master to him, but you must fear your God.

Ex21:2-11 Dt 15:12-18 Ne 5:5 Jb 31:13 Jr34:8-22

"The servants you have, men and women, shall come from the nations round you; from these you may purchase servants, men and women. •You may also purchase them from the children of the strangers who live among you, and from their families living with you who have been born on your soil. They shall be your property •and you may leave them as an inheritance to your sons after you, to hold in perpetual possession. These you may have for slaves; but to your brothers, the sons of Israel, you must not be hard masters.[h]

"If some stranger or settler among you grows rich, and your brother falls on evil days and is in difficulties with him and sells himself to him, to this stranger or settler among you or to one of his descendants, •he shall enjoy the right of redemption after sale, and one of his brothers may redeem him. •His paternal uncle, his uncle's son, or a member of his own family may redeem him; if he has the means, he may redeem himself. •By agreement with his purchaser, he must count the number of years between the year of sale and the jubilee year; the sum of the price of sale must be calculated at the annual rate for these years, his time being valued as that of a hired man. •If there are still many years to run, in proportion to their number he must refund part of his sale price as payment for his redemption. •And if there are only a few years still to run before the jubilee year, he must calculate in proportion to the number of these years what shall be refunded for his redemption, •the calculation being made as if he were hired by the year. You must see that the man is not hardly dealt with.

Ne 5:8

"If he has not been redeemed in any of these ways, he shall go free in the jubilee year, he and his children with him. •For they are my servants, these sons of Israel; they are my servants whom I have brought out of the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.

22:33+

Summary: conclusion

Nb33:52 Ezk 8:12 **26** "You must make no idols; you must set up neither carved image nor standing-stone, set up no sculptured stone in your land, to prostrate

2 yourselves in front of it; for it is I, Yahweh, who am your God. •You must keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary. I am Yahweh. 17:1+; =19:30 Jr17:19-27 Ezk 20:12-13

Blessings Dt28:1-14

3 "If you live according to my laws, if you keep my commandments and put Ps 65:9
4 them into practice, •I will give you the rain you need at the right time; the Ps 67:6; 144:13
5 earth shall give its produce and the trees of the countryside their fruits; •you shall Is 1:19 Ezk 34: 26-27 *Am 9:13*
thresh until vintage time and gather grapes until sowing time. You shall eat your fill of bread and live secure in your land.

6 "I will give peace to the land, and you shall sleep with none to frighten you. Ps144:14; 147:14
I will rid the land of beasts of prey. The sword shall not pass through your land.
7 8 You shall pursue your enemies and they shall fall before your sword; •five of Dt 28:7 Ps 81:14 *Jos 23:10* 1 S 17:37
you pursuing a hundred of them, one hundred pursuing ten thousand; and your enemies shall fall before your sword.

9 "I will turn towards you, I will make you be fruitful and multiply, and I will Ex 23:26
uphold my Covenant with you.

10 "You shall eat your fill of last year's harvest, and still throw out the old to 25:21-22
make room for the new.

11 12 "I will set up my dwelling among you,[a] and I will not cast you off. •I will Dt 4:7+ Ezk48:35 Jn1:14+ *22:23+* Ex 6:7 Ezk36:28; 37:27 ↗ 2 Co 6:16 ↗ Rv21:3
13 live in your midst; I will be your God and you shall be my people. •It is I, Yahweh your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should be their servants no longer. I have broken the yoke that bound you and have made you walk with head held high.

Curses Dt 28:15-68 Am 4:6-12+

14 "But if you do not listen to me, and do not observe each one of these Dt 4:26 1 K 8:33
15 commandments, •if you refuse my laws and disregard my customs, and break Is1:5,20 Dn 3:31; 9:11
16 my Covenant by not observing each one of my commandments, •then I will deal in like manner with you.

"I will inflict terror on you, consumption and fever that waste the eyes away and exhaust the breath of life. You shall sow your seed in vain—your enemies Jg 6:4
17 shall feed on it. •I will turn against you and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Your foes shall have the mastery over you, and you shall take flight when there 1 K 8:33 Ps 44:10 Pr 28:1
is no one pursuing you.

18 "And if, in spite of this, you do not listen to me, I will still punish Jr 14:3
19 you sevenfold for your sins. •I will break your proud strength. I will give you Jr14:1-9; 5:24f
20 a sky of iron, an earth of bronze. •You shall wear out your strength in vain, Hg 1:10
your land shall not yield its produce any longer nor the trees their fruit. Dt 11:17; 32:33

21 "If you set yourselves against me and will not listen to me, I will heap these
22 plagues on you in sevenfold punishment for your sins. •I will let wild beasts Ezk14:15
loose against you to make away with your children, destroy your cattle, and reduce you in number until your roads are deserted. Lm 1:4

23 "And if that does not reform you, and you still set yourselves against me,
24 I too will set myself against you and I will strike you with sevenfold punishment
25 for your sins. •I will send out the sword against you, to avenge the Covenant. Ezk 21
You may huddle inside your towns: I will send pestilence among you, and you
26 shall be delivered into the hands of the enemy. •I will take away from you your Ps105:16 Ezk 4:16 Rv 6:6
bread, which is your staff,[b] and one oven shall suffice for ten women to bake

e. The levitical cities are thus kept sacred: only the Levites can acquire permanent rights there.

f. Text corrected in accordance with Greek.

g. The regulations of the Book of the Covenant Ex 21:2f, were made for other social and economic conditions and are here modified. After fifty years (and not seven) the servant may depart, but his status is rather of partner than of slave.

h. Between Israelite and foreigner the common slave law of antiquity is to hold; between Israelite and Israelite, beneficiaries of the divine Covenant, another law obtains. The N.T. brings all nations into the Covenant.

26 a. Central theme of the Law of Holiness. This whole chapter is apparently dependent on Ezekiel.

b. Lit. 'I will break your staff of bread'. On this figure of speech for famine, cf. Ps 105:16.

your bread; they shall dole this bread out by weight, and you shall eat and not be filled.

"And if, in spite of this, you do not listen to me but set yourselves against me, 27
I will set myself against you in fury and punish you sevenfold for your sins. 28
Dt 28:53 Lm 2:20; 4:10 Ezk 5:10 You shall eat the flesh of your own sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your 29
own daughters. •I will destroy your high places and smash your altars of 30
Ezk 6:1-7 Jr 22:5 Lm 2:5 incense; I will pile your corpses on the corpses of your idols, and I will cast
you off. •I will reduce your cities to ruins; I will lay your sanctuaries waste;[c] 31
I will no longer breathe the fragrance that would appease me. •I, yes I, will 32
2Ch 29:8 Ezk 5:15 make such a desolation of the land that your enemies who come to live there
will be appalled by it. •And I will scatter you among the nations. I will unsheathe 33
Ps 44:11; 106:26 Ezk 5:10; 12:14; 22:15 the sword against you to make your land a waste and your towns a ruin. •Then 34
the land will observe its sabbaths indeed, lying desolate there, while you are in
the land of your enemies. Then indeed the land will rest and observe its sabbaths.
And as it lies desolate it will rest, as it never did on your sabbaths when you 35
Pr 28:1 Ws 17:18 Ezk 21:12 lived in it. •I will strike fear into the hearts of those of you that are left; in the 36
land of their enemies the sound of a falling leaf shall send them fleeing as men
flee from the sword, and they shall fall though there is no one pursuing them.
They shall stumble over one another as if the sword were upon them even when 37
there is no one pursuing them. You shall be powerless to stand before your enemies;
Dn 3:31 you shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall swallow 38
Ba 2:29 Ezk 4:17 you up. •For their sins, those of you who are left shall perish in the lands of their 39
enemies; they shall perish too for the sins of their fathers added to their own.
Dt 29:28-30:14 Ps 106:6; 107:11 Then they shall confess their sins and the sins of their fathers, sins by which 40
they betrayed me—worse, by which they set themselves against me.
Ezk 6:9 Dn 9:4 Jr 4:4? Ezk 16:60f; 20:9,13 Ps 106:45 Lk 1:72 "I in my turn will set myself against them and take them to the land of their 41
enemies. Then their uncircumcised heart will be humbled, then they will atone
for their sins. •I shall remember my Covenant with Jacob, and my Covenant with 42
Isaac and my Covenant with Abraham; and I shall remember the land.

"Abandoned by them, the land will keep its sabbaths, as it lies desolate when 43
they are gone.[d] But they must atone for their sin, for they have spurned my
customs and abhorred my laws.

Dt 4:29-31 Lm 3:21f, 31f; 5:21f Ba 2:30-31 "Yet this is not the end. When they are in the land of their enemies, I will 44
not so spurn them or abhor them as to destroy them altogether and break my
Covenant with them; for I am Yahweh their God. •For their sake I will remember 45
22:33+ the Covenant I made with those first generations that I brought out of the land
of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I would be their God, I, Yahweh."'

27:34 These are the laws, customs and rules which Yahweh laid down between 46
himself and the sons of Israel on Mount Sinai through the mediation of Moses.

Tariffs and estimates[a]

a. Persons

27 Yahweh spoke to Moses; he said: 1
'Speak to the sons of Israel and tell them: 2

"If anyone vows the value of a person[b] to Yahweh and wishes to discharge the vow:

"a man between twenty and sixty years of age shall be valued at fifty silver 3
shekels—the sanctuary shekel; •a woman shall be valued at thirty shekels; 4

"between five and twenty years, a boy shall be valued at twenty shekels, a girl 5
at ten shekels;

"between one month and five years, a boy shall be valued at five silver shekels, 6
a girl at three silver shekels;

"at sixty years and over, a man shall be valued at fifteen shekels and a woman 7
at ten shekels.

5:7,11 "If the person who made the vow cannot meet this valuation, he must present 8
the person concerned to the priest, and the priest shall set a value proportionate
to the resources of the person who made the vow.

b. Animals

9 "If it is a question of an animal suitable for offering to Yahweh, any such
10 animal given to Yahweh shall be a consecrated thing. •It cannot be exchanged or
a substitute offered—good for bad, bad for good. If one animal is substituted
11 for another, both of them shall be consecrated. •If it is a question of an unclean
animal, and not suitable for offering to Yahweh, whatever it may be it must be
12 presented to the priest •and he shall set a value on it, judging it good or bad.
13 You must abide by his valuation; •but if the person wishes to redeem it, he must
add one-fifth to the valuation.

c. Houses

14 "If a man consecrates his house to Yahweh, the priest shall set a value on it,
judging whether its value is great or little. You must abide by the priest's valuation,
15 but if the man who has vowed his house wishes to redeem it, he must add one-
fifth to the valuation, and it shall revert to him.

d. Fields

16 "If a man consecrates one of the fields of his patrimony to Yahweh, its value
shall be calculated according to its productivity,[c] at the rate of fifty silver shekels
to one omer of barley.
17 "If he consecrates the field during the jubilee year, he must stand by this
18 valuation. •But if he consecrates it after the jubilee, the priest shall calculate the
price on the basis of the number of years still to run until the next jubilee and the
valuation shall be reduced accordingly.
19 "If he wishes to redeem the field, he shall add one-fifth to the valuation, and the
20 field shall revert to him. •If he does not redeem it but sells it to another, the right
21 of redemption ceases; •when the buyer has to relinquish it at the jubilee year,
it becomes a thing consecrated to Yahweh, the same as a field laid under ban: 27:28+
the man's property passes to the priest.
22 "If he consecrates to Yahweh a field which he has bought, but which is not
23 part of his patrimony, •the priest shall assess the valuation on the basis of the
number of years still to run before the jubilee year; and the man shall pay this
24 sum the same day, as for a thing consecrated to Yahweh. •In the jubilee year,
the field shall return to the seller, to the man to whose patrimony the land belongs.
25 All valuation must be made in sanctuary shekels, at the rate of twenty gerahs
to the shekel.

Particular rules for the redemption
a. of first-born

26 "No one, however, may consecrate the first-born of his cattle, for it belongs to Ex 13:11+
27 Yahweh by right: whether ox or sheep, it belongs to Yahweh. •But if it is an
unclean animal it may be repurchased at the valuation price with one-fifth added;
if it is not redeemed, the animal shall be sold at the valuation price.

b. of things under the ban[d] Jos 6:17 Jdt 16:19

28 "Nothing, however, that a man lays under ban for Yahweh may be redeemed;
nothing he possesses, whether man, beasts, or fields of his patrimony. What is
29 laid under ban is always a most holy thing and belongs to Yahweh. •A human
being laid under ban cannot be redeemed, he must be put to death.

c. Many Hebr. MSS, Sam. and Syr. read 'sanctuary'.
d. Or 'because of them'.
27 a. Relating to the discharge of vows, 7:16; 22:21; Nb 30:3-16; Dt 12:6-12; 23:19, 22-24.
b. Persons may be vowed, cf. Jg 11:30-40; 13:3f; 1 S 1:11.

c. Others render 'in proportion to the seed (used) for it'.
d. The term 'ban' or 'anathema' is borrowed from the vocabulary of the Holy War (Jos 6:17+) and here transferred to whatever is unconditionally vowed to God. According to Lv 27:21; Nb 18:14; Ezk 44:29, the usufruct reverts to the priest. The word 'ban' is also used of things condemned by God, Dt 7:26.

Dt 14:22+ **c. of tithes**

"All tithes of the land, levied on the produce of the earth or the fruits of trees, 30
belong to Yahweh; they are consecrated to Yahweh. •If a man wishes to redeem 31
part of his tithe, he must add one-fifth to its value.

"In all tithes of flock or herd, the tenth animal of all that pass under the 32
Ml 1:8 herdsman's staff shall be a thing consecrated to Yahweh; •there must be no 33
picking out of good and bad, no substitution. If substitution takes place, both the
animal and its substitute shall be things consecrated without possibility of
redemption."'

26:46 These are the commandments that Yahweh laid down for Moses on Mount 34
Sinai, for the sons of Israel.

NUMBERS

I. THE CENSUS[a]

26:1-51
2 S 24

1 1 Yahweh spoke to Moses, in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting,
on the first day of the second month,[b] in the second year after the exodus from
the land of Egypt. He said:
2 'Take a census of the whole community of Israel's sons, by clans and families, 1Ch4:38; 7:40
3 taking a count of the names of all the males, head by head. •Every man of Israel,
twenty years of age and over, fit to bear arms, must be registered by you and
4 Aaron and assigned to his fighting station. •You are to take a man from each
tribe, the head of his family, to help you in this.

The census officials

10:13-28

5 'These are the names of those who are to be your helpers:
For Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur. 2:10;7:30; 10:18
6 For Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.
7 For Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab. 2:3 Rt 4:20 1Ch2:11 Mt 1:4 Lk3:22-33
8 For Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar.
9 For Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon.
10 Of the sons of Joseph: for Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud; for Manasseh, 1Ch7:26
Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.
11 For Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni.
12 For Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.
13 For Asher, Pagiel son of Ochran.
14 For Gad, Eliasaph son of Reuel. 2:14;7:42
15 For Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan.'
16 These were men of repute in the community; they were leaders of their 10:4 Ex18:21,25
ancestral clans, chiefs of Israel's hosts.
17 18 Moses and Aaron took these men who have been named, •and on the first
day of the second month they mustered the whole community. The sons of 14:29
Israel established their kinship[c] by clans and families, and one by one the names
19 of all men of twenty years and over were singled out. •As Yahweh had
commanded, Moses took a census of them in the wilderness of Sinai.

The census

Rv 7:4-8

20 When the kinship of the sons of Reuben, Israel's first-born, had been es-
tablished by clans and families, the names of all the males of twenty years and

1 a. This section (ch. 1-4), attributed to the 'Priestly' tradition, presents Israel as a sacred community already fully formed and organised. The Levites are at the very heart of it: this appears from the place assigned to them in the camp and from the nature of their functions; their numbering, too, is connected with the redemption of the first-born (3:43). The taking of a census is itself regarded as an act of religious significance, cf. 2 S 24. The MSS and versions do not always agree on the numbers.

b. Hence one month after the erection of the tabernacle, Ex 40:17.

c. A necessity under the old covenant because membership depended upon physical descent from Abraham; hence the genealogies of 1 Ch 1-9. Cf. also Ne 7:5,61.

over, fit to bear arms, were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the 21
tribe of Reuben was forty-six thousand five hundred.

When the kinship of the sons of Simeon had been established by clans and 22
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Simeon was 23
fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

When the kinship of the sons of Gad had been established by clans and 24
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Gad was forty-five 25
thousand six hundred and fifty.

When the kinship of the sons of Judah had been established by clans and 26
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Judah was 27
seventy-four thousand six hundred.

When the kinship of the sons of Issachar had been established by clans and 28
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Issachar was 29
fifty-four thousand four hundred.

When the kinship of the sons of Zebulun had been established by clans and 30
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Zebulun was 31
fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

The sons of Joseph: when the kinship of the sons of Ephraim had been es- 32
tablished by clans and families, the names of all the males of twenty years and
over, fit to bear arms, were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the 33
tribe of Ephraim was forty thousand five hundred. •When the kinship of the 34
sons of Manasseh had been established by clans and families, the names of all
the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, were singled out one by one.
The total of these for the tribe of Manasseh was thirty-two thousand two hundred. 35

When the kinship of the sons of Benjamin had been established by clans and 36
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Benjamin was 37
thirty-five thousand four hundred.

When the kinship of the sons of Dan had been established by clans and 38
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Dan was sixty- 39
two thousand seven hundred.

When the kinship of the sons of Asher had been established by clans and 40
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Asher was forty- 41
one thousand five hundred.

When the kinship of the sons of Naphtali had been established by clans and 42
families, the names of all the males of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms,
were singled out one by one. •The total of these for the tribe of Naphtali was 43
fifty-three thousand four hundred.

Such were the men registered by Moses, Aaron and the leaders of Israel, of 44
whom there were twelve, each representing his patriarchal House. •Every man of 45
Israel of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms, was counted according to his
2:32;11:21; 26:51 Ex12:37; 38:26 patriarchal House. •Altogether the full total was six hundred and three thousand 46
five hundred and fifty.[d]

But the Levites and their patriarchal tribe were not included in the count. 47

Statute for the Levites

Dt 10:8 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 48

2:33 'Do not, however, take any census of the Levites, or register them among the 49
1Ch15:1 sons of Israel. •You yourself must enrol the Levites to serve the tabernacle 50

of the Testimony and to look after its furnishings and its belongings. They 3:6-8 Ex 25-28 Ezk 48:8-14
are to carry the tabernacle, and all its furnishings, and they are to take care of
51 it and pitch their camp around it. •Whenever the tabernacle is moved the Levites 3:10; 9:15-23; 17:5; 18:7 Ex 40:36-38 3:10,38 Ex 19:12+
are to be the people to dismantle it; whenever the tabernacle is set up again, they
52 are to do this. Any layman coming near it must be put to death. •The sons of
Israel are to pitch their tents in formation each in their own encampment, every
53 man by his standard. •But the Levites are to pitch their tents round the tabernacle of the Testimony. In this way the wrath[e] will be kept from falling on the whole community of the sons of Israel. The Levites are to be in charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony.'
54 The sons of Israel did exactly as Yahweh had ordered Moses. They did as he said.

Order of the tribes 10:11-28

1 2 Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron.
He said:
2 'The sons of Israel are to pitch their tents, every man by his own standard, under the banner of his patriarchal House. They are to pitch their tents all round the tabernacle of the Testimony, at a measured distance.
3 'Those who are to pitch their tents on the east side:
'Towards the sunrise, the standard of the camp of Judah, in battle array. 1:7; 7:12
4 Leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon son of Amminadab. •His command: seventy-four thousand six hundred men.
5 'Encamped next to him:
'The tribe of Issachar. Leader of the sons of Issachar: Nethanel son of Zuar. 7:18
6 His command: fifty-four thousand four hundred men.
7 'The tribe of Zebulun. Leader of the sons of Zebulun: Eliab son of Helon. 7:24
8 His command: fifty-seven thousand four hundred men.
9 'The assembled strength of the camp of Judah numbers in all a hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred. These are to be first in order of breaking camp.
10 'On the south side, the standard of the camp of Reuben, in battle array. Leader 1:5; 7:30
11 of the sons of Reuben: Elizur son of Shedeur. •His command: forty-six thousand five hundred men.
12 'Encamped next to him:
'The tribe of Simeon. Leader of the sons of Simeon: Shelumiel son of Zurishad- 7:36
13 dai. •His command: fifty-nine thousand three hundred men.
14 15 'The tribe of Gad. Leader of the sons of Gad: Eliasaph son of Reuel. •His 1:14; 7:42
command: forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty men.
16 'The assembled strength of the camp of Reuben numbers in all hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty. They are to be second in order of breaking camp.
17 'Next the Tent of Meeting will move, since the camp of the Levites is situated in the middle of the other camps. The order of movement is to be the order of encampment, every man under his own standard.
18 'On the west side, the standard of the camp of Ephraim, in battle array. Leader 7:48
19 of the sons of Ephraim: Elishama son of Ammihud. •His command: forty thousand five hundred men.
20 'Next to him:
'The tribe of Manasseh. Leader of the tribe of Manasseh: Gamaliel son of 7:54
21 Pedahzur. •His command: thirty-two thousand two hundred men.
22 'The tribe of Benjamin. Leader of the sons of Benjamin: Abidan son of 7:60
23 Gideoni. •His command: thirty-five thousand four hundred men.

d. This figure would mean that Israel's total population numbered two-and-a-half million; nor is it consistent with the actual number of fighting men at the time of the Exodus (cf. Jg 5:8); it is doubtless artificial; cf. Ex 38:26.

e. I.e. God's retribution (cf. Dt 29:23-27); this text (and see Lv 10) closely associates this retribution with the presence of God who dwells in the tabernacle and whom the people's irreverence would offend.

'The assembled strength of the camp of Ephraim numbers in all a hundred and 24
eight thousand one hundred. They are to be third in order of breaking camp.

'On the north side, the standard of the camp of Dan, in battle array. Leader 25
7:66 of the sons of Dan: Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. •His command: sixty-two 26
thousand seven hundred men.

'Encamped next to him: 27
7:72 'The tribe of Asher. Leader of the sons of Asher: Pagiel son of Ochran. •His 28
command: forty-one thousand five hundred men.
7:78 'The tribe of Naphtali. Leader of the sons of Naphtali: Ahira son of Enan. 29
His command: fifty-three thousand four hundred men. 30

'The assembled strength of the camp of Dan numbers in all a hundred and 31
fifty-seven thousand six hundred. They are to be last in order of breaking camp.'

(This concerns their stationing by standards.)

Such was the tally of the sons of Israel when the census was made according 32
1:46+ to patriarchal Houses. The full count of the entire camp, grouped under the various
commands, is six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. •The Levites, 33
as Yahweh had commanded Moses, were not included in this census of the sons
of Israel.

The sons of Israel did exactly as Yahweh had ordered Moses. This was 34
how they pitched camp, grouped by standards. This was how they broke camp,
each in his own clan, every man with his own family.

The tribe of Levi

Dt 10:8 ### a. The priests

26:59-61 3 These are the descendants of Aaron and Moses, at the time when Yahweh 1
spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Ex 6:23 1 Ch 24:1 These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the eldest, then Abihu, 2
Eleazar and Ithamar.[a]

Ex 29: 30:22+ Lv 8-9 These are the names of Aaron's sons, priests anointed and invested with the 3
powers of the priesthood. •Nadab and Abihu died in the presence of Yahweh, 4
Lv 10:7 in the wilderness of Sinai, when they offered fire that was unlawful. They left
no children and so it fell to Eleazar and Ithamar to exercise the priesthood
under their father Aaron.

b. The Levites: their duties

1 Ch 15:1 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 5
1:50;8:11 'Muster the tribe of Levi and put it at the disposal of Aaron the priest: they are 6
to be at his service. •They are to undertake the duties that are laid on him and 7
on the entire community before the Tent of Meeting, in their service of the
tabernacle. •The furnishings for the Tent of Meeting are to be in their charge, and 8
they are to undertake the duties that are laid on the sons of Israel in their service
8:14-19 Ezr 2:43+ of the tabernacle. •You are to give the Levites to Aaron and his sons as 'oblates';[b] 9
they are to be given to him by the sons of Israel.[c]

'You are to enrol Aaron and his sons, and they are to carry out their priestly 10
1:51;18:4 duty. But any layman who comes near is to be put to death.'

c. Their divine election[d]

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 11
3:41 'I myself have chosen the Levites from among the sons of Israel, in place of 12
the first-born, those who open the mother's womb among the sons of Israel;
Ex 13:11+ these Levites therefore belong to me. •For every first-born belongs to me. On the 13
day when I struck all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my
own all the first-born of Israel, of both man and beast. They are mine; I am Yahweh.'

26:57-62 ### d. Census of the Levites

Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. He said: 14

15 'You are to take a census of the sons of Levi by families and clans; all the males
of the age of one month and over must be counted'.
16 At Yahweh's word, Moses took his census, as Yahweh had ordered. •These Gn 46:11
17 are the names of the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Ex 6:16-19
1 Ch 6:1
18 These are the names of Gershon's sons by their clans: Libni and Shimei;
19 Kohath's sons by their clans: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel; •Merari's
20 sons by their clans: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of Levi, grouped
according to their patriarchal families.
21 From Gershon are descended the Libnite and the Shimeite clans; these are
22 the Gershonite clans. •Their full number, counting the males of one month and
23 over, came to seven thousand five hundred. •The Gershonite clans pitched their
24 camp behind the tabernacle, on the west side. •The leader of the House of Gershon
25 was Eliasaph son of Lael. •In the Tent of Meeting the sons of Gershon had charge
of the tabernacle, the Tent and its covering, the screen for the entrance to the Ex 26-27
26 Tent of Meeting, •the hangings in the court, the screen for the entrance to the court
surrounding the tabernacle and the altar, and the cords needed for all this work.
27 From Kohath are descended the Amramite, the Izharite, the Hebronite and Ezk 40:46
28 the Uzzielite clans; these are the Kohathite clans. •Their full number, counting the
males of one month and over, came to eight thousand three hundred. They were in
29 charge of the sanctuary. •The Kohathite clans pitched their camp on the south side
30 of the tabernacle. •The leader of the house of the Kohathite clans was Elizaphan
31 son of Uzziel. •They were in charge of the ark, the table, the lamp-stand, the Ex 25:10-40; 27:1-8; 30:1-10
altars, the sacred vessels used in the liturgy, and the screen with all its fittings.
32 The chief of the Levite leaders was Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest. He was
the head of all those who were in charge of the sanctuary.
33 From Merari are descended the Mahlite and the Mushite clans; these are the
34 Merarite clans. •Their full number, counting the males of one month and over,
35 came to six thousand two hundred. •The leader of the house of the Merarite
clans was Zuriel, son of Abihail. They pitched their camp on the north side of
36 the tabernacle. •The sons of Merari were in charge of the framework of the Ex 26:15-30; 27:9-19
tabernacle, with its crossbars, posts and sockets, all its accessories and fittings,
37 and also the posts round the court, with their sockets, pegs and cords.
38 Finally, on the east side, facing the tabernacle and the Tent of Meeting,
towards the sunrise, was the camp of Moses and Aaron and his sons, who had
charge of the sanctuary on behalf of the sons of Israel. Any layman coming near 1:51
was to be put to death.
39 Altogether, the total count of Levites of the age of one month and over, whom
Moses numbered by clans as Yahweh had ordered, came to twenty-two thousand.

e. The Levites and the ransoming of the first-born

40 Yahweh said to Moses:
'Take a census of all the first-born among the sons of Israel, all the males
41 from the age of one month and over; take a census of them by name. •Then you
will present the Levites to me, Yahweh, in place of the first-born of Israel; 3:12-13 Ex 13:11+
in the same way you will give me their cattle in place of the first-born cattle of
the sons of Israel.'
42 As Yahweh ordered, Moses took a census of all the first-born of the sons
43 of Israel. •The total count, by name, of the first-born from the age of one month
and over came to twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.[e]

3 a. Zadok and the priests of the Jerusalem Temple are traced back to Eleazar, 1 Ch 5:30f. Abiathar, the other priest of David's time, is descended, through Ahimelech, from Ithamar, 1 Ch 24:3f, cf. 2 S 20:25.

b. The 'given (or 'dedicated') ones' are described as lesser ministers of the post-exilic Temple in Ezr 2:43, see note.

c. Greek, Sam. and 12 Hebr. MSS read 'they will be given to me'.

d. Like the first-born, whose place they take, Ex 13:11+, the Levites are God's property; this statute of theirs very simply expresses an ideal that will later flower in Christian priesthood and monasticism.

e. This total is made up of the Levites, v. 39, plus a remainder of those redeemed with a sum of money—a practice that became general later, Ex 13:11+.

Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, 44
16:8 'Take the Levites in the place of all the first-born of Israel's sons, and the 45
cattle of the Levites in place of their cattle; the Levites shall be my own, Yahweh's
Ex13:11+ own. •For the ransom of the two hundred and seventy-three of the first-born of 46
the sons of Israel in excess of the number of Levites, •you are to take five shekels 47
Lv5:15+ for each, reckoning by the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel; •you 48
must then give this money to Aaron and his sons as the ransom price for this extra
number.'

Moses received this money as the ransom for this extra number unransomed 49
by the Levites. •He received the money for the first-born of the sons of Israel, 50
one thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels, sanctuary shekels. •Moses 51
handed over this ransom money to Aaron and his sons, at the bidding of Yahweh,
as Yahweh had ordered Moses.

The Levite clans

a. The Kohathites

Dt 10:8 4 Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said: 1
'Take a census of those Levites who are sons of Kohath, by clans and families: 2
8:24 1Ch23:3 count all the men between thirty and fifty years of age, those fit to bear arms, 3
who are liable for service in the Tent of Meeting.

'These are the duties of the sons of Kohath in the Tent of Meeting: they are 4
to have charge of the most holy things.

'When camp is broken, Aaron and his sons are to come and take down the veil 5
Ex26:31-37; 35:12;39:34 of the screen. With it they must cover up the ark of the Testimony. •On top of 6
2S 6:7+ this they must put a covering of fine leather, and spread over the whole a cloth
all of violet. Then they are to fix the poles to the ark.

Ex25:23+ 'Over the offertory table they are to spread a violet cloth, and put on it the 7
dishes, cups, bowls and libation jars; the bread of perpetual offering is also to
be on it. •Over these they must spread a cloth of scarlet and cover the whole with 8
a covering of fine leather. Then they are to fix the poles to the table.

'They are then to take a cloth of violet and cover the light-bearing lamp-stand, 9
together with the lamps, snuffers, trays and all the oil jars that belong to it.
They are to put it, with all its accessories, on a covering of fine leather and place 10
it on the litter.

Ex30:1-6 'Over the golden altar[a] they must spread a violet cloth, and cover that with 11
a covering of fine leather. Then they are to fix the poles to it.

'They are also to take all the other objects used in the service of the sanctuary. 12
They must put them all on a violet cloth, cover them with a covering of fine leather,
and place them together on the litter.

'When they have removed the ashes from the altar,[b] they must spread a scarlet 13
1Ch28:17 cloth over it, •and place on this all the objects used in the liturgical service, 14
the fire pans, hooks, scoops, sprinkling basins and all the altar vessels. Over the
whole they must spread a covering of fine leather. Then they are to fix the poles
to it.

7:9 'When Aaron and his sons have finished covering all the sacred objects and all 15
Lv17:1+ 2S 6:7+ their accessories at the breaking of camp, the sons of Kohath are to come to
take up the burden, but without touching any of the sacred things; otherwise
they would die. This is the charge entrusted to the sons of Kohath in the Tent
of Meeting. •It is to fall to Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, to watch over the 16
Ex27:20; 30:22-23, 34-38 oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the perpetual oblation and the chrism; he
must watch over the whole tabernacle and everything in it: the sacred objects
and their accessories.'

Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said: 17
'Do not cut off the tribe of the clans of Kohath from the number of the Levites. 18
But deal with them in this way, so that they may live on and not incur death 19
when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons must go in and

20 assign to each of them his task and his burden. •In this way they can go in and
cast yet not their eyes, even for a moment, on any of the holy things; if they Ex 33:21
did, they would die.'

b. The Gershonites

21 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said to him:
22 23 'Take a census also of the sons of Gershon, by families and clans: •count all
the men between thirty and fifty years of age, those fit to bear arms, who are
liable for service in the Tent of Meeting.
24 'These are the duties of the Gershonite clans, their functions and their burdens. 7:7
25 They are to carry the curtains of the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting with its
covering and the covering of fine leather that goes over it, the screen for the
26 entrance to the Tent of Meeting, •the hangings of the court, the screen for the
entrance to the court that surrounds the tabernacle and the altar, the cords
and all the accessories, and all the necessary equipment.
27 'They are to be responsible for these things. •All the duties of the sons of
Gershon—their functions and their tasks—are to be carried out under the
28 direction of Aaron and his sons: you must see that they fulfil their charge. •Such
shall be the duties of the Gershonite clans in the Tent of Meeting. Their work
will be supervised by Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.

c. The Merarites

29 'You are to count the sons of Merari, by clans and families. •Count all the
30 men between thirty and fifty years of age, those fit to bear arms, who are liable
for service in the Tent of Meeting.
31 'The burden they are to carry and the duties that are to fall to them in the Tent 7:8
of Meeting shall be as follows: the framework of the tabernacle, its crossbars,
32 its posts and sockets, •the posts around the court with their sockets, pegs, cords
and all their tackle. You are to draw up a list of their names with the burden that
each man must carry.
33 'These are the duties of the Merarite clans. All their duties in the Tent of
Meeting will be supervised by Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.'

Census of the Levites

34 Moses, Aaron and the leaders of the community took a census of the sons
35 of Kohath, by clans and families: •of every man between thirty and fifty years
36 of age, fit to bear arms and liable for service in Tent of Meeting. •The total
37 of their clans was two thousand seven hundred and fifty men. •This was the
number of the Kohathite clans, of all those who were liable for service in the Tent
of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron counted at the bidding of Yahweh given
through Moses.
38 39 A census was taken of the sons of Gershon, by clans and families: •of every
man between thirty and fifty years of age, fit to bear arms and liable for service
40 in the Tent of Meeting. •By clans and families the total was two thousand six
41 hundred and thirty men. •This was the number of the Gershonite clans, of all
those who were liable for service in the Tent of Meeting, whom Moses and Aaron
counted at the bidding of Yahweh.
42 A census was taken of the clans of the sons of Merari, by clans and families:
43 of every man between thirty and fifty years of age, fit to bear arms and liable for
44 service in the Tent of Meeting. •The total of their clans was three thousand
45 two hundred men. •This was the number of the Merarite clans, whom Moses
and Aaron counted at the bidding of Yahweh through Moses.
46 The total number of Levites, counted according to clans and families by
47 Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel—•all the men between thirty and

4 a. The altar of incense. b. The altar of holocaust.

fifty years of age, fit to bear arms and liable for serving or carrying in the Tent of Meeting—•amounted to eight thousand five hundred and eighty. •At the 48 49
bidding of Yahweh through Moses, the census was taken to assign to every man his duty and his task; they were numbered as Yahweh had ordered Moses.

II. VARIOUS LAWS[a]

Dt23:10-15 **Expulsion of the unclean**

5 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 1
9:6;19:11-16 Lv13:45-46; 15 'Order the sons of Israel to put out of the camp all lepers, and all who suffer 2
from a discharge, or who have become unclean by touching a corpse. •Man or 3
1Co5:7-13 2Co6:16-18 Rv21:27; 22:15 woman, you must put them out and forbid them the camp. The sons of Israel must not defile in this way the camp where I dwell among them.'
The sons of Israel did so: they put them out of the camp. The sons of Israel 4
did as Yahweh had ordered Moses.

Restitution

Lv5:15-26 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Tell the sons of Israel: 5 6
"If a man or woman commits any of the sins by which men break faith with Yahweh, that person incurs guilt.
Si 4:26 "He must confess the sin he has committed and restore in full the amount 7
for which he is liable, with one-fifth added. Payment is to be made to the person whom he has wronged.
"If, however, the latter has no kinsman to whom this restitution can be made, 8
the restitution due to Yahweh reverts to the priest, over and above the ram of atonement with which the priest makes atonement for the guilty man. •For of 9
everything consecrated by the sons of Israel and brought to the priest he has a right to the portion set aside. •Whatever a man consecrates is his own; 10
whatever is given to the priest belongs to the priest." '

Oblation in cases of jealousy[b]

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Say this to the sons of Israel: 11 12
"If anyone has a wife who goes astray and is unfaithful to him, •if some other 13
man sleeps with the woman without the husband's knowledge, if she disgraces herself in secret in this way, without any witness against her, and without anyone
19:1 catching her in the act; •then, if a spirit of jealousy comes over the husband and 14
makes him jealous for the wife who has disgraced herself, or again if this spirit of jealousy comes upon him and makes him jealous for his wife even when she is innocent: •the man must bring his wife before the priest, and on her behalf 15
Lv 5:11; 7:10 make an offering of one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal. He is not to pour oil on it or put incense on it, because this is an 'oblation for jealousy', a memorial
Lv 2:2 offering to record a fault.
"The priest is then to bring the woman forward and stand her before Yahweh. 16
Then he shall take living water[c] in an earthen jar, and on the water throw dust 17
Dn 13:29 that he has taken from the floor of the tabernacle. •After he has placed the 18
woman before Yahweh, he shall unbind her hair and put in her hands the commemorative oblation (that is, the oblation for jealousy). In his own hands the priest will hold the water of bitterness and of cursing.
"He is then to put the woman on oath. He shall say to her: If it is not true that 19
a man has slept with you, that you have gone astray and disgraced yourself while under your husband's authority, then may this water of bitterness and cursing do you no harm. •But if it is true that you have gone astray, while under 20
your husband's authority, that you have disgraced yourself by sharing your bed
Rt 1:17+ with a man other than your husband... •Here the priest shall impose an impre- 21
catory oath on the woman. He shall say to her:... May Yahweh make of you

an execration and a curse among your people, making your thigh shrivel and
22 your belly swell! •May this water of cursing enter your bowels to swell your
belly and shrivel your organs!' The woman must answer: Amen! Amen!
23 "Then the priest shall commit these curses to writing and wash them off in the
24 water of bitterness. •He must make the woman drink this water of bitterness and Ps109:18
of cursing, and this water of cursing shall go into her and be bitter inside her.
25 "The priest shall then take the oblation for jealousy from the woman's hands,
and hold it up before Yahweh with a gesture of offering, and so carry it up to
26 the altar. •He shall take a handful as a memorial, and burn it on the altar. Lv 5:12
27 "He shall then make the woman drink the water. •After he has made her drink
it, if it is true that she has disgraced herself, deceiving her husband, then the water
of cursing that goes into her shall indeed be bitter: her belly will swell and her
28 thigh shrivel, and she will be an execration among her people. •But if she has
not disgraced herself and is clean, then she will go unscathed and will bear
children.
29 "This is the ritual in cases of jealousy, when a woman has gone astray and
30 disgraced herself while under her husband's authority, •or when a spirit of
jealousy has come over a man and made him jealous for his wife. When a
husband brings such a woman before Yahweh, the priest must apply this ritual
31 to her in full. •The husband shall be guiltless, but the woman must bear the
punishment for her sin." '

The nazirite[a]

1 2 6 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Say this to the sons of Israel: 1 M 3:49
"If a man or a woman wishes to make a vow, the vow of the nazirite by
3 which he is pledged to Yahweh, •he shall abstain from wine and strong drink, ✗ Lk1:15
4 and neither drink the juice of grapes, nor eat grapes, fresh or dried. •For the
duration of his vow he shall touch nothing that comes from the vine, not even Jg 13:5; 16:17
5 verjuice or lees. •As long as he is bound by his vow, no razor shall touch his
head; until the time of his consecration to Yahweh is completed, he remains
6 under vow and shall let his hair grow free. •For the entire period of his conse- Jr 35:3-6 Am 2:12
7 cration to Yahweh he must not go near a corpse, •he must not make himself
unclean for either father or mother, for either brother or sister, should they die;
8 on his head he carries his consecration to his God. •Throughout the whole of Lv 21:12 Ac21:23-26
his nazirate he is a person consecrated to Yahweh.
9 "If anyone dies suddenly in his presence, and so makes his consecrated
hair unclean, he must shave his head on the day of his cleansing, he must shave
10 his head on the seventh day. •On the eighth day, he is to bring two turtledoves
or two young pigeons to the priest, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.
11 The priest must offer one as a sacrifice for sin, and the other as a holocaust;
he must then perform over this man the rite of atonement for the defilement that
he has contracted from the corpse. The man must consecrate his head that same
12 day; •he must consecrate himself to Yahweh for the period of his nazirate, and
he must bring a male yearling lamb as a sacrifice of reparation. The time already Lv14:21-31
spent shall not count, since his hair has become unclean.

5 a. These laws ('Priestly' tradition) are additional material in the spirit of the Law of Clean and Unclean in Lv 11-16. They resemble the supplementary laws inserted in the Law of Holiness, as in Lv 20:22-25.

b. The judgement of God, or trial by ordeal, was universally practised from ancient times up to the Middle Ages; in the absence of evidence it was considered a guide to a fair decision. Among the Hittites and the Babylonians trial by water was the favourite method. Israelite usage confines trial by ordeal to this present case and attaches Yahwistic ritual to the ancient custom.

c. 'living water' Greek; 'holy water' Hebr.

6 a. For the period of his vow the nazirite, i.e. 'vowed' to God, undertakes to leave his hair uncut, to take no strong drink, and to avoid contact with corpses. The hair is a sign of strength, and the first abstention signifies that the nazirite allows the divine power to act in him, thus symbolising his dedication to God. (In Gn 49:26 and Dt 33:16 Joseph is called a nazirite). The second abstention shows that the nazirite refuses a life of ease (cf. the Rechabites, Jr 35:5-8). The third shows that he belongs to God in a special way (cf. the priests in Lv 21:1-2,10-11). Cf. Am 2:11-12 and the examples of this temporary vow in Ac 18:18; 21:23-26. A child could be thus dedicated by its mother (without time-limit?): Samson, Jg 13:5-7,14; 16:17; Samuel, 1 S 1:11 (no 'strong drink' clause); John the Baptist, Lk 1:15 ('hair' clause omitted).

"This is the ritual to be followed by the nazirite on the day when his period of 13
consecration is completed. He is to be led to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting,
and must make his offering to Yahweh: for holocaust, a male yearling lamb 14
without blemish; for sacrifice for sin, a yearling ewe lamb without blemish;
for communion sacrifice, a ram without blemish, •and a basket of unleavened 15
loaves made of fine flour mixed with oil, and of unleavened wafers spread with
oil, with the oblations and libations appropriate to them. •When he has brought 16
all this before Yahweh, the priest must offer the sacrifice for sin and the holocaust
for the nazirite. •The nazirite must offer up the communion sacrifice with the ram 17
and the unleavened bread in the basket, and the priest must offer the accom-
panying oblation and libation. •Then the nazirite shall shave off his consecrated 18
hair at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, and taking the locks of his consecrated
head, he shall put them in the fire of the communion sacrifice. •The priest is to 19
take the shoulder of the ram, as soon as it is cooked, with an unleavened cake
from the basket, and an unleavened wafer. He is to put them into the hands of the
nazirite when the nazirite has shaved off his hair. •With them he must make the 20
gesture of offering before Yahweh; as it is a holy thing, it reverts to the priest, in
Lv 7:34; 10:14 addition to the breast that has been presented and the thigh that has been set
aside. After this the nazirite may once more drink wine.

"Such is the ritual for the nazirite. If, besides the hair, he has also vowed a 21
personal offering to Yahweh, he must (apart from anything else that his means
allow) fulfil the vow that he has made, in addition to what the ritual prescribes
for his hair." '

The form of blessing

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Say this to Aaron and his sons: 22 23
Ex 23:20 Ps121:7-8 Jn17:11-12 "This is how you are to bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them:
Ps 4:6; 31:16; 134:3 May Yahweh bless you and keep you. 24
Ps 122:6 Jn 14:27 May Yahweh let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. 25
Dt 28:10 Si50:20-21 May Yahweh uncover his face to you and bring you peace." 26
[b] This is how they are to call down my name on the sons of Israel, and I will 27
bless them.'

III. OFFERINGS OF THE LEADERS AND CONSECRATION OF THE LEVITES[a]

Offering of wagons

Ex40:17-33 1Ch29:7 2Ch35:13 7 On the day Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed and conse- 1
crated it with all its furniture, as well as the altar and all its accessories. When
Ex40:9-15 he had anointed and consecrated it all, •the leaders of Israel made an offering; 2
these were the heads of the patriarchal Houses, who were leaders of tribes and
had presided over the census. •They brought their offering before Yahweh: 3
six covered wagons and twelve oxen, one wagon for every two leaders and one
ox each. They brought them before the tabernacle. •Yahweh spoke to 4
Moses and said, •'Accept these from them, and let them be set apart for the 5
service of the Tent of Meeting. You are to give them to the Levites, to each as
his duties require.' •Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them to 6
4:24-28, 31-33 the Levites. •To the sons of Gershon he gave two wagons and four oxen for 7
the duties they had to perform. •To the sons of Merari he gave four wagons 8
and eight oxen, for the duties they had to perform under the direction of Ithamar,
4:4-15 1Ch15:1,5 son of Aaron the priest. •But to the sons of Kohath he gave none at all, because 9
the sacred charge entrusted to them had to be carried on their shoulders.

Dedication offering

Ezk43:18-26 The leaders then made an offering for the dedication of the altar, on the day 10

it was anointed. They brought their offering before the altar, •and Yahweh said
to Moses, 'Let the leaders each bring an offering on successive days for the
dedication of the altar'.

On the first day an offering was brought by Nahshon son of Amminadab, 2:3
of the tribe of Judah. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing a
hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels
(sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed
with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young
bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five
kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Nahshon son of
Amminadab.

On the second day an offering was brought by Nethanel son of Zuar, leader 2:5
of Issachar. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing a hundred and
thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary
shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil,
one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young bull,
one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids,
and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Nethanel son of Zuar.

On the third day an offering was brought by Eliab son of Helon, leader of 2:7
the sons of Zebulun. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing a
hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels
(sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed
with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young
bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five
kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Eliab son of Helon.

On the fourth day an offering was brought by Elizur son of Shedeur, leader 2:10
of the sons of Reuben. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing
a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels
(sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed
with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young
bull, one ram, and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five
kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Elizur son of Shedeur.

On the fifth day an offering was brought by Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, 2:12
leader of the sons of Simeon. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing
a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels
(sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed
with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young
bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five
kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Shelumiel son of
Zurishaddai.

On the sixth day an offering was brought by Eliasaph son of Reuel, leader of 1:14;2:14
the sons of Gad. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing a hundred
and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels (sanctuary
shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed with oil,
one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young bull,
one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids,
and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Eliasaph son of Reuel.

On the seventh day an offering was brought by Elishama son of Ammihud, 2:18

b. In the Greek this verse comes before v. 24.

7 a. After the supplementary legislation of ch. 5-6 the 'Priestly' narrative is now resumed and continues until 10:28.

leader of the sons of Ephraim. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl 49
weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing
seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with
fine flour mixed with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with 50
incense, •one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, 51
one goat for the sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, 52 53
five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of
Elishama, son of Ammihud.

2:20 On the eighth day an offering was brought by Gamaliel son of Pedahzur, 54
leader of the sons of Manasseh. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl 55
weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing
seventy shekels (sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with
fine flour mixed with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with 56
incense, •one young bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, 57
one goat for the sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, 58 59
five rams, five kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of
Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

2:22 On the ninth day an offering was brought by Abidan son of Gideoni, leader 60
of the sons of Benjamin. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing 61
a hundred and thirty shekels, one sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels
(sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed
with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young 62 63
bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the 64
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five 65
kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Abidan son of
Gideoni.

2:25 On the tenth day an offering was brought by Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai, 66
leader of the sons of Dan. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing 67
a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels
(sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed
with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young 68 69
bull, one ram, and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the 70
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five 71
kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Ahiezer son of
Ammishaddai.

2:27 On the eleventh day an offering was brought by Pagiel son of Ochran, leader 72
of the sons of Asher. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing a 73
hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels
(sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed
with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young 74 75
bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the 76
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five 77
kids, and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Pagiel son of Ochran.

2:29 On the twelfth day an offering was brought by Ahira son of Enan, leader of 78
the sons of Naphtali. •His offering consisted of: one silver bowl weighing a 79
hundred and thirty shekels, one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels
(sanctuary shekels), both of them filled, for the oblation, with fine flour mixed
with oil, •one golden bowl weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, •one young 80 81
bull, one ram and one male yearling lamb for the holocaust, •one goat for the 82
sacrifice for sin, •and, for the communion sacrifice, two oxen, five rams, five kids, 83
and five male yearling lambs. This was the offering of Ahira son of Enan.

These were the offerings made by the leaders of Israel for the dedication of 84
the altar on the day it was anointed: twelve silver bowls, twelve silver sprinkling
bowls, and twelve golden bowls. •Each silver bowl weighed a hundred and 85
thirty shekels, and each sprinkling bowl seventy, the silver of these objects
weighing in all two thousand four hundred sanctuary shekels. •The twelve 86

golden bowls filled with incense weighed ten shekels each (sanctuary shekels),
the gold of these bowls weighing in all a hundred and twenty shekels.
87 The sum total of animals for the holocaust: twelve bulls, twelve rams, twelve
male yearling lambs, together with their accompanying oblations. For the
88 sacrifice for sin, twelve goats. •The sum total of animals for the communion
sacrifice: twenty-four bulls, sixty rams, sixty kids, and sixty male yearling lambs.
These were the offerings for the dedication of the altar, after it had been
anointed.
89 When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he heard Ex33:9-11
the voice that spoke to him[b] from above the throne of mercy which was on the Ex 25:17+
ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubs. It was then that he spoke
with Him.[c]

The lamps for the lamp-stand

1 8 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said:
2 'Say this to Aaron, "When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps must throw Ex25:31-39 Lv24:2-4
their light towards the front of the lamp-stand" '.[a]
3 Aaron saw to this. He set up the lamps to the front of the lamp-stand, as
4 Yahweh had ordered Moses. •This lamp-stand was worked in beaten gold, Ex 25:9
including its stem and its petals, which were also of beaten gold. This lamp-
stand had been made according to the pattern Yahweh had shown to Moses.

The Levites are offered to Yahweh Lv 8

5 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said:
6 7 'Separate the Levites from the sons of Israel and purify them. •This is how 19:1-10 Lv14:8-9
you are to purify them: you must sprinkle them with lustral water, and they must Ezk36:25
8 shave their bodies all over and wash their clothing. They will then be clean. •They
must next take a young bull, with the accompanying oblation of fine flour mixed
9 with oil, and you must take a second young bull for a sacrifice for sin. •Then
bring the Levites before the Tent of Meeting, and call together the whole
10 community of the sons of Israel. •When you have brought the Levites before
11 Yahweh, the sons of Israel must lay their hands on them.[b] •Aaron shall then offer
the Levites, making the gesture of offering before Yahweh on behalf of the sons
of Israel. From that time, they will be dedicated to the service of Yahweh. 3:6-8
12 'The Levites must then lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, one of which
you are to offer as a sacrifice for sin, and the other as a holocaust to Yahweh;
13 this is how the rite of atonement for the Levites is to be performed.[c] •Having Lv 1:4
brought the Levites before Aaron and his sons, you will present them to Yahweh
14 with the gesture of offering. •This is how you are to set the Levites apart from 16:8 Ex 29:24+
15 the rest of the sons of Israel, so that they may be mine. •The Levites will then
begin their ministry in the Tent of Meeting.
16 'You must purify them and offer them with the gesture of offering •because
they have been made over to me from among the sons of Israel, as 'oblates'. 3:12-13 Ex 13:11+
They are to replace those who open the womb, all the first-born; of all the sons
17 of Israel I have taken them for my own. •All the first-born among the sons of
Israel, man and beast, do indeed belong to me: the day I struck all the first-born
18 in the land of Egypt, I consecrated them to myself, •and now, in place of all
19 the first-born among the sons of Israel, I have taken the Levites. •From among

b. 'that spoke to him' corr.

c. The sentence, read in this context, means that the consecration of the altar makes communication possible between God and his people (Ezk 43:27) through the mediation of Moses (Ps 99:6f). But it is possible that the text was originally followed by some divine ordinance (either by that of 8:6 or by some command to set forth). If this is so, we should translate 'he heard... Then it (the voice) said to him'.

8 a. Vulg. adds 'Give orders, therefore, that the lamps look towards the north, opposite the table of the loaves of offering; they are to shine in the direction which the lamp-stand faces'.

b. Cf. Lv 1:4. The Levites are treated as an offering; they represent the first-born of Israel, see 3:12-13 and Ex 13:11+.

c. The Levites have to be freed of all worldly contamination. They were substitutes for the first-born and now the sacrificial animals are substitutes for the Levites. Cf. Gn 22.

the sons of Israel I give them to Aaron and his sons, as 'oblates'; on behalf of the sons of Israel, they will minister in the Tent of Meeting and perform the rite of atonement over them, so that none of the sons of Israel may be struck down for approaching[d] the sanctuary.'

Moses, Aaron and the whole community of the sons of Israel dealt with 20
the Levites exactly as Yahweh had directed Moses concerning them; this is what
the sons of Israel did with them. •The Levites purified themselves and washed 21
their clothes, and Aaron presented them with the gesture of offering before
Yahweh. Then he performed the rite of atonement over them to purify them.
The Levites were then allowed to perform their ministry in the Tent of Meeting 22
in the presence of Aaron and his sons. As Yahweh had directed Moses concerning
the Levites, so it was done to them.

The duration of their ministry

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 23

4:3 'This concerns the Levites. From the age of twenty-five onwards, the Levite 24
must exercise his ministry and do duty in the Tent of Meeting. •After the age 25
of fifty, he is no longer bound to the ministry; he will have no further duties;
but he will still help his brothers to ensure the services in the Tent of Meeting, 26
though he himself will no longer have any ministry. See that this is the rule for
the ministry of the Levites.'

IV. THE PASSOVER AND THE DEPARTURE

Ex12:1+ **Date of the Passover**[a]

9 Yahweh spoke to Moses, in the wilderness of Sinai, in the second year after 1
the exodus from Egypt, in the first month. He said:

Ex 12:6 'Let the sons of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. •The fourteenth 2 3
day of this month, between the two evenings, is the appointed time for you
to keep it. You must keep it with all the laws and customs proper to it.'

Moses gave orders for the sons of Israel to keep the Passover. •They kept it, 4 5
in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month,
between the two evenings. The sons of Israel did exactly as Yahweh had
ordered Moses.

Individual cases

5:2;19:11 Jn 11:55 It happened that certain men had become unclean by touching a dead body; 6
they could not keep the Passover that day. They came the same day to Moses
and Aaron, •and said to them, 'We have become unclean by touching a dead 7
body. Why should we be forbidden to bring an offering to Yahweh at the proper
time with the rest of the sons of Israel?' •Moses answered them, 'Wait there 8
till I learn what orders Yahweh gives about you'.

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Say this to the sons of Israel: 9 10

"If anyone, among you or your descendants, becomes unclean by touching
a dead body or is on a journey abroad, he can still keep a Passover for Yahweh.
Such persons shall keep it in the second month, on the fourteenth day, between 11
the two evenings. They are to eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs;
nothing of it must be left over until morning, nor must they break any of its 12
bones: they must keep this Passover exactly according to the paschal ritual.
But if anyone who is clean, or who has not had to go on a journey, fails to keep 13
the Passover, he shall be outlawed from his people. He has not brought the
offering to Yahweh at its appointed time, and he must bear the burden of his sin.

Ex12:48+ "If a stranger is living among you and keeps a Passover for Yahweh, he must 14
keep it in accordance with the laws and customs of the Passover. There is to
be only one law among you, for settler and native alike." '

The Cloud

Ex 13:22+; 40:34-38

15 On the day the tabernacle was set up, the Cloud covered the tabernacle, 1:51; 10:34
the Tent of the Testimony. From nightfall until morning, it remained over the
16 tabernacle under the appearance of fire. •So the Cloud covered it continually,
at night taking the appearance of fire.
17 Whenever the Cloud lifted above the Tent, the sons of Israel broke camp;
18 whenever the Cloud halted, there the sons of Israel pitched camp. •The sons of
Israel set out at the command of Yahweh, and at his command they pitched camp.
The people remained encamped as long as the Cloud rested on the tabernacle.
19 If the Cloud stayed for many days above the tabernacle, the sons of Israel paid
20 worship[b] to Yahweh and did not break camp. •But if the Cloud happened to
stay for only a few days above the tabernacle, they pitched camp at Yahweh's
21 command and broke camp at Yahweh's command. •If the Cloud happened to
remain only from evening to morning, they set out when it lifted the next
morning. Or, if it stayed for a whole day and night, they set out only when it
22 lifted. •Sometimes it stayed there for two days, a month, or a year; however
long the Cloud stayed above the tabernacle, the sons of Israel remained in camp
23 in the same place, and when it lifted they set out. •At Yahweh's command they
pitched camp, and at Yahweh's command they broke camp. They paid worship to
Yahweh, according to the orders which Yahweh had given through Moses.

The trumpets

Jl 2:1,15f
1Co 15:52
1Th 4:16f

1 10 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said:
2 'Make two trumpets; make them of beaten silver; and use them for 2 Ch 7:6
3 summoning the community, and for sounding the order to break camp. •When- Si 50:16
ever they are sounded, the whole community is to gather round you, at the
4 entrance to the Tent of Meeting. •But if only one trumpet is sounded, then only
the leaders, the chiefs of Israel's battalions, are to gather round you. 1:16
5 'When the trumpet blast is accompanied by a battle cry,[a] the camps pitched Ezr 3:11
6 to the east shall set out. •At the second blast accompanied by a battle cry, the Zp 1:14
camps pitched to the south shall set out.[b] To break camp, the trumpet blast must
7 be accompanied by a battle cry, •but to assemble the community the trumpets
8 shall be sounded without battle cry. •The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to sound
the trumpets; this is a perpetual law for you and your descendants.
9 'In your own land when you go to war against an enemy who oppresses you, 31:6
you must sound the trumpet with a battle cry: Yahweh your God will remember
10 you, and you will be delivered from your enemies. •At your festivals, solemnities, Lv 23:24
or new-moon feasts, you will sound the trumpet at the time of your holocausts Si 50:16
and your communion sacrifices, and they will call you to the remembrance of
your God. I am Yahweh your God.' Lv 17:1+

The order of march

11 [c] In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month,

d. The Greek simply reads 'may approach'.

9 a. The section 9:1-14 (still the 'Priestly' tradition) does not fit into the chronological scheme of ch. 1 (whose starting-point is the second month, 1:1). It supplements the great 'Priestly' rulings on the Passover, Ex 12, with a clause of considerable interest to the Jews of the Dispersion: these were in constant danger of contracting ritual impurity on their journeys, and the time required for purification might make them miss the Passover.

b. Alternative translation 'obeyed the command of Yahweh'.

10 a. The Hebr. word primarily means a sacred war cry, v. 9; 31:6, and cf. Jos 6:5,20; Am 1:14; 2:2; Zp 1:16, etc., part of the ark ceremonial, 1 S 4:5, cf. 2 S 6:15. Each stage of the journey is regarded as a march to battle. With these slogans a king was acclaimed, Nb 23:21, cf. 1 K 1:34,40; they were also used at religious festivals Lv 25:9; Nb 29:1.

b. Greek and Vet. Lat. here add 'At the third blast of the trumpet accompanied by a battle cry, the camps on the west side will set out. At the fourth blast of the trumpet accompanied by a battle cry, the camps on the north side will set out.' Instead of 'south' Sam. reads 'north'.

c. In Syr. Hex. and Sam. this v. is preceded by 'Yahweh said to Moses, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Go, leave here and go to the hill country of the Amorites, to all those who dwell in the Plain, the Uplands, the Lowlands, the Negeb and the sea coast, the land of Canaan, and Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. See, I have set the land before you; go and take possession of the land I swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give to their descendants after them."

Ex 33:1 the Cloud lifted over the tabernacle of the Testimony. •The sons of Israel set 12
out, in marching order, from the wilderness of Sinai. In the wilderness of Paran
the Cloud came to rest.

1:1;2:1-34 These are the men who set out in the vanguard, at the order of Yahweh 13
given through Moses: •in the vanguard was the standard of the camp of the sons 14
of Judah, in battle array. In command of Judah's force was Nahshon son of
Amminadab; •in command of the sons of Issachar, in battle array, was Nethanel 15
son of Zuar; •in command of the tribe of the sons of Zebulun, in battle array, 16
was Eliab son of Helon.

Then, the tabernacle being dismantled, the sons of Gershon and the sons 17
of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle.

1:5 Then came the standard of the camp of the sons of Reuben, in battle array. 18
In command of Reuben's force was Elizur son of Shedeur; •in command of the 19
tribe of the sons of Simeon, in battle array, was Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;
in command of the tribe of the sons of Gad, in battle array, was Eliasaph son 20
of Reuel.

Then came the sons of Kohath, who carried the sanctuary (the tabernacle 21
was set up before their arrival).

Then came the standard of the camp of the sons of Ephraim, in battle array. 22
In command of Ephraim's force was Elishama son of Ammihud; •in command 23
of the tribe of the sons of Manasseh, in battle array, was Gamaliel son of
Pedahzur; •in command of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin was Abidan son 24
of Gideoni.

Last of all, the rearguard of all the camps, came the standard of the camp 25
of the sons of Dan, in battle array. In command of the force of Dan was Ahiezer
son of Ammishaddai; •in command of the tribe of the sons of Asher, in battle 26
array, was Pagiel son of Ochran; •in command of the sons of Naphtali, in 27
battle array, was Ahira son of Enan.

Such was the order of march for the sons of Israel, in battle array. So they 28
set out.

Moses' proposal to Hobab[d]

Ex2:15-22 Jg 1:16 Is 15:16 Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, his father-in-law, 'We are 29
setting out for the land of which Yahweh has said: I will give it to you. Come
Gn12:2+ with us, and we will treat you well, for Yahweh has promised happiness to
Ex 18:27 Israel.' •'I will not come with you,' he answered 'I will go to my own land and 30
my own kindred.' •'Do not leave us,' Moses replied 'for you know where we 31
can camp in the wilderness, and so you will be our eyes.[e] •If you come with us, 32
you will share in the blessing of the happiness with which Yahweh blesses us.'

The departure

They set out from the mountain of Yahweh and journeyed for three days. 33
The ark of the covenant of Yahweh went at their head for this journey of three
days, searching out a camping place for them.

9:15-23 Ex40:34-38 [f] In the daytime, the Cloud of Yahweh was over them whenever they left camp. 34

14:44 ||Ps 68:1 Si 16:6 Is 4:3f; 33:3; 42:13

And as the ark set out, Moses would say, 35
'Arise, Yahweh, may your enemies be scattered
and those who hate you run
for their lives before you!'
And as it came to rest, he would say, 36
'Come back, Yahweh,
to the thronging hosts of Israel'.[g]

V. THE HALTS IN THE WILDERNESS

Taberah

11 Now the people set up a lament which was offensive to Yahweh's ears, and Yahweh heard it. His anger blazed, and the fire of Yahweh burned among them: it destroyed one end of the camp. •The people appealed to Moses, and he interceded with Yahweh and the fire died down. •So the place was called Taberah,[a] because the fire of Yahweh had burned among them.

Ex 14:11+ Dt 9:22 1K 18:38 Ex 32:11+

Kibroth-hattaavah.[b] The people complain

||Ex 16

The rabble who had joined the people were overcome by greed, and the sons of Israel themselves began to wail again, 'Who will give us meat to eat?' they said. •'Think of the fish we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic! •Here we are wasting away, stripped of everything; there is nothing but manna for us to look at!'

Ex 12:38 Ps106:14 1Co10:6

The manna was like coriander seed, and had the appearance of bdellium. The people went round gathering it, and ground it in a mill or crushed it with a pestle; it was then cooked in a pot and made into pancakes. It tasted like cake made with oil. •When the dew fell on the camp at night-time, the manna fell with it.

Ex 16:14 Dt 8:15

The prayer of Moses

Ex 32:11+

Moses heard the people wailing, every family at the door of its tent. The anger of Yahweh flared out, and Moses greatly worried over this. •And he spoke to Yahweh:

Ws 16:2

'Why do you treat your servant so badly? Why have I not found favour with you, so that you load on me the weight of all this nation? •Was it I who conceived all this people, was it I who gave them birth, that you should say to me, "Carry them in your bosom, like a nurse with a baby at the breast, to the land that I swore to give their fathers"? •Where am I to find meat to give to all this people, when they come worrying me so tearfully and say, "Give us meat to eat"? •I am not able to carry this nation by myself alone; the weight is too much for me. •If this is how you want to deal with me, I would rather you killed me! If only I had found favour in your eyes, and not lived to see such misery as this!'

Ex 3:11; 4:1;5:22 Ex 18:18 Dt 1:9 *1K 3:9; 19:4* Tb 3:6 Jb 6:9

Yahweh replies

Yahweh said to Moses, 'Gather seventy of the elders of Israel, men you know to be the people's elders and scribes. Bring them to the Tent of Meeting, and let them stand beside you there. •I will come down to speak with you; and I will take some of the spirit which is on you and put it on them. So they will share with you the burden of this nation, and you will no longer have to carry it by yourself.

Ex18:21-26:24:1 Dt 1:13 Jos 1:10 2K 2:9 Is 63:11

'To the people, say this, "Purify yourselves for tomorrow and you will have meat to eat, now that you have wailed in the hearing of Yahweh and said: Who will give us meat to eat? How happy we were in Egypt! So be it! Yahweh will give you meat to eat. •You shall eat it not for one day only, or two, or five

Ex 19:10

d. The first of a number of narratives taken not from the 'Priestly' source but from the 'Yahwistic' (with 'Elohistic' insertions). Hobab is a Kenite, Nb 24:1+, of a tribe we subsequently find in league with Judah; it controlled the Hebron district, Jg 1:16; Jos 14:14.

e. The Bedouin still call guides 'the eye of the caravan'.

f. In the Greek this verse is put after v. 36.

g. Translation uncertain. Possibly 'Bring back the throngs...'

11 a. The name probably means 'pasture land' but the author traces it to a similar root which means 'to burn'. According to Dt 9:22f, Taberah is near Kadesh.

b. The narrative of 11:4-34 is made up of two traditions, one displaying a ritualist interest ('Yahwistic'; the quails), the other an interest in the gift of prophecy ('Elohistic'; gift of the spirit to the elders).

or ten or twenty, •but for a full month, until you are sick of it and cannot bear 20
the smell of it, because you have rejected Yahweh who is with you, and have
wailed before him saying: Why did we ever leave Egypt?" '
1:46+ Moses said, 'The people round me number six hundred thousand foot 21
soldiers, and you say, "I shall give them meat to eat for a whole month"! •If all 22
Jn 6:7,9 the flocks and herds were slaughtered, would that be enough for them? If all
the fish in the sea were gathered, would that be enough for them?' •Yahweh 23
Is 50:2 Jr 32:17 Ezk 12:25; 24:14 answered Moses, 'Is the arm of Yahweh so short? You shall see whether the
promise I have made to you comes true or not.'

The spirit given to the elders

Moses went out and told the people what Yahweh had said. Then he gathered 24
Jl 3:1 seventy elders of the people and brought them round the Tent. •Yahweh came 25
12:7+ 1S 10:9-13; 19:20-24 2 K 2:9 down in the Cloud. He spoke with him, but took some of the spirit that was
on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the spirit came on them they
prophesied, but not again.[c]
Two men had stayed back in the camp; one was called Eldad and the other 26
Medad. The spirit came down on them; though they had not gone to the Tent,
their names were enrolled among the rest. These began to prophesy in the camp.
The young man[d] ran to tell this to Moses, 'Look,' he said 'Eldad and Medad 27
Jos 1:1+ are prophesying in the camp'. •Then said Joshua the son of Nun, who had 28
Mk 9:38f Ac 2 served Moses from his youth, 'My Lord Moses, stop them!' •Moses answered 29
1 Co 14:5 him, 'Are you jealous on my account? If only the whole people of Yahweh
were prophets, and Yahweh gave his Spirit to them all!' •Then Moses went back 30
to the camp, the elders of Israel with him.

The quails

Ex 16:12-13 Ws 19:11 A wind came from Yahweh and it drove quails in from the sea and brought 31
them down on the camp. They lay for a distance of a day's march
either side of the camp, two cubits thick on the ground. •The people were up 32
all that day and night and all the next day collecting quails: the least gathered
Ps 78:30 by anyone was ten homers; then they spread them out round the camp. •The 33
meat was still between their teeth, not even chewed, when the anger of Yahweh
blazed out against the people. Yahweh struck them with a very great plague.
33:16 Dt 9:22 1 Co 10:6 The name given to this place was Kibroth-hattaavah,[e] because it was there 34
that they buried the people who had indulged their greed.
From Kibroth-hattaavah the people set out for Hazeroth, and at Hazeroth 35
they pitched camp.

20:1 Ex 15:20 **Hazeroth.[a] Complaints of Miriam and Aaron**

12 Miriam, and Aaron too, spoke against Moses in connexion with the 1
Cushite woman[b] he had taken. (For he had married a Cushite woman.)
Ex 4:15-16 They said, 'Has Yahweh spoken to Moses only? Has he not spoken to us too?' 2
Ex 3:11; 4:10 Si 45:4 Yahweh heard this. •Now Moses was the most humble of men, the humblest 3
man on earth.

God's answer

Suddenly, Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron and Miriam, 'Come, all three 4
of you, to the Tent of Meeting'. They went, all three of them, •and Yahweh 5
Ex 13:22+ came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the Tent. He called
Dt 18:15 Aaron and Miriam and they both came forward. •Yahweh said, 'Listen now 6
to my words:

If any man among you is a prophet[e]
I make myself known to him in a vision,
I speak to him in a dream.
Not so with my servant Moses:[d] 7

Heb 3: 2-5

he is at home in my house;
8 I speak with him face to face, Ex 33:11+
plainly and not in riddles, Ps 17:5
and he sees the form[e] of Ex 33:20+
Yahweh. 1Co13:12

How then have you dared to speak against my servant Moses?'
9 The anger of Yahweh blazed out against them. He departed,
10 and as soon as the cloud withdrew from the Tent, there was Miriam a leper, white as snow! 2 K 5:27 2Ch26:19
Aaron turned to look at her; she had become a leper.

The prayer of Aaron and Moses Ex 32:11+

11 Aaron said to Moses:
'Help me, my lord! Do not punish us for a sin committed in folly of which
12 we are guilty. I entreat you, do not let her be like a monster, coming from its mother's womb with flesh half corrupted.'
13 Moses cried to Yahweh, 'O God,' he said 'please heal her, I beg you!'
14 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'If her father had done no more than spit in her face, would she not be a thing of shame for seven days? Ler het be shut outside Lv13:1-6
the camp for seven days, and then let her be brought in again.'[f]
15 Miriam was shut outside the camp for seven days. The people did not set
16 out until she returned. Then the people left Hazeroth, and camp was pitched 33:17
in the wilderness of Paran.

The reconnaissance in Canaan ‖Dt 1:20-29 Jos 2:1

1 2 13 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, 'Send out men, one from each tribe, Jos 14:6f
to make a reconnaissance of this land of Canaan which I am giving to the sons of Israel. Send the leader of each tribe.'
3 At Yahweh's bidding, Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran. All
4 these men were chiefs among the sons of Israel. These were their names:[a]
For the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zaccur;
5 for the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori;
6 for the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh; 1Ch4:15
7 for the tribe of Issachar, Igal son of Joseph;
8 for the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun;
9 for the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Raphu;
10 for the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi;
11 for the tribe of Joseph, for the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi son of Susi;
12 for the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemalli;
13 for the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael;
14 for the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vophsi;
15 for the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Machi.
16 These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to make a reconnaissance of the land. Then Moses gave to Hoshea son of Nun the name of Joshua. Jos 1:1+
17 Moses sent them to reconnoitre the land of Canaan, 'Go up into the Negeb;
18 then go up into the highlands. See what sort of country it is, and what sort of people the inhabitants are, whether they are strong or weak, few or many,

c. The gift was only for a time. Alternative reading (Vulg.) 'nor did they cease afterwards'.
d. Joshua perhaps, cf. Ex 33:11.
e. Doubtless the name originally suggested 'the graves of the Taavath' (name of a tribe) but an alternative etymology gives the author the opportunity of explaining the moral significance of the incident. This place, too, is near Kadesh, according to Dt 9:22.

12 a. Apparently an 'Elohistic' narrative but somewhat affected by the 'Priestly' tradition.
b. Evidently Zipporah the Midianite, cf. Ex 2:21.
c. The Hebr. defies translation and is here corrected to read as Vulg.
d. Answer to the complaint of v. 2. With the prophetic gift v. 6 (Miriam herself was a prophetess, Ex 15:20), God contrasts his familiarity with Moses cf. Ex 33:11+ and Ex 33:20+. By way of exception certain others were given a share in the divine spirit, Nb 11:15. God is to raise up prophets after Moses' death, Dt 18:15,18+, but Moses will remain the greatest of them all, Dt 34:10, until the Baptist comes, the forerunner of the new covenant, Mt 11:9-11p.
e. For 'form' Greek and Syr. read 'glory'.
f. For 'brought in again' the Greek has 'purified'.

13 a. This list should be compared with that of ch. 1, which also begins with Reuben, but the names are different—several of them being found among the contemporaries of David.

what sort of country they live in, whether it is good or poor; what sort of towns 19
1 M 2:56 they have, whether they are open or fortified; •what sort of land it is, fertile 20
or barren, wooded or open. Be bold, and bring back some of the produce of
the country.'

It was the season for early grapes. •They went up to reconnoitre the land, 21
from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, the Pass of Hamath.[b] •They went up 22
by way of the Negeb as far as Hebron, where the Anakim lived, Ahiman, Sheshai
and Talmai. (Hebron was founded seven years before Tanis in Egypt.) •They 23
came to the Valley of Eshcol; there they lopped off a vine branch with a cluster
of grapes, which two of them carried away on a pole, as well as pomegranates
and figs. •This place was called the Valley of Eshcol[c] after the cluster which 24
the sons of Israel had cut there.

Dt1:25f; 9:22 **The envoys' report**

At the end of forty days, they came back from their reconnaissance of the 25
land. •They sought out Moses, Aaron and the whole community of Israel, 26
in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They made their report to them, and to
the whole community, and showed them the produce of the country.

They told them this story, 'We went into the land to which you sent us. 27
Ex 3:8 It does indeed flow with milk and honey; this is its produce. •At the same time, 28
its inhabitants are a powerful people; the towns are fortified and very big; yes,
and we saw the descendants of Anak there. •The Amalekite holds the Negeb 29
area, the Hittite, Amorite and Jebusite the highlands, and the Canaanite the
sea coast and the banks of the Jordan.'

Dt 1:36 Caleb harangued the people gathered about Moses: 'We must march in,' 30
he said 'and conquer this land: we are well able to do it'. •But the men who 31
had gone up with him answered, 'We are not able to march against this people;
they are stronger than we are'. •And they began to disparage the country they 32
had reconnoitred to the sons of Israel, 'The country we went to reconnoitre is a
country that devours its inhabitants. Every man we saw there was of enormous
Dt2:10+ size. •Yes, and we saw giants there (the sons of Anak, descendants of the Giants). 33
We felt like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.'

‖Dt1:26-32 **The rebellion of Israel**

Ne 9:17 14 At this, the whole community raised their voices and cried aloud, and 1
Ex14:11+ the people wailed all that night. •Then all the sons of Israel grumbled 2
against Moses and Aaron, and the whole community said, 'Would that we had
died in the land of Egypt, or at least that we had died in this wilderness! •Why 3
Ac 7:40 does Yahweh bring us to this land, only to have us fall by the sword, and our
wives and young children seized as booty? Should we not do better to go back to
Egypt?' •And they said to one another, 'Let us appoint a leader and go back to Egypt'. 4

Before the whole assembled community of the sons of Israel, Moses and 5
1 Co 10:5 Aaron fell down, face to the ground. •Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son 6
Dt 1:36 Sl 46:7 of Jephunneh, two of those who had reconnoitred the country, tore their
garments; •and they said to the entire community of the sons of Israel, 'The land 7
we went to reconnoitre is a good land, an excellent land. •If Yahweh is pleased 8
with us, he will lead us into this land and give it to us. It is a land where milk and
honey flow. •Do not rebel against Yahweh. And do not be afraid of the people of 9
this land; we shall gobble them up. Their tutelary shadow has gone from them
so long as Yahweh is with us.[a] Do not be afraid of them.'

Ex 17:5; 32:7-14+ **The anger of Yahweh. Moses makes an appeal**

The entire community was talking of stoning them, when the glory of 10
Yahweh appeared at the Tent of Meeting to all the sons of Israel. •And Yahweh 11
said to Moses:

'How long will this people insult me? How long will they refuse to believe

12 in me despite the signs I have worked among them? •I will strike them with pestilence and disown them. And of you I shall make a new nation, greater and mightier than they are.'
13 Moses answered Yahweh:
'But the Egyptians already know that you, by your own power, have brought
14 this people out from their midst. •They have said as much to the inhabitants of this country. They already know that you, Yahweh, are in the midst of this people, and that you show yourself to them face to face; that it is you, Yahweh, whose cloud stands over them, that you go before them in a pillar of cloud
15 by day and a pillar of fire by night. •If you destroy this people now as if it were
16 one man, then the nations who have heard about you will say, •"Yahweh was not able to bring this people into the land he swore to give them, and so he
17 has slaughtered them in the wilderness". •No, my Lord! It is now you must
18 display your power, according to those words you spoke, •"Yahweh is slow to anger and rich in graciousness, forgiving faults and transgression, and yet letting nothing go unchecked, punishing the father's fault in the sons to the third and
19 fourth generation". •In the abundance, then, of your graciousness, forgive the sin of this people, as you have done from Egypt until now.'

Ex 32:10
Gn 12:2
Dt 32:26
Ex33:14f; 34:9-10
9:15-23
Ex13:21-22
‖Ex34:6-7

Pardon and punishment

‖Dt1:34-40

20 Yahweh said, 'I forgive them as you ask. •But—as I live, and as the glory
21 of Yahweh fills all the earth—•of all the men who have seen my glory and the signs that I worked in Egypt and in the wilderness, who have put me to the test
22 ten times already and not obeyed my voice, •not one shall see the land
23 I swore to give their fathers. Not one of those who slight me shall see it.
24 But my servant Caleb is of another spirit. Because he has obeyed me perfectly, I will bring him into the land he has entered, and his race shall possess it. (The
25 Amalekite and the Canaanite dwell in the plain.) •Tomorrow you will turn about and go back into the wilderness, in the direction of the Sea of Suph.'

Jos 5:6
Ex 24:16
Ps 57:5;72:18
Is6:3;11:9
Hab 2:4;3:3
↗ Heb 3: 16-19
Heb 3:11
Jos 14:12
1 M 2:56
Si 46:9

26 Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron.[b] He said:

Jude 5

27 'How long does this perverse community, which complains against me...?[c]
28 I have heard the complaints which the sons of Israel make against me. •Say to them, "As I live—it is Yahweh who speaks—I will deal with you according
29 to the very words you have used in my hearing. •In this wilderness your dead bodies will fall, all you men of the census, all you who were numbered from
30 the age of twenty years and over, you who have complained against me. •I swear that you shall not enter the land where I swore most solemnly, to settle you.
31 It is Caleb son of Jephunneh, and Joshua son of Nun, •and your young children that you said would be seized as booty, it is these I shall bring in to know the
32 land you have disdained. •As for you, your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness,
33 and your sons will be nomads in the wilderness for forty years, bearing the
34 weight of your faithlessness, until the last of you lies dead in the desert. •For forty days you reconnoitred the land. Each day shall count for a year: for forty years you shall bear the burden of your sins, and you shall learn what it means
35 to reject me."[d] •I, Yahweh, have spoken: this is how I will deal with this perverse community that has conspired against me. Here in this wilderness, to the last man, they shall die.'

Ezk20:15
Heb 3:17
1:18f
Ps 78:31
26:65
Ps 95:10
Ac 7:36
Ps 90:15
Ps 95:10

36 The men whom Moses had sent to reconnoitre the land, who on their return had incited the whole community of Israel to grumble against Yahweh by
37 disparaging it, •these men who had disparaged the land were all struck dead

b. The extreme north of Palestine, see note on Jg 20:1. In fact the expedition got no further than the Hebron district, v. 22.
c. *Eshcol* ('cluster') is a valley near Hebron.
14 a. The Canaanite tutelary deities, routed by the presence of Yahweh. In place of 'tutelary shadow' the Greek has '(favourable) season'.

b. Vv. 26-35 are parallel with vv. 11-25 but the outlook of the 'Priestly' tradition (cf. its interest in the census) has influenced their editing.
c. The text is apparently corrupt.
d. Or possibly 'know my displeasure'.

Jos 14:10 before Yahweh. 38 Of the men who had gone to reconnoitre the land, only Joshua
son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh remained alive.

20:12+ Dt 1:41-45 **An abortive attempt by the Israelites**

Moses reported these words to all the sons of Israel, and the people set up 39
a great outcry. 40 Then they rose early and set out for the heights of the highlands
saying, 'Look, we are setting out for this place, since Yahweh has told us that
we have sinned'. 41 Moses replied, 'Why disobey the command of Yahweh? Nothing
will come of it. 42 Do not go up, for Yahweh is not among you; do not get your-
selves beaten by your enemies. 43 Yes, there facing you are the Amalekite and the
Canaanite, and you will fall to their swords because you have turned away from
Yahweh, and Yahweh is not with you.' 44 Yet they set out presumptuously towards
10:35 the heights of the highlands. Neither the ark of the covenant of Yahweh nor
Ex 17:8+ Jg 1:17 Moses left the camp. 45 The Amalekite and the Canaanite who lived in that
hill country came down and defeated them, and harried them all the way to
Hormah.

VI. LAWS GOVERNING SACRIFICES. POWERS OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES[a]

Ex 29:40f Lv 23:18 **The oblation to accompany sacrifices**

Lv 2:1-10; 10:1-3 15 1 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, 2 'Tell this to the sons of Israel:
"When you have arrived in the land where you are to live, the land I give to
you, 3 and you make burnt offering to Yahweh either as a holocaust or as a
sacrifice, whether in payment of a vow, or as a voluntary gift, or on the occasion
of one of your solemn feasts—taking from your herds and flocks to make an
Lv 23:13 appeasing fragrance for Yahweh—4 the offerer must bring, as his personal gift to
Yahweh, an oblation of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one quarter
of a hin of oil. 5 You must also make a libation of wine, one quarter of a hin to
each lamb, in addition to the holocaust or sacrifice. 6 For a ram, you must make
an oblation of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin
of oil, 7 and a libation of one-third of a hin of wine, offering it as an appeasing
fragrance for Yahweh. 8 If you offer a bull as a holocaust or sacrifice, in payment of
a vow or as a communion sacrifice for Yahweh, 9 you must offer in addition to
the beast an oblation of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half
a hin of oil, 10 and you must offer a libation of half a hin of wine, as a burnt
offering, an appeasing fragrance for Yahweh. 11 This must be done for every
bull, every ram, every lamb or kid. 12 Whatever the number of victims you
have for sacrifice, you must do the same for each of them, however many there
are.

"This must be done by every man of your own people when he makes a burnt 13
offering, an appeasing fragrance for Yahweh. 14 Any stranger living among you, or
among your descendants, will also make a burnt offering, an appeasing fragrance
Ex 12:48+ for Yahweh: just as you act, so must 15 the assembly.[b] There shall be only one law
for you and for the settler among you. This is a law that shall bind your descend-
9:14; 15:29f Lv 17:13; 24:22 ants always: before Yahweh, you and the settler are alike. 16 There is to be one law
only, and one statute for you and for the stranger who lives among you." '

The first-fruits of bread

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, 17 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to 18
them:

"When you have entered the land to which I am bringing you, 19 you must set
aside a portion for Yahweh when you eat the bread of this country. 20 You must
set aside one loaf as the first-fruits of your meal; you must set this offering

21 aside like the one set aside from your threshing. •You are to set aside for Yahweh
a portion of the best of your meal. This applies to your descendants.

Atonement for faults of inadvertence

22 "If through inadvertence you fail in any of these commands that Yahweh has
23 given to Moses •(every single precept that Yahweh has laid on you through
Moses, from the day he gave his commands and onwards to your descendants),
24 this is what must be done:
"If it is an inadvertence of the community, the community as a whole must
make a holocaust of a young bull, an appeasing fragrance for Yahweh, with the
prescribed accompanying oblation and libation, and a he-goat must be offered
25 as a sacrifice for sin. •The priest must perform the rite of atonement over the entire
community of the sons of Israel, and pardon will be given, since it was an inad-
vertence. When they have brought their offering as a burnt offering to Yahweh,
and have presented their sacrifice for sin before Yahweh to make amends for
26 their inadvertence, •pardon will be given to the entire community of the sons
of Israel, as also to the stranger who lives among them, since the entire people
has sinned through inadvertence.
27 "If it is an individual who has sinned by inadvertence, he must offer a yearling
28 kid in sacrifice for sin. •The priest must perform the rite of atonement before
Yahweh over the person who has gone astray by this sin of inadvertence; when
29 the rite of atonement has been performed over him, he will be forgiven, •whether
he is a native, one of the sons of Israel, or a stranger living among them. There
shall be only one law among you for the man who sins by inadvertence.
30 "But the man who sins deliberately, whether native or stranger, outrages
31 Yahweh himself. Such a man must be outlawed from his people; •he has despised
the word of Yahweh and broken his command. This man must be entirely out-
lawed, since his sin is inseparable from him." [c]

Breaking the sabbath Ex 20:8+; 31:12-17; 35:1-3

32 While the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, a man was caught gathering
33 wood on the sabbath day. •Those who caught him gathering wood brought
34 him before Moses, Aaron and the whole community. •He was kept in custody,
35 because the penalty he should undergo had not yet been fixed. •Yahweh said to
Moses, 'This man must be put to death. The whole community must stone him
36 outside the camp.' •The whole community took him outside the camp and stoned
him till he was dead, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Tassels on garments[d] Dt 22:12

37 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Speak to the sons of Israel and tell them
38 to put tassels on the hems of their garments, and to put a violet cord on this tassel Mt 9:20; 23:5
39 at the hem. •You must have a tassel, then, and the sight of it will remind you
of all the commands of Yahweh. You are to put them into practice then, and no
longer follow the desires of your heart and your eyes, which have led you to
make wantons of yourselves.
40 'This will remind you of all my commandments; put them into practice,
41 and you will be consecrated to your God. •It is I, Yahweh your God, who have
brought you out of the land of Egypt so that I may be your God, I Yahweh
your God.'

15 a. 'Priestly' tradition resumed. The story of the revolt of Korah, Dathan and Abiram is here most significant: it proves that God has established an authority within the community and it demonstrates the primacy of Aaron. To this some other laws and related episodes have been added.

b. I.e. 'as you do now, so must the assembly do in the future'.

c. An enactment of great importance which appears to make forgiveness impossible when the fault is deliberate (lit. 'with a high hand'). At this period, however we must not look for an exact definition of 'deliberation'.

d. Ancient representations of Palestinian costume show tassels hanging from all round the hem (so also Dt 22:12), but in the Jewish period the tassels were almost always confined to its four corners. Jesus himself followed this practice, Mt 9:20, but condemned the ostentation that often went with it Mt 23:5.

Lv10:1-3 Dt 11:6 Ps106:16-18 Si45:18-20 Jude 11

The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram[a]

16 Korah son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi took...[b] Dathan and 1
Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth (Eliab and Peleth were sons
of Reuben) •rebelled against Moses, together with two hundred and fifty of the 2
sons of Israel, leaders of the community, prominent in the solemn feasts, men of
repute. •These joined forces against Moses and Aaron saying to them, 'You take 3
too much on yourselves! The whole community and all its members are
Ex 19:6 consecrated, and Yahweh lives among them. Why set yourselves higher than the
community of Yahweh?'

Moses, when he heard this, threw himself face downward on the ground. 4
2Tm2:19 Then he said to Korah and all his followers, 'Tomorrow morning Yahweh will 5
reveal who is his, who is the consecrated man that he will allow to come near him.
The one he allows to come near is the one whom he has chosen. •This is what 6
you are to do: take the censers of Korah and all his followers, •fill them with fire 7
and, tomorrow, put incense in them before Yahweh. Yahweh will choose the one
who is the consecrated man. Sons of Levi, you take too much on yourselves!'

Moses said to Korah, 'Listen to me now, you sons of Levi! •Is it not enough 8 9
3:45; 8:14-19 for you that the God of Israel has singled you out from the community of Israel,
and called you close to himself for service in the tabernacle of Yahweh, to stand
before this community and perform the sacred rites on their behalf? •He has 10
called you to be near him, you and all your brother Levites with you, and now
you aspire to the office of priesthood as well! •Against Yahweh himself you have 11
joined forces, you and your followers: for what is Aaron that you should complain
against him?'

Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. They replied, 12
'We will not come. •Was it not enough to take us from a land where milk and 13
Ex 3:8+ honey flow to die in this wilderness, without seeking to lord it over us now?
There is no land flowing with milk and honey that you have brought us to, 14
nor have you given us fields and vineyards for our inheritance. Do you expect
this people to be blind? We will not come.' •Moses flew into a rage and said to 15
1S12:3-5 Yahweh, 'Pay no heed to their offering. I have not taken so much as a donkey
from them, nor have I harmed any of them.'

The punishment

Moses said to Korah, 'You and all your followers, come tomorrow into the 16
presence of Yahweh, you and they, and Aaron too. •Let every man bring his 17
censer, put incense in it, and carry his censer before Yahweh—two hundred and
fifty censers. You and Aaron also, each of you bring his censer.' •So every man 18
took his censer, filled it with fire, and put incense in it. And they stood at the
entrance to the Tent of Meeting, and Moses and Aaron with them. •Then, when 19
Korah had assembled the whole community to confront these two at the entrance
to the Tent of Meeting, the glory of Yahweh appeared to the whole community.

17:9 Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, •'Stand apart from this assembly, 20 21
I am going to destroy them here and now'. •They threw themselves face down- 22
27:16 Gn18:16-33 Jb 12:10 Rv 22:6 ward on the ground, and cried out, 'O God, God of the spirits that give life to
every living thing, will you be angry with the whole community for one man's
sin?' •Yahweh answered Moses and said, •'Say this to the community, "Stand 23 24
clear of the dwelling of Korah" '.[c]

Moses stood up and went to Dathan and Abiram; the elders of Israel followed 25
him. •He said to the community, 'Stand away, I beg you, from the tents of these 26
2Tm2:19 perverse men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, for fear that with all
their sins you too will be swept away'. •So they moved away from the dwelling 27
of Korah.

Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing at their tent doors,
with their wives and their sons and their young children. •Moses said, 'By this 28
Ex3:12; 4:30-31 you will know that Yahweh himself has sent me to perform all these tasks and

29 that this is not my doing. •If these people die a natural death such as men Jn2:11+ ▲
30 commonly die, then Yahweh has not sent me. •But if Yahweh does something utterly new, if the earth should open its mouth and swallow them, themselves and all that belongs to them, so that they go down alive to Sheol,[d] then you will know that these men have rejected Yahweh.'
31 The moment he finished saying all these words, the ground split open under Jb 40:13 Ps140:10
32 their feet, •the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their families too, and all Korah's men and all their belongings.
33 They went down alive to Sheol, they and all their possessions. The earth 1 K 2:6 Pr 1:12; 5:6;9:18; 15:24; 30:16
34 closed over them and they disappeared from the midst of the assembly. •At their cries all the Israelites around them ran away. For they said, 'The earth must not swallow us!'
A fire came down from Yahweh and consumed the two hundred and fifty 16:35 1K18:38
men carrying incense.

1.2 36.37 **The censers**

17 3 38 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Tell Eleazar, son of Aaron, the priest, to pick the censers out of these ashes and take this unlawful fire elsewhere, Lv10:1-3
for these sinful censers are sanctified, at the price of these men's lives.[a] Since they have been brought before Yahweh and consecrated, let the metal be hammered into sheets to cover the altar. They will be an object-lesson to the sons of
4 39 Israel.'
Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers which had been carried by the men
5 40 who were destroyed by the fire. They were hammered into sheets to cover the
altar. •They are a reminder to the sons of Israel that no layman, no one outside 1:51+ Lv10:1-3
Aaron's line, may come near Yahweh with incense to burn, under pain of suffering 2 Ch 2:3
the lot of Korah and his followers, according to the order given by Yahweh through Moses.

6 41 **Aaron intercedes**[b]

On the following day, the entire community of the sons of Israel grumbled 1Co10:10
7 42 against Moses and Aaron, saying, 'You have brought death to the people of Yahweh'. •As the community was banding together against Moses and Aaron,
8 43 these turned towards the Tent of Meeting, and there was the Cloud covering it, and the glory of Yahweh appeared. •And Moses and Aaron went to the door of
9.10 44.45 the Tent of Meeting.
Yahweh spoke to Moses[c] and said, •'Stand clear of this community; I am 16:21 Ws18:20-25
11 46 going to destroy them here and now'. They threw themselves face downward on the ground. •Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Take the censer, fill it with fire from the altar, put incense in it and hurry to the community to perform the rite of atone-
12 47 ment over them. The wrath has come down from Yahweh and the plague has
35 begun.' •Aaron did as Moses said and ran among the assembly, but the plague was already at work among them. He put in the incense and performed the rite
13 48 of atonement over the people. •Then he stood between the living and the dead,
14 49 and the plague stopped. •There were fourteen thousand seven hundred victims of

16 a. Most critics grant that two parallel narratives are fused in these chapters The 'Yahwistic' or 'Elohistic' (vv. 1b-2a, 12-15, 25-34) is concerned with the political revolt of the Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram; the 'Priestly' (vv. 1a, 2b-11, 16-24, 27a, 35) with the religious claim of the Kohathites against the Aaronites.

b. The unfinished phrase of 1a should probably be continued by 2b 'two hundred and fifty...'.

c. Hebr. adds 'Dathan and Abiram'.

d. A word of unknown origin; it indicates the deepest parts of the earth, Dt 32:22; Is 14:9, etc.; the dead 'go down' to it, Gn 37:35; 1 S 2:6, etc.; virtuous and wicked alike are there, 1 S 28:19; Ps 89:48; Ezk 32: 17-32, leading a colourless existence, Qo 9:10; from it no praise arises to God, Is 38:10. The doctrine of rewards and punishments beyond the grave and of bodily resurrection would satisfy the psalmists' hopes, Ps 16:10-11; 49:15, but was not clearly outlined until the O.T. period was drawing to its close, Ws 3-5 (where it is linked up with belief in immortality, see Ws 3:4+); 2 M 12:38+.

17 a. Vv. 2 and 3 corr. The coals which the Kohathites put into their censers are illegal; nevertheless, the fire from God has touched the censers and therefore 'sanctified' them.

b. A supplementary passage illustrating the efficacy of Aaron's ritual expiation, cf. Lv 16.

c. Greek and Syr. read 'to Moses and Aaron'.

that plague, not counting those who died because of Korah. •Then Aaron came back to Moses at the Tent of Meeting; the plague had been halted. 15 50

Aaron's branch

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Tell the sons of Israel to give you a branch,[d] one for each patriarchal family; let their leaders together give you twelve branches for their patriarchal families. Write the name of each on his branch; and on the branch of Levi write the name of Aaron, because the leader of the families of Levi must have a branch too. •Then put them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony, the place where I meet you.[e] •The man whose branch sprouts will be the one I have chosen; this is how I shall put an end to the complaints that the sons of Israel make against you.' 16,17 1,2 18 3 Ex25:21-22 19 4 20 5

Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, and all their leaders gave him one branch each, twelve branches in all for their patriarchal families; Aaron's branch was among them. •Moses placed them before Yahweh in the Tent of the Testimony. On the following day Moses came to the Tent of the Testimony and there, already sprouting, was Aaron's branch, standing for the House of Levi. Buds had opened, flowers had blossomed, and almonds had already ripened. •Moses took all the branches away from before Yahweh and brought them back to all the sons of Israel; they examined them and each one took back his own branch. 21 6 22 7 23 8 24 9

20:8 Heb 9:4 Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Put back Aaron's branch before the Testimony, where it will have its prescribed place, a sign to these rebels. It will stop them complaining to me any more, and they will not die.' •Moses did as Yahweh had ordered. That is what he did. 25 10 26 11

Dt18:1-8 **Atonement: the function of the priesthood**

The sons of Israel said to Moses, 'We are lost! We are dead men! We are 20:4 all dead men! •Anyone who goes near the tabernacle of Yahweh with an offering will die. Are we to be doomed to the last man?'[f] 27 12 28 13

18 Then Yahweh said to Aaron: 1

Ezk44:15 / Heb7:25-28 'You and your sons, and your whole family[a] shall bear the burden of transgressions against the sanctuary. You and your sons with you shall bear the burden of the transgressions of your priesthood. •Let your brothers of the branch of Levi, your father's tribe, come with you too. They are to join you and serve you, yourselves and your sons, before the Tent of the Testimony. •They are to be at your service and the service of the whole Tent. Provided they do not come near the sacred vessels or the altar, they will be in no more danger of death than you. •They are to join you, they are to take charge of the Tent of Meeting for 3:10 the entire ministry of the Tent, and no layman shall come near you. •You must take charge of the sanctuary and charge of the altar, and the wrath will never again fall on the sons of Israel. •I myself have chosen your brothers, the Levites, Ezr2:43+ from among the sons of Israel as a gift to you. As 'oblates' they will belong to Yahweh, to serve at the Tent of Meeting. •You and your sons will undertake the priestly duties in all that concerns the altar and all that lies behind the veil.[b] Ex 26:33 You will perform the liturgy, the duties of which I entrust to your priesthood. 1:51+ But the layman who comes near shall die.' 2 3 4 5 6 7

Lv 6:7 Dt 18:3 Ezk44:29-30 **The priests' portion**

Yahweh said to Aaron: 8

2Ch31:6 'I myself have given you charge of all that is set aside for me. Everything that the sons of Israel consecrate I give to you as your portion, as well as to your sons, by perpetual ordinance. •This is what shall be yours of the most holy things, of the consecrated food: every offering that the sons of Israel give back to me,[c] whether it be an oblation or a sacrifice for sin or a sacrifice of reparation, is a thing most holy; it shall belong to you and your sons. •You may eat these most holy things. Every male may eat them. You are to count them sacred. 9 10

11 'To you also shall belong whatever is set aside from the offerings of the sons
of Israel to be held out with the gesture of offering; this I give to you, as well as Ex 29:24
to your sons and daughters, by perpetual ordinance. Every undefiled person in
12 your house may eat it. •All the best of the oil, all the best of the wine and wheat, Dt26:1+ Tb 1:7
13 the first-fruits made over by them to Yahweh, these I give to you. •All the first Si 45:20
produce of their land which they bring to Yahweh shall be yours. Every undefiled
14 person in your house may eat them. •All in Israel on which the ban is laid shall
15 be yours. •Every first-born brought to Yahweh shall be yours, of all living Ex 13:11+
creatures, whether man or beast; nevertheless you must redeem the first-born of
16 man, and you must redeem the first-born of an unclean beast. •You must redeem
it in the month in which it is born at the price of five shekels, each of sanctuary
17 weight—which is twenty gerahs. •The first-born of cow, sheep and goat, these
alone you shall not redeem. They are holy: you must sprinkle their blood on the
18 altar and burn the fat as a burnt offering, an appeasing fragrance for Yahweh; •the
meat shall be yours, together with the breast that has been presented with the
19 gesture of offering, and the right thigh. •All that the sons of Israel set aside for Mt 5:13
Yahweh from the holy things, this I give to you, and to your sons and daughters,
by perpetual ordinance. This is a covenant of salt for ever before Yahweh, for you Lv2:13+
and your descendants after you.'

The Levites' portion[d]

20 Yahweh said to Aaron: 26:62; 35:1 Dt 10:9
'You shall have no inheritance in their land, no portion of it among them shall Jos 13:14 Ezk44:28 *Ne 10:38* Si 45:22
be yours. It is I who will be your portion and your inheritance among the sons
of Israel.
21 See, to the sons of Levi I give as their inheritance all the tithes collected in Dt 14:22+
Israel, in return for their services, for the ministry they render in the Tent of
22 Meeting. •The sons of Israel must no longer go near the Tent of Meeting; they Ex 19:12+
23 would be burdened with sin and die. •To Levi belongs the ministry of the Tent
of Meeting, and the Levites will bear the burden of their sin. This is a perpetual
law for all your descendants: the Levites are to have no inheritance among the sons
24 of Israel. •The tithe that the sons of Israel set aside for Yahweh, I give the Levites Ne 10:38
for their inheritance. For this reason I have told them that they are to have no
inheritance among the sons of Israel.'

Tithes Dt 14:22+

25 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •
26 'You are to say to the Levites: 31:47
"When you receive the tithe from the sons of Israel which they must pay you Ne10:39; 12:47
and which I am giving you as your inheritance, out of this you are to set aside a
27 portion for Yahweh, a tithe of the tithe. •This is to take the place of the portion
set aside that is due from you, like the corn from the threshing-floor and new wine
28 from the press. •Thus you too will set aside a portion for Yahweh, of all the
tithes you receive from the sons of Israel. You will give what you have set aside
29 for Yahweh to Aaron the priest. •Out of all the gifts you receive you will set
aside a portion for Yahweh. From the best of all these things you will set aside
the sacred portion."
30 'You are to say to them,[e] "After you have set aside the best, all these gifts shall,

d. The word 'branch', like the corresponding Hebr., expresses the symbolism here intended: a 'branch' of a family; cf. the 'shoot' of Is 11:1.

e. 'you' is here in the singular (Greek); Hebr. has plural.

f. Probably following on 16:34. The distinction here made is not between Aaronites and Levites but between Levites and laymen.

18 a. I.e. Levi. The Levites (cf. 3:5-10) are here associated with the Aaronites in their ministry of atonement for the people (cf. Lv 16:16), but only as assistants.

b. I.e. in all that pertains to sacrifice and to the ritual performed in the Holy of Holies.

c. The offering is 'given back' because it was God who first gave it; for the same reason a defect in the offering is fraud, Lv 5:15f.

d. Legislation from the 'Priestly' narrative; it stands midway between Dt 14:28-29; 26:12 (where once every three years the Levite is allowed only a share in the tithe) and Nb 35:1-8 (where a cession of land takes the place of the tax).

e. I.e. to the Levites who, in v. 31 are addressed directly.

for the Levites, take the place of the produce of the threshing-floor and of the wine press. •You may consume them anywhere, you and your people: this is 31
your payment for serving in the Tent of Meeting. •You will not incur the burden 32
of any sin on this account, once you have set aside the best; you will not be profaning the things consecrated by the sons of Israel, and you will not die." '

31:23 ↗ Heb9:13 **The ashes of the red heifer**[a]

19 Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said: 1
Is 6:7 'This is a statute of the Law which Yahweh has prescribed. Say this to the 2
sons of Israel,
Dt 21:3 'They are to bring you a red heifer without fault or blemish, one that has
never borne the yoke. •You will give it to Eleazar the priest. It must be taken 3
Lv4:12+ ↗ Heb13:11f outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. •Then Eleazar the priest is to 4
take some of the victim's blood on his finger, and sprinkle this blood seven times
Lv 4:5-6 towards the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. •The heifer must then be burned in 5
Ezk39:16 his presence: hide, flesh, blood, and the dung too, must be burnt. •Then the 6
Ex12:22+ Lv14:4-6 priest is to take cedar wood, hyssop and cochineal red, and throw them on the
fire where the heifer is burning. •Then he must wash his clothing and bathe his 7
body in water; after which he may go back to the camp, though he will remain
unclean until evening. •The man who has burnt the heifer must wash his 8
2Ch13:12 clothing and bathe his body in water and will remain unclean until evening. •The 9
Lv4:11-12 man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must be ritually clean; he will deposit
them outside the camp, in a clean place. They must be kept for the ritual use of the
↗ Heb9:13 community of the sons of Israel for making lustral water; it is a sacrifice for sin.
The man who has gathered up the ashes of the heifer must wash his clothing 10
and will remain unclean until evening. For the sons of Israel as for the stranger
living among them, this will be a perpetual law.

Lv 21:1 Hg 2:13 **A case of uncleanness**[b]

9:6;31:19 'Anyone who touches a corpse, of any person whatsoever, shall be unclean 11
for seven days. •He shall purify himself with these waters on the third and the 12
seventh day, and he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third
and the seventh day he will not be clean. •Anyone who touches a dead person, the 13
body of a man that has died, and has not purified himself, defiles the tabernacle
of Yahweh; such a man must be outlawed from Israel because the lustral waters
have not flowed over him; he is unclean, and his uncleanness remains in him.
This is the law when a man dies in a tent. Anyone who goes into the tent, or 14
anyone who is already there, shall be unclean for seven days. •Equally unclean 15
also shall be every open vessel that has not been closed with a lid or fastening.
Anyone in the open country who touches a man who has been killed, or a man 16
who has died, or human bones or a tomb, shall be unclean for seven days.

The ritual of lustral water

Heb 9:13 'For a man thus unclean, some of the ashes must be taken from the victim 17
burnt as a sacrifice for sin. Spring water must be poured on them, in a vessel.
Lv14:4-6 Then one who is ritually clean shall take hyssop and dip it in the water. He must 18
then sprinkle the tent, all the vessels and everyone there, and also the man who
Dt21:1-9 has touched the bones, or the body of the person, whether he was killed or died
of natural causes, or the tomb. •The man who is clean must sprinkle the unclean 19
on the third and the seventh day, and on the seventh day he will have freed him
from his sin. The man who is unclean must then wash his clothing and bathe
himself in water, and by evening he will be clean. •If an unclean man fails to 20
purify himself in this way, he must be cut off from the community, for he would
defile the sanctuary of Yahweh. The lustral waters have not flowed over him,
and he is unclean.
'This is to be a perpetual law for them. The person who sprinkles the lustral 21

water must wash his clothing, and the person who touches these waters shall be
22 unclean until evening. •Anything that an unclean person touches shall be unclean,
and anyone who touches it shall be unclean until evening.'

VII. FROM KADESH TO MOAB[a]

The waters of Meribah

||Ex17:1-7

1 20 The sons of Israel, the whole community, arrived in the first month at the Dt 8:15; 9:22
desert of Zin. The people settled at Kadesh. It was there that Miriam died
and was buried.

2 There was no water for the community, and they were all united against Moses Ex 14:11+ Dt 6:16
3 and Aaron. •The people challenged Moses: 'We would rather have died,' they Ws 11:4
4 said 'as our brothers died before Yahweh! •Why did you bring the assembly 16:34;17:26
of Yahweh into this wilderness, only to let us die here, ourselves and our cattle?
5 Why did you lead us out of Egypt, only to bring us to this wretched place? It is
a place unfit for sowing, it has no figs, no vines, no pomegranates, and there is
not even water to drink!'

6 Leaving the assembly, Moses and Aaron went to the door of the Tent of
Meeting. They threw themselves face downward on the ground, and the glory
7 of Yahweh appeared to them. •Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Take the
8 branch and call the community together, you and your brother Aaron. Then, in 17:25
full view of them, order this rock to give water. You will make water flow for
them out of the rock, and provide drink for the community and their cattle.'

9 Moses took up the branch from before Yahweh, as he had directed him. •Then
10 Moses and Aaron called the assembly together in front of the rock and addressed
them, 'Listen now, you rebels. Shall we make water gush from this rock for
11 you?' •And Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the branch; Jn 7:38; 19:34
water gushed in abundance, and the community drank and their cattle too. ↗ 1Co10:4

The punishment of Moses and Aaron

Dt 1:37; 3:26f; 32:51; 33:8

12 Then Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe that Ps 106:32f
I could proclaim my holiness in the eyes of the sons of Israel, you shall not lead *Dt 4:21* 2 Ch 2:3 *Nb27:14*
this assembly into the land I am giving them'.[b]

13 These are the waters of Meribah, where the sons of Israel challenged Yahweh Ex 17:7
and he proclaimed his holiness.

Dt 2:4-7 Jg 11:17 Is24;63:1-6 Am 1:11

Edom refuses right of way

14 [c] Moses sent messengers from Kadesh, 'To the king of Edom. A message 1 M 5:47
from your brother Israel. You know well enough the extremity to which we have
15 been reduced. •Our ancestors went down into Egypt, and there we stayed for a
16 long time. But the Egyptians treated us badly, as they did our ancestors. •We

19 a. Ch. 19 is one connected whole: the water of purification, vv. 17-22, mixed with the ashes of a red heifer that has been slain and burnt outside the camp (vv. 1-10) is used to remove the defilement incurred through contact with the dead, vv. 11-16. The rite is alluded to only once elsewhere, Nb 31:53 (and see Heb 9:13); it gives legal status to an ancient, half-magical, custom by giving it the character of a sacrifice of atonement for sin, v. 17, and cf. vv. 4-5 with Lv 16:27; v. 8 with Lv 16:28. Certain other practices of this kind were taken over by the Mosaic Law, Lv 14:2-7; Nb 5: 17-28; Dt 21:1-9.

b. The purity regulations of Lv 11-16 did not mention contact with the dead.

20 a. The narratives of this section derive from the great 'Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic' collections; they draw upon several traditions of varying outlook which they either place side by side or, in many cases, fuse together; it is difficult to distinguish these traditions precisely. The main theme is the steady advance of God's chosen people despite all opposition.

b. The exact nature of the sin remains doubtful. The editor seems to have toned down some episode that reflected no credit on Moses or Aaron. In Dt 1:37 it is the abandonment of the campaign against Canaan (with Moses' consent) that brings on this punishment; it is therefore probable that our v. 12 relates to ch. 14 and not to the Meribah incident. In order to allow for another tradition, according to which Yahweh himself was opposed to the campaign (14:39-45), the editor may have removed our text from ch. 14 and inserted it here near the story of Aaron's death. The existence of two differing traditions would be adequately explained by the division of the Israelites themselves: some, with Moses, passed round the southern extremity of Edom; others, with Caleb, captured Hormah and advanced from the south; cf. Nb 21:1-3; Jg 1:9-16.

c. Just before this verse Sam. and Syr. Hex. insert certain phrases taken from Dt 3:24-28 and 2:2-6.

Ex23:20+ cried to Yahweh. He listened to us and sent an angel to bring us out of Egypt.
21:22 Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the borders of your territory. •We ask 17
permission to pass through your land. We will not cross any fields or vineyards;
we will not drink any water from the wells; we will keep to the king's highway
without turning to right or left until we are clear of your frontiers.' •Edom 18
Dt 2:29 answered, 'You shall not pass through my country; if you do, I will come out to
attack you'. •The answer of the sons of Israel was, 'We will keep to the high 19
road; if we use any of your water for myself and my cattle, I will pay for it.
I am asking only to pass through on foot.' •Edom replied, 'You shall not pass', 20
and Edom marched out to meet them with many men and in great force. •At 21
Ex 15:15 Dt 2:8 Edom's refusal to allow Israel a passage through his territory, Israel turned away.

33:38-39 Dt 10:6 **The death of Aaron**

They set out from Kadesh, and the whole community of the sons of Israel 22
Is 63:1 Ezk25:1; 35:1 Am1:11,13; 2:1 Ob 1 Zp 2:8 came to Mount Hor.[d] •Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, on the 23
frontier of the land of Edom.[e] He said, •'Aaron must be gathered to his people: 24
he is not to enter the land that I am giving to the sons of Israel, since you disobeyed
my order at the waters of Meribah. •Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring 25
them up Mount Hor. •There, strip Aaron of his garments and put them on 26
Eleazar his son, and Aaron will be gathered to his people: he is to die there.'

Moses did as Yahweh ordered. In the sight of the whole community they 27
went up Mount Hor. •Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on 28
Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and
Eleazar came back down the mountain. •The whole community saw that Aaron 29
Dt 34:8 had died, and all the House of Israel wept for Aaron for thirty days.

The capture of Hormah

33:40 Jg 1:16 21 The king of Arad,[a] a Canaanite living in the Negeb, learned that Israel was 1
coming by way of Atharim. He attacked Israel and took some prisoners.
Jos6:17+ Israel then made this vow to Yahweh, 'If you deliver this people into my power, 2
I will lay their towns under ban'. •Yahweh heard the voice of Israel and delivered 3
the Canaanites into their power. And they laid them under ban, both them and
their towns. This place was given the name Hormah.[b]

The bronze serpent

33:42 Ex14:11+; 15:15; 22:27 Ws 16:5 Is 30:6 They left Mount Hor by the road to the Sea of Suph,[c] to skirt the land of 4
Edom. On the way the people lost patience. •They spoke against God and against 5
Moses, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? For there
is neither bread nor water here; we are sick of this unsatisfying food.'

Dt 8:15 Jr 8:17 ✗1Co10:9 At this God sent fiery serpents[d] among the people; their bite brought death 6
to many in Israel. •The people came and said to Moses, 'We have sinned by 7
speaking against Yahweh and against you. Intercede for us with Yahweh to save
Ex32:11+ us from these serpents.' Moses interceded for the people, •and Yahweh answered 8
him, 'Make a fiery serpent and put it on a standard. If anyone is bitten and looks
2K18:4+ Ws 16:5f ✗Jn3:14f; 19:37 at it, he shall live.' •So Moses fashioned a bronze serpent which he put on 9
a standard, and if anyone was bitten by a serpent, he looked at the bronze serpent
and lived.

By stages to Transjordania

33:40-44 Dt 2:8 The sons of Israel set out and camped at Oboth. •Then they left Oboth and 10 11
20:23+ camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness that borders Moab, towards the sunrise.
They set out from there and camped in the wadi Zered. •They set out from there 12 13
and camped beyond the Arnon...[e]

This wadi in the desert begins in the land of the Amorites. For the Arnon is
the frontier of Moab, between the Moabites and the Amorites. •Hence it is 14
written in the Book of the Wars of Yahweh:[f]

15 ...Waheb by Suphah and the wadi Arnon
and the slope of the ravine
that runs down to the site of Ar
and leans over the frontier of Moab...

16 and from there they went on to Beer...[g]

It was of the well here that Yahweh had said to Moses, 'Call the people
17 together and I will give them water'. •Then it was that Israel sang this song: Jn 4:1+

'For the well.
Sing out for the well
18 that was sunk by the princes
and dug by the leaders of the people
with the sceptre, with their staves.'

19 .....and from Beer[h] to Mattanah, •and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from
20 Nahaliel to Bamoth, •and from Bamoth to the valley that gives on to the country of Moab, towards the heights of Pisgah which marks the edge of the desert and looks down on it.[i]

The conquest of Transjordania[j] ||Dt2:26-36

21 Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon, king of the Amorites, •'I wish to pass 20:14-21
22 through your land. We will not stray into fields or vineyards; we will not drink any water from the wells; we will keep to the king's highway until we are clear of your frontiers.' Jg 11:19-20

23 But Sihon would not give Israel leave to pass through his land. He gathered all his people, marched into the desert to meet Israel, and reached Jahaz, where
24 he gave battle to Israel. •Israel struck him down with the edge of the sword and 32:1f
conquered his country from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Dt 31:4
Ammon, for Jazer[k] was the Ammonite frontier. 20:23+

25 Israel took all these towns, and occupied all the Amorite towns, Heshbon
26 and all the towns under its jurisdiction, •Heshbon being the capital of Sihon, king of the Amorites. It was the same Sihon who had waged war on the first king[l]
27 of Moab and captured all his territory as far as the Arnon. •Hence the poets sing:

Courage, Heshbon![m]
Well built and well founded,
city of Sihon!
28 For a fire came out of Heshbon, ||Jr 48:45-46

d. Exact site uncertain.

e. Edom included Mount Seir, Dt 2:8, and the plateau east of the Arabah. Moab, 21:11f, was bounded on the south by the Zered which flows into the Dead Sea, cf. Dt 2:13f; on the north the Moabites had been driven back to the Arnon by the Amorites who in their turn were expelled by the Israelites, cf. Jos 13:7-33. After Ahab's death Moab was again a threat 2 K 3, cf. Is 15f and Jr 48. Ammon lay further to the east on the upper reaches of the Jabbok, Nb 21:24, cf. Dt 2:19; its capital, the modern Amman, was later captured by David, 2 S 11f; in Jeremiah's time, however, Ammon had taken the place of Gad in Transjordania, Jr 49:1-6. The Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites were Aramaean peoples closely related to the Hebrews: in Gn 36:1-9 (cf. 25:24-30) Edom is associated with Esau, and in Gn 19:30-38 Lot is the father of Moab and Ammon.

21 a. A town in southern Palestine. At this point we leave the 'Priestly' narrative. See 20:12+ for this episode.

b. The author connects the name with a root which means 'to dedicate to God by anathema (or 'ban')', thus the author already hints that the conquest is an act of religion.

c. Towards the Gulf of Aqaba, cf. Dt 1:1.

d. 'fiery' translates *saraph* which is used in Is 30:6 for a winged serpent or dragon. 'Seraphim' in Is 6:2-6 comes from the same root.

e. This sentence is continued in v. 16. Vv. 13-15 are a historical note on the old frontier.

f. A lost collection of ancient war songs.

g. The sentence is continued at the end of v. 18 after a parenthetical note (vv. 16b-18) explaining the name *Beer*, which means 'a well'.

h. Instead of 'Beer', Hebr., Sam., Vulg. read 'wilderness'.

i. Text uncertain. Hebr. has '...the summit of Pisgah and it looked down towards the desert'; Greek and Sam 'which looks down towards the desert'.

j. This narrative, which is independent of the foregoing itinerary, outlines what took place before the Israelites established themselves in northern Moab.

k. For 'Jazer' Hebr. reads simply *az* ('strong').

l. Others translate 'the former king'.

m. Hebr. has 'Come to Heshbon'. Our translation follows Sam. and some Greek MSS. Vv. 27-30 are an Amorite victory ballad adopted and approved by the Israelites as an oracle confirming their claims on Moab, cf. Jg 11:26.

a flame from the city of Sihon,
it devoured Ar of Moab,
it engulfed[n] the heights of the Arnon.
Woe to you, Moab! 29
You are lost, people of Chemosh!
He[o] has turned his sons into fugitives,
his daughters into captives
for Sihon, king of the Amorites.
Heshbon has destroyed 30
the little children as far as Dibon,
the women as far as Nophah,
the men[p] as far as Medeba.

32:1f Israel settled in the land of the Amorites. 31 •Moses sent men to reconnoitre 32
Jdt 5:15 Jazer, and Israel took it and all the towns in its jurisdiction and evicted the Amorites who dwelt there.

‖Dt3:1-17 Then they turned and marched in the direction of Bashan. Og king of Bashan 33
marched out to meet them with all his people to give battle at Edrei. 34 •Yahweh said to Moses, 'Do not be afraid of him, for I have given him into your power, him and all his people and his country. Deal with him as you dealt with Sihon, king
Dt 1:4 Jos 12:6 Jg 10:8 Ne 9:22 of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.' 35 •So they defeated him, his sons and all his people; not one of them escaped. And they took possession of his country.

33:48 Dt 34:1 22 Then the sons of Israel set out and pitched their camp in the plains of 1 Moab, beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho.[q]

31:8,16 Dt23:5-6 Jos24:9-10 Ne 13:2 Mi 6:5 2 P 2:15f Jude 11 Rv 2:14 *Ex2:15+*

The king of Moab appeals to Balaam[r]

Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, 2 •and Moab 3
was seized with panic before this people because of their immense number.
Moab was afraid of the sons of Israel; 4 •he said to the elders of Midian, 'Here is a horde now cropping everything round us as an ox crops the grass of the fields'.
Now Balak son of Zippor was king of Moab at the time. 5 •He sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, at Pethor[s] on the river, in the land of the sons of Amaw, saying, 'Look how this people coming from Egypt has overrun the whole countryside; they have settled at my door. 6 •Come, please, and curse this people for me, for they are stronger than I am. We may then be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For this I know: the man you bless is blessed, the man you curse is accursed.'

1 S 9:7+ The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian set out, taking the fee for the 7
divination with them. They found Balaam and gave him Balak's message. 8 •He said to them, 'Stay the night here, and I will answer as Yahweh directs me.' So the chiefs of Moab stayed with Balaam. 9 •God came to Balaam and said, 'Who are these men staying with you?' 10 •Balaam gave God this answer, 'Balak son of Zippor has sent me this message, 11 •"Look how this people coming from Egypt has overrun the whole countryside. Come and curse them for me; I may then be able to defeat them and drive them out." ' 12 •God said to Balaam, 'You are not to go with them. You are not to curse this people, for they are blessed.' In the morning Balaam rose and said to the chiefs sent by Balak, 'Go back to 13 your country, for Yahweh will not let me go with you'. 14 •So the chiefs of Moab rose and returned to Balak and said, 'Balaam would not come with us'.

And again Balak sent chiefs, more numerous and more renowned than the 15 first. 16 •They came to Balaam and said, 'A message from Balak son of Zippor, "Do not refuse, I beg you, to come to me. 17 •I will load you with honours and do
1 K 13:8 whatever you say. Come, I beg you, and curse this people for me." ' 18 •Balaam answered the envoys of Balak, 'Even if Balak gave me his house full of silver and and gold, I could not go against the order of Yahweh my God in anything, great or small. 19 •Now please stay the night here yourselves, and I will learn what else

20 Yahweh has to tell me.' •God came to Balaam during the night and said to him,
'Have not these men come to summon you? Get up, go with them. But you
21 must do nothing except what I tell you.' •In the morning Balaam rose and
saddled his she-donkey[d] and set out with the chiefs of Moab.

Balaam's donkey[e]

22 His going kindled the wrath of Yahweh,[f] and the angel of Yahweh took his
stand on the road to bar his way. He was riding his donkey and his two servants
23 were with him. •Now the donkey saw the angel of Yahweh standing on the road, Jos 5:13
a drawn sword in his hand, and she turned off the road and made off across
country. But Balaam beat her to turn her back on to the road.
24 The angel of Yahweh then took his stand on a narrow path among the
25 vineyards, with a wall to the right and a wall to the left. •The donkey saw the
angel of Yahweh and brushed against the wall, grazing Balaam's foot. Balaam
beat her again.
26 The angel of Yahweh moved and took up his stand in a place so narrow that
27 there was no room to pass, right or left. •When the donkey saw the angel of
Yahweh, she lay down under Balaam. Balaam flew into a rage and beat her with
his stick.
28 Then Yahweh opened the mouth of the donkey, who said to Balaam, 'What
29 have I done to you? Why beat me three times like this?' •Balaam answered the ✗ 2P2:16
donkey, 'Because you are playing the fool with me! If I had had a sword in my
30 hand, I would have killed you by now.' •The donkey said to Balaam, 'Am I not
your donkey, and have I not been your mount from your youth? In all this time,
have I ever failed to serve you?'[g] He answered, 'No'.
31 Then Yahweh opened the eyes of Balaam. He saw the angel of Yahweh
standing on the road, a drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down and fell
32 prostrate on his face. •And the angel of Yahweh said to him, 'Why did you beat
your donkey three times like that? I myself had come to bar your way; while I am
33 here your road is blocked.[h] •The donkey saw me and turned aside from me three
times. You are lucky she did turn aside, or I should have killed you by now,
34 though I would have spared her.' •Balaam answered the angel of Yahweh,
'I have sinned.[i] I did not know you were standing in my path. However, if you
35 are angry with me, I will go back.' •The angel of Yahweh answered Balaam,
'Go with these men, but only say what I tell you to say.' So Balaam went with
the chiefs sent by Balak.

Balaam and Balak

36 Balak learned that Balaam was coming and went out to meet him, in the
direction of Ar of Moab,[j] at the Arnon frontier on the country's furthest bound-
37 ary. •Balak said to Balaam, 'Did I not send messengers to summon you? Why did

n. 'it engulfed' Greek.
o. I.e. Chemosh.
p. 'the men' corr.

22 a. At the same altitude as Jericho, on the east side of Jordan: the author speaks as one living in Palestine.

b. Ch. 22-24 combine in one narrative materials (sometimes inconsistent) from two traditions, 'Yahwistic' and 'Elohistic'. Ch. 23 is mostly from the 'Elohistic' tradition, ch. 24 from the 'Yahwistic'; in ch. 22 both traditions overlap. This lengthy narrative offers an unusual example of the prophetic function. Balaam is a soothsayer from the Euphrates; his god is Yahweh, 22:18, etc., perhaps because he is temporarily attracted by the new religion brought from the desert by the Israelites. (It is also possible, though there is no sure evidence, that Yahweh was worshipped outside Israel). He is an enemy of the Israelites (cf. marginal references) and yet, against his will, he repeatedly blesses them. He is forced to do so by God's irresistible spirit which opposes the curse and imposes the blessing; thus catastrophe is averted and fortune assured, because blessings and curses are regarded as efficacious, and once uttered cannot be revoked, cf. Gn 27:33.

c. Pethor (on 'the river', i.e. Euphrates) and the land of Amaw (with Hebr., against 'Ammon' of Sam., Syr., Vulg.) are known from the cuneiform texts.

d. Considered a princely mount in the second millennium B.C. Cf. Jg 5:10.

e. This story is more graphic and of more popular appeal than the previous one: it is attributed to the 'Yahwistic' tradition; as in Gn 3:1f an animal appears with the gift of speech.

f. 'Yahweh' with Sam. and some Greek MSS; Hebr. 'God'.

g. Others translate 'Was I ever accustomed to do so to you?'

h. Lit. 'the road is overturned'. Others translate 'for this journey did not please me'.

i. Here in the sense of any action, deliberate or not, that goes against God's will.

j. Hebr. has *ir Moab* ('city of Moab').

you not come to me? Did you think, perhaps, I could confer no honours on you?'
Balaam answered Balak, 'Here I am at your side. May I make myself clear 38
Jr 1:9 to you now? The word that God puts into my mouth, this I shall speak.'
Balaam set out with Balak. They came to Kiriath-huzoth. •Balak sacrificed 39 40
oxen and sheep, and offered portions to Balaam and the chiefs who were with
him.[k] •Next morning Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal, 41
Hab 2:1 from where he could see the end of the camp.[l] 23 Balaam said to Balak, 'Build 1
me seven altars, and bring here to me seven bulls and seven rams'. •Balak did 2
as Balaam asked and he offered[a] a holocaust of one bull and one ram on each
altar. •Balaam then said to Balak, 'Stand beside your holocausts. I will go; 3
perhaps Yahweh will allow me to meet him. Whatever he shows me I shall tell
you.'[m] And he withdrew to a bare hill.

The oracles of Balaam

God came to meet Balaam, who said to him, 'I have prepared the seven altars 4
and offered a holocaust of one bull and one ram on each altar'. •Yahweh then 5
put a word into his mouth and said to him, 'Go back to Balak and that is what
you must say to him'. •So Balaam went back to him, and found him still standing 6
beside his holocaust, with all the chiefs of Moab. •Then he declaimed his poem.[b] 7
He said:

'Balak brought me from Aram,
the king of Moab from the hills of Kedem,
"Come, curse Jacob for me;
come, denounce Israel".
Pr 26:2 How shall I curse one when God does not curse? 8
How shall I denounce when God does not denounce?
Yes, from the top of the crags I see him, 9
from the hills I observe him.
Dt 33:28 See, a people dwelling apart,
not reckoned among the nations.[c]
Gn 13:16; 15:5+ Who can count the dust of Jacob? 10
Who can number the cloud of Israel?
May I die the death of the just!
May my end be one with theirs!'[d]

Balak said to Balaam, 'What have you done to me? I brought you to curse 11
my enemies, and you heap blessings on them!' •Balaam answered, 'Am I not 12
obliged to say what Yahweh puts into my mouth?' •Balak said to him, 'Come 13
with me to another place. What you see from here is only the fringe of this
people, you do not see them all. Curse them for me over there.' •He led him to 14
the Field of Spies, towards the summit of Pisgah. There he built seven altars
and offered a holocaust of one bull and one ram on each altar. •Balaam said to 15
Balak, 'Stand beside these holocausts. I will wait[e] over there.' •God came to 16
meet Balaam, he put a word into his mouth and said to him, 'Go back to Balak
and that is what you must say to him'. •So Balaam went to him, and found him 17
still standing beside his holocaust and all the chiefs of Moab with him. 'What
did Yahweh say?' Balak asked him. •Then Balaam declaimed his poem. He said: 18

'Arise, Balak, and listen,
give ear to me, son of Zippor.
1 S 15:29; 2 S 7:28; Jb 9:32; Ho 11:9; Hab 2:3; Mt 3:6; Rm 11:29; 2 Tm 2:13; Tt 1:2; Heb 6:18; Jm 1:17 God is no man that he should lie, 19
no son of Adam to draw back.
Is it his to say and not to do,
to speak and not fulfil?
The charge laid on me is to bless,[f] 20
I shall bless and not take it back.
I[g] have seen no evil in Jacob 21

I marked no suffering in Israel.
Yahweh his God is with him; Ps 47:5
in him sounds the royal acclaim.
22 God[h] brings him out of Egypt, =24:8-9 ↗Mt2:15
he is like the wild ox's horns to him.[i]
23 There is no omen against Jacob,
no divination against Israel.[j]
Though men say to Jacob,
say to Israel, "What wonder has God to show?" 14:15-18
24 here is a people like a lioness rising,
poised like a lion to spring; Gn 49:9
not lying down till he has devoured his prey
and drunk the blood of his victims.'

25 Balak said to Balaam, 'Very well! Do not curse them. But at least do not bless
26 them!' •Balaam answered Balak, 'Have I not told you: whatever Yahweh says,
I must do?'
27 Balak said to Balaam, 'Come then, let me take you somewhere else. From
28 there perhaps it will please God to curse them.' •So Balak led Balaam to the
29 summit of Peor, dominating the desert.[k] •Then Balaam said to Balak, 'Build me
30 seven altars here and find me seven bulls and seven rams'. •Balak did as Balaam
asked, and offered a holocaust of one bull and one ram on each altar.
1 24 Balaam then saw that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel. He did not go as
2 before to seek omens but turned towards the wilderness. •Raising his
eyes[a] Balaam saw Israel, encamped by tribes; the spirit of God came on him
3 and he declaimed his poem. He said:

'The oracle of Balaam son of Beor,
the oracle of the man with far-seeing eyes,[b]
4 the oracle of one who hears the word of God.
He sees what Shaddai makes him see, Gn17:1+
receives the divine answer, and his eyes are opened.[c]
5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob! Ps 84:1 Is 54:2-3
How fair your dwellings, Israel!
6 Like valleys that stretch afar, Heb 8:2
like gardens by the banks of a river,
like aloes planted by Yahweh,
like cedars beside the waters!
7 A hero arises from their stock, 24:17 Gn49:10 Jos21:21f Is 9:5f; 11:1f
he reigns over countless peoples.[d]
His king is greater than Agag,
his majesty is exalted.
8 God brings him out of Egypt, =23:22-24
he is like the wild ox's horns to him. Dt 33:17

k. A communion sacrifice, Lv 3:1+; this is to be followed, Nb 23:2, by a holocaust which is the prelude to a divine manifestation, cf. Jg 6:25f.

l. Lit. 'the extremity (i.e. the nearest part) of the people'.

23 a. 'he offered', reading singular with Greek.

b. The following poems must originally have belonged to one anti-Moabite collection. The first two are of the 'Elohistic' tradition.

c. Israel is a chosen race, Dt 7:6+, as its very numbers show.

d. 'theirs' Greek; Hebr. has the singular.

e. Lit. 'I will be met'.

f. Lit. 'Behold he has blessed, I have taken (i.e. it—the opportunity)'; but the versions read the passive 'I have been taken' (i.e. as God's tool).

g. 'I' Sam. and Syr.; 'He' Hebr. and Greek.

h. 'El' and not 'Elohim' here. Similarly 24:4,8,16.

i. A difficult text. Alternative translation 'he (Jacob) has the strength of the wild ox.'

j. Others translate 'in Jacob' and 'in Israel'.

k. The desert of Judah (Jeshimon) as in 21:20.

24 a. Here begins a new series of oracles from the 'Yahwistic' tradition.

b. Lit. 'whose eye is perfect', following Greek.

c. Meaning disputed. Alternative translation 'he falls and his eyes are opened'.

d. Following the Greek; the Hebr. has an entirely different text. The messianic character of the text is apparently that called 'royal'; its immediate reference would seem to be either Saul who defeated the Amalekite king Agag, 1 S 15:8, or David who also fought against the Amalekites, 1 S 30.

He[e] feeds on the carcase of his enemies,
and breaks their bones in pieces.[f]
Gn 49:9 He has crouched, he has lain down, 9
like a lion, like a lioness;
who dare rouse him?
Gn 12:3; 27:29 Blessed be those who bless you,
and accursed be those who curse you!'

Balak flew into a rage with Balaam. He beat his hands together and said to 10
Balaam, 'I brought you to curse my enemies, and you bless them three times over!
Be off with you, and go home. I promised to load you with honours. Yahweh 11
himself has deprived you of them.' •Balaam answered Balak, 'Did I not tell the 12
messengers you sent me: •Even if Balak gave me his house full of gold and 13
silver I could not go against the order of Yahweh and do anything of my own
accord, good or evil; what Yahweh says is what I will say. •Now that I am going 14
back to my own folk, let me warn you what this people will do to your people,
in time to come.' •Then he declaimed his poem. He said: 15

'The oracle of Balaam son of Beor,
the oracle of the man with far-seeing eyes,
the oracle of one who hears the word of God, 16
of one who knows the knowledge of the Most High.
He sees what Shaddai makes him see,
receives the divine answer, and his eyes are opened.
24:7 Is 9:5 Mt 2:2 I see him—but not in the present, 17
I behold him—but not close at hand:
Gn49:10+ Rv 2:28; 22:16 a star[g] from Jacob takes the leadership,
a sceptre arises from Israel.
It crushes the brows of Moab[h]
the skulls of all the sons of Sheth.[i]
20:23+ Gn 25:23+; 27:39+ Am 9:11 Edom becomes a conquered land; 18
a conquered land is Seir.
Israel exerts his strength, 19
Jacob dominates his enemies
and destroys the fugitives from Ar.'[j]

Balaam looked on Amalek and declaimed his poem. He said: 20

Ex17:8+ 'Amalek, first among the nations!
Ex 17:14 1 S 15:3 But his posterity shall perish for ever.'[k]

Jg 1:16 Ezk 25:4 Then he looked on the Kenites and declaimed his poem. He said: 21

1 S 15:6 'Your house was firm, Kain,
and your nest[l] perched high in the rock.
But the nest belongs to Beor; 22
how long will you be Asshur's captive?'[m]

Then he looked on Og[n] and declaimed his poem. He said: 23

'The Sea-people[o] gather in the north,
Dn 11:30 ships from the coasts of Kittim.[p] 24
They bear down on Asshur, they bear down on Eber;
he too shall perish for ever.'[q]

31:8 Then Balaam rose, left and went home. Balak too went his way. 25

31:16 Dt3:29;4:3 Ps106:28-31 ↗ Rv2:14 33:49 Ho 9:10 Ex 22:19 Jos 22:17

Israel at Peor[a]

25 Israel settled at Shittim.[b] The people gave themselves over to debauchery 1
with the daughters of Moab.[c] •These invited them to the sacrifices of their 2
gods, and the people ate[d] and bowed down before their gods. •With Israel thus 3

committed to the Baal of Peor, the anger of Yahweh blazed out against them.
4 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Take all the leaders of the people. Impale them for 2 S 21:6f
Yahweh, here in the sun; then the burning anger of Yahweh will turn away from
5 Israel.' •Moses said to the judges in Israel, 'Every one of you must put to death Ex18:25f Ezk 9:5
those of his people who have committed themselves to the Baal of Peor'.
6 A man of the sons of Israel came along, bringing the[e] Midianite woman into 31:16 Ex2:15+
his family, under the very eyes of Moses and the whole community of the sons
7 of Israel as they wept at the door of the Tent of Meeting. •When he saw this, Ex 6:25; 32:39
Phinehas the priest, son of Eleazar son of Aaron, stood up and left the assembly, Jos 22:13
8 seized a lance, •followed the Israelite into the alcove, and there ran them both Jg 20:28 *Ezk 9:5* ✗1Co10:8
through, the Israelite and the woman, right through the groin. And the plague
9 that had struck the sons of Israel was arrested. •In the plague twenty-four
thousand of them had died.
10 11 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Phinehas the priest, son of Eleazar son Jos 22:13
of Aaron, has turned my wrath away from the sons of Israel, because he was the
only one among them to have the same zeal as I have; for this I did not make an Dt4:24+
12 end, in my zeal, of the sons of Israel. •Proclaim this, therefore: To him I now Ex32:25-29 Lv 1-7
13 grant my covenant of peace. •For him and for his descendants after him, this Dt33:8-11 Ps106:30-31 Si 45:23-26 Ezk44:15
covenant shall ensure the priesthood for ever. In reward for his zeal for his God,
he shall have the right to perform the ritual of atonement[f] over the sons of Israel.'
14 The Israelite who was killed (he who had been killed with the Midianite
woman) was called Zimri son of Salu, leader of one of the patriarchal Houses of
15 Simeon. •The woman, the Midianite who was killed, was called Cozbi, daughter
of Zur, chief of a clan, of a patriarchal House in Midian.
16 17 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Harry the Midianites and strike them 31:3-12
18 down, •for they have harassed you with their guile in the Peor affair and in the
affair of Cozbi their sister, daughter of a prince of Midian, the woman who
was killed the day the plague came on account of Peor'.

VIII. FURTHER LEGISLATION[a]

The census

19 1 After this plague, **26** Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest. He said:

e. Israel.

f. Text uncertain. For 'carcase' the Massoretes understood 'nations'.

g. In the ancient East the star signified a god and, consequently, the deified king. See also Is 14:12. Here the word seems to refer to the Davidic dynasty from which the Messiah was to come.

h. For 'sceptre' the Greek reads 'a man'; for 'brows' it has 'chiefs'. The same Hebr. word means 'sides' (of the head) and 'frontiers'.

i. Here referring to Bedouin tribes. The poem goes on to enumerate those of Israel's enemies who lived on the borders of Canaan.

j. 'enemies': transposed from v. 18 where Hebr. has it after 'Seir'. 'Ar', cf. 22:36, in place of Hebr. 'city'.

k. Following Sam.

l. Play on words: *qen*, 'nest' and *qyn*, 'Kain' (the latter is here a textual restoration demanded by the rhythm). The Kenites were nomads (cf. 1 Ch 2:55 where they appear as brethren of the Rechabites) intimately associated with Midian (cf. Nb 10:29 and Jg 1:16). They were driven back by the Edomites (the Beor of v. 22 appears to be the Edomite king of Gn 36:32) but penetrated as far as Amalekite territory, Jg 1:16; 1 S 15:4-6, cf. 27:10 and 30:29, and even as far as the Esdraelon plain, Jg 4:11,17; 5:24. There is evidently a connection between Kain and Kenaz; Kenaz was father of Othniel who was brother (or nephew?) of 'Caleb the Kenizzite' (who, according to other passages, was of Judah), Nb 32:12; Jos 14:6,14; 15:17; Jg 1:13; 3:9-11; 1 Ch 4:13. In Gn 15:19 the Kenizzites are listed between Kenites and Kadmonites (the 'sons of the East' of Gn 29:1; Jg 6:3; etc.); in Gn 36:11-12 Kenaz is described as grandson of Esau and half-brother of Amalek—which suggests that they were neighbours rather than blood-relations.

m. Text very uncertain, corr. conjectural. 'Asshur' here, and in v. 24, is not Assyria but the nation mentioned in Gn 25:3 and 2 S 2:9.

n. These words are found only in the Greek. Og was king of Bashan, territory of the Asshurites, cf. 21:33, etc.

o. Lit. (with slight corr.) 'people of the isles'. These 'peoples of the sea' (the term includes the Philistines) descended on Egypt and Palestine in the 13th century.

p. Cyprus, and also the eastern Mediterranean seaboard.

q. Text corrected as in v. 20.

25 a. Continuing the story of Israel's contact with her neighbours. The passage, 'Priestly' in outlook, establishes the right of Phinehas to the priesthood; it is therefore a sequel to 20:22-29.

b. On Shittim or Abel-hash-shittim see Jos 2:1+.

c. What follows concerns the Midianites rather than the Moabites.

d. The sacred banquet of semitic communion sacrifices.

e. She is presumed known.

f. Alternative translation 'It is the reward of his zeal for his God and of having made atonement'.

26 a. These new and varied enactments are all of the 'Priestly' tradition.

'Take a census of all the community of the sons of Israel, by families: all 2
those of twenty years and over, fit to bear arms'.

So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke to the people in the plains of Moab, 3
near the Jordan opposite Jericho. They counted:

(As Yahweh had ordered Moses and the sons of Israel on their coming 4
out of the land of Egypt:) Men of twenty years and over:

Ex 6:14
1 Ch 5:3 Reuben, the first-born of Israel. The sons of Reuben: for Hanoch, the 5
Hanochite clan; for Pallu, the Palluite clan; •for Hezron, the Hezronite clan; 6
for Carmi, the Carmite clan. •These were the Reubenite clans. They numbered 7
forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty men.

16:1-17 The sons of Pallu: Eliab. •The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram. 8 9
These two, Dathan and Abiram, men of repute in the community, were the ones
who challenged Moses and Aaron; they belonged to the followers of Korah
who challenged Yahweh. •The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them 10
(Korah perished with his followers), when fire consumed the two hundred and
fifty men. They were a sign. •The sons of Korah did not perish. 11

1Ch4:24 The sons of Simeon by clans; for Nemuel, the Nemuelite clan; for Jamin, 12
the Jaminite clan; for Jachin, the Jachinite clan; •for Zerah, the Zerahite clan; 13
for Shaul, the Shaulite clan. •These were the Simeonite clans. They numbered 14
twenty-two thousand two hundred men.

1Ch5:11 [b] The sons of Gad by clans: for Zephon, the Zephonite clan; for Haggi, the 15
Haggite clan; for Shuni, the Shunite clan; •for Ozni, the Oznite clan; for Eri, 16
the Erite clan; •for Arod, the Arodite clan; for Areli, the Arelite clan. •These 17 18
were the clans of the sons of Gad. They numbered forty thousand five
hundred men.

The sons of Judah: Er and Onan. Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 19
The sons of Judah became clans: for Shelah, the Shelanite clan; for Perez, the 20
Perezzite clan; for Zerah, the Zerahite clan. •The sons of Perez were: for Hezron, 21
the Hezronite clan; for Hamul, the Hamulite clan. •These were the clans of 22
Judah. They numbered seventy-six thousand five hundred men.

Jg 10:1-2
1 Ch 7:1 The sons of Issachar, by clans: for Tola, the Tolaite clan; for Puvah, the 23
Puvite clan; •for Jashub, the Jashubite clan; for Shimron, the Shimronite clan. 24
These were the clans of Issachar. They numbered sixty-four thousand three 25
hundred men.

Jg12:11-12 The sons of Zebulun by clans: for Sered, the Seredite clan; for Elon, the 26
Elonite clan; for Jahleel, the Jahleelite clan. •These were the clans of Zebulun. 27
They numbered sixty thousand five hundred men.

The sons of Joseph, by clans: Manasseh and Ephraim. 28

Jos 17:1
Jg5:4;6:11
1Ch7:14-19 The sons of Manasseh: for Machir, the Machirite clan; Machir was the father 29
of Gilead: for Gilead, the Gileadite clan. •These were the clans of Gilead; for 30
Iezer, the Iezerite clan; for Helek, the Helekite clan; •Asriel, the Asrielite clan; 31
Shechem, the Shechemite clan; •Shemida, the Shemidaite clan; Hepher, the 32

27:1
1Ch7:15 Hepherite clan. •Zelophehad son of Hepher had no sons but only daughters; 33
these are the names of Zelophehad's daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah
and Tirzah. •These were the clans of Manasseh. They numbered fifty-two 34
thousand seven hundred men.

1Ch26:35 These are the sons of Ephraim by clans: for Shuthelah, the Shuthelahite clan; 35
for Becher, the Becherite clan; for Tahan, the Tahanite clan. •These are the sons 36
of Shuthelah: for Eran, the Eranite clan. •These were the clans of Ephraim. 37
They numbered thirty-two thousand five hundred men.

1 Ch 7:6 These were the sons of Joseph, by clans.

1Ch7:12;
8:1 The sons of Benjamin, by clans: for Bela, the Belaite clan; for Ashbel, the 38
Ashbelite clan; for Ahiram, the Ahiramite clan; •for Shephupham, the Shephu- 39
phamite clan; for Hupham, the Huphamite clan. •Bela had Ard and Naaman for 40
sons: the Ardite clan; for Naaman, the Naamite clan. •These were the sons of 41
Benjamin by clans. They numbered forty-five thousand six hundred men.

42 These were the sons of Dan, by clans: for Shuham, the Shuhamite clan.
43 These were the sons of Dan, by clans. •All the Shuhamite clans numbered sixty-four thousand four hundred men.
44 The sons of Asher, by clans: for Imnah the Imnite clan; for Ishvi, the Ishvite 1Ch7:30
45 clan; for Beriah, the Beriite clan. •For the sons of Beriah: for Heber, the Heberite
46 clan; for Malchiel, the Malchielite clan. •The daughter of Asher was called
47 Serah. •These were the clans of Asher. They numbered fifty-three thousand four hundred men.
48 The sons of Naphtali, by clans: for Jahzeel, the Jahzeelite clan; for Guni, 1Ch7:13
49 the Gunite clan; •for Jezer, the Jezerite clan; for Shillem the Shillemite clan.
50 These were the clans of Naphtali grouped by clans. The sons of Naphtali numbered forty-five thousand four hundred men.
51 The sons of Israel numbered in all six hundred and one thousand seven 1:46+;2:32; 11:21
hundred and thirty men.
52 53 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'The land is to be shared out among Jos 13f
54 these as a heritage, according to the number of those inscribed. •To the large in
number you are to give a large area of land, to the small in number a small area; ∞33:54
55 to each the heritage will be in proportion to the number registered. •The dividing
of the land is, however, to be done by lot. Each is to receive his inheritance
56 according to the number of names[c] in the patriarchal tribes; •the inheritance of
each tribe is to be divided by lot, each receiving in accordance with its larger or
smaller numbers.'

Census of the Levites

57 These are, by clans, the Levites that were registered: for Gershon, the Gn46:11 Ex6:16-23 1Ch6:1-15
Gershonite clan; for Kohath, the Kohathite clan; for Merari, the Merarite clan.
58 These are the Levite clans: the Libnite clan, the Hebronite clan, the Mahlite
clan, the Mushite clan, the Korahite clan.[d]
59 Kohath was the father of Amram. •The wife of Amram was called Jochebed 6:20
daughter of Levi, born to him in Egypt. To Amram she bore Aaron, Moses and Ex 15:20
60 Miriam their sister. •Aaron was the father of Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Lv10:1-3
61 Ithamar. •Nadab and Abihu died when they brought unlawful fire before Yahweh. 3:4
62 Altogether there were registered twenty-three thousand males of one month 3:14,39
and over. They were not registered with the sons of Israel, having received no 18:20-24
inheritance among them.
63 These were the men registered by Moses and Eleazar the priest who took
this census of the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan, opposite
64 Jericho. •Not one of them was among those whom Moses and Aaron had
registered when they numbered the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai;
65 for Yahweh had told them that these were to die in the wilderness and without 14:20-38
anyone remaining, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

The inheritance of daughters

1 27 Then there came forward the daughters of Zelophehad. He was the son of 26:33 Jos17:3-4
Hepher son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh; he belonged to
the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. These are the names of his daughters:
2 Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. •They appeared before Moses,
before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and the whole community,
3 at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, and said, •'Our father died in the desert.
He was not one of the company of those who conspired against Yahweh, Korah's
4 party; it was for his own sin that he died without sons.[a] •Why must our father's

b. The Greek here inverts the order of the tribes, hence a discrepancy of verse numbers.

c. Lit. 'according to their names', cf. 1:2.

d. Vv. 57 and 58 give two different clan divisions of the Levites; the second is probably the earlier. 1 Ch 6: 1-15 attempts a reconciliation.

27 a. The punishment of unbelief, ch. 14, leaves intact the rights of the next generation, but the sinful revolt of Korah and his companions, ch. 16-17, affects their descendants.

name be lost to his clan? Since he had no son, give us some property among our father's kinsmen.'

Moses took their case before Yahweh, 5 •and Yahweh spoke to Moses. He 6
said, 7 •'The daughters of Zelophehad have a just case. Give them a property
for their inheritance among their father's kinsmen; pass on to them their father's
inheritance. 8 •Then say this to the sons of Israel, "If a man dies without sons,
his inheritance is to pass to his daughter. 9 •If he has no daughter, the inheritance
is to go to his brothers. 10 •If he has no brothers, it is to go to his father's brothers.
If his father has no brothers, it is to go to the member of his clan who is most 11
nearly related: he is to take possession. This shall be a statutory ordinance for
the sons of Israel, as Yahweh has ordered Moses." '

‖Dt31:1-8,23 **Joshua the head of the community**

Dt 34:9 Yahweh said to Moses, 'Climb this mountain of the Abarim range, and look 12
on the land I have given to the sons of Israel. 13 •After you have seen it, you will
20:12+ be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was. 14 •For you both rebelled
in the wilderness of Zin when the community complained against me, when I
ordered you to proclaim my holiness before their eyes by means of the water.'
(These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.)

16:22 Is 12:2 Ac 6:3 Moses said to Yahweh, 15 •'May Yahweh, God of the spirits that give life to 15 16
all living creatures, appoint a leader for this community, 17 •to be at their head in
all they do, a man who will lead them out and bring them in,[b] so that the
1K22:17 Ezk 34:5 Mt 9:36 community of Yahweh may not be like sheep without a shepherd'. 18 •Yahweh
Jos 1:1 answered Moses, 'Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom the spirit
dwells. Lay your hands on him. 19 •Then bring him before Eleazar the priest
and the whole community, to give him your orders in their presence 20 •and to
Jos1:16-17 2K2:9,15 give him a share of your authority, so that the whole community of the sons of
Israel may obey him. 21 •He shall present himself to Eleazar the priest, who is to
Dt 33:8 1S14:41+ make inquiry for him before Yahweh, according to the rite of the Urim. At his
command all the sons of Israel shall go out and come in with him, the whole
community.'

Moses did as Yahweh had ordered. He took Joshua and brought him before 22
Dt 34:9 Eleazar the priest and the whole community, 23 •laid his hands on him and gave
him his orders, as Yahweh had directed through Moses.

Ex 23:14 Lv 23 1Ch23:31 2 Ch 2:3; 8:13;31:3 **Regulations for sacrifices**[a]

28 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, 2 •'Give the sons of Israel this order: 1 2
"Take care to bring at the appointed time my offering, my sustenance
Ex29:18+ in the form of burnt offering, an appeasing fragrance for me".

Ezr 3:4 Ne 10:34 Say to them, "These are the burnt offerings you must offer to Yahweh: 3

Lv 6:2+ Ezk46:13-15 **a. Daily sacrifices**

"Every day, two yearling lambs without blemish, as a perpetual holocaust.
2K16:15 Ps 141:2 The first lamb you must offer in the morning, the second between the two evenings, 4
together with an oblation of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one 5
quarter of a hin of purest oil. 6 •This is the perpetual holocaust made long ago
at Mount Sinai as an appeasing fragrance, a burnt offering to Yahweh. 7 •The
accompanying libation is to be at the rate of one quarter of a hin for each lamb;
the libation of strong drink for Yahweh must be poured out in the sanctuary.
The second lamb you must offer as a holocaust between the two evenings; do 8
this with the same oblation and the same libation as in the morning, as a burnt
offering, an appeasing fragrance for Yahweh.

Ezk46:4-5 **b. The sabbath**

Mt 12:5 "On the sabbath day, you must offer two yearling lambs without blemish, 9
and two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as an oblation, mixed with oil, as well

10 as the accompanying libation. •The sabbath holocaust is to be offered every sabbath in addition to the perpetual holocaust, and the accompanying libation similarly.

c. The feast of New Moon

Is 1:13 Ezk46:6-7 Am 8:5

11 "At the beginning of each of your months you must offer a holocaust to Yahweh: two young bulls, one ram and seven yearling lambs without blemish;
12 for each bull an oblation of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with
13 oil; for each ram, an oblation of two-tenths of fine flour mixed with oil; •for each lamb, an oblation of one-tenth of fine flour mixed with oil. This is a
14 holocaust, an appeasing fragrance, a burnt offering to Yahweh. •The accompanying libation is to be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, one-quarter of a hin for a lamb. This must be the monthly holocaust,
15 month after month, every month of the year. •In addition to the perpetual holocaust a he-goat must be offered to Yahweh, as a sacrifice for sin, with its accompanying libation.

d. The feast of Unleavened Bread

Ex 12+ Lv23:5-8 Dt16:1-8 Ezk45:21-28

16 17 "The fourteenth day of the first month, is the Passover of Yahweh, •and the fifteenth day of this month is a feast day. For seven days unleavened bread
18 must be eaten. •On the first day there will be a solemn assembly. You must
19 do no laborious work. •You shall offer to Yahweh a burnt offering as a holocaust: two young bulls, a ram, seven yearling sheep without blemish. •The accompanying
20 oblation of fine flour mixed with oil is to be three-tenths of an ephah for the bull,
21 22 two-tenths for the ram, •and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. •There must also be a he-goat for the sacrifice for sin, for performing the rite of atonement
23 over you. •This must be done in addition to the morning holocaust which is a
24 perpetual holocaust. •You must do this every day for seven days. It is nourishment, a burnt offering, an appeasing fragrance for Yahweh; it is to be offered
25 in addition to the perpetual holocaust and its accompanying libation. •On the seventh day you must hold a solemn assembly; you will do no laborious work.

e. The feast of Weeks

Ex 23:14+ Lv23:15-21 Dt16:9-12

26 "On the day of the first-fruits, when you make your offering of new fruits to Yahweh at your feast of Weeks, you are to hold a solemn assembly; you must
27 do no laborious work. •You must offer as a holocaust, an appeasing fragrance for
28 Yahweh: two young bulls, one ram, seven yearling lambs. •The accompanying oblation of fine flour mixed with oil is to be three-tenths of an ephah for each
29 30 bull, •two-tenths for the ram, and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. •There must also be a he-goat for the sacrifice for sin,[b] for performing the rite of
31 atonement over you. •This must be done in addition to the perpetual holocaust and its accompanying oblation.[c]

f. The feast of Acclamations

10:10 Lv 23:24 1Ch23:31 2Ch 2:3; 8:13;31:3

1 29 "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you are to hold a solemn assembly; you must do no heavy work. It shall be your day of
2 Acclamations. •You must offer as a holocaust, an appeasing fragrance for
3 Yahweh: one young bull, one ram, seven yearling lambs without blemish. •The accompanying oblation of fine flour mixed with oil is to be three-tenths of an
4 ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, •and one-tenth for each of the seven

b. Phrase expressing all the leader's functions, Dt 28:6; 1 S 29:6; 2 K 19:27; he must be guided by the divine oracles communicated to him by the priest, v. 21, cf. 1 S 14:37; 23:2f.

28 a. Ch. 28-29 deal with the liturgical cycle of Lv 23 but in their own distinctive fashion: with a view to the organisation of Temple worship they systematise the arrangements of Lv 23:13,17-18; cf. Ezk 45:21-25; 46: 11,13-15.

b. 'for the sacrifice for sin' lacking in Hebr.

c. The text here adds 'they must be without blemish for you, together with their libations'.

lambs. •There must also be a he-goat for the sacrifice for sin, for performing 5
the rite of atonement over you. •All this must be done in addition to the monthly 6
holocaust and its oblation, the perpetual holocaust and its oblation, and the
accompanying libations enjoined by law,—an appeasing fragrance, a burnt
offering to Yahweh.

Lv 16+ Ezk 45:18-20 **g. The day of Atonement**

Lv 23:26-32 "On the tenth day of this seventh month, you are to hold a solemn assembly. 7
You must fast and do no work. •You must offer as a holocaust to Yahweh, an 8
appeasing fragrance: one young bull, one ram, and seven yearling lambs of your
choice without blemish. •The accompanying oblation of fine flour mixed with 9
oil is to be three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, •and 10
one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. •A he-goat must be offered for the 11
sacrifice for sin. This is in addition to the victim for sin at the feast of Atonement,
Ex 23:14+ Lv 23:33-43 and to the perpetual holocaust with its accompanying oblation and libations.

Dt 16:13-15 Ezk 45:25 Jn 7:2 Ps 81:3 **h. The feast of Tabernacles**

"On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you are to hold a solemn assembly, 12
you must do no heavy work, and for the space of seven days you are to celebrate
a feast for Yahweh. •You must offer as a holocaust, a burnt offering, an appeasing 13
fragrance for Yahweh: thirteen young bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs
without blemish. •The accompanying oblation of fine flour mixed with oil 14
is to be three-tenths of an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for
each of the two rams, •one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; •also one 15 16
he-goat as a sacrifice for sin. This is in addition to the perpetual holocaust and its
oblation and libations.

"On the second day: twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs 17
without blemish; •the accompanying oblation and libations, as prescribed, in 18
proportion to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; •also one he-goat for the 19
sacrifice for sin. This is in addition to the perpetual holocaust with its oblation
and libations.

"On the third day: eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without 20
blemish; •the accompanying oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion 21
to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; •also one he-goat for the sacrifice 22
for sin. This is in addition to the perpetual holocaust with its oblations
and libation.

"On the fourth day: ten bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without 23
blemish; •the accompanying oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion 24
to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; •also one he-goat for the sacrifice for 25
sin. This is in addition to the perpetual holocaust with its oblation and libations.

"On the fifth day: nine bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without 26
blemish; •the accompanying oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion 27
to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; •also one he-goat for the sacrifice for 28
sin. This is in addition to the perpetual holocaust with its oblation and libations.

"On the sixth day: eight bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without 29
blemish; •the accompanying oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion 30
to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; •also one he-goat for the sacrifice for 31
sin. This is in addition to the perpetual holocaust with its oblation and libations.

"On the seventh day: seven bulls, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs without 32
blemish; •the accompanying oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion 33
to the number of bulls, rams and lambs; •also one he-goat for the sacrifice for 34
sin. This is in addition to the perpetual holocaust with its oblation and libations.

Jn 7:37 "On the eighth day you must all assemble. You must do no heavy work. •You 35 36
must offer as a holocaust, a burnt offering, an appeasing fragrance for Yahweh:
one bull, one ram, seven yearling lambs without blemish; •the accompanying 37
oblation and libations, as prescribed, in proportion to the number of bulls, rams

38 and lambs; •also one goat for the sacrifice for sin. This is in addition to the
perpetual holocaust with its oblation and libations.
39 "This is what you are to do for Yahweh at your solemn feasts, over and above
your votive and voluntary offerings, your holocausts, oblations and libations,
and your communion sacrifice." '
1 30 Moses told the sons of Israel exactly what Yahweh had ordered him.

Laws concerning vows Lv27:1+

2 Moses spoke to the leaders of the tribes of the sons of Israel. He said, 'This is
what Yahweh has ordered:
3 "If a man makes a vow to Yahweh or takes a formal pledge under oath, he Dt23:22-24 Jg 11:30-40 Ps 50:14; 56:12; 76:11 Qo 5:3-4 Mt 5:33
must not break his word: whatever he promises by word of mouth he must do.
4 "If a woman makes a vow to Yahweh or takes a formal pledge during her
5 youth, while she is still in her father's house, •and if he hears about this vow
or pledge made by her and says nothing to her, her vow, whatever it may be,
shall be binding, and the pledge she has taken, whatever it may be, shall be
6 binding. •But if the father on the day he learns of it expresses his disapproval
of it, then none of the vows or pledges she has taken shall be binding. Yahweh
will not hold her to it, since her father has expressed his disapproval.
7 "If, being bound by vows or by a pledge voiced without due reflection, she Lv 5:4
8 then marries, •and if her husband hears of it but says nothing on the day he
learns of it, her vows shall be binding and the pledges she has taken shall be
9 binding. •But if on the day he learns of it he expresses his disapproval to her,
this will annul the vow that she has made or the pledge that binds her, voiced
without due reflection. Yahweh will not hold her to it.
10 "The vow of a widow or a divorced woman and all pledges taken by her are
binding on her.
11 "If she has made a vow or taken a pledge under oath while in her husband's
12 house, •and if when the husband learns of it he says nothing to her and does
not express disapproval to her, then the vow, whatever it is, shall be binding, and
13 the pledge, whatever it is, shall be binding. •But if the husband when he hears
of them annuls them on the day he learns of them, no word of her mouth, vow
or pledge, shall be binding. Since the husband has annulled them, Yahweh will
not hold her to them.
14 "Every vow or oath that is binding on the wife[a] may be endorsed or annulled
by the husband.
15 "If by the following day the husband has said nothing to her, it means that
he endorses her vow, whatever it may be, or her pledge, whatever it may be.
16 He endorses them if he says nothing on the day he learns of them. •But if he
annuls them a longer after he time learnt of them, then he must bear the burden
of the wife's fault." '
17 These are the laws ordained by Yahweh to Moses, concerning the relationship
between man and wife, and between a father and his daughter while still young
and living in her father's home.

IX. BOOTY AND ITS ALLOCATION[a]

The holy war against Midian Ex2:15+ Dt 20:1–21:14 Jos6:17+ 1S15:1-33

1 2 31 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Exact full vengeance for the sons of
Israel on the Midianites. Afterwards you will be gathered to your people.'

30 a. Lit. 'that binds her to afflict her soul'. The expression commonly means 'to fast' but commentators are agreed it has a wider sense here.
31 a. Availing itself of certain traditional data this section introduces regulations for the conduct of the holy war, for the division of the booty and, especially, for the sharing out of the Holy Land itself. 'Priestly' tradition.

Moses said to the people, 'Some of you must take arms to wage Yahweh's 3
25:17-18 campaign against Midian, to carry out the vengeance of Yahweh on Midian. •Put 4
a thousand men in the field from each of the tribes of Israel.'
Jg 21:10 In this way Israel's hosts provided twelve thousand men equipped for war, 5
one thousand from each tribe: •Moses put them in the field, one thousand from 6
25:6-13 each tribe, with Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest, to go with them carrying the
10:9 sacred vessels and the trumpets for sounding the alarm.
They waged the campaign against Midian, as Yahweh had ordered 7
Moses, and they put every male to death. •And further, they killed the kings 8
Jos13:21-22 of Midian, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba, the five Midianite kings; they also
put Balaam son of Beor to the sword. •The sons of Israel took the Midianite 9
women captive with their young children, and plundered all their cattle, all their
flocks and all their goods. •They set fire to the towns where they lived and all 10
their encampments. •Then, taking all their booty, all that they had captured, 11
man and beast, •they took the captives, spoil and booty to Moses, Eleazar 12
the priest and all the community of the sons of Israel, at the camp in the plains
of Moab, near the Jordan opposite Jericho.

The slaughter of the women and purification of the booty

Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the community went out of 13
the camp to meet them. •Moses was enraged with the commanders of the army, 14
the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come back
from this military expedition. •He said, 'Why have you spared the life of all 15
25 the women? •These were the very ones who, on Balaam's advice, perverted the 16
sons of Israel and made them renounce Yahweh in the affair at Peor: hence the
Jg 21:11 plague which struck the community of Israel. •So kill all the male children. 17
Kill also all the women who have slept with a man. •Spare the lives only of the 18
young girls who have not slept with a man, and take them for yourselves. •As 19
19:11-22 for you, you must camp for seven days outside the camp, all of you who have
killed a man or touched a corpse. Purify yourselves, you and your prisoners,
on the third and seventh days; •purify also all clothing, everything made of skin, 20
everything woven of goats' hair and everything made of wood.'
Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers who had come back from this campaign, 21
'This is a statute of the Law which Yahweh has commanded Moses. •Whereas 22
the gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin and lead, •everything that can withstand fire, 23
must be passed through the fire and it will be clean, yet it must still be purified
19:1-10 with lustral water.[b] Whatever cannot resist fire you must pass through water.
'Wash your clothes on the seventh day and you will then be clean. You may 24
then come back to the camp.'

The allocation of the booty

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 25
'With Eleazar the priest and the heads of families in the community, count 26
1 S 30:24 the spoils and the captives, man and beast. •Then share out the spoil, half and 27
half, between those who fought the campaign and the rest of the community.
Jg 8:25 As Yahweh's portion you will set aside, from the share of the combatants who 28
took part in the campaign, one out of every five hundred persons, oxen, donkeys
and sheep. •These are to be taken from the half share which is their due, and 29
given to Eleazar the priest as an offering to Yahweh. •From the half which is 30
due to the sons of Israel, you will take one out of every fifty persons, oxen,
donkeys, sheep, and all other animals, and give them to the Levites who have
charge of the tabernacle of Yahweh.'
Moses and Eleazar the priest did as Yahweh had ordered Moses. •The 31 32
spoils, the remainder of the booty captured by the soldiers, came to six hundred
and seventy-five thousand head of small stock, •seventy-two thousand head of 33
cattle, •sixty-one thousand donkeys, •and in persons, women who had never 34 35

36 slept with a man, thirty-two thousand in all. •Half was assigned to those who
had taken part in the war, namely three hundred and thirty-seven thousand
37 five hundred head of small stock, •of which Yahweh's portion was six hundred
38 and seventy-five, •thirty-six thousand head of cattle, of which Yahweh's portion
39 was seventy-two. •Thirty thousand five hundred donkeys, of which Yahweh's
40 portion was sixty-one, •and sixteen thousand persons, of which Yahweh's
41 portion was thirty-two. •Moses gave Eleazar the priest the portion set aside
for Yahweh, in accordance with Yahweh's instructions to Moses.
42 As for the half due to the sons of Israel, which Moses had separated from
43 that of the combatants, •this half, the community's share, came to three hundred
44 and thirty-seven thousand five hundred head of small stock, •thirty-six thousand
45 46 head of cattle, •thirty thousand five hundred donkeys •and sixteen thousand
47 persons. •From this half, the share of the sons of Israel, Moses took one out
of every fifty, man and beast, and gave them to the Levites who had charge of
the tabernacle of Yahweh, in accordance with Yahweh's instructions to Moses. 18:26-32

The offerings[c] Jg8:24-27

48 The commanders of the hosts who had fought the campaign, the captains 1Ch26:26 Jdt 16:19
49 of thousands and the captains of hundreds, came to Moses •and said, 'Your
servants have numbered the soldiers under their command: not one is missing.
50 And further, we bring as an offering for Yahweh the gold ornaments we have Jg 8:25
found, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings and brooches, to have the
51 rite of atonement performed over us before Yahweh.' •Moses and Eleazar the
52 priest accepted this gold from them, all this jewellery. •This offering of gold Ex30:11-16
given by them to Yahweh amounted to sixteen thousand seven hundred and
fifty shekels, all given by the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds.
53 54 Each of the soldiers took his own booty. •But Moses and Eleazar the priest
received the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and carried Ex 28:12
it to the Tent of Meeting as a reminder to Yahweh of the sons of Israel.

The allocation of Transjordania[a] 21:24f;21:31f ‖Dt3:12-20; 33:6-20f Jos 1:12-18; 12:6; 13:8-32

1 32 The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad owned great herds of fine cattle.
Now they observed that the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead was an
2 ideal region for raising stock. •The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben
therefore went to Moses, Eleazar the priest and the leaders of the community,
3 and said to them, •'The land of Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon,
4 Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon, •which Yahweh has conquered in the sight
of the community of Israel, is ideal land for raising stock, and your servants are
5 cattle breeders. •If we have deserved your friendship,' they said 'give this land
to your servants for our own; do not make us cross the Jordan.'
6 Moses said to the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben, 'Your brothers are
7 off to the war—are you content to stay here? •Why do you keep the sons of
8 Israel from entering the land that Yahweh has given them? •This is what your
9 fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to inspect the land. •They
went up as far as the Valley of Eschol and inspected the land; but they kept
10 the sons of Israel from entering the land that Yahweh had given them. •Hence
11 the wrath of Yahweh blazed out that day and he swore this oath, •"If ever these
men of twenty years and over, who came out from Egypt, set eyes on the land
that I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...[b] For they have not
12 followed me faithfully, •except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and
13 Joshua son of Nun: these indeed have followed Yahweh faithfully." •The wrath

b. In this text the ancient rite of purification by fire is combined with that of purification by water, 19:1+.

c. Like vv. 21-25 this passage appears to be an addition. Its theology is more developed: the war, holy as it is, involves contact with the profane, and expiation is required of the soldiers. This is the significance of the offering in v. 50. Vv. 53-54 may be from another hand.

32 a. The 'Elohistic' tradition is used in this chapter.

b. Common form of oath, the main, imprecatory, clause being suppressed.

of Yahweh blazed out against Israel and he made them wander in the wilderness for forty years, until the generation that offended Yahweh had all disappeared. And now you, you rise up in your father's place, offshoot of sinful stock, to add 14
still more to the burning wrath of Yahweh against Israel! •If you turn away 15
from him, he will prolong the time spent in the wilderness, and you will bring about the ruin of all this people.'

They came to Moses and said, 'We would like to build sheepfolds here for 16
our flocks and towns for our young children. •We ourselves will take up arms[c] 17
to lead the sons of Israel until we have brought them to the place appointed for them: only our young children will stay in the fortified towns, safe from the inhabitants of the country. •We will not return to our homes until every one 18
of the sons of Israel has taken possession of his inheritance. •For we shall have 19
no inheritance with them on the other bank of the Jordan or beyond, since our inheritance has fallen to us here, east of the Jordan.'

Moses said to them, 'If you do as you have said, if you are prepared to fight 20
before Yahweh, •and if all those of you who bear arms cross the Jordan before 21
Yahweh, until he has driven all his enemies before him, •then, once the land has 22
become subject to Yahweh, you may go back; you shall be free of your obligation towards Yahweh and Israel, and this land shall be your inheritance before Yahweh. •But if you do not, you will sin against Yahweh, and be sure your 23
sin will find you out. •Build towns, then, for your young children and folds for 24
your flocks; but do what you have promised.'

The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben said to Moses, 'Your servants will 25
do as you order, sir. •Our children, our wives, our flocks and all our livestock 26
will stay in the towns of Gilead, •but your servants, every man armed for war, 27
will cross over to fight before Yahweh as you have ordered.'

Then Moses gave directions about them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua 28
son of Nun, and to the leaders of the patriarchal Houses of the tribes of Israel. Moses said to them, 'If the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben, all who bear 29
arms, cross the Jordan with you to fight before Yahweh, then once the land is in your power, you will give them the land of Gilead for their possession. •But if 30
they do not cross over in arms with you, then they must have their possessions with you in the land of Canaan.'

The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben replied, 'What Yahweh has said 31
to your servants, we will do. •We will cross in arms before Yahweh into the land 32
of Canaan; but you must give us possession of our inheritance beyond the Jordan.' •Moses gave them—the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben and the 33
half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph—the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land and the towns contained within its boundaries, the frontier towns of the land.

The sons of Gad built Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, •Atroth-shophan, Jazer, 34 35
Jogbehah, •Beth-nimrah, Beth-haran, fortified towns, and folds for the flocks. 36

1 Ch 5:8 The sons of Reuben built Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, •Nebo, Baal-meon 37 38
(their names were changed), Sibmah. They gave names to the towns they had built.

Jg 5:14 1 Ch 5:23 The sons of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead. They conquered it and 39
drove out the Amorites who were there. •Moses gave Gilead to Machir son of 40
Dt 3:14 Jg 10:4 1 Ch 2:22 Manasseh, and he settled there. •Jair son of Manasseh went and seized their 41
encampments and called them Encampments of Jair. •Nobah went and seized 42
Kenath with its outlying villages, and called it Nobah after himself.[d]

The stages of the Exodus[a]

Ex 10:11-13 33 Here are the stages of the journey made by the sons of Israel when they 1
came out in a body from the land of Egypt, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. •Moses recorded their starting-points in writing whenever they broke 2
camp on Yahweh's orders. Here are the stages according to their starting-points.

3 They left Rameses in the first month. It was on the fifteenth day of the first Ex 14:8
month, on the day following the Passover, that the sons of Israel set out
4 triumphantly in the sight of all Egypt. •The Egyptians were burying those of
their own people whom Yahweh had struck down, all their first-born; Yahweh Ex 12:12 Ws 18:12
had carried out his judgement on their gods.
5 The sons of Israel left Rameses and camped at Succoth. •Then they left Ex 12:37
6
7 Succoth and encamped at Etham which is on the edge of the wilderness. •They Ex 13:20
left Etham, turned back to Pi-hahiroth which faces Baal-zephon, and encamped Ex14:1-4
8 before Migdol. •They left Pi-hahiroth, crossed over the sea into the wilderness,
and after marching for three days in the desert of Etham they encamped at Ex 15:23
9 Marah. •They left Marah and reached Elim. At Elim there are twelve springs Ex 15:27
10 of water and seventy palm trees; they encamped there. •They left Elim and
11 encamped by the Sea of Reeds. •They left the Sea of Reeds and encamped in
12 the wilderness of Sin. •They left the wilderness of Sin and encamped at Ex 15:1
13 Dophkah. •They left Dophkah and encamped at Alush. •They left Alush and Ex17:1-7
14
15 encamped at Rephidim; the people found no drinking water there. •They left
16 Rephidim and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai. •They left the wilderness Ex 19:1
17 of Sinai and encamped at Kibroth-hattaavah. •They left Kibroth-hattaavah and 11:34-35
18 encamped at Hazeroth. •They left Hazeroth and encamped at Rithmah. •They 12:16
19
20 left Rithmah and encamped at Rimmon-perez. •They left Rimmon-perez and
21 encamped at Libnah. •They left Libnah and encamped at Rissah. •They left Ex 4:20
22
23 Rissah and encamped at Kehelathah. •They left Kehelathah and encamped at
24 Mount Shepher. •They left Mount Shepher and encamped at Haradah. •They
25
26 left Haradah and encamped at Makheloth. •They left Makheloth and encamped
27 at Tahath. •They left Tahath and encamped at Terah. •They left Terah and
28
29 encamped at Mithkah. •They left Mithkah and encamped at Hashmonah. •They
30
31 left Hashmonah and encamped at Moseroth. •They left Moseroth and encamped Dt10:6-7
32 at Bene-jaakan. •They left Bene-jaakan and encamped at Hor-haggidgad. •They
33
34 left Hor-haggidgad and encamped at Jotbathah. •They left Jotbathah and
35 encamped at Abronah. •They left Abronah and encamped at Ezion-geber.
36 They left Ezion-geber and encamped in the wilderness of Zin; this is Kadesh. Dt 2:1-8 1 K 9:26
37 They left Kadesh and encamped at Mount Hor, on the borders of the land of
38 Edom. •Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor on Yahweh's orders and it was 20:22-29
there that he died, in the fortieth year of the exodus of the sons of Israel from Dt 10:6; 32:50
39 the land of Egypt, in the fifth month, on the first day of the month. •Aaron was
40 a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died at Mount Hor. •The king
of Arad, a Canaanite who lived in the Negeb in the land of Canaan, was 21:1,10-20
41 informed when the sons of Israel arrived. •They left Mount Hor and encamped
42 at Zalmonah. •They left Zalmonah and encamped at Punon. •They left Punon 21:4
43
44 and encamped at Oboth. •They left Oboth and encamped in Moabite territory 21:10-11
45 at Iye-abarim. •They left Iyim and encamped at Dibon-gad. •They left Dibon-
46
47 gad and encamped at Almon-diblathaim. •They left Almon-diblathaim and
48 encamped in the Abarim mountains facing Nebo. •They left the Abarim
mountains and encamped in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan opposite 22:1
49 Jericho. •They encamped near the Jordan between Beth-ha-jeshimoth and Abel- 25:1 Jos 2:1
hash-shittim, in the plains of Moab.

The allocation of Canaan. God's order Lv 26 Dt7:1-6,16; 12:2-3

50 Yahweh spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan opposite
Jericho. He said:
51 'Say this to the sons of Israel: Ws 12:6
52 "When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, •you must drive

c. 'take up arms' Greek and Vulg.

d. These details, which the editor incorporates in his survey of the conquest and partition of the land, witness to less co-ordinated tribal and clan movements.

33 a. This chapter adopts and presents schematically (as the 'Priestly' editor's fashion is) the data of the previous sources; there are certain omissions (of 21:16-19, for example) and not a few additions from some unknown source. The Greek has variant forms of many of the proper names.

Ex23:24; 34:13 Lv 26:1 all the inhabitants of the country before you. You must destroy their sculptured stones, you must destroy all their statues of cast metal, and you must demolish all
1S9:12+ their high places. •You will take possession of this land and you will stay in it, 53
for I have given it to you for your own. •You are to divide it by lot among your 54
=26:54-56 clans. To a large clan you will give a greater inheritance, to a small clan a lesser one. Where the lot falls for each, that will be his. Make this apportionment according to patriarchal tribes. •But if you do not drive the inhabitants of the 55
country before you, then those you have spared will be barbs in your eyes and thorns in your side, they will harass you in the land where you live •and I will 56
deal with you as I meant to deal with them." '

Jos 14-19 Jg 20:1+ Ezk 47:13-21 **The boundaries of Canaan**

34 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said, •'Give the sons of Israel this order: ½
Ezk 47:15-20 "When you go into the land (of Canaan), this is the territory that will be your inheritance. This is the land of Canaan defined by its boundaries.
Jg 1:36 "The southern part of your country will stretch from the wilderness of Zin, 3
on the borders of Edom. Your southern boundary will start on the east at the end of the Salt Sea. •It will then turn south towards the Ascent of the Scorpions 4
and go by Zin to end in the south at Kadesh-barnea. Then it will go towards Hazar-addar and pass through Azmon. •From Azmon the boundary will turn 5
towards the wadi of Egypt and end at the Sea.[a]

"Your seaboard will be the Great Sea; this will be your western boundary. 6

"This will be your northern boundary. You will draw a line from the Great 7
Sea to Mount Hor, •then from Mount Hor you will draw a line to the Pass 8
of Hamath, and the boundary will end at Zedad. •From there it will go on to 9
Ziphron and end at Hazar-enan. This will be your northern boundary.

"You will then draw your eastern boundary from Hazar-enan to Shepham. 10
The boundary will go down from Shepham towards Riblah on the east side of 11
Dt 3:17 Ain. Further down it will keep to the eastern shore of the Sea of Chinnereth.[b]
The frontier will then follow the Jordan and end at the Salt Sea. 12

"This will be your land with the boundaries surrounding it." '

Ex 33:52 Moses then laid this charge on the sons of Israel: 13

'This is the land you are to apportion by lot, which Yahweh has ordered to be made over to the nine tribes and the half-tribe. •The tribe of the sons of 14
Reuben with its patriarchal Houses and the tribe of the sons of Gad with its patriarchal Houses have already been given their heritage; the half-tribe of Manasseh has also been given its heritage. •These two tribes and the half-tribe 15
have been given their heritage beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho, to the east, towards the sunrise.'

The leaders in charge of the allocation

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: 16

'These are the names of those who will share out the land: Eleazar the priest 17
and Joshua son of Nun, •and you will take one leader from each tribe to share out 18
the land.[c] •Here are the names of these men:[d] 19

For the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh;
for the tribe of the sons of Simeon, Shemuel son of Ammihud; 20
for the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad son of Chislon; 21
for the tribe of the sons of Dan, the leader Bukki son of Jogli; 22
for the sons of Joseph: for the tribe of Manasseh, the leader Hanniel son 23
of Ephod;
and for the tribe of the sons of Ephraim, the leader Kemuel son of Shiphtan; 24
for the tribe of the sons of Zebulun, the leader Elizaphan son of Parnach; 25
for the tribe of the sons of Issachar, the leader Paltiel son of Azzan; 26
for the tribe of the sons of Asher, the leader Ahihud son of Shelomi; 27
for the tribe of the sons of Naphtali, the leader Pedahel son of Ammihud.' 28

29 These are the men whom Yahweh ordered to divide the land of Canaan among the sons of Israel.

The portion of the Levites

18:20-24
Jos20-21
Ezk48:13
Lv25:32-34
Jos14:3-4

1 35 Yahweh spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan opposite
Jericho. He said:
2 'Direct the sons of Israel to make over to the Levites, out of the inheritance 2Ch11:14
they possess, towns in which to live and pasture land round the towns. Give
3 these to the Levites. •The towns are to be their homes and the surrounding
4 pasture land is to be for their cattle, their possessions and all their animals. •The
pasture land surrounding the towns that you make over to the Levites shall
extend, from the walls of the towns, for a thousand cubits all round.
5 'Outside the town, measure two thousand cubits to the east side, two thousand
cubits to the south, two thousand cubits to the west and two thousand cubits
to the north, the town lying in the centre: this is to be the pasture-land for these
6 towns. •The towns you hand over to the Levites will be the six cities of refuge, Dt4:41-43
ceded by you as sanctuary for men who cause another's death; and you are to
7 hand over forty-two towns in addition. •Altogether you will make over forty-
8 eight towns to the Levites, towns together with their pasturage. •Of the towns
that you grant out of the possession of the sons of Israel, more will be taken
from those who hold more, and less from those who hold less. Everyone will
make over towns to the Levites in proportion to the inheritance he himself has 26:54
received.'

Cities of refuge

Ex 21:13+
Dt19:1-13
Jos20:1-9

9 Yahweh spoke to Moses and said:
10 'Say this to the sons of Israel:
11 "When you cross the Jordan and reach the land of Canaan, •you are to select
towns which you will make into cities of refuge where a man who has killed
12 accidentally may find sanctuary. •These towns will be your refuge from the
avenger of blood, so that the killer may not die without being brought to
13 judgement before the community. •The towns you make over will serve you as
14 six cities of refuge: •the three that you make over beyond the Jordan and the
three that you make over in the land of Canaan are to be cities of refuge.
15 These six towns will be a refuge, for the sons of Israel as well as for the stranger
and the settler among you, where anyone who has killed accidentally may find Dt4:41-43
sanctuary.
16 "But if he has struck the person with an iron object so as to cause death, Ex21:12f
17 he is a murderer. The murderer must be put to death. •If he struck him with a
stone capable of killing, and has killed him, he is a murderer. The murderer
18 must be put to death. •Or if he has struck him with a wooden instrument capable
of killing, and has killed him, he is a murderer. The murderer must be put to
19 death. •The avenger of blood must put the murderer to death. When he meets Jos 20:3
him he must put him to death.[a] 2 S 14:7
2Ch19:10
20 "If the killer has maliciously manhandled his victim, or thrown some lethal
21 missile to strike him down, •or out of enmity dealt him the death-blow with
his fist, then he who struck the blow must die; he is a murderer; the avenger
22 of blood must put him to death when he meets him. •If, however, he has
manhandled his victim by chance, without malice, or thrown some missile at

34 a. The Mediterranean.
b. The Lake of Gennesareth. The 'Salt Sea' is the Dead Sea.
c. 'will share out' and 'to share out': versions.
d. The names, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, are new: the generation previously listed was destined to die without entering Canaan. The partition of the land took place only after the conquest, Jos 14-19, but the editor invokes Mosaic authority for it.

35 a. The system of private vengeance, in vogue among the Arabs of today. The 'avenger of blood', or *goel*, is the victim's nearest relative, Gn 4:15; 9:6; Dt 19:12; cf. 2 S 14:11. The *goel* is also the official protector of his relations: he is especially bound to prevent the alienation of their landed property, Lv 25:23-25; Rt 4:3f. Later, the term is used of God, the *goel* of Israel, Is 41:14; Jr 50:34; Ps 19:14. The basic idea is that of protection.

him not meaning to hit him, •or without seeing him dropped a stone on him 23
capable of causing death and so killed him, so long as he bore him no malice
and wished him no harm, •then the community must decide in accordance with 24
these rules between the one who struck the blow and the avenger of blood, •and 25
so rescue the killer from the avenger of blood. They will send him back to the
city of refuge where he had sought sanctuary, and there he will stay until the
death of the high priest who has been anointed with the holy oil. •If the killer 26
should leave the bounds of the city of refuge where he has sought sanctuary
and the avenger of blood encounters him outside the bounds of his city of refuge, 27
the avenger of blood may kill him without fear of reprisal; •since the killer 28
should stay in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; only after
the death of the high priest is he free to go back to the land where he has his
home. •These regulations shall have force of law for you and your descendants, 29
wherever you may be.

Jn 8:17 "In any case of homicide, the evidence of witnesses must determine whether 30
the murderer is to be put to death; but the evidence of a single witness is not
sufficient to uphold a capital charge. •You are not to accept ransom for the life 31
Lm 4:14 of a murderer condemned to death; he must die.[b] •Nor are you to accept ransom 32
for anyone who, having sought sanctuary in his city of refuge, wishes to come
back and live at home before the death of the high priest. •You must not profane 33
Gn 9:5-6 Ps106:38 the land you live in. Blood profanes the country, and there is no other expiation
for the country for bloodshed than the blood of the one who shed it. •You must 34
Ex 29:45 not defile the land you inhabit, the land in which I live; for I, Yahweh, live
among the sons of Israel." '

A wife's inheritance

36 Then the heads of families in the clan of the sons of Gilead, son 1
of Machir, son of Manasseh, one of the clans of Joseph's sons, came
forward.
They spoke before Moses and the leaders, the heads of families of Israel's sons, 2
and said:
'Yahweh has ordered my lord to give the land to the sons of Israel,
sharing it out by lot; and my lord has been ordered by Yahweh to give the
27:1-11 inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. •Now, if they marry 3
someone from another tribe in the sons of Israel, their property will be taken away
from the inheritance of our fathers. The property of the tribe to which they will
belong will be increased, and the property allotted to us diminished. •And when 4
Lv25:1+ the jubilee comes round for the sons of Israel, the property of these women will
be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they then belong, and lost to
the inheritance of our own patriarchal tribe.'
Moses, at Yahweh's bidding, gave the following ruling to the sons of Israel. 5
He said:
'The tribe of the sons of Joseph is in the right. •This is Yahweh's ruling 6
for the daughters of Zelophehad: "They may marry whom they please, providing
they marry into a clan of their father's tribe. •The heritage of the sons of Israel 7
is not to be transferred from tribe to tribe; every man of the sons of Israel is to
remain bound to the heritage of his patriarchal tribe. •Every daughter who has 8
a heritage in one of the tribes of the sons of Israel must marry into a clan of her
own paternal tribe, so that the sons of Israel may each preserve the heritage of
his father.[a] •No heritage may be transferred from one tribe to another: every 9
tribe of the sons of Israel will stay bound to its own heritage."'
The daughters of Zelophehad did as Yahweh had ordered Moses. 10
Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah, daughters of Zelophehad, married 11
the sons of their father's brothers. •Since they married into the clans of the 12
sons of Manasseh son of Joseph, their heritage reverted to the tribe of their
father's clan.

Conclusion

13 These are the commandments and laws that Yahweh laid down for the sons of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab near the Jordan opposite Jericho.

b. An important clause. Unlike other codes, written (Hittite) and unwritten (Bedouin), Israelitic legislation did not tolerate monetary compensation for human life.

36 a. I.e. the tribal patriarch. The jubilee was not to favour one tribe at the expense of another.

DEUTERONOMY

I. INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSES

A. THE FIRST DISCOURSE OF MOSES

Its time and place

1 These are the words spoken beyond Jordan to the whole of Israel. (In the wilderness, in the Arabah facing Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth and Dizahab. •It is eleven day's march from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea.)[a] •It was in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, that Moses spoke to the sons of Israel as Yahweh had ordered.
Nb21:21-35 Ne 9:22 He had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who lived at Ashtaroth and Edrei. •There, in the land of Moab beyond the Jordan, Moses set himself to expound this Law. He said:[b]

The final instructions at Horeb

'Yahweh our God said to us at Horeb, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. •Move or from here, continue your journey, go to the highlands of the Amorites, to those who make their home in the Arabah, in the highlands, in the lowlands, in the Negeb and in the coastland; go into the land of Canaan and to Lebanon as far as the great river Euphrates. •This is the land I have made over to you; go and take possession of the land that Yahweh swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to their descendants after them."
Gn12:7+; 15:26:2-5; 28:13-15+

'It was then that I told you: I cannot carry the burden of you by myself. Yahweh your God has multiplied you, till now you are like the stars of heaven in number. •And Yahweh your God is going to increase you a thousand times more, and bless you as he promised. •So how can I carry the heavy burden of you and your bickerings, all by myself? •Bring me wise men, shrewd and tested, out of each of your tribes, therefore, and I will make them your leaders. And you answered me, "Your plan is a good one". •And so I selected tribal leaders for you, wise[c] men and tested, and appointed them to lead you: captains of thousands, hundreds, fifties, tens, and scribes for your tribes too. •At that same time I told your judges: You must give your brothers a fair hearing and see justice done between a man and his brother or the stranger who lives with him. •You must be impartial in judgement and give an equal hearing to small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for the judgement is God's. Should a case be too difficult, bring it to me and I will hear it. •And I gave you directions at that time for everything you were to do.
‖Ex18:13f Nb 11:14 Gn 15:5; 22:17 Ne 9:23 Ps 115: 14-15
Nb11:16-17
17:8-13 2Ch19:6
Ex 23:6 Lv 19:15 Dt 16:19 Ps 82:3

Kadesh: the Israelites lose faith

‖Nb13:1-14:9

'So we left Horeb and came to the vast and terrible wilderness you have seen. We made for the highlands of the Amorites, as Yahweh our God had ordered, and arrived at Kadesh-barnea. •It was then that I said to you: Now you have reached these Amorite highlands which Yahweh our God is giving to us. •See, Yahweh your God has made over this land to you. March in, take possession

of it as Yahweh the God of your fathers ordered you; do not be afraid or Jos 1:6,9
22 discouraged. •Then you all came to me and said, "Let us send men ahead of us
to explore the country; they will report to us which way we must go and what
23 towns we shall come to". •This seemed good advice to me and I selected twelve
24 of your men, one from each tribe. •These men made towards the highlands and
25 went up into them; they reached the Valley of Eshcol and reconnoitred it. •They
collected some of the fruit of the country and brought it down to us; and they 9:22
made us this report, "It is a prosperous land that Yahweh our God has given us".
26 Yet you refused to go up into it and you rebelled against the voice of Yahweh
27 your God. •You grumbled in your tents; "It is because he hates us" you said
"that Yahweh brought us out of the land of Egypt to put us under the power of
28 the Amorites and so destroy us. •What kind of place are we making for? Our
own brothers have made us lose heart: It is a people, they say, bigger and
stronger than we are; their cities are immense, with walls reaching to the sky.
And we saw Anakim there too." 2:10+

29 'And I said to you: Do not take fright, do not be afraid of them. •Yahweh 31:6
30 your God goes in front of you and will be fighting on your side as you saw him Jos 1:29
31 fight for you in Egypt. •In the wilderness, too, you saw him: how Yahweh ↗Ac 13:18
carried you, as a man carries his child, all along the road you travelled on the 7:6+; 4:1; 32:6
32 way to this place. •But for all this, you put not faith in Yahweh your God, •who Ex 4:22
33 had gone in front of you on the journey to find you a camping ground, by night Is 63:16; Jr 31:9; Ho 11:1
in the fire to light your path, by day in the cloud. Ex 13:21f

Yahweh's instructions at Kadesh

||Nb 14: 21-35

34 'Yahweh heard this talk of yours and, in his anger, took this oath, •"Not one Ezk 20:15
of these men, this perverse generation, shall see the rich land that I swore to give 2:14
36 to your fathers, •except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He shall see it. To him and to Nb 13:30; 14:6-9
his sons I will give the land he has set foot on, for he has followed Yahweh in all
37 things". •Yahweh was angry with me too, on your account. "You shall not go Nb 20:12+
38 in either" he said. •"Your servant Joshua son of Nun, he shall be the one to enter. Dt 3:26; 4:21; 34:4
Give him encouragement, for it is he who shall bring Israel to take possession of
39 the land. •But your little ones who, you said, would be seized as booty, these Is 7:16
children of yours who do not yet know good from evil, these shall go in there;
40 I will give it to them and they shall possess it. •As for you, turn round, go back
into the wilderness, in the direction of the Sea of Suph."

41 'You answered me then, "We have sinned against Yahweh our God. We will ||Nb 14: 39-45
go up and fight as Yahweh our God has ordered us." And each one of you
42 buckled on his arms and blithely marched up into the highlands. •But Yahweh
said to me, "Tell them this: Do not go up and fight. I am not among you. You
43 will be defeated by your enemies." •And I did tell you, but you would not listen,
and you rebelled against the voice of Yahweh: you still dared to go up into the
44 highlands. •The Amorites, who live in that country of hills, came swarming out
against you like bees, pursued you and struck you down in Seir and as far away Ps 118:12
45 as Hormah. •And when you returned you shed tears in the presence of Yahweh,
46 but he did not listen to your cries and paid no heed to you. •For many a day you
had to stay at Kadesh, your full tally of days.

Israel's relations with Edom and Moab

1 2 'We turned round, therefore, and made for the wilderness, in the direction of
the Sea of Suph, as Yahweh had ordered me. For many days we wandered

1 a. The parenthesis of vv. 1b-2 sums up the previous stages of the Israelites' journey from Sinai. The 'wilderness' is that which lies to the east of Moab. The 'Arabah facing Suph' is the depression (here indicated by a few proper names) running from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba (an inlet of the Red Sea). The last stage mentioned is from Kadesh to Sinai-Horeb, a journey of eleven days.

b. Here begins the first discourse of Moses. It recalls the conquest and reminds Israel of the obligations arising from the fact of divine election. Though it declares that disloyalty will be punished with exile, it opens up the prospect of repentance, forgiveness and return.

c. The wisdom which is referred to here is of the practical order.

about the highlands of Seir. •Yahweh then said to me, •"You have wandered 2-3
long enough in these highlands. Go north. •And give the people this order: You 4
2Ch20:10 are about to pass through the territory of your kinsmen, the sons of Esau who
Nb20:14-21 live in Seir. They are frightened of you; but take care •not to provoke them. For 5
I will give you none of their land, no, not so much as a foot's length of it. I have
Gn 36:8 given the highlands of Seir to Esau as his domain.[a] •Pay them in money for 6
2:28 what food you eat; and pay them in money for all the water you drink. •Yahweh 7
Ex33:14, 16;34:9-10 Dt 8:2f;29:5 Ne9:20-21 Am 2:10 your God has blessed you in all you do; he has watched over your journeying through this vast wilderness. Yahweh your God has been with you these forty years and you have never been in want."

Nb20:21 'So we passed beyond those kinsmen of ours, the sons of Esau who live in 8
Seir, by the Arabah and Elath and Ezion-geber road; then, changing direction,
Nb 21:10-20 we took the road towards the wilderness of Moab. •And Yahweh said to me, 9
2Ch20:10 "Make no attack on Moab and do not provoke him to fight, for I will give you
none of his land. I have given Ar into the possession of the sons of Lot.' •(At one 10
1:28;9:2 Jg 1:20 Ba 3:26 time the Emim lived there, a great and numerous people, tall as the Anakim;[b]
and, like the Anakim, they were accounted Rephaim, though the Moabites call 11
them Emim. •The Horites,[c] too, lived in Seir at one time; these, however, were 12
dispossessed and exterminated by the sons of Esau who settled there in place
of them, just as Israel did in their own land, the heritage they received from
Yahweh.) •'Forward, then! Cross the wadi Zered!" 13

The arrival in Transjordania

'And so we crossed the wadi Zered. •Now from Kadesh-barnea to the wadi 14
Zered our wanderings had taken thirty-eight years, so that the whole generation
1:35+ of men fit for war was lost to the camp, as Yahweh had sworn to them. •The 15
hand of Yahweh fell upon them in the camp until they had perished entirely.
When all the men fit for war had been carried off by death from among the people, 16
Ex 15:21 down to the last man, •Yahweh said this to me, •"You are now about to cross Ar, 17-18
2Ch20:10 the land of Moab, •and to approach the frontier of the sons of Ammon. Make 19
Jg 11:12 no attack on them and do not provoke them, for I will give you none of the
land belonging to the sons of Ammon. I have given it to the sons of Lot as
their domain.' •(This also was accounted a land of Rephaim; at one time the 20
Rephaim lived there, though the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, •a great 21
and numerous people, tall as the Anakim. Yahweh exterminated them before
the advancing Ammonites who dispossessed them and settled there in place of
them, •just as he had exterminated the Horites in front of the sons of Esau who 22
live in Seir, so that they dispossessed them and settled there in place of them and
are still there now. •It was the same with the Avvites who had their encampments 23
Jos13:2+ Zp 2:5 as far as Gaza: the Caphtorim, coming from Caphtor,[d] exterminated them, settling
there in place of them.) •'Break camp, set out and cross the wadi Arnon. See, 24
I am putting Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, at your mercy, and his country
too. Set about the conquest; engage him in battle. •Today and henceforth 25
2Ch20:29 Hab 3:2 I spread the terror and fear of you among the peoples under all heaven: all who
hear the sound of your coming will tremble and be in dread."

‖Nb21:21-25 Jg11:19-22 **The conquest of Sihon's kingdom**

4:47 Jos 24:7 Ne 9:22 'So from the wilderness of Kedemoth[e] I sent envoys to Sihon king of Heshbon 26
with this message of peace: •I mean to pass through your land. I shall go my 27
2:6 way, straying neither right nor left. •What food I eat, sell me in return for money; 28
and I will pay for all the water I drink. Only give me leave to march through,
Nb20:18,21 just as the sons of Esau who live in Seir gave me leave, and the Moabites who live 29
in Ar, until I cross the Jordan into the land that Yahweh our God is giving to us.

29:4 Ps136:19 'But Sihon king of Heshbon would not give us leave to pass through his land: 30
Ex 4:21 Yahweh your God has made his spirit obstinate and his heart stubborn, so as to
leave him at your mercy, as he still is. •And Yahweh said to me, "You see, I have 31

begun to deliver Sihon and his land over to you. Set about the conquest; seize
32 his land." •Sihon then, with all his people, marched out against us to give battle
33 at Jahaz. •And Yahweh our God delivered him over to us: we defeated him, with
34 his sons and all his people. •Then we captured all his cities and laid whole towns Jos6:17+
35 under ban, men, women, children; we spared nothing •but the livestock which
36 we took as our spoil, as also the plunder from the towns we captured. •From
Aroer on the height above the wadi Arnon, and from the town at the bottom of
the ravine, as far as Gilead, not one town was beyond our reach; Yahweh our
37 God delivered them all over to us. •The country of the Ammonites alone you
did not go near, neither the region of wadi Jabbok nor the towns of the hill
country, nor anywhere forbidden us by Yahweh our God.

The end of the stay in Transjordania ||Nb21:33-35

1 3 'We then turned in the direction of Bashan and went up there. And Og king Ps136:20
of Bashan marched out against us, he and all his people, to give battle at Edrei.
2 And Yahweh said to me, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have put him at your
mercy, with all his people and his land. Deal with him as you dealt with Sihon
3 the king of the Amorites who lives in Heshbon." •So Yahweh our God put Og
king of Bashan at our mercy too, with all his people. We struck him down and
4 not a thing remained to him. •We captured all his towns at that time; there was
not a town of theirs we did not take: sixty towns, the whole confederation of
5 Argob, Og's capital in Bashan, •all strongholds enclosed in high walls and Ne 9:25
fortified with gates and bars, not to mention the Perizzite[a] towns, which were
6 very many. •We laid them under ban as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon,
7 laying the whole town, men, women, children, under the ban; •but we seized the
livestock and the spoil from these towns as our plunder.
8 'So at that time we took the land of the two Amorite kings beyond Jordan,
9 from the wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon •(the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion
10 and the Amorites call it Senir): •all the towns of the tableland, all Gilead, and 1Ch5:11
11 all Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, the capital cities of Og in Bashan. •(Og
king of Bashan was the last survivor of the Rephaim; his bed was the bed of iron[b] 2:10+
that can be seen at Rabbah-of-the-Ammonites, nine cubits long and four wide,
in the common cubit.)
12 'At that time, therefore, we occupied this land, onwards from Aroer on the 29:4
wadi Arnon. To Reuben and Gad I gave half the highlands of Gilead with its ||Nb 32
13 towns. •To the half-tribe of Manasseh I gave the rest of Gilead and the whole of Jos 13:8
Bashan, Og's kingdom. (The whole confederation of Argob and the whole of
14 Bashan is called the country of the Rephaim. •Since Jair son of Manasseh Nb32:41
occupied the whole confederation of Argob as far as the frontiers of the Geshurites Jg 10:3-5
and Maacathites, he gave his name to those towns that are still called[c] the Encamp-

2 a. The Edomites, descendants of Abraham, with the Moabites and Ammonites, vv. 9 and 19, descended from Lot, have (like the Israelites) been settled by God in territories formerly belonging to other races whose names are recorded in vv. 10-12 (see notes). On Edom, Moab, Ammon, see Nb 20:23+.

b. The Anakim, like the Emim, Rephaim, Zamzummin and Zuzim, were the remnants of the prehistoric inhabitants of Palestine and Transjordania, cf. vv. 20f and Gn 14:5. They were associated with the legendary Nephilim, Nb 13:33 and Gn 6:4, and were supposed to have built the megalithic monuments, cf. Dt 3:11. The Rephaim still occupied Bashan, Dt 3:13; Jos 12:4f; 13:12, but their name survived even in Judaea (the Vale of Rephaim to the S.W. of Jerusalem, Jos 15:8; 18:16; 2 S 5:18); the last descendants of Rapha, their eponymous ancestor, were overcome by David's warriors, 2 S 21:16-22, cf. 1 Ch 20:4-8. The word *rephaim* was also used for the shades in Sheol, cf. Jb 26:5f. In Joshua's time the Anakim were still the dominant power in the highlands of Hebron and in the coastal districts, Jos 11:21f; 14:12-15; 15:13-15; 21:11.

c. The Horites are possibly the survivors of the Hurrites, mentioned in cuneiform texts, one of the non-semitic races of the Near East. The Horites were still flourishing in Abraham's day, cf. Gn 14:6, but were absorbed by the Edomites, cf. Dt 2:22, when the latter established themselves in the highlands of Seir, east of the Arabah. The name Seir is used also for the ancestor of the race, and Gn 36:20-30 gives a list of clans descended from Seir the Horite. A wife and a daughter-in-law of Esau are Horites, Gn 36:1f,12, cf. 22, and in vv. 40f are named as Edomite clan chiefs, indicating the fusion of the two races.

d. The Philistines; see Jos 13:2+.

e. Others translate 'from the East' (the Israelites' advance lay to the east of Moab).

3 a. The Perizzites were country folk whose towns were unfortified.

b. The 'iron (ferrous basalt) bed' was possibly one of the cromlechs to be seen in the neighbourhood of Amman.

c. Hebr. here inserts 'Bashan' (Greek: Bassemath').

ments of Jair.) •To Machir I gave Gilead. •To the Reubenites and the Gadites 15 16
I gave the region from Gilead to the wadi Arnon, the middle of the ravine marking
the boundary, and up as far as the Jabbok, the wadi marking the frontier of the
Nb34:11-12 Ammonites. •The Arabah and the Jordan serve as frontiers from Chinnereth 17
down to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea),[d] at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah
on the east.

The last instructions of Moses

Jos 1:13 'Then I gave you this command: Yahweh your God has given you this land 18
for your own. All you fighting men must take up arms and march at the head
of your brothers, the sons of Israel. •Only your wives, your children and your 19
flocks (you have many flocks, I know) shall stay behind in the towns I have given
you, •until such time as Yahweh settles your brothers as he has settled you, and 20
they too occupy the land that Yahweh your God is giving them beyond the
Jos1:1+ Jordan; then you shall return, each to the domain I have given you. •I then gave 21
31:3-6 Joshua this order: You can see with your own eyes all that Yahweh has done to
these two kings; Yahweh will do the same to all the kingdoms through which you
pass. •Do not be afraid of them: Yahweh your God himself is fighting for you. 22

'And I pleaded then with Yahweh. •My Lord Yahweh, I said, you that 23 24
5:24; 11:2-3 Ex15:6-7,11 Ps 86:8 have begun to reveal your greatness and your power to your servant, you whose
works and mighty deeds no one in heaven or on earth can rival, •may I not go 25
across and see this prosperous land beyond the Jordan, this prosperous country of
1:37 Nb20:12+ hills, and Lebanon? •But because of you, Yahweh was angry with me and would 26
take no notice of me. "Enough!" he said "Speak to me no more of this. •Climb to 27
32:48-52; 34:1 the top of Pisgah; let your eyes turn towards the west, the north, the south, the
east. Look well, for across this Jordan you shall not go. •Give Joshua your 28
Jos 1:6 instructions; encourage him, strengthen him; for it is he who shall go across at
the head of his people; it is he who shall put them in possession of the land that
you will see."

Nb25:1-18 'So we stayed in the valley close to Beth-peor. 29

The apostasy at Peor. Where true wisdom lies

5:1; 6:1; 8:1; 11:8-9 Lv 18:5 **4** 'And now, Israel, take notice of the laws and customs that I teach you today, 1
and observe them, that you may have life and may enter and take possession
Rv22:18-19 of the land that Yahweh the God of your fathers is giving you. •You must add 2
nothing to what I command you, and take nothing from it, but keep the com-
Nb25:1-18 mandments of Yahweh your God just as I lay them down for you. •You can see 3
Jos 22:17 with your own eyes what Yahweh has done at Baal-peor; all the followers of
the Baal of Peor have been wiped out from among you by Yahweh your God;
but all of you who stayed faithful to Yahweh your God are still alive today. 4
32:28 1 Ch 28:8 Ne 9:13 See, as Yahweh my God has commanded me, I teach you the laws and customs 5
that you are to observe in the land you are to enter and make your own. •Keep 6
Tb 4:19 Jb 28:28 Ps 19:8 Prl1:7;9:10 Sil:14-16 them, observe them, and they will demonstrate to the peoples your wisdom and
understanding. When they come to know of all these laws they will exclaim,
Lm 2:9 4:12f Lv16:16; 26:11-12 2 S 7:23 Jdt 8:27 Ps145:18; 147:19f; 148:14 "No other people is as wise and prudent as this great nation". •And indeed, 7
what great nation is there that has its gods so near as Yahweh our God is to us
whenever we call to him?[a] •And what great nation is there that has laws and 8
customs to match this whole Law that I put before you today?

Is 55:6 **The revelation at Horeb; its demands**

32:7 Ex 10:9 Ps 44:1; 78:3,5 Sl 22:23 Is 38:19 Jl 1:3 5:2 Ex19:16-20 'But take care what you do and be on your guard. Do not forget the things 9
your eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart all the days of your life;
rather, tell them to your children and to your children's children. •The day you 10
stood at Horeb in the presence of Yahweh your God, Yahweh said to me, "Call
the people round me that I may let them hear my words, that they may learn to
fear me all the days they live on earth, and teach this to their children". •So you 11

came and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain flamed to the very sky, a sky darkened by cloud, murky and thunderous.[b] •Then Yahweh spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words but saw no shape, there was only a voice. •And Yahweh revealed his covenant to you and commanded you to observe it, the Ten Sayings which he inscribed on two tablets of stone. •He ordered me then to teach you the laws and customs that you were to observe in the land towards which you are going to make it your own.[c]

Si 17:13 Ps 18:11 5:22 Ex 24:12 Ex20:1+

'Take great care what you do, therefore: since you saw no shape on that day at Horeb when Yahweh spoke to you from the midst of the fire, •see that you do not act perversely, making yourselves a carved image in the shape of anything at all: whether it be in the likeness of man or of woman, •or of any beast on the earth, or of any bird that flies in the heavens, •or of any reptile that crawls on the ground, or of any fish in the waters under the earth. •When you raise your eyes to heaven, when you see the sun, the moon, the stars, all the array of heaven, do not be tempted to worship them and serve them. Yahweh your God has allotted them to all the peoples under heaven, •but as for you, Yahweh has taken you, and brought you out from the furnace of iron, from Egypt, to be a people all his own, as you still are today.

5:8 Ex20:4-5 Rm 1:23 17:3 2K17:16 Jb 31:26 Ws 13:2 Zp 1:5 Jr 11:4 1 K 8:51 7:6+

Of punishment to come, and of conversion

'Yahweh has been angry with me on your account; he has sworn that I shall not cross the Jordan or enter the prosperous land which Yahweh your God is giving you as your heritage. •Yes, I am to die in this country; I shall not go across this Jordan; you will go over and take possession of that rich land. •Take care therefore not to forget the covenant which Yahweh your God has made with you, by making a carved image of anything that Yahweh your God has forbidden you; •for Yahweh your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.[d]

1:37 Nb20:12+ Ex20:5+; 13:22+

'When you have begotten children and grandchildren and you have lived long in the land, if you act perversely, making a carved image in one shape or another, doing what displeases Yahweh and angers him, •on that day I will call heaven and earth to witness against you; and at once you will vanish from the land which you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You shall not live there long; you shall be utterly destroyed. •Yahweh will scatter you among the peoples, and only a small number of you will remain[e] among the nations where Yahweh will have driven you. •There you will pay service to gods that human hands have made, of wood and of stone, that cannot see or hear, eat or smell.

Nb 25:11 Is 33:14 Zp 1:18 ✓Heb12:29 Is 1:2 Lv26:14-19 Jos 23:16 2 K 17:6; 25:8f Ps105:12-13 Is 4:3+ Zc 7:14

'But you will seek Yahweh your God from there, and if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul, you shall find him. •In your distress, all that I have said will overtake you,[f] but at the end of days[g] you will return to Yahweh your God and listen to his voice. •For Yahweh your God is a merciful God and will not desert or destroy you or forget the covenant he made on oath with your fathers.

29:3; 30:1-5 Ho 5:15 Is 55:6 Jr 29:13 2Ch15:2 4,7f.15 Ps 27:8; 105:3f Mt 7:7-8

The splendour of the divine election

'Put this question, then, to the ages that are past, that went before you, from the time God created man on earth: Was there ever a word so majestic, from one end of heaven to the other? Was anything ever heard? •Did ever a people hear the

32:7 Jb 8:8 Ba 4:4

d. The Dead Sea.

4 a. Whereas the other Pentateuchal traditions emphasise the distance between God and man, cf. Ex 33: 20+, Dt calls attention to God's loving intimacy with his people in whose midst hed wells, 12:5. This same outlook is found in the narrative of the dedication of the Temple, 1 K 8:10-29, and the idea recurs in Ezk 48: 35. The N.T. gives it supreme expression, cf. Jn 1:14+.

b. 'thunderous' Greek.

c. The author draws a distinction between the 'Ten Sayings' written by God on the tablets of the Law, Ex 34:28, and the 'laws and customs' that proceed from Moses, the mouthpiece of God.

d. God's 'jealousy' is the extravagance of his love. Cf. 5:9; 6:15; 32:16,21, etc.; Ex 20:5; 34:14; 2 Co 11:2. For the 'fire' cf. Ex 13:22+; 24:17, etc.

e. The 'remnant' of which Isaiah and the prophets speak; i.e. the sole survivors of the nation's trial.

f. The words of God are here personified.

g. In the prophetic books the phrase refers to the decisive establishment of God's kingdom, the age of the new covenant.

4:7+ Ex33:20+ 7:6+ voice of the living God[h] speaking from the heart of the fire, as you heard it, and remain alive? •Has any god ventured to take to himself one nation from the 34
26:8 Ex 19:4 2 S 7:23 Ps 40:5; 136:12 Jr 32:21 midst of another by ordeals, signs, wonders, war with mighty hand and outstretched arm, by fearsome terrors—all this that Yahweh your God did for you before your eyes in Egypt?
7:9; 32:39 Ex 20:3 'This he showed you so that you might know that Yahweh is God indeed and 35
Is43:10-13 that there is no other. •He let you hear his voice out of heaven for your instruct- 36
Mk12:32 Ex 24:17 ion; on earth he let you see his great fire, and from the heart of the fire you heard
Ps105:44-45 his word. •Because he loved your fathers and chose their descendants after them, 37
he brought you out from Egypt, openly showing his presence and his great power,
7:1; 9:1; 11:23 driving out in front of you nations greater and more powerful than yourself, and 38
brought you into their land to give it you for your heritage, as it is still today.
'Understand this today, therefore, and take it to heart: Yahweh is God indeed, 39
Jos 2:11 1 K 8:23 2 Ch 20:6 Ps 83:18 Pr 3:3 Is 65:20 Zc 8:4 in heaven above as on earth beneath, he and no other. •Keep his laws and com- 40
mandments as I give them to you today, so that you and your children may
prosper and live long in the land that Yahweh your God gives you for ever.'

B. THE SECOND DISCOURSE OF MOSES[i]

Its time and place

19:7-13 Ex21:13+ Then Moses set apart three cities to the east, beyond the Jordan, •where a man 41 42
Nb35:6,13 might find refuge who had killed his fellow unwittingly and with no previous feud
against him: by taking flight to one of these cities he could save his life. •These 43
Jos 20:8 were, for the Reubenites, Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland; for the Gadites,
Ramoth in Gilead; for the Manassites, Golan in Bashan.
This is the Law which Moses put before the sons of Israel. •These are the 44 45
decrees and laws and customs that Moses proclaimed to the sons of Israel when
they came out of Egypt, •beyond the Jordan in the valley near Beth-peor, in the 46
land of Sihon the Amorite king who lived at Heshbon. Moses and the sons of
2:26–3:17 Israel had defeated him when they came out of Egypt, •and had taken possession 47
of his land and of the land of Og king of Bashan—two kings of the Amorites
to the east beyond the Jordan, •from Aroer on the height above the wadi Arnon 48
as far as Mount Sirion (which is Hermon)—•and of all the Arabah east of the 49
Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah.

5 Moses called the whole of Israel together and said to them: 1

The Ten Commandments

4:1 'Listen, Israel, to the laws and customs that I proclaim in your hearing today.
Learn them and take care to observe them.
4:10-13+ 'Yahweh our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. •It was not with our 2 3
fathers that Yahweh made this covenant, but with us, with us who are here, all
9:8-11 living today. •On the mountain, from the heart of the fire, Yahweh spoke to you 4
face to face, •and I stood all the time between Yahweh and yourselves to tell you 5
of Yahweh's words,[a] for you were afraid of the fire and had not gone up the
mountain. He said:
‖Ex20:20-17+ Mt 6:4 "I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the 6
house of slavery.
"You shall have no gods except me. 7
4:15-20 "You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in 8
heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; •you shall 9
4:24+ not bow down to them or serve them. For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous
7:9-10 Ex 34:7 God and I punish the fathers' fault in the sons, the grandsons and the great-
grandsons of those who hate me; •but I show kindness to thousands those who 10
love me and keep my commandments.

11 "You shall not utter the name of Yahweh your God to misuse it, for Yahweh will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it.

12 "Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as Yahweh your God has com- Ex 20:10
13 manded you. •For six days you shall labour and do all your work, •but the
14 seventh day is a sabbath for Yahweh your God. You shall do no work that day, Jb 31:13 Mk 2:27
neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women,
nor your ox nor your donkey nor any of your animals, nor the stranger who lives Ex 12:48+
15 with you. Thus your servant, man or woman, shall rest as you do. •Remember
that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that Yahweh your God brought
you out from there with mighty hand and outstretched arm; because of this,
Yahweh your God has commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

16 "Honour your father and your mother, as Yahweh your God has commanded Si 3:1-16 Mt 15:4 Mk10:19 Lk 18:20
you, so that you may have long life and may prosper in the land that Yahweh
your God gives to you.

17 [b] "You shall not kill.

18 "You shall not commit adultery. Jb 31:1

19 "You shall not steal.

20 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

21 "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, you shall not set your heart on Jb 31:1
his house, his field, his servant—man or woman—his ox, his donkey or anything
that is his."

22 'These are the words Yahweh spoke to you when you were all assembled on
the mountain. With a great voice he spoke to you from the heart of the fire, in Dt 4:12-13 Ex 24:16+
cloud and thick darkness. He added nothing, but wrote them on two tablets of Ex 24:12
stone which he gave to me.

Moses the mediator

Ex20:18-21

23 'Now when you had heard this voice coming out of the darkness, while the
mountain was all on fire, you came to me, all of you, heads of tribes and elders,
24 and said, "See how Yahweh our God has shown us his glory and his greatness 3:24
and we have heard his voice from the middle of the fire. Today we have seen that Ex 19:16+
25 God can speak with man and man still live. •Why should we die now, when Ex 33:20+
this great fire is ready to devour us, and when we are sure to perish if we hear
26 the voice of Yahweh our God a second time? •For what creature of flesh could
possibly live after hearing, as we have heard, the voice of the living God speaking
27 from the heart of the fire? •You, then, go near and hear everything Yahweh our
God will say and tell us all that Yahweh our God says to you; we will listen and
observe it." Ex 19:8; 24:3

28 'Yahweh heard the words you spoke to me, and he said to me, "I have heard
29 this people's words. All they have spoken is well said. •If only their heart were
always so, set on the fear of me and the keeping of my commandments, so that Lv 18:5
30 they and their children might prosper for ever! •Go and say to them: Return
31 to your tents. •But you will stand here by me and I shall tell you all the com-
mandments, the laws and the customs that you must teach them, which they
must observe in the land I am giving them for their possession."

To love Yahweh is the essence of the Law

32 'Keep this, observe it. This is what Yahweh our God has commanded you. Pr 4:27
33 Stray neither to right nor to left. •Follow the whole way that Yahweh has marked 17:11,20 Jos 1:7
for you and you shall live, you shall prosper and shall live long in the land you 1 K 3:14
are to possess.

h. 'living' Greek.

i. This second discourse, like the first, opens with a historical introduction describing Moses in the act of lawgiving (first discourse: appointment of judges; second discourse: right of asylum). The theme of the first discourse was the occupation of the Promised Land; this second discourse expounds the basic principles of the Law.

5 a. 'words' versions. Hebr. 'word'.

b. Vv. 17-20 are one verse in the Greek.

4:1 6 'These then are the commandments, the laws and the customs[a] which Yahweh your God has instructed me to teach you that you may observe them in the land which you are going to make your own. •Thus, if you fear Yahweh your God all the days of your life and if you keep all his laws and commandments which I lay on you, you will have a long life, you and your son and your grandson. Listen then, Israel, keep and observe what will make you prosper and give you great increase, as Yahweh the God of your fathers has promised you, giving you a land where milk and honey flow.

13:4;10:12 'Listen, Israel: Yahweh our God is the one Yahweh.[b] •You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength.[c] •Let these words I urge on you today be written on your heart. •You shall repeat them to your children and say them over to them whether at rest in your house or walking abroad, at your lying down or at your rising; •you shall fasten them on your hand as a sign and on your forehead as a circlet; •you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

'When Yahweh has brought you into the land which he swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that he would give you, with great and prosperous cities not of your building, •houses full of good things not furnished by you, wells you did not dig, vineyards and olives you did not plant, when you have eaten these and had your fill, •then take care you do not forget Yahweh who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. •You must fear Yahweh your God, you must serve him, by his name you must swear.

An appeal for loyalty

'Do not follow other gods, gods of the peoples round you, •for Yahweh your God who dwells among you is a jealous God; his anger could blaze out against you and wipe you from the face of the earth. •Do not put Yahweh your God to the test as you tested him at Massah. •Keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and his decrees and laws that he has laid down for you, •and do what is right and good in the eyes of Yahweh so that you may prosper and take possession of the rich land which Yahweh swore to give to your fathers, •driving out your enemies before you; this was the promise of Yahweh.

'In times to come, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the decrees and laws and customs that Yahweh our God has laid down for you?" •you shall tell your son, "Once we were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and Yahweh brought us out of Egypt by his mighty hand. •Before our eyes Yahweh worked great and terrible signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his House. And he brought us out from there to lead us into the land he swore to our fathers he would give to us. •And Yahweh commanded us to observe all these laws and to fear Yahweh our God, so as to be happy for ever and to live, as he has granted us to do until now. •For us right living will mean this: to keep and observe all these commandments before Yahweh our God as he has directed us."

Israel a people apart

7 'When Yahweh your God has led you into the land you are entering to make your own, many nations will fall before you: Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites,[a] seven nations greater and stronger than yourselves. •Yahweh your God will deliver them over to you and you will conquer them. You must lay them under ban. You must make no covenant with them nor show them any pity. •You must not marry with them: you must not give a daughter of yours to a son of theirs, nor take a daughter of theirs for a son of yours, •for this would turn away your son from following me to serving other gods and the anger of Yahweh would blaze out against you and soon destroy you. •Instead, deal with them like this: tear down their altars,

smash their standing-stones, cut down their sacred poles and set fire to their
6 idols. •For you are a people consecrated to Yahweh your God; it is you that
Yahweh our God has chosen to be his very own people out of all the peoples
on the earth.[b]

14:2;32:9 Ex 4:23; 19:6+ Is 41:8; 62:12 Jr 2:3 Ezk 20:5 Am 3:2

God's election and his favour

7 'If Yahweh set his heart on you and chose you, it was not because you out-
8 numbered other peoples: you were the least of all peoples. •It was for love of you
and to keep the oath he swore to your fathers that Yahweh brought you out with
his mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the power
9 of Pharaoh king of Egypt. •Know then that Yahweh your God is God indeed,
the faithful God who is true to his covenant and his graciousness for a thousand
10 generations towards those who love him and keep his commandments, •but who
punishes in their own persons those that hate him. He is not slow to destroy[c] the
11 man who hates him; he makes him work out his punishment in person. •You are
therefore to keep and observe the commandments and statutes and ordinances
that I lay down for you today.

Jn 15:16 1 Co 1: 26-29 1Jn4:10,19 4:35+; 5:9f Ex34:6-7 1 K 8:23 Ne 1:5 Dn 9:4 *Dt24:16+* ✗ 2K 14:6 Jr31:29-30 Ezk 14:12+

12 'Listen to these ordinances, be true to them and observe them, and in return
Yahweh your God will be true to the covenant and the kindness he promised
13 your fathers solemnly. •He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers;
he will bless the fruit of your body and the produce of your soil, your corn, your
wine, your oil, the issue of your cattle, the young of your flock, in the land he
14 swore to your fathers he would give you. •You will be more blessed than all
peoples. No man or woman among you shall be barren, no male or female of
15 your beasts infertile. •Yahweh will keep all sickness far from you; he will not
afflict you with those evil plagues of Egypt which you have known, but will
save them for all those who hate you.

Ex23:22-23 Ne 1:5 *Lk 1:12* Jn14:21,23 Ps107:38 Ho 2:10 Ex 23:26 Ex 15:26 Ps 91:10

16 'Devour, then, all these peoples whom Yahweh your God delivers over to you,
show them no pity, do not serve their gods, for otherwise you would be ensnared.

Ex23:24,33 Nb33:50

The power of Yahweh

9:1-6

17 'You may say in your heart, "These nations outnumber me; how shall I be able
18 to dispossess them?" •Do not be afraid of them: remember how Yahweh your
19 God dealt with Pharaoh and all Egypt, •the great ordeals your own eyes have
seen, the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm with which
Yahweh your God has brought you out. So will Yahweh your God deal with all

6 a. The 'laws and customs' properly so called are not enumerated until after the discourse, 12:1f.

b. Another translation sometimes adopted 'Listen, Israel: Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone', but it is more likely that we have here a declaration of monotheistic faith. This verse was later to be used as the opening words of the *Shema*, a prayer still central to Jewish piety.

c. This love, echo of God's love for his people, 4:37; 7:8; 10:15, embraces the fear of God, the duty of service and the observance of precepts, 6:13; 10:12-13; 11:1; cf. 30:2. Outside Dt there is no explicit command to love God but its equivalent is found in 2 K 23:25 and Ho 6:6. Though the command does not appear, the Psalms and the prophetic books, especially Hosea and Jeremiah, are full of the love of God. Jesus, quoting Dt 6:5, lays it down as the greatest commandment of all, Mt 22:37p; with it goes fear, the fear of a son, not of a slave, 1 Jn 4:18.

7 a. Such a conventional list of six or seven pre-Israelite Palestinian peoples recurs, with slight variations, in 20:17 and in Gn 15:20; Ex 3:8,17; 13:5; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Jos 3:10; 9:1; 11:3; 12:8; 24:11; Jg 3:5; 1 K 9:20; Ezr 9:1; Ne 9:8; 2 Ch 8:7. The Canaanites represent the original semitic population of Palestine. The Amorites are later semitic arrivals (end of 3rd millennium). The 'Yahwistic' tradition prefers the former name, the 'Elohistic' normally uses the latter; Jos 11:3 makes a geographical distinction between them, cf. Jos 9:10. The Hittites are a people of Asia Minor; the term is here used in a vague sense: it indicates a non-semitic people resident in Palestine, Gn 23. The Girgashites, Perizzites and Hivites are of least importance. The Jebusites are the ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem, 2 S 5:9+.

b. Declaring Israel's election, as in 14:2. To 'find himself a nation' God made use of wonders, 4:34, cf. 4:20; 26:7-8. Vv. 7-8 of this chapter explain the reason for God's choice, namely, loyalty to the promises which, of his own loving will, he had made to the Fathers, cf. 4:37; 8:18; 9:5; 10:15. This choice, ratified by the covenant (v. 9; 5:2-3), makes Israel a dedicated people (v. 6; 26:19). The idea of election, strongly emphasised in Dt, pervades the O.T. Israel is a nation set apart, Nb 23:9, God's people, Jg 5:13, consecrated, Ex 19:6+, a covenanted race, Ex 19:1+, God's son, Dt 1:31+, the nation of Immanuel, ('God-with-us'), Is 8:8,10. The election marks Israel off from the world but the prophets foretell the recognition of Israel's God by all nations and the universality of salvation Zc 14:16; Is 49:6; 45:14+. The coming of Jesus inaugurates this 'messianic' era.

c. Alternative translation 'allowing no substitute he destroys' (cf. Jr 32:18). The v. emphasises individual responsibility, cf. Dt 24:16, an advance on Ex 34:7; Ezekiel has it still to come.

Ex 23:28 Jos 24:12 Ws 12:8
the peoples whom you fear to face. •And what is more, Yahweh your God will 20
send hornets to destroy those who remain and hide from you.

Jos 1:9 Ps 76:7 Ex 23:29-30 Jg 2:6+
'Do not be afraid of them, for Yahweh your God is among you, a God who 21
is great and terrible. •Little by little Yahweh your God will destroy these nations 22
before you; you will not be able to make an end of them at once, or the wild
beasts would grow too many for you.[d] •But Yahweh your God will deliver them 23
over to you and will harass them until they are destroyed. •He will deliver their 24
Jos 1:5 kings into your hands and you will blot out their names from under heaven; none
shall withstand you, until you have destroyed them all.

2M12:40
'You must set fire to all the carved images of their gods, not coveting the gold 25
and silver that covers them; take it and you will be caught in a snare: it is
detestable to Yahweh your God. •You must not bring any detestable thing into 26
Lv27:28+ your house or you, like it, will come under the ban too. You must regard them
as unclean and loathsome, for they are under the ban.

The ordeal in the wilderness

4:1 Lv 18:5 Pr 3:1
8 'All the commandments I enjoin on you today you must keep and observe so 1
that you may live and increase in numbers and enter into the land that Yahweh
promised on oath to your fathers, and make it your own. •Remember how 2
2:7;29:4-5 Ex15:25; 20:20 Yahweh your God led you for forty years in the wilderness, to humble you,
to test you and know your inmost heart—whether you would keep his com-
Pr 3:3 Am 8:11 Ex 16 mandments or not. •He humbled you, he made you feel hunger, he fed you with 3
manna which neither you nor your fathers had known, to make you understand
Dt 32:47 ↗ Mt4:4p that man does not live on bread alone but that man lives on everything that comes
Ne 9:21 from the mouth of Yahweh.[a] •The clothes on your back did not wear out and 4
your feet were not swollen, all those forty years.

Pr3:11-12 Ws11:9-10 1 Co 11: 31-32
'Learn from this that Yahweh your God was training you as a man trains 5
his child, •and keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, and so follow his 6
ways and reverence him.

The Promised Land and its temptations

11:10-12; 32:13 Jr 2:7
'But Yahweh your God is bringing you into a prosperous land, a land of 7
streams and springs, of waters that well up from the deep in valleys and hills,
a land of wheat and barley, of vines, of figs, of pomegranates, a land of olives, 8
Ws 8:2 of oil, of honey, •a land where you will eat bread without stint, where you will 9
want nothing, a land where the stones are of iron, where the hills may be quarried
6:11-12 for copper. •You will eat and have all you want and you will bless Yahweh 10
your God in the rich land he has given you.

Ps 127:1f Ho 2:10
'Take care you do not forget Yahweh your God, neglecting his commandments 11
and customs and laws which I lay on you today. •When you have eaten and 12
had all you want, when you have built fine houses to live in, •when you have 13
seen your flocks and herds increase, your silver and gold abound and all your
Si 10:12 Is 30:6 Jr 2:6 possessions grow great, •do not become proud of heart. Do not then forget 14
Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house
Am 4:10 of slavery: •who guided you through this vast and dreadful wilderness, a land 15
Ex16;17:1-7 Nb11:7-9; 20:1-3; 26:6+ Ps107:4; 136:16 9:4;32:27 Jg 7:2 Is10:13-15 Am 6:13 Jn 15:5 1Co1:26-31 Ep 2:8-9 of fiery serpents, scorpions, thirst; who in this waterless place brought you water
from the hardest rock; •who in this wilderness fed you with manna that your 16
fathers had not known, to humble you and test you and so make your future the
happier. •Beware of saying in your heart, "My own strength and the might of my 17
own hand won this power for me". •Remember Yahweh your God: it was he who 18
gave you this strength and won you this power, thus keeping the covenant then,
as today, that he swore to your fathers. •Be sure that if you forget Yahweh your 19
God, if you follow other gods, if you serve them and bow down before them
—I warn you today— you will most certainly perish. •Like the nations Yahweh 20
4:26+ is to destroy before you, so you yourselves shall perish, for not having listened
to the voice of Yahweh your God.

The victory comes from Yahweh, not from Israel's merits 7:17-26

9 'Listen, Israel; today you are about to cross the Jordan, to go and dispossess 4:38+ Am 2:9
nations greater and stronger than yourself, to capture great cities fortified to
the sky. •A people great and tall, these Anakim, as you know; you have heard
the saying: Who can stand up to the sons of Anak? •Be therefore sure today 2:10+
that Yahweh your God himself will go in front of you, a devouring fire that will Jos 3:3-4; 6:8
destroy them, and he himself will subdue them for you; so you will dispossess 7:22+
them and destroy them quickly as Yahweh has promised you. •Do not say in
your heart, when Yahweh your God has driven them before you, "It is for my 8:17+
own goodness that Yahweh has brought me to possession of this land"; when 1K 8:47
it is for their wickedness that Yahweh dispossesses these nations for you. •It is
not for any goodness or sincerity of yours that you are entering their land to
possess it; no, it is for the wickedness of these nations that Yahweh your God is 18:12
dispossessing them for you, and to keep the word that he swore to your fathers,
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. •Be in fact sure, then, that it is not for any goodness Ep 2:7-9 Tt 3:5
of yours that Yahweh gives you this rich land to possess, for you are a headstrong 9:13 Ezk 2:3
people.

Israel's conduct at Horeb; Moses intercedes ‖Ex 32

'Remember; never forget how you provoked Yahweh your God in the wilder- Ps 81:11
ness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt you have been rebels against
Yahweh. •At Horeb you provoked Yahweh, and Yahweh was so angry with Ps 106:19-20
you that he was ready to destroy you. •I had gone up the mountain to receive
the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that Yahweh was making with Ex 24:12
you. I stayed forty days and forty nights on the mountain, eating no bread, Ex 24:18
drinking no water. •Yahweh gave me the two stone tablets inscribed by the
finger of God, and all the words on them that Yahweh had spoken to you on the 5:3-22
mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the Assembly. •At the end of
the forty days and forty nights, after he had given me the two tablets of stone,
the tablets of the covenant, •Yahweh said to me, "Leave this place, go down
quickly, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have broken faith.
They have been quick to leave the way I marked out for them; they have made
themselves an idol of cast metal." •Then Yahweh said to me, "I have seen this
people, and what a headstrong people they are! •Let me destroy them, and wipe 9:6; 10:16; 31:27 Ex 32:9+ 2K 17:14 Jr 7:26; 17:23; 19:15 Ba 2:30
out their name from under heaven, and make out of you a nation mightier and
greater than they."
'So I went down the mountain again and it was blazing with fire, and in my
hands were the two tablets of the covenant. •And I looked and there you were, Ex 24:12
you had been sinning against Yahweh your God. You had made yourself a
calf of cast metal; you had been quick to leave the way Yahweh marked out
for you. •I seized the two tablets and with my two hands threw them down and
broke them before your eyes. •Then I fell prostrate before Yahweh; as before,
I passed forty days and forty nights eating no bread and drinking no water, for
all the sin you had committed in doing what was displeasing to Yahweh, thus
arousing his anger. •For I was afraid of this anger, of the fury which so roused ↗ Heb 12:21
Yahweh against you that he was ready to destroy you. And once more Yahweh
heard my prayer. •Yahweh was enraged with Aaron too and was ready to destroy
him, and I pleaded for Aaron also.[a] •That work of sin, the calf you had made,
I took and burned and broke to pieces, and grinding it to fine dust I threw its Ex 32:20
dust into the stream that comes down from the mountain.

d. According to Dt 9:3 the conquest was to be swift and the existing populace was to be exterminated. The idealised conspectus of Jos 10-11 however (cf. Jos 10:1+) must be measured against the more realistic account of the Book of Judges, cf. Jg 1:1+. The conquest was, in fact, long-drawn-out and the indigenous peoples were allowed to remain; for an explanation cf. Jg 2:6+.

8 a. Yahweh makes all things by his word and so gives life to Israel by means of the commandments *(miswah)* that issue *(mosa)* from his mouth. On this text, cited in Mt 4:4p, see Am 8:11; Ne 9:29; Pr 9:1-5; Ws 16:26; Si 24:19-21; Jn 6:30-36,68+.

9 a. It is possible that this v. and vv. 22-24 are additions.

1:25-40 Ex17:1-7 Nb11:1-3; 11:4-34; 13:25-14:38; 20:1-13

Israel sins again. A prayer of Moses

'At Taberah too and at Massah and Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked Yahweh. 22
And when Yahweh wanted you to leave Kadesh-barnea, saying, "Go up and take 23
possession of the land I have given you", you rebelled against the command of
Yahweh your God and did not believe him or listen to his voice. •You have been 24
Ezk 2:3 rebels against Yahweh from the day he first knew you.[b]

‖Ex32:11-14+ Ps106:23 'So I fell prostrate before Yahweh and lay there these forty days and forty 25
nights, for Yahweh had said he would destroy you. •And I pleaded with Yahweh. 26
1 K 8:51 Est4:17g My Lord Yahweh, I said, do not destroy your people, your heritage whom in
your greatness you have redeemed, whom you have brought out of Egypt with
your mighty hand. •Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; take 27
32:27 2K13:23 no notice of this people's stubbornness, their wickedness, and their sin, •so that 28
it may not be said in the land from which you brought us, "Yahweh was not able
Ex 32:12 to bring them to the land he promised them. It was because he hated them
that he brought them out, to die in the wilderness." •But they are your people and 29
Ne 1:10 your heritage whom you brought out by your great power and your outstretched
arm.

Ex34:1f.27

The ark of the covenant; the choice of Levi

Ex 24:12 Ex 25:16 10 'Yahweh then said to me, "Cut two stone tablets like the first, and come 1
up to me on the mountain. Make an ark of wood; •on the tablets I shall 2
1 K 8:9 inscribe the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke, and you will
put them in the ark." •So I made an ark of acacia wood, cut two stone tablets 3
like the first and went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. •And 4
he inscribed the tablets as he had inscribed them before with the Ten Sayings
that Yahweh had spoken to you on the mountain from the middle of the fire on
the day of the Assembly. Then Yahweh gave them to me. •I came down the 5
1 K 8:9 mountain again and put the tablets in the ark I had made, and there they stayed
as Yahweh had commanded me.

Nb20:22; 33:31-38 [a] 'The sons of Israel left the wells of the Bene-jaakan for Moserah, where 6
Aaron died; he was buried there, and his son Eleazar succeeded him in the
priesthood. •From there they set out for Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah for 7
Nb 1:48-53;3:1-10; 4:1-33 Jotbathah, a land of water-streams. •Yahweh then set apart the tribe of Levi 8
to carry the ark of Yahweh's covenant, to stand in the presence of Yahweh, to
do him service and in his name to pronounce blessing as they still do today.
Nb18:20+ Ps 16:5 Levi therefore has no share or inheritance with his brothers: Yahweh is his 9
inheritance, as Yahweh your God told him.

'And I, as before, stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. And 10
again Yahweh heard my prayer and agreed not to destroy you. •And Yahweh 11
said to me, "Now go on your way at the head of this people, that they may go and
take possession of the land I swore to their fathers I would give them".

Circumcision of the heart

'And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God ask of you? Only this: to fear 12
6:5+ Yahweh your God, to follow all his ways, to love him, to serve Yahweh your God
with all your heart and all your soul, •to keep the commandments and laws of 13
Yahweh that for your good I lay down for you today.

Ex 9:29;19:5 Ps 24:1-2 Is 66:1-2 'To Yahweh your God belong indeed heaven and the heaven of heavens,[b] the 14
earth and all it contains; •yet it was on your fathers that Yahweh set his heart 15
7:6+ Jr 11:4-5 for love of them, and after them of all the nations chose their descendants, you
9:13+;30:6 Jr 4:4+ yourselves, up to the present day. •Circumcise your heart then and be obstinate 16
1Tm6:15 Rv17:14; 19:16 no longer;[c] •for Yahweh your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great 17
Jos22:22 2 Ch 19:7 Est 4:17r Jb 34:19 Ws 6:7 Si35:11-16 Dn 2:47 God, triumphant and terrible, never partial, never to be bribed. •It is he who 18
sees justice done for the orphan and the widow, who loves the stranger and gives
him food and clothing. •Love the stranger then, for you were strangers in the 19
land of Egypt. •It is Yahweh your God you must fear and serve; you must cling 20

21 to him; in his name take your oaths. •He it is you must praise, he is your God: for you he has done these great and terrible things you have seen with your own eyes;
22 and though your fathers numbered only seventy when they went down to Egypt, Yahweh your God has made you as many as the stars of heaven.

↗ Ac10:34▲ ↗ Rm2:11▲
26:5 Gn 46:27 Ex 1:5

Israel's lessons

1 11 'You must love Yahweh your God and always keep his injunctions, his
2 laws, his customs, his commandments. •Mark, this day, how it was you who received the instruction, not your sons. They have not known or seen the lessons of Yahweh your God, his greatness, the might of his hand, the strength
3 of his arm, •the signs and the deeds he performed in Egypt itself against Pharaoh
4 and all his land; •what he did to the armies of Egypt, to their horses and their chariots, how he poured the waters of the Sea of Reeds over them as they pursued
5 you, leaving no trace of them to this day; •what he did for you in the wilderness
6 before you reached this place; •what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the Reubenite, how, right in the midst of all Israel, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them with their households, their tents and all their retinue.
7 It is your eyes that have seen all this great work that Yahweh has done.

3:24
Ex 7-15
Nb 16 Ps106:16-17

Promises and warnings

8 'You must keep all the commandments I enjoin on you today, so that you may have the strength to conquer the land into which you are to cross to make it your
9 own, •and to live long in the land which Yahweh swore to give to your fathers and their descendants, a land where milk and honey flow.
10 'For the land which you are to enter and make your own is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you sowed your seed and watered it by
11 tread[a] like a vegetable garden. •No, the land into which you are to cross to make it your own is a land of hills and valleys watered by the rain from heaven.
12 Yahweh your God takes care of this land, the eyes of Yahweh your God are on
13 it always, from the year's beginning to its end. •And it is most sure that if you faithfully obey the commandments I enjoin on you today, loving Yahweh your
14 God and serving him with all your heart and all your soul, •"I[b] will give your land rain in season, autumn rain and spring, so that you may harvest your corn,
15 your wine, your oil; •I shall provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you
16 will eat and have all you want". •Take care your heart is not seduced, that you
17 do not go astray, serving other gods and worshipping them, •or the anger of Yahweh will blaze out against you, he will shut up the heavens and there will be no rain, the land will not yield its produce and you will quickly die in the prosperous land that Yahweh is giving you.

4:1
Jr 11:5
28:2-5; 32:13 Ex 1:14
8:7-10 Ne 9:25
Ws 12:7
Lv26:3-13
28:12 Jr 5:24 Ho 6:3b Jl 2:19,23f
Lv 26:20 1 K 8:35

Conclusion

6:6-9

18 'Let these words of mine remain in your heart and in your soul; fasten them
19 on your hand as a sign and on your forehead as a circlet. •Teach them to your children and say them over to them, whether at rest in your house or walking
20 abroad, at your lying down or at your rising. •Write them on the doorposts of
21 your house and on your gates, •so that you and your children may live long in the land that Yahweh swore to your fathers he would give them for as long as there is a sky above the earth.

Ex 13:9; 13:16
Sg 8:6
↗ *Mt23:5p*
Ne 9:29 Pr 3:2
Jr 33:25

b. 'he knew you' Greek and Sam.

10 a. Vv. 6-9 interrupt the account (resumed in v. 10) of the events at Sinai. It is probable that they are a later addition. They seek to dissociate the levitical priesthood from Aaron's sin by explaining that the powers of the priesthood derived from Moses' institution of the ark of the covenant and were conferred in the days of Eleazar, many years after the departure from Horeb.

b. In Hebr. the genitive is used to express the superlative. The 'heaven of heavens' means the highest heavens.

c. Circumcision signified membership in God's people, Gn 17:10+. But this membership brought spiritual obligations with it: 'circumcision of the heart', Jr 4:4+.

11 a. Probably alluding to a waterwheel operated by the foot.

b. Here it is God speaking; the transition is abrupt.

'For if you faithfully keep and observe all these commandments that I enjoin 22
on you today, loving Yahweh your God, following all his ways and clinging to
4:38+ him, •Yahweh will dispossess all these nations for you, and you shall dispossess 23
Ex 23:31 Jos 1:3-5 nations greater and more powerful than yourselves. •Wherever the sole of your 24
foot treads shall be yours; your territory shall stretch from the wilderness and
from Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, to the Western Sea. •No man 25
will be able to stand against you; Yahweh your God will make you feared and
dreaded throughout the land that you tread, just as he promised you.

27-28; 30:15-20 Si 15:16 'See, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: •a blessing, if you obey 26 27
the commandments of Yahweh our God that I enjoin on you today; •a curse, 28
if you disobey the commandments of Yahweh your God and leave the way I have
marked out for you today, by going after other gods you have not known. •And 29
when Yahweh your God has brought you into the land which you are to enter
Jos 8:33+ and make your own, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse
Jos 24:26 on Mount Ebal. •These mountains, as you know, are beyond the Jordan on the 30
westward road, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Plain, opposite
Jos 4:19+ Gilgal,[c] near the Oak of Moreh. •You shall indeed cross the Jordan to enter and 31
make the land your own that Yahweh your God is giving you. You shall possess
it and you shall live in it, •and you must keep and observe all the laws and 32
customs that I set before you today.

II. THE DEUTERONOMIC CODE[a]

2 K 23:8 12 'Now these are the laws and customs that you must keep and observe, 1
in the land that Yahweh the God of your fathers has granted you to possess,
for as long as you live in that land.

A. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

1 K 8:40; 14:23 2 K 16:4; 17:10 Is 57:5 Jr 2:20; 3:6,13; 17:2 Ezk 6:13 *Nb 33:52* 2 K 18:4 Ho 4:13 Am 7:9 7:5 Ex 23:24+; 34:13+

The place of worship[b]

'You must destroy completely all the places where the nations you dispossess 2
have served their gods, on high mountains, on hills, under any spreading tree;
you must tear down their altars, smash their pillars, cut down their sacred poles, 3
set fire to the carved images of their gods and wipe out their name from that
place.

Lv 17:1-9 *Ex 20:24+* 1 K 8:29 'Not so are you to behave towards Yahweh your God. •You must seek Yahweh 4 5
your God only in the place he himself will choose from among all your tribes,
Lv 1-3+ Dt 14:22+ Si 35:9 to set his name there and give it a home. •There you shall bring your holocausts 6
and your sacrifices, your tithes, the offerings from your hands, your votive
offerings and your voluntary offerings, the first-born of your herd and flock;
there you will eat in the presence of Yahweh your God and be thankful for all 7
that your hands have presented, you and your households blessed by Yahweh
your God.[c]

Jg 17:6; 21:25 *Ps 95:11* 'You must not act as we do here today: every man does what seems right to 8
him, •for as yet you have not come to the resting place and the inheritance that 9
2 S 7:1 Yahweh your God is giving you. •You are about to cross the Jordan and live in 10
the land that Yahweh your God grants you to inherit; he will give you relief
from all the enemies that surround you, and you shall live in security. •To the 11
place chosen by Yahweh your God as a home for his name, to that place you
27:7 1 K 8:29 are to bring all that I command you: your holocausts and your sacrifice, your
tithes, the offerings from your hands, and all the best of your possessions that
you vow to Yahweh. •There you shall rejoice in the presence of Yahweh your 12
God, you and your sons and daughters, your serving men and women, and the
Levite who lives in your towns, since he has no share or inheritance with you.

Regulations concerning sacrifice[d]

13 'Take care you do not offer your holocausts in all the sacred places you see;
14 only in the place that Yahweh chooses in one of your tribes may you offer
your holocausts and do all I command you.
15 'Still, whenever you want you may slaughter and eat flesh in any of your Gn 9:3 Lv 17:13
towns, as much as the blessing of Yahweh affords you. Clean or unclean may
16 eat it, just as if it were gazelle or deer.[e] •Only you must not consume the blood 12:23 Lv 1:5+
but pour it out like water on the ground.
17 'In your towns you may not consume the tithes of your corn, your wine or 14:22+
your oil, or the first-born of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings
18 or voluntary offerings, or anything your hands have presented. •You must eat
these in the presence of Yahweh your God in the place Yahweh your God 1 S 1:4 2 Ch 35:6
chooses and there alone, you and your son and daughter, your serving man or
woman and the Levite who lives in your towns. You shall rejoice in the presence
19 of Yahweh your God over all that your hands have presented. •In your land
take care never to neglect the Levite.
20 'When Yahweh your God enlarges your territory as he has promised you, and
you say, "I should like to eat meat", if you want to eat meat you may eat as much
21 as you like. •If the place in which Yahweh your God chooses to set his name is
too far away, you may slaughter any of your herd or flock that Yahweh has
given you in the way that I have laid down for you; you may eat in your towns
22 as much as you will. •But you must eat it as you would gazelle or deer; clean
23 or unclean alike may eat it. •Only take care not to consume the blood, for the 12:16 Lv 1:5+
24 blood is the life, and you must not consume the life with the flesh. •You must
25 not consume it but pour it out like water on the ground. •You must not consume
it, and then you and your sons after you will prosper, doing what is right in the
26 eyes of Yahweh. •But the holy things you have and those you have vowed you
27 must go and take to the place that Yahweh chooses. •The holocaust of flesh and
blood you must offer on the altar of Yahweh your God; and, in your sacrifices,
the blood must be poured out on the altar of Yahweh your God; the flesh you
28 may eat yourselves. •Be faithful in keeping all the instructions that I give you and
obey them, so that you and your sons after you may be happy for always, doing
what is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.

Against Canaanite cults

29 'When Yahweh your God has annihilated in front of you the nations that you 7:1-6
are to dispossess, and when you have dispossessed them and made your home
30 in their country, •be careful you are not caught in a trap: do not imitate them
once they have been destroyed in front of you, or go enquiring after their gods,
saying, "How did these nations worship their gods? I will go and do the same."
31 This is not the way for you to behave towards Yahweh your God. For Yahweh Ws 12:4
detests all this and hates what they have done for their gods, even burning their
sons and daughters in the fire for their gods. Lv 18:21+
32 1 13 'All I command you, you must keep and observe, adding nothing to it, 17:2-7; 18:21+
taking nothing away.

c. Not the Gilgal of Jos 4:19 (see note), and probably not the same as in 2 K 2:1, but somewhere in the neighbourhood of Shechem.

12 a. On this code see Introduction to the Pentateuch. Moses' second discourse is concluded in 26:16–28:69.

b. The aim of this law, like that of the prophets, is to preserve the Yahwistic ritual from Canaanite contamination, by destroying the 'high places' where Canaanite rites were practised and by decreeing a single place of worship (ultimately Jerusalem). This centralisation did not obtain in the time of the Judges, Jg 6:28; 13:16, or even in the days of Solomon, 1 K 3:4, but is an essential feature of the deuteronomic legislation. It was to be one of the principal objectives in Josiah's programme of reform, 2 K 23.

c. The Deuteronomic Code frequently emphasises the joy of the ritual meal and of the liturgical feasts.

d. As a consequence of the legislation for a single sanctuary, a distinction is drawn between the slaughter and the sacrificial killing of animals; the first may be performed anywhere, the second only in the chosen sanctuary. Lv 17:3f makes no such distinction. Cf. also 1 S 14:32f.

e. This flesh was not forbidden.

Against the enticements of idolatry

Jr23:9-14 'If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and offers to do a sign 2 1
or a wonder for you, •and the sign or wonder comes about; and if he then says 3 2
32:17 Jr 23:11-14 to you, "Come, then, let us follow other gods (whom you have not known) and
serve them", •you are not to listen to the words of that prophet or to the dreams 4 3
6:5 of that dreamer. Yahweh your God is testing you to know if you love Yahweh
your God with all your heart and all your soul. •Yahweh your God you shall 5 4
6:13 follow, him you shall fear, his commandments you shall keep, his voice you shall
18:21+ Jr 28:16; 29:32 obey, him shall you serve, to him shall you cling. •That prophet or that dreamer 6 5
of dreams must be put to death, for he has preached apostasy from Yahweh
your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from
the house of slavery, and he would have made you turn aside from the way
✗ 1Co5:13 that Yahweh your God marked out for you. You must banish this evil from
among you.

'If your brother, the son of your father[a] or of your mother, or your son or 7 6
daughter, or the wife you cherish, or the friend with whom you share your life,
32:17 if one of these secretly tries to entice you, saying. "Come, let us serve other gods",
whom neither you nor your fathers have known, •gods from among those of the 8 7
peoples far or near surrounding you, from one end of the earth to the other,
you must not give way to him, nor listen to him, you must show him no pity, you 9 8
must not spare him, you must not conceal his guilt. •No, you must kill him; your 10 9
hand is to be the first raised against him in putting him to death, the hand of
all the people will come next. •You must stone him to death, for he has tried 11 10
to lure you away from Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of
Egypt, from the house of slavery. •All Israel shall hear of it and be afraid and 12 11
never again commit such wickedness among you.

Jdt 16:19 'If you hear that in one of the towns which Yahweh your God has given you 13 12
for a home, •there are men, scoundrels[b] from your own stock, who have led 14 13
32:17 2 S 23:6 2 Ch 13:7 Na 1:11 fellow citizens astray, saying "Come, let us serve other gods" whom you have
not known, •it is your duty to look into the matter, examine it, and inquire 15 14
most carefully. If it is proved and confirmed that such a hateful thing has taken
place among you, •then you must kill all the inhabitants of that town without 16 15
Jos6:17+ giving any quarter; you must lay it under ban, the town and all it contains.[c]
You must gather all the wealth of it in the public square, and set fire to the town 17 16
and all its goods, offering it all to Yahweh your God. It shall be a ruin for all
time, never to be built again. •From what is thus banned you must keep nothing 18 17
back, so that Yahweh may turn from the ferocity of his anger and show you
mercy, and have pity on you and increase your numbers as he swore to your
fathers; •that is, provided you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, keeping 19 18
all the commandments of his that I enjoin on you today, and doing what is right
in the eyes of Yahweh your God.

Against an idolatrous practice

‖Lv19:27-28 14 'You are sons of Yahweh your God. You must not gash yourselves or 1
shave your foreheads for one who is dead.[a] •For you are a people conse- 2
Ex19:6+ Dt 7:6+ crated to Yahweh your God, and Yahweh has chosen you to be his very own
people out of all the peoples on the earth.

‖Lv 11+ **Clean and unclean animals**

Ezk 4:14 'You must eat nothing that is detestable. •These are the animals you may 3 4
eat: ox, sheep, goat, •deer, gazelle, roebuck, ibex, antelope, oryx, mountain 5
sheep. •You may eat any animal that has a divided and cloven hoof and that 6
is a ruminant. •Of those, however, that are ruminant and those that have a divided 7
and cloven hoof you may not eat the following: the camel, the hare and the
hyrax, which are ruminant but have no cloven hoof; you must hold them unclean.
So also the pig, which though it has a cloven hoof is not ruminant; you must 8

hold it unclean. You must not eat the meat of such animals nor touch their dead bodies.

9 'Of all that lives in water you may eat the following: whatever has fins and
10 scales may be eaten. •But you must not eat anything that has not fins and scales:
you must hold it unclean.

11 12 'You may eat all clean birds, •but the following birds you must not eat: the
13 tawny vulture, the griffon, the osprey, •the kite and the several kinds of buzzard,[b]
14 15 all kinds of raven, •the ostrich, the screech owl, the seagull, the several kinds
16.17 18 of hawk, •owl, barn owl, ibis, •pelican, white vulture, cormorant, •stork, the
19 several kinds of heron, hoopoe and bat. •You are to hold all winged insects to be
20 unclean and must not eat them. •You may eat anything winged that is clean.

21 'You must not eat any animal that has died a natural death. You may give it for food to the alien who lives in your towns, or sell it to a foreigner. Ex 22:30 Lv 17:15

'You are not to boil a kid in its mother's milk. ‖Ex 23: 19+

The annual tithe[c]

22 'Every year you must take a tithe of all that your sowing yields on the land, 2Ch 31:6 Ne 10:38 Tb 1:6,7 Jdt 11:13 Si 35:8,9 Mt 23:23
23 and in the presence of Yahweh your God, in the place he chooses to give his name a home, you are to eat the tithe of your corn, your wine and your oil and the first-born of your herd and flock; so shall you learn to fear Yahweh your God always.

24 'If the road is too long for you, if you cannot bring your tithe because the place in which Yahweh chooses to make a home for his name is too far, when
25 Yahweh your God has blessed you, •you must turn your tithe into money, and with the money clasped in your hand you must go to the place chosen by Yahweh;
26 there you may spend the money on whatever you like, oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink, anything your heart desires. You are to eat there in the presence of Yahweh
27 your God and rejoice, you and your household. •Do not neglect the Levite who lives in your towns, since he has no share or inheritance with you.

The third-year tithe 26:12

28 'At the end of every three years you must take all the tithes of your harvests Tb 1:8
29 for that year and deposit them at your doors. •Then the Levite (since he has no share or inheritance with you), the stranger, the orphan and the widow who live Si 7:33; 12:2 in your towns may come and eat and have all they want. So shall Yahweh your God bless you in all the work that your hands undertake.

The sabbatical year Lv 25:1-7+

1 2 15 'At the end of every seven years you must grant a remission. •Now the nature of the remission is this: every creditor who holds the person of his neighbour in bond[a] must grant him remission; he may not exact payment from
3 his fellow or his brother once the latter appeals to Yahweh for remission. •From a foreigner you may exact payment, but you must remit whatever claim you have
4 on your brother. •Let there be no poor among you then. For Yahweh will bless
5 you in the land Yahweh your God gives you for your inheritance •only if you

13 a. 'son of your father' with Sam. and Greek.

b. Lit. 'sons of Belial'. Probable meaning 'worthless', hence 'scoundrels'. In time, 'Belial' came to be taken as a proper name connected with the power of evil, cf. Ps 18:4+ ('Beliar' in N.T., 2 Co 6:15, and the apocryphal writings).

c. Following the shorter, Greek, text.

14 a. Commonly interpreted as a prohibition of the cult of the dead. The prophets, however, do not appear to doubt the lawfulness of these practices as a ritual of domestic mourning. Am 8:10; Is 22:12; Jr 41:5; Ezk 7:18; it may be conjectured, therefore, that the 'one who is dead' is the god Baal whose death was commemorated at the beginning of summer, cf. Dt 26:14; 1 K 18:28, when the vegetation withered.

b. The Hebr. adds 'the *raah*'.

c. Tithe is paid to the owner of the land: it is therefore due to Yahweh who owns the land of Israel. According to Dt the produce of the soil is tithed and the tithe taken to the Temple (14:22-27 and 12:6-7, 17-19). Every third year, vv. 28-29, it becomes the property of the poor. According to Nb 18:21-32 the tithe is paid, as God's due, to the Levites; these make a tenth of it over to the priests. According to Lv 27:32-33 cattle are also tithed. Dt 14:25 and Lv 27:31 envisage payment in money.

15 a. The case of a debtor who has bound himself by contract to work for his creditor in case of non-payment.

pay careful attention to the voice of Yahweh your God, keeping and observing all these commandments that I enjoin on you today. •If Yahweh your God 6
23:20-21 blesses you as he promised, you will be creditors to many nations and debtors to none; you will rule over many nations and be ruled by none.

Tb 4:7 Si 3:30–4:10 'Is there a poor man among you, one of your brothers, in any town of yours 7
1 Jn 3:17 in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you? Do not harden your heart or close your hand against that poor brother of yours, •but be open-handed with 8 him and lend him enough for his needs. •Do not allow this mean thought in 9 your heart, "The seventh year, the year of remission is near", and look coldly on your poor brother and give him nothing; he could appeal against you to
Tb 4:16 Yahweh and it would be a sin for you. •When you give to him, you must give 10 with an open heart; for this Yahweh your God will bless you in all you do and
Tb 4:7 Jb 24:4 in all your giving. •Of course there will never cease to be poor in the land; 11
Mt26:11p I command you therefore: Always be open-handed with your brother, and with anyone in your country who is in need and poor.

Slaves

Si 7:21 'If your fellow Hebrew, man or woman, is sold to you, he can serve you for 12
Ex21:2-4 Lv25:8f+ six years. In the seventh year you must set him free, •and in setting him free you 13
Jr 34:14 must not let him go empty-handed. •You must make him a generous provision 14 from your flock, your threshing-floor, your winepress; as Yahweh your God has blessed you, so you must give to him. •Remember that you were a slave in the 15 land of Egypt and that Yahweh your God redeemed you; that is why I lay this charge on you today.

Ex21:5-6 'But if he says to you, "I do not want to leave you", if he loves you and your 16 household and is happy with you, •you are to take an awl and drive it through 17 his ear into the door and he shall be your servant for all time. You are to do the same for your maidservant.

'Do not think it hard on you to have to give him his freedom; he is worth 18 twice the cost of a hired servant and has served you for six years. So shall Yahweh your God bless you in all you do.

Ex 13:2,11+ ### The first-born

Ex 22:29 'You must consecrate every first-born male from your herd and flock to 19 Yahweh your God. You must not put the first-born of your herd to work nor shear the first-born of your flock. •You are to eat it, you and your household, 20 each year, in the presence of Yahweh your God, in the place Yahweh chooses. If it has a blemish, if it is lame or blind, or has any serious defect at all, you 21 must not sacrifice it to Yahweh your God. •You must eat it at home, unclean 22 and clean together,[b] as you would gazelle or deer; •only you must not consume 23 the blood, but pour it out like water on the ground.

Ex12:1+; 23:14+ Lv23:5-8 ### The feasts: Passover and Unleavened Bread

2 K 23:1 16 'Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover for Yahweh your 1 God, because it was in the month of Abib that Yahweh your God brought you out of Egypt by night. •You must sacrifice a passover from your flock or 2 herd for Yahweh your God in the place where Yahweh chooses to give his name a home. •You must not eat leavened bread with this; for seven days you must eat 3 it with unleavened bread, the bread of emergency, for it was in great haste that you came out of the land of Egypt; so you will remember, all the days of your life, the day you came out of the land of Egypt. •For seven days no leaven must 4 be found in any house throughout your territory, nor must any of the meat that you sacrifice in the evening of the first day be kept overnight until morning. You may not sacrifice the passover in any of the towns that Yahweh your God 5 gives you; •but only in the place where Yahweh your God chooses to give his 6 name a home, there you must sacrifice the passover, in the evening at sunset,

7 at the hour at which you came out of Egypt. •You must cook it and eat it in
the place Yahweh your God chooses, and in the morning you are to return and
8 go to your tents. •For six days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the seventh
day there shall be an assembly for Yahweh your God; and you must do no work.

Other feasts Ex 23:14+ Lv 23:15-21 Nb 28:26-31

9 'You are to count seven weeks, counting these seven weeks from the time you
10 begin to put your sickle into the standing corn. •You must then celebrate the
feast of weeks for Yahweh your God with the gift of a voluntary offering from
your hand in proportion to the way that Yahweh your God has blessed you.
11 You must rejoice in the presence of Yahweh your God in the place where Yahweh
your God chooses to give his name a home, you and your son and daughter,
your serving men and women, the Levite who lives in your towns, the stranger,
12 the orphan and the widow who live among you. •Remember that you were a
slave in Egypt, and carefully observe these laws. Lv 23:33-43 Nb 29:12-39
13 'You must celebrate the feast of Tabernacles for seven days, at the time when
14 you gather in the produce of your threshing-floor and winepress. •You must
rejoice at your feast, you and your son and daughter, your serving men and
women, the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow who live in your towns.
15 For seven days you are to celebrate the feast for Yahweh your God in the place
Yahweh chooses, for Yahweh your God will bless you in all your harvest and
all your handiwork, and you will be filled with joy.
16 'Three times a year all your menfolk are to appear before Yahweh your God 1 K 25 Tb 1:6 Ps 122:4 Lk 2:42
in the place he chooses: at the feast of Unleavened Bread, at the feast of Weeks,
at the feast of Tabernacles. No one must appear before Yahweh empty-handed,
17 but every man must give what he can, in proportion to the blessing that Yahweh
your God gives you.

Judges Ex 23:1-3;6-8

18 'You are to appoint judges and scribes in each of the towns that Yahweh is Jos 1:10 Pr 17:15
giving you, for all your tribes; these must administer an impartial judgement to
19 the people. •You must not pervert the law; you must be impartial, you must take 1:16-17 2 Ch 19:6 Ps 58:2 Pr 17:23; 28:21
no bribes, for a bribe blinds wise men's eyes and jeopardises the cause of the just.
20 Strict justice must be your ideal, so that you may live in rightful possession of
the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.

Abuses in worship

21 'You must not plant a sacred pole of any wood whatsoever beside the altar Ex 34:13+ 2 K 23:14
22 that you put up for Yahweh your God; •nor must you set up a standing-stone, Ex 23:24+
1 a thing Yahweh your God would abhor. 17 To Yahweh your God you must
sacrifice nothing from herd or flock that has any blemish or defect whatsoever, Lv 22:20-25
for Yahweh your God holds this detestable.
2 'If there is anyone, man or woman, among you in any of the towns Yahweh 13; 19:16-21 Jg 6:1
your God is giving you, who does what is displeasing to Yahweh your God by
3 violating his covenant, •who goes and serves other gods and worships them, or 4:19 2 K 17:16; 23:5 Ws 13:2
4 the sun or the moon or any of heaven's array—a thing I have forbidden—•and
this person is denounced to you; if after careful inquiry it is found true and
5 confirmed that this hateful thing has been done in Israel, •you must take the
man or woman guilty of this evil deed outside your city gates, and there you
6 must stone that man or woman to death. •A man may be put to death only on 19:15+ Jn 8:17
the word of two witnesses or three; and no man may be put to death on the
7 word of one witness alone. •The witnesses shall be the first to raise their hands Jn 8:7
against him in putting him to death, then all the people shall follow. You must
banish this evil from your midst.

15 b. To make it clear that the meal is not a ritual one.

1:16;21:5 **Levitical judges**

2Ch19:8 'If a case comes before you which is too difficult for you,[a] a case of murder, 8
legal rights or assault, or any dispute at all in your towns, you must make your
way to the place Yahweh your God chooses, •and approach the levitical priests 9
and the judge then in office. They will hold an inquiry[b] and give a decision for
Mt 23:3 you. •You must abide by the decision they pronounce for you in that place 10
which Yahweh chooses, and you must take care to carry out all their instructions.
You must abide by the verdict they give you and by the decision they declare to 11
you, swerving neither right nor left of the sentence they have pronounced for
you. •If anyone presumes to disobey either the priest who is there in the service 12
Jos 1:18 Jg 20:13 of Yahweh your God, or the judge, that man must die. You must banish this
evil from Israel. •And all the people shall hear of it and be afraid and not act 13
presumptuously a second time.

1 S 8-10 **Kings**

'When you reach the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and take pos- 14
session of it and live there, if you say to yourself, "I will appoint a king over
2 S 5:1 me like all the surrounding nations", •it must be a king of Yahweh's choosing 15
whom you appoint over you; it must be one from among your brothers that is
appointed king over you; you are not to give yourself a foreign king who is no
brother of yours.

1 S 8:11 2 S 8:4 Is 2:7 'Ensure that he does not increase the number of his horses, or make the people 16
go back to Egypt to increase his cavalry, for Yahweh said to you, "You must
1 K 11:1 never go back that way again".[c] •Nor must he increase the number of his wives, 17
for that could lead his heart astray. Nor must he increase his gold and silver
Jos 1:8 1 S 10:25 excessively.[d] •When he is seated on his royal throne he must write a copy of this 18
1 K 2:3 Law on a scroll for his own use at the dictation of the levitical priests.[e] •It must 19
never leave him and he must read it every day of his life and learn to fear Yahweh
his God by keeping all the words of this Law and observing these laws. •So his 20
5:32 heart will not look down on his brothers and he will swerve neither right nor
left from these commandments. If he does this, he will have long days on his
throne, he and his sons, in Israel.

Nb 18 **The levitical priesthood**

18 'The levitical priests, that is to say the whole of the tribe of Levi, shall have 1
no share or inheritance with Israel; they shall live on the foods offered[a] to
Jos 13:4 Ezk 44:28-29 Yahweh and on his dues. •This tribe is to have no inheritance among their 2
brothers; Yahweh will be their inheritance as he promised them.

Lv 6-7 Nb 18:8-24 1 S 2:13 Tb 1:7 'These are the priests' dues from the people, from those who offer an ox or 3
a sheep in sacrifice: the priest is to be given the shoulder, the cheeks and the
stomach. •You must give him the first-fruits of your corn, your wine, your oil, 4
as well as the first of your sheep's shearing. •For Yahweh your God has chosen 5
him out of all your tribes to stand before Yahweh your God, to do the duties
of the sacred ministry, and to bless in Yahweh's name, him and his sons for
all time.

2K23:9+ 'If the Levite living in one of your towns anywhere in Israel decides to come 6
to the place Yahweh chooses, •he shall minister there in the name of Yahweh 7
his God like all his fellow Levites who stand ministering there in the presence of
Yahweh, •and shall eat equal shares with them, no count being taken of the 8
claims he has on the levitical families for the goods he has sold.[b]

Prophets

'When you come into the land Yahweh your God gives you, you must not 9
Ex 22:18 fall into the habit of imitating the detestable practices of the natives. •There 10
Lv18:21+; 19:26 2K 17:17 must never be anyone among you who makes his son or daughter pass through
fire, who practises divination, who is soothsayer, augur or sorcerer, •who uses 11

12 charms, consults ghosts or spirits, or calls up the dead. •For the man who does these things is detestable to Yahweh your God; it is because of these detestable practices that Yahweh your God is driving these nations before you. Lv 19:31+ 2K 23:24 9:4

13 14 'You must be entirely faithful to Yahweh your God. •For these nations whom you are dispossessing may listen to soothsayers and diviners, but this is not the 15 gift that Yahweh your God gives to you: •Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself, from among yourselves, from your own brothers; 16 to him you must listen. •This is what you yourselves asked of Yahweh your God at Horeb on the day of the Assembly. "Do not let me hear again" you said "the voice of Yahweh my God, nor look any longer on this great fire, or I shall die"; Ps 18:23 Is 2:6 Nb 12:6+ Ws 11:1 Ho 12:4

17 18 and Yahweh said to me, "All they have spoken is well said. •I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers;[c] I will put my words into 19 his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him. •The man who does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name, shall be held answerable to me 20 for it. •But the prophet who presumes to say in my name a thing I have not commanded him to say, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die." ↗Jn 1:21+ Ac 3:22-23; 7:37 *Ex 4:12* Ws 11:1 Ho 12:4 Am 2:11 Jn 12:49f

21 22 'You may say in your heart, "How are we to know what word was not spoken by Yahweh?"[d] •When a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh and the thing does not happen and the word is not fulfilled, then it has not been spoken by Yahweh. The prophet has spoken with presumption. You have nothing to fear from him. Jr 28:8-9 Ezk 2:5; 33:33

B. ON THE LAW OF RETALIATION

Homicide and cities of refuge

Ex 21:13-14+ Nb 35:9-34+ Jos 20:1-9

1 19 'When Yahweh your God has annihilated the nations whose land Yahweh your God gives you, and you have dispossessed them and you live in their 2 towns and in their houses, •you are to set aside three cities in the land Yahweh is 3 giving you for your possession. •You must keep the approaches to them in good order and divide into three parts the area of the land Yahweh your God is giving into your possession, so that any homicide may be able to find a refuge in them. 4 Here is the case of how a man may save his life by taking refuge there.

'If anyone has struck his fellow accidentally, not having any previous feud 5 with him •(for example, he goes with his fellow into the forest to cut wood; his arm swings the axe to fell a tree; the head slips off the handle and strikes his companion dead), that man may take refuge in one of these cities and save his 6 life. •It must not be allowed that the avenger of blood, in the heat of his anger, should pursue the killer and that the length of the road should help him to overtake and fatally wound him; for the man has not deserved to die, having had no previous feud with his companion.

7 8 'I command you therefore: You are to set aside three cities, •and if Yahweh your God enlarges your territory, as he swore to your fathers he would, and gives 9 you the whole land he promised to give your fathers—•provided you keep and 4:41-43

17 a. It seems that this clause concerns local judges.

b. 'They will hold an inquiry' Sam. and Greek.

c. Not a verbatim quotation, but the thought is expressed in Nb 14:3f; cf. Ex 13:17 and 14:11f.

d. Apparently these vv. allude to Solomon, cf. 1 K 10:26f and ch. 11.

e. Some render 'he will get the priests to write. . .'.

18 a. 'foods offered': in Hebr. *ishe*, a term of Sumerian origin for the food offered to the god; this is the meaning here and in 1 S 2:28. Lv and the 'Priestly' tradition connect the word with *esh*, fire; hence 'sacrifice by fire', 'burnt offering', cf. Lv 1:9+.

b. And which must revert to him when the jubilee comes round. The text of the end of the verse is uncertain.

c. Institution of the prophetic (as 17:14-20 is of the royal) office; it is ascribed by Moses to Yahweh at the time of the manifestation at Horeb, cf. Ex 20:19-21 and Dt 5:23-28. In N.T. St Peter, Ac 3:22-26, and St Stephen, Ac 7:37, refer to this text. The Jewish expectation of a Messiah-Prophet, a second Moses, is based on this passage. St John's gospel emphasises the parallels between Jesus and Moses, cf. Jn 1:17+.

d. Distinction between true and false prophet was an urgent problem (1 K 22; Jr 28). Two criteria are offered: loyalty to the religion of Israel, cf. Dt 13, and fulfilment of the prediction, 18:22. See Introduction to the Prophets.

observe all the commandments I enjoin on you today, loving Yahweh your God and always following his ways—then to those three cities you will add three more. In this way, innocent blood will not be shed in the land Yahweh your God gives 10
for your inheritance; otherwise there would be blood-guilt on you.

'But if it happens that a man has a feud with his fellow and lies in wait for 11
him and falls on him and wounds him fatally and he dies, and the man takes refuge in one of these cities, •the elders of his own town shall send to have him 12
19:21 seized and hand him over to the avenger of blood to die.[a] •You are to show him 13
21:9 no pity. You must banish the shedding of innocent blood from Israel, and then you will prosper.

Boundaries

27:17 Pr 15:25; 22:28 Ho 5:10 'You must not displace your neighbour's boundary mark, set by your forbears, 14
in the inheritance you receive in the land Yahweh is giving into your possession.

Witnesses

Lv 5:1 'A single witness cannot suffice to convict a man of a crime or offence of any 15
kind; whatever the misdemeanour, the evidence of two witnesses or three is required to sustain the charge.

17:2-7 Dn 13:62 'If a malicious witness appears against a man to accuse him of rebellion,[b] 16
both parties to this dispute before Yahweh must be brought before the priests 17
and judges then in office. •The judges must make a careful inquiry, and if it turns 18
out that the witness who accused his brother is a lying witness, •you must deal 19
1 M 9:73 with him as he would have dealt with his brother. You must banish this evil from your midst. •Others will hear of it and be afraid and never again do such an evil 20
19:13 thing among you. •You are to show no pity. 21

Ex 21:25+ **The 'lex talionis'**

'Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

War and combatants

Nb 31:1-2 Jos 1:9 20 'When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and 1
an army greater than your own, you must not be afraid of them; Yahweh your God is with you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. •When you 2
are about to join battle the priest is to come forward and address the people. He is to say to them, "Listen, Israel; now that you are about to join battle against 3
your enemies, do not be faint-hearted. Let there be no fear or trembling or alarm
Ex 33:14; 34:9-10 as you face them. •Yahweh your God goes with you to fight for you against your 4
enemies and to save you."

↗ 1 M 3:56 Then the scribes are to address the people in words like these: 5
28:30 "Is there any man here who has built a new house and not yet dedicated it? Let him go home lest he die in battle and another perform the dedication.

"Is there any man here who has planted a vineyard and not yet enjoyed its 6
fruit? Let him go home lest he die in battle and another enjoy its fruit.

25:4 Is there any man here who has betrothed a wife and not yet taken her? Let 7
him go home lest he die in battle and another take her."

'The scribes shall also address the people like this: 8

Jg 7:3 "Is there any man here who is fearful and faint of heart? Let him go home lest he make his fellows lose heart too."

'And when the scribes have finished speaking to the people, commanders will 9
be appointed to lead them.

7:1-5 **Captured towns**

'When you advance to the attack on any town, first offer it terms of peace. 10
If it accepts these and opens its gates to you, all the people to be found in it shall 11
do forced labour for you and be subject to you. •But if it refuses peace and offers 12

13 resistance, you must lay siege to it. •Yahweh your God shall deliver it into your
14 power and you are to put all its menfolk to the sword. •But the women, the
children, the livestock and all that the town contains, all its spoil, you may take 1 K 9:21 Ws 12:6
for yourselves as booty. You will devour the spoil of your enemies which Yahweh
your God has delivered to you.
15 'That is how you will treat the far-distant towns not belonging to the nations
16 near you. •But as regards the towns of those peoples which Yahweh your God 1 K 9:21
gives you as your own inheritance, you must not spare the life of any living thing.
17 Instead, you must lay them under ban, the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites,
18 Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, as Yahweh your God commanded, •so that they
may not teach you to practise all the detestable practices they have in honour
of their gods so and cause you to sin against Yahweh your God.
19 'If, when attacking a town, you have to besiege it for a long time before you
capture it, you must not destroy its trees by taking an axe to them: eat their
fruit but do not cut them down. Is the tree in the fields human that you should
20 besiege it too? •Any trees, however, which you know are not fruit trees, you
may mutilate and cut down and use to build siege-works against the hostile town
until it falls.

The unidentified murderer

1 21 'In the land Yahweh is giving you as your possession, if a murdered man Nb 19:18
is discovered lying in open country and it is not known who killed him,
2 your elders and scribes[a] must go and measure the distance between the victim and
3 the surrounding towns, •and establish which town is nearest the victim. Then
the elders of that town are to take a heifer that has not yet been put to work or Nb 19:2 1 S 6:7
4 used as a draught animal under the yoke. •And the elders of that town must
bring the heifer down to a watercourse that is never dry at a spot that has been
neither ploughed nor sown, and there by the watercourse they must break the
5 heifer's neck. •And the priests, the sons of Levi, shall then come forward, for
these are the men Yahweh your God has chosen to do him service and to bless 17:8-12
in the name of Yahweh, and it is their business to settle all cases of dispute or of
6 violence. •All the elders of the town nearest the murdered man shall then wash Ps 26:6
7 their hands in the watercourse, over the slaughtered heifer. •They are to pro-
nounce these words, "Our hands did not shed this blood and our eyes saw
8 nothing. •Cover[b] your people Israel whom you have redeemed, Yahweh, and let
no innocent blood be shed among your people Israel." So they will be covered
9 against blood-vengeance. •You must banish all shedding of innocent blood from 19:13
among you if you mean to do what is right in the eyes of Yahweh.

C. ON MARRIAGE

Women taken in war

10 'When you go to war against your enemies and Yahweh your God delivers
11 them into your power and you take prisoners, •if you see a beautiful woman
12 among the prisoners and find her desirable, you may make her your wife •and
13 bring her to your home. She is to shave her head and cut her nails[c] •and take off 2 S 19:25
her prisoner's garb; she is to stay inside your house and must mourn her father
and mother for a full month. Then you may go to her and be a husband to her,
14 and she shall be your wife. •Should she cease to please you, you will let her go

19 a. Thus the element of intention finds a place in the penal code of Yahwism.
b. I.e. against Yahweh. It is a question now of religious offence.

21 a. 'scribes' Sam.
b. 'Cover' in the sense of 'covering a fault'. The word later acquired a technical sense for atonement and its ritual, Ex 25:17+. The offence is covered up and there is no longer need for punishment.
c. Mourning rites.

where she wishes, not selling her for money: you are not to make any profit out of her, since you have had the use of her.

Birthright

Gn29:30-31 1 S 1:2,8 'If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and the loved one 15
and the unloved both bear him children, and if the first-born son is of the unloved
wife, •then when the man comes to bequeath his goods to his sons, he may not 16
treat the son of the wife whom he loves as the first-born at the expense of the
son of the wife he does not love, the true first-born. •He must acknowledge as 17
Gn25:31 first-born the son of the wife he does not love and give to him a double share
of his estate, for this son is the first-fruit of his strength, and the right of the
first-born is his.

The rebellious son

Pr19:18; 23:22; 30:17 'If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not listen to the voice 18
of his father or the voice of his mother, and even when they punish him still will
not pay attention to them, •his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring 19
him out to the elders of the town at the gate of that place. •And they shall 20
say to the elders of his town, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and will
not listen to us; he is a wastrel and a drunkard". •Then all his fellow citizens 21
shall stone him to death. You must banish this evil from your midst. All Israel
will hear of it and be afraid.

Various rulings

2 S 4:12 'If a man guilty of a capital offence is put to death and you hang him on a tree, 22
Jn 19:31 his body must not remain on the tree overnight; you must bury him the same 23
Jos 8:29 Ezk39:16 day, for one who has been hanged is accursed of God, and you must not defile the
✗ Ga3:13 land that Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance.

‖Ex23:4-5 Mt 7:12 22 'If you see your brother's ox or one of his sheep straying there must be no 1
evasion: you must take them back to your brother. •And if he is not close 2
at hand or you do not know who he is, you must take them home with you and
keep them by you until your brother comes for them; you will then return them
to him.

'You are to do the same with his donkey, the same with his cloak, the same 3
with anything your brother loses and that you find; there must be no evasion.[a]

'You must not make off when you see your brother's ox or donkey fall on the 4
road, but must help your brother to put it on its feet again.

'A woman must not wear men's clothes nor a man put on women's dress;[b] 5
anyone who does this is detestable to Yahweh your God.

'If, when out walking, you come across a bird's nest, in a tree or on the ground, 6
with chicks or eggs and the mother bird sitting on the chicks or the eggs, you
must not take the mother who is brooding the chicks. •Let the mother go; the 7
young you may take for yourself. So shall you prosper and have a long life.

'When you build a new house you are to give your roof a parapet; then your 8
house will not incur blood-vengeance through anyone falling from it.

'You must not sow any other seed in your vineyard lest the whole of its produce 9
become consecrated, both the crop you have sown and the produce of your
vineyard.[c]

Lv 19:19 'You must not plough with ox and donkey together. 10

'You must not wear clothing woven part of wool, part of linen.[d] 11

Nb15:37+ 'You are to make tassels for the four corners of the cloak in which you wrap 12
yourself.

A young wife's reputation

'If a man marries a wife, and sleeps with her and then turns against her, 13
and taxes her with misconduct and publicly defames her by saying, "I married 14

this woman and when I slept with her I did not find the evidence of her virginity",
15 the girl's father and mother must take her and produce the evidence of her
16 virginity before the elders of the town at the gate. •The girl's father shall then
declare to the elders, "I gave this man my daughter for a wife and he has turned
17 against her, •and now he taxes her with misconduct: I found no evidence of
virginity in your daughter, he says. But the evidence of my daughter's virginity
18 is here." And they shall spread the cloth out before the elders of the town. •Then
19 the elders of the town shall take the man and flog him •and fine him one hundred
silver shekels for publicly defaming a virgin of Israel, and give this money to the
girl's father. She shall remain his wife and as long as he lives he may not repudiate
her.

20 'But if the accusation that the girl cannot show the evidence of virginity is 2 S 13:12 Ezk 23:45
21 substantiated, •they shall take her to the door of her father's house and her
fellow citizens shall stone her to death for having committed an infamy in
Israel by disgracing her father's House. You must banish this evil from your
midst.

Adultery and fornication

22 'If a man is caught sleeping with another man's wife, both must die, the man Lv 20:10 1 M 9:73 Jb 31:11 Dn 13:22
who has slept with her and the woman herself. You must banish this evil from
Israel.

23 'If a virgin is betrothed and a man meets her in the city and sleeps with her, Ex 22:15
24 you shall take them both out to the gate of the town and stone them to death;
the girl, because she did not cry for help in the town; the man, because he has
25 violated the wife of his fellow. You must banish this evil from your midst. •But
if the man has met the betrothed girl in the open country and has taken her by
26 force and lain with her, only the man who lay with her shall die; •you must do
nothing to the girl, for hers is no capital offence. The case is like that of a man
27 who attacks and kills his fellow; •for he came across her in the open country
and the betrothed girl could have cried out without anyone coming to her
rescue.

28 'If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed and seizes her and lies with
29 her and is caught in the act, •the man who has lain with her must give the girl's
father fifty silver shekels; she shall be his wife since he has violated her, and as Ezk 11:12
long as he lives he may not repudiate her.

1 30 23 'A man must not take his father's wife, and must not withdraw the skirt 27:20 Lv 18:8
of his father's cloak from her.[a]

Some who are excluded from public worship

2 1 'A man whose testicles have been crushed or whose male member has been Lv 21:17-23 Ne 13:23
3 2 cut off is not to be admitted to the assembly of Yahweh. •No bastard[b] is to be Is 56:3-5 Zc 9:6
4 3 admitted to the assembly of Yahweh. •No Ammonite or Moabite is to be admitted *Rt 1:16* Ne 13:1-13
to the assembly of Yahweh; not even their descendants to the tenth generation
5 4 may be admitted to the assembly of Yahweh, and this is for all time; •because Jdt 14:10 Lm 1:10
they did not come to meet you with bread and water when you were on your way Pr 26:2
out of Egypt, and because they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Nb 22:24
6 5 of the Two Rivers to curse you. •But Yahweh your God refused to listen to
Balaam, and Yahweh your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because

22 a. The rule is ancient, Ex 23:4f, but Dt formulates it with characteristic emphasis on brotherly love.
b. Allusion to immoral practices in Canaanite religions.
c. Whatever is planted in the same soil as the vine falls under the same religious interdict; in any case, the soil that suits one does not suit the other.
d. This and the preceding are apparently a remnant of primitive taboos.

23 a. 'To spread the fold (of the cloak)' over a woman signifies marriage, Rt 3:9; Ezk 16:8. 'To withdraw the fold' signifies the opposite, namely, violation of a husband's rights.
b. Obscure term. It seems to refer to the fruit of intermarriage between Hebrews and Philistines. The Ammonites and Moabites are also related to the Israelites, Gn 19:30f.

Yahweh your God loved you. •Never, as long as you live, shall you seek their 7/6
welfare or their prosperity.

'You are not to regard the Edomite[c] as detestable, for he is your brother; nor 8/7
the Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land. •The third generation of 9/8
children born to these may be admitted to the assembly of Yahweh.

Nb 5:1-4 **The camp and legal purity**

'When you are in camp, at war with your enemies, you must keep clear of all 10/9
Lv15:16-17 evil. •If any man among you is unclean by reason of a nocturnal emission, he 11/10
must go out of the camp and not come into it again; •towards evening he must 12/11
wash himself, and he may return to the camp at sunset.

'You must have a latrine outside the camp, and go out to this; •and you 13.14/12,13
must have a mattock among your equipment, and with this mattock, when you
go outside to ease yourself, you must dig a hole and cover your excrement. •For 15/14
Yahweh your God goes about within your camp to guard you and to deliver
your enemies to you. Your camp must therefore be a holy place; Yahweh must
not see anything improper among you or he would turn away from you.

D. ON PROTECTING THE WEAK

Protection of the Israelite

'You must not allow a master to imprison a slave who has escaped from him 16/15
and come to you. •He shall live with you, among you, wherever he pleases in any 17/16
one of your towns he chooses; you are not to molest him.

1K14:23; 15:12 Is 57:7 Jr 2:20 Ho 4:14 Am 2:7 'There must be no sacred prostitute among the daughters of Israel, and no 18/17
sacred prostitute among the sons of Israel. •You must not bring to the house 19/18
of Yahweh your God the wages of a prostitute or the earnings of a dog,[d] whatever
vow you may have made, for both are detestable to Yahweh your God.

15:6 Ex 22:24 Lv25:35-38 'You must not lend on interest to your brother, whether the loan be of money 20/19
or food or anything else that may earn interest. •You may demand interest on 21/20
a loan of a foreigner, but you must not demand interest from your brother; so
that Yahweh your God may bless you in all your giving in the land you are to
enter and make your own.

Nb 30:3 Pr 20:25 Qo 5:3-4 Si 18:22 'If you make a vow to Yahweh your God, you must not be lazy in keeping it; 22/21
be sure that Yahweh your God requires it, and to withold it would be a sin.
But if you had refrained from making a vow, there would be no sin for you. 23/22
Whatever passes your lips you must keep to, and the vow that you have freely 24/23
made with your own mouth to Yahweh your God must be fulfilled.

'If you go through your neighbour's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, 25/24
as many as you wish, but you must not put any in your basket. •If you go through 26/25
↗ Mt12:1p your neighbour's standing corn, you may pick the ears with your hand, but
you must not put a sickle into your neighbour's corn.

Si 42:9 Is 50:1 Jr 3:1,8 **Divorce**

24 'Supposing a man has taken a wife and consummated the marriage; but 1
she has not pleased him and he has found some impropriety of which to
↗ Mt 19:7+ accuse her; so he has made out a writ of divorce for her and handed it to her
and then dismissed her from his house; •she leaves his home and goes away to 2
become the wife of another man. •If this other man takes a dislike to her and 3
makes out a writ of divorce for her and hands it to her and dismisses her from his
house (or if this other man who took her as his wife happens to die), •her first 4
husband, who has repudiated her, may not take her back as his wife now that
she has been defiled in this way. For that is detestable in the sight of Yahweh,
and you must not bring guilt on the land that Yahweh your God gives for your
inheritance.

More protective measures

5 'If a man is newly married, he shall not join the army nor is he to be pestered at home; he shall be left at home free of all obligations for one year to bring joy to the wife he has taken. 20:7 Jl 2:16

6 'No man may take a mill or a millstone in pledge; that would be to take life itself in pledge.

7 'If anyone is found kidnapping one of his brothers, one of the sons of Israel, whether he makes him his slave or sells him, that thief must die. You must banish this evil from your midst. Ex 21:16 Lv 19:11

8 'In a case of leprosy, take care you faithfully observe and follow exactly all that the levitical priests direct you to do. You are to keep and observe all that I have 9 commanded them. •Remember what Yahweh your God did to Miriam when you were on your way out of Egypt. Lv 13-14 Nb12:10-15

10 'If you are making your fellow a loan on pledge, you are not to go into his 11 house and seize the pledge, whatever it may be. •You must stay outside, and the 12 man to whom you are making the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. •And if the man is poor, you are not to go to bed with his pledge in your possession;[a] ‖Ex 22: 25-26
13 you must return it to him at sunset so that he can sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it will be a good action on your part in the sight of Yahweh your God. Jb 22:6;24:6 Am 2:8 Mi 2:8

14 'You are not to exploit the hired servant who is poor and destitute, whether 15 he is one of your brothers or a stranger who lives in your towns. •You must pay him his wage each day, not allowing the sun to set before you do, for he is poor and is anxious for it; otherwise he may appeal to Yahweh against you, and it would be a sin for you. Lv 19:13 Si 7:20; 34:23 Jr 22:13 Ml 3:5 ↗Jm 5:4 *Tb 4:14* Jr 22:13

16 'Fathers may not be put to death for their sons, nor sons for fathers. Each is to be put to death for his own sin.[b] Gn18:24+ Dt 7:10 ↗2K14:6 Jr 31:29f Ezk 14: 12+; 18:4,20 *27:19*

17 'You must not pervert justice in dealing with a stranger or an orphan, nor 18 take a widow's garment in pledge. •Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that Yahweh your God redeemed you from there. That is why I lay this charge on you. Ex22:21f Jb 24:4 Ps 94:6

19 'When reaping the harvest in your field, if you have overlooked a sheaf in that field, do not go back for it. Leave it for the stranger, the orphan and the widow, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all your undertakings. Ex 23:11 Lv19:9f; 23:22 Dt26:12-13 Rt 2:2

20 'When you beat your olive trees you must not go over the branches twice. Let anything left be for the stranger, the orphan and the widow.

21 'When you harvest your vineyard you must not pick it over a second time. Let anything left be for the stranger, the orphan and the widow.

22 'Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. That is why I lay this charge on you.

1 25 'If men have any dispute they must go to court for the judges to decide between them; these must declare the one who is right to be in the right,
2 the one who is wrong to be in the wrong. •If the one who is in the wrong deserves a flogging, the judge shall make him lie down and have him flogged in his presence
3 with the number of strokes proportionate to his offence. •He may impose forty strokes but no more, lest the flogging be too severe and your brother be degraded in your eyes. ↗2Co11:24

4 'You must not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the corn. ↗1Co9:9 ↗1Tm5:18

c. Expressing a friendliness not witnessed elsewhere in the Bible: there is no sign of it after the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, supported by the Edomites, cf. Ob and Ps 137:7.

d. Sacred prostitution was a feature of Canaanite cult, cf. Baal of Peor, Nb 25. and had affected Israel, 1 K 14:24; 22:47; 2 K 23:7; Ho 4:14. 'Dog' is an opprobrious term for a male prostitute.

24 a. Lit. 'you are not to go to sleep in his pledge' because originally the 'pledge' was a mantle, Ex 22:25f.

b. A text of great importance for the doctrine of individual responsibility.

Gn 38
Rt1:11;4
Mt 22:24p

The levirate[a] law

'If brothers live together and one of them dies childless, the dead man's wife must not marry a stranger outside the family. Her husband's brother must come to her and, exercising his levirate, make her his wife, •and the first son she bears shall assume the dead brother's name; and so his name will not be blotted out in Israel. •But if the man declines to take his brother's wife, she must go to the elders at the gate and say, "I have no levir willing to perpetuate the name of his brother in Israel; he declines to exercise his levirate in my favour". •The elders of the town shall summon the man and talk to him. If he appears before them, and shall say, "I refuse to take her", •then she to whom he owes levirate shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take the sandal off his foot, spit in his face, and pronounce the following words, "This is what we do to the man who does not restore his brother's house", •and the man shall be surnamed in Israel, House-of-the-Unshod.[b]

Modesty in brawls

'When two men are fighting together, if the wife of one intervenes to protect her husband from the other's blows by putting out her hand and seizing the other by the private parts, •you shall cut her hand off and show no pity.

Appendices

Lv19:11;
35-36
Pr 11:1;
20:10
Ho 12:8
Am 8:5
Mi6:10-11

'You are not to keep two different weights in your bag, one heavy, one light. You are not to keep two different measures in your house, one large, one small. You must keep one weight, full and accurate, so that you may have a long life in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you. •For anyone who does things of his kind and acts dishonestly is detestable to Yahweh your God.

Ex17:8-16
1 S 15:2
Dn 3:55
2 S 7:1

'Remember how Amalek treated you when you were on your way out of Egypt. •He met you on your way and, after you had gone by, he fell on you from the rear and cut off the stragglers; when you were faint and weary he had no fear of God. •When Yahweh your God has granted you peace from all the enemies surrounding you in the land Yahweh your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you are to blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget.

E. RITUAL PRESCRIPTIONS

First-fruits[a]

Ex22:28;
23:19
Ne 10:36
Pr 3:9
Si 35:7

26 'When you come to the land Yahweh your God is giving you for an inheritance, when you have taken possession of it and are living in it, •you must set aside the first-fruits of all the produce of the soil raised by you in the land Yahweh is giving you. You must put them in a pannier and go to the place where Yahweh your God chooses to give his name a home. •You must go to the priest then in office and say to him, "Today I declare to Yahweh my God that I have come to the land Yahweh swore to our fathers he would give us".

'The priest shall then take the pannier from your hand and lay it before the altar of Yahweh your God. •Then, in the sight of Yahweh your God, you must make this pronouncement:[b]

"My father was a wandering Aramaean. He went down into Egypt to find
10:22
Ps105:12
refuge there, few in numbers; but there he became a nation, great, mighty, and strong. •The Egyptians ill-treated us, they gave us no peace and inflicted harsh slavery on us. •But we called on Yahweh the God of our fathers. Yahweh heard our voice and saw our misery, our toil and our oppression; •and Yahweh brought
4:34
us out of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great terror, and with signs and wonders. •He brought us here and gave us this land, a land where

10 milk and honey flow. •Here then I bring the first-fruits of the produce of the soil
that you, Yahweh, have given me".
'You must then lay them before Yahweh your God, and bow down in the sight
11 of Yahweh your God. •Then you are to feast on all the good things Yahweh has
given you, you and your household, and with you the Levite and the stranger
who lives among you.

The third-year tithe 14:28

12 'In the third year, the tithing year, when you have finished reckoning the tithe
of all your produce and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and Ex12:48+; 23:11
13 the widow, and they have eaten it in your towns and had their fill, •you are to Si35:9-10
say in the sight of Yahweh your God:
"I have cleared my house of all that was consecrated. Yes, I have given it to
the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow, in accordance with all the 24:19
commandments you laid on me, not going beyond your commandments, not
14 forgetting them. •I have not eaten any bread of mourning; I have consumed Tb 4:17 Ps106:28
nothing that was unclean; I have offered nothing to the dead.[c] I have obeyed Ho 9:4
15 the voice of Yahweh my God and I have done all as you commanded me. •Look
down from the dwelling place of your holiness, from heaven, and bless your people 1 K 8:43 Ps 11:4
Israel and the soil you have given us as you swore to our fathers, a land where Ba 2:16
milk and honey flow".

III. CONCLUDING DISCOURSE

A. END OF THE SECOND DISCOURSE

Israel, the people of Yahweh

16 'Yahweh your God today commands you to observe these laws and customs;
you must keep and observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.
17 'You have today made this declaration[d] about Yahweh: that he will be your 2 S 7:24
God, but only if you follow his ways, keep his statutes, his commandments, his
18 ordinances, and listen to his voice. •And Yahweh has today made this declar-
ation about you: that you will be his very own people as he promised you, but
19 only if you keep all his commandments; •then for praise and renown and honour
he will set you high above all the nations he has made, and you will be a people
consecrated to Yahweh, as he promised.'

The writing of the Law

1 27 Moses and the elders of Israel gave the people this command: 'Keep all the 11:26-28
2 commandments I enjoin on you today.[a] •After you have crossed the Jordan
into the land Yahweh your God is giving you, you are to set up tall stones and
3 coat them with lime •and write on them all the words of this Law, the moment Jos 8:32

25 a. From the Latin *levir*, brother-in-law, translating the Hebrew *yabam*. A widow who has no son is taken to wife by her brother-in-law; the eldest son of this marriage is reckoned the dead husband's, whose heir he becomes. This law (found also in Assyrian and Hittite legislation) had for its purpose the perpetuation of the family name and the stability of the family property. The story of Tamar, Gn 38, emphasises the first, the story of Ruth the second; in Rt 4 the privileges and duties of the *levir* are extended to the 'avenger', see Nb 35:19+. According to Dt the obligation applies only to brothers living together, and is optional. The custom still obtained in later Judaism despite opposition from certain quarters, cf. Mt 22:23f.

b. This ritual signifies that the man has declined his obligation, cf. Rt 4:8+. From being joint owner with his brother he now becomes sole owner of the house and property but for refusing to marry the widow he must bear this contemptuous epithet.

26 a. The first-born of man and beast is God's, Ex 13:11+; similarly the first-fruits of the soil are consecrated to him, Ex 22:28; 23:19; 34:26; Lv 2:12,14; 23:10-17; Dt 18:4. According to Nb 18:12 they revert to the priests, cf. Ezk 44:30.

b. This profession of faith reminds Israel of the divine choice, of deliverance from Egypt and of the gift of the Promised Land, see 7:6+.

c. The reference is perhaps to idolatrous rites rather than to the cult of the dead, cf. 14:1+.

d. The covenant is represented here as a solemn contract with the Deuteronomic Code for content.

27 a. The verse interrupts the discourse (resumed in v. 2); it may have been written in after the insertion here of an older section (vv. 4-8 and 11-26) naming Ebal as the place of worship, a section which, it seems, was followed by ch. 31. Moses' discourse is resumed in v. 9.

you cross to enter the land Yahweh your God is giving you, a land where milk and honey flow, as Yahweh the God of your fathers promised you.

'And when you have crossed the Jordan, you are to set up these stones on 4
Jos8:30-31 Mount Ebal,[b] as today I command you, and you are to coat them with lime.
Jos 8:31 There you must build Yahweh your God an altar of stones that no iron tool has 5
Ex20:24f worked. •You must build the altar to Yahweh your God of undressed stone, 6
12:11 and on this altar you will offer holocausts to Yahweh your God, •and immolate 7
communion sacrifices and eat them there, rejoicing in the sight of Yahweh your
Jos 8:32 God. •On these stones you must write all the words of this Law; cut them 8
carefully.'

Then Moses and the levitical priests said to all Israel: 9

'Be silent, Israel, and listen. Today you have become a people for Yahweh your God. •You must listen to the voice of Yahweh your God and observe the 10
commandments and laws I enjoin on you today.'

Jos8:33-35 And the same day Moses gave the people this order: •'When you have crossed 11 12
Lk6:20-26 the Jordan, the following tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people:
Simeon and Levi, Judah and Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. •And the following 13
tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad and Asher, Zebulun,
Dan and Naphtali. •The Levites shall then speak, and proclaim loudly to all the 14
Israelites:

Ex20:4+ Ws 14:8 "A curse on the man who carves or casts an idol, a thing detestable to Yahweh, 15
the work of a craftsman's hands, and sets it up in secret."[c] And all the people
shall answer saying: Amen.

Ex21:17+ Ezk 22:7 "A curse on him who treats his father or mother dishonourably." And all the 16
people shall say: Amen.

19:14 Jb 24:2 Ho 5:10 "A curse on him who displaces his neighbour's boundary mark." And all the 17
people shall say: Amen.

Lv 19:14 "A curse on him who leads a blind man astray on the road." And all the people 18
shall say: Amen.

24:17 Ex 22:20f+ "A curse on him who tampers with the rights of the stranger, the orphan and 19
the widow." And all the people shall say: Amen.

23:1 Lv 18:8 Am 2:7 "A curse on him who sleeps with his father's wife and withdraws the skirt of 20
his father's cloak from her." And all the people shall say: Amen.

Ex22:18+ Lv 18:23 "A curse on him who lies with any kind of animal." And all the people shall 21
say: Amen.

Lv 18:9 "A curse on him who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his 22
mother." And all the people shall say: Amen.

Lv18:7,8 "A curse on him who sleeps with his mother-in-law." And all the people shall 23
say: Amen.

Ex20:13+ "A curse on him who strikes down his neighbour in secret." And all the 24
people shall say: Amen.

Ex23:8+ Pr 17:23 "A curse on him who accepts a bribe to take an innocent life." And all the 25
people shall say: Amen.

Jr 11:3 ↗ Ga3:10 "A curse on him who does not maintain the words of the Law by observing 26
them." And all the people shall say: Amen.

Jos 23:15 **Promised blessings**[a]

11:26-28 Lv26:3-13 Is 1:19 Zc 6:15 28 'But if you obey the voice of Yahweh your God faithfully, keeping and 1
observing all those commandments of his that I enjoin on you today,
Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. •All the 2
Gn49:25-26 Dt11:10-15 blessings that follow shall come up with you and overtake you[b] if only you obey
the voice of Yahweh your God.

'You will be blessed in the town and blessed in the country. •Blessed will be 3 4
Jb 5:25 be the fruit of your body, the produce of your soil, the issue of your livestock,
the increase of your cattle, the young of your flock. •Blessed will be your pannier 5
Ps 121:8 and your bread bin. •Blessed will you be coming in, and blessed going out. 6

7 The enemies that rise against you Yahweh will conquer for your sake; they will Lv 26:7
8 come at you by one way and flee before you by seven. •Yahweh will summon
a blessing for you in your barns and in all your undertakings, and will bless you Ps 133:3
in the land that Yahweh is giving you.
9 'Yahweh will make of you a people consecrated to himself as he has sworn
to you, if you keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and follow his ways.
10 All the peoples of the earth will see that you bear the name of Yahweh and will Nb 6:27 Jr 14:9
11 go in fear of you. •Yahweh will give you great store of good things, the fruit of *Jb 5:25* Ps 127:3
your body, the fruit of your cattle and the produce of your soil, in the land he
12 swore to your fathers he would give you. •Yahweh will open the heavens to you, 11:14
his rich treasure house, to give you seasonable rain for your land and to bless all
the work of your hands. You will make many nations your subjects, yet you will
13 be subject to none. •Yahweh will put you at the head, not at the tail; you will
always be on top and never underneath, if you obey the commandments of
14 Yahweh your God that I enjoin on you today, keeping and observing them, •not
swerving to right or left from any of the works I enjoin on you today by following Pr 4:27
any other gods and serving them.

Curses

15 'But if you do not obey the voice of Yahweh your God nor keep and observe 32:22f Lv26:14-39
all those commandments and statutes of his that I enjoin on you today, then all 1 K 9:6 Is 1:20
the curses that follow shall come up with you and overtake you. Jr 26:4-6 Lm 2:17
16 17 'You will be accursed in the town and accursed in the country. •Accursed will Ba 1:20
18 be your pannier and your bread bin. •Accursed will be the fruit of your body, Dn 3:31; 9:10,11 *Ho 9:11*
the produce of your soil, the increase of your cattle, the young of your flock.
19 Accursed will you be coming in, and accursed going out.
20 'Yahweh will send on you curses, frustration, imprecation in return for all
your offerings, until you are destroyed and speedily perish for your perverse
21 behaviour, for and deserting me. •Yahweh will infect you with the plague 1 K 8:37
until it has consumed you on the land which you are entering to make your own.
22 Yahweh will strike you down with consumption, fever, inflammation, burning Am 4:9
23 fever, drought, blight, mildew, and these will pursue you to your ruin. •The
24 heavens above you will be brass, the earth beneath you iron. •Yahweh will turn 1 K 8:35
the rain on your land to dust and sand; it will fall on you from the heavens until
25 you perish. •Yahweh will have you defeated in front of your enemies; you will 1 K 8:33 2 Ch 29:8
come at them by one way and flee before them by seven; and you will become a Ps 44:10 Lm 1:5
26 thing of horror for all the kingdoms of the earth. •Your carcase will be carrion Ezk 22:12
for all the birds of heaven and all the beasts of the earth, with no one to scare
them away.
27 'Yahweh will strike you down with Egyptian boils, with swellings in the groin,
28 with scurvy and the itch for which you will find no cure. •Yahweh will strike you
29 down with madness, blindness, distraction of mind, •until you grope your way Is 59:10
at noontide like a blind man groping in the dark, and your steps will lead you
nowhere.
'You will never be anything but exploited and plundered continually, and no
30 one will come to your help. •Betroth a wife, another man will have her; build a 20:5-7 Is 62:8,9; 65:21
house, you will not live in it; plant a vineyard, you will not gather its first-fruits. Am 5:11
31 Your ox will be killed before your eyes and you will eat none of it; your donkey Mi 2:4; 6:15 *Jg 6:4*
will be carried off in your presence and not be restored to you; your sheep will be
32 given to your enemies, and no one will come to your help. •Your sons and
daughters will be handed over to another people, and every day you will wear
33 your eyes out watching eagerly for them, while your hands are powerless. •A

b. Sam. 'on Mount Gerizim'.
c. The curses are concerned with secret offences which only the all-seeing justice of God can punish.
28 a. The blessings and curses that follow are peculiar to Deuteronomy and have several points of contact with the teaching of the prophets.
b. Note the tendency to speak of the blessings, and of the curses, v. 15, as persons.

Am 5:11 nation you do not know will eat the fruit of your soil and of your labour. You will never be anything but exploited and crushed continually. •You will be driven 34
mad by the sights your eyes will see. •Yahweh will strike you down with foul 35
boils on knee and leg, for which you will find no cure, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

2K 17:4-6; 25:7,11 Jr 9:15 Lm 2:9 Lk 19:41-44 *Lm 3:14,45* Ba 2:4 'Yahweh will send you and the king you set over you, to a nation that 36
neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you will serve other gods
of wood and of stone. •You will become a thing of horror, a proverb, and a 37
byword to all the peoples among whom Yahweh takes you.

1 K 8:37 Jl 1:4 Am 7:1 *Jl 1:5* 'You will cast seed in plenty on the fields but harvest little, for the locust will 38
devour it. •You will plant and till your vineyards but not drink wine or gather 39
grapes, for the grub will eat them up. •You will grow olive trees throughout your 40
territory but not anoint yourself with oil, for your olive trees will be cut down.
You will father sons and daughters but they will not be yours, for they will go 41
1 K 8:37 into captivity. •All your trees and all the produce of your soil will become the 42
prey of insects.

'The stranger living among you will rise higher and higher at your expense, 43
and you yourselves sink lower and lower. •He will make you his chattel, you 44
will not make him yours; he it is who will be at the head, and you at the tail.

1 K 8:33 'All these curses will come up with you, will pursue you and overtake you 45
until you perish for not obeying the voice of Yahweh your God by keeping those
commandments and laws of his that he enjoined on you. •They will be a sign 46
and a wonder over you and your descendants for ever.

Of war and exile to come

Jr 5:19 'For failing to serve Yahweh your God in the joy and happiness that come 47
from an abundance of all things, •you will submit to the enemies that Yahweh 48
Lm 28:48 will send against you, in hunger, thirst, nakedness, utter destitution. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until you perish.

Is 5:26; 33:19 Jr 5:15 Ba 4:15 'Yahweh will raise against you a far-off nation from the ends of the earth, 49
like an eagle taking wing. This will be a nation whose language you do not
understand, •a nation grim of face, with neither respect for the old, nor pity for 50
1 K 8:37 Lm 1:11 the young. •They will eat the offspring of your cattle and the produce of your 51
soil until you perish, leaving you neither corn nor wine nor oil nor increase of
Mt 24 your cattle nor young of your flock, until they make an end of you. •They will 52
Lm 2:2 besiege you in all your towns until your loftiest and most strongly fortified walls collapse, the walls on which you relied within your frontiers. They will besiege

Lv 26:29 2 K 6:28 Jr 19:9 Lm 2:20; 4:10 Ba 2:3 Ezk 5:10 you in all the towns that Yahweh gives you. •During the siege and in the distress 53
to which your enemies will reduce you, you will eat the fruit of your body, the
flesh of those sons and daughters of yours whom Yahweh has given you. •The 54
tenderest and most fastidious among you will glower at his brother, even at the
wife he cherishes and at the children that are left to him, •grudging them a share 55
in the flesh of those children of his that he is eating, for during the siege and in
the distress to which your enemies will reduce you in all your towns, there will
be nothing left to him. •The tenderest and most fastidious woman among you, 56
so tender, so fastidious that she has never ventured to set the sole of her foot to
the ground, will glower at the husband she cherishes, even at her son and her
daughter, •and hide from them the afterbirth of her womb and the child she bears 57
to eat them, so utter will be the destitution during the siege and in the distress to
which your enemies will reduce you in all your towns.

'If you do not keep and observe all the words of this Law that are written in 58
this book, in the fear of this name of glory and awe: Yahweh your God, •Yahweh 59
will strike you down with monstrous plagues, you and your descendants: with
plagues grievous and lasting, diseases pernicious and enduring. •Once more he 60
will bring on you the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will infect you.
Further, Yahweh will bring on you every sickness, every plague, not mentioned 61

62 in the Book of this Law, until you perish. •There will be only a handful of you Dn 3:3
left, you who were as many as the stars of heaven.
63 'For not obeying the voice of Yahweh your God, •just as Yahweh took delight 1 K 8:47
in giving you prosperity and increase, so now he will take delight in bringing you Pr 1:26
ruin and destruction. You will be torn from the land which you are entering to Dn 3:31
64 make your own. •Yahweh will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the Ps44:11-12
earth to the other; there you will serve other gods of wood and of stone that Jr 9:15
65 neither you nor your fathers have known. •Among these nations there will be Dn 9:7
no repose for you, no rest for the sole of your foot; Yahweh will give you a Ho 9:17
66 quaking heart, weary eyes, halting breath. •Your life from the outset will be Si 40:5
67 a burden to you; night and day you will go in fear, uncertain of your life. •In Ba 2:18
the morning you will say, "How I wish it were evening!", and in the evening, Jb 7:4
"How I wish it were morning!", such terror will grip your heart, such sights your Ps14:5+
68 eyes will see. •Yahweh will take you back to Egypt by sea and by land, though Ho 8:13
I had promised you: You will not see it again. And there you will want to sell
yourselves to your enemies as serving men and women, but no one will buy you.'[c]

Conclusion

69 1 These are the words of the covenant which Yahweh ordered Moses to make
with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant he had
made with them at Horeb.[d]

B. THE THIRD AND LAST DISCOURSE

The exodus and the covenant recalled

1 2 29 Moses called the whole of Israel together and said to them:
'You have seen all that Yahweh did before your eyes in the land of Egypt,
2 3 to Pharaoh, to his servants and to his whole land, •the great ordeals your own Ex 19:4
3 4 eyes witnessed, the signs and those great wonders. •But until today Yahweh has 4:29; 30:1.14
given you no heart to understand, no eyes to see, no ears to hear.[a] Is 29:10
Jr 5:20
4 5 'For forty years I led you in the wilderness; the clothes on your back did not Rm11:8
5 6 wear out and your sandals did not wear off your feet. •You had no bread to eat, 8:4
you drank no wine, no strong drink, learning thus that I, Yahweh, am your God. 2:7
6 7 When you reached this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan 2:30-35; 3:12-16
7 8 came out against us to do battle, but we defeated them. •We conquered their
land and gave it as an inheritance to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh.
8 9 'Keep the words of this covenant and observe them and you will thrive in all 32:28
9 10 you do. •All of you stand here today in the presence of Yahweh your God: your Jos 1:8
10 11 heads of tribes, your elders, your scribes, all the men of Israel, •with your children 2 K 2:3
and your wives (and the stranger too who is in your camp, whether he cuts wood Jos 9:21
11 12 or draws water for you),[b] •and you are about to enter into the covenant of
Yahweh your God, a covenant ratified with dire sanctions, which he has made
12 13 with you today, •and by which, today, he makes a nation of you and he himself
becomes a God to you, as he has promised and as he has sworn to your fathers
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The covenant and generations to come

13 14 'Not with you alone do I make this covenant today and pronounce these
14 15 sanctions, •but with him also who is not here today, as well as with him who
stands with us here in the presence of Yahweh our God.

c. The threat of Egyptian plagues and of a second slavery recalls the favours commemorated in the introductory discourse: this balance suggests that the very power that saved may yet destroy.

d. Referring back to the whole of the second discourse (which begins in ch. 5 and includes the Deuteronomic Code). By this general conclusion the law that was received in Moab is related to the Decalogue of Horeb.

29 a. The keynote of the third discourse: God must prepare the 'heart' before man can understand his ways.

b. The lower orders, often of non-Israelite extraction, Jos 9:27.

'Yes, you know those among whom we lived in Egypt, those through whose 15
lands we journeyed, the nations through whom we have passed. •You have 16
seen their abominations and their idols, the wood, the stone, the silver and gold 17
they have in their countries.

'Let there be no man or woman among you, no clan or tribe, whose heart 17
turns away from Yahweh your God today to go and serve the gods of those 18
nations. Let there be no root among you bearing fruit that is poisonous and
bitter. •If, after hearing these sanctions, such a man should bless himself in his 18
heart and say, "I may follow the dictates of my own heart and still lack nothing; 19
Ws 1:10 much water drives away thirst",[c] •Yahweh will not pardon him. The wrath and 19
jealousy of Yahweh will blaze against such a man; every curse written in this 20
book will fall on him, and Yahweh will blot out his name from under heaven.
Yahweh will single him out from all the tribes of Israel to his destruction, in 20
accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in the Book of this Law. 21

'The future generation, your children who are to come after you, as also the 21
stranger from a distant country, will see the plagues of that land and the diseases 22
Jb 18:5 Ps107:34 Yahweh will inflict on it, and will exclaim, •"Sulphur, salt, scorched earth, the 22
whole land through! No one will sow, nothing grow, no grass spring ever again. 23
Gn19:25+ Like this, Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, Admah and Zeboiim, which
1 K 9:7f Jr 22:8f Yahweh overthrew in his anger and his wrath." •And all the nations will exclaim, 23
Jr 5:19 "Why has Yahweh treated this land like this? Why this great blaze of anger?" 24
Jr 16:11 And people will say, "Because they deserted the covenant of Yahweh, the God of 24
their fathers, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of the 25
land of Egypt; •because they went and served other gods and worshipped them, 25
gods they had not known, gods that were no part of their heritage from him, •for 26
this the anger of Yahweh has blazed against this land, bringing on it all the 27
curses written in this book. •In anger, in fury, in fierce wrath Yahweh has torn 27
them from their country and flung them into another land where they are today." 28

Lv26:40-45 **Return from exile and repentance**

Pr 25:2 'Things hidden belong to Yahweh our God but things revealed are ours and 28
our children's for all time, so that we may observe all the words of this Law. 29
1 K 8:47 Ne 1:8 **30** And when all these words come true for you, the blessing and the curse 1
4:29-31; 29:3 I have set before you, if you meditate on them in your heart wherever among
Tb 30:2 the nations Yahweh your God drives you, •if you return to Yahweh your God, 2
if you obey his voice with all your heart and soul in everything I enjoin on you
1 S 17:37 Tb 13:5 today, you and your children, •then Yahweh your God will bring back your 3
2 M 2:18 Jr 29:14; captives, he will have pity on you and gather you once again out of all the peoples
31:10 Ezk11:17 where Yahweh your God has scattered you. •Had you wandered to the ends of 4
Am 9:14 Mi 2:12 the heavens, Yahweh your God would gather you even from there, would come
Zc 8:7-8 there to reclaim you •and bring you back to the land your fathers possessed, so 5
Is 43:5-7 that you in your turn might make it your own, prospering there and increasing
even more than your fathers.

10:16 Jr 4:4+ 'Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descend- 6
Ezk11:19 ants, until you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and soul, and so
have life. •Yahweh your God will make all these curses recoil on your foes 7
and on your enemies who have persecuted you. •And once again you will obey 8
the voice of Yahweh your God and keep all those commandments of his that
Ex 23:26 Jr 32:41 I enjoin on you today. •Yahweh your God will give you great prosperity in all 9
your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, the fruit of your cattle and in the
produce of your soil. For once again Yahweh will take delight in your prosperity
as he took delight in the prosperity of your fathers, •if only you obey the voice 10
of Yahweh your God, keeping those commandments and laws of his that are
written in the Book of this Law, and if you return to Yahweh your God with all
your heart and soul.

Jb 28 Si 51:26 'For this Law that I enjoin on you today is not beyond your strength or beyond 11

12 your reach.[a] •It is not in heaven, so that you need to wonder, "Who will go up Is 45:19
to heaven for us and bring it down to us, so that we may hear it and keep it?" ↗ Rm10:6-8
13 Nor is it beyond the seas, so that you need to wonder, "Who will cross the seas
14 for us and bring it back to us, so that we may hear it and keep it?" •No, the Word[b] 6:7 Jn1:14+
is very near to you, it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance. 29:3

The two ways

15 'See, today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster. •If you 11:26-28 Ps 1
16 obey the commandments of Yahweh your God[c] that I enjoin on you today, if Si15:16-17; 17:11 Jr 21:8 Rm6:21-23
you love Yahweh your God and follow his ways, if you keep his commandments, Ga 6:8
his laws, his customs, you will live and increase, and Yahweh your God will *Ne 9:29*
17 bless you in the land which you are entering to make your own. •But if your heart Pr8:34-35; 9:11
strays, if you refuse to listen, if you let yourself be drawn into worshipping other
18 gods and serving them, •I tell you today, you will most certainly perish; you will
19 not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. •I call
heaven and earth to witness against you today: I set before you life or death, 4:26; 31:28; 32:1
blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live,
20 in the love of Yahweh your God, obeying his voice, clinging to him; for in this
your life consists, and on this depends your long stay in the land which Yahweh Ps 133:3
swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he would give them.'

IV. THE LAST DAYS OF MOSES

Joshua and his mission

1/2 31 [a] Moses proceeded to address these words to the whole of Israel, •'I am
one hundred and twenty years old now, and can no longer come and go
3 as I will. Yahweh has said to me, "You shall not cross this Jordan". •It is Yahweh
your God who will cross it at your head to destroy these nations facing you 3:1-28
and dispossess them; and Joshua too shall cross at your head, as Yahweh has
4 said. •Yahweh will treat them as he treated Sihon and Og the Amorite kings Nb21:24-25
5 and their land, destroying them. •Yahweh will hand them over to you, and you
will deal with them in exact accordance with the commandments I have enjoined
6 on you. •Be strong, stand firm, have no fear of them, no terror, for Yahweh 1:29-30 Jos 1:9 1 K 8:57
your God is going with you; he will not fail you or desert you.'
7 Then Moses summoned Joshua and in the presence of all Israel said to him, Jos 1:6
'Be strong, stand firm; you are going with this people into the land Yahweh swore
to their fathers he would give them; you are to give it into their possession.
8 Yahweh himself will lead you; he will be with you; he will not fail you or desert
you. Have no fear, do not be disheartened by anything.'

The ritual reading of the Law 2 K 23:1f

9 Moses committed this Law to writing and gave it to the priests, the sons of
Levi, who carried the ark of Yahweh's covenant, and to all the elders of Israel.
10 And Moses gave them this command: 'At the end of every seven years, at the
11 time fixed for the year of remission, at the feast of Tabernacles, •when the whole

c. Taking the quotation marks from this clause, some translate 'so that moist soil and dry alike would be swept away'—a proverbial expression for total destruction; and the Greek reads 'so that the sinless may not be destroyed together with the sinners'.

30 a. A recurring lesson in the wisdom literature is that wisdom, the fount of joy, is inaccessible; cf. Jb 28 (but contrast Pr 8:1f). Nevertheless, God reveals it through the Law, Si 24:23-34; Ps 119.

b. The theology of the Word of God has its roots in this personification; it ripens in the wisdom books, cf. Pr 8:22+ and Ws 7:22+, and comes to maturity in the prologue of the fourth gospel, cf. Jn 1:1+. St Paul applies this text to 'the word of faith', Rm 10:6-8.

c. 'If you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God' Greek.

31 a. A composite chapter. It is probable that vv. 1-3a, 14a,15,23, are a part of the ancient documents used in ch. 27, that vv. 9-13,24-27 belong to the earlier edition of Dt which included the discourse containing the Code, and lastly that vv. 3b-8, 16-22, 28-30 were added by the editor who combined the two groups. In the second group the Law itself stands as witness against guilty Israel; in the final editorial addition it is the canticle of ch. 32 that thus witnesses.

of Israel comes to look on the face of Yahweh your God in the place he chooses, you must proclaim this Law in the hearing of all Israel. •Call the people together, 12
men, women, children, and the stranger who lives with you, for them to hear it and learn to fear Yahweh your God and keep and observe all the words of this Law. •Their children, who as yet do not know it, shall hear it and learn to fear 13
Yahweh your God for as long as you live in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.'

Yahweh's instructions

Yahweh said to Moses, 'And now the time draws near when you must die. 14
Ex25:22+ Summon Joshua and take your stand at the Tent of Meeting, that I may give him his orders.' And Moses and Joshua came and took their stand at the Tent of Meeting. •And Yahweh showed himself at the Tent in a pillar of cloud; the 15
pillar of cloud stood at the door of the Tent.
4:25-28 Yahweh said to Moses, 'And now you will soon be sleeping with your fathers. 16
Ws 14:12 Ezk 16:15 This people will start playing the harlot, following the alien gods of the land they are invading. They will desert me and break this covenant of mine that I have made with them. •On that day my anger shall blaze against them; I will forsake 17
32:20 Is 59:2 Mi 3:4 them and hide my face from them. A host of disasters and misfortunes will overtake them to devour them, and when that day comes they will say, "If such disasters overtake me, surely Yahweh my God cannot be with me?" •Yes 18
indeed, I shall hide my face that day for all the evil they have done by turning to other gods.

The song of witness

'Now write down this song which you must use; teach it to the sons of Israel, 19
put it into their mouths that it may be a witness on my behalf against the sons of Israel; •against Israel whom I am bringing into the land I swore to his fathers 20
I would give him, a land where milk and honey flow; against Israel who will eat
32:15 and take his fill and grow fat, then turn to other gods to serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. •When a host of disasters and misfortunes overtake 21
him, this song shall stand as witness against him, for his descendants must not forget it. Yes, even today, before I have brought him to the land I promised on oath, I know what plans he has in mind.' •So on that same day, Moses wrote 22
out this song and taught it to the sons of Israel.
Jos 1:9 He gave Joshua son of Nun this order: 'Be strong and stand firm, for you are 23
to bring the sons of Israel to the land I swore I would give them, and I myself will be with you.'

The Law placed beside the ark[b]

When Moses had finished writing in a book the words of this Law to the very 24
end, •he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of Yahweh's 25
covenant: •'Take this Book of the Law and put it beside the ark of the covenant 26
Jn 5:45; 12:47-48 of Yahweh your God. Let it lie there as a witness against you. •For I know how 27
9:13 Ps 78:8 defiant you are and how stubborn. If today while I am still alive and with you, you defy Yahweh, how much more will you defy him after my death!

Israel assembles to hear the song

'Gather round me all the elders of your tribes, and your scribes, so that I may 28
30:19 let them hear these words and call heaven and earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you are sure to act perversely; you will leave the 29
way I have marked out for you; in days to come disaster will fall on you for doing what is displeasing to Yahweh, provoking him by your behaviour.'
Then in the hearing of Israel's full assembly Moses spoke the words of this 30
song to the very end:

A. THE SONG OF MOSES[a]

1	32 'Listen, heavens, while I speak;	4:26; 30:19
	earth, hear the words that I am saying.	Ps 50:4; 78:1
2	May my teaching fall like the rain,	Is 1:2
	may my word drop down like the dew,	*Jb 29:23*
	like showers on fresh grass	Is 45:8; 55:10
	and light rain on the turf.	Ps 72:6
3	For I proclaim the name of Yahweh.	Ho 6:3
	Oh, tell the greatness of our God![b]	Jg 5:3
4	'He is the Rock, his work is perfect,	Gn1:31+
	for all his ways are Equity.	Ps18:31+; 145:17
	A God faithful, without unfairness,	Is 17:10; 26:4;44:8
	Uprightness itself and Justice.	Dn 4:34
5	They have acted perversely, those he begot without blemish,[c]	Ho14:10
	a deceitful and underhand brood.	Zp 3:5
6	Is this the return you make to Yahweh?	*Ps 78:8*
	O foolish, unwise people!	Is1:2;63:8
	Is not this your father, who gave you being,[d]	Ba 4:8
	who made you, by whom you subsist?	Ho11:1-4
7	Think back on the days of old,	*Ps119:73*
	think over the years, down the ages.	Jr 4:2
	Ask of your father, let him teach you;	1:31+
	of your elders, let them enlighten you.	4:9
8	When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance,	Jb 8:8
	when he divided the sons of men,	Ps 77:5
	he fixed their bounds according to the number of the sons of God;[e]	4:32
9	but Yahweh's portion was his people,	Gn 10
	Jacob his share of inheritance.	Ac17:26+
10	'In the waste lands he adopts him,	7:6+
	in the howling desert of the wilderness.	1 S 10:1
	He protects him, rears him, guards him	1 K 8:51
	as the pupil of his eye.	Is 63:17
11	Like an eagle watching its nest,	Ps121:34
	hovering over its young,	Ws 11:2
	he spreads out his wings to hold him,	Jr 2:6
	he supports him on his pinions.	Ba 4:8
12	'Yahweh alone is his guide,	Ho 9:10; 13:5
	with him is no alien god.	Zc 2:12
13	He gives him the heights of the land to ride,	Ex 19:4
	he feeds him on the yield of the mountains,	Ps 28:9; 68:19
	he gives him honey from the rock to taste,	Is 31:5
	and oil from the flinty crag;	*Ps17:8+;* 91:4
14	curds from the cattle, milk from the flock,	Is 63:9
	with rich food of the pastures,	Is 43:11
		Ho 13:4
		8:7-10; 11:10-17
		Ps18:33; 81:16
		Is 58:14
		Ezk16:13

b. The Law mediated by Moses, 4:14+, is thus placed beside the Decalogue uttered by God himself: both possess the same divine authority. Cf. 28:69 and 5:24,27.

32 a. The great canticle of Moses celebrates the unique power of the God of Israel, the one true God, and bulwark of his people, who punishes their faithlessness and rebukes their oppressors. Many of its ideas and images are to be found in the Psalms and the prophetic books, particularly in Is 40-55 and Ezk.

b. Exordium addressed to the whole natural world.

c. Lit. 'not sons of blemish'. Israel is of noble birth, being born of Yahweh; his degeneration is his own doing. The text of the verse is corrupt.

d. A summary of sacred history now begins. Cf. the introductory discourse and also Ps 78; 105, etc.

e. The 'sons of God' (or 'of the gods') are the angels, Jb 1:6+, the heavenly courtiers, cf. v. 43 and Ps 29:1; 82:1; 89:6, cf. Tb 5:4+; in this context they are the guardian angels of the nations, cf. Dn 10:13+. But Yahweh himself takes care of Israel, his chosen one, cf. Dt 7:6+. 'God' Greek; Hebr. 'Israel'.

rams of Bashan's breed, and goats,
rich food of the wheat's ear,
and blood of the fermenting grape for drink.

6:11-12; 31:20; 33:26 Pr 30:9 Ws 15:11 Is 44:2+; 51:13; 63:10 Jr 5:7 Ho 13:6 4:24+ Ps 78:58
'Jacob ate and had his fill,[f] 15
Jeshurun grew fat, turned restive.[g]
(You grew fat, gross, bloated.)
He disowned the God who made him,
dishonoured the Rock, his salvation.
They roused him to jealousy with alien gods, 16
with things detestable they angered him.

13:3,7f,14 Ps 106:37
They sacrificed to demons who are not God, 17
to gods they did not know,
newcomers of yesterday
whom their fathers had never feared.

Ps 18:2; 78:35 Is 1:2; 17:10 Jr 2:27,32
(You forget the Rock who begot you, 18
unmindful now of the God who fathered you.)
Yahweh has seen this, and in his anger 19
cast off his sons and his daughters.

31:17 Ps 78:8; 95:10
"I shall hide my face from them," he says 20
"and see what becomes of them.
For they are a deceitful brood,
children with no loyalty in them.

Ps 78:58 Is 45:6; 65:3 Jr 2:11 Ezk 8:3
They have roused me to jealousy with what is no god, 21
they have angered me with their beings of nothing;
↗ Rm 10:19
I, then, will rouse them to jealousy with what is no people,
I will anger them with an empty-headed nation.[h]

28:15-68 Ps 78:21 Jr 15:14; 17:4
Yes, a fire has blazed from my anger, 22
it will burn to the depths of Sheol;
it will devour the earth and all its produce,
it will set fire to the foundations of the mountains.

Lv 26:21-26 Ezk 5:16-17
I will hurl disasters on them, 23
and on them I will spend all my arrows.

Ps 91:6
For weapons I shall have barns of famine,[i] 24
fever and consumption for poison.
I will send the sharp teeth of the wild beast,

Jr 8:17
and the venom of creeping things against them.

Lm 1:20 Ezk 7:15
Outside, the sword shall carry off their children, 25
and terror shall reign within.
Youth and maid alike shall perish,
suckling and greybeard both together.

Ex 32:10-12 Nb 14:13-16 Ho 9:12
I should crush them to dust, I said, 26
I should wipe out their memory among men,

9:28 Ex 32:12 Is 10:12-15; 42:8; 48:11
did I not fear the boasting of the enemy. 27
But let not their foes be mistaken!
Let them not say: Our own power wins the victory,

8:17-18
Yahweh plays no part in this.

4:6; 29:8 Is 47:7 Jr 4:22; 23:6
What a nation of short sight it is; 28
in them there is no understanding.
Were they wise, they would succeed, 29
they would be able to read their destiny.[j]

Jos 23:10 Is 30:17 Jg 2:14 2Ch 24:24 Ps 44:12
How else could one man rout a thousand, 30
how could two put ten thousand to flight,
were it not that their Rock has sold them,
that Yahweh has delivered them up?

"But their rock is not like our Rock; 31

our enemies are no intercessors.[k]

32 For their stock springs from the vinestock of Sodom — Ps 78:63 Ws 10:7
and from the groves of Gomorrah:
their grapes are poisonous grapes,
their clusters are envenomed; — Jb 20:11
33 their wine is the poison of serpents, — Ps 58:4
the vipers' cruel venom.
34 But he,[l] is he not something precious to me,[m] — Ho 13:12
sealed inside my treasury?
35 Vengeance is mine, and requital,[n] — Ps 94:1 ↗ Rm 12:19 ↗ Heb 10:30
for the time when they make a false step.
For it is close, the day of their ruin;
their doom[o] comes at speed.
36 (For Yahweh will see his people righted, — 2 M 7:6 ||Ps 135:14 Ho 11:8
he will take pity on his servants.)
For he will see to it that their power fails,
that, serf or freeman, there is not one remaining.
37 Where are their gods?, he will ask then, — 1 S 12:21 Ps 18:2 Jr 2:28
the rock where they thought to take refuge,
38 who ate the fat of their sacrifices
and drank the wine of their libations?
Let these arise and help you,
let these be the shelter above you!
39 See now that I, I am He, — 4:35 1 S 2:6 2 K 5:7 Tb 11:15 Jb 10:7 Ws 12:13; 16:13,15 Si 36:4 Is 19:22; 41:4; 42:8+; 43:11; 44:7
and beside me there is no other god.
It is I who deal death and life;
when I have struck it is I who heal
(and none can deliver from my hand).
40 "Yes, I lift up my hand to heaven,
and I say: As surely as I live for ever,
41 when I have whetted my flashing sword — Jb 20:24 Is 49:2 Ezk 21:14-22
I will take up the cause of Right,
I will give my foes as good again,
I will repay those who hate me.
42 I will make my arrows drunk with blood, — Ps 68:21,23 Jr 46:10
and my sword shall feed on flesh:
the blood of wounded and captives,
the skulls of the enemy leaders."
43 [p]'Heavens, rejoice with him, — Ps 79:10
let the sons of God pay him homage! ↗ Heb 1:6
Nations, rejoice with his people, ↗ Rm 15:10
let God's envoys tell of his power!
For he will avenge the blood of his servants,
he will give his foes as good again,

f. Following the Greek.

g. Like a bull, *shor*; the word *Jeshurun*, applied to Israel here and in 33:5, alludes to this but is of uncertain derivation.

h. Not that God's 'election' passes from Israel, but that he lavishes his favour on a people not his own and lacking the wisdom of the Law.

i. A bold image; cf. Ps 144:13 and Pr 7:27 ('the courts of death').

j. Greek reads 'they will receive it in the time to come'.

k. Their gods being nothing, the prayers of Israel's enemies are valueless.

l. 'he', i.e. Israel whom God keeps in readiness for a time. The canticle now tells of Israel's deliverance and of the punishment of his enemies; cf. Is 14; 47; 51 and the prophecies of Jr and Ezk against the nations.

m. Lit. 'like a tribute with me'. It was the custom of vassal nations to pay tribute in precious stones etc.

n. In these verses words with which the prophets admonished Israel are turned against Israel's foes: cf. Jr 18:17; Is 10:3, etc.

o. Lit. 'what is prepared for them'.

p. Following the Greek. Hebr. has a different and shorter text. On the 'sons of God' (here parallel with 'heaven', i.e. the angels) cf. note on v. 8.

he will repay those who hate him
and purify[q] the land of his people.'

44 [r]Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and recited all the words of this song in the people's hearing.

The Law, the source of life[s]

45 When Moses had finished reciting these words to all Israel, 46 he said to them, 'Take all these words to heart; I call them to witness against you today. You must order your children to keep and observe all the words of this Law. 47 It is no idle thing you will be doing, for the Law is your life, and by its means you will live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.'

8:3 Ne 9:29

3:23-28 **Moses' death foretold**

48 Yahweh spoke to Moses that same day and said to him, 49 'Climb Mount Nebo, that mountain of the Abarim range, in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and view the land of Canaan which I am giving the sons of Israel as their domain. 50 Die on the mountain you have climbed, and be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. 51 Because you broke faith with me among the sons of Israel that time at Meribath-kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not display my holiness among the sons of Israel, 52 you may see this land only from afar; you cannot enter it, this land that I am giving to the sons of Israel.'

Ex 17:7 Nb 33:38 Nb 20:12+ Ezk 20:41

Gn 49 **Moses blesses the tribes[a]**

33 1 This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, pronounced over the sons of Israel before he died. 2 He said:

1 S 9:6 Si 3:10f

'Yahweh came from Sinai.[b]
For them, after Seir, he rose on the horizon,
after Mount Paran he shone forth.
For them he came, after the mustering[c] at Kadesh,
from his zenith as far as the foothills.

Ex 19:1+ Jg 5:3 Ps 68:7 Hab 3:3 Zc 9:14

3 'You who have such love for the forefathers,
in your hand are all the holy ones.[d]
At your feet they fell,
under your guidance went swiftly on.

Ps 147:19 Jn 10:28

4 (*Moses enjoined a law on us.*)[e]
The assembly of Jacob comes into its inheritance;
5 there was a king in Jeshurun
when the heads of the people foregathered
and the tribes of Jacob were all assembled.[f]

Ps 78:5 Jn 1:17 32:15+ Is 44:2

6 'May Reuben live and not die,
live too, his small band of warriors!'[g]

Nb 32:1 Jos 13:15-23

7 Of Judah he said this:

'Listen, Yahweh, to the voice of Judah
and bring him back to his people.[h]
That his hands may defend his rights,
come to his help against his foes.'

Jos 15:1-12

8 Of Levi he said:

'Grant to Levi[i] your Urim,
your Thummim to the one you favoured
after you had tested him at Massah
and striven with him at the waters of Meribah.
9 He says of his father and mother,

Lv 8:8 Nb 27:21 1 S 14:41+ Ps 95:8-9 *Ex 17:7;* 32:26 Nb 20:1-3+ Ex 32:25-29 Nb 25:7f,10f

"I have not seen them".
His brothers he does not know,
nor does he know his children.
Yes, they have kept your word,
they hold firmly to your covenant.
10 They teach your customs to Jacob,
your Law to Israel.
They send incense rising to your nostrils,
place the holocaust on your altar.
11 Yahweh, bless his worthiness,
and accept the work of his hands.
Crush the loins of his enemies
and of his foes, till they rise no more.'

12 Of Benjamin he said:

'Beloved of Yahweh, he rests in safety. Jos 18:11
The Most High[j] protects him day after day
and dwells between his hillsides.'

13 Of Joseph he said: ||Gn 49:22

'His land is blessed by Yahweh. 2 S 1:21
For him the best of heaven's dew Jos 16:1-10;17:1
and of the deep that lies below, Hab 3:19
14 the best of what the sun makes grow,
of what springs with every month,
15 the first-fruits of the ancient mountains, Gn 49:26
the best from the hills of old,[k]
16 the best of the land and all it holds,
the favour of him who dwells in the Bush. Ex 3:1-3
May the hair grow thick on the head of Joseph,
of the consecrated one among his brothers![l]
17 First-born of the bull,[m] his the glory. Gn 48:19 Nb 24:8 Ps 92:10 Zc 2:2
His horns are the wild ox's horns,
with them he tosses the peoples
to the very ends of the earth.
Such are the myriads of Ephraim,
such are the thousands of Manasseh.'

18 Of Zebulun he said:

'Prosper, Zebulun, in your voyages abroad, Jos 19:10-23

q. Lit. 'perform the rite of expiation over', a phrase common in ritual texts, Ex 25:17+.

r. Here Greek inserts 31:22 and for 'song' reads 'Law'.

s. Continuing 31:27. The 'words' are the words of the Law (v. 46) not of the canticle. V. 48 follows on v. 44.

33 a. These blessings, the text of which has suffered badly in course of transmission, are extremely ancient. The archaic vocabulary and the tribal situation suggest a period after the conquest but earlier than David. Cf. the blessings of Jacob, Gn 49.

b. A verse difficult to interpret and archaic in vocabulary. Yahweh rises, as a star rises, and leads the tribes from Sinai through the desert to the foothills of Mount Pisgah, cf. 3:17 and 4:49.

c. I.e. the gathered clans.

d. The 'forefathers' are the patriarchs and the 'holy ones' their descendants. The text of the v. is uncertain.

e. Evidently a gloss.

f. Vv. 4-5 are still part of the introduction. 'Jeshurun' is Israel, cf. 32:15.

g. The headline of Reuben's blessing has dropped from the text. This tribe soon lost its importance. 'live too' is a correction; Hebr could be rendered 'despite the small number of his warriors'.

h. Allusion to a period when Judah was separated from the rest of Israel: the time either of the divided kingdom or, more probably, of the conquest.

i. 'Grant to Levi' Greek.

j. 'The Most High' corr. 'hillsides', lit. 'shoulders' (cf. the 'shoulder' of a mountain). Allusion to Jerusalem; the original site of the city was called 'the shoulder of the Jebusite', Jos 15:8.

k. I.e. where the patriarchs once lived, cf. Gn 49:26. But the phrase tends to acquire a cosmic sense, cf. Hab 3:6.

l. Cf. Gn 49:26. 'consecrated' translates *nazir*, cf. Nb 6:1+.

m. A term often used for gods in the ancient East. This blessing awards Joseph (i.e. Ephraim and Manasseh) the primacy which Jacob assigned to Judah, Gn 49.

and you, Issachar, in your tents![n]
On the mountain[o] where the people come to pray 19
they offer sacrifices for success,
for they taste the riches of the seas,
and the treasures hidden in the sands.'

Of Gad he said: 20

Nb 32:1
Jos13:24-28
1Ch5:20;
12:9

'Blessed be he who gives Gad space enough!
He lies there like a lioness;
he has savaged arm and face and head.
Then he took the first portion for himself;[p] 21
he saw that there a leader's share was kept for him.
He came as leader of the people,
having executed the justice of Yahweh
and his sentences on Israel.'

Of Dan he said: 22

Jos19:40-48

'Dan is a lion cub
leaping from Bashan.'[q]

Of Naphtali he said: 23

Jos19:32-39

'Naphtali, sated with favours,
filled with the blessings of Yahweh:
the Sea and the South are his domain.'[r]

Of Asher he said: 24

Gn 49:20
Jos19:24-31

'Most blessed of the sons may Asher be!
Let him be privileged among his brothers
and bathe his feet in oil!
Be your bolts of iron and of bronze 25
and your security as lasting as your days![s] 26

32:15
Ex 15:11
Ps 18:10;
68:4+
Is 44:2

There is none like the God of Jeshurun:
he rides the heavens to your rescue,
rides the clouds in his majesty. 27

Ps 90:1-2
Hab 1:12

The God of old, he is your refuge.
Here below, he is the age-old arm
driving the enemy before you;
it is he who cries, "Destroy!" 28

Nb 23:9
Ps 68:26
Jr 23:6

Israel rests in safety.
The well spring of Jacob is chosen out
for a land of corn and wine;
there heaven itself rains down dew. 29

Ps 33:12;
144:15

Happy are you, O Israel!
Who is like you, a victorious people?

Ps 3:3-4;
115:9-11

In Yahweh is the shield that protects you
and the marching sword[t] leading to your triumph.
Your enemies will try to corrupt you,
but you yourself shall trample on their backs.'

Jos 1:1

The death of Moses

3:27
Nb 22:1

34 [a] Then, leaving the plains of Moab,[b] Moses went up Mount Nebo, the 1
peak of Pisgah opposite Jericho, and Yahweh showed him the whole land;
Gilead as far as Dan, •all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the 2
land of Judah as far as the Western Sea,[c] •the Negeb, and the stretch of the Valley 3
of Jericho, city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.[d] •Yahweh said to him, 'This is the 4

land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying: I will give it to your descendants. I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross 1:37
into it.' •There in the land of Moab, Moses the servant of Yahweh died as
Yahweh decreed; •he[e] buried him in the valley, in the land of Moab, opposite 2 K 2:17
Beth-peor; but to this day no one has ever found his grave. •Moses was a Jude 9
hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye undimmed, his vigour
unimpaired. •The sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty Nb 20:29
days. The days of weeping for the mourning rites of Moses came to an end.
Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his
hands on him. It was he that the sons of Israel obeyed, carrying out the order
that Yahweh had given to Moses.

Since then, never has there been such a prophet in Israel as Moses, the man Ex 33:11+; 33:20+; Nb 12:6-8; 27:18-23; Ws 11:1; Si 45:1-5; Jr 15:1; ↗Jn 1:17
Yahweh knew face to face. •What signs and wonders Yahweh caused him to
perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh and all his servants and his whole
land! •How mighty the hand and great the fear that Moses wielded in the sight
of all Israel!

n. Both these tribes engaged in commerce, Issachar by land, Zebulun by sea.
o. Probably Carmel.
p. Gad and Reuben were the first tribes to settle.
q. Dan lay to the north of Israel at Laish (meaning 'lion') and on the borders of Bashan, cf. 34:1.
r. The 'Sea' is apparently the Lake of Gennesareth. 'South' is obscure and the versions omit.
s. Asher's territory lay near the sea; its soil and climate suited the olive. Translation uncertain.
t. 'the marching sword' corr.

34 a. The Sam. text of the following vv. is shorter.
b. The valleys that run up into Moab from the Jordan depression in the Jericho area.
c. The Mediterranean.
d. Zoar is to the south, Jericho to the north of the Dead Sea.

e. I.e. Yahweh, but Sam. and Greek read 'they'.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH SAMUEL AND KINGS

In the Hebrew Bible the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are called 'The Early Prophets'; the 'Later Prophets' being Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve Minor Prophets. A tradition ascribing these books to 'prophets' was responsible for the use of this title: Joshua was credited with the book of that name, Samuel with the Books of Judges and of Samuel, Jeremiah with the Books of Kings. Though we are accustomed to refer to these as 'historical' books, the term 'Prophets' suits them well since they are written from a religious standpoint and are concerned chiefly with the relationship between Israel and God, and Israel's obedience—above all its disobedience—to the word ministered through the prophets. Indeed, the part played by the prophets in these books is considerable: Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others of lesser note, and the Books of Kings provide us with the historical background for the ministry of the pre-exilic 'writing' prophets.

These books are therefore related to those that follow, but they are also related to those that precede them. Their content forms a direct continuation of the Pentateuch: at the end of Deuteronomy Moses names Joshua as his successor and dies; this is the starting-point of the Book of Joshua. A literary unity has even been claimed as existing between the two groups, and efforts have been made to establish the persistence of the pentateuchal 'documents' or 'sources' to the end of Joshua (thus constituting a 'Hexateuch') and even to the end of the Books of Kings. But this 'documentary theory', doubtful for the Pentateuch itself, appears quite inapplicable to the subsequent books. On the other hand, there is an affinity of doctrine and vocabulary between these books and Deuteronomy. This is less marked in some of the books than in others but is discernible in all. For this reason many scholars now suppose that Deuteronomy is the first chapter of a religious history on the grand scale, reaching to the end of Kings. Deuteronomy having provided the historical basis for the doctrine of the election of Israel, and having outlined the theocratic constitution resulting from it, the Book of Joshua then proceeds to show how this chosen people established itself in its Promised Land; the Book of Judges recounts Israel's repeated defections and returns to grace; the two Books of Samuel deal first with the crisis that led to a monarchical régime and imperilled the theocratic ideal and then go on to show how this ideal achieved reality under David; the Books of Kings tell of the decline that set in during the reign of Solomon and how, notwithstanding the devotion of a few subsequent kings, Israel's obstinate infidelity brought down God's judgement on his people. The separation of Deuteronomy from this literary unit may have occurred when it was decided to assemble all the material relating to the person and work of Moses (cf. Introduction to the Pentateuch).

This hypothesis seems sound but should be supplemented by two relevant

observations. In the first place, oral traditions or written documents of varying ages and characteristics, most of them already assembled in groups, were the raw material of the deuteronomic editor; moreover, the editorial hand has been lighter on some parts than on others. This explains how it is that the books, or large sections of the books, preserve their individual character. Secondly, this deuteronomic editing was not a single process: each book shows traces of having passed through more than one process of editing. The Books of Kings, to take the clearest example, went through at least two editions: one just after the reform under Josiah, the other during the Exile. (For further details, see the notes on the individual books.)

In their final form, therefore, these books are the product of a school, of a number of devout men profoundly influenced by the outlook of Deuteronomy, men who meditated on the history of their nation and extracted a religious lesson from it. At the same time they have handed on not only an account of the outstanding events in the history of Israel but also traditions or texts that date back to the heroic age of the Conquest. That the literary form chosen is that of 'sacred history' does not diminish the importance of these books for the historian, while giving them special value for the believer. From them the latter will not only learn to see the hand of God in all world events, but in God's exacting love for his chosen people will recognise the slow preparation for the New Israel, the community of the faithful.

The Book of Joshua falls into three parts: *a.* the conquest of the Promised Land, ch. 1-12; *b.* the partition of the territory between the tribes, ch. 13-21; *c.* the last days of Joshua, especially his last discourse and the assembly at Shechem, ch. 22-24. It is rightly conceded by Jewish tradition that the book was not written by Joshua. Various sources have been used. In Part One we find (ch. 2-9) a group of traditions, running parallel at times, connected with the Benjaminite shrine at Gilgal, and (ch. 10-11) two records of battles, Gibeon and Merom, associated respectively with the conquest of the south and north. The story of the Gibeonites, ch. 9, is dovetailed into 10:1-6, thus joining up two narratives which, in all probability, were brought together at the beginning of the monarchical period. Part Two is topographical. Ch. 13 identifies the territories of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh; according to Nb 32 and Dt 3:12-17 Moses had already established these in Transjordania. Ch. 14-19 combine a pre-monarchical description of the tribal boundaries with lists of towns; these lists, at least in part, must be assigned a date subsequent to the political schism, since the catalogue of towns of Judah is much more exhaustive than that for the other tribes. There are two supplementary lists: the cities of refuge, ch. 20, an institution of great antiquity, cf. Ex 21:13, and the levitical towns, ch. 21; this second list probably derives from the times of David and Solomon. In Part Three, ch. 22, dealing with the return of the Transjordanian tribes and their building of an altar by the Jordan, comes from a separate tradition of uncertain age; ch. 24 represents an ancient tradition about the assembly at Shechem and the sacred pact concluded by the tribes.

It is not easy to determine to what extent these various component parts, some very ancient, had been assembled before the deuteronomic editors set to work. To these editors we may assign (in addition to minor modifications) the introduction of ch. 1, the catalogue of ch. 12, the insertion of 8:30-35. That

ch. 24, modified in accordance with the outlook of Deuteronomy, has been preserved side by side with ch. 23 (which a deuteronomic writer has modelled on ch. 24) is an indication that there were two successive editions of the book.

In the Book of Joshua the conquest of the whole Promised Land appears as the result of collective tribal action under Joshua's leadership. On the other hand, it is admitted that the conquest was not complete, 13:1-6; 17:12-16, that some sections of the people took action in their own interests, 14:6-13; 15:13-19, and that the war was not without its setbacks, 19:47. These reservations are confirmed by the first chapter of Judges in which each tribe is depicted as fighting to win its own territory, often without success, and Joshua plays no part. This must be fairly close to what actually happened. It is even likely that these independent thrusts were initiated before the crossing of the Jordan and that detachments of Judah and of Simeon, in association with allied groups like the Calebites and Kenites, left Kadesh to make their incursions from the south, cf. especially Jg 1: 16-17, cf. Nb 21:3, and Jg 1:9-15, cf. Jos 15:13-19. It is likely that certain northern groups did not go down into Egypt and did not join the Israelite confederacy until the assembly at Shechem when they adopted the Yahwistic religion of the tribes newly arrived from the desert, Jos 24. Whether this was so or not, the sacred pact at Shechem was momentous: it welded the tribes together and was the one guarantee of political unity until the monarchy was established. For the events of Joshua exact dating is scarcely possible but the Israelite invasion of Canaan may be placed within the last thirty years of the 13th century; this date is suggested by the chronology adopted for the Exodus (cf. Introduction to the Pentateuch), by contemporary history and by the data of Palestinian archaeology.

The Book of Joshua presents an idealised and simplified picture of a complex history the details of which we can only conjecture. It is idealised: the epic of the deliverance from Egypt has its continuation in the conquest during which God intervenes miraculously to help his people. It is simplified: all is centred round the heroic figure of Joshua: it is he who leads the House of Joseph to war, ch. 1-12, and to him is ascribed the assignment of tribal territories (though this did not take effect at once) ch. 13-21. Joshua holds the centre of the stage throughout and the book ends with his farewell and death, ch. 23; 24:29-31. The Fathers of the Church saw in him a foreshadowing of Jesus: both bore the name 'saviour' and both led their followers through the waters (the one of Jordan, the other of baptism) to a promised land, while the conquest and division of the territory are an image of the progressive expansion of the Church.

True to the Old Testament outlook, the land of Canaan is the dominant theme of the whole book: the people that had found God in the desert now receives its own country at God's hand. Yahweh fought for Israel, 23:3,10; 24:11-12, and gave for its inheritance the land he had promised to the Fathers, 23:5,14.

The Book of Judges is made up of three unequal parts: *a.* introduction, 1:1–2:5; *b.* body, 2:6–16:31; *c.* two appendices, the first dealing with the migration of the Danites and the founding of the sanctuary at Dan, ch. 17-18, the second with the war waged on the Benjaminites for their crime at Gibeah, ch. 19-21.

The story of the Judges is confined to the body of the book. The term 'judges' (*shophetim*, cf. the *suffetes*, or magistrates, of Tyre and Carthage) does not mean administrators of justice but 'governors', the people's war leaders and deliverers. Occasionally, as for example Gideon and notably Deborah and

Barak, they act for a whole group of tribes. In birth, temperament and policy they differ widely, but their vocation is the same: they have a grace, or 'charisma'; they are divinely chosen to save. This is the insistent note of the passages preluding the story of each of the six 'major' Judges, Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson: the Israelites betray Yahweh, he hands them over to their enemies, they plead with him, he sends a saviour—the Judge. Once the deliverance has been effected there is an interval of peace, after which the Israelites' relapse begins again. This recurring pattern and the explanation given for it in 2:6–3:6 and in 10:6-16 so closely resembles the teaching of Deuteronomy that we cannot but recognise the hand of deuteronomic editors.

In this deuteronomic edition ancient sources have been used, but their individuality has been respected. Some were themselves composite: the stories of Gideon and of Jephthah existed in several forms, and the Song of Deborah, ch. 5, has a prose counterpart (influenced by Jos 11) in ch. 4. These elements had been brought together before the deuteronomic editorial work began. When the brief references to the 'minor' Judges were inserted is not known (Shamgar, 3:31; Tola and Jair, 10:1-5, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon, 12:8-15).

The beginning of the great central section of the book (2:6-9) is almost a verbatim repetition of the end of Joshua, Jos 24:28-31; one book is therefore the continuation of the other. This sequence, however, is broken by Jg 1:1–2:5; this passage records a tradition concerning the settlement in Canaan, a tradition parallel with that of Joshua and the historical value of which we have already remarked; but this ancient source has itself been given a deuteronomic setting, 1:1 and 2:1-5. The story of Abimelech, ch. 9, and the appendices, ch. 17-21, have also been added; these sections derive from traditions of great antiquity and their contribution to the social and religious history of Israel is considerable. They were untouched by the earliest deuteronomic editing of Judges but were apparently incorporated later to form a link with the Books of Samuel (the continuation of the great deuteronomic opus): Abimelech's shortlived kingship and Jotham's ominous fable prepare the reader for the conflicting views on the institution of the monarchy in 1 S 8-12, while the two appendices describe the religious and moral chaos of a period when 'there was no king in Israel', Jg 17:6 and 19:1. All this is an indication that this book passed through several editions.

The original work, ch. 2-16, contains a number of chronological data which, added together, yield a total of 410 years for the period of the Judges. This figure is at variance with 1 K 6:1 which allows only 480 years for the period between the Exodus and the building of Solomon's Temple; it agrees still less with the historical evidence which puts the Israelite entry into Canaan at the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the reign of David at a little before 1000 B.C. Clearly the chronology of this book is frankly schematic, cf. the recurrence of the number, forty, a generation's length, of its multiple, eighty and of its fraction, twenty; moreover, whole periods are added together which in fact overlapped, since the various oppressions and deliverances never affected the whole country at one time but only a part of it. The period of the Judges covered not more than one-and-a-half centuries, the victory of Taanach under Deborah and Barak in 1125 marking its central point.

Granted this chronology, it is still not easy to fit into it the rest of the information furnished by Judges. All that can be said is that the victory of Taanach preceded the Midianite invasion (Gideon) and the Philistine incursions (Samson).

The principal fact to emerge is that the antagonists of Israel during this troubled age were not only the Canaanites, original occupiers of the land (like those of the Jezreel plain, defeated by Deborah and Barak) but also the neighbouring peoples like the Moabites (Ehud), the Ammonites (Jephthah), the Midianites (Gideon) and the Philistine newcomers (Samson). Against these threats each section of the nation defended its own territory. At times, however, neighbouring groups would make common cause, 7:23; on the other hand, protests might be registered by some powerful tribe against its exclusion from a share in the plunder, 8:1-3; 12:1-6. The Song of Deborah, ch. 5, indicts the tribes that refused to fight; strangely enough, Judah and Simeon are not even mentioned.

The territory of these two tribes lay to the south, cut off from the rest of Israel by Canaanite Gezer, by the Gibeonite towns and by Jerusalem, and their isolation favoured the stirrings of the future schism. Contrastingly, in the north the battle of Taanach had left the Israelites masters of the plain of Jezreel and thus brought about the alliance of the House of Joseph with the northern tribes. A common faith, however, held the various sections firmly together: all the Judges were sincere worshippers of Yahweh and the shrine of the ark at Shiloh was a rallying point for the whole people. Moreover, common struggles stiffened the national spirit, and when in the days of Samuel all were threatened, they met the common peril as a united people.

For the Israelites the lesson of this book was that oppression is the punishment for impiety, and that victory was one of the consequences of returning to God. The author of Ecclesiasticus praises the Judges for their constancy, Si 46:11-12, and the Letter to the Hebrews sees in their success the reward of faith; they belong to the 'cloud of witnesses' who encourage the Christian to renounce sin and to undergo his trials with fortitude, Heb 11:32-34; 12:1.

The short Book of Ruth is placed after Judges in the Septuagint, Vulgate, and modern versions. In the Hebrew Bible it figures among the 'Writings' as one of the five *megilloth*, or 'scrolls', read on the principal feasts, Ruth being used at Pentecost. This arrangement as conditioned by the liturgy was possibly not the original one. Furthermore, although its action is placed in the period of the Judges (Rt 1:1) the book does not form part of the deuteronomic corpus which runs from Joshua to the end of Kings.

It tells the story of Ruth the Moabitess who, after the death of her husband, a man from Bethlehem, refuses to leave her mother-in-law, Naomi; levirate law is invoked and she weds Boaz, a relation of her husband's. Of this marriage Obed was born who was to be the grandfather of David. The main purpose of the book is to show, 2:12, how trust in God is rewarded and how God's goodness is not constricted by frontiers. That a woman of Moab should be privileged to become the great-grandmother of David gives a particular value to this narrative; nor is there any reason to doubt its historical foundation.

The date of the book is disputed. Many believe it late, but the arguments are not conclusive and occasional archaisms point rather to the pre-exilic period. The universalist tendency of the book does not conflict with such a view, and is its enduring lesson: St Matthew underlines it when he includes Ruth's name in his genealogy of Christ, Mt 1:5.

The Books of Samuel constituted, in the Hebrew Bible, one single work.

The division into two books dates back only to the Greek translation which, moreover, grouped Samuel and Kings under the one title 'The Four Books of Kingdoms' (called in the Vulgate 'The Four Books of Kings'). The Hebrew Samuel is equivalent to the first two of these. It owes its name to its traditional attribution to the prophet Samuel.

There are five sections: *a.* Samuel, 1 S 1-7; *b.* Samuel and Saul, 1 S 8-15; *c.* Saul and David, 1 S 16–2 S 1; *d.* David, 2 S 2-20; *e.* appendices, 2 S 21-24.

The work is not from one hand: it mingles, or places side by side, various traditions relating to the beginnings of the monarchical period. The story of the ark in Philistine hands, 1 S 4-6, is followed by the royalist account of the institution of the monarchy, 1 S 9; 10:1-16; 11, a prelude to the war of liberation, ch. 13-14. In these chapters Samuel is the inspired prophet, God's instrument in choosing Saul. The Samuel sequence has been completed by an account of the prophet's childhood, 1 S 1-3, and the rejection of Saul, ch. 15, which leads up to the anointing of David, 16:1-13. An interwoven narrative of lesser antiquity represents Samuel as the last of the Judges, ch. 7; it continues with an anti-royalist account of the institution of the monarchy, ch. 8; 10:17-24; 12. In 1 S 17–2 S 1, where doublet narratives abound, parallel traditions have been assembled; they are, it seems, of equal antiquity and relate to the early years of David and to his clash with Saul. Connected with the oldest stratum of 1 Samuel are: the narratives relating to David's period of rule in Hebron, the war against the Philistines, the capture of Jerusalem, the return of the ark, 2 S 2-6. The prophecy of Nathan, ch. 7, is also of great antiquity but has passed through several hands; ch. 8 is an editorial summary. 2 S 9 is the first chapter of a long story which ends only in 1 K 1-2: it is a history of David's family and the disputed succession, written by an eye-witness in the first half of the reign of Solomon. The account is interrupted by 2 S 21-24, a collection of short passages of varying origin dealing with the reign of David.

It is possible that other literary groups, besides the lengthy history of 2 S 9-20, were formed some time in the first two centuries of the monarchy, namely, the earliest Samuel cycle and the two histories of Saul and David (1 S 17–2 S 1). It is further possible that these groups had already been combined by about 700 B.C., though the books did not reach definitive form until they were gathered into the great deuteronomic historical work a little before, or during, the Exile. Even so, the influence of Deuteronomy is less obvious here than in Judges and Kings. It is most noticeable in the earlier chapters (especially 1 S 7 and 12) and may possibly be traced in one of the editions of Nathan's prophecy, 2 S 7; but the narrative of 2 S 9-20 has remained almost untouched.

The Books of Samuel cover a period from the rise of the monarchy to the end of the reign of David. Philistine expansion (the battle of Aphek was fought about 1050) threatened the very existence of Israel and made monarchical government a necessity. Saul (c. 1030) first appears as one of the line of Judges, but his recognition by all the tribes invests him with a wider and a lasting authority: monarchy has begun. The war of liberation begins and the Philistines are driven back to their own frontiers, 1 S 14; henceforth the engagements take place on the borders of Israelite territory, 1 S 17 (Valley of the Terebinth), 28 and 31 (Gilboa). The battle of Gilboa ends in disaster, and Saul dies on the field, c. 1010. National unity is once more in jeopardy: at Hebron the men of Judah proclaim David king; the northern tribes set up a rival, Ishbaal, son of Saul,

who had taken refuge in Transjordania. The assassination of Ishbaal, however, clears the way for unity and the northern tribes acknowledge David's sovereignty.

The Second Book of Samuel does no more than summarise the political consequences of the reign of David which were nevertheless far-reaching. The Philistines had been repelled for good, unification of the national territory was completed by the absorption of the Canaanite enclaves, in particular Jerusalem which became the political and religious capital of the kingdom. The whole of Transjordania was reduced to submission and David extended his authority to include the Aramaeans of southern Syria. This notwithstanding, when David died, c. 970, national unity had not in fact been achieved: Israel and Judah, the two sections of his kingdom, were frequently at loggerheads: the revolt of Absalom was backed by the men of the north and the slogan of Sheba the Benjaminite, 'To your tents, Israel!' was a signal for rebellion. The signs already pointed to the disruption of the kingdom.

The Books of Samuel have a religious lesson to teach: they reveal the conditions in which a kingdom of God on earth might be expected to function and what difficulties it would experience. The ideal was achieved only in the times of David: before him Saul's failure, after him the sins of his successors, thwarted it, calling down the judgement of God and procuring the ruin of the nation. The promises made to the House of David, from the prophecy of Nathan onwards, sustained and nourished the messianic hope. The New Testament refers three times to Nathan's prophecy, Ac 2:30; 2 Co 6:18; Heb 1:5. Jesus is presented as a descendant of David, and when the people salute him as 'son of David' they are acknowledging him as Messiah. Between David and Christ the chosen saviour, king of God's holy nation, persecuted by his own people, the Fathers see a significant likeness.

1 and 2 Kings, like 1 and 2 Samuel, were originally one book in the Hebrew Bible. In the Greek translation they are numbered not '1 and 2' but '3 and 4' (3 and 4 Kingdoms), and in the Vulgate (3 and 4 Kings).

They are a continuation of the Books of Samuel, and 1 K 1-2 are the concluding chapters of the lengthy document of 2 S 9-20. The long account of the reign of Solomon, 1 K 3-11, gives a detailed account of his excelling wisdom, his riches and the magnificence of his building, particularly of the Temple of Jerusalem. It was an age of splendour but not of conquest—the conquering spirit of the reign of David had disappeared, an age of conservatism, organisation and (most significantly) of exploitation. This last aggravated the existing hostility between North and South, and when Solomon died, in 931, the kingdom split in two: to the political secession of the northern tribes was added religious schism, 1 K 12-13. From 1 K 14 to 2 K 17 the history of the twin kingdoms of Israel and Judah is described in parallel; it is a history of fraternal strife but also of attacks from without: Egypt attacks Judah, the Aramaeans attack the northern tribes. But the danger becomes more acute with the intervention of Assyrian armies in this part of the world—in the 9th century first and then, more decisively, in the 8th when Samaria falls to their onslaught in 721, Judah having already accepted vassalage. The story of Judah, the remainder of the kingdom, is continued in 2 K 18–25:21 until the destruction of Jerusalem in 587. The narrative is mainly concerned with two reigns, each remarkable for a national revival and a religious reform: the reign of Hezekiah, 2 K 18-20, and that of

Josiah, 2 K 22-23. The major political events of this period are Sennacherib's invasion in 701 when Hezekiah was king and, under Josiah, the collapse of Assyria and the rise of the Chaldaean empire. Judah was forced to submit to the new master of the east but shortly afterwards she rebelled. Punishment was swift: in 598 Nebuchadnezzar's armies captured Jerusalem and deported part of its population; ten years later, incipient revolt provoked Nebuchadnezzar to further action which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem and a second deportation, 587. Two brief appendices, 2 K 25:22-30, bring the Books of Kings to a close.

The books themselves explicitly mention three of their sources: a History of Solomon, the Annals of the Kings of Israel, the Annals of the Kings of Judah. But there were others: the concluding chapters of the great Davidic document, 1 K 1-2; a description of the Temple, 'Priestly' in origin, 1 K 6-7; and notably a history of Elijah written towards the end of the 9th century and a history of Elisha of a slightly later date; both of which underlie the Elijah and Elisha cycles (respectively, 1 K 17–2 K 1 and 2 K 2-13). The narratives of the reign of Hezekiah in which Isaiah figures, 2 K 18:17–20:19, are derived from the prophet's disciples.

Where the use of sources has not interfered, events are narrated according to a uniform plan: each reign is treated separately and completely and each is introduced and concluded by a scarcely varying formula which always includes a verdict on the king's religious conduct. By reason of the 'original sin' of the Northern Kingdom (the erection of the shrine at Bethel) all the kings of Israel are judged guilty; of the kings of Judah only eight are praised for their fidelity to Yahweh's commands and on six occasions this praise is qualified by the reservation 'the high places were not destroyed'. Only Hezekiah and Josiah win unstinted approval.

The criterion of these verdicts is clearly the law of Deuteronomy on the unique sanctuary. And further, the discovery of Deuteronomy in the reign of Josiah and the religious reform that this discovery inspired mark the climax of this entire history, and the whole work is a demonstration of the fundamental teaching of Deuteronomy, repeated in 1 K 8 and 2 K 17, namely, that the nation will be blessed if it respects God's covenant, punished if it does not. The influence of Deuteronomy is also traceable in the literary style of the editor's enlargements of, or comments on, his sources.

It is not improbable that a first deuteronomic edition was made before the Exile and before the death of Josiah at Megiddo in 609, with the eulogy of Josiah in 2 K 23:25 (minus the concluding words) marking the end of the original work. A second edition, also deuteronomic, was compiled during the Exile—after 562 if we assign to it the present conclusion of the book (2 K 25:22-30), and a little earlier if we suppose that this second edition ended with the story of the second deportation (2 K 25:21 reads like a conclusion). Finally, certain additions were made to the work during or after the Exile.

The Books of Kings must be read as they were written: as a story of salvation. The ingratitude of the chosen people and the successive ruin of the two sections of the nation seem to thwart God's design. But a small body of faithful people remain who have not 'bowed the knee to Baal'; this remnant of Zion loyal to the covenant guarantees the future. That God's design cannot be frustrated is shown by the astonishing persistence of the Davidic dynasty to which the messianic promise had been made. The whole work ends, in its final form, with the favour shown to Jehoiachin, as if with a dawning of redemption.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

I. THE CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND

A. THE PREPARATIONS

The summons to enter the Promised Land

1 1 When Moses the servant of Yahweh was dead,[a] Yahweh spoke to Joshua son Nb 27:18
2 of Nun,[b] Moses' adjutant. He said, •'Moses my servant is dead; *rise*—it is Dt 34
time—and cross the Jordan here, you and all this people with you, into the St 46:1
3 land which I am giving the sons of Israel. •Every place you tread with the soles Ezk 47:13
4 of your feet I shall give you as I declared to Moses that I would. •From the Dt 11:24-25
wilderness and Lebanon to the great river Euphrates and to the Great Sea
5 westwards, this shall be your territory.[c] •As long as you live, no one shall be able Dt 7:24
to stand in your way: I will be with you as I was with Moses; I will not leave 1 K 8:57
you or desert you. *1:9,17; 3:7; 6:27* Ex 3:12

Faithfulness to the Law is a condition of God's aid Dt 31:7-8,23

6 'Be strong and stand firm, for you are the man to give this people possession Dt 1:21
7 of the land that I swore to their fathers I should give to them. •Only be strong Dt 3:28
and stand firm and be careful to keep all the Law which my servant Moses laid
on you. Never swerve from this to right or left, and then you will be happy in Dt 5:32
8 all you do. •Have the book of this Law always on your lips; meditate on Dt 29:8
it day and night, so that you may carefully keep everything that is written in it. Ps 1:2
9 Then you will prosper in your dealings, then you will have success. •Have I not Dt 6:6f; 17:18f
told you: Be strong and stand firm? Be fearless then, be confident, for go where Dt 1:29f; 7:2|; 20:1f; 31:6,7,23
you will, Yahweh your God is with you.'

Aid from the tribes beyond the Jordan

10 Then Joshua gave the officers of the people this order: •'Go through the camp Nb 11:16
11 and say to the people, "Get provisions ready, for in three days you will cross Dt 16:18
the Jordan here and go on to take possession of the land which Yahweh your
12 God is giving you as your very own" '. •Then to the Reubenites and Gadites
13 and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, •'Remember what Yahweh's servant Nb 32
Moses told you, "Yahweh your God, granting you a place to find rest, has given Dt 3:18-20
14 you this land". •Your wives, your little ones and your cattle may remain in the
land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan. But all you who are fighting men
must go over with your weapons in front of your brothers and fight with them

1 a. The book is thus represented as the continuation of Dt and, adopting the style and outlook of Dt, draws on various traditions to describe Israel's entry into the Promised Land and its establishment there.

b. On Joshua's name, his part in the reconnaissance of the Promised Land, his loyalty, and his appointment as Moses' successor, cf. Ex 17:9; 24:13; 33:11; Nb 11:28; 13:8,16; 14:5f,30,38; 27:15-23; Dt 3:21,28; 31:7-8,14,23; 34:9. In the Greek he is called 'son of Naue', the result of a mistake in the earliest Septuagint MSS which read NAYH (Naue) instead of NAYN (Naun).

c. The boundaries assigned to the country destined for conquest (cf. Gn 15:18; Dt 1:7; 11:24, see Jg 20:1+) go far beyond those of the country partitioned in ch. 13-19. After 'Euphrates' Hebr. adds 'the whole country of the Hittites', omitted by Greek.

till Yahweh grants rest, to your brothers and you alike, when they too have 15
taken possession of the land that Yahweh your God is giving them. Then you
22 may go back again to the land that is yours to hold,[d] which Yahweh's servant
Nb 27:20 Moses gave you eastwards beyond the Jordan.'[e] •Then they answered Joshua, 16
'We will do all that you have told us, and wherever you send us we will go. •We 17
obeyed Moses in all things, and now we will obey you. Only may Yahweh your
1:5 God be with you as he was with Moses! •If anyone rebels against your direction 18
Dt 17:12 and does not obey whatever orders you lay on him, let him be put to death.
Only be strong and stand firm.'

Joshua's spies at Jericho[a]

6:17 Nb 13 2 Joshua son of Nun sent out two spies secretly from Shittim.[b] He said, 'Go out 1
and explore the country at Jericho'. They went, and they entered the house
Mt 1:5 of a harlot called Rahab; there they lodged. •Word of this was brought to the 2
king of Jericho, 'Take notice, some men from the Israelites have come here
tonight to reconnoitre the country'. •Then the king of Jericho sent a message 3
to Rahab, 'Send out the men who came to you and are lodging in your house,
Jm 2:25 for they have come to reconnoitre the whole country'. •But the woman took 4
the two men and hid them; and she answered, 'True, the men came to me, but
I did not know where they came from. •When the city gate was about to be 5
closed at nightfall, the men went out and I cannot say where they went. Follow
them quickly, you may still overtake them.'

She had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under stalks of flax she 6
had heaped up there. •The king's men pursued them towards the Jordan, as far 7
as the fords, and the gate was shut once the pursuers had gone through.

✗ Heb 11:31 ✗ Jm 2:25 **The pact between Rahab and the spies**

The others had not yet lain down when Rahab came up to them on the roof. 8
She said to them, 'I know that Yahweh has given you this land, that we ourselves 9
are afraid of you and that all who live in this territory have been seized with
9:9-10 Ex 14 terror at your approach; •for we have heard how Yahweh dried up the Sea of 10
Reeds before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did with the two
Nb 21:23f. 33f Amorite kings across the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you put under the ban.
5:1 When we heard this, our hearts failed us, and no courage is left in any of us to 11
‖Dt 4:39+ stand up to you, because Yahweh your God is God both in heaven above and
on earth beneath.[c] •Swear to me now by Yahweh, then, since I myself have 12
shown you kindness, that you too will show kindness to the people of my father's
house, and will give me a sure sign of this; •that you will spare the lives of my 13
father and mother, my brothers and sisters and all who belong to them, and
will preserve us from death.' •Then the men answered her, 'If we do not, it is 14
we, not you, who will deserve to die, unless you tell of our agreement. When
6:22-25 Yahweh has given us the land, we will deal with you kindly and faithfully.'
1 S 19:12 Ac 9:25 2Co 11:33 Rahab let them down from the window by a rope, for her house was against the 15
city wall and she lived inside the wall itself. •She said, 'You must make for the 16
hills, to escape your pursuers. Hide there for three days till the pursuers have
returned, and then go on your way.' •The men answered, 'We for our part will 17
be free of the oath you made us swear, except on these conditions. •When we 18
enter your land you must use this sign: you must tie this scarlet cord to the
window from which you let us down, and you must gather with you in your
house your father and mother and brothers and all your family. •If anybody 19
passes through the doors of your house to go out, his blood shall be on his own
2S 1:16+ head and we are not to blame; but the blood of all who stay with you in the
house shall be on our heads if a hand is laid on any of them. •If you make this 20
talk of ours known, we shall be free of the oath that you made us swear.' •She 21
replied, 'Let it be as you say'. She let them go, and they left. Then she tied the
scarlet cord to the window.[d]

The spies return

22 They left her and made for the hills. They stayed there for three days, till
the pursuers had returned, having scoured the countryside without finding them.
23 Then the two men came down again from the hills, crossed the river and came
24 to Joshua son of Nun; and they told him all that had happened to them. •They
said to Joshua, 'Yahweh has delivered the whole country into our hands, and
its inhabitants all tremble already at the thought of us'.

B. THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN[a]

Before the crossing

1 3 Early in the morning, Joshua struck camp and set out from Shittim with all
the Israelites. They reached the Jordan and camped there before they crossed.
2 3 Three days later, the officers went through the camp •and gave the people these
instructions, 'When you see the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God and Dt 9:3
the levitical priests carrying it, you must leave the place where you are standing
4b and follow the ark, •so that you know which way to take; you have never gone
4a this way before. •Between you and the ark, however, keep a distance of some
5 thousand cubits;[b] do not go near it.' •Joshua said to the people, 'Sanctify your- Ex19:10,15
selves for tomorrow, because tomorrow Yahweh will work wonders among you'.
6 Then he said to the priests, 'Take up the ark of the covenant, and cross at the
head of the people'. They took up the ark of the covenant and moved to the
front of the people.

The final instructions

7 Yahweh said to Joshua, 'This very day I will begin to make you a great man
in the eyes of all Israel, to let them be sure that I am going to be with you 1:5,17
8 even as I was with Moses. •As for you, give this order to the priests carrying
the ark of the covenant: "When you have reached the brink of the waters of the
9 Jordan, you are to stand still in the Jordan itself" .' •Then Joshua said to the
10 Israelites, 'Come closer and hear the words of Yahweh your God'. •Joshua said,
'By this you shall know that a living God is with you and without a doubt will Ex34:9-10 Dt 7:1+
expel the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the
11 Amorite and the Jebusite. •Look, the ark of Yahweh,[c] the Lord of the whole
12 earth, is about to cross the Jordan at your head. •Choose twelve men at once 4:2

d. Hebr. here adds 'and take possession of it'.

e. According to the Book of Joshua (though not of Judges) the conquest is to be a national affair and not the result of isolated tribal thrusts from various directions.

2 a. Ch. 2-9 are a collection of traditions emanating from the Benjaminite shrine of Gilgal, 4:19+. These traditions have no literary relationship with those found in the first four books of the Pentateuch.

b. Shittim (the Acacias) indicates that part of the plain just to the north-east of the Dead Sea, Nb 25:1; 33:49.

c. The text credits Rahab with a profession of faith in the manner of Dt, cf. Dt 4:39. Rahab was saved by her faith, Heb 11:31, and justified by her works, Jm 2:25. As a woman of non-Israelite stock who by her faith and charity secured the safety of her family she became, for the Fathers, a symbol of the Church. In Hebr. her name is not the same as that of Rahab the mythical monster, Jb 9:13; 7:12+, which stands for Egypt in Ps 87:4.

d. Vv. 17-21, occurring too late in the narrative, seem to derive from a different tradition (v. 20 is parallel with v. 14) and there is no further mention of the scarlet cord. It is in keeping with their allegorical interpretation of Rahab (cf. note to v. 11) that some of the Fathers see in the scarlet cord a symbol of the blood of Christ.

3 a. There is a deliberate parallelism between the narrative of the crossing of the Jordan and entry into Canaan, 3:1–5:12, and the narrative of the Exodus from Egypt; the editor himself calls attention to it, 3:7; 4:14,23; Yahweh halts the Jordan just as he dried up the Sea of Reeds (3:7–4:18; Ex 14:5-31); the ark of Yahweh leads the Israelites like the pillar of cloud or of fire (3:6-17; 4:10-11; Ex 13:21-22; 14:19-20); Joshua plays the part that Moses played in the Exodus (Jos 3:7; 4:14); and just as the adults of the Exodus period were circumcised, so in their turn are their desert-born children (Jos 5:2-9); the manna that had served Israel in the desert, Ex 16, ceases as soon as the Israelite enter Canaan, Jos 5:12, and the Passover is celebrated in Gilgal after the second 'crossing', Jos 5:10, as it had been celebrated in Egypt before the first, Ex 12:1-28; 13:3-10. Thus, with Joshua the events of the Exodus receive their first fulfilment; the Passion and resurrection of Christ repeat and fulfil those events at the spiritual level, cf. 1 Co 10:1. The Fathers therefore regard Joshua as prefiguring his namesake, Jesus.

b. A sabbath day's journey, about half a mile. This parenthesis, which contradicts v. 4b, voices a scruple born of a strong sense of God's awe-inspiring presence resting on the ark, 2 S 6:7+.

c. 'the ark of Yahweh' corr. following v. 13.

from the tribes of Israel, one man from each tribe. •As soon as the priests with 13
the ark of Yahweh, the Lord of the whole earth, have set their feet in the
waters of the Jordan, the upper waters of the Jordan flowing down will be
stopped in their course and stand still in one mass.'

The river crossed

Accordingly, when the people struck camp to cross the Jordan, the priests 14
Si 24:26 carried the ark of the covenant in front of the people. •As soon as the bearers 15
of the ark reached the Jordan and the feet of the priests who carried it touched
the waters (the Jordan overflows the whole length of its banks throughout the
Ex 14:22 harvest season)[d] •the upper waters stood still and made one heap over a wide 16
space[e]—from Adam to the fortress of Zarethan—while those flowing down to
the Sea of the Arabah, that is, the Salt Sea, stopped running altogether. The
people crossed opposite Jericho. •The priests who carried the ark of the covenant 17
Ex 14:21 of Yahweh stood still on dry ground in mid-Jordan, and all Israel continued
to cross dry-shod till the whole nation had finished its crossing of the river.

The twelve memorial stones

Ezk47:13 4 When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, Yahweh spoke to 1
3:12 Joshua, •'Choose out twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe, 2
Ex 24:4 and give them this command: "Take from here, from mid-Jordan, twelve stones;[a] 3
carry them with you and set them down in the camp where you pass the night" '.
Joshua called the twelve men he had marked out among the Israelites, one man 4
for each tribe, •and told them, 'Pass on before the ark of Yahweh your God 5
into mid-Jordan, and each of you take one stone on his shoulder, matching the
number of the tribes of Israel, •to make a memorial of this in your midst; for 6
=4:21-24 Ex 12:26 when in days to come your children ask you, "What do these stones mean
for you?", •you will tell them, "The waters of the Jordan separated in front 7
of the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, and when it crossed the Jordan, the waters
of the river vanished. These stones are an everlasting reminder of this to the
Israelites." ' •The Israelites did as Joshua told them; they took twelve stones 8
from mid-Jordan to match the number of the tribes of Israel, as Yahweh had
told Joshua; they carried them over to the camp and set them down there. •Then 9
Joshua set up twelve stones in mid-Jordan in the spot where the feet of the
priests who carried the ark had rested; they are there even now.[b]

The crossing ends

The priests carrying the ark stood still in mid-Jordan until everything was 10
done that Yahweh had directed Joshua to tell the people, all as Moses had
instructed Joshua; and the people hurried across. •When they were all over, 11
the ark of Yahweh then crossed, with the priests at the head of the people. •The 12
Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed in
front of the Israelites, as Moses had ordered them. •They were some forty 13
thousand warriors in arms, and they crossed before Yahweh, ready for battle,
towards the plain of Jericho. •That day Yahweh made Joshua great in the sight 14
of all Israel, and they honoured him as they had honoured Moses as long as
he lived. •Yahweh said to Joshua, •'Tell the priests carrying the ark of the 15 16
testimony to come up from the Jordan'. •And Joshua commanded the priests: 17
'Come up from the Jordan!' •Now when the priests carrying the ark of the 18
covenant of Yahweh came up from the Jordan, their feet had no sooner
touched the bank than the waters of the Jordan returned to their bed and ran
on overflowing as before.

Gilgal is reached[c]

It was the tenth day of the first month when the people came up from the 19
Ex 24:4 Jordan and made their camp at Gilgal, east of Jericho. •As for the twelve stones 20

21 that had been taken from the Jordan, Joshua set them up at Gilgal. •Then he
said to the Israelites, 'When your children in days to come ask their fathers,
22 "What is the meaning of these stones?" •tell them this, "You see the Jordan. =4:6-7
23 Israel crossed over it dry-shod, •because Yahweh your God dried up the waters
of the Jordan in front of you until you had crossed, just as Yahweh your God Ex 14:21
had done with the Sea of Reeds, which he dried up before us till we had crossed
24 it; •so that all the peoples of the earth may recognise how mighty the hand of 1 S 17:46
Yahweh is, and that you yourselves may always stand in awe of Yahweh your
God."'

The peoples west of the Jordan are terrified

1 5 When all the kings of the Amorites in the country west of Jordan and all
the kings of the Canaanites in the coastal region heard that Yahweh had
dried up the waters of the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed it,[a]
their hearts grew faint and their spirit failed them as the Israelites drew near. 2:11

The Hebrews are circumcised at Gilgal

2 At this time Yahweh said to Joshua, 'Make knives of flint and circumcise Gn17:10+
3 the Israelites again'.[b] •Joshua made knives of flint and circumcised the Israelites
on the Hill of Foreskins.
4 The reason why Joshua circumcised them was this. All the males of the people
who had come out of Egypt of age to bear arms had died in the wilderness on their
5 journey after leaving Egypt. •Now all the people who came out had been circum-
cised; but those who had been born in the wilderness—in the journey through
6 it when Egypt was left behind—none of these had been circumcised, •because
for forty years the Israelites travelled through the wilderness, until all the nation Nb14:20-35
had died out, that is, the men who had come out of Egypt of age to bear arms;
they had not obeyed the voice of Yahweh, and Yahweh had sworn to them never
to let them see the land that he had sworn to our fathers to give us, a land where Ex 3:8
7 milk and honey flow. •But in place of these he set their sons, and these it was
that Joshua circumcised, for they were uncircumcised, since they could not be
8 circumcised on the journey. •When the circumcising of the whole nation was
9 over, they stayed to rest in the camp till they were well again; •and Yahweh
said to Joshua, 'Today I have taken the shame of Egypt[c] away from you'. Hence 1 S 17:26
that place has been called Gilgal until now.[d]

The Passover kept

10 The Israelites pitched their camp at Gilgal and kept the Passover there on
11 the fourteenth day of the month, at evening in the plain of Jericho. •On the
morrow of the Passover they tasted the produce of that country, unleavened
12 bread and roasted ears of corn, that same day. •From that time, from their

d. This flood occurs in March and April when the snows of Hermon melt; this is harvest time in the lower Jordan valley.

e. According to an Arab historian, something similar happened in A.D. 1267: landslides dammed the river in this area (Adama-Damieh) for several hours.

4 a. 'from mid-Jordan, twelve stones' Greek.

b. The narrative shows signs of two distinct traditions which it has placed side by side. The first account, deriving from the sanctuary at Gilgal, connects the circles of stones that were to be seen there, 4:19+, with the crossing of the twelve tribes. The second account, 'Priestly' in origin, locates the twelve stones in the Jordan itself, so that henceforth they were invisible; this account evidently dates back to the time when the prophets were attacking the heterodox worship at Gilgal.

c. The word *gilgal* means 'ring of stones'; it was used as a proper name for several places, cf. Dt 11:30; 2 K 2:1. Joshua's Gilgal lies between the Jordan and Jericho at Khirbet En-Natale, about 2½ miles from the river. This ancient centre of worship became the chief sanctuary of Benjamin: the upright stones were said to be relics of the crossing of Jordan, 4:1-8,21-24; they served to mark the circumcising of the people and celebration of the first Passover in Canaan, 5:9-10, and also the solemn promise made to the Gibeonites, 9:15. This first camp west of Jordan remained the headquarters of the campaign, 10:6; 14:6. Gilgal was still an important centre of political and religious life in the days of Saul, cf. 1 S 11:15+. The prophets preached against the cult practised there, Ho 4:15; 9:15; 12:12; Am 4:4; 5:5.

5 a. 'they had' versions; 'we had' Hebr.

b. The author reckons the circumcision of the people at the time of the Exodus, v. 5, as the first. Hebr. here adds 'a second time'.

c. The 'shame' lies in being uncircumcised, as the author believes the Egyptians were.

d. Play on words: Gilgal is connected with *galal* (to take, or roll, away).

Ex16:1+ first eating of the produce of that country, the manna stopped falling. And having manna no longer, the Israelites fed from that year onwards on what the land of Canaan yielded.[e]

C. THE CONQUEST OF JERICHO

Prelude: a theophany[f]

Nb22:23 1Ch21:16 When Joshua was near Jericho, he raised his eyes and saw a man standing 13
there before him, grasping a naked sword. Joshua walked towards him and said
Ex 23:20 Dn 12:1 Rv19:11-16 to him, 'Are you with us or with our enemies?' •He answered, 'No, I am captain 14
of the army of Yahweh, and now I come...' Joshua fell on his face to the ground
and worshipped him and said, 'What are my Lord's commands to his servant?'
Ex 3:5 Ex19:12+ The captain of the army of Yahweh answered Joshua, 'Take your sandals off 15
your feet, for the place you are standing on is holy'. And Joshua obeyed.

The taking of Jericho[a]

2M12:15 6 Now Jericho had been carefully barricaded against the Israelites; no one came 1
out, no one went in. •Then Yahweh said to Joshua, 'Now I am delivering 2
Jericho and its king into your hands. All you fighters, •valiant warriors, will 3
march round the town and make the circuit once, and for six days you will do
the same thing. •(But seven priests will carry seven trumpets in front of the ark.) 4
On the seventh day you will go seven times round the town (and the priests will
blow their trumpets). •When the ram's horn rings out (when you hear the sound 5
of the trumpet), the whole people must utter a mighty war cry[b] and the town
wall will collapse then and there; then the people can storm the town, each man
going straight ahead.'

Joshua son of Nun (called the priests and said to them, 'Take up the ark 6
of the covenant, and seven priests are to carry seven trumpets of ram's horn in
front of the ark of Yahweh'. •He) said to the people, 'Forward! March round 7
the town (and let the vanguard march before the ark of Yahweh).' •All was done 8
Dt 9:3 as Joshua ordered the people. (Seven priests carrying the seven trumpets
of ram's horn in front of Yahweh moved onwards and blew their trumpets; the
ark of the covenant of Yahweh came behind them, •the vanguard marched in 9
front of the priests with their trumpets, the rearguard followed behind the ark;
the men marched, the trumpets sounded.)

Joshua had given the people the following order: 'Do not shout, do not utter 10
even a word; let nothing be heard from you till the day when I say: Raise the
war cry. Then you are to shout.'

(At Joshua's command, the ark of Yahweh went round the town and made 11
the circuit once; then they returned to the camp and spent the night there.)
Joshua rose early (and the priests took up the ark of Yahweh. •Bearing the 12 13
seven ram's horn trumpets, the seven priests walked before the ark of Yahweh
sounding their trumpets as they went, while the vanguard marched before
them and the rearguard behind the ark of Yahweh, and the march went on to
the sound of the trumpet.)

They marched once round the town (on the second day) and returned to the 14
camp, and so on for six days. •On the seventh day they rose at dawn and marched 15
seven times round the town in the same manner. Only on that day did they march
round seven times. •At the seventh time (the priests blew their trumpets and) 16
Joshua said to the people, 'Raise the war cry, because Yahweh has given the
town into your hands.

Jericho placed under the ban[c]

Lv27:28-29 Dt 13:16 Jdt 16:19 1 M 5:5 'The town and everything inside it must be set apart for Yahweh under a ban; 17
only the life of Rahab the harlot is to be spared, with all who are in her house,

18 since she hid the messengers we sent. •But beware of the ban yourselves; do not be covetous and take anything that is under the ban; that would lay the
19 whole camp of Israel open to the same ban and bring disaster on it. •All the silver and all the gold, all the things of bronze and things of iron are consecrated to Yahweh and must be put into his treasury.'
20 The people shouted, the trumpets sounded. When they heard the sound of the trumpet, the people raised a mighty war cry and the wall collapsed then and there. At once the people stormed the town, every man going straight ahead;
21 and they captured the town. •They enforced the ban on everything in the town: men and women, young and old, even the oxen and sheep and donkeys, massacring them all.

Jr 25:9;▲ 31:40;▲ 50:26;▲ 51:3 ▲ Heb 11:31 ▲ 7:1-26

↗ Heb 11:30

Rahab's house preserved 2:1-21

22 Joshua said to the two men who had reconnoitred the country, 'Go into the harlot's house, and bring out the woman with all who belong to her, so as to
23 keep your oath to her'. •The young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out all her clansmen too and set them in safety outside the camp
24 of Israel. •They burned the town and all within it except the silver and gold and things of bronze and iron; these they put into the treasury of Yahweh's house.
25 But Rahab the harlot, her father's household and all who belonged to her, these Joshua spared. She has dwelt among Israel until now, because she concealed the messengers Joshua sent to reconnoitre Jericho.

Jg 1:25

A curse upon Jericho's restorer

26 At that time Joshua made them take this oath before Yahweh:

> 'Cursed be any man who comes forth
> and builds this town up again!
> On his eldest son he shall lay its foundations,
> on his youngest set up its gates.'

↗ 1K 16:34

27 Yahweh was with Joshua, and Joshua's fame spread all through the country. 1:5+

The ban defied

1 7 But the sons of Israel incurred guilt by violating the ban. Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, laid his hands on something that fell under the ban, and the anger of Yahweh flared out against the Israelites.

6:18; 22:20 1 K 8:33 1 Ch 2:7

The sacrilege punished by a repulse at Ai

2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai,[a] east of Bethel; his command was: 'Go up and reconnoitre the country'. The men went up and reconnoitred Ai.

Jg 1:22 1 S 13:5 Ho 4:15

e. The eating of unleavened bread and roasted corn (marking the arrival of Israel in an agricultural country) took on a religious character because of the Passover, which in turn required circumcision. The ceasing of the manna indicated that the desert period was over.

f. Vv. 13-15 are the remains of a lost tradition: this theophany consisted of a revelation and instructions to Joshua, v. 14; these doubtless concerned the conquest, conceived of as Yahweh's personal undertaking. There is perhaps a relationship between this and the similarly isolated passage of Jg 2:1-5. There is certainly a further parallel with the Exodus: the scene recalls the Burning Bush and the commission of Moses.

6 a. The narrative as it stands unites two different tactical approaches: one is a perambulation of the walls in silence followed by the great war cry; the other is a procession with the ark to the sound of the sacred trumpets, to show that God is with Israel, cf. 1 S 4:3f. These two accounts evidently derive from separate traditions. The second of the two is bracketed in the text.

b. On this sacred war cry, cf. Nb 10:5+.

c. The 'ban', *herem* in Hebr., makes over all that is captured to God; hence men and animals are killed and booty given to the sanctuary. The ban is a religious act, a rule for holy war, and may either depend on a divine command, Dt 7:1-2; 20:13f; 1 S 15:3, or on a vow made to assure victory, Nb 21:2. Failure to observe it is sacrilege and its punishment is severe, Jos 7, cf. 1 S 15:16-23, though the regulation is sometimes qualified, Nb 31:15-23; Dt 2:34-35; 3:6-7; 20:13-14; Jos 8:26-27. The conception of God as a merciful father will later correct this primitive interpretation of his absolute dominion, cf. Ws 1:13 and especially the N.T., Mt 5:44-45.

7 a. 'to Ai' Greek; the Hebr. adds 'which is near Beth-aven' ('house of nothingness'), a gloss which calls Bethel by its later, insulting, name, Ho 4:15 etc. and cf. Am 5:5. Ai (meaning 'the ruin') is the modern et-Tell ('ruin' in Arabic). In the times of Joshua the place was in ruins but could serve as a defensive position for the people of the district (Bethel).

They came back to Joshua and said, 'There is no need for all the people to go up; let some two or three thousand men go and attack Ai. Spare the whole people such a toil; the enemy are not many.' •Some three thousand men of the people marched up to Ai, but broke before the townsmen. •These killed some thirty-six of them and drove the men back from the town gate to Shebarim; there on the slope they made havoc of them. Then the people lost heart and their courage melted away.

Joshua's prayer

Joshua tore his garments and prostrated himself before the ark of Yahweh till nightfall; the elders of Israel did as he did, and all poured dust on their heads.
Ex32:11-14 And Joshua said, 'Alas, Lord Yahweh, why did you bring this nation across the Jordan only to deliver us into the power of the Amorite and destroy us? I wish we had won a place to live in on the other side of the Jordan! •Forgive me, Lord, but what can I say, now that Israel has turned its back on the enemy? The Canaanites will hear of it, and all the inhabitants of the country; they will unite against us to wipe our name off the face of the earth. What are you going to do for your great name?'

Yahweh's answer

Yahweh answered Joshua, 'Stand up! Why are you lying prostrate like this? Israel has sinned; they have violated the covenant I ordained for them. Yes, they have taken what was under the ban, stolen and hidden it and put it into their baggage. •That is why the sons of Israel cannot stand up to their foes; why they have turned their backs on their enemies, because they have come under the ban themselves. I will be with you no longer unless you remove what is under the ban from among you.[b]

'Rise and call the people together and say to them, "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because Yahweh the God of Israel declares: The ban is now among you, Israel; you can never stand up to your enemies until you take what is under
1S14:40-42 the ban from among you". •In the morning therefore you will come forward tribe by tribe, and then the tribe that Yahweh marks out by lot will come forward clan by clan, and the clan that Yahweh marks out by lot will come forward family by family, and the family that Yahweh marks out by lot[c] will come forward man by man. •And then the man taken with the thing that is banned is to be delivered over to the fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has violated the covenant with Yahweh and committed an infamy in Israel.'

Ac5:1-10 **The culprit brought to light and punished**

1 S 10:20 Ac5:1-10 Joshua rose early; he made Israel come forward tribe by tribe, and the lot marked out the tribe of Judah. •He called up to him the clans of Judah, and the lot marked out the clan of Zerah. He called up the clan of Zerah, family by family, and Zabdi was marked out. •Then Joshua called up the family of Zabdi, man by man, and it was Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, who was chosen by the lot.

1 S 6:5 Then Joshua said to Achan, 'My son, give glory to Yahweh the God of Israel, and pay him homage; tell me what you have done and hide nothing from me'. Achan answered Joshua, 'Yes, I am the man who has sinned against Yahweh the God of Israel, and this is what I have done. •When I saw among the spoil a fine robe from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and an ingot of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden there in the ground inside my tent, and the silver is underneath.'

Joshua sent out messengers; they ran to the tent, and the robe was indeed hidden inside the tent, and the silver was underneath. •They took everything from inside the tent and brought it to Joshua and the elders of Israel and laid it out before Yahweh.

24 Then Joshua took Achan son of Zerah, with the silver and the robe and the Ho 2:17
ingot of gold and led him up to the Vale of Achor—and with him his sons and
daughters, his oxen and donkeys and sheep, his tent and everything that belonged
to him. All Israel went with him.
25 Joshua said, 'Why did you bring evil on us? May Yahweh bring evil on you
today!' And all Israel stoned him.[d]
26 A great cairn was reared over him,[e] which is still there today. Then Yahweh
ceased from his burning anger. It was then that the place was given the name,
the Vale of Achor,[f] which it is still called now.

D. THE TAKING OF AI

The command given to Joshua

1 8 Then Yahweh said to Joshua, 'Be fearless now, and be confident. Take all Jg 20:29
your fighting men with you, and march out against Ai. I will put into your
2 power the king of Ai, his people, his town and his territory. •You are to do with
Ai and its king as you did with Jericho and its king. As regards booty, you
may take the goods and the cattle—no more. Take up a concealed position
against the city, to the rear of it.'

Joshua's stratagem

3 Joshua prepared to march against Ai with all the fighting men. He chose
4 thirty thousand men from among the bravest and sent them out by night •after
giving them these instructions, 'Listen! You are to take up a concealed position
against the town, but at the rear not far from the town, and mind you all keep
5 alert! •I and all the people with me will go forward till we are near the town, and
when the people of Ai come out against us as they did the first time, we will
6 run before them. •Then they will follow close behind us, and we shall draw them
away from the town, because they will think, "They are running from us as they
7 did last time". •Then you will rise from your concealed position and seize the
8 town; Yahweh your God will deliver it into your hands. •When you have captured
the town, set fire to it. These orders must be carried out. See to it! The orders
9 come from me.' •Joshua sent them off, and they made their way to the concealed
position, at a point between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai. Joshua spent the
10 night among the people, •then, rising early next day, mustered the people and
marched on Ai; he and the elders of Israel marched at the head of the people.
11 All the warriors with him marched up towards the front of the town; they pitched
12 camp north of Ai, with the ravine between Joshua and the town. •He took some
five thousand men[a] and concealed these between Bethel and Ai, to the west of
13 the town. •The people pitched their camp north of the town, while the concealed
position lay to the west. Joshua spent that night in the valley itself.

The battle of Ai

14 When the king of Ai saw how things lay, he and all his people hurried out
to engage Israel on the slope facing the Arabah; he did not know that an ambush
15 had been laid against him to the rear of the town. •Joshua and all Israel with him

b. The violation of the 'anathema', or 'ban', is a sacrilege, 6:17+, and the whole community is contaminated (it becomes 'anathema') by the presence of the booty that has been pilfered. The community can only be released from the effects of the ban, when these have been executed on the guilty individual.

c. Cf. Saul designated king by lot, 1 S 10:20-21, and Jonathan found guilty, 1 S 14:40-42. Explicitly in the latter case, and probably in others, identification was effected by the sacred lots, used for consulting God, cf. 1 S 2:28+; 14:41+. Cf. also Jon 1:7.

d. The Hebr. adds 'and they burned them with fire and stoned them', referring respectively to Achan's goods and family.

e. A felon's burial, cf. the king of Ai, 8:29, Absalom, 2 S 18:17, and the similar treatment of the five Canaanite kings, Jos 10:27.

f. Cf. Is 65:10; Ho 2:17. The name is here explained by *'achar*, 'to bring misfortune', v. 25.

8 a. This figure is more realistic than the 30,000 of v. 3.

let themselves be driven back, taking flight towards the wilderness. •All the people who were in the town followed them in loud pursuit, and in pursuing Joshua they left the town itself unguarded. •Not a man was left behind in Ai,[b] all had gone out in pursuit of Israel; and in pursuing Israel they left the town undefended.

8:26 Ex17:8-15 2K13:14-19 Then Yahweh said to Joshua, 'Point the javelin in your hand at Ai; for I am about to put the town in your power'. Then Joshua pointed the javelin in his hand towards the town.[c] •No sooner had he stretched out his hand than the men in ambush rose quickly from their position, ran forward and entered the town; they captured it and quickly set it on fire.

Disaster for the people of Ai

When the men of Ai looked back, they saw smoke rising from the town into the sky. None of them had the chance to run one way rather than another, for the people fleeing towards the wilderness turned back on their pursuers. •For when Joshua and all Israel saw that the town had been seized by the men in ambush, and saw the smoke rising from the town into the sky, they turned round and attacked the men of Ai. •The others came out from the town to engage them, so that the men of Ai found themselves surrounded by Israelites, some on this side and some on that. These set about them till not one was alive and none left to flee; but the king of Ai was captured alive, and brought to Joshua. •When Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the open ground and where they followed them into the wilderness, and when all to a man had fallen by the edge of the sword, all Israel returned to Ai and slaughtered all its people •The number of those who fell that day, men and women together, was twelve thousand, all people of Ai.

The ban; the destruction of the town

8:18-19 Joshua did not draw back the hand with which he had pointed the javelin until he had dealt with all the dwellers in Ai as with men under a ban. For booty, Israel took only the cattle and the spoils of the town, according to the order Yahweh had given to Joshua. •Then Joshua burned Ai, making it a ruin for evermore, a desolate place even today. •He hanged the king of Ai 10:27 Dt21:22-23 2S18:17 from a tree till evening; but at sunset Joshua ordered his body to be taken down from the tree. It was then thrown down at the entrance to the town gate and 7:26 a great cairn was reared over it; and that is still there today.

E. SACRIFICE ON MOUNT EBAL: THE LAW READ THERE[d]

The altar of undressed stones

Then Joshua built an altar to Yahweh the God of Israel on Mount Ebal, as Moses, Yahweh's servant, had ordered the sons of Israel, as is written Ex20:25+ Dt27:4-7 in the Book of the Law of Moses, 'an altar of undressed stones that no iron tool has ever worked'. On this they offered holocausts to Yahweh and offered communion sacrifices as well.

The reading of the Law

Dt27:2-4,8 There Joshua wrote on the stones a copy of the Law which Moses had written Dt27:9-26 for the Israelites. •Then, on both sides of the ark, and facing the levitical priests Jg 9:7 who carried the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, all Israel with their elders and scribes and judges—strangers as well as Israelites born—all took their places, Dt 11:29 half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half in front of Mount Ebal,[e] as Moses the servant of Yahweh had ordered originally for the blessing of the people of Israel. •After this, Joshua read all the words of the Law—the blessing and the cursing—exactly as it stands written in the Book of the Law. •Of every

word laid down by Moses there was not one left unread by Joshua in the presence of the full assembly of Israel, with the women and children there, and the strangers living among the people.

F. THE TREATY BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE GIBEONITES

A coalition against Israel

1 9 Hearing these things, all the kings on this side of the Jordan, in the highlands Jg 1:9
and in the lowlands, all along the coast of the Great Sea towards Lebanon,
the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Dt 7:1+
2 Jebusites, •formed an alliance to fight together against Joshua and Israel.

The ruse of the Gibeonites[a]

3 When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and 10:6
4 to Ai, •they decided to resort to trickery. They set out provided with supplies, 2 S 21:2
having loaded their donkeys with old sacks and with old wineskins that had
5 burst and been sewn up again. •The sandals on their feet were worn out and
patched, the garments they wore were threadbare. The bread they took with
them to eat was all dry and crumbling.
6 They came to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, and speaking to him and the men
of Israel, they said, 'We come from a distant country, so make a treaty with us'.
7 The men of Israel answered these Hivites, 'It may be that you live in our neigh-
8 bourhood; how then can we make a treaty with you?' •They answered Joshua,
'We are your servants'. But Joshua asked them, 'Who are you and where do you
9 come from?' •They answered, 'Your servants have come from a country very
far away, because of the fame of Yahweh your God; for we have heard of him 2:10
10 and all that he has done in Egypt •and all that he has done to the two Amorite
kings whose realm was beyond the Jordan, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og
11 the king of Bashan who lived at Ashtaroth. •Then our elders and all the
people of our country said to us, "Take provisions with you for the journey;
go to meet them and say to them: We are your servants; so make a treaty with
12 us". •Here is our bread; it was warm when we took it from home for our journey
the day we set out to come to you, and now you see it is dry and
13 crumbling. •These wineskins were new when we filled them; you see they have
burst; and our clothes and sandals are all worn out from travelling such a long
way.'
14 The leaders partook of the provisions they offered and did not consult the
15 oracle of Yahweh.[b] •Joshua granted them peace and made a treaty with
them guaranteeing their lives, and the leaders of the community ratified it by
oath.
16 Now it so happened that three days after the treaty had been made, it became
known that they were a neighbouring people whose home was in the midst of
17 Israel. •The Israelites set out from the camp and came to their towns,[c] which
18 were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. •The Israelites did not
attack them because the leaders of the community had sworn to them by Yahweh
the God of Israel, but the community grumbled at the leaders.

b. 'Ai' Greek; the Hebr. adds 'Bethel'.

c. Not merely a signal but a gesture effective in itself like that of Moses in Ex 17:9,11.

d. Vv. 30-35, interrupting the narrative of the conquest (in 9:6, Joshua is still at the camp at Gilgal), come from the deuteronomic editor; he owes vv. 32-35 to Dt 27 and vv. 30-31 to an independent tradition.

e. Carrying Dt 27 into effect, cf. Dt 11:29. The incident takes place west of Shechem which is overlooked on the north by Ebal, on the south by Gerizim. Later, possibly in the time of Nehemiah, the schismatic Samaritan temple was built on Gerizim; it was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, 2 M 6:2; cf. 5:23. Jesus alludes to the worship there, Jn 4:21.

9 a. The 'Gibeonites' live not only in Gibeon (el-Jib, N.W. of Jerusalem) but also in the three neighbouring towns named in v. 17. They constitute a non-Canaanite enclave, cf. 11:19, hence their isolation and their wish for an alliance with the Israelites.

b. The Israelite leaders eat Gibeonite food and *ipso facto* enter into an alliance with them, Gn 31:46f.

c. 'to their towns' Greek; Hebr. adds 'on the third day'.

The Gibeonites' place in the community

All the leaders declared in full assembly, 'Since we have sworn an oath to 19
them by Yahweh the God of Israel, we cannot touch them. •This is what we 20
will do with them: we will let them live, lest otherwise we bring the wrath on
Dt 29:10 ourselves because of the oath we swore to them.' •The leaders went on, 'Let 21
them live, but let them be wood-cutters and water-carriers in the service
of the whole community'. The community did[d] as the leaders had said. •Joshua 22
sent for the Gibeonites and asked them, 'Why did you trick us with those words,
"We live very far away", when in fact you live right among us? •From 23
now you are accursed, and you shall never cease being serfs, wood-cutters
and water-carriers in the house of my God.'[e] •They answered Joshua, 'We 24
did it because your servants had become convinced that Yahweh your God had
ordered Moses his servant to give you this whole country and destroy all
its inhabitants before you; also because, as you advanced on us, we were extremely
afraid that you would kill us. That was why we did this. •Now, see, we are in 25
your power; do with us whatever you think right and good.' •What he did with 26
them was this. He saved them from the hands of the Israelites, and they did not
kill them.[f] •But from that day forward, Joshua made them wood-cutters and 27
water-carriers for the community, and bound them, down to the present day,
to wait on Yahweh's altar wherever Yahweh might choose.

Ws 1:1,8

G. FIVE AMORITE KINGS FORM A COALITION[a] THE SOUTH OF PALESTINE IS SUBDUED

Five kings make war on Gibeon

10 Now it happened that Adoni-zedek the king of Jerusalem was told that 1
Joshua had conquered Ai and put the town under a ban, dealting with Ai and
its king as he had dealt earlier with Jericho and its king; and also that the
inhabitants of Gibeon had made their peace with Israel and entered their
community. •There was consternation at this, since Gibeon was as important 2
a town as one of the royal towns themselves, and larger than Ai, while all its citizens
Jg 1:5 were fighting men. •Then Adoni-zedek the king of Jerusalem sent word to Hoham 3
the king of Hebron, Piram the king of Jarmuth, Japhia the king of Lachish and
Debir the king of Eglon, •'Join me and help me to conquer Gibeon, because 4
it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites'. •The five Amorite kings 5
joined forces and set off together, that is, the king of Jerusalem, the king of
Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish and the king of Eglon, they
and all their armies with them; they besieged Gibeon and attacked it.

Joshua comes to the rescue of Gibeon

9:3-14 The men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, 'Do not 6
desert your servants; come up here quickly to save us and help us, because
all the Amorite kings living in the mountains have allied themselves against us'.
Joshua came up from Gilgal in person, bringing all the fighting men and all the 7
bravest of his army with him. •Yahweh said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid of 8
these men; I have delivered them into your power; not one of them will be
able to stand against you'. •Having marched from Gilgal throughout the night, 9
Joshua caught them unawares.

Si 46:4-6 **Aid from on high**

Js 5:20
Is 28:21 Yahweh drove them headlong before Israel, defeating them completely at 10
1 M 3:24 Gibeon; furthermore, he pursued them towards the descent of Beth-horon and
harassed them as far as Azekah, and as far as Makkedah. •And as they fled 11
Ex 9:18-26
Jb 38:22-23
Is 28:17;
30:30 from Israel down the descent of Beth-horon,[b] Yahweh hurled huge hailstones
from heaven on them all the way to Azekah, which killed them. More of them

12 died under the hailstones than at the edge of Israel's sword. •Then Joshua spoke
to Yahweh, the same day that Yahweh delivered the Amorites to the Israelites.
Joshua declaimed:[c]

'Sun, stand still over Gibeon,
and, moon, you also, over the Vale of Aijalon'.
13 And the sun stood still, and the moon halted, Sl 46:4 Hab3:11-12
till the people had vengeance on their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of the Just?[d] The sun stood still in the middle
14 of the sky and delayed its setting for almost a whole day. •There was never a 2K20:10-11
day like that before or since, when Yahweh obeyed the voice of a man, for
15 Yahweh was fighting for Israel. •Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, returned
to the camp at Gilgal.[e]

The five kings in the cave at Makkedah

16 As for those five kings, they had fled and hidden in the cave of Makkedah,
17 and news of this was brought to Joshua. 'The five kings' the message ran 'have
18 been found hiding in the cave at Makkedah.' •Joshua answered, 'Roll great
19 stones to the mouth of the cave and post men there to keep guard. •And you,
do not stay there idle; pursue the enemy, cut off their line of retreat and do not
let them enter their towns, for Yahweh your God has put them in your power.'
20 When Joshua and the sons of Israel had routed them completely and were near
to slaughtering the last of them, the survivors who had escaped alive took refuge
21 in their fortresses. •The people came back to Joshua's camp at Makkedah; they were
all safe and sound, and no one dared to attempt anything against the Israelites.
22 Then Joshua said, 'Clear the mouth of the cave, and bring the five kings out
23 to me'. •They did so, bringing him the five kings from the cave; the king of
Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish and
24 the king of Eglon. •When these kings had been brought to him, Joshua assembled
all the men of Israel and said to the officers of the men of war who had fought
with him, 'Come forward and put your feet on the necks of these kings!' They Ps 110:1
25 came forward and put their feet on their necks. •'Do not be afraid; have
confidence,' Joshua went on 'be resolute, for this is how Yahweh shall deal
26 with all the enemies you fight.' •With this Joshua struck and killed them and
had them hanged on five trees; they hung there till evening.
27 At the hour of sunset Joshua gave his order; they were taken down from 8:29+ 2 S 18:17
the trees and thrown into the cave where they had been hiding. Great stones
were laid at the mouth of the cave, and these are still there today.

The conquest of the southern towns of Canaan[f]

28 The same day, Joshua took Makkedah, striking the town and its king with
the edge of the sword; he delivered them over to the ban, with every living
creature there, and let no one escape; and he treated the king of Makkedah
as he had treated the king of Jericho.

d. 'The community did' added with Greek.

e. Cf. 1 K 9:20-21, and especially the two classes of menials in the pre-exilic Temple, the *Nethinim* and the *Servants of Solomon*, Ezr 2:43+.

f. The violation of this treaty by Saul was expiated in the reign of David, 2 S 21:1-14.

10 a. Ch. 10 and 11 are different in literary form from the preceding ch.: the conquest of the whole south, and after this of the whole north, of the land, effected by all the united tribes under Joshua's leadership, is described as the result of two expeditions against the allied Canaanite kings. This is at variance with other passages of this book, 13:1-6; 14:6-13; 15:13-19; 17:12,16, and also with the outline at the beginning of Judges, Jg 1, in which the conquest is seen to be slow and incomplete, with each tribe acting for itself. This latter presentation is closer to the historical fact, but the Book of Joshua, to give an overall picture of the conquest, associates events with Joshua with which he had nothing to do, or which took place after his time.

b. The regular route for invaders, cf. Saul's pursuit of the Philistines, 1 S 14:23,31.

c. Greek; the Hebr. adds 'in the sight of Israel'. Two lines from a popular song enable the narrator to develop his story in the epic manner. They were originaly a rhetorical appeal for time to secure victory, cf. 1 S 14:24.

d. An ancient collection of poems now lost; it is quoted again in 2 S 1:18.

e. In v. 21, on the other hand, the camp is at Makkedah, south of Azekah, v.10—an indication of the composite nature of this ch.

f. Note the formal presentation of this material, cf. 10:1+.

Joshua, and all Israel with him, went on from Makkedah to Libnah and 29
attacked it. •This, too, with its king, Yahweh gave into the power of Israel; 30
and Israel struck every living creature there with the edge of the sword, and
left none alive, and treated its king like the king of Jericho.

Joshua, and all Israel with him, went on from Libnah to Lachish, and besieged 31
it and attacked it. •Yahweh gave Lachish into the power of Israel and Israel 32
took it on the second day and struck it and every living creature there with the
Jg 1:29+ edge of the sword, as they had treated Libnah. •Then Horam the king of Gezer 33
marched up to help Lachish, but Joshua struck him and his people down until
not one was left alive.

Joshua, and all Israel with him, went on from Lachish to Eglon. They besieged 34
it and attacked it. •They took it the same day and struck it with the edge of the 35
sword. Every living creature there he delivered over to the ban that day, as he
had treated Lachish.

Jg 1:10-15 Joshua, and all Israel with him, went on up from Eglon to Hebron. They 36
14:12f; 15:13-14 attacked it, •took it and struck it with the edge of the sword, with its king, all 37
the places belonging to it and every living creature in it. As he had treated Eglon,
so here, he left not a man alive. He delivered it over to the ban, with every living
creature in it.

15:15f Joshua, and all Israel with him, turned aside to Debir and attacked it. •He 38 39
took it and its king and all the places belonging to it; they struck them with
the edge of the sword, and every living creature there they delivered over to the
ban. He left none alive. As he had treated Hebron, as he had treated Libnah
and its king, so he treated Debir and its king.

The southern conquests recapitulated

Jg 1:9 Thus Joshua subdued the whole land: the highlands, the Negeb, the lowlands, 40
the hillsides, and all the kings in them. He left not a man alive and delivered
every single soul over to the ban, as Yahweh the God of Israel had commanded.
Joshua conquered them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and the whole region 41
of Goshen as far as Gibeon. •All these kings and their kingdoms Joshua mastered 42
in one campaign, because Yahweh the God of Israel fought for Israel. •And 43
then Joshua, and all Israel with him, returned to the camp at Gilgal.

H. THE CONQUEST OF THE NORTH[a]

A coalition of northern kings

11 When Jabin the king of Hazor[b] heard these things, he sent word of them 1
to Jobab the king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, the king of Achshaph
and the kings in the northern highlands and in the valley south of Chinneroth, 2
and those of the lowlands and the hillsides of Dor westwards. •Eastwards and 3
Dt 7:1+ westwards lived the Canaanite; in the highlands the Amorite and Hivite and
Perizzite and Jebusite; under Hermon the Hittite, in the land of Mizpah. •They 4
set out with all their troops, a horde as countless as the sands of the sea, with
innumerable horses and chariots.

The victory at Merom

These kings, having all agreed on a meeting place, came and encamped near 5
one another at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. •Then Yahweh said 6
2 S 8:4 to Joshua, 'Have no fear of these men, for by this time tomorrow Israel shall see
them all cut to pieces; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots'.
Joshua and all his warriors caught them unawares by the waters of Merom[c] 7
and fell on them. •Yahweh delivered them into the power of Israel, who defeated 8
them and pursued them to Sidon the Great and to Misrephoth-maim westwards
and to the Vale of Mizpah eastwards; Israel harried them till not one was left

9 to escape. •Joshua treated them as Yahweh had ordered; he hamstrung 2 S 8:4
their horses and burned their chariots.[d]

The capture of Hazor and of the other northern towns

10 Joshua then came back and captured Hazor, putting its king to the sword.
11 Hazor in earlier days was the capital of all these kingdoms. •And they put to
the sword every living creature there, because of the ban. Not a soul was left
12 there, and lastly Hazor was burned. •Joshua conquered all these royal cities
and their kings and struck them with the edge of the sword because of the ban,
as Moses the servant of Yahweh had ordered.
13 Yet of all these towns standing on their mounds Israel burned none, apart from
14 Hazor which Joshua gave to the flames. •As for the spoils of these towns and
the cattle, the Israelites took them for themselves. But they struck all the human
beings with the edge of the sword, and wiped them all out; they did not leave
one living soul.

The orders of Moses carried out by Joshua

15 What Yahweh had ordered his servant Moses, Moses in turn had ordered
Joshua, and Joshua carried it out, leaving nothing unaccomplished that
16 Yahweh had ordered Moses. •Thus Joshua mastered the whole country: the
highlands, the whole Negeb and the whole land of Goshen, the lowlands, the
Arabah, the highlands and the lowlands of Israel.
17 From Mount Halak, which rises towards Seir, to Baal-gad in the Vale of
Lebanon below Mount Hermon, he captured all their kings, struck them down
18 and slaughtered them. •For many a day Joshua had made war on all these kings;
19 no city had made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites who lived at Gibeon; 9:3+
20 all the rest they conquered in battle. •For Yahweh had ordained that the hearts Ex 4:21
of these men should be stubborn enough to fight against Israel, so that they
might be mercilessly delivered over to the ban and be wiped out, as Yahweh
had ordered Moses.[e]

The Anakim wiped out 15:13-14 Dt 2:10+ Jg 1:10-15+

21 Then Joshua came and wiped out the Anakim[f] from the highlands, from
Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the highlands of Judah and all the
22 highlands of Israel; he delivered them and their towns over to the ban. •No more
23 Anakim were left in Israelite territory except at Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. •Joshua Jr 47:5
mastered the whole country, just as Yahweh had told Moses, and he gave it Jg 3:11
to Israel as an inheritance according to their division by tribes.
And the country had rest from war.

I. RECAPITULATION

The kings conquered east of the Jordan

1 12 [a] These are the kings of the country whom the Israelites conquered and
despoiled of their kingdoms, beyond Jordan eastwards, from the wadi

11 a. See note on 10:1.
b. To the south-west of Lake Huleh, cf. 1 K 9:15; 2 K 15:29; Jr 49:28f. This Jabin of Hazor has been inopportunely introduced into the narrative of Jg 4.
c. The waters of Merom rose in a valley 4000 feet above sea level: an army with chariots would find no room for manœuvre.
d. David was to do the same, 2 S 8:4. Before the reign of Solomon the Israelite army had no chariots, 1 K 9:19; 10:26f.
e. Cf. Dt 7:2f and 20:16-18 where reasons for this massacre are given: the conquest is a holy war, the land of Yahweh must be purified of its pagan inhabitants, Israel is holy and therefore a people apart, Dt 7:6+, it must use no half-measures or its faith will be compromised. This did not in fact happen; cf. notes on Jos 10 and Jg 1. The reason for failure (the sins of Israel) and why God allowed it (to test his people) are explained in Jg 2:20-3:4 (see Jg 2:6+).
f. On the Anakim, see Dt 2:10+. This observation of the editor's does not square with Jos 15:13-14 where it is Caleb who conquers Hebron.
12 a. The whole of ch. 12 is the work of the deuteronomic editor.

Arnon to the mountain country of Hermon, with all the Arabah eastwards:
Sihon the king of the Amorites who lived at Heshbon ruled from Aroer on the 2
edge of the gorge of the Arnon (and with this went the bed of the gorge) over
half of Gilead to the wadi Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites, •and 3
eastwards over the Arabah to the Sea of Chinneroth on the one side, and to the
Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, towards Beth-jeshimoth where you come to
the foothills of Pisgah on the south.

Dt2:10+ Og, the king of Bashan, one of the last of the Rephaim, who lived at Ashtaroth 4
and Edrei, •ruled over Mount Hermon and over Salecah, and over the whole 5
of Bashan as far as the boundary of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and
Nb21:21-35 over half of Gilead to the boundary of Sihon the king of Heshbon. •Moses, the 6
servant of Yahweh, and with him the Israelites, had conquered these kings, and
Nb 32 Moses, the servant of Yahweh, had given their possessions to the Reubenites,
the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

The kings conquered west of the Jordan

And these are the kings of the country whom Joshua and the Israelites 7
conquered westwards of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the Vale of Lebanon to
Mount Halak rising towards Seir, and Joshua allotted their inheritance to the
tribes of Israel according to their divisions: •in the highlands and lowlands, in 8
the Arabah and on the hillsides, in the wilderness and the Negeb: in the territories
Dt 7:1+ of Hittite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizzite, Hivite and Jebusite:

	the king of Jericho,	one;	9
	the king of Ai near Bethel,	one;	
	the king of Jerusalem,	one;	10
	the king of Hebron,	one;	
	the king of Jarmuth,	one;	11
	the king of Lachish,	one;	
	the king of Eglon,	one;	12
Jg 1:29	the king of Gezer,	one;	
	the king of Debir,	one;	13
	the king of Geder,	one;	
	the king of Hormah,	one;	14
	the king of Arad,	one;	
	the king of Libnah,	one;	15
	the king of Adullam,	one;	
	the king of Makkedah,	one;	16
Jg1:22-26	the king of Bethel,	one;	
	the king of Tappuah,	one;	17
	the king of Hepher,	one;	
	the king of Aphek,	one;	18
	the king of Sharon,	one;	
	the king of Madon,	one;	19
	the king of Hazor,	one;	
	the king of Symoon,[b]	one;	20
	the king of Achshaph,	one;	
Jg1:27-28	the king of Taanach,	one;	21
	the king of Megiddo,	one;	
	the king of Kedesh,	one;	22
	the king of Jokneam in Carmel,	one;	
	the king of Dor on the hillsides of Dor,	one;	23
	the king of Goiim in Galilee,[c]	one;	
	the king of Tirzah,	one;	24
	Total number of all these kings:	thirty-one.	

II. THE APPORTIONING OF THE LAND AMONG THE TRIBES

Lands remaining unconquered[a]

23:1
Ezk47:13

1 13 Now Joshua had grown old and advanced in years. Yahweh said to him,
'You are old now and advanced in years, yet much of the country still
2 remains to be subdued. •This is the country remaining:

Jg 13:1
1S4:1;5:8
Ps 83:7
Ezk25:15
Am 1:6
Zp 2:4

'All the regions of the Philistines[b] and the whole country of the Geshurites;
3 from the Shihor, east of Egypt, to the boundary of Ekron northwards, the land
is counted as Canaanite. (The five chiefs of the Philistines are those of Gaza,
4 Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the Avvites are in •the south.) The whole
country of the Canaanites from Arah,[c] which the Sidonians hold, to Aphekah
5 and the boundary of the Amorites, •and then the country of the Gebalites with
all Lebanon eastwards from Baal-gad at the foot of Mount Hermon to the
Pass of Hamath.

‖Jg 3:3

6 'All who live in the highlands from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim
westwards—all the Sidonians—I myself will drive out before the Israelites. In the
meantime, share out the land by lot among the Israelites as I have ordered
7 you. •The time has come to divide this land among the nine tribes and the
half-tribe of Manasseh: from the Jordan to the Great Sea westwards you shall
give it to them; the Great Sea will mark their boundary.'[d]

23:5

A. THE TRIBES BEYOND THE JORDAN DESCRIBED[e]

Nb 32
Dt3:12-17

A general survey

8 As for the other half-tribe of Manasseh,[f] this and the Reubenites and Gadites
had already received the allotted inheritance given them by Moses beyond the
Jordan eastwards; Moses the servant of Yahweh had then assigned them
9 the country onward from Aroer, which lies on the edge of the wadi Arnon,
and from the town within the gorge itself; all the tableland from Medeba to
10 Dibon; •all the towns of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had reigned in
11 Heshbon, to the boundary of the Ammonites. •Then Gilead and the territory
of the Geshurites and Maacathites with all the highlands of Hermon and with
12 the whole of Bashan, including Salecah; •and in Bashan the whole kingdom
of Og, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei and was the last survivor of
13 the Rephaim. Moses had conquered and dispossessed these two kings. •But the
Israelites did not dispossess the Geshurites or the Maacathites, and therefore
14 Geshur and Maacah even now still form part of Israel. •To the tribe of Levi

13:33
Nb18:20
Dt 18:2

b. 'Symoon' Greek; 'Shimron-meron' Hebr.
c. 'Galilee' Greek; Hebr. has 'Gilgal'.

13 a. These places never became part of Israel although included in the ideal plan of the Holy Land (Jos 1:4) and in the outline of Nb 34:1-12; to the south, the Philistine territory and the Geshurites, cf. 1 S 27:8, and also the Avvites, cf. Dt 2:23; to the north, the territory of the Sidonians, i.e. Phoenicia. The section 13:1-7 is editorial and introduces the geographical document.

b. The Philistines originated in Caphtor, Dt 2:23; Am 9:7; Jr 47:4f, i.e. from Crete or Asia Minor. It is perhaps by anticipation that they are mentioned in Gn 21:32-34 and 26:1-18. It was not until about 1200 that they established a mass settlement in Palestine (named after them) on the maritime plain. V. 4 lists their five provinces, cf. Jg 3:3 and Jl 4:4. They were not Semites, nor did they practise circumcision. In the time of the Judges and of Saul they were bitter enemies of Israel; they were driven back by David, but maintained control of the coastal districts.

c. 'from Arah' conj.; Hebr. has 'and the cave'.

d. 'from the Jordan... boundary' is absent from Hebr.

e. This section gathers its data from Nb 32 and Dt 3:12-17; it adds place-names but, unlike the account of the tribes west of Jordan, it offers no description of the tribal territories. The Israelites themselves were not sure of the topography of these tribes, and Reuben and Gad are spoken of as a unity, Nb 32:1f; Dt 3:12; Jos 1:12, etc. It was not long before the two tribes shrank under pressure from Ammonite and Moabite expansion, cf. for Reuben Gn 49:4; Dt 33:6, for Gad Gn 49:19 and his absence from the Song of Deborah, Jg 5. The origins of the half-tribe of Manasseh are obscure; its settlement in Gilead was not perhaps as early as this but had some connexion with the episode of Jos 17:4f.

f. 'As for the other half-tribe of Manasseh' restored.

alone no inheritance was given; Yahweh the God of Israel was their inheritance,[g] as he had told them.

Gn49:3-4 Dt 33:6 **The tribe of Reuben**

Moses had given the tribe of the sons of Reuben a portion according to their 15
clans. •Thus the land they received stretched from Aroer, on the edge of the 16
wadi Arnon, and the town within the gorge itself, and all the tableland up to
Jr 48:21 Medeba, •and Heshbon and all the towns on the tableland: Dibon, Bamoth-baal, 17
Beth-baal-meon, •Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, •Kiriathaim, Sibmah and 18 19
Zereth-shahar in the highlands of Gor; •Beth-peor, the slopes of Pisgah, 20
Beth-jeshimoth, •all the towns on the tableland and the whole kingdom of Sihon 21
the king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon; he had been defeated by
Ex2:15+ Moses, and with him the princes of Midian, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba,
Nb22:2+; 31:8 vassals of Sihon who used to live in this country. •As for Balaam son of Beor, 22
the soothsayer, the Israelites had put him to the sword with others they had
slaughtered. •Thus the land of the Reubenites stretched to the Jordan. This was 23
the inheritance of the sons of Reuben according to their clans, with the towns
and their outlying villages.

Gn49:19 Dt33:20-21 1 Ch5:11 **The tribe of Gad**

Moses had given the tribe of Gad, the sons of Gad, a portion according to 24
their clans. •The land they received was Jazer, all the towns of Gilead, half the 25
country of the Ammonites as far as Aroer facing Rabbah, •and from Heshbon 26
to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim as far as the territory
of Lo-debar, •and lastly, in the valley: Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and 27
Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon the king of Heshbon. The Jordan was
their boundary to the lower end of the Sea of Chinnereth, on the eastern side
of the Jordan. •This was the inheritance of the sons of Gad according to their 28
clans, with the towns and their outlying villages.

The half-tribe of Manasseh

Moses had given the half-tribe of the sons of Manasseh[h] a portion according 29
to their clans. •The land they received stretched from Mahanaim right through 30
Bashan, with the whole kingdom of Og the king of Bashan and all the Encamp-
ments of Jair in Bashan, sixty towns. •Half of Gilead, with Ashtaroth and Edrei, 31
the royal cities of Og in Bashan, were allotted to the sons of Machir son of
Manasseh, to half of the sons of Machir according to their clans.

This was the apportioning made by Moses in the plains of Moab, beyond the 32
13:14 Jordan and facing Jericho eastwards. •But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given 33
no inheritance; Yahweh the God of Israel is their inheritance, as he has told
them.

B. THE THREE GREAT TRIBES WEST OF JORDAN DESCRIBED[a]

Introduction

14 These are the portions that the Israelites received as an inheritance in the 1
land of Canaan, assigned to them by Eleazar the priest and by Joshua son
of Nun and by the heads of the families of the tribes of Israel. •They made the 2
apportionment by lot,[b] as Yahweh had ordered through Moses for the nine
tribes and the half-tribe. •Moses had given the two-and-a-half tribes beyond the 3
Nb35:1-8 21 Jordan their own inheritance but had given the Levites no inheritance among
them. •The sons of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. No portion 4
in the land was given the Levites except certain towns to live in, with the pasture
Nb 34 lands adjoining for their cattle and property. •In apportioning the land, the 5
Israelites did as Yahweh had ordered Moses to do.

The portion of Caleb[c]

6 Certain sons of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh
the Kenizzite said to him, 'You know what Yahweh said to Moses the man Nb13-14
7 of God at Kadesh-barnea concerning you and me. •I was forty years old when
Moses the servant of Yahweh sent me from Kadesh-barnea to reconnoitre this
8 country, and of this I most faithfully made report to him. •But the brothers who
had gone up with me discouraged the people, whereas I myself did the whole
9 will of Yahweh my God. •That day Moses swore this oath, "Be sure of this,
that the land your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your
children for ever, because you have done the whole will of Yahweh my God".
10 From then till now, Yahweh has kept me alive in accordance with his promise. 23:1 Nb14:38
It is forty-five years since Yahweh made this promise to Moses (it was while
Israel was journeying through the wilderness), and now I am eighty-five years
11 old. •Today I am still as strong as the day when Moses sent me out on that Sl46:9-10
12 errand; for fighting, for going and coming, I am as strong now as then. •It is
time you gave me the highlands that Yahweh promised me then. You heard 10:37 Nb14:24
then how it was peopled by the Anakim and how its towns were great and Dt2:10+
strong. If Yahweh is with me, I shall drive them out as Yahweh said.'
13 Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as an inheritance. 15:13-19; 21:12
14 And hence Hebron down to the present day has remained the possession of Jg1:10-15
Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, because he did the whole will of Yahweh
15 the God of Israel. •The name of Hebron in earlier times was Kiriath-arba. Arba 15:14 Jg 3:11
had been the greatest man of the Anakim.

And the country had rest from war.

The tribe of Judah Gn49:8-12 Dt 33:7

1 15 The portion falling to the tribe of the sons of Judah according to their Ezk47:19
clans was near the boundary of Edom, from the wilderness of Zin to
2 Kadesh south-westwards. •Their southern boundary began at the end of the
3 Salt Sea, at the bay that faces south; •it proceeded south of the Ascent of Akrabbim, Jg1:36+
crossed through Zin and up to the south of Kadesh-barnea, passed Hezron,
4 went up to Addar and from there turned to Karka, •skirted Azmon, came out
at the wadi of Egypt and ended at the sea. This will be your southern boundary.
5 Eastwards, the boundary was the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan.
6 The boundary to the north began at the bay at the mouth of the Jordan. •This
boundary went up to Beth-hoglah, passed along north of Beth-arabah and
7 reached the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben. •The boundary went up to Debir
from the Vale of Achor and turned[a] towards the circle of stones opposite the
Ascent of Adummim, south of the wadi; the boundary went on to the waters
8 of En-shemesh and ended at En-rogel. •Then it went on up the wadi Ben- 18:16 Jg 19:10
hinnom, coming from the south to the flank of the Jebusite,[b] that is to say Is 17:5
Jerusalem, and climbed to the crest of the mountain barring the wadi Hinnom,
9 westward and at the northern end of the plain of Rephaim. •From the mountain 2 S 6:2
top the boundary bent towards the source of the Waters of Nephtoah, passed
from there towards Mount Ephron and then turned towards Baalah, that is to

g. 'Yahweh was' Greek; 'the burnt offerings for Yahweh were' Hebr.

h. A gloss adds, at the beginning of the v. 'to the half-tribe of the sons of Manasseh'.

14 a. The long section 14:1-19:49 combines several documents: a pre-monarchical description of tribal boundaries and also lists of towns, especially detailed in the cases of Judah (Simeon) and Benjamin. These documents, joined together and annotated (with echoes of Jg 1 in particular), give a picture of the occupation of the country under the leadership of Joshua.

b. 'they made the apportionment' Greek.

c. Caleb was a Kenizzite, vv. 6 and 14—not an Israelite therefore, cf. Nb 24:21+. His clan came from southern Palestine, cf. 'the Negeb of Caleb', 1 S 30:14; from Kadesh onwards, Nb 13-14, we find Caleb's clan associated with Israel and in particular with Judah. It occupied the Hebron district, 14:14; 15:13-19; Jg 1:12-15, and was absorbed by Judah, cf. the genealogies in 1 Ch 2:8,42;4:11 The clan may have entered Canaan from the south with other Israelite or assimilated groups, cf. Nb 20:12+.

15 a. Hebr. adds 'to the north'.

b. The 'flank' or 'shoulder' of the Jebusite, cf. 18:16, is the slope of the hill on which ancient Jerusalem stood, cf. 2 S 5:9+.

Jg 14:1 say, Kiriath-jearim. •From Baalah the boundary bent westwards to the mountain 10
country of Seir, skirted the northern slope of Mount Jearim, that is to say
Chesalon, went down to Beth-shemesh and through Timnah, •reached the north 11
side of Ekron, turned towards Shikkeron, passed by the Hill of Baalah, then on
to Jabneel, and ended at the sea. •The western boundary was the Great Sea 12
itself. This was the boundary that enclosed the lands assigned to the clans of the
sons of Judah.

14:6+ ‖Jg 1:10-15 **The Calebites occupy the territory of Hebron**

10:37; 11:21f; 14:13f Caleb son of Jephunneh was given a portion among the sons of Judah in 13
accordance with the order given by Yahweh to Joshua. Joshua gave him
Kiriath-arba,[c] the chief city of the Anakim, which is now Hebron. •Caleb drove 14
the three sons of Anak out of it: Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai, descended from
10:38 Anak. •From there he marched up against the inhabitants of Debir, the name 15
1 Ch 2:49 of which was once Kiriath-sepher. •Then Caleb said, 'To the man who conquers 16
and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will give my daughter Achsah to wife'. •The man 17
who captured it was Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's brother; Caleb gave him
his daughter Achsah to wife. •When she came to her husband, he urged her[d] 18
to ask her father for a field. Then she jumped down from her donkey, and Caleb
asked her, 'What do you want?' •She answered, 'Grant me a favour; since you 19
have banished me to the wilderness of the Negeb, at least grant me some springs
of water'. So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Judah according to their 20
clans.

Names of places possessed by the tribe of Judah

These are the furthermost towns of the tribe of the sons of Judah, towards 21
the boundary of Edom in the Negeb: Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, •Kinah, Dimon, 22
Adadah, •Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, •Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, •Hazor-hadattah, 23,24 25
Kerioth-hezron (that is to say, Hazor), •Amam, Shema, Moladah, •Hazar- 26 27
gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet, •Hazar-shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, •Baalah, Iim, 28 29
Ezem, •Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, •Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, •Lebaoth, 30,31 32
Shilhim, En-rimmon.

In all, twenty-nine towns, with their outlying villages.

Jg 13:2 In the lowlands: 33
Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, •Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah, Enam, •Jarmuth, 34 35
Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, •Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, Gederothaim; fourteen 36
towns with their villages.

Mi 1:11 Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad, •Dilean, Mizpeh, Joktheel, •Lachish, Bozkath, 37,38 39
Mi 1:13 Eglon, •Cabbon, Lahmas, Chitlish, •Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, Makkedah: 40 41
sixteen towns with their villages.

Libnah, Ether, Ashan, •Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, •Keilah, Achzib, Mareshah: 42,43 44
nine towns with their villages.

Ekron, with its towns and outlying villages. •From Ekron to the sea, everything 45 46
to the side of Ashdod, with its villages. •Ashdod with its towns and outlying 47
villages; Gaza with its towns and outlying villages as far as the wadi of Egypt;
the Great Sea marks the boundary.

In the highlands: 48
Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, •Dannah, Kiriath-sannah, which is now Debir, •Anab, 49 50
Eshtemoh, Anim, •Goshen, Holon, Giloh: eleven towns with their villages. 51
Arab, Dumah, Eshan, •Janum, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah, •Humtah, Kiriath-arba, 52,53 54
which is now Hebron, Zior: nine towns with their villages. •Maon, Carmel, 55
Ziph, Juttah, •Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, •Kain, Gibeah, Timnah: ten towns 56 57
with their villages.

Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, •Maarath, Beth-anoth, Eltekon: six towns with their 58 59
villages.

Tekoa,[e] Ephrathah, which is now Bethlehem, Peor, Etam, Kulon, Tatam, Sores,
Carem, Gallim, Bether, Manach: eleven towns with their villages.
60 Kiriath-baal, which is now Kiriath-jearim, and Rabbah: two towns with their villages. 2 S 6:2
61 In the wilderness:
62 Beth-arabah, Middin, Secacah, •Nibshan, the City of Salt and Engedi: six towns with their villages.
63 But the sons of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; the Jebusites lived in Jerusalem side by side with the sons of Judah, as they still do today. Jg 1:8.21 2S5:6-9+

The tribe of Ephraim

Gn49:22-26 Dt33:13-17

1 16 The portion awarded by lot to the sons of Joseph stretched from the Jordan
opposite Jericho eastwards. From Jericho onwards the boundary climbed
2 the highlands to the wilderness of Bethel; •it left Bethel-luz and went on
3 towards the boundary of the Archites at Ataroth; •then passed downwards
and westwards to the boundary of the Japhletites as far as the border of Lower 1 Ch 7:24
4 Beth-horon, as far as Gezer, and from there it reached the sea. •This was the
inheritance of the sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim.
5 As regards the territory of the sons of Ephraim according to their clans, the
boundary of their inheritance to the east was Ataroth-addar as far as Upper
6 Beth-horon, •and it ended at the sea...[a] Michmethath to the north; and the
boundary turned east to Tanaath-shiloh and ran beyond it on the east to Janoah;
7 it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Naarah, then touched Jericho and
8 ended at the Jordan. •From Tappuah the boundary went westwards to the wadi
Kanah and ended at the sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of Ephraim
9 according to their clans, •as well as the towns set apart for the Ephraimites
inside the inheritance of the sons of Manasseh, all those towns and their villages.
10 The Canaanites living in Gezer were not driven out; they have remained in Jg 1:29+
Ephraim to the present day, but are obliged to do forced labour.

The tribe of Manasseh

Gn49:22-26 Dt33:13-17

1 17 A portion was awarded by lot to Manasseh, because he was Joseph's Nb 26:29 Jg 5:14
first-born son. To Machir, Manasseh's eldest son and father of Gilead,
there fell, as was right for a fighting man, the country of Gilead and Bashan.
2 And portions were also given to Manasseh's other sons, according to their clans: Jg 6:11
to the sons of Abiezer, the sons of Helek, the sons of Asriel, the sons of Shechem,
the sons of Hepher, the sons of Shemida: these were the clans of the male children
3 of Manasseh son of Joseph. •Zelophehad son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son Nb 27:1-11
of Machir, son of Manasseh, had no sons, only daughters, whose names are
4 these: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. •These came to the priest
Eleazar and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the leaders, and said, 'Yahweh
ordered Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers'. According
to Yahweh's order, therefore, they were given an inheritance among the
5 brothers of their father. •In this way there fell to Manasseh ten portions besides
6 the country of Gilead and Bashan which lies across the Jordan, •since Manasseh's
daughters received an inheritance as well as his sons. The country of Gilead
7 itself belonged to Manasseh's other sons. •The boundary of Manasseh was, on
the side of Asher, Michmethath, which is opposite Shechem, and thence continued
8 to the right[a] to Jashib at the spring of Tappuah. The territory of Tappuah
belonged to Manasseh, but Tappuah on Manasseh's border belonged to the sons

e. The old name for Hebron, Kiriath-arba, cf. Gn 23:2; 35:27; Jos 14:15; Jg 1:10, etc., means 'town of the four' (referring either to the four districts of the town or to the four clans living there, Anak and his three sons, cf. Dt 2:10+). In Jos 14:15, Arba has become the name of an individual.

d. 'he urged her' corr., cf. Jg 1:14.

e. From 'Tekoa' to the end of the v. is restored from the Greek, absent from the Hebr.

16 a. Some words have dropped out of the text.

17 a. I.e. to the south.

of Ephraim. •The boundary passed down to the wadi Kanah (south of the 9
wadi were the Ephraimite towns, besides those which Ephraim had among the
towns of Manasseh, the territory of Manasseh being north of the wadi), and
it ended at the sea. •Southwards Ephraim, northwards Manasseh, both bounded 10
Jg1:27-28 by the sea; they touched Asher to the north and Issachar to the east. •In Issachar 11
and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth-shean and its dependent towns, Ibleam and
its dependent towns, the inhabitants of Dor and En-dor and their dependent
towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and Megiddo and their dependent towns, and
a third of the Nepheth. •But because the sons of Manasseh could not take 12
possession of these towns, the Canaanites managed to hold their own in the
1K9:20-21 country. •However, when the Israelites became stronger, they put the Canaanites 13
to forced labour, though they never drove them out.

The sons of Joseph occupy forest country[b]

The House of Joseph spoke thus to Joshua, 'Why have you given me for 14
inheritance only one share, only one portion, when my people are many because
Yahweh has so blessed me?' •Joshua answered, 'If your people are so many, 15
go up to the woodland region and clear yourselves the forest of the country
of the Perizzites and the Rephaim, since the highlands of Ephraim are too
small for you'. •The sons of Joseph answered, 'The highlands are not enough 16
Jg 1:19b Is 17:5 for us, and what is more, all the Canaanites living in the plain have iron chariots,
and so have those in Beth-shean and its dependent towns, and those in the
plain of Jezreel'. •Joshua said to the House of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, 17
'You are a large population and one of great strength; you shall not have one
share only •but a mountain shall be yours; it is covered with woods, but you 18
must clear it, and its boundaries shall be yours, since you cannot[c] drive out the
Canaanite because of his iron chariots and his superior strength'.

C. THE SEVEN OTHER TRIBES DESCRIBED

The land survey for these seven tribes

Ex25:22+ Ps 78:60 **18** The whole community of the Israelites assembled at Shiloh,[a] and the Tent 1
of Meeting was set up there; the whole country was now subdued and
at their disposal. •But among the Israelites there were still seven tribes left which 2
had not received their inheritance. •Then Joshua said to them, 'How much more 3
time will you waste before taking possession of the land which Yahweh the God
of your fathers has given to you? •Choose three men from each tribe, for me to 4
send up and down the country so that they can make a survey with a view to its
apportioning, and then come back to me. •They must divide the land into seven 5
portions. Judah will remain in his territory to the south, and those of the House
of Joseph will remain in their territory to the north. •You are to survey the land 6
in seven sections and bring your findings to me here, so that I can cast lots for
you before Yahweh our God. •For the Levites have no portion with the rest 7
of you; the priesthood of Yahweh is to be their inheritance; and Gad and Reuben
and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan
eastwards, as Moses, Yahweh's servant, gave it to them.'

The men set off. To those who were to survey the country Joshua gave this 8
order: 'Off you go, survey and map the whole country, and then come back here
to me; I shall cast lots for you before Yahweh at Shiloh'. •So the men left, and 9
went up and down the country, making a sevenfold list in writing of all the
towns and bringing it back to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh.

Joshua cast lots for them before Yahweh at Shiloh, and there Joshua appor- 10
tioned the land among the Israelites according to their groupings.

Gn 49:27 Dt 33:12 **The tribe of Benjamin**

One portion fell to the tribe of the sons of Benjamin according to their clans: 11

their territory lay, as it proved, between that of the sons of Judah and the sons
12 of Joseph. •Their northern boundary began at the Jordan, climbed to the northern
flank of Jericho, rose through the highlands westwards and ended at the
13 wilderness of Beth-aven. •Thence it continued towards Luz, southwards to the
flank of Luz, which is now Bethel; then downwards to Ataroth-addar, on the
14 mountain south of Lower Beth-horon. •The boundary curved, and on the
western side turned southward, from the mountain that faces Beth-horon from
the south and ended at Kiriath-baal, which is now Kiriath-jearim, a city of the
15 sons of Judah. This was the western side. •On the south side the boundary ran
from the edge of Kiriath-jearim towards Gasin,[b] emerged by the waters of the
16 spring of Nephtoah, •continued to the skirts of the mountain facing the Vale
of Ben-hinnom, north of the plain of the Rephaim, then down into the Vale 15:8+
17a of Hinnom, south of the flank of the Jebusite and reaching En-rogel. •It then Jg 19:10
curved northwards, going on to En-shemesh; it came out at the circles of stones
18 facing the Ascent of Adummim, •then went on to Cheteph in sight of the Arabah
17b
19 and down to the Arabah and •the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben, •then reached
the flank of Beth-hoglah to the north. The boundary stopped at the northern
bay of the Salt Sea, at the southern end of the Jordan. This was the southern
20 border. •The Jordan itself was the eastern border. Such was the inheritance of
the sons of Benjamin, with the boundaries defining it.

The towns of Benjamin

21 The towns of the tribe of the sons of Benjamin, according to their clans, were
22
23 Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz; •Beth-arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel; •Avvim,
24 Parah, Ophrah; •Chephar-ammoni, Ophni, Geba: twelve towns and their villages.
25,26
27 Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth; •Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah; •Rekem, Irpeel, 2 S 4:2
28 Taralah; •Zela Haeleph, Jerusalem,[c] Gibeah and Kiriath: fourteen towns with Jg 19:10
their villages. This was the inheritance of the sons of Benjamin, according to
their clans.

The tribe of Simeon[a]

Gn 49:5
1Ch4:28
-33

1 19 The second portion awarded by lot came to Simeon, the tribe of the sons
of Simeon, according to their clans; their inheritance was encircled by the
2 inheritance of the sons of Judah. •For their portion they had Beersheba, Shema,
3,4
5 Moladah; •Hazar-shual, Balah, Ezem; •Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah; •Ziklag,
6 Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah; •Beth-lebaoth and Sharuhen: thirteen towns and
7 their villages; •Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan: four towns and their villages.
8 With these go all the villages lying outside these towns as far as Baalath-beer,
Ramah of the Negeb. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Simeon
9 according to their clans. •The inheritance of the sons of Simeon was taken out
of the portion of the sons of Judah, because the share of the sons of Judah was
too large for them; this is why it was within the inheritance of the sons of Judah
that the sons of Simeon were given theirs.

The tribe of Zebulun

Gn 49:13
Dt 33:18
Jg 1:30

10 The third portion fell to the sons of Zebulun according to their clans; the
11 territory of their inheritance reached as far as Sarid; •their boundary climbed
westwards to Maraalah, touching Dabbesheth first and then the wadi facing

b. The narrative may refer to the clearing of the hill country of Ephraim. Possibly also it alludes to the settlement of part of Manasseh in the wooded region of Gilead, east of Jordan, the land of the Rephaim (see Dt 2:10+). v. 15, in accordance with Gn 14:5; Dt 3:11,13; Jos 12:4. Cf. 13:8+.

c. The insertion of the negative is conjectural.

18 a. This section suggests that, as the conquest proceeded, the centre of worship moved from Gilgal, 14:6, to Shiloh, cf. also 19:51; 21:2; 22:9,12. On the subsequent history of this sanctuary, cf. 1 S 1:3+.

b. 'Gasin' Greek.

c. A gloss before 'Jerusalem' adds 'the Jebusite, that is'.

19 a. The once powerful tribe of Simeon, Gn 34:25f; 49:5f, had been incorporated into Judah, cf. Jg 1:3f. It is not mentioned in the blessings of Dt 33. Cf. also 1 Ch 4:38-43.

Jokneam. •But eastwards and towards the sunrise the boundary went from 12
Sarid to the boundary of Chisloth-tabor, then towards Dobrath and upwards
to Japhia. •Thence it went on, eastwards and towards the sunrise, to Gath- 13
hepher and Ittah-kazin; it came out at Rimmon and turned towards Neah.
Then northwards the boundary bent towards Hannathon and ended at the plain 14
of Iphtahel. •Besides this, there were Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Iralah and 15
Bethlehem: twelve towns with their villages. •This was the inheritance of the 16
sons of Zebulun according to their clans: these towns and their villages.

Gn49:14 -15 Dt 33:18

The tribe of Issachar

The fourth portion came to Issachar, to the sons of Issachar, according to 17
their clans. •Their territory reached to Jezreel and included Chesulloth and 18
Shunem; •Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath; •Dobrath,[b] Kishion, Ebez; •Remeth 19,20
and En-gannim, En-haddah and Beth-pazzez. •Their boundary touched Tabor 21
and Shahazimah and Beth-shemesh, and ended at the Jordan: sixteen towns 22
with their villages. •This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Issachar, 23
according to their clans: the towns with their villages.

Gn49:20 Dt 33:24 Jg1:31-32

The tribe of Asher

The fifth portion came to the tribe of the sons of Asher, according to their 24
clans. •Within their territory were Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph, •Allam- 25,26
melech, Amad and Mishal; on the west it touched Carmel and the streams of the
Libnath; •on the other side it went eastwards to Beth-dagon, touching Zebulun 27
and the Vale of Iphtahel northwards, then Beth-emek and Neiel beyond; it
ended at Cabul. To the north it took in •Abdon, Rehob, Hammon and Kanah 28
as far as Sidon the Great. •The boundary then turned back towards Ramah 29
and on to the stronghold of Tyre and Hosah, and ended at the sea. Mahalab,
Achzib, •Acco, Aphek, Rehob: twenty-two towns with their villages. •This was 30,31
the inheritance of the tribe of the sons of Asher, according to their clans; these
towns with their villages.

Gn49:21 Dt 33:23 Jg 1:33

The tribe of Naphtali

To the sons of Naphtali came the sixth portion, to the sons of Naphtali 32
according to their clans. •Their territory went from Heleph and the Oak of 33
Zanaannim to Adami-negeb, to Jabneel as far as Lakkum, and ended at the
Jordan. •The westward boundary ran to Aznoth-tabor and thence passed on to 34
Hukkok, touching Zebulun southwards, Asher westwards and the Jordan east-
wards. •The fortified towns were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth; 35
Adamah, Ramah, Hazor; •Kedesh, Edrei, En-hazor; •Yiron, Migdalel, Horem, 36,37,38
Beth-anath, Beth-shemesh: nineteen towns with their villages. •This was the 39
inheritance of the sons of Naphtali according to their clans; the towns with their
villages.

Gn49:16 -17

The tribe of Dan[c]

Dt 33:22 To the tribe of the sons of Dan came the seventh portion according to their 40
Jg 13:25 clans. •Within the territory of their inheritance were Zorah, Eshtaol, Irshemesh; 41
Jg 14:1 Sha-alabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah; •Elon, Timnah, Ekron, •Eltekeh, Gibbethon, 42,43,44
Baalath; Jehud, Bene-berak, Gath-rimmon; •Me-jarkon and Rakkon with the 45,46
territory facing Joppa.

Jg1:34-35; 18 But the territory of the sons of Dan resisted them; and therefore the sons of 47
Dan went up and attacked Leshem and captured it and put it to the sword.
Having seized the town they settled in it, and changed the name of Leshem to
Dan after Dan their ancestor. •This was the inheritance of the tribe of the sons 48
of Dan, according to their clans: these towns with their villages.

So ended the drawing of lots for the country and the apportioning of it.[d] 49

24:30 Jg 2:9 And the Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them; •at the 50

command of Yahweh, they gave him the city he had asked for, Timnath-serah in the highlands of Ephraim; he rebuilt the city and settled there.

51 These are the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the heads of each family apportioned by lot among the tribes of Israel at Shiloh, in Yahweh's presence, at the door of the Tent of Meeting; and thus the apportioning of the land was finished.

D. PRIVILEGED CITIES

The cities of refuge[a]

1 2 3 20 Yahweh said to Joshua, •'Speak to the Israelites and say to them, "Choose the cities of refuge of which I spoke to you through Moses, •towns where a man who has killed accidentally, unwittingly, may find sanctuary; they Ex 21:13+ Nb 35:9-34 Dt 19:1-13

4 are to be your refuge from the avenger of blood. •The man who has killed may seek sanctuary in one of these towns; he must stop at the entrance of the town gate and explain his case to the elders of the place. They shall let him enter Nb 35:19+

5 the town and assign him a place to live with them. •If he is pursued by the avenger of blood, they are not to give him up to him, since he has killed his neighbour

6 unwittingly, with no long-cherished hatred against him. •The man who has killed must remain in that town until he has appeared for judgement before the community, until the death of the high priest then in office. Only then may the man who has killed go back to his own town and his own house, to the town from which he has fled." '

7 For this purpose they designated Kedesh in Galilee, in the highlands of Naphtali, Shechem in the highlands of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba,

8 which is now Hebron, in the highlands of Judah. •Across the Jordan and on the east facing Jericho, in the wilderness on the tableland, they chose Bezer of the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth-gilead of the tribe of Gad, and Golan Dt 4:43

9 in Bashan of the tribe of Manasseh. •These were the towns marked out for all the Israelites and for the stranger living among them, so that any man might find sanctuary there if he had killed accidentally, and might escape the hand of the avenger of blood until he had appeared for judgement before the community.

The levitical cities[a]

Nb 35:1-8 ||1Ch 6:39-66

1 21 Then the heads of families among the Levites came to Eleazar the priest Lv 25:32-34

2 and to Joshua son of Nun and the heads of families of the tribes of Israel— they were then at Shiloh in the land of Canaan. They said to them, 'Yahweh ordered through Moses that we should be given towns to live in, with the

3 adjoining pasture lands for our cattle'. •So because of Yahweh's order the Israelites gave the Levites these towns from their inheritance, and with them

4 the adjoining pasture lands. •Lots were cast for the clans of the Kohathites. 1Ch 6:39 To the Levites, the sons of Aaron the priest, fell thirteen towns from the tribes

5 of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin; •the other sons of Kohath received, clan by 1Ch 6:46

b. 'Daberath' Greek.

c. The tribe of Dan first settled to the west of Benjamin but was harried by the Amorites, Jg 1:34-35, and even more by the Philistines, cf. the story of Samson, Jg 13-16. Most of the Danites emigrated northward to the sources of the Jordan, Jg 18. The migration took place at the beginning of the period of the Judges; it is taken as an already accomplished fact by Jg 5:17 (Dan, coupled with Asher, is associated with the coast of Phoenicia); Gn 49:17 (Dan lies on a trade route); Dt 33:22 (Dan is near Bashan). Part of Dan's original territory was repopulated by Calebites, 1 Ch 2:42-50.

d. The document describing the territory of the tribes ends here, see 14:1+. Vv. 49b-51 are an editorial addition.

20 a. Ch. 20-21 complement the account of the division of the land. Ch. 20 makes provision for the law of asylum of Ex 21:13+, and names six cities of refuge in accordance with the prescription of Nb 35 and Dt 19.

21 a. Levi is not an independent political unit and is awarded no territory, 13:14,33; 14:3-4; 18:7, but the Levites are allowed residence in certain towns and rights over the adjacent pastures, cf. Nb 35:1-8. The towns are the six cities of refuge of ch. 20, and forty-six more, chosen from the various tribes. The date of this catalogue is disputed; it may go back to the time of David and Solomon.

clan, [b] ten towns from the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. To 6
the sons of Gershon, clan by clan, fell thirteen towns from the tribes of Issachar,
Asher, Naphtali and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. •To the sons of Merari, 7
clan by clan, fell twelve towns from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun.

These towns and the adjoining pasture land, the Israelites gave by lot to the 8
Levites, as Yahweh had ordered through Moses.

The portion of the Kohathites

1 Ch 6:50 From the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Simeon they gave the towns named 9
below;[c] •this was the portion of the sons of Aaron from the clans of the Koha- 10
thites, of the sons of Levi; for theirs was the first portion. •They gave them 11
Kiriath-arba, the chief city of the Anakim, which is now Hebron, in the highlands
14:13-14 of Judah, with the pasture lands round it. •But the fields and villages of this 12
town they gave into the possession of Caleb son of Jephunneh as his property.
To the sons of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron, the city of refuge for men 13
who had killed, and the adjoining pasture lands; also Libnah with its pasture
lands, •and Jattir, Eshtemoa, •Holon, Debir, •Ashan, Juttah and Beth-shemesh, 14,15 16
each with its pasture lands: nine towns taken from these two tribes. •From 17
1 Ch 7:8 the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon and Geba with their pasture lands, •and Anathoth 18
and Almon with theirs: four towns. •The towns of the priests, the sons of 19
Aaron, were thirteen towns in all, with their pasture lands.

1 Ch 6:51 To the clans of the sons of Kohath, to the remaining Levites of the sons of 20
Kohath, the lot assigned towns belonging to the tribe of Ephraim. •They were 21
given the city of refuge, Shechem, with its pasture lands, in the highlands
of Ephraim, together with Gezer, •Kibzaim and Beth-horon, each with its 22
pasture lands: four towns. •From the tribe of Dan, Elteke, Gibbethon, •Aijalon 23 24
and Gath-rimmon with their pasture lands: four towns. •From the half-tribe 25
of Manasseh, Taanach and Jibleam with their pasture lands: two towns. •In all: 26
ten towns with their pasture lands for the remaining clans of the sons of Kohath.

The portion of the sons of Gershon

To the sons of Gershon who were of levitical clans were given the city of 27
refuge Golan in Bashan and also Ashtaroth, each with its pasture lands: two
towns, both from the half-tribe of Manasseh. •From the tribe of Issachar, 28
Kishion, Dobrath, •Jarmuth and En-gannim, each with its pasture lands: four 29
towns. •From the tribe of Asher, Mishal, Abdon, •Helkath and Rehob, each 30 31
with its pasture lands: four towns. •From the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh the city 32
of refuge in Galilee, Hammoth-dor and Rakkath, each with its pasture lands:
three towns. •The towns for the Gershonites according to their clans were thirteen 33
towns in all with their pasture lands.

The portion of the sons of Merari

To the clans of the sons of Merari, the remainder of the Levites, fell four 34
towns with their pasture lands from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam, Kartah,
Rimmon[d] and Nahalal; •from beyond the Jordan and from the tribe of Reuben, 35 36
the city of refuge Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland, Jahaz, •Kedemoth 37
and Mephaath, each with its pasture lands: four towns;[e] •from the tribe of Gad 38
the city of refuge Ramoth-gilead, Mahanaim, •Heshbon and Jazer, each with 39
its pasture lands: four towns. •The towns allotted clan by clan to the sons of 40
Merari, to the remainder of the levitical clans, were twelve towns in all.

The towns thus granted to the Levites in Israelite territory were in all forty- 41
eight, with their pasture lands. •For all these towns, the town itself and the 42
pasture land round it went together. This was true of every town named.

The end of the apportioning

So it was that Yahweh gave the Israelites all the land he had sworn to give 43

44 their fathers. They took possession of it and settled there. •Yahweh granted
them peace on all their frontiers just as he had sworn to their fathers, and of all
their enemies not one had managed to stand against them. Yahweh had given all
45 their enemies into their hands. •Of all the promises that Yahweh had made to 23:14 Is 55:11
the House of Israel, not one failed; all were fulfilled.

III. JOSHUA FINISHES HIS COURSE

A. THE RETURN OF THE EASTERN TRIBES. THE QUESTION OF THEIR ALTAR[a]

The tribes from across the Jordan are sent home

1 22 Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of
2 Manasseh •and said to them, 'You have faithfully observed all that Moses 1:12-18 Nb 32:6-32
the servant of Yahweh ordered you, and whenever I have given you an
3 order you have obeyed me. •Despite the fact that the campaign has lasted such
a very long time, you have never deserted your brothers; at every point you
4 have obeyed the orders of Yahweh your God. •Now that Yahweh your God
has granted your brothers the rest he promised them, go back to your tents, Heb 4:8
to the land given into your possession by Moses the servant of Yahweh, beyond
5 the Jordan. •But take great care to practise the commandments and the Law
which Moses the servant of Yahweh gave you: love Yahweh your God, follow Dt 6:5+
his paths always, keep his commandments, be loyal to him and serve him with
all your heart and soul.'
6 Joshua blessed them and sent them away; they went home to their tents.
7 Moses had given a territory in Bashan to one half of the tribe of Manasseh; to
the other half Joshua gave another among their brothers on the west bank of the
8 Jordan. As Joshua sent them home to their tents he blessed them •and said to
them, 'You are going back to your tents with great wealth, with cattle in plenty,
with silver and gold, bronze and iron and great quantities of clothing; share
these spoils of your enemies with your brothers'.

An altar is built beside the Jordan[b]

9 The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh went home again;
they left the Israelites at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, and made their way back
to the land of Gilead, the territory which belonged to them and where they had
settled in accordance with the order of Yahweh given through Moses.
10 When they came to the circles of stones at the Jordan which are in Canaanite
territory, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an
11 altar there beside the Jordan, an imposing altar of great size. •This came to the
ears of the Israelites. 'See,' the word went round 'the Reubenites, the Gadites
and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built this altar facing the land of
Canaan near the circles of stones at the Jordan, beyond the territory of the
Israelites.'[c]
12 At this news, the whole community of the children of Israel mustered at
Shiloh, ready to march against them and make war on them.

b. 'clan by clan' corr.
c. End of v. uncertain.
d. 'Rimmon' corr.
e. Vv. 36-37, omitted by the official Massoretic text, are found in many Hebr. MSS and are included here with corrections from the Greek.

22 a. Ch. 22 comes from a separate tradition which the author has adjusted to the outlook of Deuteronomy.
b. This episode probably took place in the period of the Judges; the Ephraimites, who were in possession of ark and sanctuary, henceforth opposed any further proliferation of altars. But in fact each tribe had its own sanctuaries, some of them held in honour from patriarchal times, others associated with the memory of some more recent divine manifestation. The period of centralised worship (demanded by Dt 12:4-14, 17-19,26-28) was still far off. 2 K 5:17, however, shows that Yahwistic worship outside the promised land was inconceivable.
c. V. 11, which locates the altar on the far side of Jordan, is an addition.

The eastern tribes rebuked

Ex 6:25 Nb 25:7,11f
The Israelites sent the priest Phinehas son of Eleazar to the Reubenites, the 13
Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, •and with him 14
ten leading men, one leader and head of his family from each tribe in Israel;
every one of them was head of his family among the clans of Israel. •When they 15
came to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh in the land
of Gilead, this is what they said to them:

'This is our message to you from the whole community of Yahweh: What 16
do you mean by this treachery committed against the God of Israel? Why turn
aside from Yahweh today, building yourselves an altar, an act of rebellion today
against Yahweh himself?

Nb25:3-5 Dt 4:3
'Was the sin at Peor not enough, the sin from which we are not cleansed 17
even now, in spite of the plague that ravaged the whole community of Yahweh?
Since then, you have stopped following Yahweh today, since you set yourselves 18
in revolt against him today, tomorrow his anger will be roused against the whole
community of Israel.

'Do you think your territory is unclean? Then cross over into the territory 19
of Yahweh, where his tabernacle is, and choose a home among us. But do not
rebel against Yahweh or make us accomplices in rebellion by building an altar
7 to vie with the altar of Yahweh our God. •When Achan son of Zerah betrayed 20
his trust in the matter of the ban, did not the wrath come down on the whole
community of Israel, although he was only one man? Did he not have to die for
his sin?'

The tribes from across the Jordan clear their name

The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh spoke in their 21
turn and answered the heads of the clans of Israel:

Dt 10:17
'The God of gods, Yahweh, the God of gods, Yahweh well knows, and 22
let Israel know it too: if there has been defiance or treachery on our part
against Yahweh, let him not save us today; •or if we have built an altar to turn 23
away from Yahweh and offer holocaust and oblation and communion sacrifice
on it, let Yahweh punish us for it! •The truth is, we acted from fear and for 24
this reason: one day your children might say to ours, "What link have you with
Yahweh the God of Israel? •Has not Yahweh set the boundary of the Jordan 25
between us and you, you sons of Reuben and sons of Gad? You have no share in
Yahweh." Thus your children might be the cause of stopping ours from paying
reverence to Yahweh.

'So we said to each other, "Let us build this altar, not for holocausts or other 26
sacrifices •but as a witness between us and you and among our descendants 27
after us, proving that we do indeed worship Yahweh with our holocausts, our
victims and our communion sacrifices in his presence. So that one day your
children will not be able to say to ours: You have no share in Yahweh. •But 28
if ever it were to happen that they said such a thing to us or to our descendants
in the future, we should say to them: Look at this structure, Yahweh's altar,
made by our ancestors not for holocausts or other sacrifices but as a witness
between us and you." •We have no intention of defying Yahweh or turning 29
away from serving him today by building an altar for holocausts or oblations
or sacrifices to vie with the altar of Yahweh our God that stands before his
tabernacle!'

Peace restored

When Phinehas the priest, the leaders of the community and the heads of the 30
clans of Israel who were with him heard the words spoken by the sons of Gad
and of Reuben and of Manasseh, they approved of them. •Then the priest 31
Phinehas son of Eleazar said to the sons of Reuben and sons of Gad and sons
of Manasseh, 'Now we clearly see that Yahweh is among us, because you have

not committed any treachery against him; this means you have saved the children of Israel from the punishment of Yahweh'.

32 The priest Phinehas son of Eleazar and the leaders left the Reubenites and the Gadites and returned from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan and
33 the Israelites, to whom they brought back this answer. •The Israelites were pleased to hear this; they gave thanks to God and spoke no more of marching against them and making war and ravaging the country where the sons of Reuben
34 and of Gad had settled. •The Reubenites and the Gadites named the altar...,[d] Gn31:48-52 Jg 6:24 'Because' they said 'it will be a witness between us that Yahweh is God'.

B. JOSHUA'S LAST WORDS TO THE PEOPLE[a]

Joshua sums up his work

1 **23** Long after Yahweh had given Israel rest from all the enemies round
2 them—Joshua was old now, far advanced in years—•Joshua summoned 13:1;14:10; 24:29 all Israel, their elders, chief men, judges and scribes, and said to them, 'I myself
3 am old, far advanced in years; •you for your part have witnessed all that Yahweh your God has done to all these nations before your eyes; Yahweh your God
4 himself has fought for you. •Now as an inheritance for your tribes, I have apportioned you by lot the peoples who still remain to be conquered, no less than those that I have wiped out between the Jordan and the Great Sea in the west.
5 Yahweh your God will himself drive them out before you; he will cast them out 13:6 before you and you will take possession of their country as Yahweh your God promised you.

A rule of life among foreign peoples

6 'Therefore stand firm to keep and fulfil all that is written in the Book of the
7 Law of Moses, never turning aside from it to right or left, •never mingling with Dt 7:1-6 the peoples who are still left beside you. Do not utter the names of their gods, Ex 23:13 do not swear by them, do not serve them and do not bow down before them.
8 9 No; you must be loyal to Yahweh your God as you have been till now. •Because of this, Yahweh has driven out great and powerful nations before you, and no
10 one so far has been able to resist you. •One man of you could rout a thousand Lv 26:8 Dt 32:30 of them, because Yahweh your God himself fought for you as he had promised
11 you. •Be very careful, as you value your life, to love Yahweh your God. Dt 6:5+
12 'But if you prove faithless, if you make friends with the remnant of those Dt 7:1-6 peoples who are still left beside you, if you form kinships with them and inter-
13 marry, •then know for certain that Yahweh your God will no longer drive these peoples before you; instead, they will be a snare and a pitfall for you, a scourge to your sides and thorns in your eyes, till you vanish from this good land which Yahweh your God has given you.
14 'And now today I must go the way of all the earth. Acknowledge with all your heart and soul that of all the promises of good that Yahweh your God has made you, not one has failed: all have been fulfilled, and not one has failed. 21:45
15 'But just as every promise of good made to you by Yahweh your God has Dt 28 been fulfilled for you, so also will Yahweh fulfil against you all his threats of evil, even to driving you out of the good land that Yahweh your God has given you.
16 'For if you violate the covenant which Yahweh your God has demanded of you, if you go and serve other gods and bow down before them, then Yahweh's

d. The name has been lost; the word 'witness' must have been part of it. Cf. the explanation of the name Gilead in Gn 31:47-48.

23 a. Cf. the last discourse of Moses, Dt 31, but also the farewells of Samuel, 1 S 12, David's 'testament', 1 K 2:1-9, and the last words of Mattathias, 1 M 2:49-68. The discourse is deuteronomic in style; it is a colourless doublet of that in ch. 24 which it was designed to replace.

Dt 4:26 anger will be roused against you and you will quickly vanish from the good land that he has given you.'

C. THE GREAT ASSEMBLY AT SHECHEM[a]

Israel's vocation set forth once more

24 Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem;[b] then he called 1
the elders, leaders, judges and scribes of Israel, and they presented
themselves before God. •Then Joshua said to all the people: 2

Gn11:27-32 Ps 45:10 'Yahweh the God of Israel says this, "In ancient days your ancestors lived
beyond the River—such was Terah the father of Abraham and of Nahor—and
Gn12-24; 35:2-4 they served other gods. •Then I brought your father Abraham from beyond the 3
River and led him through all the land of Canaan. I increased his descendants
Gn25:19-26; 27;36:1-8 and gave him Isaac. •To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountain 4
Gn46:1-7 Ex 3-15 country of Seir as his possession. Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt.
Then I sent Moses and Aaron and plagued Egypt with the wonders that I worked 5
there. So I brought you out of it. •I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, and 6
you came to the Sea; the Egyptians pursued your ancestors with chariots and
horsemen as far as the Sea of Reeds. •There they called to Yahweh, and he 7
spread a thick fog between you and the Egyptians, and made the sea go back on
them and cover them. You saw with your own eyes the things I did in Egypt.
Nb21:21-35 Dt 2:26-3:11 Ps 78:55 Then for a long time you lived in the wilderness, •until I brought you into the 8
land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan; they made war on you and
I gave them into your hands; you took possession of their country because
Nb22-24 Jg 11:24 I destroyed them before you. •Next, Balak son of Zippor the king of Moab 9
arose to make war on Israel, and sent for Balaam son of Beor to come and curse
you. •But I would not listen to Balaam; instead, he had to bless you, and I saved 10
you from his hand.

"When you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho, those who held Jericho 11
Dt 7:1+ fought against you, as did the Amorites and Perizzites, the Canaanites, Hittites,
Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I put them all into your power. •I sent 12
Ex 23:28 Dt 7:20 Ps 44:3 out hornets in front of you, which drove the two Amorite kings before you;
Dt6:10-13 this was not the work of your sword or your bow. •I gave you a land where you 13
never toiled, you live in towns you never built; you eat now from vineyards
and olivegroves you never planted."

Israel chooses Yahweh

Gn 35:2 Ezk 20:3 'So now, fear Yahweh and serve him perfectly and sincerely; put away the 14
gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve
Yahweh. •But if you will not serve Yahweh, choose today whom you wish to serve, 15
whether the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River, or the gods of the
Amorites in whose land you are now living. As for me and my House, we will serve
Yahweh.'

Ex 19:8;24:3 The people answered, 'We have no intention of deserting Yahweh and 16
serving other gods! •Was it not Yahweh our God who brought us and our 17
ancestors out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery, who worked those great
wonders before our eyes and preserved us all along the way we travelled and
among all the peoples through whom we journeyed? •What is more, Yahweh 18
drove all those peoples out before us, as well as the Amorites who used to live
in this country. We too will serve Yahweh, for he is our God.'

Then Joshua said to the people, 'You cannot serve Yahweh, because he is 19
Lv17:1+ Dt 4:24;6:15 a holy God, he is a jealous God who will not forgive your transgressions or your
sins. •If you desert Yahweh to follow alien gods he in turn will afflict and destroy 20
you after the goodness he has shown you.' •The people answered Joshua, 'No; 21
it is Yahweh we wish to serve'. •Then Joshua said to the people, 'You are 22

witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen Yahweh, to serve him'. They
23 answered, 'We are witnesses'. •'Then cast away the alien gods among you and
24 give your hearts to Yahweh the God of Israel!' •The people answered Joshua,
'It is Yahweh our God we choose to serve; it is his voice that we will obey'.

The covenant at Shechem

25 That day, Joshua made a covenant for the people; he laid down a statute and Ex 15:25
26 ordinance for them at Shechem. •Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the
Law of God. Then he took a great stone and set it up there, under the oak in Gn 12:6; 35:4
27 the sanctuary of Yahweh, •and Joshua said to all the people, 'See! This stone Ex 24:4
shall be a witness against us[c] because it has heard all the words that Yahweh Dt 11:30 Jg 9:6 1 S 10:25
has spoken to us: it shall be a witness against you in case you deny your God.' Jg 2:6
28 Then Joshua sent the people away, and each returned to his own inheritance.

D. TWO ADDITIONS

The death of Joshua[d]

||Jg2:6-10

29 After these things Joshua son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh,[e] died; he was 23:1
30 a hundred and ten years old. •They buried him on the estate he had received 19:50
for inheritance, at Timnath-serah which lies in the highlands of Ephraim, north
31 of Mount Gaash.[f] •Israel served Yahweh throughout the lifetime of Joshua and
the lifetime of those elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the deeds that
Yahweh had done for the sake of Israel.

The bones of Joseph. The death of Eleazar[g]

32 The bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel had brought from Egypt, were Gn50:24-25 Ex 13:19 Jn 4:5
buried at Shechem in the portion of ground that Jacob had bought for a hundred Gn33:18-20
pieces of money from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, which had
33 become the inheritance of the sons of Joseph. •Then Eleazar son of Aaron died
and was buried at Gibeah, the town of his son Phinehas, which had been given
him in the highlands of Ephraim.[h]

24 a. Part One (vv. 2-13): Joshua asks his hearers to recognise God's interventions on behalf of Israel, cf. the profession of faith in Dt 6:21-24 and 26:5-9. Part Two (vv. 14-24): all declare for Yahweh and renounce pagan gods. Part Three (vv. 25-28): the covenant is adopted and its statutes committed to writing. An ancient tradition underlies this ch.; it possibly implies something more than a renewal of the Sinaitic covenant, namely, an offer of the Yahwistic faith to associated groups which had not experienced either the marvels or the revelation of the desert period. However this may be, the pact of Shechem confirmed the religious unity, and thus preserved the political unity, of the tribes; it was to have a decisive effect on the history of the nation.

b. Shechem with its central position was suitable for tribal gatherings, cf. also 1 K 12; and its history made it the ideal place for making this religious pact : Abraham had built an altar there, Gn 12:6-7, Jacob had bought land there, Gn 33:18-20, and there had buried the idols brought from Mesopotamia, Gn 35:2-4.

c. Cf. the heap of stones, Gn 31:48,52, the altar, Jos 22:26f, and the *stele*, Is 19:19-20, set up as 'witnesses'.

d. Vv. 28-31 are almost exactly repeated at the beginning of the second introduction to Judges, showing how the two books have been edited together.

e. This same title was given to Moses, 1:1; cf. Dt 34:5, and later to David, Ps 18: pref; 89:3,20, presages of the 'servant of Yahweh', Is 42:1+.

f. The Septuagint adds 'There (in Timnath-serah) they laid with him, in the tomb where they had buried him, the flint knives with which he had circumcised the Israelites at Galgala when he had led them out of Egypt as the Lord ordered him; and they are there even today'.

g. Joshua and Eleazar die where Moses and Aaron should have died—in the Promised Land. Even the bones of Joseph, precursor of Israel in Egypt, are brought back to the land that had been given to the patriarchs. Thus, with the Book of Joshua, the return from Egypt is completed.

h. The Septuagint adds 'Then the Israelites went away, each to their own place and to their own town. The Israelites worshipped Astarte and Astaroth and the gods of the nations round them. The Lord delivered them over into the hands of Eglon, king of Moab, who oppressed them for eighteen years.' Cf. Jg 3:14.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

I. FIRST INTRODUCTION[a]

A. SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF THE SETTLEMENT IN CANAAN

The settlement of Judah, Simeon, Caleb and the Kenites

Ex33:7+ 1 After the death of Joshua the Israelites consulted Yahweh, 'Which of us shall march up first against the Canaanites to attack them?' 1
•And Yahweh answered, 'Judah is to attack first; I am delivering the country straight into his hands'. 2
20:18
•Then Judah said to Simeon his brother,[b] 'March with me into the territory allotted to me; we will attack the Canaanite, and then I in my turn will march with you into your allotted territory'. And Simeon marched with him. 3
•So Judah marched up, and Yahweh delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands, and they routed ten thousand men at Bezek. 4
•They came on Adoni-zedek[c] at Bezek, joined battle with him and routed the Canaanites and Perizzites. 5
Jos10:1-27
•Adoni-zedek took to flight, but they followed and captured him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. 6
•Then Adoni-zedek said, 'Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to pick up the crumbs under my table. As I did to others, so God does to me.' He was taken to Jerusalem,[d] 7
Jos 15:63
and there he died. 8
•(The sons of Judah attacked Jerusalem and took it: they put its people to the sword and set fire to the city.)[e]
1:21
2S 5:6+
After this the sons of Judah went down to attack those Canaanites living in the highlands and in the Negeb and the lowlands. 9
•Then Judah marched against the Canaanites in Hebron—in earlier times the name of Hebron was Kiriath-arba—and they overcame Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai. 10
1:20
Jos9:1;10:11;21-22;14:13f;36-39,40
•From there they marched against the inhabitants of Debir—in earlier times the name of Debir was Kiriath-sepher. 11
Jos15:13-19
Jos14:6+
•Caleb said, 'To the man who conquers and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will give my daughter Achsah to wife'. 12
•The man who captured it was Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother; Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah to wife. 13
3:9-10
1Ch4:13
•When she came to her husband, he urged her[f] to ask her father for a field. Then she jumped down from her donkey, and Caleb asked her, 'What do you want?' 14
•She answered, 'Grant me a favour; since you have banished me to the wilderness of Negeb, at least grant me some springs of water'. So Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs. 15
4:11
Nb10:29-32;24:21+
Ex2:16+
The sons of Hobab the Kenite, father-in-law of Moses,[g] went up with the sons of Judah from the city of palms into the wilderness in the Negeb of Judah at the Ascent of Arad; they went and lived with the Amalekites. 16
Ex17:8+
Then Judah set out with his brother Simeon. They overcame the Canaanites who lived in Zephath and delivered it over to the ban; hence the town was given the name of Hormah. 17
Nb14:45;20:12+;21:1-3
•But Judah did not take[h] Gaza with its territory or Ashkelon with its territory or Ekron with its territory; 18
•they could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain, because they had iron chariots.[i] 19b
Jos 17:16
•Yahweh was with Judah, and Judah subdued the highlands. 19a
1:10+
As Moses had directed, Hebron was given to Caleb, and he drove the three sons of Anak out of it. 20
Dt 2:10
Jos 15:69
•As regards the Jebusites living in Jerusalem, the sons 21

of Benjamin did not drive them out, and even now the Jebusites are still living in Jerusalem with the sons of Benjamin. Ps106:34▲

The settlement of the House of Joseph

22 In the same way, the House of Joseph went up against Bethel,[j] and Yahweh Jos 12:16
23 was with them. •The House of Joseph made a reconnaissance of Bethel. The Jos 7:2+
24 name of the city used to be Luz. •The scouts saw a man coming out of the city, Gn 28:19
25 and said to him, 'If you show us how to enter the city, we will spare you'. •He showed them a way into the city. They put the inhabitants to the sword but
26 let the man go, and all his clan with him. •The man went off to the country Jos 6:23
of the Hittites and built a town which he called Luz; that is its name even yet.

The settlement of the northern tribes and the Edomites

27 Manasseh did not subdue Beth-shean and its outlying villages, or Taanach Jos 12:21; 17:11-13
and its villages. He did not drive out the inhabitants of Dor and its outlying villages, or of Ibleam and its villages, or of Megiddo and its villages; in those
28 parts the Canaanites held their ground. •But when the Israelites became stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labour, though they did not drive them
29 out.[k] •Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites in Gezer;[l] thus the Canaanites Jos 10:33; 12:12; 16:10
30 went on living there among them. •Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants *Jos 19:10-15*
of Kitron or of Nahalol. The Canaanites remained among Zebulun, but were
31 subjected to forced labour. •Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco Jos 19:24-31
32 or of Sidon or Ahlab, or Achzib...[m] or Aphik or Rehob. •So the Asherites lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the country, for they did not drive
33 them out. •Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh or of Jos 19:32-33
Beth-anath; they settled among the Canaanite inhabitants of the country; but the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath were compelled to do forced
34 labour for them. •The Amorites drove back the Danites into the highlands 17:1+ Jos 19:47
35 and would not allow them to enter the plain below. •The Amorites held their ground at Har-heres and Shaalbim, but when the hand of the House of Jacob grew heavier, they were subjected to forced labour.
36 The territory of the Edomites[n] begins at the Ascent of Akrabbim, runs to Nb 34:3-5 Jos 15:3
the Rock and continues on upwards.

The angel of Yahweh tells Israel of ills to come[a] 6:7-10 Ps106:34

1 2 The angel of Yahweh[b] went up from Gilgal to Bethel[c] and came to the House of Israel; and he said, '...and I brought you out of Egypt and led you into this land which I swore to give your fathers. I said: I shall never break Dt 7:1-5

1 a. General view of the situation in Palestine after the death of Joshua. The Israelites establish themselves in Canaan slowly and painfully (contrast the Joshua account, cf. Jos 10:1+); tribes, and even clans, fight as isolated units; for the most part they occupy the highlands; they have no success against the towns in the plain, nor do they massacre the conquered but only subjugate them. This account, so close to the facts, appears to derive from an ancient document, but the part played by Judah has been subsequently enhanced to bring out the religious significance of that tribe. 2:1-5 adopts a different standpoint.

b. The tribes are personified under the names of their eponymous ancestors. Simeon and Judah will eventually merge, Jos 19:1+.

c. 'Adoni-zedek', following Jos 10:1-3.

d. I.e., to his own people: he was king of Jerusalem, Jos 10:3.

e. A gloss: it was David who captured Jerusalem, 2 S 5:6f.

f. 'he', cf. Greek and Vulg.; 'she urged him', Hebr.

g. The verse is corrected in accordance with the Greek.

h. 'did not take', following Greek, cf. v. 19b and 3:3; 'took' Hebr.

i. Judah is therefore isolated from the rest of Israel cf. Jg 5 and Dt 33:7.

j. Jos does not mention this capture of Bethel; on the other hand, Jg does not record the capture of Ai which is near Bethel, Jos 8.

k. These towns were not actually conquered until the early days of the monarchy, 1 K 9:15-22.

l. On the Jerusalem-Jaffa road, dominating the Philistine plain. The southern tribes were thus almost completely cut off from the northern.

m. Following Jos 19:29, and omitting the following word 'Helbab' (repetition of Ahlab in variant form).

n. 'Edomites' Greek; 'Amorites' Hebr.

2 a. This paragraph, with 1:1, gives the ancient document of ch. 1 a deuteronomistic setting: the conquest is delayed as a punishment for infidelity, cf. 2:6+.

b. God himself in visible form, cf. Gn 16:7+. Cf. the apparition to Joshua near Gilgal, Jos 5:13-15. On Gilgal, cf. Jos 4:19+.

c. 'Bethel' Greek; 'Bochim' Hebr., cf. v. 5. 'and he said...': some such phrase as 'I visited you' has dropped out of the text.

my covenant with you. •You for your part must make no covenant with the 2
inhabitants of this country; you must destroy their altars. But you have not
obeyed my orders. What is it that you have done? •Very well, I now say this: 3
I am not going to drive out these nations before you. They shall become your
oppressors,[d] and their gods shall be a snare for you.' •When the angel of 4
Yahweh had spoken these words to all the Israelites, the people began to groan
20:26 and weep. •And they called the name of the place Bochim,[e] and offered sacrifices 5
to Yahweh there.

II. SECOND INTRODUCTION

GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON THE AGE OF THE JUDGES[f]

The end of Joshua's life

Ex 23:30 ‖Jos24:28 Then Joshua told the people to go, and the Israelites went away, each to his[g] 6
‖Jos24:31 own possession, to occupy the land. •The people served Yahweh throughout the 7
lifetime of Joshua and the lifetime of those elders who outlived Joshua and had
‖Jos24:29 known all the great deeds that Yahweh had done for the sake of Israel. •Joshua 8
son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died when he was a hundred and ten years
Jos 19:50 old. •They buried him on the estate he had received for inheritance, at Timnath- 9
heres in the highlands of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. •And when 10
that generation too had been gathered to its fathers, another generation followed
it which knew neither Yahweh nor the deeds that he had done for the sake
of Israel.

The unfaithfulness of succeeding generations; their punishment

Ps106:36 Then the sons of Israel did what displeases Yahweh[g] and served the 11
Baals. •They deserted Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them 12
out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from the gods of the peoples
round them. They bowed down to these; they provoked Yahweh; •they deserted 13
10:6 Dt 32:30 1 S 7:14 1 K 11:5; 18:18 Ps106:41 Yahweh to serve Baal and Astarte.[h] •Then Yahweh's anger flamed out against 14
Israel. He handed them over to pillagers who plundered them; he delivered
them to the enemies surrounding them, and they were not able to resist them.
Dt29:15-46 In every warlike venture, the hand of Yahweh was there to foil them, as 15
Yahweh had warned, as Yahweh had sworn to them. Thus he reduced them
to dire distress.[i]

The judges. No lasting conversion

Then Yahweh appointed judges[j] for them, and rescued the men of Israel from 16
the hands of their plunderers. •But they would not listen to their judges. They 17
prostituted themselves[k] to other gods, and bowed down before these. Very
quickly they left the path their ancestors had trodden in obedience to the orders
of Yahweh; they did not follow their example. •When Yahweh appointed 18
judges for them, Yahweh was with the judge and rescued them from the hands
of their enemies as long as the judge lived, for Yahweh felt pity for them
as they groaned under the iron grip of their oppressors. •But once the judge 19
was dead, they relapsed and behaved even worse than their ancestors. They
followed other gods; they served them and bowed before them, and would not
give up the practices and stubborn ways of their ancestors at all.

Why foreign nations were left in the land

Then Yahweh's anger flamed out against Israel, and he said, 'Since this 20
people has broken the covenant I laid down for their ancestors, since they have

21 not listened to my voice, •in future I will not evict any of the nations that Joshua
22 left in the land when he died'; •this was to test them by means of these nations,
to see whether Israel would or would not tread the paths of Yahweh as once
23 their ancestors had trodden them. •So Yahweh allowed these nations to remain;
he did not hurry to drive them out, and did not deliver them into the hands
of Joshua.

The peoples who remained

1 3 These are the nations that Yahweh let remain, to use them to test all those
2 in Israel who had never known war in Canaan •(this was only in the interest
of the generations of the sons of Israel, to teach them the art of war, those at
3 least who had never known the former wars): •the five chiefs of the Philistines, ‖Jos13:3-6
all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hittites[a] who lived in the range of
4 Lebanon, from the uplands of Baal-hermon to the Pass of Hamath. •They
were used to put Israel to the test and see if they would keep the orders that
5 Yahweh had given their fathers through Moses. •The Israelites lived among the
Canaanites and Hittites and Amorites, the Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites; Dt 7:1+
6 they married the daughters of these peoples, gave their own daughters in marriage
to their sons, and served their gods.

III. THE STORY OF THE JUDGES TOLD IN EPISODES[b]

A. OTHNIEL

7 The Israelites[c] did what displeases Yahweh. They forgot Yahweh their God 2:13+
8 and served the Baals and the Asherahs. •Then Yahweh's anger flamed out
against Israel: he handed them over to Cushan-rishathaim the king of Edom,[d]
and the Israelites were enslaved by Cushan-rishathaim for eight years.
9 The Israelites cried to Yahweh, and Yahweh raised up for the Israelites a
deliverer who rescued them, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 1:13
10 The spirit of Yahweh came on him;[e] he became judge in Israel and set out 13:25
to fight. Yahweh delivered the king of Edom, Cushan-rishathaim, into his
11 hands, and he overcame Cushan-rishathaim. •Then the land enjoyed rest for forty 3:30;5:31; 8:28 Jos11:23; 14:15 Jdt16:25
years,

d. 'oppressors' versions.

e. 'Bochim': 'the Weepers', a place near Bethel, unidentified.

f. The moral lesson of the whole book is contained in this second introduction: under Joshua's leadership the people remain faithful, v. 7, but subsequently desert Yahweh, vv. 10-12. God punishes them by abandoning them to their foes, vv. 14,15; nevertheless, he provides them with deliverers, 'judges', who bring them back to the worship of the true God, vv. 16,18. But without the judge to lead them they relapse, v. 19. This didactic theme is that of the deuteronomistic editor who has insinuated it by means of prefaces and conclusions to the story of each judge, 3:7,12-15; 4:1f; 6:10; 8:33; 10:6f, etc. But the editor has retained and included other more ancient explanations of Israel's reverses. The first is that God's purpose in allowing Israel's antagonists to survive was to train his people for warfare, 3:1-2. A second, that he wished to put their fidelity to the test by contact with the indigenous pagans, 2:22-23; 3:4, as a punishment for Israel's disloyalty; there are traces of this opinion in Jos 23:4-13. A third explanation, cf. Ex 23:29 and Dt 7:22, is that the native peoples were preserved to prevent the country being overrun by wild animals. Ws 12:3-22 will eventually attribute the delay to God's merciful patience: he gives the native peoples time to repent before their extermination.

g. Lit. 'did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh', a recurring formula of Jg and Dt.

h. 'Astarte': Hebr. has 'the Astartes'. In the Bible the phrase 'Baal and Astarte' or, in the plural, 'the Baals and Astartes' is the common expression for the Canaanite divinities. Baal, 'the Lord', is the male god; Astarte, the Assyrian Ishtar, is the goddess of love and fecundity. The name Asherah, another female divinity of the same type, cf. Ex 34:13+, is sometimes used instead, 3:7; 2 K 23:4, etc.

i. Following Greek and Dt 28:52.

j. See Introduction to Joshua-Kings.

k. Customary figure of speech for idol-worship.

3 a. 'Hittites', following Jos 11:3 and 2 S 24:6; 'Hivites' Hebr.

b. Examples taken from history now illustrate the moral thesis of 2:10-19, formulas from which recur from time to time in this narrative.

c. Here indicating Judah and Simeon only; these southern tribes were threatened by Edomite raids.

d. Read 'Edom' and not 'Aram' Hebr. (so also v. 10) and omit 'Naharaim'.

e. The divine appointment and function of the judge is expressed by God's 'taking possession' of him, cf. 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19 and cf. 1 S 11:6 and 16:13. The judges are 'inspired' as the prophets were, and the same expression is used in both cases, Nb 24:2; 1 S 10:6,10; 19:20,23; cf. Is 42:1; 59:21.

B. EHUD[f]

1 S 12:9 When Othniel son of Kenaz died, 12 •once again the men of Israel began to do
what displeases Yahweh, and Yahweh gave Eglon the king of Moab power over
Israel, because they had done what displeases Yahweh. 13 •Eglon in alliance with
the sons of Ammon and Amalek marched against Israel and conquered them
and took possession of the city of palms.[g] 14 •The Israelites were enslaved by
Eglon the king of Moab for eighteen years.

1 Ch 8:4 15 Then the Israelites cried to Yahweh, and Yahweh raised up a deliverer for
them, Ehud the son of Gera the Benjaminite; he was left-handed. The men of
Israel appointed him to take their tribute to Eglon the king of Moab. 16 •Ehud
made a dagger—it was double-edged and a cubit long—and strapped it on under
his clothes, over his right thigh. 17 •He presented the tribute to Eglon the king
of Moab. This Eglon was a very fat man. 18 •Having presented the tribute, Ehud
went off again with the men who had carried it; 19 •but he himself, on reaching the
Idols of Gilgal,[h] turned and went back and said, 'I have a secret message for
you, O king'. The king replied, 'Silence!' and all who were with him went out.

Jdt 8:5 20 Then Ehud went in. The king sat in the cool retreat of his upper room; he was
alone. Ehud said to him, 'I have a message from God for you, O king'. The
king immediately stood up from his seat. 21 •Then Ehud, using his left hand, drew
the dagger he was carrying on his right thigh and thrust it into the king's belly.
22 The hilt too went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for Ehud
left the dagger in his belly; then he went out through the window.[i] 23 •Ehud went
out by the porch; he had shut and locked the doors of the upper room behind
him.

24 When he had gone, the servants came back and looked; the doors of the
upper room were locked. They thought, 'He is probably covering his feet[j] in the
inner part of the cool room'. 25 •They waited until they no longer knew what to
think, for he still did not open the doors of the upper room. At length they
took the key and unlocked the room; their master lay on the ground, dead.

26 While they were waiting, Ehud had fled. He passed the Idols and escaped
to safety in Seirah. 27 •When he reached the territory of Israel[k] he sounded the
6:35 horn in the highlands of Ephraim, and the Israelites came down with
him from the hills, with him at their head. 28 •And he said to them, 'Follow
12:5 me, because Yahweh has delivered your enemy Moab into your hands'. So they
followed him, cut Moab off from crossing the fords of the Jordan and let no
one across. 29 •On that occasion they beat the Moabites, some ten thousand men,
all tough and seasoned fighters, and not one escaped. 30 •That day, Moab was
3:11+ 1 S 7:13 Jdt 16:25 humbled under the hand of Israel, and the land enjoyed rest for eighty years.

C. SHAMGAR[l]

5:6 31 After him came Shamgar son of Anath. He routed six hundred of the Phil-
2S 23:11-12 istines with an ox-goad; he too was a deliverer of Israel.

D. DEBORAH AND BARAK[a]

Israel oppressed by the Canaanites

1S 12:11+ Jos 11:1+ 1 S 12:9 4 When Ehud died, once again the Israelites began to do what displeases 1
Yahweh, 2 •and Yahweh handed them over to Jabin the king of Canaan[b]
who reigned at Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in
Harosheth-ha-goiim.

3 Then the Israelites cried to Yahweh; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots
plated with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years.

Deborah

4 At this time Deborah was judge in Israel, a prophetess,[c] the wife of Lappidoth.
5 She used to sit under Deborah's Palm[d] between Ramah and Bethel in the
highlands of Ephraim, and the Israelites would come to her to have their
6 disputes decided. •She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in ↗ Heb11:32
Naphtali. She said to him, 'This is the order of Yahweh, the God of Israel:
"March to Mount Tabor and take with you ten thousand men from the sons
7 of Naphtali and the sons of Zebulun. •I will entice Sisera, the commander of ↗ Ps83:9
Jabin's army, to encounter you at the wadi Kishon with his chariots and
8 troops; and I will put him into your power." ' •Barak answered her, 'If you
come with me, I will go; if you will not come, I will not go, for I do not know
how to choose the day when the angel of Yahweh will grant me success'.[e] 4:14 Gn16:7+
9 'I will go with you then,' she said 'but, the way you are going about it, the
glory will not be yours;[f] for Yahweh will deliver Sisera into the hands of a
10 woman.' Then Deborah stood up and went with Barak to Kedesh, •and there
Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali. Ten thousand men marched behind
him, and Deborah marched with him.

Heber the Kenite

11 Heber the Kenite had cut himself off from the tribe of Kain and the clan 1:16+ Nb24:21+
of the sons of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses; he had pitched his tent near
the Oak of Zaanannim, not far from Kedesh.

Sisera routed

12 When Sisera heard that Barak son of Abinoam was encamped on Mount
13 Tabor, •he called for all his chariots—nine hundred chariots plated with
iron—and all the troops he had. He summoned them from Harosheth-ha-goiim
14 to the wadi Kishon. •Deborah said to Barak, 'Up! For today is the day Yahweh 4:8;5:19
has put Sisera into your power. Yes, Yahweh marches at your head.' And
Barak charged down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men behind him.
15 At Barak's advance, Yahweh struck terror into Sisera, all his chariots and all Ex 14:14
16 his troops. Sisera leapt down from his chariot and fled on foot. •Barak pursued
the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth-ha-goiim. Sisera's whole army
fell by the edge of the sword; not one man escaped.

Sisera slain

17 Sisera meanwhile fled on foot towards the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber
the Kenite. For there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the family
18 of Heber the Kenite. •Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, 'My lord,
stay here with me; do not be afraid!' He stayed there in her tent, and she covered
19 him with a rug. •He said to her, 'Please give me a little water to drink, for I am

f. The narrative records a Moabite invasion of the country west of Jordan in the neighbourhood of Jericho and the highlands of Ephraim. It combines two very similar accounts: in the first, Eglon has his residence to the east of Gilgal, vv. 19 and 26, beyond Jordan in Moabite territory; in the second, v. 28, the incident takes place west of Jordan, probably at the Jericho oasis.

g. Here meaning Jericho.

h. As the name Gilgal implies, cf. Jos 4:19+, here there is a ring of upright stones: either rough-hewn idols or, more probably, the stones of the ancient cromlech inscribed with idolatrous emblems.

i. The end of the verse is absent from the Greek and is uncertain.

j. Euphemism: to relieve nature.

k. 'the territory of Israel' Greek; Hebr. omits.

l. Some textual witnesses put this brief passage after 16:31. As it is, it amputates the story of Ehud from that of Deborah, 4:1, and is a later insertion (at the end of the period of the Judges, as the mention of Philistines suggests). A 'Shamgar, son of Anath' appears also in the song of Deborah, 5:6, where he is apparently a Canaanite despot.

4 a. Faced with a coalition of northern Canaanite princes, the tribes are about to make their first attempt at effective unity. The deuteronomistic editor makes use of a prose narrative, ch. 4, and then, 5, of a poem of greater antiquity.

b. Since Canaan was never one kingdom we are to understand 'a Canaanite king', who was with some probability master of the plain of Esdraelon. The name Jabin is taken from Jos 11, but according to the poem of ch. 5 it was Sisera who was the Israelites' opponent.

c. Deborah dispenses justice on the authority of Yahweh.

d. 'Palm' corr.

e. 'for... success' Greek. Barak wants to be able to consult Yahweh (cf. Ex 33:7+) through Deborah during the campaign.

f. 'the glory will not be yours' corr.

thirsty'. She opened the skin that had milk[g] in it, gave him some to drink and covered him up again. •Then he said to her, 'Stand at the tent door, and if anyone comes and questions you—if he asks, "Is there a man here?", say, "No".' •But Jael the wife of Heber took a tent-peg, and picked up a mallet; she crept up softly to him and drove the peg into his temple right through to the ground. He was lying fast asleep, worn out; and so he died.[h] •And now Barak came up in pursuit of Sisera. Jael went out to meet him and said, 'Come in, and I will show you the man you are looking for'. He went into her tent; Sisera lay dead, with the tent-peg through his temple.

Jdt 13:8

Israel delivered

Thus God that day humbled Jabin the king of Canaan before the Israelites. And the Israelites bore down more and more heavily on Jabin the king of Canaan, until he was utterly destroyed.

THE SONG OF DEBORAH AND BARAK[a]

Gn 49
1 S 12:11+; 18:6

5 They sang a song that day, Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam, and the words were:

'That warriors in Israel unbound their hair,[b]
that the people came forward with a will,
for this, bless Yahweh!

Ps 2:10

'Listen, you kings! Give ear, you princes!
From me, from me comes a song for Yahweh.

Dt 32:3

I will glorify Yahweh, God of Israel.

Nb 26:29
Dt 33:2
Ps 68:7-8
Is 42:13

'Yahweh, when you set out from Seir,[c]
as you trod the land of Edom,
earth shook, the heavens quaked,[d]

Ex 19:16+
Hab 3:3
Heb 12:26

the clouds dissolved into water.

Jdt 16:15
Ps 97:5

The mountains[e] melted before Yahweh,
before Yahweh, the God of Israel.

3:31+

'In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
in the days of Jael,
every highroad was forsaken;

Is 33:8

those who went forth on their travels
through by-paths took their way.

'Dead, dead were Israel's villages[f]
until you rose up, O Deborah,
you rose up, a mother in Israel.

'Those that should stand for God were dumb.

1S 13:19-22

From five cities, not one shield![g]
Not one spear from forty thousand in Israel!

'My heart beats fast for Israel's chieftains,
with those of the people who stood forth boldly.
For this, bless Yahweh!

'You who ride on white she-asses,
you with caparisons beneath you,
and you who walk the highways, sing[h]
to the shouts of a rejoicing people
gathered about the watering places.
There they extol Yahweh's blessings,

the blessings of his reign in Israel.
(Yahweh's people marched down to the gates.)[k]

12 'Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, declaim a song!
Take heart, arise Barak,
capture your captors, son of Abinoam![j]

13 'Then Israel marched down to the gates;[k]
Yahweh's people, like heroes, marched down to fight for him.

14 'Ephraim's princes are in the valley.
Your brother Benjamin joins your ranks.
From Machir, captains have come down; Nb 32:39 Jos 17:1
from Zebulun, those with the staff of office.[l]
15 The princes of Issachar are with Deborah;
Naphtali in the vale with Barak has sped forward to follow him.[m]

'Where the streams of Reuben are,
men hold their long debate.[n]
16 Why did you linger among the sheepfolds
listening to pipes amid the flocks?
(Where the streams of Reuben are,
men hold their long debate.)

17 'Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan.
Why is Dan in the ships of strangers?[o] Jos 19:40+
Asher kept by the sea coast,
dwelling at ease within his harbours.

18 'The tribe of Zebulun fronted death,
Naphtali too, on the rising ground.[p]

19 'The kings came, they stood in line of battle;[q] Ps 48:4
then they fought, those kings of Canaan, 4:14
at Taanach, by Megiddo's waters,
yet bore away no silver spoils.

20 'From high in heaven fought the stars, Jos 10:10-14 2 S 5:24 Ps 18:14-15
fought from their orbits against Sisera.

21 'The torrent of Kishon swept them away,
the sacred torrent,[r] the torrent of Kishon.
Trample, my soul, with might and main!

g. I.e. *leben*, the sour milk of the nomad.
h. Text uncertain.

5 a. There is no doubt that this victory song, a masterpiece of ancient Hebrew literature, was composed when the events were fresh in its author's mind. It witnesses to the unity of worship that henceforth held the tribes together: Yahweh had come to the rescue of his people and his was the triumph; savage as it is, the song is instinct with genuine love for the God of Israel. The text is uncertain at times.
b. The modern Bedouin still observe this ritual of war.
c. 'Seir', usually synonymous with Edom, here indicates Sinai.
d. 'quaked' with Greek.
e. A gloss adds 'that is, Sinai'.
f. 'villages' following a few Hebr. MSS.
g. This line is amended conjecturally.
h. 'sing' (of it) corr.; 'think on' (it) Hebr.

i. Text uncertain. This last line anticipates v. 13.
j. 'Take heart' Greek. 'capture your captors' Syr.
k. Text corrected in accordance with last line of v. 11. In the East the gates of towns are where people congregate.
l. '(Ephraim's) princes are in the valley' Greek; 'their root is in Amalek' Hebr. 'Your brother' corr.; 'behind you (Benjamin)' Hebr. 'the staff of office'; Hebr. adds 'of the scribe'.
m. Lit. 'at his heels'. This line is uncertain. For 'Naphtali' Hebr. reads 'Issachar'.
n. Following Greek Syr. and v. 16; Hebr. 'heart-searching'.
o. By this time Dan had emigrated northwards, cf. Jg 17-18 and Jos 19:40+. Apparently the men of Dan hired out their labour to Phoenician shipmasters.
p. Note how this list of tribes, vv. 14-18, differs from Jos: Benjamin is more closely associated with Ephraim; with Ephraim and Manasseh it constitutes the House of Joseph, 2 S 19:21. Manasseh is here represented by Machir, first-born of Manasseh, cf. Jos 17:1. Gilead, v. 17, stands either for Gad (who does not otherwise appear) or for the Transjordanian half-tribe of Manasseh, Jos 13:29f. Four of the ten groups named did not rally to the call. Judah and Simeon, isolated in the south, are not even mentioned.
q. 'they stood in line of battle' following Greek.
r. 'the sacred torrent' following Greek.

'The horses' hoofs beat the ground; 22
galloping, galloping go his steeds.

"Curse Meroz,"[s] says Yahweh's angel 23
"curse, curse the dwellers in it;
for they never came to Yahweh's aid,
to Yahweh's aid among the warriors."

Jdt 13:18 Lk 1:42 'Blessed be Jael among women 24
(the wife of Heber the Kenite);[t]
among all women that dwell in tents may she be blessed.

'He asked for water; she gave him milk; 25
in a precious bowl she brought him cream.
She stretched out[u] her hand to seize the peg, 26
her right hand to seize the workman's mallet.

'She struck Sisera, crushed his head,
pierced his temple and shattered it.
At her feet he tumbled, he fell, he lay; 27
at her feet he tumbled, he fell.
Where he tumbled, there he fell dead.

'Through her window she leans and looks,[v] 28
Sisera's mother, through the lattice:
"Why is his chariot long in coming?
Why are the harnessed horses slow?"

'Among her princesses the wisest one answers, 29
and she to herself repeats,
2 S 1:24 "They are gathering, doubtless, sharing the spoil: 30
a girl, two girls for each man of war;
a garment, two dyed garments for Sisera;
a scarf, two embroidered scarves for me!"[w]

Jdt 16:17,31 Ps 145:20 'So perish all your enemies, Yahweh! 31
2 S 23:3-7 Dn 12:3 Mt 13:43 And let those who love you[x] be like the sun
when he arises in all his strength!'

3:11+ And the land enjoyed rest for forty years.

E. GIDEON AND ABIMELECH[a]

1. THE CALLING OF GIDEON

Israel oppressed by the Midianites

1 S 12:11+ Ex 2:15+ 6 The Israelites did what displeases Yahweh; Yahweh gave them over for seven 1
years into the hands of Midian, •and Midian bore down heavily on Israel. 2
1 S 13:6 To escape from Midian the Israelites used the mountain clefts and the caves
and shelters. •Whenever Israel sowed seed, Midian would march up with Amalek 3
and the sons of the East;[b] they would march up against Israel •and encamp 4
on their territory and destroy the produce of the country as far as Gaza. They
7:12 Lv 26:16 Dt 28:31f left Israel nothing to live on, not a sheep or ox or donkey, •for they came 5
up as thick as locusts with their own cattle and their tents; they and their camels
were past counting, they overran and pillaged the country. •Thus Midian brought 6
1 S 7:2 Israel to great distress, and the Israelites cried to Yahweh.

2:1-5+ **A message from a prophet**

When the Israelites cried to Yahweh because of Midian, •Yahweh sent a 7 8
1 S 10:18 prophet to the Israelites. This was his message, 'Thus Yahweh speaks, the God

of Israel. "It was I who brought you out of Egypt and led you out of a house
9 of slavery. •I rescued you from the power of the Egyptians and the power of
all who oppressed you. I drove them out before you and gave you their land,
10 and I said to you: I am Yahweh your God. Do not reverence the gods of the
Amorites in whose land you now live. But you have not listened to my words."'

The angel of Yahweh appears to Gideon

11 The angel of Yahweh[c] came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah[d] which Gn16:7+ 1Ch7:18 Heb13:1f *Nb 26:30* Jos 17:2
belonged to Joash of Abiezer. Gideon his son was threshing wheat inside the
12 winepress to keep it hidden from Midian, •when the angel of Yahweh appeared[e]
13 to him and said, 'Yahweh is with you, valiant warrior!' •Gideon answered him, Lk 1:28
'Forgive me, my lord, but if Yahweh is with us, then why is it that all this is
happening to us now? And where are all the wonders our ancestors tell us of when
they say, "Did not Yahweh bring us out of Egypt?" But now Yahweh has
deserted us; he has abandoned us to Midian.'
14 At this Yahweh turned to him and said, 'Go in the strength now upholding Ex3:10-12
you, and you will rescue Israel from the power of Midian. Do I not send you
15 myself?' •Gideon answered him, 'Forgive me, my lord, but how can I deliver
Israel? My clan, you must know, is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least
16 important in my family.' •Yahweh answered him, 'I will be with you and you shall
17 crush Midian as though it were a single man'. •Gideon said to him, 'If I
have found favour in your sight, give me a sign that it is you who speak 6:36 Ex 4:1-9
18 to me.[f] •I beg you, do not go away until I come back. I will bring you my 1S14:10+
offering[g] and set it down before you.' And he answered, 'I will stay until you
return'.
19 Gideon went away and prepared a young goat and made unleavened cakes
with an ephah of flour.[h] He put the meat into a basket and the broth into a pot,
20 then brought it all to him under the terebinth. As he came near, •the angel of
Yahweh said to him, 'Take the meat and unleavened cakes, put them on this
21 rock and pour the broth over them'. Gideon did so. •Then the angel of Yahweh
reached out the tip of the staff in his hand and touched the meat and unleavened
cakes.[i] Fire sprang from the rock and consumed the meat and unleavened cakes, Lv 9:24 1K 18:38 1Ch21:26 2 Ch 7:1
22 and the angel of Yahweh vanished before his eyes. •Then Gideon knew this
was the angel of Yahweh, and he said, 'Alas, my Lord Yahweh! I have seen Ex 33:21
23 the angel of Yahweh face to face!' •Yahweh answered him, 'Peace be with you;
24 have no fear; you will not die'. •Gideon built an altar there to Yahweh and
called it Yahweh-Peace. This altar still stands at Ophrah of Abiezer. Gn33:20+ Ex 17:15 Jos 22:34 1 S 14:35

Gideon and Baal[j]

25 Now that night Yahweh said to Gideon, 'Take your father's fattened calf,[k]
and pull down the altar to Baal belonging to your father and cut down the Ex 34:13+

s. A town in Naphtali, south of Kadesh.
t. Probably a gloss derived from 4:11,17,21.
u. 'She stretched out' following Greek.
v. 'looks' following Greek. Cf. the expectation of Atossa, mother of Darius, in the *Persae* of Aeschylus.
w. Text corr. Hebr. 'spoil of two dyed stuffs, a piece of embroidery, dyed stuff, two pieces of embroidery for the neck of the spoil'.
x. 'who love you' Greek and Lat.; 'who love him' Hebr.

6 a. The story of Gideon is instructive of Israel's condition at this time. The Hebrews had taken to agriculture and, like the other settled peoples, were threatened by nomad incursions. To some extent they had adopted the worship of the *Baalim*, the local gods who guaranteed the annual yield of wheat and oil. A select few remained faithful to Yahweh. The deuteronomistic editor has made use of two, or possibly three, documents originating in the Northern Kingdom.

b. The semitic tribes who roamed the Syro-Arabian desert east of the Jordan, cf. Nb 24:21+.

c. Referred to as 'Yahweh' in vv. 14, 16, 23. In v. 22 Gideon identifies Yahweh and his 'angel'. Cf. Gn 16:7+.

d. A sacred tree, cf. 4:5; 9:37, etc.; Jos 24:26. Ophrah is to the north of Beisan.

e. In human shape evidently, cf. Gn 18:1.

f. Gideon realises that he is addressing a supernatural being.

g. The 'oblation' of Lv 2; Gideon is thinking of a 'communion sacrifice'.

h. A kid, the most suitable sacrificial animal; a measure of flour; loaves unleavened, because otherwise 'unclean'; all are placed on a rock, a primitive rite characteristic of peasants fresh from nomadic life.

i. Yahweh transforms the communion sacrifice into a holocaust. Heavenly fire consecrates the place as a shrine. The end of the verse is misplaced (in v. 23, Yahweh is still present).

j. Second account of Gideon's call. 'Gideon' means 'he who pulls, or cuts, down'.

k. Text uncertain here and in vv. 26 and 28.

sacred post at the side of it. •Then, on the top of this bluff, build a carefully 26
constructed altar to Yahweh your God. Then take the fattened calf and burn it
as a holocaust on the wood of the sacred post you have cut down.' •Then Gideon 27
chose ten of his servants and did as Yahweh had ordered him. But since
he stood too much in fear of his family and the townspeople to do this by day,
he did it by night. •Next morning, when the townspeople got up, the altar to 28
Baal had been destroyed, the sacred post that had stood beside it was now cut
down, and the fattened calf had been burnt as a holocaust on the newly-built
altar. •Then they said to each other, 'Who has done this?' They searched, made 29
enquiries and declared, 'Gideon son of Joash has done it'. •Then the townspeople 30
said to Joash, 'Bring out your son for he must die, since he has destroyed the
altar to Baal and cut down the sacred post that stood beside it'. •Joash answered 31
all those mustered round him, 'Would you plead for Baal? Would you champion
Dt17:2-5 his cause? (Let anyone who pleads for Baal be put to death before dawn.)[l] If he
is a god, let him plead for himself, now that Gideon has destroyed his altar.'
That day Gideon was given the name of Jerubbaal,[m] because, they said, 'Baal 32
must plead against him, seeing that he has destroyed his altar'.

The call to arms

Then all Midian and Amalek and the sons of the East joined forces, crossed 33
3:10+ the Jordan and encamped in the plain of Jezreel. •And the spirit of Yahweh 34
came on Gideon; he sounded the horn and Abiezer rallied behind him. •He sent 35
3:27;7:23f; 8:1 messengers throughout Manasseh, and Manasseh too rallied behind him; he
sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, and they too marched out to
meet him.

The trial with the fleece

6:17+ Gideon said to God, 'If you really mean to deliver Israel by my hand, as you 36
have declared, •see now, I spread out a fleece on the threshing-floor; if there 37
is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is left dry, then I shall know that
you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have declared'. •And so it happened. 38
Gideon rose the next morning, squeezed the fleece and wrung enough dew out
of the fleece to fill a drinking cup. •Then Gideon spoke to God again, 'Do not 39
be angry with me if I speak once again. Let me make trial with the fleece just
once more. Let the fleece alone be dry, and let there be dew on the ground
all round it.' •And God did so that night. The fleece alone stayed dry, and there 40
was dew on the ground all round it.

2. GIDEON MAKES WAR WEST OF THE JORDAN

1 S 14:6 1Co 1:25f **Yahweh cuts down the numbers of Gideon's army**

1S12:11+ 7 Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) got up very early, as did all the people with him; 1
he pitched camp at En-harod;[a] the camp of Midian was north of his, under
the Hill of Moreh in the valley. •Then Yahweh said to Gideon, 'There are too 2
many people with you for me to put Midian into their power; Israel might
Dt8:17-18 Is10:13-15 Am 6:13 claim the credit for themselves at my expense: they might say, "My own hand
has rescued me". •Therefore, make this proclamation now to the people: "Let 3
Dt 20:8 1 M 3:56 anyone who is frightened or fearful go home!" ' Gideon put them to the test.[b]
Twenty-two thousand men went home, and ten thousand were left.

1 S 14:6 Jdt 9:11 Yahweh said to Gideon, 'There are still too many people. Take them down 4
to the waterside and I will sift them there. If I say of a man: He is to go with
you, that man is to go with you. And if I say of a man: He is not to go
with you, that man is not to go.' •So Gideon took the people down to the 5
waterside, and Yahweh said to him, 'All those who lap the water with their
tongues, as a dog laps, place these on one side. And all those who kneel down

6 to drink, place these on the other side.'[c] •The number of those who lapped with
their tongues[d] was three hundred; all the rest of the people had knelt to drink.
7 Then Yahweh said to Gideon, 'With the three hundred who lapped the water Ps 83:9
I will rescue you and put Midian into your power. Let all the others go back,
8 every man to his own home.' •Gideon made the people give him what pitchers
and horns they had,[e] then sent away all the Israelites, each to his own tent,
keeping only the three hundred with him. The camp of Midian was below his
own in the valley.

An omen of victory

9 Now it came about that in the night Yahweh said to him, 'Get up and go
10 down to the camp. I am putting it into your power. •However, if you are afraid
11 to make the assault, go down first to the camp with your servant Purah; •listen
to what they are saying; you will be encouraged by it and then you will march
against the camp.' So with his servant Purah he went down to the outposts of
the camp.
12 Midian and Amalek and all the sons of the East stretched through the valley
as thick as locusts; their camels were innumerable like the sand on the seashore. 6:5 Ex 10:14-15 Jdt 2:20 1 M 3:56 Jr 46:23 Jl 1:6f
13 Gideon came up just as a man was telling his comrade a dream; he was
saying, 'I had a dream: a cake made of barley bread came rolling through
the camp of Midian; it reached the tent, struck against it[f] and turned it upside
14 down'. •His comrade answered, 'This can be nothing else than the sword of
Gideon son of Joash the Israelite. God has put Midian and all the camp into
15 his power.' •When Gideon heard the dream thus told and interpreted, he fell Is 9:3
to his knees; then he returned to the camp of Israel and said, 'On your feet,
for Yahweh has put the camp of Midian into your power!'

The surprise attack

16 Gideon then divided his three hundred men into three companies. To each
man he gave a horn and an empty pitcher, with a torch inside each pitcher.
17 He said to them, 'Watch me, and do as I do. When I reach the edge of the
18 camp, whatever I do, you do too. •When I sound the horn, I and those with me,
then you too must sound your horns all round the camp and shout, "For Yahweh
and for Gideon!" '
19 Gideon and his hundred companions reached the edge of the camp at the
beginning of the middle watch, when the new sentries had just been posted;
20 they sounded their horns and smashed the pitchers in their hands. •The three
companies sounded their horns and smashed their pitchers; with their left hands
they grasped the torches, with their right hands the horns ready to blow; and
21 they shouted, 'For Yahweh and for Gideon!'[g] •And they stood still, spaced out
all round the camp. Then the whole camp woke[h] and the Midianites fled,
22 shouting. •While the three hundred kept sounding their horns, Yahweh made
every man in the camp turn his sword against his comrade. They all fled as far 1 S 14:20
as Beth-shittah towards Zarethan,[i] as far as the bank of Abel-meholah opposite
Tabbath.

The pursuit

23 The men of Israel mustered from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh, and 6:35

l. Interrupting the ironical discourse of Joash (cf. that of Elijah in 1 K 18:27): probably a gloss.

m. The etymology explaining Gideon's second name, cf. 7:1, etc., is of the popular kind. The name in fact has the opposite sense 'May Baal strive for, i.e. defend (the one who bears the name)'. A Yahwistic shrine replaces the Canaanite one.

7 a. *Harod* means 'terror', cf. v. 3.
b. 'put them to the test' conj.

c. 'place on the other (side)' versions.

d. 'with their tongues' Greek.

e. Conj.; Hebr. 'the people took (plural) provisions in their hands'.

f. The Hebr. here adds 'and it fell', omitted by Greek, and also (at end of v.) 'and the tent lay flat'. The tent symbolises the nomad; the barley cake the agricultural Israelites. Hence the remark in v. 14. Dreams were regarded as divine revelations, cf. Gn 20:3+.

g. Eliminating 'A sword' before 'For Yahweh'.

h. 'woke' corr.

i. 'towards Zarethan' in accordance with 1 K 4:12.

8:1; 12:5 pursued Midian. 24 •Gideon sent messengers throughout the highlands of
Ephraim to say, 'Come down and fight Midian, seize the water-points as far as
Jn1:28+ Beth-barah and the Jordan before they reach them'. All the men of Ephraim
mustered and seized the water-points as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. 25 •They
Ps 83:12 captured the two Midianite chieftains, Oreb and Zeeb;[j] they killed Oreb at
Is 10:26 Oreb's Rock and Zeeb at Zeeb's Winepress. They pursued Midian; and they
brought Gideon the heads of Oreb and of Zeeb beyond the Jordan.

12:1-6 **The Ephraimites take offence**[a]

1S12:11+ 8 Now, the men of Ephraim said to Gideon, 'What do you mean by treating 1
6:35;7:24 us like this, not summoning us when you went to fight with Midian?' And
they reproached him bitterly. 2 •He answered, 'What have I done when compared
to you? Is not the gleaning of Ephraim's grapes better than the vintage of
Abiezer? 3 •Into your power Yahweh[b] has given the chieftains of Midian, Oreb
and Zeeb. Can what I managed to do compare with what you have done?' And
at these words their anger left them.

3. GIDEON MAKES WAR BEYOND THE JORDAN. GIDEON'S END

Gideon pursues the enemy beyond the Jordan

4 Gideon reached the Jordan and crossed it, but he and his three hundred
companions were tired out and famished.[c] 5 •So he said to the men of Succoth,
'Please give my followers a few loaves of bread, because they are tired out, and
I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna,[d] the kings of Midian'. 6 •The chieftains of
Succoth answered, 'Give bread to your army? Are the hands of Zebah and
Zalmunna already in your grasp?' 7 •And Gideon answered, 'Very well! When
Yahweh has put Zebah and Zalmunna into my power, I will tear your flesh
with desert thorn and briar.' 8 •From there he went up to Penuel and asked the
men of Penuel the same thing; they answered as those of Succoth had done.
9 And to those of Penuel he made a similar reply, 'When I return victorious,
I will destroy this tower'.

The defeat of Zebah and Zalmunna

10 Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with their army, about fifteen thousand
men, all who remained of the army of the sons of the east. Those who had
fallen were a hundred and twenty thousand fighting men. 11 •Gideon went up the
nomads' way,[e] eastwards of Nobah and Jogbehah, and routed the army when
it thought itself in safety. 12 •Zebah and Zalmunna fled. He pursued them; he
took the kings of Midian prisoner, both Zebah and Zalmunna. And he utterly
destroyed the army.[f]

Gideon's acts of vengeance

13 After the battle, Gideon returned by the Ascent of Heres.[g] 14 •He seized a young
man, one of the people of Succoth, and questioned him, and the young man
wrote down the names of the chieftains and elders of Succoth for him—seventy-
seven men. 15 •Then Gideon came to the people of Succoth and said, 'Here you
see Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me and said, "Are the
hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your grasp, for us to give bread to
your tired troops?" ' 16 •Then he seized the elders of the city, and took desert thorn
and briar and tore[h] the men of Succoth with them. 17 •He destroyed the tower
of Penuel and slaughtered the townsmen. 18 •Then he said to Zebah and Zalmunna,
'The men you killed at Tabor—what were they like?'[i] They answered, 'They
looked like you. Every one of them carried himself like the son of a king.' 19 •Gideon
replied, 'They were my brothers, the sons of my own mother; as Yahweh lives,
if you had spared their lives I would not kill you'. 20 •Then he ordered Jether his

eldest son: 'Stand up and kill them'. But the boy did not draw his sword; he
21 dared not; he was still only a lad. •Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, 'Stand up
yourself, and strike us down; for as a man is, so is his strength'. Then Gideon 9:54
stood up and killed Zebah and Zalmunna; and he took the crescents from round Ps 83:12
their camels' necks.

Gideon triumphant. His end

22 The men of Israel said to Gideon, 'Rule over us, you and your sons and 1 S 8:7
23 your grandson,[j] because you have rescued us from the power of Midian'. •But
Gideon answered them, 'It is not I who shall rule over you, nor my son; Yahweh
24 must be your lord'. •But Gideon went on, 'Let me make one request of you.
Let every man of you give me one of the rings out of his spoils'—for the Ex 32
25 vanquished army had golden rings, because they were Ishmaelites. •They
answered, 'Gladly'. So he spread out his cloak, and on it they threw, every man Nb 31:28f, 50f
26 of them, a ring taken from their spoils.[k] •The weight of the golden rings he had 2S 8:11-12
asked for reached seventeen hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescents and
the earrings and purple garments worn by the kings of Midian, and besides the
27 collars round their camels' necks, too. •Of all this, Gideon made an ephod[l] and
put it in his own city of Ophrah. After him, all Israel prostituted themselves 1K 12:26-32
to it, and it was a snare for Gideon and his family.
28 Thus Midian was humbled before the Israelites. They did not lift up their 1 S 7:13 Jdt 16:25
heads again, and the land enjoyed rest for forty years, as long as Gideon lived. 3:11+
29 30 So Jerubbaal son of Joash withdrew and lived in his own house. •Gideon had
31 seventy sons begotten by him, for he had many wives. •His concubine, who
32 lived in Shechem, bore him a son too, whom he called Abimelech.[m] •Gideon 9
son of Joash was blessed in his old age; he died, and was buried in the tomb
of Joash his father, at Ophrah of Abiezer.

Israel relapses into idolatry

33 After Gideon's death, the people of Israel again began to prostitute themselves 9:4
34 to the Baals, and took Baal-berith[n] for their god. •The Israelites no longer
remembered Yahweh their God, who had rescued them from all the enemies
35 round them. •And towards the family of Jerubbaal—Gideon—they remained
ungrateful for all its good deeds to Israel.

4. THE REIGN OF ABIMELECH[a]

Abimelech becomes king

1 9 Abimelech son of Jerubbaal came to his mother's brothers at Shechem and
2 said to them and the whole clan of his mother's family,[b] •'Please put this

j. Oreb 'the raven', cf. Is 10:26. Zeeb 'the wolf'. Cf. 8:5, where the two chiefs are called by other names.

8 a. Ephraim claimed right of leadership.
b. 'Yahweh' Greek; 'God' Hebr.
c. Thus the versions.
d. In Hebr. 'Victim' and 'Shade (protection) denied', distorted and derisive forms of the Midianite kings' names. Gideon pursues the raiders as they make off with the plunder.
e. 'nomads' way' (lit. 'the way of those who live under the tent').
f. 'he destroyed' Greek.
g. 'by the Ascent of Heres' Greek.
h. 'tore' versions and v. 7.
i. 'What were they like' following Greek. This battle of Tabor is not otherwise known. Gideon informs the kings that they have killed his brothers, thus justifying his action: his is blood-vengeance, cf. Nb 35:19+.

j. An offer of kingship, not over all Israel but over Shechem and a few clans. Gideon refuses the title but accepts the authority; his sons are to wield it after him, cf. ch. 9; 1 S 8-12.
k. 'he spread out' Greek. Gideon's first use of authority is to demand a share of the spoil for a sanctuary. It was the common practice in Israel to set part of the booty aside for Yahweh, cf. Nb 31:50.
l. In other passages the ephod is the receptacle for the sacred lots, 1 S 2:28+; here, as it seems, it signifies a religious emblem; this becomes the object of idolatrous worship.
m. The woman lives with her family (cf. Samson's marriage, Jg 14) but the children belong to the father's clan—a type of marriage familiar in the East. *Abimelech* 'My Father (i.e. Yahweh) is king', cf. v. 23.
n. Baal-berith or El-berith, 9:46, god of the covenant and of oaths. Israel's ancient patriarchal traditions had evidently been contaminated by, and fused with, idolatrous Canaanite practice.

9 a. It is commonly agreed that of all the episodes of Israelite history this is one of the first to have achieved definitive form. The narrative appears to derive from

question to the leading men of Shechem: Which is better for you, to be ruled by seventy—I mean all the sons of Jerubbaal—or to be ruled by one? Remind yourselves also that I am your own flesh and blood.'[c] •His mother's brothers 3
spoke of him to all the leading men of Shechem in these terms, and their hearts inclined towards Abimelech, for they told themselves, 'He is our brother'.
8:33+ So they gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-berith, and 4
with this Abimelech paid worthless scoundrels to follow him. •Then he went 5
2 K 10: 1-17;11:1 to his father's house at Ophrah and murdered his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on the selfsame stone. Only the youngest son of Jerubbaal escaped, for he had gone into hiding; this was Jotham. •Then all the leading men of 6
Jos24:26+ Shechem and all Beth-millo gathered, and proclaimed Abimelech king by the terebinth of the pillar at Shechem.[d]

Jotham's fable[e]

News of this was brought to Jotham. He came and stood on the top of Mount 7
Jos8:33+ Gerizim and shouted aloud for them to hear:

2Ch25:18 'Hear me, leaders of Shechem,
that God may also hear you!

2 K 14:9 'One day the trees went out 8
to anoint a king to rule over them.
They said to the olive tree, "Be our king!"

'The olive tree answered them, 9
"Must I forego my oil
Lv 2 1S10:1;16:13 Ps104:15 which gives honour to gods and men,
to stand swaying above the trees?"

'Then the trees said to the fig tree, 10
"Come now, you be our king!"

'The fig tree answered them, 11
"Must I forego my sweetness,
forego my excellent fruit,
to stand swaying above the trees?"

'Then the trees said to the vine, 12
"Come now, you be our king!"

Qo 10:19 'The vine answered them, 13
"Must I forego my wine
Ps104:15 Pr 31:6 Qo 9:7 Si31:27-28 which cheers the heart of gods and men,
to stand swaying above the trees?"

'Then all the trees said to the thorn bush, 14
"Come now, you be our king!"

'And the thorn bush answered the trees, 15
"If in all good faith you anoint me king to reign over you,
then come and shelter in my shade.
If not, fire will come from the thorn bush
and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

[f] 'In the same way, therefore, if you have acted in sincerity and good faith 16
in making Abimelech king, if you have dealt honourably with Jerubbaal and his family, and have acted towards him as his own deeds deserve...[g] •My father 17
on his side fought for you, risked his life, rescued you from the power of Midian; you on your side have risen today against my father's family, you have murdered 18
his seventy sons on the selfsame stone; and to rule the leading men of Shechem you have set up Abimelech, the son of his slave-girl, because he is your brother.

19 If, I say, you have acted in sincerity and good faith towards Jerubbaal and his
20 family, then may Abimelech be your joy and may you be his. •If not, may fire 9:49,57
come out of Abimelech and devour the leading men of Shechem and Beth-millo,
and fire come out of the leading men of Shechem and Beth-millo to devour
Abimelech.'
21 Then Jotham took flight; he escaped and made his way to Beer; and there
he remained, to be out of the reach of his brother Abimelech.

The men of Shechem revolt against Abimelech

22 Abimelech ruled over Israel for three years.[h] •Then God sent a spirit of 1S16:14+
23 discord between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem, and the leaders of 1K22:23
24 Shechem rebelled against Abimelech. •And this was so that the crime committed
against Jerubbaal's seventy sons should be avenged,[i] and their blood recoil on
their brother Abimelech who had murdered them and on those leaders of
25 Shechem who had helped him to murder his brothers. •To spite him, the leaders
of Shechem put men in ambush on the mountain tops, and these robbed anyone
26 travelling their way.[j] Abimelech was told of this. •Gaal son of Ebed,[k] with his
brothers, happened to pass through Shechem and won the confidence of the
27 leaders of Shechem. •They went out into the countryside to harvest their
vineyards; they trod the grapes and held rejoicings and went into the temple
28 of their god. They ate and drank there[l] and cursed Abimelech. •Then Gaal son
of Ebed exclaimed, 'Who is Abimelech, and what is Shechem, that we should
be his slaves? Would it not be more fitting for the son of Jerubbaal and Zebul Gn 34
his delegate to serve[m] the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem? Why should
29 we be his slaves? •Who will put this people under my command? Then I would
drive Abimelech out and say to him:[n] Reinforce your army and come and
30 fight.' •Zebul the governor of the city was told what Gaal son of Ebed had
31 said, and he was furious. •He sent messengers to Abimelech at Arumah, bidding
them tell him, 'Listen! Gaal son of Ebed has come to Shechem with his brothers,
32 and they are stirring up the town against you.[o] •Move, therefore, under cover
of dark, you and the men you have with you, and take up concealed positions
33 in the countryside; •then in the morning at sunrise leave them quickly and
advance against the town. When Gaal and his men come out to meet you, do
34 with him as occasion serves.' •So Abimelech set off under cover of dark with
all the men he had and took up concealed positions opposite Shechem, in four
35 companies. •And as Gaal son of Ebed came out and paused at the entrance
to the gate of the town, Abimelech and the men with him rose from their ambush.
36 Gaal saw these men and said to Zebul, 'Look, there are men coming down from
the tops of the mountains!' Zebul answered, 'You mistake the shadow of the
37 mountains for men'. •But Gaal said again, 'Look, there are men coming down

prophetic circles in the Northern Kingdom, which were opposed to the monarchical system, cf. Jotham's fable. But the narrative also reveals the peaceful coexistence of Israel and Canaan in the early days of Hebrew settlement in Palestine: Abimelech, who succeeds Gideon, reigns over the Canaanites as well as over the Israelites.

9 b. 'the whole clan of his mother's family' corr.

c. I.e. your blood-relation.

d. Beth-millo, probably the same as the Migdal-shechem of vv. 46 and 49. 'the terebinth of the pillar' corr.

e. One of the earliest examples of didactic poetry in Israelite literature. It betrays a mistrust of the monarchy such as we find in 1 S 8. Olive, fig, and vine, trees of value for man, refuse kingship as serving no useful purpose; these represent Jerubbaal, cf. 8:23. The thornbush, fruitless and noxious, accepts it: this is Abimelech.

f. The mention of 'good faith' in v. 15 leads to a second moral now drawn from the fable; it concerns not the king but his supporters. The 'good faith' of the Shechemites is no more apparent in Abimelech's case than previously in Jerubbaal's. Total ruin will be the result, cf. what follows.

g. The interrupted construction is resumed in v. 19.

h. Not over all Israel but over Shechemite territory and a few Israelite clans.

i. 'so that the crime... should be avenged' corr.

j. Thus depriving Abimelech of his toll revenues.

k. Probably a Canaanite who rallies the native Shechemites against the half-Israelite Abimelech, cf. v. 28. Read 'Ebed' throughout, with Greek and Vulg., not 'slave' as in Hebr.

l. The 'communion sacrifice' which follows a successful harvest.

m. 'Would it not be... serve' corr.

n. 'I would say to him' Greek; 'he said to Abimelech' Hebr.

o. 'at Arumah' following v. 41 and Greek; 'craftily' or 'secretly' Hebr. 'they are stirring up' corr.

from the Navel of the Land, and another band is on its way from Diviners' Oak'.[p] •Then Zebul said to him, 'What has become of your boasting now, you 38
who said, "Who is Abimelech that we should be his slaves?" Are not these the men you made light of? Sally out now, then, and fight them.' •So Gaal 39
sallied out at the head of the leaders of Shechem and fought with Abimelech. But Abimelech drove Gaal before him; Abimelech went in pursuit of Gaal who 40
fled before him, and many of his men fell dead before they reached the town gate. •Then Abimelech went back to[q] Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and 41
his brothers and prevented them from living in Shechem.

Shechem destroyed and Migdal-shechem taken

Next day the people went out into the country, and Abimelech was told of 42
this. •He took his men, divided them into three companies and lay in wait in 43
the fields. When he saw the people leaving the town, he bore down on them and cut them to pieces. •While Abimelech and the company with him advanced and 44
took up their post at the entrance to the town gate, the two other companies fell on everyone in the fields and slaughtered them. •All that day Abimelech 45
attacked the town. He stormed it and slaughtered the people inside, razed the town and sowed it with salt.[r] •On hearing this, the leading men of Migdal- 46
8:33; 9:4 shechem took refuge in the crypt of the temple of El-berith.[s] •As soon as 47
Abimelech heard that all the leaders of Migdal-shechem had gathered there, he went up to Mount Zalmon with all his men. Then taking an axe in his hands, 48
he cut off the branch of a tree, picked it up and put it on his shoulder, and said to the men with him, 'Do what you have seen me do, and do it quickly'. •So 49
all his men set to work cutting down branches, one each; then they followed
9:20 Abimelech and heaped the branches on the crypt, and set it on fire over those inside.[t] All the inhabitants of Migdal-shechem perished too, about a thousand men and women.

The siege of Thebez: the death of Abimelech

2 S 11:21 Then Abimelech marched against Thebez, besieged it and stormed it. •In the 50 51
middle of the town there was a fortified tower in which all the men and women and all the leading men of the town took refuge. They locked the door behind them and climbed up to the roof of the tower. •Abimelech reached the tower and 52
attacked it. As he was approaching the door of the tower to set it on fire, a woman threw down a millstone on his head and crushed his skull. •He called 53 54
8:21 his armour-bearer at once and said to him, 'Draw your sword and kill me, that
1 S 31:4 no one may say of me, "A woman killed him" '. His armour-bearer ran
Jdt 14:18 him through, and he died. •When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech 55
was dead, they withdrew, each to his own home.

Thus God made the evil recoil on Abimelech that he had done to his father 56
by murdering his seventy brothers, •as God made all the wickedness of the 57
people of Shechem recoil on their own heads too. And so the curse of Jotham
9:20 son of Jerubbaal came true for them.

JEPHTHAH AND THE LESSER JUDGES[a]

F. TOLA

Gn 46:13 Nb 26:23 1 Ch 7:1-5 **10** After Abimelech, Tola son of Puah, son of Dodo, rose to deliver Israel. 1
He belonged to Issachar and lived at Shamir in the mountain country of Ephraim. •He was judge in Israel for twenty-three years; then he died and was 2
buried at Shamir.

G. JAIR

Nb 12:14 32:41 After him rose Jair of Gilead, who judged Israel for twenty-two years. •He had 3 4

thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys' colts; and they possessed thirty towns, Dt 3:14▲ 1 K 4:13▲ 1Ch2:21 -23▲
5 which are still called the Encampments of Jair,[b] in the land of Gilead. •Then Jair died and was buried at Kamon.

H. JEPHTHAH[c]

Oppression by the Ammonites

6 Again the Israelites began to do what displeases Yahweh. They served the 2:13+
Baals and the Astartes, and the gods of Aram and Sidon, the gods of Moab
and those of the Ammonites and Philistines. They deserted Yahweh and served
7 him no more. •Then Yahweh's anger flamed out against Israel and he gave
them over into the power of the Philistines and the power of the Ammonites,
8 who from that year onward crushed and oppressed the men of Israel for eighteen Nb21:35
years—all the Israelites who lived beyond the Jordan, in the Amorite country
9 in Gilead. •The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight Judah, Benjamin
10 and the House of Ephraim, and Israel's distress was very great. •Then the
Israelites cried to Yahweh and said, 'We have sinned against you, because we 1 S 7:2
11 have turned from Yahweh our God to serve the Baals'. •And Yahweh said to
the Israelites, 'When the Egyptians and the Amorites, the Ammonites and the
12 Philistines,[d] •the Sidonians and Amalek and Midian[e] oppressed you and you
13 cried to me, did I not rescue you from their power? •But you on your part have
turned from me and served other gods; and so I shall rescue you no more. 1 S 8:8
14 Go and cry to the gods you have chosen. Let them rescue you in your time of
15 trouble.' •The Israelites answered Yahweh, 'We have sinned. Do with us as you
16 think fit; only do rescue us today.' •They got rid of the foreign gods that they
had, and served Yahweh, and he could bear Israel's suffering no longer.
17 The Ammonites mustered and pitched their camp in Gilead. The Israelites
18 rallied and camped at Mizpah.[f] •Then the people, the chieftains of Gilead, said
to each other, 'Who will volunteer to fight the sons of Ammon? He shall be
made leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead.'

Jephthah lays down his terms

1 **11** Jephthah the Gileadite was a valiant warrior. He was the son of a harlot. 1S12:11+
2 Gilead was Jephthah's father,[a] •but Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and
the sons of this wife, when they grew up, drove Jephthah out, saying, 'You are
to have no share in our father's inheritance, because you are the son of an alien Gn21:10
3 woman'. •Jephthah fled from his brothers and made his home in the land of Tob.
Worthless followers gathered round him and used to go raiding with him.[b]
4 Some time after this, the Ammonites took up arms against Israel. •And when
5 the Ammonites had attacked Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah
6 from the land of Tob. •'Come' they said 'and be our commander, and we can

p. The 'Navel of the Land': name of a rounded hill, unidentified. The 'Diviners' Oak' is the same as the Oak of Moreh, Gn 12:6.

q. 'went back to' Greek; 'lived in' Hebr.

r. Symbolic gesture to assure the barrenness of the soil.

s. Thus claiming right of sanctuary.

t. Abimelech thus avoids the sacrilege of spilling blood in a consecrated place.

10 a. These 'lesser judges' appear to have been clan leaders who assumed military command to drive out the enemy. They bear the clan names: Tola and Puah are clans of Issachar; Jair, a clan of Manasseh-in-Gilead.

b. 'thirty towns' versions. A play on words: '*air* (donkey), '*ir* (town) and *Jair*.

c. The introduction, 10:6-16 (cf. ch. 2 and 6:7-10), to the story of Jephthah is also a preface to the second part of Jg, namely to the stories of Jephthah, Samson, and probably also Samuel. 1 S 1-12. The following narrative shows traces of re-editing and possibly derives from varying traditions, probably of Transjordanian origin. Jephthah, cast off by his family, becomes an outlaw chief. When danger threatens he is invited to return; the conditions he lays down are in fact a claim to kingship. Jephthah is pre-eminently the judge of the land of Gilead. The war between Ephraim and Gilead shows how far Israel is from unification.

d. Verse corrected, following Greek and Vulg.

e. 'Midian' *(Madiam)* following Greek; 'Maon' Hebr.

f. I.e. Mizpah in Gilead, cf. Gn 31:49.

11 a. Note how the country is personified, cf. Nb 26: 29-34. Vv. 1b-2 are an addition.

b. Cf. Abimelech, 9:4, and David, 1 S 22:1-2; 25:13, etc.

fight the Ammonites.' •But Jephthah answered the elders of Gilead, 'Was it not 7
you who hated me and drove me out of my father's house? Why come to me
when you are in trouble?' •The elders of Gilead answered Jephthah, 'That is 8
exactly why we have come back to you. Come with us; fight the Ammonites and
be our leader, leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead.'[c] •Jephthah answered the 9
elders of Gilead, 'If you take me home to fight the Ammonites and Yahweh puts
them at my mercy, I am to be your leader?' •The elders of Gilead answered 10
Jephthah, 'Yahweh be witness between us. May we be accursed if we do not
do as you have said!' •So Jephthah set off with the elders of Gilead. The people 11
set him at their head as leader and commander; and Jephthah repeated all his
conditions at Mizpah in Yahweh's presence.[d]

Jephthah negotiates with the Ammonites[e]

Dt2:19f,27 Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites to say to him, 'What 12
is the trouble between us, for you to come and make war on my country?' •The 13
king of the Ammonites answered Jephthah's messengers, 'The reason is that
when Israel came up from Egypt, they seized my land from the Arnon to the
Jabbok and the Jordan. Give it back peaceably now.' •Jephthah sent messengers 14
to the king of the Ammonites •with this answer, 'Jephthah says this: "Israel 15
seized neither the land of Moab nor the land of the Ammonites. •When Israel 16
came out of Egypt, they passed through the wilderness to the Sea of Reeds
Nb20:14-21 and reached Kadesh. •Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom to say 17
to him: Please let us pass through your country, but the king of Edom would
not listen. They sent similarly to the king of Moab, but he refused, and Israel
remained at Kadesh; •later they made their way through the wilderness, going 18
round the countries of Edom and Moab until they were to the east of Moab
territory. The people encamped beyond the Arnon but did not cross the border
of Moab, for the Arnon itself is the boundary there. •Then Israel sent messengers 19
to Sihon the king of the Amorites, who ruled at Heshbon. Israel's message was:
Please let us pass through your country to our destination. •But Sihon would 20
not let Israel pass through his territory; he mustered his whole army; they
encamped at Jahaz, and he then joined battle with Israel. •Yahweh the God 21
of Israel delivered Sihon and his whole army into the power of Israel; Israel
defeated them and took possession of the whole country of the Amorites who
lived in that region. •Thus they came to occupy the whole country of the 22
Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.
And now that Yahweh the God of Israel has driven the Amorites out before 23
his people Israel, will one such as you dispossess us? •Do you not possess all 24
that Chemosh your god took from its owners?[f] In the same fashion, whatever
Yahweh our God took from its owners, that we possess too. •Are you a better 25
Nb22:24 Jos24:9-10 man than Balak son of Zippor, the king of Moab? Did he challenge Israel?
Did he make war against them? •When Israel settled in Heshbon and its 26
outlying villages, or in Jazer and its villages, or in any of the towns on the banks
of the Jordan[g] (three hundred years), why did you not recover those places
then?[h] •I for my part have committed no sin against you, rather, you for your 27
Gn18:25 part are wronging me by making war on me. Let Yahweh the Judge give judgement
today between the sons of Israel and the king of the Ammonites." ' •But the king 28
of the Ammonites took no notice of the message Jephthah had sent him.

Jephthah's vow and his victory

3:10+ The spirit of Yahweh came on Jephthah, who crossed Gilead and Manasseh, 29
passed through to Mizpah in Gilead, and from Mizpah in Gilead made his way
to the rear of the Ammonites. •And Jephthah made a vow to Yahweh, 'If you 30
Gn22:1-19 2 K 3:27 Mi 6:7 deliver the Ammonites into my hands, •then the first person to meet me from 31
the door of my house when I return in triumph from fighting the Ammonites
shall belong to Yahweh, and I will offer him up as a holocaust'.[i] •Jephthah 32

marched against the Ammonites to attack them, and Yahweh delivered them
33 into his power. •He harassed them from Aroer almost to Minnith (twenty towns) 1 S 7:13 Ezk27:17
and to Abel-keramim. It was a very severe defeat, and the Ammonites were
humbled before the Israelites.
34 As Jephthah returned to his house at Mizpah, his daughter came out from Ex 15:21 Jdt 15:12
it to meet him; she was dancing to the sound of timbrels. This was his only 1S18:6-7
35 child; apart from her he had neither son nor daughter. •When he saw her, he
tore his clothes and exclaimed, 'Oh my daughter, what sorrow you are bringing
me! Must it be you, the cause of my ill-fortune! I have given a promise to Yahweh,
36 and I cannot unsay what I have said.'[j] •She answered him, 'My father, you
have given a promise to Yahweh; treat me as the vow you took binds you to, Nb 30:3
since Yahweh has given you vengeance on your enemies the Ammonites.'
37 Then she said to her father, 'Grant me one request. Let me be free for two months.
I shall go and wander in the mountains, and with my companions bewail my
38 virginity.'[k] •He answered, 'Go', and let her depart for two months. So she went
39 away with her companions and bewailed her virginity in the mountains. •When
the two months were over, she returned to her father, and he treated her as the
vow that he had uttered bound him.[l] She had never known a man. From this
40 comes this custom in Israel •for the daughters of Israel to leave home every
year and to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite for four days every 2Ch35:25
year.

War between Ephraim and Gilead.[a] The death of Jephthah

1 12 The men of Ephraim mobilised; they crossed the Jordan, making for 1S12:11+
Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, 'Why did you go to fight the Ammonites 8:1-3
2 without asking us to go with you? We shall burn you and your house.' •Jephthah
answered them, 'My people and I were hard put to it, the Ammonites pressed
us hard. I summoned you to help me, but you did not rescue me from their
3 hands. •When I saw that no one came[b] to my help, I took my life in my hands
and marched against the Ammonites, and Yahweh handed them over to me.
4 Why then today come up against me to make war on me?' •Then Jephthah
mustered all the men of Gilead and joined battle with Ephraim, and the men
of Gilead routed Ephraim, because these kept saying, 'You are no more than
deserters from Ephraim, you Gileadites in the heart of Ephraim and Manasseh'.
5 Then Gilead cut Ephraim off from the fords of the Jordan, and whenever an 3:28;7:24
Ephraimite fugitive said, 'Let me cross', the men of Gilead asked him, 'Are you
6 an Ephraimite?' If he answered 'No', •they said, 'Then say Shibboleth'.[c] He
would say 'Sibboleth', since he could not pronounce the word correctly. There- Mt 26:73
upon they seized and slaughtered him by the fords of the Jordan. There
perished in this way forty-two thousand men of Ephraim.

c. Not merely a military commander but the leader, lit. 'head'.

d. At Mizpah therefore there must have been not merely a *stele* but a frequented shrine in which Yahweh was invoked as witness.

e. Possession of the 'plains of Moab' was always disputed between Israel and its neighbours. Over this area the rights of Moab and of Ammon were equal: the same arguments are therefore valid against both.

f. The Ammonite god was in fact Milcom; Chemosh was the principal god of the Moabites. 'took from its owners' corr.; 'made you owner of' Hebr. Jephthah here uses the language of his place and time: each nation was thought to receive help from its own god. But cf. v. 27.

g. 'Jazer' and 'Jordan' Greek and Vulg.; 'Aroer' and 'Arnon' Hebr. 'three hundred years' is a gloss.

h. Jephthah is appealing to prescriptive right.

i. Jephthah is a sincere Yahwist but shares the ideas of his contemporaries, cf. the king of Moab sacrificing his son, 2 K 3:27. Human sacrifice was forbidden by the Law but made its way into Israel through Canaanite influence, cf. Lv 18:21+; 2 K 23:10

j. A vow was held irrevocable, cf. Nb 30:3.

k. 'I shall go and wander' versions. To be childless was considered a misfortune and, for a woman, a disgrace.

l. I.e. he kills his daughter. Thus the earliest commentators; in the Middle Ages, however, it was thought that Jephthah had merely consecrated his daughter to perpetual virginity. The narrator's terseness and his emphasis on the annual mourning mark his disapproval of an act which proceeded from a misguided conscience.

12 a. The Ephraimites claim primacy in Israel; they particularly oppose the secession of the Transjordanian tribes (cf. the gloss concluding v. 4 'You are no more... Manasseh').

b. 'no one came' versions; 'you did not come' Hebr.

c. *Shibboleth* means either 'an ear of corn' or 'a flowing stream'. The Ephraimites were betrayed by their mispronunciation.

1 S 7:15 Jephthah was judge in Israel for six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, 7
and was buried in his own town, Mizpah in Gilead.[d]

I. IBZAN

1 S 7:15 After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem[e] was judge in Israel. •He had thirty sons and 8 9
thirty daughters. He gave his daughters in marriage outside his clan, and brought
in thirty brides from outside for his sons. He was judge in Israel for seven years.
Then Ibzan died and was buried in Bethlehem. 10

J. ELON

Gn 46:14 Nb 26:26 1 S 7:15 After him, Elon of Zebulun was judge in Israel. He was judge in Israel for 11
ten years. •Then Elon of Zebulun died and was buried at Elon[f] in the land of 12
Zebulun.

K. ABDON

After him, Abdon son of Hillel of Pirathon was judge in Israel. •He had 13 14
10:4 1 S 7:15 forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy donkeys' colts. He was
judge in Israel for eight years. •Then Abdon son of Hillel of Pirathon died, and 15
he was buried at Pirathon in the mountain country of Ephraim, in the land of
Shaalim.[g]

L. SAMSON[a]

Samson's birth foretold

1 S 12:9 Jos 13:2+ **13** Again the Israelites began to do what displeases Yahweh, and Yahweh 1
delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

Jos 15:33 There was a man of Zorah of the tribe of Dan, called Manoah. His wife 2
18:2.11 Gn 11:30:18 1 S 1 2 Ch 2:53 Lk 1:5-25 Heb 13:1f was barren, she had borne no children. •The angel of Yahweh[b] appeared to this 3
woman and said to her, 'You are barren and have had no child.[c] •But from now 4
on take great care. Take no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean.
For you will conceive and bear a son. No razor is to touch his head, for the 5
Nb 6:1+ 1 S 1:11 boy shall be God's nazirite from his mother's womb. It is he who will begin to
rescue Israel from the power of the Philistines.' •Then the woman went and 6
1 S 9:6 told her husband, 'A man of God has just come to me; his presence was like
the presence of the angel of God, he was so majestic. I did not ask him where
he came from, and he did not reveal his name to me. •But he said to me, "You 7
will conceive and bear a son. From now on, take no wine or strong drink,
and eat nothing unclean. For the boy shall be God's nazirite from his mother's
womb to his dying day." '

The angel appears a second time

Then Manoah pleaded with Yahweh and said, 'I beg you, Lord, let the man 8
of God that you sent come to us once again and instruct us in what we must do
with the boy when he is born'. •Yahweh[d] heard Manoah's prayer for favour, 9
and the angel of Yahweh visited the woman again as she was sitting in the
field; her husband Manoah was not with her. •The woman ran quickly and told 10
her husband: 'Look,' she said 'the man who came to me the other day has appeared
to me again'. •Manoah rose and followed his wife, and he came to the man and 11
said to him, 'Are you the man who spoke to this woman?' He answered, 'I am'.
Manoah went on, 'When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the boy's rule 12
of life? How must he behave?' •And the angel of Yahweh answered Manoah, 13
'The things that I forbade this woman, let him refrain from too.[e] •Let him taste 14

nothing that comes from the vine, let him take no wine or strong drink, let him
15 eat nothing unclean, let him obey all the orders I gave this woman.' •Manoah
then said to the angel of Yahweh, 'Do us the honour of staying with us while
16b we prepare a kid for you'. •For Manoah did not know this was the angel Tb 12:19
16a of Yahweh. •The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, 'Even if I did stay
with you, I would not eat your food; but if you wish to prepare a holocaust,
17 offer it to Yahweh'.[f] •Manoah then said to the angel of Yahweh, 'What is your
18 name, so that we may honour you when your words are fulfilled?' •The angel
19 of Yahweh replied, 'Why ask my name? It is a mystery.'[g] •Then Manoah took Gn 32:30 Ex 3:14 Rv 19:12
the kid and the oblation and offered it as a holocaust on the rock to Yahweh
20 who works mysteries.[h] •As the flame went up heavenwards from the altar, the Lv 9:24
angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame in the sight of Manoah and his wife, Tb 12:16,19 Ezk 1:28
21 and they fell face downwards on the ground. •After this, the angel of Yahweh Rv 1:17
did not appear any more to Manoah and his wife, by which Manoah understood
22 that this had been the angel of Yahweh. •And Manoah said to his wife, 'We
23 are certain to die, because we have seen God'. •His wife answered him, 'If Ex 33:20+
Yahweh had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a holocaust and
24 oblation from our hands; he would not have told us all these things.'[i] •The woman
gave birth to a son and called him Samson. The child grew, and Yahweh blessed Heb 11:32
25 him; •and the spirit of Yahweh began to move him in the Camp of Dan, between 3:10+; 18:12 Jos 19:41
Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson marries

1 14 Samson went down to Timnah, and there he noticed one of the daughters Gn 38:12 Jos 15:10; 19:41 1 S 12:9
2 of the Philistines. •He came up again and told his father and mother
this. 'At Timnah' he said 'I noticed one of the daughters of the Philistines. Get
3 her for me, then, to be my wife.' •His father and mother said to him, 'Is there Gn 34:4
no woman among those of your own clan or among your whole nation, for you 1 S 17:26 Tb 4:12
to seek a wife among these uncircumcised Philistines?' But Samson answered Gn 24:3-4
4 his father, 'Get this one for me; get her, because I like her'. •His father and Gn 28:1-2
mother did not know that all this came from Yahweh, who was seeking an
occasion for quarrelling with the Philistines; since at this time the Philistines
had Israel in their power.

5 Samson went down to Timnah,[a] and as he reached the vineyards of Timnah
6 he saw a young lion coming roaring towards him. •The spirit of Yahweh seized
on him, and though he had no weapon in his hand he tore the lion in pieces as a 3:10+ 1 S 17:34f 2 S 23:20
7 man tears a kid; but he did not tell his father or mother what he had done. •He
8 went down and talked to the woman, and he liked her. •Not long after this,
Samson came back to marry her. He went out of his way to look at the carcase
9 of the lion, and there was a swarm of bees in the lion's body, and honey. •He took
up some honey in his hand and ate it as he went along. On returning to his
father and mother, he gave some to them, which they ate too, but he did not
10 tell them he had taken it from the lion's carcase. •Then he went down to the

d. With Greek and Vulg. Text uncertain.
e. Bethlehem of Zebulun, Jos 19:15, near Nazareth.
f. 'Elon' with Greek rather than 'Aijalon' Hebr.
g. With Greek, cf. 1 S 9:4.

13 a. The story of Samson supposes the existence of an historical personage, a Danite peasant of prodigious strength who fought single-handed against the Philistines. In this a very ancient tradition saw the hand of God: Samson's strength was divine in origin, it was attributable to the spirit of God, 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14; 16:28, or possibly to his nazirite vow, ch. 13; 16:17a; it was therefore a gift from Yahweh, 16:28. Popular imagination subsequently elaborated this theme.

b. Cf. 2:1; 6:11 and Gn 16:7+. In v. 22 the angel is identified with Yahweh as in 6:22-23.

c. The text adds 'you will conceive, and bear a son', a doublet of v. 5a.

d. 'Yahweh' versions; 'God' Hebr. So also for the 'angel of Yahweh' in this verse.

e. 'Let him refrain from' corr.; 'let her refrain from' Hebr. The Hebr. has the feminine in v. 14 also.

f. The angel refuses the food but accepts the sacrifice.

g. Man cannot hope to comprehend God: he cannot 'know his name' (the 'name' reveals the person).

h. Or 'Yahweh of Mysteries', like 'Yahweh-Peace', 6:24. We follow the versions here. The Hebr. has 'and he worked a miracle', adding 'in the sight of Manoah and his wife', a doublet of v. 20b.

i. The Hebr. adds 'he would not have let us hear such things'.

14 a. The Hebr. adds 'with his father and mother'; to be omitted, cf. v. 6.

Tb 8:20 woman, and they made a feast for Samson for seven days there,[b] for such is the custom of young men. •But because they were frightened of him, they chose 11
thirty companions to stay with him.

Samson's riddle

1 K 10 Ezk 17 Then Samson said to them, 'Let me ask you a riddle. If you find the answer 12
within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty pieces of fine linen and
thirty festal robes. •But if you cannot find the answer, then you in your turn 13
must give me thirty pieces of fine linen and thirty festal robes.' 'Ask your riddle,'
they replied 'we are listening.' •So he said to them: 14

'Out of the eater came what is eaten,
and out of the strong came what is sweet'.

But three days went by and they could not solve the riddle.

16:5-21 On the fourth day[c] they said to Samson's wife. 'Cajole your husband into 15
telling you the answer to the riddle, or we will burn you and your father's house
together. Did you invite us here to rob us?' •Then Samson's wife fell on his 16
neck in tears and said, 'You only hate me, you do not love me. You have asked
my fellow countrymen a riddle and not even told me the answer.' He said to her,
'I have not even told my father or mother, why should I tell you?' •She wept 17
Lk 11:8 on his neck for the seven days their feast lasted. She was so persistent that on
the seventh day he told her the answer, and she in turn told her fellow
countrymen what the answer to the riddle was.

So on the seventh day, before Samson entered the bridal room,[d] the men 18
of the town said to him:

'What is sweeter than honey,
and what stronger than a lion?'

He retorted:

'If you had not ploughed with my heifer,
you would never have guessed my riddle'.

Then the spirit of Yahweh seized on him. He went down to Ashkelon, killed 19
thirty men there, took what they wore and gave the festal robes to those who
had answered the riddle, then burning with rage returned to his father's house.
Then Samson's wife was given to the companion who had been his best man. 20

Samson sets fire to the crops of the Philistines

1 S 12:9 15 Not long after this, at the time of the wheat harvest, Samson went back 1
to see his wife; he had brought a kid for her; he said, 'I wish to go to my
wife in her room'. But her father would not let him enter. •'I felt sure' he said 2
'that you had taken a real dislike to her, so I gave her to your companion. But
would not her younger sister suit you better? Have her instead of the other.'
Samson answered them, 'I can only get my own back on the Philistines now 3
by doing them some damage'. •So Samson went off and caught three hundred 4
2 S 14:30 foxes, then took torches and turning the foxes tail to tail put a torch between
each pair of tails. •He lit the torches and set the foxes free in the Philistines' 5
cornfields. In this way he burned both sheaves and standing corn, and the vines
and olive trees as well.

The Philistines asked, 'Who has done this?' and received the answer, 'Samson, 6
who married the Timnite's daughter; his father-in-law took the wife back again
and gave her to his companion instead'. Then the Philistines went up and burned
the woman and her family[a] to death. •Samson said to them, 'Since this is how 7
you behave, I swear I will not rest till I have had my revenge on you'. •And he 8
1 S 17:26 fell on them for all he was worth and caused great havoc. Then he went down
to the cave in the Rock of Etam, and stayed there.

The donkey's jawbone

9 The Philistines came up and encamped in Judah and made a foray against 2 S 23:11
Lehi.
10 The men of Judah said to them, 'Why are you attacking us?' They
answered, 'We have come to seize Samson and to do to him what he did to us'.
11 Then three thousand of the men of Judah went down to the cave in the Rock
of Etam and said to him, 'Do you not know that the Philistines have us in their
power? Now what have you done to us?' He answered, 'What they did to me
12 I did to them'. •Then they said to him, 'We have come down to take you, to
hand you over to the Philistines'. He said to them, 'Swear to me not to kill me
13 yourselves'. •They answered, 'No; we only want to bind you and hand you
over to them; we certainly do not want to kill you'. Then they bound him
with two new ropes and brought him up from the Rock.
14 As he approached Lehi, and the Philistines came running towards him with
triumphant shouts, the spirit of Yahweh seized on Samson; the ropes on his
arms became like burnt strands of flax and the bonds melted off his hands.
15 Catching sight of the fresh jawbone of a donkey, he reached out and snatched
16 it up; then with it he struck down a thousand men. •And Samson said:

'With the jawbone of a donkey I have thrashed them;[b]
with the jawbone of a donkey I have struck down a thousand men'.

17 And with this, he hurled the jawbone from him; and that is why the place was
18 called Ramath-lehi.[c] •And as he was thirsty, he called on Yahweh and said,
'You yourself have worked this great victory by the hand of your servant; and
19 now must I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?' •Then
God opened a hollow in the ground, the hollow there is at Lehi, and water
gushed out of it. Samson drank; his vigour returned and he revived. And therefore
20 this spring was called En-hakkore;[d] it is still at Lehi today. •Samson was judge 16:31
in Israel in the days of the Philistines for twenty years.

The gates of Gaza

1 16 From here Samson went on to Gaza, and seeing a harlot there he went 1 S 12:9
2 into her house. •The news was told to the men of Gaza, 'Samson has Qo 7:26
arrived'. They surrounded the place and kept watch for him at the gate of
the town. All that night they made no move, thinking, 'We will wait till daybreak;
3 then we will kill him'. •Samson however stayed in bed till midnight, and rising
at midnight, he seized the doors of the town gate and the two posts as well; he
tore them up, bar and all, hoisted them on to his shoulders and carried them
to the top of the hill facing Hebron and there he left them.[a]

Samson is betrayed by Delilah Sl 9:2

4 After this, Samson fell in love with a woman in the Vale of Sorek; she was
5 called Delilah.[b] •The chiefs of the Philistines visited her and said to her, 'Cajole
him and find out where his great strength comes from,[c] and how we can master 14:15-18
him and bind him and reduce him to helplessness. In return we will each
give you eleven hundred silver shekels.'

b. 'he (Samson)' corr.; 'his father' Hebr. 'they made' corr.; 'Samson made' Hebr. 'for seven days' versions. Samson's marriage is of the same kind as Gideon's marriage at Shechem, 8:31+. In such marriages the wedding feast was held at the house of the bride's father with whom she continued to live afterwards.

c. Thus the versions; 'on the seventh day' Hebr. The marriage was consummated on the first day of the wedding celebrations.

d. Corr. in accordance with 15:1.

15 a. 'and her family' corr., cf. ch. 14-15; 'and her father' Hebr.

b. 'I have thrashed them' corr. In the Hebr. the words here translated 'donkey' 'thrash' are from the same root.

c. *Ramath-lehi:* the 'heap' or 'height' of Lehi; also, by a punning etymology, 'the throwing of the jawbone'.

d. I.e. 'the Spring of him who Called' (on God); but also, and more probably, 'the Spring of the Partridge', 1 S 26:20; Jr 17:11.

16 a. 'there he left them' Greek.

b. Perhaps a nickname with possible meaning 'informer'.

c. They seek the magical knowledge they feel necessary to defeat preternatural strength.

Delilah said to Samson, 'Please tell me where your great strength comes 6
from, and what would be needed to bind you and tame you'. •Samson answered, 7
'If I were bound with seven new bowstrings that had not yet been dried, I should
lose my strength and become like any other man'. •The chiefs of the Philistines 8
brought Delilah seven new bowstrings that had not yet been dried and she took
them and bound him with them. •She had men concealed in her room, and she 9
shouted, 'The Philistines are on you, Samson!' Then he snapped the bowstrings
as a strand of tow snaps at a touch of the fire. So the secret of his
strength remained unknown.

Then Delilah said to Samson, 'You have been laughing at me and telling me 10
lies. But now please tell me what would be needed to bind you.' •He answered, 11
'If I were bound tightly with new ropes that have never been used, I should lose
my strength and become like any other man'. •Then Delilah took new ropes 12
and bound him with them, and she shouted, 'The Philistines are on you, Samson!'
She had men concealed in her room, but he snapped the ropes round his arms
like thread.

Then Delilah said to Samson, 'Up to now you have been laughing at me 13
and telling me lies. Tell me what would be needed to bind you.' He answered,
'If you wove the seven locks of my hair into the warp of the web and fixed the
peg[d] firmly, I should lose my strength and become like any other man'. •She 14
lulled him to sleep, then wove the seven locks of his hair into the warp, fixed
the peg and shouted, 'The Philistines are on you, Samson!' He woke from his
sleep and pulled out both stuff and peg. So the secret of his strength remained
unknown.

Delilah said to him, 'How can you say you love me when you do not trust 15
me? Three times now you have laughed at me and have not told me where your
great strength comes from.' •And day after day she persisted with her questions, 16
and allowed him no rest, till he grew tired to death of it. •At last he told her 17
Nb 6:4 1 S 1:11 his whole secret; he said to her, 'A razor has never touched my head, because
I have been God's nazirite from my mother's womb. If my head were shorn, then
my power would leave me and I should lose my strength and become like any
other man.' •Then Delilah realised he had told his whole secret to her; she 18
had the chiefs of the Philistines summoned and given this message, 'Come just
once more: he has told his whole secret to me'. And the chiefs of the
Philistines came to her with the money in their hands.[e] •She lulled Samson to 19
sleep in her lap, and summoned a man who sheared the seven locks off his head.
Then he began to lose his strength,[f] and his power left him. •She cried, 'The 20
Philistines are on you, Samson!' He awoke from sleep, thinking, 'I shall break
free as I did before and shake myself clear'. But he did not know that Yahweh
2 S 1:20 had turned away from him.[g] •The Philistines seized him, put out his eyes and 21
took him down to Gaza. They fettered him with a double chain of bronze, and
he spent his time turning the mill in the prison.

But the hair that had been shorn off began to grow again. 22

Samson's revenge and death

The chiefs of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon 23
their god[h] and to rejoice. They said:

'Into our hands our god has delivered
Samson our enemy'.

And as soon as the people saw their god, they acclaimed him, shouting his 24
praises:

'Into our hands our god has delivered
Samson our enemy,
the man who laid our country waste
and killed so many of us'.

25 And as their hearts were full of joy, they shouted, 'Send Samson out to amuse us'.
So Samson was brought out of prison, and he performed feats for them; then
26 he was put to stand between the pillars. •But Samson said to the boy who was
leading him by the hand, 'Lead me where I can touch the pillars supporting the
27 building, so that I can lean against them'. •Now the building was crowded with
men and women. All the chiefs of the Philistines were there, while about three
28 thousand men and women were watching Samson's feats from the roof. •Samson
called on Yahweh and cried out, 'Lord Yahweh, I beg you, remember me; give
me strength again this once, and let me be revenged on the Philistines at one blow
29 for my two eyes'. •And Samson put his arms round the two middle pillars
supporting the building, and threw all his weight against them, his right arm
30 against one and his left arm against the other; •and he cried out, 'May I die
with the Philistines!' He thrust now with all his might, and the building fell on
the chiefs and on all the people there. Those he killed at his death outnumbered
31 those he had killed in his life. •His brothers and his father's whole family came
down and carried him away. They took him up and buried him between Zorah 1 S 7:15
and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had been judge in Israel
for twenty years.

IV. ADDITIONS

A. THE SANCTUARY OF MICAH AND THE SANCTUARY OF DAN[a]

The household shrine of Micah

2a 17 In the highlands of Ephraim there was a man called Micayehu.[b] •He 1:34
said to his mother, 'The eleven hundred silver shekels which were taken
from you and concerning which you uttered a curse, going on to say—I heard it
3b with my own ears—•"I solemnly declare that of my own free will I consecrate
this silver to Yahweh,[c] to make a carved image (and an idol of cast metal)"[d]—
2b I myself have that silver; I was the one who took it, •and now I give it back
3c to you'. •His mother answered, 'May my son be blessed by Yahweh!' •And
2c Micayehu gave her back the eleven hundred silver shekels.
3a
4 Then his mother took two hundred silver shekels and gave them to the metal-
worker. From them he made a carved image (and an idol of cast metal), and
5 this was placed in the house of Micah, •who built a shrine for it, and then made 1S2:28+
an ephod and teraphim, and installed one of his sons to act as priest for him.[e] Gn31:19+
6 In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did as he pleased. 1 S 7:1; 15:23+; *18:1; 19:1; 21:25*; Dt 12:8

d. Vv. 13-14 are corrected and restored from the versions. The peg is the vertical support of the loom. The loom is horizontal; in it the stuff in process of weaving is stretched between the upright supports which are firmly fixed in the ground.

e. Corr.

f. 'who sheared' versions; 'and she sheared' Hebr. 'he began to lose his strength' versions; 'she began to torment him' Hebr.

g. Because the nazirite vow had been broken.

h. Amorite god of fertility worshipped in Palestine, cf. the place-name Beth-dagon, Jos 15:41; 19:27; the god was adopted by the Philistines, cf. 1 S 5:2f.

17 a. This story, possibly derived from the fusion of two texts, or from a primitive story later completed, is of very ancient origin. It reflects the anarchy of Israel before the monarchy, 18:1; cf. 19:1; 21:25, and the abuses that had crept into Yahwism: namely, idolatrous forms of worship and the sacrilegious innovations of Micah and the Danites in establishing a shrine for their own use yet lacking the sanction of a divine apparition, cf. Ex 19:12+. Hence the underlying disapproval of the Danite shrine which was later to be associated with Jeroboam's schismatic worship, 1 K 12:30. Micah and the Danites, however, remain sincere Yahwists. For their priest they want a Levite, a custodian of the Mosaic tradition. The Danite migration seems to have taken place at the beginning of the period of the Judges, Jos 19:47-48, cf. Jos 17:14-18. The episode belongs to the period when the tribes were establishing themselves with difficulty, each acting on its own account, cf. Jg 1:1+.

b. *Micayehu* 'Who is like Yahweh?', here and in v. 3a; elsewhere abbreviated to Micah.

c. The silver thus became sacred and to use it for profane purposes would have called down the divine curse. Vv. 2-3 have evidently suffered some confusion; our text, going by the sense, restores the order.

d. The phrase 'idol of cast metal' juxtaposed with the 'carved image' is possibly an addition. The reference is to two idolatrous forms of the Yahwistic cult, cf. 1 K 12:28-30.

e. I.e. according to the ancient custom authorising the head of clans and families to exercise the functions of priest themselves and to appoint their own priests. The rest of the narrative will however show that the superior rights of the Levites were admitted nonetheless.

There was a young man of Bethlehem in Judah,[f] of the clan of Judah, who 7
Ex12:48+ was a Levite and resided there as a stranger. •This man left the town of Bethlehem 8
in Judah to look for a place where he could find a home. In his travels he
came to the highlands of Ephraim and to Micah's house. •Micah asked him, 9
'Where do you come from?' The other answered him, 'I am a Levite from
Bethlehem in Judah. I am travelling and looking for a place where I can find a
home.' •Micah said to him, 'Stay here with me; be a father and a priest for me, 10
and I will give you ten silver shekels a year, and food and clothing'; and he
urged the Levite. •The Levite agreed to remain in the man's house, and the 11
young man became like one of his sons to him. •Micah installed the Levite; 12
the young man became Micah's priest and stayed in his house. •And Micah 13
said, 'Now I know that Yahweh will prosper me, because I have this Levite as
my priest'.

1:34-36;5:17 Jos19:40+ **The Danites go in search of a territory**

17:6+ 18 In those days there was no king in Israel. 1
Now in those days the tribe of Dan was in search of a territory to live in,
because up till then no territory had fallen to them among the tribes of Israel.
13:2 1Ch2:53 From their clan the Danites sent five brave men[a] from Zorah and Eshtaol to 2
reconnoitre the country and explore it. They said to them, 'Go and explore the
country'. The five men came to the highlands of Ephraim and to Micah's
house, and spent the night there. •When they were near Micah's house, they 3
recognized the voice of the young Levite, and turning that way they said to
him, 'Who brought you here? What are you doing here? What is keeping you
here?' •He answered, 'Micah has done such and such for me. He pays me a wage 4
Ex13:7+ and I act as his priest.' •They replied, 'Then consult God and find out for us 5
whether the journey we are making will be successful'. •The priest replied, 6
'Go in peace; the journey you are making is under the eye of Yahweh'. •So the 7
five men set out, and came to Laish. They saw that the people there lived in
security like the Sidonians, peaceful and trusting, that nothing lacked there of
all that the earth yields, and that they were far from the Sidonians and had no
relations with the Aramaeans.[b] •Then they went back to their kinsfolk at Zorah 8
and Eshtaol, and when these asked them, 'What can you tell us?' •they 9
answered, 'We went and passed through the country as far as Laish. We saw
that the people there live in security like the Sidonians. They are far from Sidon
and have no relations with Aram. Up, and let us march against them, for we
have seen the country and it is very good. But you—why stand there speechless?
Set out for Laish without delay and take possession of the country.[c] •When you 10
reach it, you will find a defenceless people. The country is wide; God has put in
your power a place where there is nothing lacking of all that man can want on
earth.'

The migration of the Danites

13:2;18:2 So men of the tribe of Dan set out from Zorah and Eshtaol, six hundred 11
of them, armed for war. •They went up and camped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah; 12
and for this reason the place is still called the Camp of Dan today. It lies west
of Kiriath-jearim. •From there they entered the highlands of Ephraim and 13
came to Micah's house.
2K23:24 Then the five men who had been to explore the country spoke to their brothers 14
and said, 'Do you know that there is an ephod in these houses, and teraphim
and a carved image (and an idol in cast metal)? So now think what you have
to do.' •They turned aside and went to the young Levite's dwelling in Micah's 15
house, and greeted him. •[d]While the six hundred men of the Danites, armed 16
for war, stood at the threshold of the gate, •the five who had set out to explore 17
the country went on into the house and took the carved image and ephod and
teraphim (and the idol of cast metal), while the priest remained at the threshold

18 of the gate with the six hundred men armed for war. •These men, having entered
Micah's house, took the carved image, the ephod and the teraphim (and the
19 idol of cast metal). But the priest said, 'What are you doing?' •They answered,
'Hush! Put your hand over your mouth and come with us. You shall be a father
and a priest for us. Is it better for you to be priest for one man's household, or
20 to be priest for a tribe and clan in Israel?' •The priest was overjoyed; he took the
ephod and teraphim and the carved image and set off in the middle of the band
of men.
21 They left by the way they came, putting the women,[e] children, cattle and
22 valuables in front of them. •They had gone some way from Micah's home when
the neighbours with houses next to his gave the alarm and set off in pursuit Gn31:22f
23 of the Danites. •And as they shouted after them, the Danites turned round and
24 asked Micah, 'What is all this shouting about?' •He answered, 'You have taken
away the god I made for myself; you have taken away the priest as well. You go
on your way, and what is left for me? How can you ask me, "What is this about?"'
25 The Danites answered, 'Let us hear no more from you, or men may lose their
tempers and fall on you. You may bring about your own destruction and that
26 of your household.' •So the Danites went on their way; and since Micah saw
they were the stronger, he turned and went home.

Laish taken. Dan and its sanctuary founded

27 So taking with them the god that Micah had made and the priest who had
served him, the Danites marched against Laish, against a peaceful and trusting
28 people. They slaughtered all the inhabitants and set the town on fire. •There
was no one to help the town because it was a long way from Sidon and had no
relations with the Aramaeans. It lay in the valley running towards Beth-rehob.
29 They rebuilt the town and settled in it, •and called it Dan after Dan their father
who had been born to Israel, although the town was originally called Laish.
30 The Danites erected the carved image for their own use. Jonathan son of Gershom, Ex 2:22;18:3
son of Moses,[f] and his sons after him were priests for the tribe of Dan till the
31 day when the inhabitants of the country were carried away into exile. •The carved 2K15:29
image that Micah had made they enshrined for their own use, and there it stayed
as long as the house of God remained at Shiloh.[g]

B. THE CRIME AT GIBEAH AND THE WAR AGAINST BENJAMIN[a]

The Levite of Ephraim and his concubine

1 19 In those days, when there was no king in Israel, there was a man, a Levite, 17:6+
whose home was deep in the highlands of Ephraim. He took as
2 concubine a woman from Bethlehem in Judah. •In a fit of anger[b] his concubine
left him and returned to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and she stayed
3 there for some four months. •Her husband set out to visit her, to reason with
her and fetch her back; he had his servant and two donkeys with him. As he
approached the house of the girl's father, the father saw him and came very
4 joyfully to meet him. •His father-in-law, the father of the girl, made him his

f. I.e. belonging to the territory, not to the tribe. This youth is a Levite who lives in Judah as a 'resident alien', cf. Ex 12:48+.

18 a. The Hebr. here adds 'from the frontiers, five men'.

b. 'nothing lacked there' corr. 'the Aramaeans' Greek; 'the man' Hebr.; so also in v. 28.

c. Verse corrected, following Greek.

d. The repetitions in vv. 16-18 suggest the use of two sources

e. 'the women' is absent from the text.

f. 'Moses' according to the versions; Hebr. 'Manasseh'. Jonathan is the young Levite of 17:7-13.

g. In fact, the sanctuary of Dan remained, 2 K 10:29, after the one at Shiloh had been destroyed, 1 S 4.

19 a. The narrative combines several ancient traditions: one is connected with the sanctuary at Mizpah, another with the one at Bethel. It emphasises the moral demands God makes on his people; the crime of Gibeah rouses the indignation of Israel and the Benjaminites are punished. But no part of the people of God can be allowed to perish; the reduced tribe of Benjamin will recover.

b. Versions; Hebr. 'she played the harlot against him'.

guest; and he stayed with him for three days; they ate and drank and spent the
Ps104:15 night there. •On the fourth day they got up early, and the Levite was preparing 5
to leave when the girl's father said to his son-in-law, 'Have a bite of food to
fortify yourself; you can leave later'. •So they sat down and began eating and 6
drinking, the two of them together; then the girl's father said to the young man,
'Come, say you will spend tonight here too, and enjoy yourself'. •And when 7
the man got up to leave, the father-in-law pressed him again, and he spent
Ps104:15 another night there. •On the fifth morning, the Levite got up early to leave, 8
but the girl's father said to him, 'Eat something first, I beg you'. So they whiled
away the time till the day began to decline, and the two of them ate together.
The husband was preparing to leave with his concubine and his servant when 9
his father-in-law, the father of the girl, said to him, 'Look, the day is drawing
towards evening. Spend the night here and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow you
can go and return to your tent.'[c] •But the man would not stay the night there; 10
Jos 15:8; 18:16; 19:28 2 S 5:6+ 1Ch 11:4-5 he got up and set off and came within sight of Jebus[d]—that is, Jerusalem. He
had with him two donkeys saddled, and his concubine and his servant.

Gn 19:1-11 Ho 9:9; 10:9 **The crime of the men of Gibeah**[e]

By the time they were near Jerusalem, the day was fast going. The servant 11
said to his master, 'Please let us leave the road now and enter this Jebusite
town and spend the night there'. •His master answered, 'We will not enter 12
a town of foreigners, of people who are not Israelites; we will go on to Gibeah
instead'. •He went on to say to the servant, 'Come on, we will try to reach one 13
or other of those places, either Gibeah or Ramah, and spend the night there'.
So they kept on, continuing their journey. As they approached Gibeah in 14
Benjamin the sun was already setting. •So they turned that way to spend the 15
night in Gibeah. Inside the town, the Levite sat down in the middle of the public
square, but no one offered to take them into his house for the night.[f]

But an old man came their way, who was returning at nightfall from his 16
work in the fields. He was a man from the highlands of Ephraim, and a
foreigner resident in Gibeah, the men of the place being Benjaminites. •Raising 17
his eyes, he saw the traveller sitting in the public square of the town; the old man
asked him, 'Where have you come from? Where are you going?' •The other 18
answered, 'We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a place deep in
the highlands of Ephraim. That is where I come from. I have been to Beth-
lehem in Judah and now I am going home,[g] but no one has offered to take me
into his house, •although we have straw and provender for our donkeys, and 19
I have bread and wine as well for myself and this maidservant and the young
man who is travelling with your servant; we are short of nothing.' •The old 20
man answered, 'Welcome to you! Let me see to all your needs; you cannot spend
the night in the public square.' •So he took him into his house and gave the 21
donkeys provender. The travellers washed their feet, then ate and drank.

Gn 19:4f As they were at their cheerful meal, some men from the town, scoundrels, 22
came crowding together round the house; they battered on the door and said
to the old man, the master of the house, 'Send out the man who has come
into your house, so that we can abuse him'. •Then the master of the 23
house went out to them and said, 'No, my brothers; I implore you, do not
commit this crime. This man has become my guest; do not commit
such an infamy.[h] •Here is my daughter; she is a virgin;[i] I will give her 24
to you. Possess her, do what you please with her, but do not commit such an
infamy against this man.' •The men would not listen to him. So the Levite 25
took his concubine and brought her out to them. They had intercourse with her
and outraged her all night till morning; when dawn was breaking they let her go.

At daybreak the girl came and fell on the threshold of her husband's host, 26
and she stayed there till it was full day. •In the morning her husband got up and 27
opened the door of the house; he was coming out to continue his journey when

he saw the woman who had been his concubine lying at the door of the house
28 with her hands on the threshold. •He said to her, 'Stand up; we must go'. There
was no answer. Then he laid her across his donkey and began the journey home.
29 Having reached his house, he picked up his knife, took hold of his concubine, 1 S 11:7
and limb by limb cut her into twelve pieces; then he sent her all through the land
30 of Israel.[j] •[k]He instructed his messengers as follows, 'This is what you are to
say to all the Israelites, "Has any man seen such a thing from the day the Israelites
came out of the land of Egypt, until this very day? Ponder on this, discuss it;
then give your verdict." ' And all who saw it declared, 'Never has such a
thing been done or been seen since the Israelites came out of the land of
Egypt'.

The Israelites pledge themselves to avenge the crime at Gibeah

1 **20** So all the sons of Israel came out, and the whole community,[a] from Dan Nb 34:1
to Beersheba[b] and the land of Gilead, gathered together as one man in the 1 S 3:20; 7:5+
2 presence of Yahweh at Mizpah. •The leaders of all the people and all the tribes 1 Ch 13:5
of Israel were present at this assembly of the people of God, four hundred Ezk 47:13
3 thousand foot soldiers who could handle the sword.[c] •The Benjaminites heard 20:17
that the sons of Israel had gone up to Mizpah... Then the sons of Israel said,
4 'Tell us how this crime was committed'. •The Levite, the husband of the murdered
woman, spoke in reply and said, 'I had come with my concubine to Gibeah
5 in Benjamin, to spend the night there. •The men of Gibeah rose against me and
in the night surrounded the house where I was lodging; as for me, they wanted
6 to kill me, and as for my concubine, they raped her to death. •Then I took my
concubine, cut her in pieces and sent her throughout all the territory that Israel 2 S 13:12
7 inherited because these men have committed an infamy in Israel. •You have all
met together here, men of Israel. Discuss the matter and make your decision here
8 and now.' •All the people stood up as one man and said, 'Not one of us will
9 return to his tent, not one of us will go back to his house. •Now, this is what we
10 shall do to Gibeah. We will cast lots,[d] •and select ten men from every hundred
from each of the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from every thousand, and 2 S 13:12
a thousand from every ten thousand; they will collect food for the army, for
those who will go and punish Gibeah[e] in Benjamin for the infamy they have
11 committed in Israel.' •So all the men of Israel mustered against that town, united
as one man.

The Benjaminites remain stubborn

12 The tribes of Israel sent messengers out through the whole tribe[f] of Benjamin,
13 saying, 'What is this crime that has been committed among you? •Come now,
give up these men, these scoundrels from Gibeah, so that we may put them to
death and banish wickedness from the midst of Israel.' But the Benjaminites Dt 17:12+
would not listen to their brother Israelites.

c. Vv. 8-9 are corrected. Note the protracted ceremonial politeness.

d. The town had already long been known as Jerusalem, cf. 2 S 5:9+. The name Jebus (used for Jerusalem in v. 11, Hebr.) is a gloss, the form being derived from the name of the earliest inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Jebusites, cf. also 1 Ch 11:4f.

e. The way the narrative has been edited gives it many points in common with the story of Lot, Gn 19:1-11.

f. A crime against hospitality; an even graver one is to follow.

g. 'I am going home' with Greek and v. 29; 'I am going to the house of Yahweh' Hebr.

h. Not the lust but the violation of the sacred duty of hospitality is considered the more serious. Like Lot, the host seeks to avert this by handing over his daughter. The Levite, seeing that his assailants are not to be persuaded, sacrifices his concubine.

i. The Hebr. adds 'and his concubine'.

j. A grim appeal for vengeance.

k. Corr. and restored from the Greek.

20 a. The leading men, representative of the community of Israel, in assembly.

b. Stereotyped formula for the northern and southern limits of the territory actually occupied by Israel. Other phrases refer to the ideal, promised, boundaries: e.g. 'the wadi of Egypt', between Beersheba and Egypt, on the south; on the north, either 'the Pass of Hamath', Am 6:14; 1 K 8:65, between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, or 'the great river' (Euphrates) Gn 15:18; Dt 1:7.

c. Exaggerated figures as in 8:10.

d. Corr. in accordance with Greek and Lv 16:8.

e. 'for those who will go and punish' versions. 'Gibeah'; the Hebr. reads 'Geba'.

f. 'the whole tribe' versions; 'all the tribes' Hebr.

The first encounters

The Benjaminites left their towns and mustered at Gibeah to fight the 14
Israelites. •The Benjaminites from these various towns had counted their numbers 15
that day, and in all there were twenty-five thousand men[g] who could handle the
sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah. •In this great army were seven hundred 16
picked men who could fight with both hands; every one of these could sling
a stone at a hair and not miss it. •The men of Israel also took a count. Without 17
20:2 Benjamin, there were four hundred thousand of them who could handle the
20:27 Ex33:7+ sword; all experienced fighters. •They set off and went up to Bethel to consult 18
God. The Israelites put the question, 'Which of us should go out first to
attack the Benjaminites?' And Yahweh answered, 'Judah shall go first'.

In the morning the Israelites marched out and pitched their camp facing 19
Gibeah. •Then advancing to engage Benjamin they drew up their line in front 20
of the town. •But the Benjaminites sallied out from Gibeah and that day killed 21
twenty-two thousand Israelites, who were left on the field. •[h]The Israelites went 23
and wept before Yahweh until evening; then they consulted Yahweh; they
asked, 'Shall we join battle again with the sons of our brother Benjamin?' Yahweh
answered, 'March against him'. •Then the army of the people of Israel took 22
heart afresh; and again they drew up their line for battle in the same place as
the day before. •This second day the Israelites advanced on the Benjaminites; 24
but again this second day Benjamin sallied out from Gibeah against them and 25
killed eighteen thousand Israelites, who were left on the field; they were all
experienced fighters who could handle the sword.[i] •Then all the Israelites and 26
2:5 the whole people went up to Bethel; they wept and sat in Yahweh's presence;
they fasted all day till the evening and offered holocausts and communion
20:18 sacrifices before Yahweh; •then the Israelites consulted Yahweh. The ark of the 27
Nb25:7-13 covenant of God was there in those days, •and Phinehas son of Eleazer son of 28
Aaron was the priest who ministered at it at that time. They said, 'Ought we to
go again and fight the sons of our brother Benjamin, or should we stop?'
Yahweh answered, 'March; for tomorrow I shall deliver him into your power'.

Benjamin is conquered and wiped out[j]

Jos 8 Then Israel stationed men in ambush round Gibeah. •On the third day the 29 30
Israelites marched against the Benjaminites and, just as before, they drew up
their line in front of the town. •The Benjaminites made a sally against them 31
and let themselves be drawn away from the town. As before, they began by
killing those of the people who were on the road that runs up to Bethel and on
the road that runs up to Gibeon;[k] and there in the open country they killed
about thirty men of Israel. •The Benjaminites thought, 'They have had to fall 32
back in front of us as before'; but the Israelites decided, 'Let us take to flight
and draw them away from the town along the highroads. •Then the main body 33
of the army of Israel, leaving its position, will form up for battle at Baal-tamar,
but meanwhile the Israelites in ambush will rush forward from their position
west of Geba.'[l] •Then ten thousand picked men, chosen from the whole of 34
Israel, appeared before Gibeah. The battle was fierce. The Benjaminites did not
suspect the disaster hanging over them. •Yahweh defeated Benjamin before 35
Israel, and on that day the Israelites killed twenty-five thousand one hundred
men of Benjamin, all men who could handle the sword. •The Benjaminites, 36
seeing themselves defeated...[m]

The men of Israel had given ground to Benjamin because they relied on the
ambush they had set against Gibeah. •The men in ambush quickly poured out 37
and reached Gibeah and put the whole town to the sword. •For it had been 38
agreed between the Israelite army and the troops in ambush that these should
raise a smoke signal from the town, •whereupon the Israelites in the thick of the 39
battle would turn about. Now Benjamin had begun by killing men of the Israelite
army, about thirty of them; so they were thinking, 'Plainly we have routed them

40 now as we did before'. •But the signal, a column of smoke, began to rise from
the town, and the Benjaminites looking back saw the whole town going up in
41 flames to the sky. •Then the Israelites turned about, and the Benjaminites were
seized with terror, for they saw that disaster was imminent.
42 They retreated before Israel, making for the wilderness, but the main body
of Israel pressed them hard, while the others coming out of the town surprised
43 and slaughtered them from the rear.[n] •They hemmed the Benjaminites in, pursued
44 them relentlessly and crushed them opposite Geba on the east.[o] •Eighteen
45 thousand men of Benjamin fell, all of them brave men. •The survivors turned
and ran, and fled into the wilderness and towards the Rock of Rimmon. On Is 10:27
the highroads the Israelites caught five thousand men. Then they pursued the
46 Benjaminites to Geba and killed two thousand of them. •The total number of
Benjaminites who fell that day was twenty-five thousand men who could handle
47 the sword, all of them brave men. •Six hundred men had escaped into the
wilderness, to the Rock of Rimmon, and there they stayed for four months.
48 The men of Israel went back to the Benjaminites, and put all the males in the
towns to the sword, the cattle too, and all that came their way. And they set on
fire all the towns that they came to in Benjamin.

The Israelites relent[a]

1 **21** The men of Israel had sworn this oath at Mizpah, 'Not one of us will give
2 his daughter in marriage to Benjamin'.[b] •The people went to Bethel and
stayed there until evening, sitting before God with groans and bitter weeping.
3 They said, 'Yahweh, God of Israel, why must this be Israel's lot, to lose one
4 of its tribes today?' •The next day the people got up early and built an altar
5 there; they offered holocausts and communion sacrifices. •Then the Israelites
said, 'Which of all the tribes of Israel has not come to the assembly in Yahweh's
presence?' For they had sworn a solemn oath threatening death to anyone who
would not come into Yahweh's presence at Mizpah.
6 Now the Israelites were sorry for Benjamin their brother; 'Today,' they said
7 'one tribe has been cut off from Israel. •What shall we do to find wives for those
who are left, since we have sworn by Yahweh not to give them any of our own
daughters in marriage?'

The maidens of Jabesh given to the Benjaminites

8 Then they asked the question, 'Which of the tribes of Israel has not come into
Yahweh's presence at Mizpah?' It was discovered that no one from Jabesh-gilead
9 had come to the camp for the assembly; •for the people had been counted over,
10 and not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead was there. •Then the community
sent twelve thousand of their bravest men there, with these orders: 'Go and Nb31:5-6
11 slaughter all the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, the women and children too. •This
is what you must do. You are to put all the males and all women who have Nb31:17-18 Jos6:17+
slept with a male under the ban, but you are to spare the maidens.' They obeyed

g. The figures differ in the versions; here we follow Greek. The Hebr. adds, at the end of the verse 'they numbered seven hundred picked men', a doublet of v. 16a.

h. Vv. 22 and 23 are interchanged.

i. In the original narrative these successive defeats were probably the result of some legal defilement incurred by the soldiers, cf. Jos 7.

j. It is evident that here two documents have been placed side by side: vv. 29-36a and vv. 36b-44. Joshua used the same stratagem at the siege of Ai, Jos 8.

k. 'Gibeon' corr.; 'Gibeah' Hebr.

l. 'west of Geba' versions; 'from the plain (or plateau) of Geba' Hebr.

m. The sennetce is concluded in v. 45.

n. End of verse corrected.

o. 'pursued them relentlessly' corr. 'Geba' corr.; 'Gibeah' Hebr. So too in v. 45.

21 a. The final editor has collected and juxtaposed several traditions concerning the restoration of Benjamin, hence the repetitions in the text. According to one tradition, the men of Jabesh are made to give their daughters to the surviving Benjaminites since they alone can do so without breaking an oath. According to a second tradition, the people of Jabesh are massacred for having refused to attend the assembly of Israel, but their unmarried girls are spared. According to a third, the Benjaminites seize the maidens during the feast at Shiloh. The narrative calls attention to the solidarity of the tribes: they are forced to cut off the guilty tribe, but cannot tolerate this 'breach in Israel'.

b. Thus severing Benjamin completely from the community of Israel.

the orders.[c] •Among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead they found four hundred 12
young virgins who had never slept with a man, and brought them to the camp (at
Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan).

Then the whole community sent messengers to offer peace to the Benjaminites 13
who were at the Rock of Rimmon. •Benjamin returned, and they were given 14
those women from Jabesh-gilead who had been left alive; but there were not
enough for all.

The daughters of Shiloh are carried off

The people were sorry for Benjamin because Yahweh had made a breach in 15
the tribes of Israel. •And the elders of the community said, 'What shall we do 16
to find wives for the survivors, since the women of Benjamin have been
wiped out?' •They went on, 'How can we preserve a remnant[d] for Benjamin so 17
that a tribe may not be blotted out from Israel? •We ourselves cannot give them 18
our own daughters in marriage.' For the Israelites had sworn this oath, 'Cursed
be any man who gives a wife to Benjamin!'

1 S 1:3+ 'But yet' they said 'there is Yahweh's feast which is held every year at Shiloh.'[e] 19
(This town lies north of Bethel, east of the highway that runs from Bethel up to
Shechem, and south of Lebonah.) •So they gave this advice to the Benjaminites, 20
'Place yourselves in ambush in the vineyards. •Keep watch there, and when the 21
daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in groups together, you too come out
of the vineyards: seize a wife, each one of you, from the daughters of Shiloh and
make for the land of Benjamin. •If their fathers or brothers come to complain 22
to you, we shall say to them, "Forgive them because each one of them has taken[f]
a wife for himself, as men do in war. For if you had given them brides, you would
have broken your oath, and so would have sinned." ' •The Benjaminites did this, 23
and from the dancers they had captured, they chose as many wives as there
were men; then they set off, returned to their inheritance, rebuilt their towns
and settled in them.

Then the Israelites went away, each to rejoin his own tribe and clan, and 24
returned from Shiloh each to his own inheritance.

17:6+ Dt 12:8 In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did as he pleased. 25

c. The end of the verse according to the versions; Hebr. omits.
d. Following Greek.
e. One of the three great annual feasts, Ex 23:14+, probably the feast of Tabernacles.
f. 'complain to you', 'Forgive them', versions. 'because... has taken' corr.; Hebr. 'because we did not take'.

THE BOOK OF
RUTH

I. RUTH AND NAOMI

1 1 In the days of the Judges famine came to the land and a certain man from
Bethlehem of Judah went—he, his wife and his two sons—to live in the country
2 of Moab. •The man was called Elimelech, his wife Naomi and his two sons,
Mahlon and Chilion;[a] they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem of Judah. They came 1 S 17:12 1 Ch 4:4 Mi 5:1
3 to the country of Moab and settled there. •Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died,
4 and she and her two sons were left. •These married Moabite women: one was
5 named Orpah and the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years. •Then
both Mahlon and Chilion also died and the woman was bereft of her two sons
6 and her husband. •So she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return from
the country of Moab, for she had heard that Yahweh had visited[b] his people and
7 given them food. •So, with her daughters-in-law, she came away from the place
where she was living and they took the road back to the land of Judah.
8 Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back, each of you to her mother's
house. May Yahweh be kind to you as you have been to those who have died
9 and to me. •Yahweh grant that you find rest, each of you, in the house of a
10 husband.' And she kissed them. But they wept aloud •and said to her, 'No, we
11 will go back with you to your people'. •And Naomi said, 'You must return, my
daughters; why come with me? Have I any more sons in my womb to make Gn 38:8-11 Dt 25:5-10
12 husbands for you?[c] •Return my daughters, go, for I am too old now to marry again.
Even if I said there is still hope for me, even if I were to have a husband this very
13 night and bear sons, •would you be prepared to wait until they were grown up?
Would you refuse to marry for this? No, my daughters, I should then be deeply
14 grieved for you, for the hand of Yahweh has been raised against me.' •And once
more they started to weep aloud. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and
went back to her people.[d] But Ruth clung to her.
15 Naomi said to her, 'Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people
and to her god. You must return too; follow your sister-in-law.'
16 But Ruth said, 'Do not press me to leave you and to turn back from your
company, for

'wherever you go, I will go, 2 S 15:21
wherever you live, I will live. 2 K 2:2-4
Your people shall be my people,
and your God, my God.[e] Dt 23:2-9
17 Wherever you die, I will die

1 a. The names may be fictitious and chosen for their meaning: the two sons, who die young, are Mahlon ('sickness') and Chilion ('pining away'); Orpah means 'she who turns away' (1:14), Ruth 'the beloved', Naomi 'my fair one', Elimelech 'my God is king'.

b. Ex 3:16+. The 'visitation' is here an act of divine favour, not of judgement.

c. In accordance with levirate law, Dt 25:5-10+.

d. 'and went back to her people' Greek.

e. Whereas Orpah returns to Moab and its god Chemosh, Ruth chooses Yahweh's territory and his people; in doing so she will have no other God but him. The Moabites were themselves excluded from Yahwistic ceremonial worship, Dt 23:4.

and there I will be buried.
1 K 19:2; 20:10 May Yahweh do this thing to me
and more also,[f]
if even death should come between us!'

18 Seeing that she was determined to go with her, Naomi said no more.
19 The two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. Their arrival there
set the whole town astir, and the women said, 'Can this be Naomi?'
20 •But she said to them, 'Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara,[g] for Shaddai has marred
Gn 17:1 + Ex 15:23 Mi 1:12 me bitterly.

'Filled full I departed, 21
Jb 1:21 Yahweh brings me back empty.
Why call me Naomi, then,
since Yahweh has given witness against me
and Shaddai has afflicted me?'

22 This was how Naomi, she who returned from the country of Moab, came
back with Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law. And they came to Bethlehem
at the beginning of the barley harvest.

II. RUTH IN THE FIELDS OF BOAZ

2:20 **2** 1 Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side, well-to-do and of
Elimelech's clan. His name was Boaz.
Lv 19:9-10; 23:22 2 Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Let me go into the fields and glean
Dt 24:19-22 among the ears of corn[a] in the footsteps of some man who will look on me with
favour'. And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter'. 3 •So she set out and went to
glean in the fields after the reapers. And it chanced that she came to that part
of the fields which belonged to Boaz of Elimelech's clan. 4 •Now Boaz, as it
Ps 129:7-8 Lk 1:28 happened, had just come from Bethlehem. 'Yahweh be with you!' he said to
the reapers. 'Yahweh bless you!' they replied. 5 •Boaz said to a servant of his who
was in charge of the reapers, 'To whom does this young woman belong?'[b] 6 •And
the servant in charge of the reapers replied, 'The girl is the Moabitess, the one
who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab, 7 •and she said, "Please
let me glean and gather the ears of corn after the reapers". So she came and has
been on her feet[c] from morning till now.'

8 Boaz said to Ruth, 'Listen, my daughter, and understand this. You are not
to glean in any other field, do not leave here but stay with my servants.[d] 9 •Keep
your eyes on whatever part of the field they are reaping and follow behind.
I have ordered my servants not to molest you. And if you are thirsty, go to the
pitchers and drink what the servants have drawn.' 10 •Then she fell on her face,
bowing to the ground. And she said to him, 'How have I so earned your favour that
you take notice of me, even though I am a foreigner?' 11 •And Boaz answered her,
'I have been told all you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's
death, and how you left your own father and mother and the land where you
were born to come among a people whom you knew nothing about before you
came here. 12 •May Yahweh reward you for what you have done! May rich
Ps 17:8; 91:1,4 recompense be made to you by Yahweh, the God of Israel, to whom you have
come, to find shelter beneath his wings.' 13 •Then she said, 'May I find favour in
your eyes, my lord, since you have given me courage and spoken kindly to your
maidservant, though indeed I am not the equal of one maidservant of yours'.

14 When it was time to eat Boaz said to her, 'Come, eat some of this bread and
dip your piece in the wine'. Ruth sat with the reapers and Boaz made a heap[e]
of roasted grain for her and she ate till her hunger was satisfied, and she had some
left over. 15 •Then she got up to glean and Boaz gave orders to his servants, 'Let her
glean among the sheaves themselves,' he said 'and do not check her. 16 •And see

you pull a few ears of corn from the bundles and let them fall. Let her glean them,
17 and do not scold her.' •So she gleaned in the field till evening. Then she beat out
what she had gleaned and it came to about an ephah of barley.
18 And taking it with her, she went into the town. She showed her mother-in-law
what she had gleaned and also showed her the food she had set aside after
19 satisfying her hunger, and gave it to her. •And her mother-in-law said to her,
'Where did you glean today? Where have you been working? Blessed be the
man who took notice of you!' Then Ruth told her mother-in-law in whose field
she had worked, 'The name of the man with whom I have been working today'
20 she said 'is Boaz'. •Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May he be blessed
by Yahweh who does not withhold his kindness from living or dead! This man'
Naomi added 'is a relative of ours. He is one of those who has the right of 2:1
21 redemption over us.'[f] •Then Ruth said to her mother-in-law, 'He also said to me,
22 "Stay with my servants until they have gathered in all my harvest" '. •And
Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, 'It is better for you, my daughter, to go
with his servants than to go to some other field where you might be molested'.
23 So Ruth stayed with the servants of Boaz and gleaned until the barley and
wheat harvests were done. And she went on living with her mother-in-law.[g]

III. BOAZ SLEEPS

1 3 Then Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, 'My daughter, is it not my duty
2 to see you happily settled? •And is not Boaz, with whose servants you were,
our kinsman? Now tonight he is winnowing the barley at the threshing-floor.
3 Come, wash and anoint and dress yourself. Then go down to the threshing-floor.
Do not make yourself known to him before he has finished eating and drinking.
4 But when he settles down to sleep, take careful note of the place where he lies,
then go and turn back the covering at his feet and lie there yourself. He will tell
5 you what to do.' •And Ruth said to her, 'I will do all you say'.
6 So she went down to the threshing-floor and did all that her mother-in-law
7 had told her. •When Boaz had eaten and drunk, he was in a happy mood and
went to lie down by the heap of barley. Then she came quietly and turned back
8 the covering at his feet and lay there. •In the middle of the night the man started
9 up and looked about him; and there lying at his feet was a woman. •'Who are
you?' he said; and she replied, 'I am Ruth, your maidservant. Spread the skirt
of your cloak over your servant for you have right of redemption over me.'[a]
10 'May Yahweh bless you, my daughter,' said Boaz 'for this last act of kindness[b]
of yours is greater than the first, since you have not gone after young men, poor 2:11
11 or rich. •Have no fear then, my daughter, I will do whatever you ask, for the
12 people of Bethlehem all know your worth. •But, though it is true I have right of 2:20
13 redemption over you, you have a kinsman closer than myself. •Stay here for
tonight, and in the morning if he wishes to exercise his right over you, very well,
let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to do so, then as Yahweh lives, I will
14 redeem you. Lie here till morning.' •So she lay at his feet till morning. Boaz[c]

f. Formula of imprecatory oath, cf. Nb 5:21f; 1 S 3:17; 14:44; 20:13; 25:22; 2 S 3:9,35; 19:14; 1 K 2:23; 2 K 6:31. Ruth would name the disasters invoked but the narrator uses a vague formula since the mere naming was considered dangerous.

g. Mara, 'the bitter one', or, amending to *Mari*, 'my bitterness', balancing Naomi, 'my fair one'.

2 a. According to the Law the poor had this right, but its exercise depended on the goodwill of the owner of the property.

b. In the East every woman 'belongs' to someone, father, husband, brother or master.

c. Emended reading.

d. Hebr. reads 'maidservants'. Same emendation in 2:22,23 and 3:2.

e. 'made a heap' Greek.

f. Lit. 'he is one of our *goelim*', Nb 35:19+. Here the duty of Elimelech's closest relative, his *goel*, seems to be twofold: to prevent the alienation of his land, Lv 25:23-25, by redeeming his field, Rt 4:4, and to raise up children to him by marrying Ruth, cf. Dt 25:5-10+. Boaz however is not the closest relative, Rt 3:12.

g. In the versions ch. 3 begins with these words.

3 a. By this gesture Ruth asks Boaz, her *goel*, to marry her, cf. Dt 23:1; 27:20; Ezk 16:8.

b. This act of filial piety, of 'kindness', on Ruth's part consists in wishing to provide a legal descendant for Elimelech, her father-in-law, by choosing to marry his relative, Boaz.

c. 'Boaz' corr.; 'She' Hebr.

rose before the hour when one man can recognise another, 'For' said he 'it must not be known that this woman came to the threshing-floor'. •Then he said 15
to her, 'Bring the cloak you are wearing and hold it out'. She held it out while he put six measures of barley into it and then gave it to her to carry. And she went into the town.

When Ruth came back, her mother-in-law asked her, 'How did things go with 16
you, my daughter?' Then she told her all that the man had done for her. •'He 17
gave me these six measures of barley,' she added 'and he said to me, "You must not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed".' •Naomi replied, 'Wait, my 18
daughter, and see how things will go, for he will not rest until it is settled, and settled today'.

IV. BOAZ MARRIES RUTH

4 Meanwhile Boaz had gone up to the gate of the town and sat down, and the 1
relative of whom he had spoken chanced to come past. Boaz said to him, 'Come here, man, and sit down'; and he came and sat down. •Then Boaz picked out 2
ten of the town's elders and said to them, 'Sit down here', and they sat down. Then Boaz said to the man who had right of redemption, 'Naomi, who has come 3
back from the country of Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our
Lv 25:25 brother, Elimelech. •I thought I should tell you about this and say: Buy it in the 4
presence of the men who are sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you want to use your right of redemption, redeem it; if you do not, tell me so and I shall know, for there is no one but you to redeem it except me, though I come after you, myself.' And he said, 'I am willing to redeem it'. •But 5
Dt25:5-10 Boaz continued, 'On the day you purchase the land from Naomi, you purchase Ruth the Moabitess also, the wife of the dead man,[a] and so restore his name to his inheritance'. •And the man with right of redemption said, 'Then I cannot use 6
my right of redemption, without jeopardising my own inheritance. As I cannot use my right of redemption, exercise the right yourself.'[b] •Now in former times 7
Dt25:9-10 it was the custom in Israel, in matters of redemption or exchange, to confirm the transaction by one of the parties removing his sandal and giving it to the other. In Israel this was the form of ratification in the presence of witnesses.
Ps 60:8; 108:9 So when the man with right of redemption said to Boaz, 'Purchase it for yourself', 8
he took off his sandal.[c]

Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses this day 9
that I buy from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech, to Chilion and to Mahlon. •You are witnesses too that I buy Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's 10
widow, to be my wife, to keep the name of the dead man in his inheritance, so that the dead man's name may not die out among his brothers and at the gate of his town.' •All the people at the gate said, 'We are witnesses'; and the elders 11
said, 'May Yahweh make the woman who is to enter your House like Rachel
Gn35:23-26 and Leah who together built up the House of Israel.

'Grow mighty in Ephrathah,
Gn35:19-20 be renowned in Bethlehem.

And through the children Yahweh will give you by this young woman, may your 12
Gn 38 House become like the House of Perez[d] whom Tamar bore to Judah.'
Ch 2:5, 9-12, 19, 50f So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. And when they came together, 13
Yahweh made her conceive and she bore a son. •And the women said to Naomi, 14
Lk 1:58 'Blessed be Yahweh who has not left the dead man[e] without next of kin this day to perpetuate his name in Israel. •The child will be a comfort to you and the 15
prop of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you and is more to
1 S 1:8 you than seven sons has given him birth.' •And Naomi took the child to her 16
Gn 30:3 own bosom and she became his nurse.[f]

17 And the women of the neighbourhood gave him a name. 'A son has been born
for Naomi' they said; and they named him Obed.[g] This was the father of David's
father, Jesse.[h] 1 S 16:1

THE GENEALOGY OF DAVID[i]

‖1Ch2:5-15
↗Mt 1:3-5
↗Lk3:31-33

18 These are the descendants of Perez. Perez was the father of Hezron, •Hezron
19 of Ram, Ram of Amminadab, •Amminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon, Nb 1:7
20 Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed, •Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.
21
22

4 a. Elimelech, the head of the family. Ruth is reckoned his widow; Mahlon, through whom she is related to Elimelech, does not count.

b. The *goel* has the right to prevent the alienation of the land, and the man agrees to do this. But Boaz combines the two things, i.e. purchase of the land and marriage with Ruth, in accordance with levirate law. The child of this marriage will be Elimelech's legal heir and the land will revert to him. The first *goel* is afraid he will lose by the transaction and so renounces his prerogative in favour of Boaz.

c. The custom mentioned in Dt 25:9-10 has a different significance. There it is the woman herself who shows her contempt for the man who is unwilling to marry her on behalf of his dead brother, her husband. Here the gesture merely validates a contract of exchange. To put one's foot on a field, or to throw a sandal on to it, is to take possession of it, Ps 60:8; 108:9. The sandal thus becomes the symbol of the right of ownership. By taking it off and handing it to the purchaser the owner transfers this right to him.

d. Ancestor of Boaz and Ephrathah.

e. 'the dead man' corr.

f. Naomi is the child's legal mother just as Elimelech is his legal father.

g. Obed = servant (i.e. of Yahweh).

h. The dutifulness of Ruth and Boaz thus makes Naomi the ancestress of King David.

i. This second genealogy cannot be the work of the author of Ruth. The whole point of the story is that the name of Elimelech is perpetuated (4:5,10) through the devotion of Ruth and Boaz; but in v. 21 Boaz is listed as Obed's father and the name of Obed's legal father, Elimelech, does not appear. But another lesson, of universal interest, emerges: it is a foreigner, Ruth, who is the ancestress of David and through him of Christ. The gospel will call attention to this.

THE BOOKS OF
SAMUEL

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

I. SAMUEL

Sl46:13-20

A. THE CHILDHOOD OF SAMUEL

The pilgrimage to Shiloh

Jr 7:12

1 There was a man of Ramathaim,[a] a Zuphite from the highlands of Ephraim 1
whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of
1Ch6:19-23 Dt21:15-17 Zuph, an Ephraimite. •He had two wives, one called Hannah, the other Peninnah; 2
Ex23:14+ Lv 23:39 Peninnah had children but Hannah had none. •Every year this man used to go 3
Jg 13:3, 21:19 2 S 5:10 up from his town to worship and to sacrifice to Yahweh Sabaoth[b] in Shiloh.[c]
1K 11:29 Am 3:13 Dt 12:18 The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there as priests of Yahweh.
One day Elkanah offered sacrifice. He used to give portions to Peninnah and 4
Lk 1:7 to all her sons and daughters; •to Hannah, however, he would give only one 5
portion, although he loved her more, since Yahweh had made her barren. •Her 6
Gn16:4-5 rival would taunt her to annoy her, because Yahweh had made her barren.
And this went on year after year; every time they went up to the temple 7
of Yahweh[d] she used to taunt her. And so Hannah wept and would not eat.
Dt21:15-17 Then Elkanah her husband said to her, 'Hannah, why are you crying and why 8
Rt 4:15 Is 56:5 are you not eating? Why so sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?'

The prayer of Hannah

Now after they had eaten in the hall, Hannah rose and took her stand before 9
Yahweh,[e] while Eli the priest was sitting on his seat by the doorpost of the temple
of Yahweh. •In the bitterness of her soul she prayed to Yahweh with many 10
tears •and made a vow, saying, 'Yahweh Sabaoth! If you will take notice of 11
↗Lk1:48 the distress of your servant, and bear me in mind and not forget your servant
Nb6:1+ Jg 13:5;16:17 and give her a man-child, I will give him to Yahweh for the whole of his life
and no razor shall ever touch his head'.[f]
While she prayed before Yahweh which she did for some time, Eli was watching 12
her mouth, •for she was speaking under her breath; her lips were moving but 13
her voice could not be heard. He therefore supposed that she was drunk[g] •and 14
said to her, 'How long are you going to be in this drunken state? Rid yourself
of your wine.' •'No, my lord,' Hannah replied 'I am a woman in great trouble; 15
I have taken neither wine nor strong drink—I was pouring out my soul before
Yahweh. •Do not take your maidservant for a worthless woman; all this time 16
I have been speaking from the depth of my grief and my resentment.' •Then Eli 17
answered her: 'Go in peace,' he said 'and may the God of Israel grant what you
have asked of him'. And she said, •'May your maidservant find favour in your 18
sight'; and with that the woman went away; she returned to the hall[h] and ate
and was dejected no longer.

The birth and consecration of Samuel

They rose early in the morning and worshipped before Yahweh and then set 19
Is 10:29 out and returned to their home in Ramah. Elkanah had intercourse with Hannah

20 his wife and Yahweh was mindful of her. •She conceived and gave birth to a son,
and called him Samuel 'since' she said 'I asked Yahweh for him.'[i]
21 When a year had gone by, •the husband Elkanah went up again with all his
22 family to offer the annual sacrifice to Yahweh and to fulfil his vow. •Hannah,
however, did not go up, having said to her husband, 'Not before the child is
weaned.[j] Then I will bring him and present him before Yahweh and he shall stay
23 there for ever.' •Elkanah her husband then said to her, 'Do what you think fit;
wait until you have weaned him. May Yahweh bring about what you have
said.'[k] So the woman stayed behind and nursed her child until his weaning.
24 When she had weaned him, she took him up with her together with a three-
25 year old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the
temple of Yahweh at Shiloh; and the child was with them. •They slaughtered the
26 bull and the child's mother came to Eli. •She said, 'If you please, my lord. As
you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to
27 Yahweh. •This is the child I prayed for, and Yahweh granted me what I asked
28 him. •Now I make him over to Yahweh for the whole of his life. He is made over
to Yahweh.'

There she left him,[l] for Yahweh.

The song of Hannah[a] Ps 2; 18 ↗Lk 1:45-55

1 2 Then Hannah said this prayer:

'My heart exults in Yahweh, 2 S 22:3 Is 61:10 Lk 1:47
my horn is exalted in my God,
my mouth derides my foes,
for I rejoice in your power of saving.

2 There is none as holy as Yahweh, Lv 17:1+
(indeed, there is no one but you)
no rock like our God. 2 S 22:3 Ps 18:2+

3 Do not speak and speak with haughty words, Ps 75:4
let not arrogance come from your mouth.
For Yahweh is an all-knowing God
and his is the weighing of deeds.

4 The bow of the mighty is broken Si 10:14
but the feeble have girded themselves with strength. Is 40:29
5 The sated hire themselves out for bread Is 29:19
but the famished cease from labour;

1 a. Also called Ramah.
b. I.e. 'Yahweh of armies'; not only nor primarily the hosts of Israel, but the stars and heavenly powers too, and indeed all the cosmic forces, cf. Gn 2:1, under God's command. This ancient title is associated with the ark, cf. 1 S 4:3, the sacred emblem protecting Israel when Yahweh wages war with his people on their enemies. The title is used freely in the major prophets (with the exception of Ezekiel) and in the Psalms.
c. Now Seilun, about twelve miles S. of Nablus. This was the home of the ark in the period of the Judges, possibly even in the time of Joshua, cf. Jos 18:1+; its sanctuary there was destroyed, cf. Jr 7:12; 26:6,9; Ps 78:60, probably by the Philistines after the defeat recorded in 1 S 4. The yearly pilgrimage was that of the feast of Tabernacles.
d. In the desert the shrine of the ark was a tent, but at Shiloh a stone building, cf. 1:9; 3:2,3,15.
e. Phrase corrected, in accordance with Greek.
f. As with Isaac, Samson, and John the Baptist, God intervenes: Samuel is born of a mother who was barren; she dedicates the unborn child to God as a minister in the sanctuary. The uncut hair is, like Samson's, a sign of this dedication. But it is not explicitly said that Samuel is to be a nazirite, cf. Nb 6:1+, Jg 13:5.
g. People usually prayed aloud. Feastdays were sometimes an occasion for heavy drinking, Is 22:13; Am 2:8. Hence Eli's suspicion.
h. 'she returned to the hall' Greek.
i. A derivation from the root *shaal* (to ask) would give Shaul, 'Saul'. Biblical etymology is often, as here, content with a certain similarity of sound. The actual derivation of 'Samuel' is from Shem-El, 'the name of God'.
j. Infants were weaned late.
k. 'what you have said' versions; 'what he has said' Hebr.
l. 'she left him' in accordance with 2:11a; 'he worshipped' Hebr.

2 a. This song has been called the prototype of the Magnificat, but its tone is much more impersonal. It is a messianic hymn expressing the hopes of the 'poor', cf. Zp 2:3+, and ending with a reference to the messiah-king. It has been put into Hannah's mouth because of the allusion to the 'barren woman' in v. 5b. The text of vv. 1, 3, 5, 10, 11 has been corrected.

Ps 113:9
Is 54:1
the barren woman bears sevenfold,
but the mother of many is desolate.

Dt 32:39
Ws 16:13
Ps 30:3
Jn 5:21
Tb 4:19
Jb 5:11
Ps 75:7;
147:6
↗ Lk 1:52
↗ Mt 1:3-5
Yahweh gives death and life, 6
brings down to Sheol and draws up;
Yahweh makes poor and rich, 7
he humbles and also exalts.

He raises the poor from the dust, 8
he lifts the needy from the dunghill
Ps 149:4 to give them a place with princes,
and to assign them a seat of honour;
Ps 75:3;
104:5 for to Yahweh the props of the earth belong,
Jb 9:6;38 on these he has poised the world.

Ps 121:3 He safeguards the steps of his faithful 9
but the wicked vanish in darkness
(for it is not by strength that man triumphs).
The enemies of Yahweh are shattered, 10
the Most High thunders in the heavens.

Ps 98:9 Yahweh judges the ends of the earth,
Ps 18:50 he endows his king with power,
Ps 89:24 he exalts the horn of his Anointed.'

Then she left for Ramah, but the boy stayed to minister to Yahweh in the 11
presence of Eli the priest.

The sons of Eli

Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels; they cared nothing for Yahweh •nor 12 13
for the rights of the priests as regards the people.[b] Whenever a man offered a
Lv 7:29-36
Dt 18:3 sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand
while the meat was being cooked; •he would thrust this into cauldron or pan, 14
or dish or pot, and the priest claimed for his own whatever the fork brought up.
That was how they behaved with all the Israelites who came there to Shiloh.
The priest's servant would even come up before the fat had been burnt and say 15
to the man who was making the sacrifice, 'Give the priest meat for him to roast.
He will not take boiled meat from you, but raw.' •Then if the man replied, 16
Lv 3:3-5 'Let them first burn the fat and then take for yourself whatever you wish', he
would retort, 'No! You must give it to me now or I will take it by force'. •This 17
sin of the young men was very great in the sight of Yahweh, because they
treated the offering made to Yahweh with contempt.

Samuel at Shiloh

Samuel was in the service of Yahweh; the boy wore a linen loincloth round 18
him.[c] •His mother used to make him a little tunic which she brought him each 19
year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. •Then Eli 20
would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, 'May Yahweh grant you an heir
by this woman in place of the one she has made over to Yahweh.' And then they
would go home. •Yahweh visited Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to 21
3:19 three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the boy Samuel grew up in the
presence of Yahweh.

More about the sons of Eli

Though now very old, Eli came to hear of everything that his sons were 22
doing to all Israel.[d] •And he said to them, 'Why do you do these things I hear[e] 23
from all the people? •No, my sons! The reports I hear are not good...[f] •If man 24 25

sins against man, God will be the arbiter, but if he sins against Yahweh, who will intercede for him?' But they did not listen to their father's words, for Yahweh was determined to bring them to their deaths.[g]

26 Meanwhile the boy Samuel went on growing in stature and in favour both with Yahweh and with men. Si 46:13 ↗ Lk 2:52

Future punishment is announced[h] 3:11-14

27 A man of God came to Eli and said to him, 'Yahweh says this,
"Did I not reveal myself to your father's[i] House when they were in Egypt,
28 slaves of the household of Pharaoh. •I chose them out of all the tribes of Israel
to be my priests, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to carry the ephod;[j] and Jg 17:5 2 S 2:1; 5:19
to your father's House I granted all the burnt offerings of the sons of Israel.
29 Why do you look with envious eyes on the sacrifice and the offering I have
ordered, honouring your sons more than me, by letting them grow fat on the
30 best part of all the offerings of my people Israel?[k] •Whereas—it is Yahweh the
God of Israel who speaks—I had said that your House and your father's House 1 K 2:27
would walk in my presence for ever,[l] now, however,—it is Yahweh who speaks—
far be this from me. For those who honour me I honour in my turn, and those 2 S 22:26 Ps 18:25
31 who despise me are esteemed as nothing. •So, the days are coming when I
will break your strength and the strength of your father's House, till there is
32 not one old man left in your House. •Like an envious enemy you will look on
all the good that I shall do to Israel, but there shall be not one old man left in
33 your House for ever. •One of you I will keep at my altar for his eyes to perish 22:17-19
and his soul to wither, but the bulk of your House shall perish by the sword of
34 men.[m] •What happens to your two sons Hophni and Phinehas shall be a sign for 14:10+
35 you: on the one day both shall die. •I will raise up a faithful priest for myself; 4:11
he shall do whatever I plan and whatever I desire. I will build him an
36 enduring House and he will walk in the presence of my Anointed for ever. •And 9:26+
all that survive of your House will come and beg him on their knees for a silver
piece or a loaf of bread and say: Please give me some priestly task, so that I can 2 K 23:9
have a scrap of bread to eat." '

God calls Samuel[a]

1 3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to Yahweh in the presence of Eli;
it was rare for Yahweh to speak in those days; visions were uncommon.
2 One day, it happened that Eli was lying down in his room. His eyes were
3 beginning to grow dim; he could no longer see. •The lamp of God had not Ex 27:20f Lv 24:3
yet gone out, and Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of Yahweh where the ark Ex 25:22+
4 of God was,[b] •when Yahweh called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am'. Gn 22:1

b. Eli's sons ignore the regulations governing the priest's share.

c. In Hebrew, *ephod*, a priestly vestment, cf. 2 S 6: 14; 22:18. It is to be distinguished from the *ephod*, an instrument of divination; cf. v. 28 and note. On the high priest's *ephod*, see Ex 28:6+.

d. The Hebr. adds 'and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting', a gloss suggested by Ex 38:8.

e. The Hebr. adds 'these wicked deeds', a gloss.

f. The conclusion of this verse is corrupt. Hebr. 'causing the people of Yahweh to sin'.

g. As elsewhere in the Bible, Ex 4:21; Jos 11:20; Is 6:9-10, etc., the 'hardening' of the sinner is attributed to Yahweh as its ultimate cause. But this form of expression in no way denies man's free will.

h. The episode is apparently a subsequent insertion; it makes the briefer passage of 3:11-14 unnecessary. The death of Hophni and Phinehas, 4:11, is to be merely an omen, v. 34, of the coming misfortunes foretold in v. 33: the massacre of the priests of Nob, Eli's descendants, 22:18-19 (with the exception of Abiathar 22:22-23, later deposed by Solomon, 1 K 2:27), and (in v. 35) the substitution of Zadok's family which, from the time of Solomon onwards, enjoys the favour of the king, 'the Lord's anointed'; and also, in v. 36, the humiliating situation of the provincial priests after the reform under Josiah, 2 K 23:9.

i. Levi.

j. Not a vestment worn, like the *ephod* of v. 18, but something that is 'carried', 14:3; 23:6; 30:7, and that holds the sacred lots by which Yahweh is consulted, 14:18f; 23:9f; 30:8,. see 14:41+. We meet it in the period of the Judges, Jg 17:5; 18:14f (Gideon's *ephod*, Jg 8:26f, is apparently an idolatrous emblem), but it is not mentioned in post-Davidic narratives (one allusion in Ho 3:4).

k. Text and meaning uncertain; so also v. 32.

l. I. e. would serve him faithfully andenjoy his favour.

m. 'his eyes', 'his soul' Greek; 'your eyes', 'your soul' Hebr. 'the sword' Greek.

3 a. By this first revelation Samuel is consecrated prophet. It is not a dream; the voice awakens Samuel. Nor is it a 'vision' except in the wide sense, since Samuel hears but does not see Yahweh.

b. Above this ark is where Yahweh manifests his presence and issues his commands, cf. Ex 25:22; Is 6.

Then he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me'. Eli said, 'I did 5
not call. Go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down. •Once again Yahweh 6
called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am,
since you called me'. He replied, 'I did not call you, my son; go back and lie
down'. •Samuel had as yet no knowledge of Yahweh and the word of Yahweh 7
had not yet been revealed to him. •Once again Yahweh called, the third time. 8
He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me'. Eli then
understood that it was Yahweh who was calling the boy, •and he said to Samuel, 9
'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Yahweh, your servant is
listening" '. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Yahweh then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, 'Samuel! 10
Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, Yahweh, your servant is listening'. •Then 11
Yahweh said to Samuel, 'I am about to do such a thing in Israel as will make
the ears of all who hear it ring. •On that day, I will carry out against Eli 12
2:27-36 everything I have spoken about his House,[c] from beginning to end. •You are to 13
tell him that I condemn his House for ever because he has known that his
sons have been cursing God, yet he has not corrected them. •Therefore—I swear 14
it to the House of Eli—neither sacrifice nor offering shall ever expiate the guilt
of the House of Eli.'

Then Samuel lay still until the morning, when he opened the doors of 15
Yahweh's temple. He was afraid to tell the vision to Eli, •but Eli called him and 16
said, 'Samuel, my son'. 'Here I am' he answered. •'What message did he give 17
Rt1:17+ you?' Eli asked; 'Do not hide it from me. May God do this to you, and more,
if you keep back anything of what he said to you.' •Samuel then told him 18
Jb 1:21 everything, keeping nothing back from him. Eli said, 'He is Yahweh; let him
do what he thinks good'.

2:21 Samuel grew up and Yahweh was with him and let no word of his fall to 19
Gn 39:2 the ground. •All Israel from Dan to Beersheba came to know that Samuel was 20
Jg20:1+ accredited as a prophet of Yahweh. •Yahweh continued to appear in Shiloh, for 21
he revealed himself to Samuel,[d] **4** and the word of Samuel went out to all 1
Israel. By then, Eli was very old and his sons still persisted in their wicked
behaviour towards Yahweh.[a]

B. THE ARK IN PHILISTINE HANDS[b]

The defeat of the Israelites and capture of the ark

It happened at that time that the Philistines mustered to fight Israel and
Israel went out to meet them in battle, encamping near Ebenezer while the
29:1 Philistines were encamped at Aphek.[e] •The Philistines drew up their battle line 2
Jos13:2+ against Israel, the battle was hotly engaged, and Israel was defeated by the
Philistines and about four thousand of their army were killed[d] on the field.
The troops returned to the camp and the elders of Israel said, 'Why has Yahweh 3
Nb10:35f allowed us to be defeated today by the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of our
2 S 11:11 God[e] from Shiloh so that it may come among us and rescue us from the power
of our enemies.'[f] •So the troops sent to Shiloh and brought away the ark of 4
Yahweh Sabaoth, he who is seated on the cherubs; the two sons of Eli, Hophni
and Phinehas, came with the ark. •When the ark of Yahweh arrived in the camp, 5
all Israel gave a great shout[g] so that the earth resounded. •When the Philistines 6
heard the noise of the shouting, they said, 'What can this great shouting in the
Hebrew camp mean?' And they realised that the ark of Yahweh had come into
the camp. •At this the Philistines were afraid; and they said, 'God has come to 7
the camp'. 'Alas!' they cried 'This has never happened before. •Alas! Who 8
will save us from the power of this mighty God? It was he who struck down
Egypt with every kind of plague![h] •But take courage and be men, Philistines, 9
or you will become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been slaves to you. Be

men and fight.' •So the Philistines joined battle and Israel was defeated, each man fleeing to his tent. The slaughter was great indeed, and there fell of the Israelites thirty thousand foot soldiers. •The ark of God was captured too, and the two sons of Eli died, Hophni and Phinehas. 2:34 Ps 78:61

The death of Eli

A Benjaminite ran from the battle line, reaching Shiloh that same day, his 2 S 1:2 Jr 7:12 clothes torn and dust on his head. •When he arrived, Eli was there, sitting on his seat beside the gate watching the road,[i] for his heart trembled for the ark of God. This man, then, came to the town bringing the news, whereupon cries filled the town. •Eli heard the uproar and asked, 'What does this great outcry mean?' The man made haste and told Eli. —•Eli was ninety-eight years old; his gaze was fixed; he was blind.—•The man said to Eli, 'I have come from the camp. I escaped from the ranks today'. 'My son,' said Eli 'what has happened?' •The messenger replied, 'Israel has fled before the Philistines; the army has been utterly routed. What is worse, your two sons are dead and the ark of God has been captured.' •When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his seat by the gate; his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. He had ruled[j] Israel for forty years.

The death of the wife of Phinehas

Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was with child and near her time. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and husband were dead she crouched down and gave birth, for her labour pains came on. •When she was at the point of death, the women Gn 35:16f standing round her said, 'Do not be afraid; you have given birth to a son'. But she did not answer and took no notice. •She named the boy Ichabod,[k] saying, 14:3 'The glory has gone from Israel', thinking of her father-in-law and husband and of the capture of the ark of God. •She said, 'The glory has gone from Israel, Ps 78:61 because the ark of God has been captured'.

The ark brings disaster to the Philistines[a]

5 When the Philistines had captured the ark of God they brought it from 1M 10:83 Ebenezer to Ashdod.[b] •Taking the ark of God, the Philistines put it in the temple of Dagon, setting it down beside Dagon.[c] •Next morning the people Jg 16:23+ of Ashdod went to the temple of Dagon[d] and there lay Dagon face down on 31:10 Is 45:5f,20f the ground before the ark of Yahweh. They picked Dagon up and put him back in his place. •But early next morning there lay Dagon face down again on the ground before the ark of Yahweh, and Dagon's head and two hands were lying severed on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left in its place.[e]

c. Probably added after 2:27-36 had been inserted.
d. Hebr. here adds 'at Shiloh in the word of Yahweh', absent from Greek.

4 a. 'Eli... Yahweh' ending of ch. 3 according to Greek and Vet. Lat.; Hebr. omits. 'It happened... Israel' Greek; Hebr. omits.
b. This episode, 4:1-7, has only superficial connections with the preceding: the mention of Shiloh and of Eli and his sons. Samuel no longer figures. The ark (cf. Ex 25:10+ and 2 S 6:7+) is now the main theme. In content, flavour and geographical setting, it is related to the story of Samson, Jg 13-16. At first an independent unit, it has been used to introduce the royalist account of the institution of the monarchy, ch. 9-11, which is followed by the resumption of the Philistine wars, ch. 13-14. For the continuation of the history of the ark we must pass to 2 S 6 and then to 1 K 8:1-11.
c. In northern Philistine territory.
d. 'were killed' versions.
e. The phrase in the Hebr. is overloaded: 'the ark of the covenant of Yahweh' (or 'of God'); so also in vv. 4-5.
f. The ark is the palladium (protective image) of Israel.
g. This sacred war cry is part of the ark ritual, cf. Nb 10:5+.
h. Hebr. adds 'in the wilderness'.
i. Thus the Greek.
j. Lit. 'judged', though strictly Eli was not one of Israel's 'judges'. 'forty years': round number for a 'generation'.
k. *Ei-chabod*: 'Where is the glory?'—the glory of Yahweh enthroned on the ark.

5 a. The Philistines and Dagon their god are to feel the terrible power of the sacred ark where Yahweh manifests his presence, 2 S 6:7+.
b. One of the five Philistine towns like Gath, v. 8, and Ekron, v. 10. Cf. 6:17 and Jos 13:2+.
c. As a trophy captured from the defeated god.
d. 'went to the temple of Dagon' Greek.
e. 'the trunk of Dagon' versions.

This is why the priests of Dagon and indeed all who enter Dagon's temple do 5
not step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to the present day.[f]

The hand of Yahweh weighed heavily on the people of Ashdod and struck 6
Ps 78:66 terror into them,[g] afflicting them with tumours, in Ashdod and its territory.
When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening they said, 'The ark of the God 7
of Israel must not stay here with us, for his hand lies heavy on us and on Dagon
Jos13:2+ our god'. •So they summoned all the Philistine chiefs to them, and said, 'What 8
shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?' They decided, 'The ark of the
God of Israel must go away to Gath'. So they took the ark of the God of Israel
to Gath. •But after they had taken it there, the hand of Yahweh lay heavy on 9
that town and a great panic broke out; the people of the town, from youngest to
oldest, were struck with tumours that he brought out on them. •They then sent 10
the ark of God to Ekron, but when it came to Ekron the Ekronites shouted,
'They have brought us the ark of the God of Israel to bring death to us and
our people'. •They summoned all the Philistine chiefs and said, 'Send the ark 11
of the God of Israel away; let it go back to where it belongs and not bring death
to us and our people'—for there was mortal panic throughout the town; the
hand of God was very heavy there. •The people who did not die were struck 12
with tumours and the wailing from the town went up to heaven.

The return of the ark

6 The ark of Yahweh was in Philistine territory for seven months. •Then the ½
Philistines called for their priests and diviners and asked, 'What shall we do
with the ark of Yahweh? Tell us how to send it back to where it belongs.' •They 3
replied, 'If you do send the ark of the God of Israel away, you must not send
it away empty; you must pay him a guilt-offering. Then you will be healed and
you will know why his hand would not turn away from you.' •They then asked, 4
'What guilt-offering ought we to pay him?' They answered, 'In proportion to
the number of the Philistine chiefs, five golden tumours and models of your
rats,[a] for the plague was the same for you all as for your chiefs. •So you must 5
make models of your tumours and models of the rats that ravage your country,
Jos 7:19 Jn 9:24 and you must pay honour to the God of Israel.[b] Then perhaps he will lighten
his hand on you and your gods and your country. •Why should you be as 6
stubborn as Egypt and Pharaoh were? After he had brought evil on them, did they
not let them leave? •Now, then, take and fit out a new cart, and two milch cows 7
Nb 19:2 Dt 21:3 that have never borne the yoke.[c] Then harness the cows to the cart and take
2 S 6:3 their calves back to the byre.[d] •Then take the ark of Yahweh, place it on the 8
cart, and put the golden objects which you are paying him as guilt-offering in
a box beside it; then let it go its own way. •Watch it; if it goes up the road to 9
its own territory, to Beth-shemesh, then it was he[e] who did us this great harm;
but if not, then we will know it was not his hand that struck us, but that this
happened to us by chance.'

The people did this. They took two milch cows and harnessed them to the 10
cart and shut up their calves in the byre. •Then they placed the ark of Yahweh 11
on the cart, with the box and the golden rats and the models of their tumours.

The cows made straight for Beth-shemesh keeping to the one road, lowing as 12
they went and turning neither to right nor to left. The Philistine chiefs followed
them as far as the boundaries of Beth-shemesh.

The ark at Beth-shemesh

The people of Beth-shemesh were reaping the wheat harvest in the plain 13
when, raising their eyes, they saw the ark and went joyfully to meet it. •When 14
the cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh it stopped. There was a
2 S 24:22 large stone[f] there, and they cut up the wood of the cart and offered the cows as
a holocaust to Yahweh. •The Levites[g] had taken down the ark of Yahweh and 15
the box containing the golden objects beside it, and placed all this upon the

large stone. The men of Beth-shemesh offered holocausts that day and offered
16 sacrifices to Yahweh. •When the five Philistine chiefs had seen this, they went
17 back to Ekron the same day. •These were the golden tumours the Philistines paid as guilt-offering to Yahweh: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for
18 Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; •as also the golden rats to the number of all the Philistine towns of the five chiefs, from fortified towns to open villages. The large stone on which they placed the ark of Yahweh is a witness[h]
19 to the present day in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh. •Of the people of Beth-shemesh the sons of Jeconiah had not rejoiced when they saw the ark of Yahweh, and he struck down seventy[i] of them. The people mourned because Yahweh had struck them so fiercely.[j]

The ark at Kiriath-jearim

20 The men of Beth-shemesh then said, 'Who can stand his ground before Ps 76:7; 132:6
21 Yahweh this holy God; to whom shall we let him go up, away from us?' •So Mi 3:2
they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim[k] saying, 'The Philistines have sent back the ark of Yahweh; come down and take it up to your town'.

1 7 The men of Kiriath-jearim came and, taking up the ark of Yahweh, brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar[a] his son to guard the ark of Yahweh.

Samuel, judge and liberator[b]

2 From the day the ark settled in Kiriath-jearim a long time passed, twenty
3 years, and the whole House of Israel longed for Yahweh. •Then Samuel said Jg 6:6-10; 10:10-16
to the whole House of Israel, 'If you are returning to Yahweh with all your heart, put aside the foreign gods you now have, and the Astartes too, and set your heart on Yahweh and serve him alone; and he will deliver you from
4 the hand of the Philistines'. •And the Israelites put aside the Baals and Jg 2:13+
Astartes and served Yahweh alone.
5 Then Samuel said, 'Muster all Israel at Mizpah[c] and I will plead with 10:17
6 Yahweh for you'. •So they mustered at Mizpah and drew water and poured Jg 20:1
it out before Yahweh. They fasted that day and declared, 'We have sinned against Yahweh'. And it was at Mizpah that Samuel was judge over the Israelites.
7 The Philistines came to hear that the children of Israel had mustered at Mizpah and the Philistine chiefs marched against Israel. The Israelites heard
8 of this and grew afraid of the Philistines. •They said to Samuel, 'Do not cease
9 calling on Yahweh our God to save us from the power of the Philistines'. •Then Ex 17:6-13
Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it as a holocaust to Yahweh, and he Si 46:16-18
10 called on Yahweh on behalf of Israel and Yahweh answered his prayer. •While

f. It was, in fact, an ancient and widespread custom to leap the threshold, where spirits were thought to make their home.

g. 'struck terror into them' Aquila. The 'tumours' are possibly haemorrhoids.

6 a. 'and models of the rats' following Greek. These rats probably spread the disease, if the 'tumours' were in fact the result of plague. But it is possible that ch. 6 combines two traditions: one making the plague consist of humiliating tumours, the other of an incursion of rats.

b. I.e. 'acknowledge that you have sinned against him', cf. Jos 7:19.

c. New cart and unworked beasts since they are to be used for a sacred task, cf. 2 K 2:20; Nb 19:2; Dt 21:3.

d. Though separated from their calves, the cows go forward, v. 12—striking evidence that God is leading them, v. 9. Cf. 1 K 18 where Elijah deliberately makes the miracle more difficult.

e. Or 'it'. Throughout the narrative the pronouns could refer either to God or to the ark (masculine in Hebr.). But the meaning is the same, since no distinction is made between God and the ark which is the sign of his presence.

f. Any large stone could serve as an altar, 14:33.

g. V. 15a which interrupts the narrative is inserted by a scrupulous editor, shocked that profane hands should touch the ark.

h. 'The large stone is a witness' corr.

i. The translation follows the Greek. Hebr. text here adds a gloss 'fifty thousand men'.

j. The Israelites in their turn discover how terrible the ark can be for those who do not revere it, cf. 2 S 6:7+.

k. A Gibeonite town, Jos 9:17, on the borders of Judah and Benjamin. There the ark is on neutral ground.

7 a. Though not a Levite, cf. Jg 17:5.

b. This chapter does not continue the preceding narrative. Here Samuel plays the leading part after the fashion of a 'judge', or leader raised up by God; he is credited, vv. 13-14, with the liberation actually brought about by Saul and David. This paves the way for the anti-royalist version of the institution of the monarchy, 8; 10:17-24; 12.

c. To the N. of Jerusalem. The ancient custom of Israel was to gather 'before Yahweh' in some sanctuary, v. 6.

Samuel was offering the holocaust the Philistines approached to give Israel battle, but Yahweh thundered with a great noise that day against the Philistines and threw them into a panic, and so they were routed before Israel. •The men 11
of Israel then went out from Mizpah in pursuit of the Philistines and struck them down as far as below Beth-car.[d] •Then Samuel took a stone and erected 12
it between Mizpah and Jeshanah and gave it the name Ebenezer,[e] saying, 'Thus far has Yahweh aided us'.

Jg 3:30; 8:28;11:33 So the Philistines were humbled and no longer came into Israelite territory; 13
the hand of Yahweh lay on the Philistines all Samuel's lifetime. •The towns the 14
Philistines had taken from Israel were given back to them, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel freed their territory from the power of the Philistines. There was peace, too, between Israel and the Amorites.

Jg12:7,9, 11,14;16:31 Samuel was judge over Israel as long as he lived. •Each year he went on 15 16
circuit through Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah and judged Israel in all these places. •He would then return to Ramah, for his home was there; there too he 17
judged Israel. And there he built an altar to Yahweh.

II. SAMUEL AND SAUL

A. THE INSTITUTION OF THE MONARCHY[a]

The people ask for a king[b]

Ho 8:4 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his two sons as judges[c] over Israel. 1
The name of the first-born was Joel, that of the younger Abijah; they were 2
Pr 17:23 judges in Beersheba. •But his sons did not follow his ways; they wanted money, 3
taking bribes and perverting justice. •Then all the elders of Israel gathered 4
together and came to Samuel at Ramah. •'Look,' they said to him 'you are 5
Dt 17:14 Ho 13:10 old, and your sons do not follow your ways. So give us a king to rule
✗ Ac 13:21 over us, like the other nations.'[a] •It displeased Samuel that they should say, 6
'Let us have a king to rule us', so he prayed to Yahweh. •But Yahweh said to 7
Samuel, 'Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for it is not you
12:12 Jg 8:22-23 Jg 10:13 1 K 9:9 they have rejected; they have rejected me from ruling over them. •All they have 8
done to me from the day I brought them out of Egypt until now—they deserted me and served other gods—they are doing now to you. •Well then, obey their 9
voice; only, you must warn them solemnly and instruct them in the rights of the king who is to reign over them.'

The disadvantages of the monarchy

All that Yahweh had said Samuel repeated to the people who were asking 10
10:25;12:3f Dt 17:14-20 1 K 12 him for a king. •He said, 'These will be the rights of the king who is to reign 11
over you.[e] He will take your sons and assign them to his chariotry and cavalry,
2 S 15:1 1 K 1:5 and they will run in front of his chariot. •He will use them as leaders of a 12
thousand and leaders of fifty; he will make them plough his ploughland and harvest his harvest and make his weapons of war and the gear for his chariots.
1 K 21:1-24 He will also take your daughters as perfumers, cooks and bakers. •He will take 13 14
22:7 the best of your fields, of your vineyards and olive groves and give them to his officials. •He will tithe your crops and vineyards to provide for his eunuchs and 15
his officials. •He will take the best of your manservants and maidservants, of 16
your cattle[f] and your donkeys, and make them work for him. •He will tithe your 17
1 K 12:4 flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. •When that day comes, you 18
will cry out on account of the king you have chosen for yourselves, but on that
Pr 1:25-33 Mi 3:4 day God will not answer you.'

The people refused to listen to the words of Samuel. They said, 'No! We 19
want a king, •so that we in our turn can be like the other nations; our king 20
shall rule us and be our leader and fight our battles.' •Samuel listened to all 21

22 that the people had to say and repeated it in the ears of Yahweh. •Yahweh then said to Samuel, 'Obey their voice and give them a king'. Samuel then said to the men of Israel, 'Go back, each to your own town'.[g]

Saul and his father's she-donkeys[a]

1 9 Among the men of Benjamin there was a man named Kish son of Abiel, 14:51 1 Ch 8:33
son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah; a Benjaminite and a man of
2 rank. •He had a son named Saul,[b] a handsome man in the prime of life. Of all
the Israelites there was no one more handsome than he; he stood head and 10:23; 16:7.12
3 shoulders taller than the rest of the people. •Now some of the she-donkeys of
Saul's father Kish had strayed, so Kish said to Saul, 'My son, take one of the
4 servants with you and be off; go and look for the she-donkeys'. •They passed
through the highlands of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah,
but did not find them; they passed through the land of Shaalim, they were not
5 there; they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them. •When
they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him,
'Come, let us go back or my father will stop worrying over the she-donkeys and
6 start being anxious about us'. •He answered, 'Look, there is a man of God in Dt 33:1 Jg 13:6 1 K 13:1
this town,[c] a man held in honour; everything he says comes true. Let us go
there, then; perhaps he will be able to guide us on the journey we have
7 undertaken.' •Saul replied to the servant, 'But if we do go, what can we take to
the man? The bread in our sacks has gone, and we have no present to offer
8 the man of God. What can we give him?'[d] •Again the servant answered Saul, Nb 22:7 2 K 5:15
'Look,' he said 'I have a quarter of a silver shekel here; I will give it to the man
10 of God and he shall tell us our road.' •Then Saul said to his servant, 'Well said!
Come, let us go.' And they went off to the town where the man of God was.

Saul meets Samuel

11 As they were going up the slope to the town they came on some girls going
9 out to draw water, and said to them, 'Is the seer[e] there?' —•Formerly in Israel Gn 24:11 Ex 2:16
when a man used to go to consult God he would say, 'Come, let us go to the
12 seer', for a man who is now called a 'prophet' was formerly called a 'seer'.—•The Si 46:15
girls replied, 'Yes, the seer is ahead of you. He has just come[f] into the town, 1 K 14:23 2 Ch 17:6

d. 'Beth-car' conj., cf. Greek.

e. I.e. 'stone of help'. The Ebenezer of 4:1 is situated elsewhere.

8 a. A turning point of Israel's political and religious history. The sanctuary of the ark of Shiloh has been destroyed and unity is menaced as the Philistine threat increases. A section of the people (repeating the offer made to Gideon, Jg 8:22f, and cf. the attempt made by Abimelech, Jg 9:1f) asks for a king 'such as other nations have', but others hold the opposite view that Yahweh, Israel's only lord, should be left to provide leaders as circumstances required, as he did in the days of the Judges. These two schools of thought find a voice in the anti-royalist, ch. 8; 10:17-24; 12, and royalist, 9:1–10:16; 11, versions of the institution of the monarchy, here placed side by side. The royalist view ultimately prevails, but Saul, the first king, is scarcely distinguishable from the judges who preceded him; he is Yahweh's own choice, 9:16; 10:24, and is possessed by his spirit, 10:10, and wins the people over by a feat of arms, 11:5-11. The monarchy, however, only achieves its full development in David, an outstanding personality in whom the religious and civil functions of the Israelite monarchy are harmoniously combined, and whose political position does not interfere with the duties of the Lord's anointed. But none of his successors achieves this ideal again, and David remains the model of that future king through whom God is to bring about the salvation of his people, namely the Messiah, the Anointed of the Lord.

b. This anti-royalist account continues the story of ch. 7.

c. Not, however, leaders raised up by God to deliver his people, such as the judges and Samuel himself, ch. 7, but officials appointed to administer justice.

d. Israel forgets that it is not like other nations; in following their example and casting off Yahweh, its true king, it denies its special vocation.

e. The details that follow reflect a state of affairs not known until the days of Solomon and after; this satire implies extensive experience.

f. Following the Greek.

g. The end of the verse is by an editor: the 'dismissal of the people' makes it possible for him to insert 9:1–10:16 (royalist version) into this anti-royalist account which was originally followed by 10:17-24.

9 a. Another narrative, not connected with the preceding. Saul is its central figure, Samuel appears not as a judge but as a prophet whom Saul meets by chance. The monarchy is willed by God; the first king is his chosen one. This is the opening of the royalist (the more ancient) version which continues as far as 10:16 and is resumed in ch. 11.

b. I.e. 'asked for' (from God).

c. Ramah, Samuel's town.

d. One consults a prophet only after making him a present, Nb 22:7; 1 K 14:3; 2 K 4:42; 5:15; 8:8. Cf. Am 7:12; Mi 3:11; Ezr 13:19.

e. A rare word for 'prophet', used in ancient prose narrative. Hence the explanatory gloss of v. 9, which is to be read after v. 11.

f. 'the seer... come' following Greek.

Nb 33:52 for the people are having a sacrifice today on the high place.[g] •You will meet 13
him as soon as you enter the town before he goes up to the high place for
Lv 3:1+ the meal. The people will not eat until he comes, since he must bless the
sacrifice; then the people invited eat afterwards.[h] Go up now and you will soon
find him.'

So they went up to the town, and as they were going through the gate Samuel 14
came out in their direction on his way to the high place. •Now Yahweh had 15
given Samuel a revelation the day before Saul came, saying, •'About this time 16
tomorrow I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin; you are to
10:1 Ex 3:7.10 anoint him as prince over my people Israel, and he will save my people from the
power of the Philistines; for I have seen the distress of my people and their
crying has come to me'. •When Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh told him, 'That is the 17
16:12 man of whom I told you; he shall rule my people'. •Saul accosted Samuel in the 18
gateway and said, 'Tell me, please, where the seer's house is?' •Samuel replied 19
to Saul, 'I am the seer. Go up ahead of me to the high place. You are to
eat with me today. In the morning I shall take leave of you and tell you all that
is in your heart. •As regards the she-donkeys you lost three days ago, do not 20
worry about them; they have been found already. Besides, for whom is all
the wealth of Israel destined, if not for you and all your father's House?'[i] •Saul 21
then replied, 'Am I not a Benjaminite, from the smallest[j] of Israel's tribes?
And is not my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why
do you say such words to me?'

Samuel then took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and 22
gave them a place at the head of those invited; there were about thirty of them.
Samuel said to the cook, 'Serve the portion I gave you, which I told you to 23
put on one side'. •The cook then took up the leg and the tail and set it in front 24
of Saul, saying, 'There! The part that has been kept is set before you. Eat!'...[k]
So, Saul ate that day with Samuel.

From the high place they came down to the town. On the housetop they 25
spread out coverlets for Saul and he lay down.[l]

31:4 2 S 1:14 1 K 1:34 Ps 132:10 **The consecration of Saul**[m]

At the break of day Samuel called to Saul on the housetop, 'Get up; I must 26
take leave of you'. Saul got up, and the two of them, he and Samuel, went out
into the street. •They had walked as far as the end of the town when Samuel 27
said to Saul, 'Tell the servant to go on ahead of us, but you stand still for a
moment and I shall make known to you the word of God'.

9:16-17 Jg 9:9 1 K 1:39 Si 46:13 10 Samuel took a phial of oil and poured it on Saul's head; then he kissed 1
him, saying, 'Has not Yahweh anointed you prince over his people Israel?
You are the man who must rule Yahweh's people, and who must save them
14:10+ from the power of the enemies surrounding them. This shall be the sign[a] for
Dt 7:6+; 32:9 you that Yahweh has appointed you prince of his heritage: •when you leave 2
Jr 31:15 Mk 14:13 me now, you will meet two men near the tomb of Rachel, on the frontiers of
Benjamin...[b] and they will say to you, "The she-donkeys you went in search
of have been found and your father has lost interest in the donkeys and is
worrying about you, thinking, What am I to do about my son?" •Going further 3
from there you will come to the Oak of Tabor where three men will meet you,
going up to God at Bethel; one will be carrying three kids, one three loaves of
bread and the third a skin of wine. •They will greet you and give you two loaves 4
of bread which you must accept from them. •After this you will go to Gibeah of 5
13:3 God[c] (where the Philistine pillar[d] is) and as you come to the town you will
meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place, headed by harp,
16:13 Jg 3:10+ tambourine, flute and lyre; they will be in an ecstasy.[e] •Then the spirit of Yahweh 6
2 K 3:15 will seize on you, and you will go into an ecstasy with them, and be changed into
another man. •When these signs are fulfilled for you, act as occasion serves, 7
Gn 39:2 for God is with you. •You must go down before me to Gilgal;[f] I will join you 8

there to offer holocausts and communion sacrifices. You are to wait seven days for me to come to you, and then I will show you what you are to do.' 13:8 Lv1:1+; 3:1+

The return of Saul

9 As soon as Saul had turned his back to leave Samuel, God changed his heart
10 and all these signs were accomplished that same day. •From there[g] they came 19:20-24
to Gibeah, and there was a group of prophets coming to meet him; the spirit of 11:6 Nb11:25
11 God seized on him and he fell into ecstasy in their midst. •When all who knew
him previously saw him prophesying with the prophets, the people said to each
other, 'What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul one of the prophets too?'
12 One of the group retorted, 'And who is their father?'[h] And this is the origin of
the proverb: Is Saul one of the prophets too? 19:24
13 When Saul's ecstasy had passed he went back into the house[i] •and his uncle
14 asked him and his servant, 'Where have you been?' He replied, 'In search of
the she-donkeys; and when we saw we could not find them, we went to Samuel.'
15 Saul's uncle then said, 'Tell me, now, what did Samuel say to you?' •Saul said
16 to his uncle, 'He only told us that the donkeys were already found', but he
said nothing to him about the kingship of which Samuel had spoken.

Saul is chosen king by lot[j]

17 Samuel called the people together to Yahweh at Mizpah •and said to the 7:5+
18 Israelites, 'Yahweh the God of Israel has spoken and says, "I brought Israel Jg 6:8-9
out of Egypt and delivered you from the power of the Egyptians and of all the Ex 20:2 Lv 25:38
19 kingdoms that were oppressing you". •But today you have rejected your God,
he who saved you from all your calamities and desperate straits; and you have
said, "No,[k] you must set a king over us". Well then, take your positions before
Yahweh according to your tribes and clans.'
20 Samuel then made all the tribes of Israel come forward, and the lot fell to Jos 7:16-18
21 the tribe of Benjamin. •He then made the tribe of Benjamin come forward clan
by clan, and the lot fell to the clan of Matri; he then made the clan of Matri
come forward man by man, and the lot fell to Saul son of Kish. They looked
for him but he was not to be found.
22 Once again they consulted Yahweh, 'Has the man come here?'[l] 'There he is,'
23 Yahweh answered 'hidden among the baggage'. •So they ran and brought him
out and, as he stood among the people, he was head and shoulders taller than 9:2;16:7
24 them all. •Then Samuel said to all the people, 'Have you seen the man Yahweh

g. The 'high place' was a shrine set on a hilltop near a town. The custom was Canaanite, but Israel substituted Yahweh for Baal, Jg 6:25f, and the high places were for many years tolerated by the orthodox, 1 K 3:4f, until their prohibition by the law imposing a single sanctuary, Dt 12:2+.

h. The sacred meal was an essential part of the communion sacrifice, cf. Lv 3:1+.

i. Saul's royal destiny is foretold for the first time.

j. 'the smallest' conj.

k. Text corrupt. Hebr. 'because for the time appointed for you saying: I have invited the people'.

l. 'they spread... lay down' Greek and Vet. Lat.

m. The kings of Israel were anointed by a man of God, either a priest or a prophet, cf. 16:13; 1 K 1:39; 2 K 9:6; 11:12. The rite gave them a sacred character: the king was 'the anointed of Yahweh', cf. 2:35; 24:7,11; 26:9,16, and see Ex 30:22+.

10 a. 'Yahweh anointed you... the sign' following Greek and Vulg.; Hebr. omits.

b. The word omitted is incomprehensible in the Hebr. The 'frontiers' are those between Benjamin and Ephraim; Saul is on his way from there. Ancient tradition (and cf. Jr 31:15) located Rachel's tomb there; later it was said to be near Bethlehem where it is still shown, cf. the gloss of Gn 35:19.

c. Another name for Gibeah, Saul's home, vv. 10f; 11:4; 15:34.

d. Others translate 'governor'. The parenthesis is a gloss preparing the reader for 13:3.

e. These 'prophets' lived in groups; they made use of music and gesticulation to stimulate an ecstasy which communicated itself to others, 19:20-24, 1 K 22:10f. They have been compared with the dervishes of today. Israel's neighbours (cf. the prophets of Baal, 1 K 18:25-29) were familiar with this lower form of religious life, which was long tolerated in the cult of Yahweh, 1 K 18:4. The 'prophets' reappear, with diminished frenzy, in Elisha's company, 2 K 2:3+. The great prophets of Israel are of a different quality, see Introduction to the Prophets.

f. Near Jericho, cf. Jos 4:19+. V. 8 is an insertion preparing for 13:8-15, a passage from a different source.

g. The original narrative must have described the fulfilment of the first two signs.

h. They are surprised that a man of Saul's standing should mix with these enthusiasts, no doubt of lowly origin.

i. 'into the house' conj.

j. The anti-royalist version of ch. 8 is here resumed.

k. 'you have said, "No" ' several MSS and versions.

l. Following Greek.

has chosen? Of all the people there is none to equal him.' And all the people
1 K 1:39 2K 11:12 acclaimed him, shouting, 'Long live the king!'

8:11-18 Dt17:18-20 Jos24:26-28 Samuel explained the royal constitution to the people and inscribed it in a 25
book which he placed before Yahweh. He then dismissed all the people, each
to his own home. •Saul too went home to Gibeah and with him went the mighty 26
men[m] whose hearts God had touched. •But there were some scoundrels who 27
11:12-14 said, 'How can this fellow save us?' They despised him, and offered him no
present.

Victory over the Ammonites[a]

12:12 About a month later,[b] **11** Nahash the Ammonite marched up and laid 1
siege to Jabesh-gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, 'Make a
treaty with us and we will be your subjects'. •But Nahash the Ammonite said 2
to them, 'I will make a treaty with you on this condition, that I put out all your
right eyes; I shall inflict this disgrace on the whole of Israel'. •The elders of 3
Jabesh said to him, 'Give us seven days' grace while we send messengers
throughout the territory of Israel, and if no one comes to our help, we will go
over to you'. •The messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, and reported this 4
to the people, and all the people began to lament and weep.

Now Saul was just then coming in from the fields behind his oxen, and he 5
said, 'What is wrong? Why are the people weeping?' They explained to him
10:10 Jg 3:10+ what the men of Jabesh had said. •And the spirit of Yahweh seized on Saul 6
when he heard these words, and his fury was stirred to fierce flame. •He took 7
Jg 19:29 a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces which he sent by messengers throughout
the territory of Israel with these words: 'If anyone will not march with Saul,[c]
14:15 Gn 35:5 this shall be done with his oxen!' At this, a dread of Yahweh fell on the people
and they marched out as one man. •He inspected them at Bezek; there were 8
three hundred thousand Israelites and thirty thousand of Judah.[d] •He then said 9
to the messengers who had come, 'This is what you must say to the men of
Jabesh-gilead, "Tomorrow by the time the sun is hot help will reach you" '. The
messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh who were overjoyed;
they said to Nahash,[e] 'Tomorrow we will go over[f] to you and you can do 10
what you like to us'.

The next day, Saul disposed the army in three companies; they burst into the 11
middle of the camp in the last watch of the night and struck down the
Ammonites until high noon. The survivors were so scattered that not two of
them were left together.

Saul is proclaimed king[g]

10:27 The people then said to Samuel, 'Who said, "Is Saul to reign over us?" Hand 12
2 S 19:23 the men over for us to put them to death.' •'No one is to be put to death today' 13
Saul replied 'for today Yahweh has brought victory to Israel.' •Then Samuel 14
said to the people, 'Come, let us go to Gilgal and reaffirm the monarchy there'.

Jos4:19+ So all the people went to Gilgal and there they proclaimed Saul king before 15
Lv 3:1+ Yahweh at Gilgal. They offered communion sacrifices there before Yahweh;
and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Jos24:1-28 ### Samuel gives way to Saul[a]

Nb27:16-17 **12** Samuel said to all Israel, 'I have faithfully done all you asked of me, and 1
I have appointed a king over you. •In future it is the king who will 2
lead you. As for me, I am old and grey, and my sons are here among you. I have
led you from my youth until today. •Here I am. Testify against me before 3
8:11-17 Nb 16:15 Si 46:19 Yahweh and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I
taken? Have I ever wronged or oppressed anyone? Have I ever taken a bribe
from anyone? If so I will here and now requite you.' •'You have neither wronged 4
nor oppressed us' they said 'nor accepted a bribe from anyone.' •He said to them, 5

'Yahweh is witness against you and his anointed is witness today that you have found nothing in my hands?' 'He is witness' they replied.

6 Samuel then said to the people,[b] 'Yahweh is witness,[c] he who raised up
7 Moses and Aaron and who brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt. •So Mi 6:4
now stand here while I argue with you before Yahweh and remind you of all
8 the saving works he performed for you and for your ancestors. •When Jacob came to Egypt the Egyptians oppressed them,[d] and your ancestors cried to Yahweh who sent Moses and Aaron; they brought your ancestors out of Egypt and gave
9 them a settled home here. •Then they forgot Yahweh their God and he sold them into the power of Sisera, general of the army of Hazor, as also into the Jg 4-5;13-16
power of the Philistines and of the king of Moab who fought against them. Jg3:12-30
10 They cried to Yahweh, "We have sinned, for we have deserted Yahweh; we have served the Baals and the Astartes. Rescue us now from the power of our
11 enemies, and we will serve you". •Then Yahweh sent Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, Jg6-8;4-5; 11-12
and Samuel.[e] He rescued you from the power of the enemies surrounding you, and you lived in security.

12 'But when you saw Nahash, king of the Ammonites, come to attack you, 11:1f
you said to me, "No, a king must rule over us"—although Yahweh your God
13 himself is your king. •Here then is the king you have chosen;[f] Yahweh has set a 8:7
14 king over you. •If you reverence and serve Yahweh and obey his voice and do not rebel against his order, and if both you and the king who rules over
15 you follow Yahweh your God, all will be well. •But if you do not obey the voice of Yahweh, if you rebel against his order, his hand will be against you and against your king.[g]

16 'Stand here, then, and watch the great wonder Yahweh will do before your
17 eyes. •It is now wheat harvest, is it not?[h] I will call on Yahweh and he shall 1 K 18
send thunder and rain. Consider then and see what a very wicked thing you
18 have done in the sight of Yahweh by asking to have a king.' •Samuel then called on Yahweh, and Yahweh sent thunder and rain the same day, and all the people
19 held Yahweh and Samuel in great awe. •They all said to Samuel, 'Plead for your servants with Yahweh your God that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil of asking to have a king'.

20 Samuel said to the people,[i] 'Do not be afraid; you have indeed done all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following Yahweh, but serve Yahweh with
21 all your hearts. •Do not turn aside after empty idols which, being empty, are Dt32:37-39
22 useless and cannot save, •since for the sake of his great name Yahweh will Jr 14:21 Ezk 20:9
23 not desert his people, for it has pleased Yahweh to make you his people. •For Dn 3:34 Dt 7:6+
my part, far be it from me that I should sin against Yahweh by ceasing to plead Ex 32:11+
24 for you or to instruct you in the good and right way. •Only reverence and serve Yahweh faithfully with all your heart, for you see the great wonder he
25 has done among you. •But if you persist in wickedness, you and your king will perish.'

m. 'the mighty men' conj.

11 a. Here the royalist version is resumed. This is the moment foretold in 10:7, and it indicates to everyone that Saul (whose anointing has remained secret) is God's chosen leader. We are once more in the climate of the Book of Judges.

b. 'About a month later' versions; join with 11:1.

c. The text adds 'and Samuel' in accordance with the mentality of ch. 7.

d. The large numbers and the distinction between Israel and Judah betray a late hand.

e. 'to Nahash' added conjecturally.

f. The men of Jabesh play on the word which can mean either 'attack' or (as in v. 3) 'surrender'.

g. V. 15 originally followed v. 11; Saul was acclaimed king on the day after the victory. But according to the parallel narrative, Saul had already been proclaimed at Mizpah, 10:24. Vv. 12-14 harmonise the two narratives: Saul was not acknowledged by all, cf. 10:27, and his investiture had to be 'renewed'. Hosea, hostile to monarchical government, brands the proclamation as sinful, Ho 8:4; 9:15.

12 a. The immediate sequel of 10:17-24 (anti-royalist version).

b. A short discourse in the style of Deuteronomy and of the deuteronomic editor of Judges.

c. 'is witness' Greek.

d. 'the Egyptians oppressed them' Greek.

e. 'Barak' Greek. Thus Samuel is ranked with the judges, cf. ch. 7.

f. The text adds 'for whom you have asked'.

g. 'and against your king' Greek.

h. A season when it never rains in Palestine.

i. Summary of the anti-royalist thesis: establishing the monarchy has been a grave offence, nevertheless God will not cast off his chosen people if they remain faithful. The prophets will plead for them and guide them.

B. THE BEGINNING OF SAUL'S REIGN

Revolt against the Philistines[a]

13 ...[b] •Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; there were two thousand ½
with Saul at Michmash and in the highlands of Bethel, and a thousand
with Jonathan[c] at Geba[d] of Benjamin; the rest of the people Saul sent home,
each man to his own tent.[e]
10:5;14:1-15 Jonathan smashed the Philistine pillar which was at Gibeah[f] and the Philistines 3
learned that the Hebrews had risen in revolt. Saul had the trumpet sounded
throughout the country, •and the whole of Israel heard the news: Saul has 4
smashed the Philistine pillar, and now Israel has incurred the enmity of the
Philistines. So all the people rallied behind Saul at Gilgal. •The Philistines 5
mustered to do battle with Israel, three thousand[g] chariots, six thousand horse
and a force as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They came up and pitched
Jos 7:2+ camp at Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven.[h] •When the men of Israel saw 6
14:11 that their situation was desperate, since they were hard pressed, they hid in
Jg 6:2 caves, in holes, in crevices, in vaults, in wells. •Many, too, crossed over the 7
Jordan fords into the territory of Gad and Gilead.

15 Samuel breaks with Saul[i]

Saul was still at Gilgal and all the people who followed him were trembling.[j]
10:8 He waited for seven days, the period Samuel had fixed, but Samuel did not 8
come to Gilgal and the army, deserting Saul, was dispersed. •So Saul said, 9
'Bring me the holocaust and the communion sacrifices'; and he offered the
holocaust. •Just as he was completing the offering of the holocaust Samuel 10
came, and Saul went out to meet him and greet him, •but Samuel said, 'What 11
have you done?' Saul replied, 'I saw the army deserting me and dispersing,
and you had not come at the time fixed, while the Philistines were mustering
at Michmash. •So I thought: Now the Philistines are going to fall on me at 12
Gilgal and I have not implored the favour of Yahweh. So I felt obliged to act
and I offered the holocaust myself.' •Samuel answered Saul, 'You have acted 13
like a fool. If you had[k] carried out the order Yahweh your God commanded
you, Yahweh would have confirmed your sovereignty over Israel for ever. •But 14
2 S 7:15f / Ac 13:22 now your sovereignty will not last; Yahweh has searched out a man for himself
Ps 78:70 after his own heart[l] and designated him leader of his people, since you have
not carried out what Yahweh ordered you.' •Samuel then rose and left Gilgal 15
to continue his journey.

Those of the people who remained followed Saul as he went to join the warriors, and went from Gilgal to Geba[m] of Benjamin. Saul inspected the force that was with him; there were about six hundred men.

Preparations for war[n]

Saul, his son Jonathan, and the force that was with them took up their quarters 16
14:15 in Geba of Benjamin while the Philistines camped at Michmash.[o] •The raiding 17
contingent came out from the Philistine camp in three companies: one made
for Ophrah in the land of Shual; •another for Beth-horon; and the third for the 18
height overhanging the Valley of the Hyenas, towards the wilderness.[p]

There was not a single smith in the whole land of Israel, because the 19
Philistines had reasoned: We must prevent the Hebrews from forging swords or
Jg 5:8 spears. •Hence all the Israelites were in the habit of going down to the Philistines 20
to sharpen every ploughshare, axe, mattock or goad. •The price was two-thirds 21
of a shekel for ploughshares and axes, and one-third for sharpening mattocks
and straightening goads.[q] •So it was that on the day of the battle of Michmash[r] 22
no one in the whole army with Saul and Jonathan had either sword or spear
in his hand, except, however, Saul and his son Jonathan.
14:15 A Philistine outpost left for the Pass of Michmash. 23

Jonathan attacks the outpost

1 14 One day, Jonathan son of Saul said to his armour-bearer, 'Come on, let us go across to the Philistine outpost in the pass'.[a] But he did not warn his
2 father. •Saul was on the outskirts of Geba, sitting under the pomegranate tree that stands near the threshing-floor;[b] the force with him numbered about six
3 hundred men. •Ahijah son of Ahitub, brother of Ichabod son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of Yahweh at Shiloh, was wearing the ephod. The force did not know that Jonathan had left.

4 In the pass that Jonathan was trying to cross to reach the Philistine outpost
5 there is a rocky spur on one side and a rocky spur on the other; one is called
6 Bozez, the other Seneh. •The first spur stands to the north facing Michmash, the other to the south facing Geba. •Jonathan said to his armour-bearer, 'Come on, let us go across to the outpost of these uncircumcised men; perhaps Yahweh will do something for us, for nothing can prevent Yahweh from giving us victory,
7 whether there are many or few of them'. •His armour-bearer said to him, 'Do
8 just as your heart tells you; as for me, my heart is[c] with you'. •Jonathan then said, 'Look, we will go across to these people and let ourselves be seen.
9 If they say to us, "Do not move till we come to you" we shall stay where we are
10 and not go up to them. •But if they say, "Come up to us" we will go up, for that will be the sign[d] for us that Yahweh has given them into our power.'

11 When they both let themselves be seen by the Philistine post, the Philistines said, 'Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have been
12 hiding'. •The men of the post then hailed Jonathan and his armour-bearer. 'Come up to us,' they said 'we have something to tell you.' Jonathan then said to his armour-bearer, 'Follow me up; Yahweh has given them into the power
13 of Israel'. •Jonathan climbed up, hands and feet, with his armour-bearer behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armour-bearer, coming behind,
14 finished them off. •This first blow that Jonathan and his armour-bearer struck accounted for about twenty men...[e]

13:3 1 M 4:31 | Is10:28,29 | 4:21 | 2:28+; 14:18 | Is 10:28 | 1 M 3:19 Ps 33:16 Si 39:18 | 17:47 | Jg 7:4-7 Jdt 9:11 | 1 M 5:40 | 10:1+ | 13 | 2 S 18:5

Battle is engaged

15 There was panic in the camp and in the countryside; all the men in the outpost, and the raiding contingent too, were terrified; the earth shook; it was
16 a very panic of God. •Saul's lookout men in Geba[f] of Benjamin could see the
17 camp scattering in all directions. •Saul then said to the force that was with him,

13:16,17,23 | 11:7+

13 a. Ch. 13 is composite. Vv. 16-18 and 23 belong to the primitive account which is continued in ch. 14. Vv. 3-15 are of later origin. There will be no further allusion to this first rejection of Saul, apparently an anticipation of ch. 15.

b. The Hebr. reads 'Saul was one year old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel for two years', which is absurd. The verse is lacking in the ancient Greek version. A tradition credited Saul with a reign of forty years, Ac 13:21.

c. Saul's son, v. 16 etc.

d. 'Geba' conj., cf. v. 15; 'Gibeah' Hebr.

e. Remnant of an independent tradition.

f. 'Gibeah' Greek, cf. 10:15; 'Geba' Hebr. 'had risen in revolt' Greek. Possibly a duplicate of 14:1-15.

g. 'three thousand' versions.

h. 'House of nothingness', nickname for Bethel, cf. Am 5:5.

i. The tragedy of King Saul: though he is Yahweh's chosen one and the saviour of his people, ch. 11 and 14, Yahweh casts him off, ch. 13 and 15. The Bible, from the preference shown to Jacob rather than to Esau, Gn 25:23, cf. Rm 9:13, from Israel's own election, Dt 7:6; Am 3:2, to the calling of the apostles, teaches the free bestowal of God's choice. But it teaches also that persistence in God's favour depends on the faithfulness of the one chosen: Saul betrayed his choice.

j. Text uncertain.

k. 'If you had' conj. It is not easy to see what Saul's fault was: he waited seven days, as instructed. That he himself should offer sacrifice would not be opposed to ancient custom, cf. 14:32-35. The reason for his rejection is put more clearly in ch. 15.

l. I.e. David.

m. Following Greek.

n. With v. 16 the ancient narrative of the war of liberation begins. Vv. 19-22 are parenthetical.

o. With the deep wadi Suweinit between; Jonathan crosses it, 14:4f.

p. These skirmishers are out to lay the whole country waste. Text uncertain.

q. Text very doubtful.

r. 'of Michmash' Greek.

14 a. 'in the pass' Greek.

b. 'Geba' according to v. 5 and 13:16; 'Gibeah' Hebr. 'near the threshing-floor' conj.

c. 'my heart is' Greek.

d. An event, imminent or remote, that will show God's will. It is foretold either by God, Ex 3:12, or by a man of God, 1 S 2:34; 10:7-9; 2 K 19:29, or else, as here and in Gn 24:12f; Jg 6:17-18 and 36-40; 2 K 20: 8-10, it is suggested by the person himself, to invite an answer from God.

e. The end of the verse is corrupt. Vulg. paraphrases.

f. 'Geba' cf. 13:16; 'Gibeah' Hebr. 'the camp' Greek.

'Call the roll and see who has left us'. So they called the roll, and Jonathan and his armour-bearer were missing.

2:28+:14:3 Saul then said to Ahijah, 'Bring the ephod'; for it was he who carried the 18
ephod in the presence of Israel.[g] •But while Saul was speaking to the priest, 19
the turmoil in the Philistine camp grew worse and worse; and Saul said to the
priest, 'Withdraw your hand'.[h] •Then Saul and the whole force with him formed 20
up and advanced to where the fighting was, where men were all drawing their
Jg 7:23 swords on each other in wild confusion. •The Hebrews who had earlier taken 21
29:4 service with the Philistines and had accompanied them into camp, themselves
defected[i] to the Israelites with Saul and Jonathan. •All the Israelites in hiding 22
in the highlands of Ephraim, hearing that the Philistines were on the run, chased
after them and joined in the fight. •That day Yahweh gave Israel the victory, 23
and the battle spread beyond Beth-horon.[j]

Jonathan defies Saul's orders

Saul had imposed a great fast[k] that day, laying the people under an oath, 24
'Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, before I have had my revenge
on my enemies!' So no one so much as tasted food.

Now there was a honeycomb lying on the ground;[l] •but when the people 25
26
came up to the honeycomb, though the swarm had gone[m] no one put a hand
to his mouth for fear of the oath. •But Jonathan, not having heard his father lay 27
the oath on the people, put out the end of the stick he was holding, thrust it
into the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth; then his eyes brightened.
But one of the men spoke up. 'Your father' he said 'has bound the people with 28
a strict oath to the effect that anyone who eats food today will be accursed.'[n]
Jonathan replied, 'My father has done the nation a disservice. See how much 29
brighter my eyes are now that I have eaten this mouthful of honey. •By the same 30
token, if the people had eaten their fill of the booty they took from the enemy
today, would not the defeat of the Philistines have been all the greater?'

The people commit a ritual fault

Jos10:10-12 They struck at the Philistines that day from Michmash as far as Aijalon 31
until the people were utterly weary. •They flung themselves on the booty and, 32
Lv 1:5+ taking sheep, oxen and calves, slaughtered them there on the ground and ate
them with the blood. •News of this came to Saul. 'Look,' they said 'the people 33
are sinning against Yahweh, eating with the blood.' At which he replied to those
who brought the news,[o] 'Roll me a large stone here'.[p] •Then he said, 'Scatter 34
through the people and say to them, "Let each man bring me his ox or his sheep;
slaughter them here and eat, not sinning against Yahweh by eating with the
blood". All the people then brought what each one had[q] that night, and they
Jg 6:24 slaughtered them there. •Saul built an altar to Yahweh; it was the first altar 35
he had built to Yahweh.

The guilt of Jonathan is discovered, but he is saved by the people

Saul said, 'Let us go down under cover of darkness and pursue and plunder 36
the Philistines until dawn; we shall not leave one of them alive'. 'Do whatever
you think right' they replied. But the priest said, 'Let us approach God here'.[r]
Saul consulted God, 'Shall I go down and pursue the Philistines? Will you 37
28:6 give them into Israel's power?' But he gave him no reply that day. •Then Saul 38
said, 'Come forward, all you leaders of the people; consider carefully where
today's sin may lie; •for as Yahweh lives who gives victory to Israel, even if it 39
be in Jonathan my son, he shall be put to death'. And not one of all the people
Jos 7:14 answered him. •Then to all Israel he said, 'Stand on one side, and I and 40
Jonathan my son will stand on the other'. And the people replied to Saul, 'Do
Sl 33:3; 45:10 as you think right'. •Then Saul said, 'Yahweh, God of Israel, why did you not 41
answer your servant to-day? If the fault lies on me or on my son Jonathan,

O Yahweh, God of Israel, give Urim: if the fault lies on your people Israel, give Ac 1:26
42 Thummim.'[g] Jonathan and Saul were indicated and the people went free. •Saul
said, 'Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan'; and Jonathan was
indicated.
43 Saul then said to Jonathan, 'Tell me what you have done'. Jonathan said,
'I only ate a mouthful of honey off the end of the stick I was holding. Here I am.
44 I am ready to die.' •Saul said, 'May God do this to me and more if you do not Rt1:17+
45 die, Jonathan'. •But the people said to Saul, 'Must Jonathan die after winning
this great victory for Israel? Never let it be so! As Yahweh lives, not one hair
of his head shall fall to the ground, for his deeds today have been done with
the help of God.' And so the people ransomed[t] Jonathan and he was not put
to death.
46 Saul decided not to pursue the Philistines, and the Philistines returned to
their own territory.

Summary of Saul's reign[u]

47 Saul consolidated his rule over Israel and fought against all his enemies 2 S 1:22
everywhere: against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, Beth-rehob, the king of 2 S 8:2f; 10:6f
48 Zobah, the Philistines; wherever he turned he was victorious.[v] •He did great 15
deeds of valour; he defeated the Amalekites and delivered Israel from the power
of their plunderers.
49 The sons of Saul were: Jonathan, Ishvi[w] and Malchishua. The names of his 31:2
50 two daughters were: the elder, Merab, and the younger, Michal. •The name 18:17f,20f
of Saul's wife was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of his army
51 commander was Abner son of Ner; he was Saul's uncle. •Kish the father of 9:1
Saul, and Ner the father of Abner were the sons of Abiel.
52 There was fierce war against the Philistines throughout Saul's lifetime. Any
strong man or man of valour that caught Saul's eye he recruited into his service.[x]

The holy war against the Amalekites[a]

27:8
Nb 31:1
1 **15** Samuel said to Saul, 'I am the man whom Yahweh sent to anoint you 14:48
king over his people, over Israel, so now listen to the words of Yahweh.
2 Thus speaks Yahweh Sabaoth, "I will repay what Amalek did to Israel when they Ex17:8-16 Dt25:17-19
3 opposed them on the road by which they came up out of Egypt. •Now, go and

g. Saul wishes to consult God before joining battle, cf. 30:7f and v. 37 of this chapter. A later scribe, thinking of Jg 8:27 where the *ephod* is an idolatrous symbol, changed '*ephod*' here to 'ark of God'.

h. The priest is about to draw lots. Saul stops him and goes out to battle without consulting the oracle.

i. 'themselves defected to' Greek.

j. 'Beth-horon' corr.; 'Beth-aven' Hebr. The Philistines are driven back the way they have come, cf. v. 31. A notable triumph: the highlands, the very heart of the kingdom, are cleared of the enemy.

k. 'Saul... fast' following Greek. This voluntary abstinence is a means of winning God's gift, victory.

l. Restored conjecturally.

m. 'the swarm had gone' conj.

n. The text adds 'and the people were exhausted', a gloss.

o. 'to those who brought the news' conj. 'here' Greek.

p. The stone is to serve as an altar, cf. 6:14; Jg 6:20; 13:19, thus making the slaughter a sacrificial rite, cf. Lv 17:1+.

q. 'what he had' Greek.

r. To consult the *ephod*, cf. 30:8.

s. This verse, restored in accordance with the versions, shows how the *ephod* was used for divination; it held two lots (small sticks, or dice?) called Urim and Thummim (the meaning of the words is uncertain), their import being determined according to convention. The one drawn out gave the divine answer—a simple 'yes' or 'no', cf. 23:10-12. The process was frequently a long one. The care of the sacred lots was reserved to the levitical priests, Nb 27:21; Dt 33:8. After the reign of David the practice was discontinued and never resumed, cf. Ezr 2:63 = Ne 7:65. But the name was still used for part of the high priest's vestment, cf. Ex 28:30; Lv 8:8, and Ex 28:6+.

t. Like some victim dedicated to Yahweh, Ex 13: 13-15; 34:20; Lv 27:27. But possibly the verb simply means 'to set free'.

u. A summary like that of 7:13-15 (Samuel) and 2 S 8 (David). Cf. also 2 S 3:2-5; 5:13-16; 20:23-26.

v. 'he was victorious' Greek; 'he acted wickedly' Hebr.

w. I.e. 'the man of Yahweh'. The same person is called Ishbaal, 'the man of the Master', in 1 Ch 8:33, and Ishbosheth, 'the man of shame', in the Hebr. of 2 S 2:8, etc. where 'shame' is substituted for 'Baal', the name of the Canaanite god.

x. The beginnings of a professional army as distinct from the national mass levy.

15 a. Ch. 15 makes no mention of Saul's first rejection, 13:8-15, and is not connected with the anti-royalist version of ch. 12, since it only condemns Saul and not the monarchical system. Nevertheless, it emphasises the opposition, inherent in the Israelite monarchy, between purely civil policy and the demands of Yahweh, an opposition revealed in the struggle between King and Prophet (Saul and Samuel, Achab and Elijah, Hezekiah and Isaiah, Zedekiah and Jeremiah).

Nb24:20 Jos6:17+ strike down Amalek; put him under the ban with all that he possesses. Do not spare him, but kill man and woman, babe and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey".'

Saul summoned the people and reviewed them at Telaim: two hundred 4
thousand foot soldiers (and ten thousand men of Judah). •Saul went to the city 5
Nb10:29+; 24:21 of Amalek and lay in ambush in the river bed. •Saul said to the Kenites, 'Go, 6
Ex17:8+ leave your homes among the Amalekites or I may destroy you with them, for you were friendly to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt'. So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

Saul then defeated the Amalekites, starting from Havilah in the direction of 7
Shur, which is to the east of Egypt. •He took Agag king of the Amalekites 8
alive and, executing the ban, put all the people to the sword. •But Saul and the 9
army spared Agag with the best of the sheep and cattle, the fatlings and lambs and all that was good. They did not want to put those under the ban; they only put under the ban what was poor and worthless.[b]

Saul is rejected by Yahweh

15:29 Gn6:6+ The word of Yahweh came to Samuel, •'I regret having made Saul king, 10 11
for he has turned away from me and has not carried out my orders'. Then Samuel was deeply moved, and all night long he cried out to Yahweh.

In the morning Samuel went to meet Saul; word was brought him that Saul 12
25:2 had gone to Carmel[c] to raise himself a monument, and had passed on again and gone down to Gilgal. •When Samuel reached Saul, Saul said to him, 'Blessed 13
may you be by Yahweh! I have carried out Yahweh's orders'. •But Samuel 14
replied, 'Then what is the meaning of this bleating of sheep in my ears, and the lowing of oxen I hear?' •Saul said, 'They have brought them from Amalek 15
because the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice them to Yahweh, your God; the rest we put under the ban'.

Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Stop! Let me tell you what Yahweh said to me 16
last night.' Saul said, 'Tell me'. •Samuel continued, 'Small as you may be in 17
your own eyes, are you not head of the tribes of Israel? Yahweh has anointed you king over Israel. •Yahweh sent you on a mission and said to you, "Go, put 18
these sinners, the Amalekites, under the ban and make war on them until they
Rm11:29 are exterminated". •Why then did you not obey the voice of Yahweh? Why did 19
you fall on the booty and do what is displeasing to Yahweh?' •Saul replied to 20
Samuel, 'But I did obey the voice of Yahweh. I went on the mission which Yahweh gave me; I brought back Agag king of the Amalekites; I put the Amalekites under the ban. •From the booty the people took the best sheep and 21
oxen of what was under the ban to sacrifice them to Yahweh your God in Gilgal.' •But Samuel replied:[d] 22

Pr 15:8;21:3 Ho3:4;6:6 Am 5:21-25+ Zc 10:2 Mt 12:7 Heb 10:9
'Is the pleasure of Yahweh in holocausts and sacrifices
or in obedience to the voice of Yahweh?
Yes, obedience is better than sacrifice,
submissiveness better than the fat of rams.
Rebellion is a sin of sorcery, 23
Jg 17:5 presumption a crime of teraphim.[e]

'Since you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has rejected you as king.'

Saul vainly asks for pardon[f]

Then Saul said to Samuel, 'I have sinned, for I have transgressed the 24
order of Yahweh and your directions, being afraid of the people and doing what they said. •Now, I pray you, forgive my sin; come back with me and I will 25
worship Yahweh.' •But Samuel answered Saul, 'I will not come back with you, 26
1K11:11,30f for you have rejected the word of Yahweh and he has rejected you as king of Israel'. •As Samuel turned to go away, Saul caught at the hem of his garment 27

28 and it tore, •and Samuel said to him, 'Today Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from you and given it to a neighbour of yours who is better than you'. 29 (And yet the glory of Israel will not lie or go back on his word, for he is not 30 a man to go back on his word.) •'I have sinned,' Saul said 'but please still show me respect in front of the elders of my people and in front of Israel, 31 and come back with me, so that I can worship Yahweh your God.'[g] •Samuel followed Saul back and Saul worshipped Yahweh.

28:16 Jr 18:1+ 2 S 7:15f 15:11 Nb 23:19

Agag's death and Samuel's departure

32 Then Samuel said, 'Bring me Agag the king of the Amalekites', and Agag 33 came to him reluctantly. 'Truly, death is a bitter thing'[h] he said. •Samuel said:

'As your sword has made women childless,
so shall your mother be made childless among women.'

Then Samuel butchered Agag before Yahweh at Gilgal.[i]

34 35 Samuel left for Ramah, and Saul went up home to Gibeah of Saul. •Samuel did not see Saul again to the day of his death;[j] Samuel was very sorry for Saul, but Yahweh regretted having made Saul king of Israel.

Is 10:29 Gn 6:6

III. SAUL AND DAVID

A. DAVID AT COURT

David is anointed[a]

1 16 Yahweh said to Samuel, 'How long will you go on mourning over Saul when I have rejected him as king of Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among 2 his sons.' •Samuel replied, 'How can I go? When Saul hears of it he will kill me.' Then Yahweh said, 'Take a heifer with you and say, "I have come to sacrifice 3 to Yahweh". •Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and then I myself will tell you what you must do; you must anoint to me the one I point out to you.'

1 Ch 11:3 Rt 4:17-22 Is 11:1 Lk 2:4 *1 K 1:39*

4 Samuel did what Yahweh ordered and went to Bethlehem. The elders of the town came trembling to meet him and asked, 'Seer, have you come with 5 good intentions towards us?' •'Yes,' he replied 'I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' He purified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

Jb 1:5

6 When they arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely Yahweh's 7 anointed one stands there before him', •but Yahweh said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see[b] as man sees; man looks at appearances but Yahweh looks at the heart'.

9:2; 10:23f Jb 10:4 Ps 147:10f Pr 15:11 Is 55:8-9 Jr 11:20+ 17:10; 20:12

b. 'poor and worthless' versions. Saul and the people have failed in their execution of the ban which should have fallen on all living things, even though their motive is not to deprive Yahweh of the best of the booty but to sacrifice it to him, v. 15. Saul acts in good faith, and in this lies his tragedy: his sin consists in choosing his individual way of honouring God, with a view to his own popularity. He seeks to compromise between Yahweh who has chosen him and the people who have acknowledged him as king; he has not declared for God alone.

c. A town to the S. of Hebron, cf. 25:2f. The modern Kermel, it lies on Saul's way from the Negeb to Gilgal.

d. Samuel does not condemn sacrificial practice as a whole, but obedience of the heart is what pleases God, not mere external ritual. To practise the second against God's will is to do homage to something that is not God, to be guilty of idolatry, a crime here suggested by 'sorcery' and the mention of *teraphim*, tutelary idols of houses and property, Gn 31:19,30f; 1 S 19:13. On consulting *teraphim* cf. Ez 21:21.

e. 'a crime of *teraphim*' Symmachus.

f. Vv. 24-28 seem to be an addition preluding the narrative of David's anointing, ch. 16.

g. There are no witnesses of the interview, and Saul's rejection does not become effective immediately (because the king has confessed his fault?). Samuel agrees to support Saul's authority by accompanying him to the sanctuary.

h. 'reluctantly' text uncertain. 'death is a bitter thing' following Greek; 'the bitterness of death is removed' Hebr. (in this reading, Agag believes he has been spared).

i. The ban is now enforced.

j. Though see 19:22-24 which records a different tradition.

16 a. The episode appears to derive from the prophetic tradition and remains unrelated to the subsequent history in which David is anointed at Hebron by the men of Judah, 2 S 2:4, and then by the elders of Israel, 2 S 5:3, without any further mention of the present anointing of which, according to 17:28, and despite 16:13, Eliab has no knowledge.

b. 'God sees' Greek.

Jesse then called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel, who said, 'Yahweh 8
has not chosen this one either'. •Jesse then presented Shammah, but Samuel said, 9
17:12 'Yahweh has not chosen this one either'. •Jesse presented his seven sons to 10
Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'Yahweh has not chosen these'. •He then 11
2 S 7:8 asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one
left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep'. Then Samuel said to Jesse,
'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes'. •Jesse had him sent 12
9:2
Gn 39:6 for, a boy[c] of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. Yahweh
2S14:25f said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one'. •At this, Samuel took the horn of 13
9:17
10:6 oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh
Jg3:10+; seized on David[d] and stayed with him from that day on. As for Samuel, he rose
9:9
Si 46:13 and went to Ramah.

David takes service with Saul[e]

Now the spirit of Yahweh had left Saul and an evil spirit from Yahweh[f] 14
filled him with terror. •Saul's servants said to him, 'Look, an evil spirit of God 15
is the cause of your terror. •Let our lord give the order, and your servants 16
who wait on you will look for a skilled harpist; when the evil spirit of God
troubles you, the harpist will play and you will recover.'[g] •Saul said to his 17
Si 11:2 servants, 'Find me a man who plays well and bring him to me'. •One of the 18
soldiers then spoke up. 'I have seen one of the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite'
he said; 'he is a skilled player, a brave man and a fighter, prudent in speech,
a man of presence, and Yahweh is with him.' •At this, Saul sent messengers to 19
Jesse, saying, 'Send me David your son who is with the sheep'. •Jesse took five[h] 20
loaves, a skin of wine and a kid, and sent them to Saul by David his son. •And so 21
David came to Saul and entered his service; Saul loved him greatly and David
became his armour-bearer. •Then Saul sent to Jesse saying, 'Let David enter 22
my service; he has won my favour'. •And whenever the spirit from God troubled 23
Saul, David took the harp and played; then Saul grew calm, and recovered, and
the evil spirit left him.

1 M 4:30 **Goliath defies the Israelite army**
Si 47:4

17 The Philistines mustered their troops for war; they assembled at Socoh, 1
which is a town of Judah, and pitched camp between Socoh and Azekah, in
2 S 23:9 Ephes-dammim. •Saul and the Israelites also mustered, pitching camp in the 2
Valley of the Terebinth, and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines.
These took their stand on the hills one side and the Israelites on the hills the 3
other side, with the valley between them.

One of their shock-troopers stepped out from the Philistine ranks; his name 4
2 S 21:19 was Goliath,[a] from Gath; he was six cubits and one span tall. •On his head was 5
a bronze helmet and he wore a breastplate of scale-armour; the breastplate
weighed five thousand shekels of bronze. •He had bronze greaves on his legs and 6
2 S 21:19 a bronze javelin across his shoulders. •The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's 7
beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron. A shield-
bearer walked in front of him.

17:23 He took his stand in front of the ranks of Israel and shouted, 'Why come 8
out and range yourselves for battle? Am I not a Philistine and are you not the
slaves of Saul? Choose a man and let him come down to me. •If he wins in a fight 9
with me and kills me, we will be your slaves; but if I beat him and kill him, you
shall become our slaves and be servants to us.' •The Philistine then said, 'I chal- 10
lenge the ranks of Israel today. Give me a man and we will fight in single combat.'
When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine they were dismayed 11
and terrified.

David arrives in the camp

16:10f David was the son of an Ephrathite from Bethlehem of Judah whose name 12
Rt 1:2+

was Jesse; Jesse had eight sons and, by Saul's time, he was old and well on in
13 years.[b] •The three eldest sons of Jesse followed Saul to the war. The names of
the three sons who went to the war were: the first-born Eliab, the second Abinadab
14 and the third Shammah. •David was the youngest; the three eldest followed Saul.
15 (David alternated between serving Saul and looking after his father's sheep at 2 S 7:8
16 Bethlehem.[c] •Morning and evening for forty days the Philistine advanced and
17 took his stand.) •Jesse said to David his son, 'Take your brothers this ephah of
18 roasted grain and these ten loaves, and hurry to your brothers' camp. •And take
these ten cheeses to their commanding officer;[d] ask after your brothers' health and
19 bring some token from them; •they are with Saul and all the Israelites in the
Valley of the Terebinth fighting the Philistines.'

20 David rose early in the morning and, leaving the sheep with someone to guard 2 S 7:8
them, took up his load and went off as Jesse had ordered him; he came to the
encampment just as the troops were leaving to take up battle stations, shouting
21 the war cry. •Israel and the Philistines drew up their lines facing one another.
22 David left the bundle in charge of the baggage guard, ran to the battle line and
went to ask his brothers how they were.

23 While he was talking to them, the shock-trooper (his name was Goliath, the
Philistine from Gath) came up from the Philistine ranks and made his usual 17:8-10
24 speech, and David heard it. •As soon as the Israelites saw this man, they all
25 ran away from him and were terrified. •The Israelites said, 'Have you seen this
man coming up now? He is coming to challenge Israel. The king will lavish
riches on the man who kills him and give him his daughter in marriage and 18:17
grant his father's House the freedom of Israel.'

26 Then David asked the men who were standing near him, 'What reward will
the man have who kills this Philistine and removes the disgrace from Israel? Who
is this uncircumcised Philistine who dares insult the armies of the living God?' 18:25; 31:4
Jos 5:9+
27 The people replied as before, 'That is how the man will be rewarded who kills Jg 15:18
28 him'. •Now Eliab his elder brother heard him talking to the men and his anger 2K 19:4,16
Is 37:4,17
flared up against David. 'Why have you come down here?' he said. 'Whom have 2 S 7:8
you left in charge of those few sheep out there in the wilderness? I know your
29 insolence and your wicked heart; you have come to watch the battle.' •David
30 retorted, 'What have I done? Must I not even speak?' •And he turned away from
him to address another and asked the same question; and the people answered
31 as before. •But David's words were noted and reported to Saul, who sent for
him.

David volunteers to accept the challenge

32 David said to Saul, 'Let no one lose heart on his account;[e] your servant will

c. 'a boy' conj.

d. 'The spirit of God' possesses David without external manifestation and in close association with the anointing: this is the grace bestowed on one consecrated. The name 'David' is an ancient semitic word for 'commander', 'military leader'.

e. David's early association with Saul is recounted in two traditions. According to one, David is summoned to court as a minstrel and becomes Saul's armour-bearer, 16:14-23, in which capacity he accompanies the king in the Philistine war, 17:1-11, and distinguishes himself in single combat, 17:32-53 (fusion of both traditions). According to the second, David is a young shepherd unknown to Saul; he visits his soldier brothers at the very moment the Philistine champion is gibing at the Israelites, 17:12-30. (v. 31 is a link-verse and the first tradition is then resumed, 17:32-53). Saul then summons the young hero and enlists him in his service, 17:55–18:2.

f. The spirit of Yahweh (cf. Jg 3:10+) leaves Saul, 15:23, and he is 'possessed' by an evil spirit which is said to be 'of God', vv. 15-16, cf. 18:10; 19:9, because the Israelite ascribed everything to God, the ultimate Cause. (Cf. the 'evil spirit' of Jg 9:23, the spirit of lies, 1 K 22:19-23, the spirit of giddiness, Is 19:14, the spirit of lethargy, Is 29:10). Knowing himself rejected by God and deserted by Samuel, the hot-tempered king suffers attacks of madness, 18:10f; 19:9f.

g. The ancients commonly used music either to summon the good spirit, cf. 10:5, or to expel the evil spirit.

h. 'five' conj.

17 a. 2 S 21:19 assigns the defeat of Goliath to one of David's warriors—the more ancient tradition, as it seems. Possibly the original tradition behind ch. 17 spoke only of David's victory over an unnamed opponent, 'the Philistine'.

b. 'in years' versions. The ancient Greek version omits vv. 12-13.

c. Editorial gloss inserted to harmonise the two traditions, see 16:14+.

d. Lit. 'commander of their thousand'.

e. Resumption of the first tradition (v. 32 follows on v. 11). The two traditions are then fused.

go and fight this Philistine'. •But Saul answered David, 'You cannot go and fight 33
the Philistine; you are only a boy and he has been a warrior from his youth'.
2 S 7:8 David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to look after the sheep for his father 34
Jg 14:6 Si 47:3 and whenever a lion or a bear came out and took a sheep from the flock, •I used 35
to follow him up and strike him down and rescue it from his mouth; if he turned
on me I seized him by the hair at his jaw and struck him down and killed him.
Your servant has killed both lion and bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall 36
be like one of them, for he has dared to insult the armies of the living God.
Lv 26:8 Dt 30:3-4 Pr 28:1 Yahweh who rescued me from the claws of lion and bear' David said 'will 37
rescue me from the power of this Philistine.' Then Saul said to David, 'Go, and
Yahweh be with you!'
Saul made David put on his own armour and put a bronze helmet on his 38
head and gave him a breastplate to wear, •and over David's armour he buckled 39
his own sword; but not being used to these things David found he could not
walk. 'I cannot walk with these,' he said to Saul 'I am not used to them.' So they
took them off again.[f]

David and Goliath

He took his staff in his hand, picked five smooth stones from the river bed, 40
put them in his shepherd's bag, in his pouch, and with his sling in his hand he
went to meet the Philistine. •The Philistine, his shield-bearer in front of him, 41
came nearer and nearer to David; •and the Philistine looked at David, and what 42
6:12 he saw filled him with scorn, because David was only a youth, a boy[g] of fresh
complexion and pleasant bearing. •The Philistine said to him, 'Am I a dog for 43
you to come against me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his
gods. •The Philistine said to David, 'Come over here and I will give your flesh 44
to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field'. •But David answered the 45
Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come
against you in the name of Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of the armies of Israel
that you have dared to insult. •Today Yahweh will deliver you into my hand 46
and I shall kill you; I will cut off your head, and this very day I will give your
dead body and the bodies of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the
Jos 4:24 wild beasts of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in
Ho 1:7 Israel, •and that all this assembly may know that it is not by sword or by spear 47
14:6 2K 19:34f Ps 33:16 that Yahweh gives the victory, for Yahweh is lord of the battle and he will
deliver you into our power.'
No sooner had the Philistine army started forward to confront David than 48
David left the line of battle and ran[h] to meet the Philistine. •Putting his hand 49
in his bag, he took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on the
forehead; the stone penetrated his forehead and he fell on his face to the ground.
Thus David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone and struck 50
the Philistine down and killed him. David had no sword in his hand. •Then David 51
ran and, standing over the Philistine, seized his sword and drew it from the
21:10 scabbard, and with this he killed him, cutting off his head.
The Philistines saw that their champion was dead and took to flight. •The 52
men of Israel and of Judah started forward, shouting their war cry, and pursued
the Philistines as far as the approaches of Gath and the gates of Ekron. The
Philistine wounded lay all along the road from Shaaraim as far as Gath[i] and
Ekron. •From their determined pursuit of the Philistines the Israelites returned 53
21:10;31:9 and plundered their camp. •And David took the Philistine's head and brought 54
it to Jerusalem; the man's armour he kept in his own tent.[j]

David the conqueror of Goliath is presented to Saul[k]

When Saul saw David going to engage the Philistine he said to Abner, his 55
army commander, 'Abner, whose son is that boy?' 'On your life, O king,' Abner
replied 'I do not know.' •So the king said, 'Find out whose son the lad is'. 56

When David came back after killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the Philistine's head in his hand. •Saul asked him, 'Whose son are you, young man?' David replied, 'The son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem'.

18 After David had finished talking to Saul, Jonathan's soul became closely bound to David's and Jonathan came to love him as his own soul.[a] •Saul kept him by him from that day forward and would not let him go back to his father's house. •Jonathan made a pact with David to love him as his own soul; he took off the cloak he was wearing and gave it to David, and his armour too, even his sword, his bow and his belt.[b] •Whenever David went out, on whatever mission Saul sent him, he was successful, and Saul put him in command of the fighting men; he stood well in the people's eyes and in the eyes of Saul's officers too. 19:1-7:20; 23:16-18; 2 S 1:26; 9:1

The first stirrings of jealousy in Saul[c]

On their way back, as David was returning after killing the Philistine, the women came out to meet King Saul from all the towns of Israel, singing and dancing to the sound of tambourine and lyre and cries of joy; •and as they danced the women sang: Ex 15:20f; Jg 5:11:34; Jdt 15:12

'Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands.' 21:12; 29:5; Sl 47:6

Saul was very angry; the incident was not to his liking. 'They have given David the tens of thousands,' he said 'but me only the thousands; he has all but the kingship now.' •And Saul turned a jealous eye on David from that day forward.

On the following day an evil spirit from God seized on Saul and he fell into a fit of frenzy while he was in his house. David was playing the harp as on other days and Saul had his spear in his hand. •Saul brandished the spear; 'I am going to pin David to the wall' he said. But David twice evaded him.[d] 16:14+ ⇨19:9-10; 26:8

Saul feared David, for Yahweh was with him but had turned away from Saul. So Saul dismissed him from his presence, making him commander of a thousand; he marched at the head of the people. •In all his enterprises David was successful, and Yahweh was with him. •And seeing how well he succeeded, Saul was frightened of him. •But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he was their leader in all their exploits. Gn 39:2; 2 S 5:2

David's marriage[e]

Saul said to David, 'Here is my elder daughter Merab; I will give her to you in marriage; but you must serve me bravely and fight the battles of Yahweh'—for Saul had made up his mind, 'Let it be not my hand that strikes him down, but the hand of the Philistines!' •David replied to Saul, 'Who am I and what is my ancestry[f] and my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?' But when the time came for Merab the daughter of Saul to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah. 14:49; 17:25; 2 S 7:18; 2 S 21:8

f. The translation follows the Greek.

g. 'a boy' conj., cf. 16:12.

h. 'left the line of battle and ran' conj.; 'ran towards the line of battle' Hebr.

i. 'Gath' Greek. 'from Shaaraim' conj.

j. The verse has been added: Jerusalem was captured somewhat later, 2 S 5:6-9, and David had no tent of his own.

k. Same tradition as 17:12-30. David is still unknown to Saul. This is at variance with 16:14-23 and 17:55-18:5 is therefore omitted, like 17:12-31, from the ancient Greek version.

18 a. The friendship of David and Jonathan is an attractive feature of the subsequent bitter episodes; it lasts till Jonathan's death.

b. The accoutrement is part of the man, cf. 24:5-6; 2 K 2:13f; Rt 3:9; Jonathan's gesture thus expresses his devotion for David, v. 1.

c. The text of this chapter is overloaded: v. 6 is unnecessary, as also vv. 10-11 (first attempt on David's life), vv. 17-19 (thwarted marriage with Merab), v. 30 (David's triumph, repeating vv. 14-16). The ancient Greek version omits these doublets.

d. Vv. 10-11, belonging to the same tradition as 16:14-23, anticipate the episode of 19:8-10 and here interrupt the narrative.

e. Vv. 17-19 are ill-assorted with what follows; with the exception of the gloss in v. 21 there is no allusion in vv. 20-27 to any previous broken engagement, and vv. 20-27 develop the ideas of vv. 17-19 concerning Michal.

f. 'my ancestry' conj.

14:49;25:44 2 S 3:13 Now Michal the daughter of Saul fell in love with David. When Saul heard 20
this he was pleased. •He thought, 'Yes, I will give her to him, but she will prove 21
a snare for him and the hand of the Philistines will strike him'. (Twice[g] Saul said
to David, 'Now you shall be my son-in-law'.) •Saul then gave this command to 22
his servants, 'Talk secretly to David and say, "Look, the king is pleased with you
and all his servants love you; it is time you became the king's son-in-law" '.
The king's servants repeated these words in David's ear, and David replied, 23
'Does it strike you as an easy thing for me to become the king's son-in-law, poor
and of humble position as I am?' •Saul's servants then reported back what 24
David had said. •Saul replied, 'Tell David this, "The king desires no settlement[h] 25
17:26+ except a hundred foreskins[i] of the Philistines, for vengeance on the king's
enemies" '. Saul was planning that David should fall by the hand of the Philistines.

His servants brought this message to David and he was delighted at the 26
thought of becoming the king's son-in-law. The time had not yet expired •when 27
David rose and set off, he and his men, and killed two hundred of the Philistines.
David brought back their foreskins and counted them out before the king so that
he could be the king's son-in-law. Saul then gave him his daughter Michal in
marriage.

Saul now realised that Yahweh was with David, and that all the House of 28
Israel[j] loved him; •then Saul feared David all the more and became David's 29
lasting enemy. •The leaders of the Philistines went out to battle, but every time 30
they went out to battle David was more successful than all Saul's officers, and
his name was held in great honour.

18:1;20:1f **Jonathan intervenes on behalf of David[a]**

19 Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants of his intention to kill 1
David. Now Jonathan, Saul's son, held David in great affection; •and so 2
Jonathan warned David; 'My father Saul is looking for a way to kill you,' he
said 'so be on your guard tomorrow morning; hide away in some secret place.
Then I will go out and keep my father company in the fields where you are hiding, 3
and will talk to my father about you; I will find out what the situation is and
let you know.'

So Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father; he said, 'Let not the king 4
sin against his servant David, for he has not sinned against you, and what
he has done has been greatly to your advantage. •He took his life in his hands 5
when he killed the Philistine, and Yahweh brought about a great victory for
all Israel. You saw it yourself and rejoiced; why then sin against innocent blood
in killing David without cause?' •Saul was impressed by Jonathan's words and 6
took an oath, 'As Yahweh lives, I will not kill him'. •Jonathan called David 7
and told him all these things. Then Jonathan brought him to Saul, and David
attended on him as before.

B. THE FLIGHT OF DAVID

=18:10-11 **Saul's attempt on David's life**

War broke out again and David went out to fight against the Philistines; he 8
16:14+ inflicted a great defeat on them and they fled before him. •An evil spirit from 9
Yahweh came on Saul while he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand;
25:44;26:8 David was playing the harp. •Saul tried to pin David to the wall with his spear, 10
but he avoided Saul's thrust and the spear stuck in the wall. David fled and
made good his escape.

20:1f **David is saved by Michal**

Ps 59 That same night[b] •Saul sent agents to watch David's house, intending to kill 11
him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, 'If you do not escape

12 tonight, you will be a dead man tomorrow'. •Then Michal let David down
through the window, and he made off and took to flight and so escaped. Jos 2:15
13 Michal then took the teraphim, laid it on the bed, put a tress of goats' hair on 15:22+
14 its head and covered it with a garment. •When Saul sent the agents to arrest Gn 31:19
15 David, she said, 'He is ill'. •Saul, however, sent the agents back to see David,
16 saying, 'Bring him to me on his bed for me to kill him'. •So they went in, and
17 there on the bed was the teraphim with the tress of goats' hair on its head! •Then
Saul said to Michal, 'Why have you deceived me like this and let my enemy go,
and so make his escape?' Michal answered Saul, 'He said to me, "Let me go
or I will kill you" '.

Saul and David at Ramah with Samuel[c]

18 So David fled and made his escape, and he went to Samuel at Ramah and told
him all that Saul had done to him; he and Samuel went and lived in the huts.[d]
19 Word was brought to Saul, 'David is in the huts at Ramah'. •Saul accordingly 10:5+,10+
20 sent agents to capture David; when they saw[e] the company of prophets prophesy- Nb 11:25
ing, and Samuel there as their leader, the spirit of God came on Saul's agents, 2K 1:9-14
21 and they too fell into an ecstasy. •Word of this was brought to Saul and he sent
other agents, and they, too, fell into an ecstasy; Saul then sent a third group of
agents, and they fell into an ecstasy too.
22 He then went to Ramah himself and, coming to the well of the threshing-floor
on the bare hill,[f] asked, 'Where are Samuel and David?' And someone answered,
23 'Why, they are in the huts at Ramah'. •He went on from there to the huts at
Ramah and the spirit of God came on him too, and he went on his way in an ecsta-
24 sy until he came to the huts at Ramah. •He too stripped off his clothes and he too
fell into an ecstasy in the presence of Samuel, and falling down lay there naked
all that day and night. Hence the saying: Is Saul one of the prophets too? 10:10-12

Jonathan helps David to return[a] 18:1;19:1-7, 11-17

1 **20** David then fled from the huts at Ramah.[b] And he went and talked to
Jonathan, 'What have I done, what is my guilt and what is my sin
2 against your father that he is seeking my life?' •He answered, 'You must not think
that. He will not kill you. Look, my father does nothing, important or unimpor-
tant, without confiding it to me; why should he hide this from me? It is not true.'
3 But David swore this solemn oath, 'Your father knows very well that I enjoy your
favour, and thinks, "Jonathan must not come to know of this or he will be
grieved". But as Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, there is only a step
between me and death.'
4 Then Jonathan said to David, 'What do you want me to do for you?'
5 David replied, 'Look, tomorrow is New Moon[c] and I should be sitting at table
6 with the king, but you must let me go and hide in the fields till evening.[d] •If your
father notices my absence, you must say, "David asked urgent leave of me to
hurry off to Bethlehem, his own town, because they are holding the annual

g. In Merab's and then in Michal's case.

h. I.e. a *mohar*, the sum paid by the bridegroom to the father of his future bride.

i. To assist reckoning of the enemy dead some part of their bodies was sometimes cut off. The foreskins prove that those killed are uncircumcised, i.e. are Philistine.

j. 'all... Israel' Greek; 'Michal, Saul's daughter' Hebr.

19 a. This episode does not square with the narrative of ch. 20 where Jonathan as yet knows nothing, v. 2, of his father's vicious intentions. There are two different traditions telling of Jonathan's intervention on behalf of David.

b. David's wedding night; the narrative is connected with 18:27 rather than with what immediately precedes.

c. Independent and probably late narrative.

d. Where the prophets lived, cf. 2 K 6:1f, in Ramah or its neighbourhood. Or possibly the name of a district in Ramah: 'in Navith' or 'in Naioth'.

e. 'when they saw' versions.

f. 'of the threshing-floor on the bare hill' according to Greek.

20 a. Narrative from a tradition different from 19:1-7 and parallel with 19:11-17. In one case it is Saul's daughter, in the other his son, who saves David.

b. Editorial link; in the narrative that follows David has not yet left Saul.

c. Celebrated by a religious feast, Is 1:13-14; Ho 2:13; Am 8:5; cf. 2 K 4:23, with sacrifice, Nb 10:10; 28:11f.

d. With the Greek we omit 'on the third (day)' after 'till evening'.

sacrifice there for all the clan". •If he says, "Very well", your servant is safe, but 7
if he is angry, you may be sure he is set on evil. •Do this favour for your servant, 8
since you have united yourself with him by a pact in Yahweh's name. But if
I am guilty, then kill me yourself—why take me to your father?' •Jonathan 9
replied, 'You must not think that. If I had certain knowledge that my father
was set on bringing evil upon you, would I not tell you?' •David then said to 10
Jonathan, 'Who will let me know if your father gives you a harsh answer?'[e]

'Come,' Jonathan said to David 'let us go out into the fields.' So the pair of 11
them went out into the fields. •Then Jonathan said to David, 'Yahweh the God 12
of Israel be witness! I will sound my father this time tomorrow; if all is well
Rt1:17+ as concerns David and I do not then inform him, •then may Yahweh do this to 13
Jonathan and more! If my father thinks fit to do you some harm, I will inform
you and send you away, and you will go unharmed. And may Yahweh be with
you as he used to be with my father.[f] •If I am still alive, show me Yahweh's own 14
kindness; if I die, •never withdraw your own kindness from my House. When 15
Yahweh cuts off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth, •let 16
2S9:21:7 not the name of Jonathan be cut off with the House of Saul, or Yahweh will
demand a reckoning of David.'[g] •Once again Jonathan swore the solemn oath[h] 17
to David because he loved him as his own soul.

Jonathan said to him, 'Tomorrow is New Moon; your absence will be noticed, 18
for your place will be empty. •The day after tomorrow your absence will be very 19
marked, and you must go to the place where you hid on the day of the deed,[i]
and you must stay beside the heap of stones there. •For my part, the day after 20
tomorrow I shall be shooting arrows towards it as though at a target. •Then 21
I shall send a servant to say, "Go and find the arrow". If I say to the servant,
"The arrow is this side of you, get it", come by all means, because it will be safe
for you and there will be nothing to fear as sure as Yahweh lives. •But if I say 22
20:37 to the youth, "The arrow is ahead of you", then be off, for Yahweh himself sends
you away. •And as regards the agreement we made, you and I, why, Yahweh is 23
witness between us for ever.'

So David hid in the fields; New Moon came and the king sat down to his 24
meal. •He sat in his usual place, the place by the wall, with Jonathan seated 25
facing him and Abner sitting next to Saul; but David's place was empty. •Saul 26
said nothing that day, thinking, 'Something has happened; he is unclean'.[j] •On 27
the day after New Moon, the second day, David's place was still empty. •Saul 28
said to his son Jonathan, 'Why did not the son of Jesse come to the meal either
yesterday or today?' •Jonathan answered Saul, 'David asked urgent leave of 29
me to go to Bethlehem. "Please let me go," he said "for we are holding the clan
sacrifice in the town and my brothers have ordered me to attend. So now if
you approve of this, let me take my leave and see my brothers." That is why he
has not come to the king's table'.

Then Saul's anger flared up against Jonathan and he said to him, 'You son 30
of a wanton! Do I not know that you are in league with the son of Jesse to your
own disgrace and the disgrace of your mother's nakedness? •As long as the son 31
of Jesse lives on the earth neither your person nor your royal rights are secure.
Now, send and bring him to me; he is condemned to death.' •Jonathan answered 32
Saul his father and said, 'Why should he die? What has he done?' •But Saul 33
brandished his spear at him to strike him down, and Jonathan knew then that
his father had already made up his mind[k] that David should die. •Hot with 34
anger Jonathan rose from the table and took no food that second day of the
New Moon, being grieved on David's account because his father had insulted him.

Next morning Jonathan went out into the fields for the agreed meeting with 35
David, taking a young servant with him. •He said to his servant, 'Run and find 36
the arrows I am going to shoot', and the servant ran while Jonathan shot an arrow
ahead of him. •When the servant reached the place where Jonathan had shot 37
20:22 the arrow, Jonathan shouted after him, 'Is not the arrow ahead of you?' •Again 38

Jonathan shouted after the servant, 'Be quick, hurry, do not stand about'.
39 Jonathan's servant picked up the arrow and brought it back to his master. •The
servant suspected nothing; only Jonathan and David knew what was meant.
40 Jonathan then gave his weapons to his servant and said, 'Go and carry them
41 to the town'. •When the servant went off, David rose from beside the hillock
and fell with his face to the ground and bowed down three times. Then they
42 kissed each other and both shed many tears.[l] •Then Jonathan said to David,
'Go in peace. And as regards the oath that both of us have sworn in the name 2S9:1;21:7
of Yahweh, may Yahweh be witness between you and me, between your descend-
1 43 ants and mine for ever.'[m] **21** David then rose and left, and Jonathan went
back to the town.

David and the priest at Nob

2 1 David went to Nob,[a] to Ahimelech the priest.[b] Ahimelech came out trembling Is 10:32 Mk 2:26
3 2 to meet David and said, 'Why are you alone and no one with you?' •David replied
to Ahimelech the priest, 'The king has given me an order and said to me, "Let
no one know anything of the mission I am sending you on, nor of the order I am
giving you". As regards my soldiers, I have arranged to meet them at such and
4 3 such a place.[c] •Meanwhile, if you have five loaves of bread to hand, give them
5 4 to me, or whatever there is.' •The priest replied to David, 'I have no ordinary Ex 25:30 Lv24:5-9
bread to hand; there is only consecrated bread[d]—provided your soldiers have ↗Mt 12:3-4p
kept themselves from women?'
6 5 David replied to the priest, 'Certainly, women are forbidden us, as always
when I set off on a campaign. The soldiers' things are pure. Though this is a
profane journey, they are certainly pure today as far as their things are con-
7 6 cerned.'[e] •The priest then gave him what had been consecrated, for the only
bread there was the bread of offering which is taken away from the presence of
Yahweh to be replaced by warm bread when it is removed.
8 7 Now one of Saul's servants happened to be there that day, detained in the Ps 52
presence of Yahweh; his name was Doeg the Edomite and he was the chief of 22:9f
Saul's guardsmen.[f]
9 8 David then said to Ahimelech, 'Have you no spear or sword here to hand?
I did not bring either my sword or my weapons with me, because the king's
10 9 business was pressing.' •The priest replied, 'The sword of Goliath the Philistine 17:51,54; 31:10
whom you killed in the Valley of the Terebinth is over there wrapped up in
a cloth behind the ephod;[g] if you wish to take it, do so, for there is no other here'.
David said, 'There is none like it; give it to me'.

David with the Philistines[h]

11 10 That day David left, fleeing from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath. Ps 34:56

e. The question presupposes that a meeting would be dangerous. The answer is given in v. 18ff. Vv. 11-17 are an addition anticipating the passing of Saul's authority to David.

f. Vv. 12-13 corr.

g. Vv. 14-16: text badly corrupted, restored with help of Greek.

h. 'swore' Greek; 'made (David) swear' Hebr.

l. Reference to an unrecorded episode. The text of vv. 19-20 is uncertain.

j. According to Lv 15:16; Dt 23:11, an 'accident', an involuntary pollution, makes a man unclean till evening.

k. Lit. 'it was already decided on his father's part' Greek.

l. Lit. 'wept copiously' conj. Text uncertain.

m. Vv 40-42 have been added: there is no point in the arrow stratagem unless David and Jonathan cannot meet.

21 a. On the eastern slope of Mt. Scopus, E. of Jerusalem, then still in Canaanite hands; a traveller from Benjamin to Judah had to by-pass it. The episode prepares for 22:9-23.

b. A descendant of Eli, 22:9, and brother of (or possibly to be identified with) Ahijah, 14:3. The priests of Shiloh had fled to Nob after the disaster of ch. 4.

c. Following Greek.

d. The loaves of offering. They were reserved for the priests, Lv 24:5-9. Exception to this law was admitted in the time of David, but ritual purity was essential.

e. Difficult verse. We adopt this interpretation: though the journey had no religious purpose, David and his companions behaved as on a military expedition for which continence was a religious obligation, cf. Dt 23:11; their 'things' (euphemism) are pure.

f. Lit. 'runners' conj., cf. 22:17.

g. This *ephod* is apparently not the *ephod* from which lots were drawn, 2:28+, but possibly an emblem of the divinity, like Gideon's *ephod*, Jg 8:27.

h. Independent tradition of David's flight; it anticipates the narrative of ch. 27 and, with a touch of humour, portrays David's coming.

But the servants of Achish said, 'Is not this David, the king of the country? 12/11
Was it not of him they sang in the dance:

18:7;29:5 "Saul has killed his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands"?'

David pondered these words and became very frightened of Achish the king 13/12
of Gath. •When their eyes were on him he played the madman and, when they 14/13
held him, feigned lunacy. He would drum[t] on the doors of the gate and let his
spittle run down his beard.

Achish said to his servants, 'You can see this man is mad. Why bring him 15/14
to me? •Have I not enough madmen without your bringing me this one to weary 16/15
me with his antics? Is he to join my household?'

C. DAVID THE OUTLAW

David begins his wanderings

2 S 23:13 Ps 63 Mi 1:15 22 David left there and and took refuge in the Cave of Adullam;[a] his brothers 1
and all his father's family heard of it and joined him there. •All the op- 2
pressed, those in distress, all those in debt, anyone who had a grievance,
gathered round him and he became their leader. There were about four
hundred men with him.

David went from there to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, 3
'Allow my father and mother to stay with you[b] until I know what God intends
to do for me'. •He left them[c] with the king of Moab and they stayed with him 4
all the time that David was in the stronghold.

But the prophet Gad[d] said to David, 'Do not stay in the stronghold; go 5
and make your way into the land of Judah.' So David went away and came to
the forest of Hereth.

The massacre of the priests of Nob

Ps 52 Saul came to hear that David and the men with him had been discovered. 6
Saul was at Gibeah, seated under the tamarisk on the high place, spear in hand,
with his officers standing round him. •'Listen, men of Benjamin,' Saul said to 7
8:14 his officers standing round him, 'is the son of Jesse ready to give you all fields
and vineyards and to make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders
of hundreds •that you all conspire against me? No one told me when my son 8
made a pact with the son of Jesse; none of you felt sorry[e] for me or told me when
my son incited my servant to become my enemy, as is now the case.'

21:2-10 Doeg the Edomite then spoke up—he was standing near Saul's officers: 9
'I saw the son of Jesse come to Nob,' he said 'to Ahimelech son of Ahitub.
This man consulted Yahweh for him, gave him provisions and also the sword 10
of Goliath the Philistine.' •Then the king sent and summoned the priest Ahimelech 11
son of Ahitub and his whole family, the priests of Nob; they all came to the king.

Saul said, 'Now listen, son of Ahitub'. He answered, 'I am here, my lord'. 12
'Why have you conspired against me,' Saul said 'you and the son of Jesse, 13
giving him bread and a sword and consulting God on his behalf, for him to rebel
against me as is now the case?' •Ahimelech answered the king, 'Who among all 14
2 S 23:23 your servants is as faithful as David, son-in-law to the king, captain[f] of your
bodyguard, honoured in your household? •Was today the first time I ever 15
consulted God on his behalf? Far be it from me to do otherwise! Let not the
king bring any charge against his servant or against his whole family, for your
servant knew nothing whatever of the whole affair.' •But the king answered, 16
'Most surely you shall die, Ahimelech, you and your whole family'.

2:31 33 The king said to the guardsmen who were standing beside him, 'Step forward 17
and put the priests of Yahweh to death, for they too have supported David;

they knew he was making his escape yet did not tell me'. But the king's servants
18 would not lift a hand to strike the priests of Yahweh. •The king then said to
Doeg, 'You step forward and strike the priests'. Doeg the Edomite stepped
forward and struck the priests himself, that day killing eighty-five men who wore
19 the linen ephod. •As for Nob, the town of the priests, Saul put it to the sword, 2:18+
men and women, children and infants, cattle and donkeys and sheep.
20 One son only of Ahimelech son of Ahitub escaped. His name was Abiathar, 23:6
21 and he fled away to join David •and told him that Saul had slaughtered the
22 priests of Yahweh. •David said to Abiathar, 'I knew that day, when Doeg the
Edomite was there, he would be sure to inform Saul. I am responsible[g] for the
23 death of all your kinsmen. •Stay with me, have no fear, for he who seeks your life
seeks mine too; you will be safe with me.'[h]

David at Keilah

1 23 They brought the news to David, 'The Philistines are fighting against Keilah
2 and are plundering the threshing-floors'. •David consulted Yahweh, 'Shall
I go and fight these Philistines?' Yahweh answered David, 'Go and fight the
3 Philistines and save Keilah'. •But David's men said to him, 'We go in fear here
in Judah; how much more, then, if we go to Keilah fight against to the Philistines?'
4 So David consulted Yahweh again and Yahweh replied, 'Be on your way; go
5 down to Keilah for I will give the Philistines into your power'. •So David and
his men went to Keilah and fought the Philistines, and carried off their cattle
and inflicted a great defeat on them. Thus David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.
6 Now when Abiathar son of Ahimelech took refuge with David, he went down to 22:20-23
Keilah with the ephod in his hand.[a] 2:28+
7 When word was brought to Saul that David had gone to Keilah he said, 'God
has delivered him[b] into my power, for he has walked into a trap by going into
8 a town with gates and bars'. •Saul called all the people to arms, to go down to
9 Keilah and besiege David and his men. •David, however, was aware that Saul
was plotting evil against him and said to Abiathar the priest, 'Bring the ephod'. 2:28+
10 David said, 'Yahweh, God of Israel, your servant has heard that Saul is preparing
11 to come to Keilah and destroy the town because of me. • [c] Will Saul come down
as your servant has heard? Yahweh, God of Israel, I beg you, let your servant
12 know.' Yahweh replied, 'He will come down'. •Then David asked, 'Will the
townsmen of Keilah hand me and my men over to Saul?' Yahweh replied, 'They
13 will hand you over'.[d] •At this, David made off with his men, about six hundred in
number; they left Keilah and went where they could. When the news was brought to
Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he abandoned the expedition.
14 David stayed in the wilderness, in the strongholds; he stayed in the mountains,
in the wilderness of Ziph;[e] Saul searched for him continually, but God did not
deliver him into his power.

David at Horesh. A visit from Jonathan[f]

15 David was afraid[g] because Saul had mounted an expedition to take his life.

i. 'would drum' Greek.

22 a. The caves of the desert of Judah have always provided refuge for outlaws. Adullam was a town in the Shephelah, or 'lowlands'.

b. 'stay' conj. David puts his parents out of reach of Saul's vengeance; according to Rt 1:4f; 4:21-22 he had family ties with Moab.

c. 'left' versions.

d. He was to remain David's 'seer', 2 S 24:11f.

e. 'felt sorry' Greek.

f. 'captain' Greek.

g. 'am responsible' following Greek.

h. Abiathar was to remain David's priest until the king's death. He was dismissed by Solomon, 1 K 2: 26-27.

23 a. Following Greek.

b. 'delivered' Greek.

c. Here the Hebr. has 'Will the townsmen of Keilah hand me over to him?' This is omitted by the Greek and is repeated in v. 12.

d. David has liberated the people of Keilah, but he makes them pay for it: he and his followers live at their expense, cf. 25:4-8+. But Keilah betrays him and appeals to the established authority. Cf. 23:19-20; 24:2; 26:1.

e. To the S. of Hebron. The verse links the Keilah episode, vv. 1-13, with that of Ziph, vv. 19-27.

f. Vv. 15-18 are part of the traditions relating to David's friendship with Jonathan, cf. especially 20: 11-17. Here the prophecy of David's accession is explicit, and Jonathan is content with second place, v. 17. Is this the tenor of the pact of v. 18, and was there a conspiracy of the two friends against Saul? Cf. 20:30; 22:8.

g. 'was afraid' conj.

18:1 At that time he was at Horesh in the wilderness of Ziph. •Jonathan son of 16
Saul set off and went to David at Horesh and encouraged him in the name of
God. •'Have no fear,' he told him 'for the hand of my father Saul will not reach 17
you; you are the one who is to reign over Israel, and I shall be second to you.
Saul my father is himself aware of this.' •And the two made a pact in the presence 18
of Yahweh. David stayed at Horesh and Jonathan went home.

David has a narrow escape from Saul

26:1f Ps 54 Now some men of Ziph went up to Saul at Gibeah. 'Is not David in hiding 19
among us' they said 'in the strongholds at Horesh, on the Hill of Hachilah
to the south of the wastelands? •Now whenever you wish to go down, O king, 20
do so; it will be our task to deliver him into the king's power.' •Saul replied, 21
'May you be blessed by Yahweh, for coming to help me. •Go now, make surer 22
still. Find out and note the place his footsteps hurry to,[h] for I have been told
he is very cunning. •Take careful notice of all the hiding places where he lurks, 23
and come back to me when you are certain. I will then come to you; and if he
is in the country, I will track him down through all the clans of Judah.'

So they set off and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Meanwhile, David and his 24
men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain to the south of the wastelands.
When Saul and his men set out in search of him, David was informed of it and 25
went down to the rock[i] that is in the wilderness of Maon. Saul heard of this
and pursued David into the wilderness of Maon. •Saul and his men proceeded 26
along one side of the mountain, David and his men along the other. David was
hurrying to get away from Saul, while Saul with his men was trying to outflank[j]
David and his men and so capture them, •when a messenger came to Saul and 27
said, 'Come at once, the Philistines have invaded the country'. •So Saul broke 28
off his pursuit of David and went to fight the Philistines. This is why that place
is called the Rock of Divisions.

=26 **David spares Saul**

24 David went away from there, and stayed in the strongholds of Engedi.[a] 1
When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, 'David is 2
now in the wilderness of Engedi'. •Saul thereupon took three thousand men 3
chosen from the whole of Israel and went in search of David and his men east
Ps 57 of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. •He came to the sheepfolds[b] along the route 4
where there was a cave, and went in to cover his feet.[c] Now David and his men
were sitting in the recesses of the cave; •David's men said to him, 'Today is the 5
day of which Yahweh said to you, "I will deliver your enemy into your power,
do what you like with him" '. David stood up and, unobserved, cut off the
border of Saul's cloak. •Afterwards David reproached himself for having cut off 6
the border of Saul's cloak.[d] •He said to his men, 'Yahweh preserve me from 7
9:26+;31:4 2 S 1:14 doing such a thing to my lord[e] and raising my hand against him, for he is the
anointed of Yahweh'. •David gave his men strict instructions, forbidding them 8
to attack Saul.

Saul then left the cave and went on his way. •After this, David too left the 9
cave and called after Saul, 'My lord king!' Saul looked behind him and David
bowed to the ground and did homage. •Then David said to Saul, 'Why do you 10
listen to the of men who say to you, "David means to harm you"? •Why, your 11
own eyes have seen today how Yahweh put you in my power in the cave
and how I refused[f] to kill you, but spared you. "I will not raise my hand
against my lord," I said "for he is the anointed of Yahweh." •O my father, see, 12
look at the border of your cloak in my hand. Since I cut off the border of your
cloak, yet did not kill you, you must acknowledge frankly that there is neither
malice nor treason in my mind. I have not offended against you, yet you hunt
me down to take my life. •May Yahweh be judge between me and you, and may 13
Yahweh avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be laid on you. •(As the old 14

proverb says: Wickedness goes out from the wicked, and my hand will not be
15 laid on you.)[g] •On whose trail has the king of Israel set out? On whose trail
are you in hot pursuit? On the trail of a dead dog! On the trail of a single flea! 2 S 9:8;16:9
16 May Yahweh be the judge and decide between me and you; may he take up my
cause and defend it and give judgement for me, freeing me from your power.'
17 When David had finished saying these words to Saul, Saul said, 'Is that your
18 voice, my son David?' And Saul wept aloud. •'You are a more upright man
than I,' he said to David 'for you have repaid me with good while I have repaid
19 you with evil. •Today you have crowned your goodness towards me[h] since
20 Yahweh had put me in your power yet you did not kill me. •When a man
comes on his enemy, does he let him go unmolested? May Yahweh reward
21 you for the goodness you have shown me today. •Now I know you will indeed 26:25
22 reign and that the sovereignty in Israel will be secure in your hands. •Now
swear to me by Yahweh that you will not cut off my descendants after me nor
23 blot out my name from my family.' •This David swore to Saul[i] and Saul went
home while David and his men with him went back to the stronghold.

The death of Samuel =28:3

1 25 Samuel died and the whole of Israel assembled to mourn him. They buried
him at his home in Ramah.

The story of Nabal and Abigail

David then set off and went down to the wilderness of Maon.[a]
2 Now there was a man in Maon whose business was at Carmel, a man of 15:12+
means who owned three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was engaged
3 in shearing his sheep at Carmel. •The man's name was Nabal and his wife's
Abigail. She was a woman of intelligence and beauty, but the man was brutish
and ill-mannered. He was a Calebite.
4 When David learned in the wilderness that Nabal was at his sheepshearing,
5 he sent ten soldiers, saying to them,[b] 'Go up to Carmel, visit Nabal and greet
6 him in my name. •You are to say this to my brother,[c] "Peace to you, peace
7 to your House, peace to all that is yours! •I hear that you have the shearers;
now your shepherds were with us and we did not molest them, nor did they find
8 anything missing all the time they were at Carmel. •Ask your soldiers and they
will tell you. May these soldiers win your favour, for we come on a day of
feasting. Whatever you have to hand please give to your servants and to David
your son." '
9 David's soldiers came and said all this to Nabal in David's name, and waited.
10 Then Nabal answered David's soldiers, 'Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse?
11 There are many servants nowadays who run away from their masters. •Am I to
take my bread and my wine[d] and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers
12 and give it to men who come from I do not know where?' •David's soldiers
turned away and went back the way they had come, and they told all this to David.
13 Then David said to his men, 'Every man buckle on his sword!' And they

h. 'make sure' with some MSS. 'hurry' following Greek.
i. Actually, from what follows, a rocky gorge.
j. 'outflank' Greek.

24 a. The 'Well of the Kid'; near the shore of the Dead Sea in the same latitude as Ziph.
b. Drystone enclosures to house flocks at night.
c. Euphemism for 'to ease oneself'.
d. David feels remorse (for the phrase, cf. 2 S 24: 10), for the garment is, as it were, the man himself, cf. 18:4, and to touch it is to lay hands on the person.
e. The text adds 'the anointed of Yahweh', probably a gloss.
f. 'I refused' Greek; 'and he said' Hebr.
g. Proverb inserted by a glossator: contact with the wicked brings misfortune.
h. 'you have crowned' (lit. 'you have made great') conj.
i. Vv. 21-23a, which foretell David's kingship, are an addition similar to those of 20:12-17; 41-42; 23:15-18.

25 a. 'Maon' Greek.
b. The shearing is a festive occasion. 2 S 13:23f. on which the rich sheep-owner should display his generosity. David takes advantage of this to demand the sum that nomads levy on neighbouring villages in return for the 'protection' they afford by abstaining from pillage and by restraining marauders, v. 16. This is called the 'law of brotherhood'.
c. 'to my brother' conj.
d. 'my wine' Greek.

buckled on their swords, and David buckled on his too; about four hundred men followed David while two hundred remained with the baggage.

Now one of the servants had brought the news to Abigail, Nabal's wife. 14
He said, 'David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he flared out at them. •Now these men were very good to us; they did not molest 15
us and we did not find anything missing all the time we were out in the fields while we were in their neighbourhood. •They were a protection to us night and 16
day, all the time we were in their neighbourhood minding the sheep. •Now bear 17
this in mind and see what you can do, for the ruin of our master and of his whole House is decided on, and he is so ill-tempered no one can say a word to him.'

Abigail hastily took two hundred loaves, two skins of wine, five sheep ready 18
prepared, five measures of roasted grain, a hundred bunches of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs and loaded them on donkeys. •She said to her servants, 19
'Go on ahead of me, I will follow you'—but she did not tell her husband.

As she was riding her donkey down behind a spur of the mountain, David 20
and his men happened to be coming down in her direction; and she met them. •Now David had decided, 'It was a waste of time guarding all this man's 21
property in the wilderness. Nothing was missing of all he had, and yet he
Rt1:17+ returned evil for good. •May God do this to David[e] and more if by morning 22
1K16:11 I leave one male[f] alive of all those who belong to him!' •As soon as Abigail 23
saw David she quickly dismounted from the donkey and, falling on her face before David, bowed down to the ground. •She fell at his feet and said, 'Let me 24
take the blame, my lord. Let your servant speak in your ear; listen to the words of your servant. •Pay no attention to this ill-tempered man Nabal for his 25
his nature is like his name; "Brute"[g] is his name and brutish his character. But I your servant did not see the soldiers my lord had sent. •And now, my lord, 26
as Yahweh lives and as your soul lives, by Yahweh who kept you from the crime of bloodshed and from taking vengeance with your own hand, may your enemies, and all those who plan evil against my lord become like Nabal.[h] •As 27
for the present your servant brings my lord, let it be given to the soldiers of my lord's own following. •I ask you to forgive your servant's fault, for then 28
Yahweh will grant my lord a lasting dynasty, for my lord is fighting the battles of Yahweh, and in all your life there is no wickedness to be found in you.
Should men set out to hunt you down and try to take your life, my lord's life 29
Ps 69:28 Is 4:3 Dn 12:1 Rv 3:5 will be kept close in the satchel of life[i] with Yahweh your God, while as for the lives of your enemies he will fling them away, as from a sling. •When Yahweh 30
has done for my lord all the good he has promised you, when he has made you
2S 3:10 prince over Israel, •you do not want to have any reason to grieve or feel remorse 31
at having shed blood needlessly and avenged yourself with your own hand. And when Yahweh has shown his goodness to my lord, then remember your servant.'
Pr 15:1 David said to Abigail, 'Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who sent you 32
to meet me today! •Blessed be your wisdom and blessed you yourself for 33
restraining me today from the crime of bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand! •But as Yahweh the God of Israel lives, he who kept me 34
from harming you, had you not hurried out to meet me, I swear that Nabal would not have had one male left alive by the morning.' •David then 35
accepted from her what she had brought him and said, 'Go home in peace; see, I have listened to you and have granted your request'.

Abigail returned to Nabal. He was holding a feast, a princely feast, in his 36
house; Nabal was in high spirits, and as he was very drunk she told him nothing at all till it was daylight. •In the morning then, when the wine had left him, 37
his wife told him all that had happened and his heart died inside him and he became like a stone. •About ten days later Yahweh struck Nabal, and he died. 38

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, 'Blessed be Yahweh who 39
has avenged the insult I received at Nabal's hands and has restrained his servant from doing evil; Yahweh has brought Nabal's wickedness down on his own head.'

40 David then sent Abigail an offer of marriage. •When David's servants came
to Abigail at Carmel, they said, 'David has sent us to you to take you to him
41 as his wife.' •She rose and bowed down her face to the ground. 'Consider your
42 servant a slave' she said 'to wash the feet of my lord's servants.' •Quickly
Abigail stood up again and mounted a donkey; followed by five of her slave-
girls she followed David's messengers and became his wife.
43 David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel and he kept them both as wives.
44 •Saul had given Michal his daughter, the wife of David, to Palti son of Laish, from Gallim. 18:20f; 19:10f

David spares Saul[a] 2 S 3:13f =24

1 26 Now the men of Ziph came to Saul at Gibeah. 'Is not David in hiding' 23:19f
2 they said 'on the Hill of Hachilah on the edge of the wastelands?' •So Saul
set off and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, accompanied by three thousand
3 men chosen from Israel to search for David in the wilderness of Ziph. •Saul
pitched camp on the Hill of Hachilah, which is on the edge of the wastelands,
by the roadside. David was then living in the wilderness and saw that Saul was
4 coming after him there. •Accordingly, David sent out spies and learned that Saul
5 had indeed arrived. •Setting off, David went to the place where Saul had pitched
camp. He saw the place where Saul and Abner son of Ner commander of his army
were lying. Saul was lying inside the camp with the troops bivouacking round him.
6 Speaking to Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah and brother of 1 Ch 2:16
Joab, David said, 'Who will come down with me into the camp of Saul?' Abishai
7 answered, 'I will go down with you'. •So in the dark David and Abishai made
their way towards the force, where they found Saul lying asleep inside the camp,
his spear stuck in the ground beside his head, with Abner and the troops lying
round him.
8 Then Abishai said to David, 'Today God has put your enemy in your
power; so now let me pin him to the ground with his own spear. Just one 18:11; 19:10
9 stroke! I will not need to strike him twice.' •David answered Abishai, 'Do not
kill him, for who can lift his hand against Yahweh's anointed and be without 9:26+; 31:4
10 guilt? •As Yahweh lives,' David said 'Yahweh himself will strike him down,
whether his time to die comes, or he goes out to battle and perishes then.
11 Yahweh forbid that I should raise my hand against Yahweh's anointed! But now
take the spear beside his head and the pitcher of water and let us go away.'
12 David took the spear and the pitcher of water from beside Saul's head, and
they made off. No one saw, no one knew, no one woke up; they were all asleep,
for a deep sleep from Yahweh had fallen on them. Gn 2:21; 15:12
13 David crossed to the other side[b] and halted on the top of the mountain a
14 long way off; there was a wide space between them. •David then called out to
the troops and to Abner son of Ner, 'Abner, will you not answer?' Abner replied,
15 'Who is that calling?' •David said to Abner, 'Are you not a man? Who is your
like in Israel? Why did you not guard your lord the king then? Some man of
16 the people came to kill the king your lord. •What you did was not well done.
As Yahweh lives, you all deserve to die since you did not guard your lord,
Yahweh's anointed. Look where the king's spear is now, and the pitcher of
water that was beside his head.'
17 Then Saul recognised David's voice and said, 'Is that your voice, my son
18 David?' David answered, 'It is my voice, my lord king. •Why does my lord
19 pursue his servant?' he said. 'What have I done? What evil am I guilty of? •May

e. 'David' Greek; 'David's enemies' Hebr.

f. Lit. 'who urinates against the wall'.

g. In Hebrew *nabal* means the 'fool' who respects neither God nor man; he is at once stupid, irreligious, malicious, cf. Is 32:5f.

h. Sharing his tragic end as foreseen by Abigail.

i. God takes care of his friends' lives as man would of a treasure. The image is similar to that of the 'book of life', Ps 69:28; Is 4:3; Dn 12:1; Rv 3:5.

26 a. The narrative of ch. 26 is very like that of ch. 24. We have here either two similar events to which oral, and then written, tradition has given the same contours; or else (more probably) a duplicate narrative, i.e. two similar ways of illustrating David's magnanimity and his respect for the sacred office of the king, 'the anointed of Yahweh', cf. 9:26+.

b. To the other side of the valley.

my lord king now listen to the words of his servant: if Yahweh himself has incited you against me, let him accept an offering; but if men have done it, may they be accursed before Yahweh, for now they have driven me out so that
Dt 7:6+ I have no share in the heritage of Yahweh. They have said, "Go and serve other gods".[c] •So now, do not let my blood fall to the ground out of the presence 20
of Yahweh;[d] for the king of Israel has gone out in quest of my life[e] as a man hunts a partridge on the mountains.'

Saul replied, 'I have sinned. Come back, my son David; I will never harm 21
you again since you have shown such respect for my life today. Yes, my course has been folly and my error grave.' •David answered, 'Here is the king's spear. 22
Ps 7:8;18:20 Let one of the soldiers come across and take it. •Yahweh repays everyone for 23
his uprightness and loyalty. Today Yahweh put you in my power, but I would not raise my hand against Yahweh's anointed. •Just as today your life 24
counted for much in my sight, so shall my life count for much in the sight of Yahweh and he will deliver me from all distress.'

24:21 Then Saul said to David, 'May you be blessed, my son David! You will do 25
great things and will succeed.' Then David went on his way and Saul returned home.

D. DAVID AMONG THE PHILISTINES

He takes refuge at Gath

27 'One of these days' David thought 'I shall perish at the hand of Saul. 1
I can do no better than escape[a] to the land of the Philistines;[b] then Saul will give up tracking me through the length and breadth of Israel and
21:11-16 I shall be safe from him.' •So David set off and went, he and the six hundred 2
men who were with him, down to Achish son of Maoch the king of Gath. •He 3
settled at Gath with Achish, he and his men, each with his family and David
30:5 with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the wife of Nabal from Carmel. •When news reached Saul that David had fled to Gath, he stopped 4
searching for him.

David as vassal of the Philistines

David said to Achish, 'If I you will grant me a favour, let me be given a place[e] 5
in one of the country towns for me to settle in. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?' •So that day Achish gave him Ziklag,[c] and for this 6
reason Ziklag has been the property of the kings of Judah[d] to the present day.
29:3 The length of time that David stayed in Philistine territory was a year and 7
four months.

Ex 17:8+ Jos 13:2 1 S 15 David and his men went out on raids against the Geshurites, Girzites and 8
Amalekites, for these are the tribes inhabiting the region that goes from Telam[e] in the direction of Shur and as far as the land of Egypt. •David laid the country- 9
side waste and left neither man nor woman alive but took the sheep and oxen, donkeys, camels and garments and came back, bringing them to Achish. •Achish 10
would ask, 'Where did you go raiding today?' David would reply, 'Against the
1 Ch 2:25 Negeb of Judah', or 'the Negeb of Jerahmeel', or 'the Negeb of the Kenites.'[f] But David never brought a man or woman back alive to Gath 'in case' as he 11
thought 'they inform against us and say, "David did such and such" '. This was David's practice all the time he stayed in Philistine territory. •Achish trusted 12
David. 'He has made himself hated by his own people Israel' he thought 'and so will be my servant for ever.'

The Philistines go to war against Israel

28 At that time the Philistines mustered their forces for war to fight Israel, 1
and Achish said to David, 'It is understood that you join forces with me, you and your men?' •David answered Achish, 'In that case, you will soon see 2

what your servant can do.'[a] Achish replied to David, 'Right, I shall appoint you as my permanent bodyguard.'

Saul and the witch of En-dor[b]

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned him and buried him at Ramah, his own town. Saul had expelled the necromancers and wizards from the country. =25:1

4 Meanwhile the Philistines had mustered and pitched camp at Shunem.[c]
5 Saul mustered all Israel and they encamped at Gilboa. •When Saul saw the Philistine camp he was afraid and there was a great trembling in his heart.
6 Saul consulted Yahweh, but Yahweh gave him no answer, either by dream or 14:38,41+ Ex33:7+
7 oracle or prophet. •Then Saul said to his servants, 'Find a woman who is a necromancer for me to go and consult her'. His servants replied, 'There is Lv 19:31 a necromancer at En-dor'.

8 And so Saul, disguising himself and changing his clothes, set out accompanied by two men; their visit to the woman took place at night. 'Disclose the future to me' he said 'by means of a ghost. Conjure up the one I shall name 1 K 14:2
9 to you.' •The woman answered, 'Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has swept the necromancers and wizards out of the country; why are you setting
10 a trap for my life, then, to have me killed?' •But Saul swore to her by Yahweh, 'As Yahweh lives,' he said 'no blame shall attach to you for this business.'
11 Then the woman asked, 'Whom shall I conjure up for you?' He replied, 'Conjure up Samuel'.

12 Then the woman saw Samuel and, giving a great cry, she said to Saul,
13 'Why have you deceived me? You are Saul.'[d] •The king said, 'Do not be afraid! What do you see?' The woman answered Saul, 'I see a ghost[e] rising up from the
14 earth'.[f] •'What is he like?' he asked. She answered, 'It is an old man coming up; he is wrapped in a cloak'. Then Saul knew it was Samuel and he bowed down his face to the ground and did homage.

15 Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed my rest, conjuring me up?' Si 46:20 Saul replied, 'I am in great distress; the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has abandoned me and no longer answers me either by prophet or
16 dream; and so I have summoned you to tell me what I must do'. •Samuel said, 'And why do you consult me, when Yahweh has abandoned you and is with 15:27-28
17 your neighbour?[g] •Yahweh has done to you as he foretold through me; he has snatched the sovereignty from your hand and given it to your neighbour, David,

c. The land of Israel was God's inheritance; so closely were the two linked that it was thought impossible to worship Yahweh in another land where alien gods held sway. Thus Naaman takes soil to Damascus from Israel, 2 K 5:17. To condemn David to exile is to force him to abandon Yahweh.

d. And consequently where his blood will not be avenged. Cf. Gn 4:14-15.

e. 'my life' Greek.

27 a. 'than escape' Greek.

b. A sure way of eluding Saul but a seeming desertion to the enemy, putting David in a false position from which circumstances, ch. 29, and his own cunning, vv. 8-12, extricate him.

c. On the borders of Philistia, to the N.E. of Beersheba. Achish assigns the town to David whose followers he relies on to police the neighbouring desert country.

d. That is, it became the king's private domain.

e. 'Telam' Greek.

f. The Negeb is the sparsely populated, mainly pastoral district lying to the S. of Palestine. It belongs to the men of Judah and their allies, such as the Kenites, cf. also 30:14. David represents his raids as made against these; in fact they are made against the marauders from the desert and win him the favour of the men of Judah.

28 a. An ambiguous answer which Achish takes for a promise of valour in war. David is hoping that circumstances will dispense him from fighting against Israel, as in fact they did, ch. 29.

b. Necromancy was practised in Israel, 2 K 21:6; Is 8:19, though forbidden by the Law, Lv 19:31; 20:6,27; Dt 18:11, and v. 9 of this chapter. The narrator seems to share the popular belief in ghosts (though he regards it unlawful to consult them); the Fathers and commentators, however, seek an explanation of the incident itself; divine power, demonic activity, the woman's trickery. Doubtless, as in other seances, credulity and trickery were at work; but the incident is presented as a genuine recalling of Samuel's spirit (hence the woman's fear) to foretell the future. Cf. 1 Ch 10:13 (LXX) and Si 46:20.

c. In the plain of Jezreel, S. of Shunem the Gilboa range borders this plain. En-dor lies at the foot of Tabor and N. of Shunem; to reach it, therefore, Saul had to pass round the Philistine encampment.

d. The woman knows of the relations between Samuel and Saul; that the dead prophet appears, she concludes, means that her client is the king of Israel.

e. In Hebr. an *elohim* or superhuman being, cf. Gn 3:5; Ps 8:5. Only in this place is it used of the dead.

f. It rises from Sheol, underworld of the dead, cf. Nb 16:33+.

g. 'with your neighbour' Greek.

because you disobeyed the voice of Yahweh and did not execute his fierce anger against Amalek. That is why Yahweh treats you like this now. 18
•What is more, 19
31:2-6 Yahweh will deliver Israel and you, too, into the power of the Philistines.
Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me;[h] and Israel's army, too, for
Yahweh will deliver it into the power of the Philistines.'

Saul was overcome[i] and fell full-length on the ground. He was terrified by 20
what Samuel had said and, besides this, he was weakened by having eaten
nothing at all that day and all that night. •The woman then came to Saul, and seeing 21
his terror said, 'Look, your servant has obeyed your voice; I have taken my life
in my hands, and have obeyed the command you gave me. •So now you in your 22
turn listen to what your servant says. Let me set a little food before you for
you to eat and get some strength for your journey.' •But he refused. 'I will 23
not eat' he said. His servants however pressed him, and so did the woman.
Allowing himself to be persuaded by them, he rose from the ground and sat
on the divan. •The woman owned a fattened calf which she quickly slaughtered, 24
and she took some flour and kneaded it and with it baked cakes of unleavened
bread; •she put these before Saul and his servants; and after they had eaten 25
they set off and left the same night.

1Ch13:20 **David is sent away by the Philistine leaders**[a]

4:1 29 The Philistines mustered all their forces at Aphek while the Israelites 1
were encamped near the spring which is in Jezreel. •The Philistine lords 2
paraded in their groups of a hundred and a thousand, with David and his men
bringing up the rear with Achish. •The Philistine leaders asked, 'Who are these 3
Hebrews?' Achish replied to the Philistine leaders, 'Why, this is David the
27:7 servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me for the last one or two
years.[b] I have had no fault to find with him from the day he gave himself up
to me to the present time.' •But the Philistine leaders were angry with him. 4
'Send the man back,' they said 'let him return to the place you assigned him.
14:21 He must not go down with us to battle, in case he turns on us once battle is
joined. Would there be a better way for the man to regain his master's favour
than with the heads of these men here? •Is not this the David of whom they 5
sang in the dance:

18:7;21:12 "Saul has killed his thousands,
David his tens of thousands"?'

So Achish called David and said, 'As Yahweh lives, you are loyal, and to 6
me it seems only right you should accompany me in the campaign, for I have
found nothing wrong in you from the day you came to me to the present time.
But you are not acceptable to the leaders. •So go back, and go in peace, rather 7
than antagonise the leaders of the Philistines.'

'But what have I done,' David asked Achish 'what fault have you had to 8
find with your servant from the day I entered your service to the present time,
for me not to be allowed to go and fight the enemies of my lord the king?'[c]
2S14:17, 20;19:28 Achish answered, 'You know[d] that in my sight you are as blameless as an angel 9
of God; but the Philistine leaders have said, "He must not go out with us to
battle". •So now, get up early in the morning, you and your master's servants 10
who came with you, and go to the place I assigned you. Let there be no rancour
in your heart, for to me you are blameless.[e] You must get up early in the
morning and when it is light enough you must be off.'

So David rose early, he and his men, and set off in the morning to return 11
to the land of the Philistines. The Philistines went up to Jezreel.

The campaign against the Amalekites

30 Now by the time David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day, the 1
Amalekites had raided the Negeb and Ziklag; they had stormed Ziklag and

burnt it down. •They had taken the women captive with all those[a] who were there, both small and great. They had not killed anyone, but taken the prisoners and gone on their way. •When David and his men arrived, they found the town burnt down and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. •Then David and the people with him wept aloud till they were too weak to weep any more. David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the 27:3 wife of Nabal from Carmel.

David was in great trouble, for the people were talking of stoning him; all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David took courage from Yahweh his God. •To the priest Abiathar son of Ahimelech David said, 'Bring me the ephod'. Abiathar brought the ephod to David. •Then David 2:28+ consulted Yahweh, 'Am I to go in pursuit of these raiders? Shall I overtake them?' The answer was, 'Go in pursuit; you will certainly overtake them and rescue the captives'. •David accordingly set off with the six hundred men who were with him, and reached the wadi Besor.[b] •David then continued the pursuit with four hundred men, two hundred staying behind who were too exhausted to cross the wadi Besor.

Out in the country they found an Egyptian and brought him to David. They gave him bread which he ate, and water to drink; •they also gave him a piece of fig cake and two bunches of raisins; he ate these and his spirits revived, for he had neither eaten bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. David then said to him, 'Whose man are you and where do you come from?' He answered, 'I am a young Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite; my master aban- doned me because I fell sick three days ago. •We raided the Negeb of the 27:10 Cherethites,[c] and the Negeb of Judah, and the Negeb of Caleb too, and we burnt Ziklag down.' •David said, 'Will you lead me down to these raiders?' He replied, 'Swear to me by God not to kill me or hand me over to my master and I will lead you down to these raiders'.

And when he led him down there they were, scattered over the whole countryside, eating, drinking and rejoicing, because of the enormous booty they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. •David struck them down from dawn till evening, putting them under the ban.[d] None Jos6:17+ escaped except for four hundred soldiers who mounted camels and fled. •David set free all whom the Amalekites had captured. David set his two wives free also. Nothing was missing, whether small or great, booty or sons and daughters,[e] everything that been captured; David brought all back. •They captured the flocks and herds as well and drove them in front of him. 'This is David's booty' they shouted.

Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him, those he had left at the wadi Besor; they came out to meet David and the troops with him, and, approaching David and the troops, asked[f] how they had fared. •But all the rogues and scoundrels among the men who had gone with David said, 'They did not go with us so we will not give them any of the booty we have rescued, though each can take his wife and children away and go'. •But David said, 'Do not act like this after what[g] Yahweh has done for us; he has protected us, delivering into our hands the raiders who set on us. Who would agree with you on this? No:

h. In Sheol, dwelling of good and bad alike, cf. Nb 16:33+.
i. 'was overcome' conj.

29 a. Following immediately on 28:2.
b. 'one or two years' Greek.
c. David is rescued from his awkward position by the decision of Achish but still pretends that his loyalty has been impugned.
d. 'You know' conj.
e. 'and go... blameless' Greek and Vet. Lat.

30 a. 'with all those' Greek.
b. The text adds 'and the rest stayed behind', a gloss.
c. The Cherethites are kin to the Philistines and David later chooses part of his bodyguard from them, 2 S 8:18; 15:18, etc.
d. 'putting them under the ban' conj. Text corrupt.
e. The Greek sequence is adopted here.
f. 'approaching... asked' conj. from Greek and Syr.
g. 'like this after what' Greek.

'As the share is of him who goes down to the battle,
so is the share of him who stays with the baggage.

Nb 31:7 'They must share alike.' •And from that day forward he made this a statute 25
and an ordinance for Israel which obtains to the present day.

When David came to Ziklag he sent parts of the booty to the elders of Judah, 26
proportionate to their towns,[h] with this message, 'Here is a present for you from
the booty taken from the enemies of Yahweh':

Jos 15:19
for those in Bethel, 27
for those in Ramoth of the Negeb,
for those in Jattir, 28
for those in Aroer,
for those in Siphmoth,
for those in Eshtemoa,
for those in Carmel, 29
for those in the towns of Jerahmeel,
for those in the towns of the Kenites,
for those in Hormah, 30
for those in Borashan,
for those in Athach,
for those in Hebron 31

and for all the places which David and his men had frequented.[i]

2S 1:1-16;4:4 ‖1 Ch 10:1-12 **The battle of Gilboa and the death of Saul**[a]

28:19 31 The Philistines made war on Israel and the men of Israel fled from 1
the Philistines and were slaughtered on Mount Gilboa. •The Philistines 2
14:49 pressed Saul and his sons hard and killed Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua,
the sons of Saul. •The fighting grew heavy about Saul; the bowmen took him 3
Jg 9:54 off his guard, so that he fell wounded by the bowmen.[b] •Then Saul said to his 4
24:7 armour-bearer, 'Draw your sword and run me through with it; I do not want
17:26+ these uncircumcised men to come and gloat over me'. But his armour-bearer was
9:26+;26:9 2M 14:42 afraid and would not do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. •His 5
armour-bearer, seeing that Saul was dead, fell on his sword too and died with
him. •And so Saul and his three sons and his armour-bearer died together 6
that day. •When the Israelites who were on the other side of the valley[c] saw that 7
the men of Israel had taken flight and that Saul and his sons were dead, they
abandoned their towns and fled. The Philistines then came and occupied them.

When the Philistines came on the following day to strip the dead, they found 8
2M 17:54 15:35 Saul and his three sons lying on Mount Gilboa. •They cut off his head and, 9
stripping him of his armour, had it carried[d] round the land of the Philistines
5:2;21:10 2 S 1:20 to proclaim the good news to their idols and their people. •They placed his 10
2 S 4:12; 21:12 armour in the temple of Astarte; they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.
2 S 2:4 When the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead[e] heard what the Philistines had done 11
to Saul, •all the warriors set out, marching throughout the night, and took the 12
bodies of Saul and his sons off the wall of Beth-shan, and bringing them[f] to
Jabesh they burned them there. •Then they took their bones and buried them 13
Gn 50:10 under the tamarisk of Jabesh, and fasted for seven days.[g]

h. 'towns' conj.
i. To repay hospitality and, still more, to win friends who will put David on the throne, 2 S 2:4. The towns mentioned (some of the names have been corrected) all lie to the S. of Hebron.
31 a. This follows on ch. 28.
b. 'The bowmen' 1 Ch 10:3. 'so that he fell wounded' Greek. Text uncertain.
c. The text adds 'and those beyond Jordan', probably a gloss.
d. Translation uncertain.
e. They had been rescued by Saul, ch. 11, and wanted to pay him their last respects.
f. 'bringing them' Greek.
g. On fasting for the dead cf. 2 S 1:12; 3:35, and contrast 2 S 12:23. On the seven days' mourning cf. Gn 50:10; Jdt 16:24; Si 22:12.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

David learns of Saul's death[a] 4:10

1 After the death of Saul, David returned from his rout of the Amalekites and 1S31:1-13
2 spent two days in Ziklag. •On the third day a man came from the camp 4:12-17; 1 S 30
where Saul had been, his garments torn and earth on his head. When he came
3 to David, he fell to the ground and did homage. •'Where do you come from?'
4 David asked him. 'I have escaped from the Israelite camp' he said. •David said
to him, 'What happened? Tell me.' He replied, 'The people have fled from the
battlefield and many of them have fallen. Saul and his son Jonathan are dead
too.'
5 David then asked the young soldier who brought the news, 'How do you
6 know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?' •'I happened to be on Mount
Gilboa,' the young soldier replied 'and there was Saul, leaning on his spear,
7 with the chariots and the cavalry pressing him hard. •Then he turned round
8 and saw me, and shouted to me. I answered, "Here I am". •He said, "Who are
9 you?" "An Amalekite" I replied. •Then he said, "Stand over me and kill me, for
10 a giddiness has come on me, though my life is wholly in me still". •So I stood
over him and killed him, because I knew that once he fell he could not survive.
Then I took the crown he wore on his head and the bracelet on his arm, and 2K11:12
I have brought them here to my lord.'
11 Then David took hold of his garments and tore them, and all the men with 13:31
12 him did the same. •They mourned and wept and fasted until the evening for 1S31:13+
Saul and his son Jonathan, for the people of Yahweh and for the House of
Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.
13 David said to the young soldier who had brought the news, 'Where are you
14 from?' 'I am the son of a resident alien,' he answered 'an Amalekite.' •David
said, 'How is it you were not afraid to lift your hand to destroy Yahweh's 1S9:26+; 24:7
15 anointed?' •Then David called one of his soldiers. 'Come here,' he said 'strike
16 him down.' The man struck him and he died. •'Your blood be on your own Lv 20:9 Jos 2:19
head,' David said[b] 'for your own lips gave evidence against you when you
said, "I killed Yahweh's anointed". '

David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan[c]

17 Then David made this lament over Saul and his son Jonathan. •It is written
18 in the Book of the Just,[d] so that it may be taught to the sons of Judah. It runs: Jos10:13+

19 Alas, the glory of Israel has been slain on your heights!
How did the heroes fall?

20 Do not speak of it in Gath, ↗Mi1:10
nor announce it in the streets of Ashkelon,
or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,
the daughters of the uncircumcised will gloat. Jg16:23-24 1S31:9

21 O mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew or rain on you; Gn27:28 Dt 33:13 Is 5:6

1 a. A second tradition of Saul's death. The narrative, which follows immediately on 1 S 30, is itself composite. According to one form of the tradition, a soldier brings news of the death of Saul and Jonathan, and David laments with his followers, vv. 1-4 and 11-12. In the other form, a young Amalekite boasts of having killed Saul and brings the royal insignia, expecting a reward; David orders his execution, vv. 5-10 and 13-16.

b. David addresses the dead man: the man's blood will not cry for vengeance (on David) because he has been justly executed, cf. 1 K 2:32.

c. The poem is certainly authentic. Text corr. in vv. 19,21, 24, 25.

d. In this verse the words have been re-ordered in accordance with the sense.

treacherous fields,
for there the hero's shield was dishonoured!

Is 21:5 The shield of Saul was anointed not with oil
but with blood of the wounded, fat of the warriors; 22
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
1 S 14:47 nor the sword of Saul return idle.

Saul and Jonathan, loved and lovely, 23
neither in life, nor in death, were divided.
Swifter than eagles were they,
stronger were they than lions.

O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul 24
Jg 5:30 who clothed you in scarlet and fine linen,
who set brooches of gold
on your garments.

How did the heroes fall 25
in the thick of the battle?

O Jonathan, in your death I am stricken, 26
I am desolate for you, Jonathan my brother.
1 S 18:1 Very dear to me you were,
your love to me more wonderful
than the love of a woman.

✗ 1M9:21 How did the heroes fall 27
and the battle armour fail?

I. DAVID

A. DAVID KING OF JUDAH

David consecrated king at Hebron

Ex 30:11 2 After this David consulted Yahweh. 'Shall I go up to one of the towns of 1
1S2:28+ Judah?' he asked. Yahweh answered, 'Go up'. 'Which shall I go to?' David
asked. 'To Hebron'[a] was the reply. •So David went up, with his two wives, 2
Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the wife of Nabal from Carmel. •The men who 3
were with him, David made go up too, each with his family, and they settled
in the towns of Hebron.[b] •There the men of Judah came and anointed David 4
king over the House of Judah.[c]

David's message to Jabesh

1S31:11-13 They told David that the people of Jabesh-gilead had given Saul burial, 5
so David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead. 'May you be blessed by
Yahweh' he said 'for doing this kindness to Saul your lord, and for burying
him. •And now may Yahweh show kindness and faithfulness to you! I too shall 6
treat you well because you have done this.[d] •And now take courage and be men 7
of valour. Saul your lord is dead, but the House of Judah has anointed me to be
their king.'[e]

Abner makes Ishbaal king over Israel

1S14:49+ Abner son of Ner, Saul's army commander, had taken Ishbaal[f] son of Saul 8
and brought him over to Mahanaim.[g] •He had made him king over Gilead, 9
over the Ashurites,[h] over Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin, and indeed over
all Israel. •Ishbaal son of Saul was forty years old when he became king of 10
Israel, and he reigned for two years. Only the House of Judah supported David.

11 The length of David's reign over Judah in Hebron was seven years and six months.[t] =5:5

War between Israel and Judah. The battle of Gibeon

12 Abner son of Ner with Ishbaal's followers marched out from Mahanaim to
13 Gibeon. •Joab son of Zeruiah with David's followers also marched out, 20:8
encountering them by the Pool of Gibeon.[j] There they halted, one party on one side of the pool, and the other opposite.
14 Then Abner said to Joab, 'Let the young soldiers come forward and hold
15 a contest before us'.[k] 'Let them come forward' Joab replied. •So they came forward and were numbered off, twelve from Benjamin for Ishbaal son of Saul,
16 and twelve of David's followers. •Each caught his adversary by the head and drove his sword into his side so that they all fell together. Hence the place was called the Field of Sides;[l] it is at Gibeon.
17 That day a very fierce battle took place, and Abner and the men of Israel
18 were beaten by David's followers. •The three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab,
19 Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift-footed as a wild gazelle. •Asahel 23:24 1Ch27:7
set off in pursuit of Abner turning neither to right nor to left as he went in pursuit
20 of him. •Abner turned. 'Asahel,' he said 'is that you?' He answered, 'It is'.
21 'Turn to your right or your left,' Abner said 'catch one of the soldiers and take
22 his spoil.' But Asahel would not break off the pursuit. •Again Abner spoke to
Asahel, 'Stop pursuing me, unless you want me to strike you to the ground; 3:27,30
23 and then how could I look your brother Joab in the face again?'[m] •But he refused to turn away, so Abner struck him in the belly with the butt[n] of his spear so that the spear came out at his back; and he fell there and died on the spot. On coming to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, everyone halted.
24 Joab and Abishai took up the pursuit of Abner and at sunset reached the
25 Hill of Ammah, which is to the east of the valley, on the road to Giah.[o] •The Benjaminites gathered behind Abner in close formation and halted at the top
26 of the Hill of Ammah.[p] •Abner called out to Joab, 'Is the sword to go on eating its fill for ever?' he said. 'Do you not know that this will end in disaster? How long will it be before you order these people to stop pursuing their brothers?'
27 'As Yahweh[q] lives,' Joab replied 'if you had not spoken, these men would not
28 have given up the pursuit of their brothers until morning.'[r] •Joab then sounded the trumpet and all the troops halted; they pursued Israel no further and fought no more.
29 All that night Abner and his men made their way through the Arabah;[s] they crossed the Jordan and, marching throughout the morning, came to Mahanaim.
30 Joab, giving up the pursuit of Abner, mustered his whole force; David's followers
31 had lost nineteen men in addition to Asahel, •but had killed three hundred and
32 sixty of Benjamin, Abner's men. •They took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb, which is at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched throughout the night and day dawned as they reached Hebron.

2 a. Hebron was the most important city in Judah. At the time of the conquest it had been captured and occupied by the Calebites, Jos 15:13f; Jg 1:20, but these had soon been absorbed into the people of Judah.
b. The townships dependent on Hebron, or possibly districts of the town itself.
c. David had won supporters in Judah, 1 S 27:10-12; 30:26-31. He was later to be anointed by the elders of Israel, 5:3. This form of the tradition knows nothing of Samuel's anointing of the young David, 1 S 16:1-13.
d. 'well because' conj.
e. David asks the men of Jabesh to acknowledge him as Saul's successor. Their reply is not given, but they must have followed the lead of Israel.
f. 'Ishbaal', here and subsequently, as in 1 Ch 8:33, cf. 9:39, and in certain of the versions; 'Ishbosheth' Hebr. See 1 S 14:49+.
g. A town in Transjordania, cf. Gn 32:3 and 2 S 17:24.
h. 'Ashurites' Targ.; 'Assyrians' Hebr.
i. An editorial note.
j. Six or seven miles to the N. of Jerusalem, cf. Jr 41:12.
k. Abner suggests that the dispute be settled by a contest between a few warriors from each side, cf. 1 S 17:8-9; but since all are killed, the decision remains open and battle is joined, v. 17.
l. 'Field of Sides' conj.
m. Abner does not wish to incur blood-vengeance.
n. 'with the butt' conj.
o. 'to the east... Giah' conj.
p. 'the Hill of Ammah' conj.
q. 'Yahweh' Greek; 'God' Hebr.
r. Joab accepts the truce.
s. Here the term indicates the Jordan valley. 'throughout the morning': meaning uncertain.

3 So the war dragged on between the House of Saul and the House of David, 1
but David grew steadily stronger, and the House of Saul ever weaker.

5:13-16
‖1Ch3:1-4 **The sons born to David at Hebron**

13:1 Sons were born to David at Hebron: his first-born Amnon, by Ahinoam of 2
Jezreel; •his second Chileab, by Abigail the wife of Nabal from Carmel; the 3
13:37a third Absalom the son of Maacah, daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;[a] •the 4
1 K 1:5 fourth Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth Shephatiah the son of Abital; •the 5
sixth Ithream, by Eglah wife of David. These were born to David at Hebron.

The rift between Abner and Ishbaal

This is what took place during the war between the House of Saul and the 6
House of David. Abner took complete control in the House of Saul. •Now there 7
21:8-10 was a concubine of Saul's named Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, and Abner took
her. Ishbaal said to Abner, 'Why have you slept with my father's concubine?'[b]
At these words of Ishbaal Abner flew into a rage. 'Am I a dog's head?'[c] he 8
shouted. 'Here am I full of goodwill towards the House of Saul your father,
his brothers and his friends, not leaving you to the hands of David, and now
Rt1:17+ you find fault with me about a woman! •May God do this to Abner and more 9
3:18;5:2 if I do not bring about what Yahweh has promised on oath to David, •to take 10
1 S 25:30 the sovereignty from the House of Saul, and set up the throne of David over
Israel and Judah, from Dan to Beersheba.'[d] •Ishbaal dared not say a single 11
word in answer to Abner, because he was afraid of him.

Abner negotiates with David

Abner sent messengers to say to David, '...[e]Come to an agreement with 12
me and I will give you my support to win all Israel over to you'. •'Very well,' 13
David said 'I will come to an agreement with you. I impose one condition
1S18:20-27 however; you will not be admitted to my presence unless you bring me Michal,
Saul's daughter, when you come to see me.' •David then sent messengers to 14
Ishbaal son of Saul. 'Give me back my wife Michal,' he said 'whom I won with
a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.' •So Ishbaal sent for her to be taken from 15
1 S 25:44 her husband Paltiel son of Laish. •Her husband set off with her and followed 16
16:5 her, weeping, as far as Bahurim; but Abner said to him, 'Go back', and he
went.

[f]Now Abner had conferred with the elders of Israel. 'For a long time now' 17
he said 'you have wanted David for your king. •Now you must take action; 18
3:10+ Yahweh has given this promise about David, "By the hand of my servant David
I will deliver my people Israel from the hands of the Philistines and all their
enemies'." •Abner also spoke to the men of Benjamin, and then went to 19
Hebron to tell David all that had been agreed by Israel and the House of
Benjamin.

Abner accompanied by twenty men came to David at Hebron, and David 20
held a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. •Then Abner said to 21
David, 'I must be off. I am going to rally all Israel to my lord the king. They
will make an alliance with you, and you will reign over all that you desire.'
So David allowed Abner to go, and he went unmolested.

The murder of Abner

The followers of David were just then coming back with Joab from a raid, 22
bringing a great amount of booty with them. Abner was no longer with David
at Hebron, since David had allowed him to go, and he had gone unmolested.
When Joab arrived and the whole force that was with him, Joab was told, 'Abner 23
son of Ner has been to the king and he has allowed Abner to go away unmolested'.
Then Joab went to the king. 'What have you done?' he said. 'Abner comes to 24
you and you allow him to go unmolested? Why? •Do you not know Abner son 25

of Ner? He came to trick you, to know your every move, to find out what you
are doing.'
26 Joab left David's presence and sent messengers after Abner and these,
27 unknown to David, brought him back from the Well of Sirah. •When Abner
reached Hebron, Joab drew him apart to the side of the gate as if to have a word 1 K 2:5
with him in private, and there struck him in the belly. And so, for the blood
28 of Joab's brother Asahel, he died. •Afterwards when David heard of this, he 2:22-23
said, 'I and my kingdom are innocent for ever before Yahweh of the blood of
29 Abner son of Ner; •may it fall on the head of Joab and on all his family! May
the House of Joab never lack men with the discharge or the leprosy, or only
30 fit to hold a distaff, or falling by the sword, or short of bread!' •(Joab and his
brother Abishai had murdered Abner because he killed their brother Asahel 2:22-23
31 at the battle of Gibeon.) •David then said to Joab and all the troops who were
with him, 'Tear your garments, put on sackcloth, and mourn before Abner'; 21:10
32 and King David walked behind the bier. •They buried Abner at Hebron, and the
33 king wept aloud at Abner's grave, and the people all wept too. •The king made
this lament over Abner:

'Should Abner have died as a fool dies?
34 Your hands were not tied, your feet not chained;
you fell as a man falls at the hands of criminals.'[g]

And all the people wept once more over him.
35 They all tried then to persuade David to have some food while it was still
daylight, but David took this oath, 'May God do this to me and more if I taste Rt1:17+
36 bread or anything whatever until the sun is down!' •All the people took note 1 S 31:13
of this and it pleased them; indeed, everything the king did pleased the people.
37 That day all the people and all Israel understood that the king had no part
in the death of Abner son of Ner.
38 The king said to his officers, 'Do you not know that in Israel a prince, a great
39 man, has fallen today? •I, though I am king by anointing,[h] am weak at this
present time, and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too ruthless for me. May
Yahweh pay back the wrong-doer in proportion to the wrong he has done.' Ps 28:4 Is 3:11

The murder of Ishbaal

1 4 When Ishbaal son of Saul heard the news that Abner had died at Hebron,
2 his heart failed him, and the whole of Israel was alarmed. •Now Ishbaal
son of Saul had two freebooting chieftains; one was called Baanah, the other
Rechab. They were the sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, and Benjaminites—for
3 Beeroth is regarded as belonging to Benjamin. •The people of Beeroth had Jos 18:25
taken refuge in Gittaim where they have remained to this day as resident aliens. Ex12:48+
4 [a]Jonathan son of Saul had a son with crippled feet. He was five years old 9:3; 16:1
when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him 1 S 31
up and fled, but as she hurried away he fell and was lamed. His name was
Meribbaal.[b]

3 a. To the E. of the Lake of Tiberias.
b. 'and Abner took her' Greek. By appropriating one of Saul's concubines Abner sets himself up as a claimant to the throne, since the harem of the deceased king passed to his successor, see 12:8, 16:20-22 and 1 K 2:22.
c. The text adds 'of Judah', absent from the Greek.
d. We are not told on what occasion this promise was made to David.
e. Some words are corrupt; lit. 'where he was, saying: Whose is a country?'
f. Vv. 17-19 are by a later editor. Many in Israel favoured David even during the lifetime of Saul, 1 S 18: 7,16,28, still more under Ishbaal, Saul's colourless successor.
g. Though not shackled in any way, Abner died unresisting. This would have proved him a fool, were it not that he had been killed by treachery.
h. Meaning uncertain. David excuses himself for his inability to proceed against the assassins: it is too soon after his consecration and he commits their punishment to God. In the end he bequeathes this task to Solomon, 1 K 2:5-6, cf. 31-34.

4 a. A piece of information alien to the context. Its purpose is possibly to remind the reader that, Ishbaal excepted, Saul's only heir was a cripple.
b. 'Meribbaal' here and subsequently, as in 1 Ch 8:34; 9:40. To avoid mention of the Canaanite Baal the Hebr. of 2 S altered the name to 'Meribosheth' (meaning uncertain 'he who diffuses (?) shame'). Similarly, Ishbosheth was read for Ishbaal, 2:8+, and Jerubbesheth for Jerubbaal, 11:21.

The sons of Rimmon of Beeroth, Rechab and Baanah, set out; they came 5
to Ishbaal's house at the hottest part of the day when he was taking his midday
rest. •The woman who kept the door had been cleaning wheat, and she had 6
drowsed off to sleep. Rechab and his brother Baanah stole by •and entered the 7
house where Ishbaal was lying in his bedroom on his bed. They struck and killed
him and cut off his head; and taking the head with them, they travelled all night
by the road of the Arabah.[c] •They brought Ishbaal's head to David at Hebron. 8
'Here' they said to the king 'is the head of Ishbaal son of Saul, your enemy,
who sought your life. Yahweh has avenged my lord the king today on Saul
and on his offspring.'

But David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah by saying, 'As Yahweh 9
1:1-16 lives, who has delivered me from all adversity, •the man who thought to bring 10
me good news when he told me Saul was dead, this man I seized and killed
at Ziklag, rewarding him for his good news. •How much more when bandits 11
have killed an honest man in his house, and on his bed! Am I not bound to
demand account of his blood from you, and wipe you from the earth?'[d] •Then 12
Dt21:22-23 David gave an order to his soldiers, who put them to death, cut off their hands
1 S 31:10 and feet, and hung them up beside the Pool of Hebron. Ishbaal's head
they took and buried in Abner's grave at Hebron.

B. DAVID KING OF JUDAH AND OF ISRAEL

||1 Ch 11:1-3 David is anointed king of Israel

5 All the tribes of Israel then came to David at Hebron. 'Look' they said 1
Dt 17:15 'we are your own flesh and blood. •In days past when Saul was our king, 2
3:10+ it was you who led Israel in all their exploits; and Yahweh said to you, "You are
1 S 18:16 the man who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you shall be the leader of
Israel". ' •So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David 3
made a pact with them at Hebron in the presence of Yahweh, and they anointed
David king of Israel.

David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned for 4
=2:11 forty years. •He reigned in Hebron over Judah for seven years and six months; 5
||1 Ch 3:4 then he reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years.[a]

||1 Ch 11:4-9 The capture of Jerusalem[b]

Jos 15:63 David and his men marched on Jerusalem against the Jebusites living there. 6
Jg 1:8;19:10 These said to David, 'You will not get in here. The blind and the lame will hold
1 K 3:1; 11:27 you off.'[c] (That is to say: David will never get in here.) •But David captured the 7
Is 29:3 fortress of Zion, that is, the Citadel of David. •That day David said, 'Whoever 8
Mt21:14-15 strikes the Jebusites and goes up by the conduit...'[d] As for the blind and the
Lv 21:18 lame, David hated them in his soul.[e] (Hence the saying: the blind and the lame
Si 36:12 shall not enter the Temple.) •David went to live in the fortress and called it the 9
Is 22:9 Citadel of David.[f] David then built a wall round it, from the Millo going
Ps78:69; 89:132:13 inwards.[g] •David grew greater and greater, and Yahweh, God of Sabaoth, was 10
Gn 39:2 with him.
1 S 1:3+

Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to David with cedar wood and carpenters 11
1 K 5:15 and stonemasons, who built David a palace. •David then knew that Yahweh 12
||1 Ch 14:1-2 had confirmed him as king over Israel, and for the sake of his people Israel was
making his reign glorious.

The sons born to David in Jerusalem

3:2-5 After coming from Hebron, David took other concubines and wives in 13
||1 Ch 14:3-7 Jerusalem, and sons and daughters were born to him. •These are the names 14
||1Ch3:5-8 of those born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,
Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, •Elishama, Eliada, Eliphelet. 15 16

Victory over the Philistines

||1 Ch 14: 8-16

17 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of all Israel,[h] Is 28:21
they all marched up to seek him out. On hearing this, David went down to the
18 stronghold.[i] •When the Philistines arrived they deployed in the Valley of the
19 Rephaim.[j] •David consulted Yahweh; 'Shall I attack the Philistines?' he asked. 23:13 1S2:28+
'Will you deliver them into my power?' Yahweh answered David, 'Attack!
20 I will most surely deliver the Philistines into your power.' •Accordingly David
went to Baal-perazim and there defeated them. David said, 'Yahweh has made
a breach in my enemies for me like a breach the waters make'. For this reason
21 that place was called Baal-perazim.[k] •They had left their gods behind them
there, and David and his men carried them off.

22 Again the Philistines marched up and deployed in the Valley of the Rephaim.
23 David consulted Yahweh, who answered, 'Do not attack them from the front;
24 go round to their rear and engage them opposite the balsam trees. •When you Gn 3:8 2 K 7:6
hear the sound of steps[l] in the tops of the balsam trees, advance, for that will Jg 5:20
25 be Yahweh going out ahead of you to rout the army of the Philistines.' •David Ps 84:6
did as Yahweh had ordered and routed the Philistines from Gibeon as far as
the Pass of Gezer.[m]

The ark in Jerusalem[a]

||1 Ch 13: 1-14

1 6 David again mustered all the picked troops of Israel, thirty thousand men.
2 Setting off with the whole force then with him, David went to Baalah[b] of Jos15:9,60 Ps132:6-10, 13-14 Ex25:10+ 1S4:3-4 1 S 6:7 Dn 3:55
Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which bears the name of Yahweh
3 Sabaoth who is seated on the cherubs. •They placed the ark of God on a new
cart, and brought it from Abinadab's house which is on the hill. Uzzah and
4 Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the cart, •Uzzah walked[c] alongside
5 the ark of God and Ahio went in front. •David and all the House of Israel

c. The Jordan valley, cf. 2:29.

d. David's indignation is sincere. Nevertheless, Ishbaal's death, following on Abner's, assures him the throne of Israel, 5:1-3.

5 a. David, already anointed king by the men of Judah, 2:4, is now acknowledged by the men of Israel. The two groups remain distinct however (David is king 'over all Israel and Judah'), and internal dissension troubles this united kingdom right up to the time of the final division, 1 K 12.

b. This took place after the victories over the Philistines described in vv. 17-25.

c. They consider the position impregnable: cripples could defend it.

d. 'goes up' conj. The sentence would be completed 'will receive such and such a reward'. But the text is uncertain. The 'conduit' (if this is what the word means) is the tunnel bored through the hill of ancient Jerusalem as a way down to the Well of Gihon (1 K 1:33f) without having to leave the city. Resolute men could climb up it into the town. The text of 1 Ch 11:6 is easier 'The first to strike down a Jebusite will become leader and commander. Joab was first to go up.'

e. These words are alien to the context and are absent from Ch.

f. David's choice is explained by Jerusalem's central position between the northern and southern tribes. The city's name is attested as early as 2000 B.C. The old Jebusite town (Dt 7:1+) was built on Mt. Zion between the Valleys of the Kidron and the Tyropoean it was overlooked on the N. by the spur of Ophel, 2 Ch 27:3, and by the height on which David was to erect an altar, 2 S 24:16f, and Solomon the Temple, 1 K 6; Solomon's palaces were later built to the S. of the Temple, 1 K 7. The city soon spread over the large hill to the W., the northern wall of which had twice to be pushed further N., 2 K 14:13+. The water system (v. 8+) was improved, particularly by Hezekiah, 2 K 20:20+. In 587 Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city, 2 K 25, but rebuilding of the Temple was completed in 515, Ezr 6:15, and of the walls in 445, Ne 2-6. Antiochus Epiphanes built the citadel of the Akra opposite the Temple, 1 M 1:33+, and the Hasmonaeans turned it into a palace, Lk 23:7; Herod, however, set up his official residence more to the W., Herod also made the ancient citadel of the Temple, Ne 7:2, into a huge fortress, the Antonia, and rebuilt the Temple, Jn 2:20. The city was ultimately destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D.; cf. Lk 21:20. Mentioned for the first time in the Bible together with its priest-king Melchizedek, Gn 14:18+; Ps 76:2, and destined to be, under David, the political and religious capital of Israel, Jerusalem (or Zion) eventually becomes the symbol of God's chosen people, Ezk 23; Is 62. It is the home of Yahweh, Ps 76:2+, and of his Anointed, Ps 2 and 110, the future meeting place of all the nations, Is 2: 1-5; 60. With the vision of the new Jerusalem, Is 54; 11, the Bible closes, Rv 21f.

g. 'a wall' corr. 'the town' Ch. On the 'Millo' see 1 K 9:15. This wall 'going inwards' must have run along the Tyropoean valley; it was soon to be inside the city which was expanding westwards.

h. 'all Israel' Ch; 'Israel' Hebr.

i. To Adullam perhaps, 1 S 22:1-5. Jerusalem was evidently not yet captured.

j. Sunken plain to the S.W. of Jerusalem, Jos 15:8; 18:16; cf. Dt 2:10+.

k. Perez means 'breach', cf. Gn 38:29.

l. The advancing tread of Yahweh.

m. 'Gibeon' Ch and Greek ('Gabaon'). Gezer is just within Philistine territory; the enemy is forced back to his own country.

6 a. This narrative takes up the story of the ark where a previous narrator left it, 1 S 7:1. By receiving the ark where Yahweh manifests his presence, Ex 25: 8+; Dt 4:7+, Jerusalem is no longer the political capital only, but the religious centre, the holy city of Israel.

b. 'Baalah' cf. Ch. The old name of Kiriath-jearim, Jos 15:9, cf. Jos 15:60; 18:14.

c. 'Uzzah walked' conj.

Ps68:24f; 150:3,5 danced before Yahweh with all their might, singing[d] to the accompaniment of
lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals. •When they came to the 6
threshing-floor of Nacon, Uzzah stretched his hand out to[e] the ark of God and
steadied it, as the oxen were making it tilt. •Then the anger of Yahweh blazed 7
out against Uzzah, and for this crime[f] God struck him down on the spot, and
he died there beside the ark of God. •David was displeased that Yahweh had 8
1 K 8:1 broken out against Uzzah, and that place was called Perez-uzzah,[g] as it still is now.

David went in fear of Yahweh that day. 'However can the ark of Yahweh 9
come to me?' he said. •So David decided not to take the ark into the Citadel 10
1 Ch 26:4 of David and took it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath. •The ark of Yahweh 11
remained in the house of Obed-edom of Gath for three months, and Yahweh
blessed Obed-edom and his whole family.

‖1 Ch 15: 1-29 Ps 24:7 Word was brought to King David that Yahweh had blessed the family of 12
Obed-edom and all that belonged to him on account of the ark of God. David
accordingly went and brought the ark of God up from Obed-edom's house to
the Citadel of David with great rejoicing. •When the bearers of the ark of Yahweh 13
1 K 18:26 had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fat sheep. •And David danced 14
1 S 2:18+ whirling round before Yahweh with all his might, wearing a linen loincloth
round him.[h] •Thus David and all the House of Israel brought up the ark of 15
Yahweh with acclaim and the sound of the horn. •Now as the ark of Yahweh 16
entered the Citadel of David, Michal the daughter of Saul was watching from
the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before Yahweh; and she
‖1 Ch 16:1-3 despised him in her heart. •They brought the ark of Yahweh in and put it in 17
Lv 1:1+ position inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered holo-
Lv 3:1+ causts before Yahweh, and communion sacrifices. •And when David had finished 18
offering holocausts and communion sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name
of Yahweh Sabaoth. •He then distributed among all the people, among the 19
whole multitude of Israelites, men and women, a roll of bread to each, a portion
of dates,[i] and a raisin cake. Then they all went away, each to his own house.

As David was coming back to bless his household Michal, the daughter of 20
Saul, went out to meet him. 'What a fine reputation the king of Israel has won
himself today,' she said 'displaying himself[j] under the eyes of his servants'
maids, as any buffoon might display himself.' •David answered Michal, 'I was 21
dancing for Yahweh, not for them. As Yahweh lives,[k] who chose me in preference
to your father and his whole House to make me leader of Israel, Yahweh's
people, I shall dance before Yahweh •and demean myself even more. In your 22
eyes I may be base, but by the maids you speak of I shall be held in honour.'[l]
20:3 And to the day of her death Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no children. 23

‖1 Ch 17: 1-15 Si 47:1 *1 K 5:4* Rm 1:3 *Dt 12:10; 25:19* **The prophecy of Nathan**[a]

7 Once David had settled into his house and Yahweh had given him rest from 1
all the enemies surrounding him, •*the king said to the prophet Nathan,* 2
Ps 132:1-5 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent'.
Ha 1:4 Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for Yahweh 3
is with you'.

But that very night the word of Yahweh came to Nathan: 4

'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus Yahweh speaks: Are you the man to 5
1 K 8:16,27 Is 66:1 build me a house to dwell in? •I have never stayed in a house from the day I 6
✓ Ac 7:48 *Ex 40:34-38* brought the Israelites out of Egypt until today, but have always led a wanderer's
life in a tent. •In all my journeying with the whole people of Israel, did I say 7
to any one of the judges[b] of Israel, whom I had appointed as shepherds of Israel
Am 7:14 my people: Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" •This is what you 8
1 S 16:11; 17:15,20, 28,34f Ps 78:70f; 89:3,19,26 must say to my servant David, "Yahweh Sabaoth says this: I took
you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel;
I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies 9
Ps 89:27 before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on

10 earth. •I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and
they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked
11 continue to oppress them as they did, •in the days when I appointed judges over
my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies.[c] Yahweh will
12 make you great; Yahweh will make you a House. •And when your days are
ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring
13 of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. •(It is he who shall
build a house for my name, and I will make his royal throne secure for ever.)[d]
14 I will be a father to him and he a son to me;[e] if he does evil, I will punish him
15 with the rod such as men use, with strokes such as mankind gives. •Yet I will
not withdraw my favour from him, as I withdrew it from your predecessor.
16 Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me[f] and your
throne be established for ever." '
17 Nathan related all these words to David and this whole revelation.

23:5 1K2:4,24 Ps89:29-37; 132:11-12 ↗ *Ac2:30*
1 K 5:19 2K 19:34 1 Ch 17: 11-14
Is 9:5 Jn 7:42 ↗ *Heb1:5*
1S13:14; 15:28
23:5 Dn 2:45 Mk11:10 Lk1:32-33

David's prayer[g] ‖1 Ch 17: 16-27

18 King David then went in and, seated before Yahweh,[h] said:
'Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my House, that you have led me as 1 S 18:18 1Ch17:16
19 far as this? •Yet in your sight, Lord Yahweh, this is still not far enough, and
you make your promises extend to the House of your servant for a far-distant
20 future...[i] •What more can David say to you, when you yourself have singled
21 out your servant, Lord Yahweh? •For your servant's sake, this dog of yours,[j]
22 you have done so great a thing by revealing this to your servant. •In this is your
greatness, Lord Yahweh; there is none like you, no God but you alone, as our Ex 15:11 Is 45:5
23 own ears have heard. •Is there another people on the earth like your people Israel, Dt4:7,34
with a God setting out to redeem them and make them his people, make them
renowned, work great and terrible things on their behalf, drive nations out and Ps 44:1-2
24 gods before his people?[k] •You have constituted your people Israel to be your Ex 6:7
25 own people for ever; and you, Yahweh, have become their God. •Now, Lord Dt7:6+; 26:17; 29:12
Yahweh,[l] always keep the promise you have made your servant and his House,

d. 'with all their might singing' Greek, Ch.

e. 'his hand out to' Ch.

f. Meaning very uncertain. Ch 'because he had laid his hand on the ark'. The ark was terrible to its foes, 1 S 5, or to those who treated it with disrespect, 1 S 6:19. Our text goes further; the ark where Yahweh sits enthroned is sacred and may not be handled. Behind this primitive conception of the sacred (cf. Lv 17:1+) lies an acute sense of God's terrible majesty, cf. Ex 33: 20+. The Priestly code provides for this instinct: even the Levites may not approach the ark without mortal peril until it has been covered by the priests, Nb 4:5, 15,20. Nor do they touch it but carry it on shafts, Ex 25:14.

g. 'Uzzah's Breach', cf. 5:20. Popular etymology: Yahweh has brought destruction (lit. 'broken through') on Uzzah.

h. A priestly garment; David has just offered sacrifice and is about to give a blessing, v. 18.

i. Interpretation conjectural.

j. He wore nothing but a loincloth, cf. Ex 20:26 and 28:42-43.

k. Following the Greek.

l. 'In your eyes' Greek. The whole episode brings out the simplicity and earnestness of David's devotion.

7 a. The prophecy is built round a contrast: David is not to build a house (a temple) for God, v. 5; God is to build a House (a dynasty) for him, v. 11. The substance of the prophecy is the perpetuity of the Davidic dynasty in Israel, vv. 12-16. David himself thus understood it, vv. 19, 25, 27, 29, cf. 23:5; so also Ps 89:29-37; 132:11-12. The oracle, therefore, stretches beyond Solomon, David's immediate successor, to whom it is applied by v. 13 (an addition) and by 1 Ch 17:11-14; 22:10; 28:6 and 1 K 5:19; 8:16-19. There is an interplay of light and shade in the prophecy, however, and it allows us a glimpse of one privileged descendant who is to enjoy God's special favour. It is the first in the series of prophecies relating to the Davidic Messiah, Is 7:14+; Mi 4:14+; Hg 2:23+. Ac 2:30 applies the text to Jesus.

b. 'judges' Ch; 'tribes' Hebr.

c. Vv. 10-11a (corr.; cf. Greek and Ch), which extend the prophecy to the whole of Israel, seem to be an addition.

d. Probably an addition, cf. note a above. If this verse is omitted, the prophecy displays an affection for the old customs of the desert, vv. 6-7, and a misgiving with regard to the Temple such as one finds in the (later inserted) v. 27 of 1 K 8, in the prophets, Is 66:1-2, and even in Stephen's discourse, Ac 7:48.

e. Not yet a messianic title as in Ps 2:7 and Heb 1:5 (cf. 2 Co 6:18): God will deal with David's descendants as a father with his son, chastising them as men do, cf. Ps 89:30-33. 1 Ch 17:13 applies the text to the Messiah and therefore suppresses the second part of the verse.

f. 'before me' Greek and some MSS; 'before thee' Hebr.

g. A prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the promise of vv. 8-16.

h. In the tent where the ark was.

i. The text adds, lit. 'and this is the instruction of man', which here makes no sense.

j. 'your servant's' Greek, Ch; 'your word's' Hebr. 'this dog of yours' conj.; 'according to your heart' Hebr. The whole verse is uncertain.

k. To avoid giving the impression that these gods actually existed, the scribal tradition modified the Hebr. text (here restored in accordance with Ch and versions), eliminating even the suggestion that false gods could do for their people what Yahweh could do for Israel.

l. 'Lord Yahweh' conj.; 'Yahweh God' Hebr.

and do as you have said. •Your name will be exalted for ever and men will say, 26
"Yahweh Sabaoth is God over Israel." The House of your servant David will
be made secure in your presence, •since you yourself, Yahweh Sabaoth, God 27
of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, "I will build you a House";
hence your servant has ventured to offer this prayer to you. •Yes, Lord Yahweh, 28
Nb 23:19 Jn 17:17 you are God indeed, your words are true and you have made this fair promise
to your servant. •Be pleased, then, to bless the House of your servant, that it 29
may continue for ever in your presence; for you, Lord Yahweh, have spoken;
and with your blessing the House of your servant will be for ever blessed.'

‖1 Ch 18: 1-13 **The wars of David**[a]

8 After this, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them. From the hands 1
1 S 14:47 Ps 60 of the Philistines he took...[b] •He also defeated the Moabites, and making 2
them lie down on the ground measured them off by the line; he measured out
two lines to be put to death and one full line to have their lives spared. The
Moabites became subject to David, paying him tribute.
10:6;15:19 1 K 11:23 David defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, on his way to 3
extend his power over the river.[c] •David captured one thousand seven hundred 4
Dt 17:16 Jos 11:6,9 charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers from him; David hamstrung all
the chariot teams, keeping only a hundred of them.[d] •The Aramaeans of 5
Damascus came to the help of Hadadezer king of Zobah, but David killed
twenty-two thousand men of the Aramaeans. •Then David imposed governors on 6
Aram of Damascus, and the Aramaeans became subject to David, paying him
tribute. Wherever David went, Yahweh gave him victory. •David took the 7
2 K 11:10 golden shields carried by the guards of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem.
From Betah and Berothai, towns belonging to Hadadezer, King David took a 8
great quantity of bronze.
When Tou king of Hamath[e] heard that David had defeated Hadadezer's 9
entire army, •he sent his son Hadoram[f] to King David to greet him and to 10
congratulate him on fighting and defeating Hadadezer, since Hadadezer was the
enemy of Tou. Hadoram brought with him articles of silver, gold and bronze,
which King David also consecrated to Yahweh as he had already consecrated 11
Jg 8:25 the silver and gold taken from all the nations he had subjugated: •Edom, Moab, 12
the Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek; from the spoil, too, of Hadadezer son
of Rehob, king of Zobah.
2 K 14:7 Thus David won fame for himself. On his return he defeated the Edomites[g] 13
Gn 36:39 1 K 11:14-25 in the Valley of Salt,[h] eighteen thousand of them. •He imposed governors on 14
Edom[i] and all the Edomites became subject to David. Wherever David went,
Yahweh gave him victory.

‖1 Ch 18: 14-17 **The administration of the kingdom**

David ruled over all Israel, administering law and justice to all his people. •Joab 15 16
=20:23-26 1 K 4:1-6+ son of Zeruiah was in command of the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was
recorder; •Zadok son of Ahitub and Abiathar son of Ahimelech were priests;[j] 17
Seraiah was secretary; •Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in command of the Chere- 18
15:18;20:7, 26; 23:20 1 K 1:38 thites and Pelethites;[k] David's sons were priests.[l]

C. DAVID'S FAMILY AND THE INTRIGUES FOR THE SUCCESSION[a]

1. MERIBBAAL

David's kindness to Jonathan's son

21:1-14+ 1 S 18: 1-4+; 20:15f, 42 16:1-4; 19:27-31

9 David asked, 'Is there anyone still left of Saul's family so that I can show him 1
kindness for Jonathan's sake?' •Now there was a servant of Saul's household 2
whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. 'You are Ziba?' the king
asked. 'At your service' he answered. •The king said, 'Is there no one still left 3

of Saul's family for me to show him God's kindness?' 'There is still one of
4 Jonathan's sons,' Ziba answered the king 'a man with crippled feet.' •'Where 4:4
is he?' the king asked. Ziba replied, 'He is living in the household of Machir son
5 of Ammiel at Lodebar'. •So King David sent to have him brought from the 17:27
house of Machir son of Ammiel at Lo-debar.
6 On entering David's presence, Meribbaal[b] son of Jonathan, son of Saul, fell
on his face and did homage. David said, 'Meribbaal!' He answered, 'I am at
7 your service'. •Then David said, 'Do not be afraid; I intend to show you kindness
for your father Jonathan's sake. I will restore all the land of Saul your father
8 to you and you shall always eat at my table.' •And Meribbaal did homage.
'What is your servant' he said 'that you should show favour to a dead dog 1 S 24:15
like me?'
9 Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said, 'Everything belonging to
10 Saul and his family I give to your master's son. •You must work the land for him,
you and your sons and your slaves; you must harvest the produce to provide food
for your master's family[c] to eat. But Meribbaal, your master's son, shall always
11 take his meals at my table.' Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty slaves. •Ziba 19:29
said to the king, 'Your servant will do everything my lord the king has ordered
his servant'.
12 So Meribbaal ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. •Meribbaal had
a young son whose name was Mica. All those who lived in Ziba's house became 1Ch8:34f
13 Meribbaal's servants. •Meribbaal lived in Jerusalem, since he always ate at the 21:7
king's table. He was crippled in both feet.

2. THE AMMONITE WAR — BIRTH OF SOLOMON

David's ambassadors are insulted

‖1 Ch 19:1-5

1 10 After this, the king of the Ammonites died and his son Hanun succeeded
2 him. •David thought, 'I will show the same kindness for Hanun son of 17:27
Nahash as his father showed me'. And through his servants David sent him his
condolences on his father's death. But when David's servants reached the land
3 of the Ammonites, •the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun their master, 'Do you
imagine David means to honour your father when he sends you messengers of
sympathy? On the contrary, the reason why David has sent his servants to you

8 a. Summary of the campaigns of David's reign. The Ammonite war is not mentioned because it is to be described, ch. 10-12, in connection with the story of Bathsheba.

b. Two unintelligible words. Accepted translation 'control of the capital'. Ch 'Gath and its villages'.

c. Meaning uncertain; interpretation adopted: Hadadezer, head of the small kingdom of Zobah in Anti-Lebanon, was trying to extend his control of the neighbouring Aramaean groups further towards the Euphrates (the river); David took advantage of this situation to attack him in the rear. But possibly we have here another account of the campaign of ch. 10.

d. Before the time of Solomon the Israelite army had no chariots.

e. On the Orontes, to the N. of the districts controlled by Hadadezer.

f. 'Hadoram' Ch; cf. Greek.

g. According to Greek; cf. Ch and the inscr. of Ps 60.

h. Probably the Arabah, the valley running S. from the Dead Sea.

i. Here the text repeats 'on the whole of Edom he imposed governors'.

j. 'Abiathar son of Ahimelech', cf. 1 S 22:20 'Shusha' cf. 1 Ch 18:16 and 1 K 4:3. Abiathar, descended from Eli and a priest of David from the start, 1 S 22:20, was deprived by Solomon, 1 K 2:26-27, and Zadok's family then enjoyed the monopoly of the Jerusalem priesthood, in accordance with the prophecy against the sons of Eli, 1 S 2:30-36. Zadok is here said to be son of Ahitub and, according to 1 Ch 5:29-34 and 6:35-38, he is thus descended from Eleazar, son of Aaron; but the text is not certain.

k. Foreign mercenaries from Philistia who constituted David's bodyguard, 15:18; 20:7,23; 1 K 1:38,44.

l. An odd statement, probably meaning that David's sons assisted or deputised for him in those priestly functions for which the king was qualified; cf. 6:13-20.

9 a. Ch. 9-20, which are continued in 1 K 1-2, are derived from an ancient and well-informed narrative which the author of Samuel uses almost unchanged. The prophecy of Nathan, ch. 7, in its primitive form was perhaps the preface to it. The narrative told how David's crown eventually passed to Solomon, despite the fact that Meribbaal, Saul's grandson, was still alive, ch. 9, despite Sheba's hostility, ch. 20, and notwithstanding the whole tragic history of the royal family: David's adultery and the birth of Solomon, ch. 10-12, the murder of Amnon, 13, Absalom's revolt, 15-18, and Adonijah's intrigues, 1 K 1-2.

b. Here and subsequently 'Meribbaal', cf. 4:4; 'Mephibosheth' Hebr.

c. 'family' Greek.

is to explore the city,[a] to reconnoitre it and so overthrow it.' •Whereupon Hanun 4
Is 20:4 seized David's servants, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut their clothes
half-way up to the buttocks, and sent them away. •When David was told, he 5
sent someone to meet them, for the men were covered with shame. 'Stay in
Jericho' the king said 'until your beards have grown again, and come back then.'

‖1 Ch 19: 6-15 **The first Ammonite campaign**

The Ammonites saw that they had incurred the enmity of David and accord- 6
1 S 14:47 ingly sent messengers to hire the Aramaeans of Beth-rehob and the Aramaeans
8:3 of Zobah, twenty thousand foot; also the king of Maacah with one thousand
11:1 men, and the men of Tob, twelve thousand men.[b] •When David heard this, he 7
sent Joab with all the common soldiers and the champions.[c] •The Ammonites 8
marched out and drew up their line of battle at the approaches to the gate, while
the Aramaeans of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah kept
their distance in the open country. •Joab, seeing that he had to fight on two 9
fronts, to his front and to his rear, chose the best of Israel's picked men and drew
them up in line facing the Aramaeans. •He entrusted the rest of the army to his 10
brother Abishai, and drew them up in line facing the Ammonites. •'If the Ara- 11
maeans prove too strong for me,' he said 'you must come to my help; if the
Ammonites prove too strong for you, I will go to yours. •Take courage and 12
stand firm for the sake of our people and the towns of our God. And may Yahweh
do as he thinks right.' •Joab and the force with him joined battle with the 13
Aramaeans, who fled before him. •When the Ammonites saw that the Aramaeans 14
had taken flight, they too fled before Abishai and withdrew into their town. Then
Joab returned from the war with the Ammonites and came back to Jerusalem.

8:3-8 ‖1 Ch 19: 16-19 **Victory over the Aramaeans**[d]

Seeing that they had been defeated by Israel, the Aramaeans consolidated 15
their forces. •Hadadezer sent messengers and mobilised the Aramaeans from 16
beyond the river. They came to Helam with Shobach, commander of Hadadezer's
army, at their head. •Word of this was brought to David, who mustered all 17
Israel, crossed the Jordan and reached Helam. The Aramaeans drew up in
line facing David and engaged him. •But the Aramaeans gave ground before 18
Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their chariot teams and forty thousand
men; he also struck down Shobach their general, who died then and there. •When 19
all the vassal kings of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they
made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. The Aramaeans
were afraid to give any more help to the Ammonites.

Ps 51 **The second Ammonite campaign. David's sin**[a]

‖1Ch20:1 2 S 10:7 11 At the turn of the year,[b] the time when kings go campaigning, David sent 1
Joab and with him his own guards and the whole of Israel. They massacred
the Ammonites and laid siege to Rabbah. David however remained in Jerusalem.

It happened towards evening when David had risen from his couch and was 2
strolling on the palace roof, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the
woman was very beautiful. •David made inquiries about this woman and was 3
23:39 told, 'Why, that is Bathsheba, Eliam's daughter, the wife of Uriah the Hittite'.[c]
Then David sent messengers and had her brought. She came to him, and he slept 4
Lv 15:19 with her; now she had just purified herself from her courses. She then went home
again. •The woman conceived and sent word to David, 'I am with child'. 5

Then David sent Joab a message, 'Send me Uriah the Hittite', whereupon 6
Joab sent Uriah to David. •When Uriah came into his presence, David asked 7
after Joab and the army and how the war was going. •David then said to Uriah, 8
'Go down to your house and enjoy yourself'. Uriah left the palace, and was
followed by a present from the king's table. •Uriah however slept by the palace 9
door with his master's bodyguard and did not go down to his house.

10 This was reported to David; 'Uriah' they said 'did not go down to his house'.
So David asked Uriah, 'Have you not just arrived from a journey? Why do you
11 not go to your home?' •But Uriah answered, 'Are not the ark and the men of 1 S 4:3f
Israel and Judah lodged in tents; and my master Joab and the bodyguard of
my lord, are they not in the open fields? Am I to go to my house, then, and
eat and drink and sleep with my wife?[d] As Yahweh lives, and as you yourself
12 live, I will do no such thing!' •Then David said to Uriah, 'Stay on here today;
13 tomorrow I shall send you back'. So Uriah stayed that day in Jerusalem. •The
next day David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him
drunk. In the evening Uriah went out and lay on his couch with his master's
bodyguard, but he did not go down to his house.

14 15 Next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by Uriah. •In the
letter he wrote, 'Station Uriah in the thick of the fight and then fall back behind
16 him so that he may be struck down and die'. •Joab, then besieging the town,
17 posted Uriah in a place where he knew there were fierce fighters. •The men of
the town sallied out and engaged Joab; the army suffered casualties, including
some of David's bodyguard; and Uriah the Hittite was killed too.

18 19 Joab sent David a full account of the battle. •To the messenger he gave this
order: 'When you have finished telling the king all the details of the battle,
20 the king's anger may be provoked; he may say, "Why did you go so near the
21 town to fight? Did you not know they would shoot from the ramparts? •Who
killed Abimelech son of Jerubbaal?[e] Was it not a woman who dropped a mill- Jg 9:50-54
stone on him from the ramparts, causing his death at Thebez? Why did you go
so near the ramparts?" If so, you are to say, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite
has been killed too". '

22 So the messenger left, and on his arrival told David all that Joab had
instructed him to say. David was angry with Joab. 'Why did you go so near
the ramparts?' he said to the messenger. 'Who killed Abimelech son of Jerubbaal?
Was it not a woman who dropped a millstone on him from the ramparts, causing
23 his death at Thebez? Why did you go so near the ramparts?'[f] •The messenger
answered David, 'Because their men made a show of force against us and sallied
out against us in the open. We drove them back to the approaches of the gate,
24 but the bowmen shot at your bodyguard from the ramparts; some of the king's
bodyguard perished, and your servant Uriah the Hittite was killed too.'

25 Then David said to the messenger, 'Say this to Joab, "Do not take the matter
to heart; the sword devours now one and now another. Storm the town in
26 greater force and overthrow it." That is the way to encourage him.' •When
Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she mourned for her
27 husband. •When the period of mourning was over, David sent to have her
brought to his house; she became his wife and bore him a son. But what David
had done displeased Yahweh.

David is rebuked by Nathan. His repentance[a]

1K21:17 Ps 51 Si 47

1 12 Yahweh sent Nathan the prophet to David. He came to him and said: 14:3-17 1K20:38

10 a. Rabbah, the capital, 11:1; 12:26, the modern Amman.

b. Zobah and Beth-rehob, to the N. of the sources of the Jordan, were united under Hadadezer' suzerainty. Maacah and Tob lay to the N. of Transjordania.

c. The army consisting of the mass levy of the whole population ('the common soldiers') and the mercenaries of the king's guard ('the champions').

d. This short narrative seems to come from a different source.

11 a. For the author of ch. 9-20 the Ammonite war is no more than a background for the story of David and Bathsheba.

b. The Spring equinox.

c. A foreign mercenary. For Hittites see Dt 7:1+.

d. Continence in war was a religious obligation, cf. 1 S 21:6.

e. 'Jerubbaal' Greek, cf. Jg 7:1f; 'Jerubbesheth' Hebr., see 2:8+ and 4:4+.

f. Omitted by Hebr.; inserted here from Greek.

12 a. Possibly Nathan's intervention, 12:1-15a, did not figure in the original narrative: in v. 22 David seems unaware of the child's doom. Both traditions, however, are of equal antiquity and display the same religious sentiment: David's sin is denounced, but his repentance wins forgiveness.

'In the same town were two men,
one rich, the other poor.
The rich man had flocks and herds 2
in great abundance;
the poor man had nothing but a ewe lamb, 3
one only, a small one he had bought.
This he fed, and it grew up with him and his children,
eating his bread, drinking from his cup,
sleeping on his breast; it was like a daughter to him.
When there came a traveller to stay, the rich man 4
refused to take one of his own flock or herd
to provide for the wayfarer who had come to him.
Instead he took the poor man's lamb
and prepared it for his guest.'

David's anger flared up against the man. 'As Yahweh lives,' he said to Nathan 5
Ex 21:37 Lk 19:8 'the man who did this deserves to die! •He must make fourfold restitution for 6
the lamb, for doing such a thing and showing no compassion.'

Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man. Yahweh the God of Israel 7
says this, "I anointed you king over Israel; I delivered you from the hands of
Saul; •I gave your master's house to you, his wives into your arms; I gave you 8
the House of Israel and of Judah; and if this were not enough, I would add as
much again for you. •Why have you shown contempt for Yahweh,[b] doing what 9
displeases him? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, taken
his wife for your own, and killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. •So now 10
the sword will never be far from your House,[c] since you have shown contempt
for me and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."

'Thus Yahweh speaks, "I will stir up evil for you out of your own House. 11
6:22 Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to your neighbour,
and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. •You worked in 12
secret, I will work this in the face of all Israel and in the face of the sun."'

1K 21:29 Ps 32:5 David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against Yahweh'. Then Nathan said 13
to David, 'Yahweh, for his part, forgives your sin; you are not to die. •Yet 14
because you have outraged Yahweh[d] by doing this, the child that is born to
you is to die.' •Then Nathan went home. 15

The death of Bathsheba's child. The birth of Solomon

Yahweh struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David and it fell
gravely ill. •David pleaded with Yahweh for the child; he kept a strict fast and 16
21:10 1K 21:27 went home and spent the night on the bare ground, covered with sacking. •The 17
officials of his household came and stood round him to get him to rise from the
ground, but he refused, nor would he take food with them. •On the seventh day 18
the child died. David's officers were afraid to tell him the child was dead. 'Even
when the child was alive' they thought 'we reasoned with him and he would
not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He will do something
desperate.' •David, however, noticed that his officers were whispering among 19
themselves, and realised that the child was dead. 'Is the child dead?' he asked
the officers. They answered, 'He is dead'.

David got up from the ground, bathed and anointed himself and put 20
on fresh clothes. Then he went into the sanctuary of Yahweh and prostrated
himself. On returning to his house he asked for food to be set before him, and
ate. •His officers said, 'Why are you acting like this? When the child was alive 21
you fasted and wept; now the child is dead you get up and take food.'[e] •'When 22
the child was alive' he answered 'I fasted and wept because I kept thinking, "Who
knows? Perhaps Yahweh will take pity on me and the child will live." •But 23
Jb 7:9+ now he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to
him[f] but he cannot come back to me.'

24 David consoled his wife Bathsheba. He went to her and slept with her. She 1 K 1:11
conceived[g] and gave birth to a son whom she named Solomon. Yahweh loved
25 him •and made this known through the prophet Nathan who named him Jedidiah
in accordance with the word of Yahweh.[h]

The capture of Rabbah ||1 Ch 20:1-3

26 Joab attacked Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the water town.[i]
27 He then sent messengers to tell David, 'I have stormed Rabbah and captured
28 the water town. •So now muster the rest of the troops and pitch camp against
the town and take it, unless you want me to capture the town and give it my
29 name.' •So David mustered the whole army and marched on Rabbah; he stormed
30 the town and captured it. •He took the crown from the head of Milcom;[j] it
weighed one talent of gold, and in it was set a precious stone which made an
ornament for David's head. He carried off great quantities of spoil from the
31 town. •He brought away its population and set them to work with saws, iron Ex 1:13 1 Ch 20:3
picks and iron axes, and employed them in brickmaking. He treated all the
Ammonite towns in the same way. Then David and the whole army returned to
Jerusalem.

3. ABSALOM[a]

Amnon violates Tamar his sister

1 13 After this, the following events took place. Absalom son of David had 3:2-3
a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar; Amnon son of David fell in love 1 Ch 3:9
2 with her. •Amnon was so obsessed with his sister Tamar that it made him ill,
for she was a virgin and it seemed to Amnon impossible to do anything to her.
3 But Amnon had a friend called Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, and 21:21
4 Jonadab was a very shrewd man. •'Son of the king,' he said 'tell me why, morning
after morning, you look so worn? Will you not tell me?' Amnon answered, 'I am
5 in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister'. •Then Jonadab said, 'Lie down
on your bed, pretend to be ill and when your father comes to visit you, say,
"Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat; let her prepare the
6 food before my eyes for me to see; only at her hands will I eat" '. •So Amnon
lay down and pretended to be ill. Then the king came to visit him and Amnon
said to the king, 'Let my sister Tamar come and make a cake or two; I will eat
7 at her hands'. •David then sent word to Tamar at the palace, 'Go to your brother
8 Amnon's house and prepare some food for him'. •Tamar went to the house of
her brother Amnon who was lying there in bed. She took dough and kneaded it,
9 and she made cakes there before his eyes and baked the cakes. •Then she took
the pan and dished them up in front of him, but he refused to eat. 'Let everyone
10 leave me' he said; so they all withdrew. •Then Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring
the food to the inner room so that I can eat at your hands'. So Tamar took the
cakes she had made and brought them to her brother Amnon in the inner room.
11 And as she was offering the food to him, he caught hold of her and said, 'Come;
12 lie with me, my sister'. •But she answered, 'No, my brother! Do not violate me.
13 This is not a thing men do in Israel. Do not commit such an outrage. •Wherever Gn 34:7 Dt 22:21 Jg 20:6,10 Jr 29:23

b. 'Yahweh' versions; 'the word of Yahweh' Hebr.
c. Allusion to the violent deaths of Amnon and of Absalom.
d. 'outraged Yahweh' corr.
e. David neglects the customary observances. His religious feeling is not conventional but personal, vv. 22-23 and 6:21-22.
f. To Sheol, the abode of the dead, cf. Nb 16:33+.
g. 'She conceived' Greek.
h. The birth of Solomon, 'beloved of Yahweh' (the meaning of Jedidiah), is an assurance of God's pardon. Moreover, it is Solomon and not the better qualified heirs whom God freely chooses to place on David's throne.
i. 'the water town' corr., cf. v. 27. The lower city at the foot of the acropolis.
j. 'Milcom' Greek. Milcom was the Ammonite idol, 1 K 11:5.
13 a. Absalom, fratricidal and rebellious son, is the central figure of the dramatic events within David's family, ch. 13-20. This domestic drama gives rise to a series of political crises which exposes the dissensions within the nation and threatens the future of the kingdom.

should I go, bearing my shame? While you would become an outcast in Israel. Go now and speak to the king; he will not refuse to give me to you.'[b] •But he 14
would not listen to her; he overpowered her and, raping her, lay with her.

Then Amnon was seized with extreme hatred for her; the hatred he now felt 15
for her was greater than his earlier love. 'Get up and go' he said. •'No, my 16
brother,' she said 'to send me away would be a greater wrong than the other
you have done me.'[c] But he would not listen to her. •He called the soldier who 17
was his servant. 'Get rid of this woman for me,' he said 'throw her out and bolt
the door after her.' •(She was wearing a long-sleeved gown, for this was what 18
the king's unmarried daughters wore in days gone by.) So the servant put her
out and bolted the door after her.

Tamar took dust and put it on her head, tore the long-sleeved gown she was 19
wearing, laid her hand on her head, and went away uttering cries as she went.[d]
Pr 12:16 Her brother Absalom said to her, 'Has Amnon your brother been with you? 20
Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this so much to heart.'
But Tamar remained disconsolate in her brother Absalom's house.

When King David heard the whole story, he was very angry; but he had no 21
wish to harm his son Amnon, since he loved him; he was his first-born.[e] •Absalom 22
however would not so much as speak to Amnon,[f] for he hated Amnon for having
raped his sister Tamar.

Absalom kills Amnon and flees

1 S 25:4f Two years later, when Absalom had the sheep-shearers at Baal-hazor, which 23
is near Ephraim, he invited the entire royal household.[g] •Absalom went to the 24
king and said, 'At this moment your servant has the sheep-shearers. Will the
king and his officers be pleased to come with your servant?' •'No, my son,' the 25
king replied 'we must not all come and be a burden to you.' And though Absalom
was insistent, he would not go but dismissed him. •Absalom persisted, 'Then 26
at least let my brother Amnon come with us'. The king said, 'Why should he
go with you?' •But Absalom insisted, so he allowed Amnon and all the king's 27
sons to go with him.

Absalom prepared a royal banquet[h] •and then gave this order to his servants: 28
'Listen carefully; when Amnon's heart is merry with wine and I say, "Strike
Amnon down", then kill him. Have no fear. I myself have given you the order.
Take courage, be brave.' •Absalom's servants treated Amnon as Absalom had 29
ordered. Then all the king's sons started up, mounted their mules and took flight.

While they were on the road, a rumour reached David, 'Absalom has killed 30
1:11 all the king's sons; not one of them is left'. •The king rose and tore his garments 31
and lay down on the ground. All his officers in attendance tore their garments
too. •But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, spoke up. 'Let not my lord 32
imagine' he said 'that they have killed all the young men, the sons of the king;
Pr12:16 Amnon alone is dead, for Absalom's face gave warning of this ever since Amnon
violated his sister Tamar. •Let not my lord the king imagine that all the king's 33
sons are dead; Amnon alone is dead •and Absalom has taken flight.' 34

The soldier on sentry duty looked up and saw a large troop advancing down
the slope on the Bahurim road.[i] The sentry came to tell the king. 'I saw men'
he said 'coming down the Bahurim road on the mountainside.' •Then Jonadab 35
said to the king, 'Here come the king's sons; it has turned out just as your servant
said'. •He had scarcely finished speaking when the king's sons arrived, and they 36
cried aloud and wept; the king and all his officers wept bitterly too. •Absalom 37a
3:3; 15:8 however had taken flight and gone to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur,
where he stayed for three years. •And all that time the king observed mourning 38b 37b
for his son.[j]

Joab negotiates the return of Absalom

The king's heart[k] was now no longer set against Absalom, once he had 39

recovered from Amnon's death. **14** Now Joab son of Zeruiah observed that
the heart of the king was again turning to Absalom, •so he sent to Tekoa[a] for 1K20:38
a quick-witted woman. 'Pretend to be in mourning' he said. 'Put on mourning
garments; do not anoint yourself with oil; act like a woman who has long been
mourning for the dead. •Go then to the king and say this to him.' And Joab
put into her mouth the words she had to say.[b] 12:1f
So the woman of Tekoa went to the king and fell with her face to the ground 1K3:16f
and did homage. 'Help, O king!'[c] she said. •The king said, 'What is the matter?' 2K6:26f
'Alas,' she replied 'I am a widow; my husband is dead. •Your servant had two
sons and out in the fields, where there was no one to intervene, they quarrelled
with each other. And one of them struck the other and killed him. •And now
the whole clan has risen against your servant. "Give up the man who killed his Nb35:19+
brother" they say. "For the life of the brother he murdered we will have his 21:17
death, and so destroy the heir too." By this means they will put out what embers
remain to me, and leave my husband neither name nor survivor on the face of
the earth.' •The king then said to the woman, 'Go to your house; I myself will
give orders concerning your case'. •The woman of Tekoa said to the king, 'My
lord king! May the guilt be on me and on my family; the king and his throne
are innocent of it.' •'Bring me the man who threatened you,' the king replied
'and he shall never hurt you again.' •Then she said, 'Let the king be pleased to
pronounce the name of Yahweh his God, so that the avenger of blood may not Nb35:19+
do greater harm and destroy my son'. 'As Yahweh lives,' he said 'not one hair
of your son shall fall to the ground.'
Then the woman said, 'Permit your servant to say something else to my lord
the king.' 'Go on' he said. •'Why then' the woman said 'has the king—who
in making this decision convicts himself—so conspired against God's people by
not bringing back home the one he has banished? •We must all die; we are like
water spilt on the ground that can never be gathered up again, nor does God Jb14:7-12 Ps 88:5,10
raise up a corpse; let the king make[d] plans then for the one who has Jb 7:9
been banished not to remain far away from him in exile.[e]
[f]'Now the reason why I have come to speak about this to my lord the king
is because people have frightened me, and your servant thought, "I will speak
to the king; perhaps the king will do what his servant asks. •For the king will
consent to deliver his servant from the hands of the man who would cut us off,
myself and my son with me, from God's heritage. •May the word of my lord
the king" your servant thought "set me at rest. For my lord the king is like
the angel of God[g] for discerning good and evil."[h] May Yahweh your God be 1S29:9
with you!'
Answering her the king said, 'Please do not evade the question I am about
to ask you'. The woman said, 'Let my lord the king ask his question'. •'Is not
the hand of Joab behind you in all this?' the king asked. The woman replied,
'As surely as you live, my lord king, I cannot get away from the things which my

b. According to ancient usage, cf. Gn 20:12, Amnon could have married Tamar who was only his half-sister. Such marriages were forbidden by the laws of Lv 18:9; 20:17; Dt 27:22.

c. The translation follows the Greek.

d. As one in mourning or in sorrow, 1:2; Est 4:1; Jr 2:37.

e. End of verse as versions; omitted by Hebr.

f. Lit. 'spoke neither good nor bad'. Absalom breaks with Amnon.

g. 'the entire household' conj.

h. 'Absalom... banquet' versions.

i. 'on the Bahurim road' conj. The Hebr. omits what follows as far as the second 'Bahurim'; the restoration follows the Greek. Bahurim lies E. of the Mount of Olives on the road to Jericho, 16:5.

j. The text of vv. 37-38 is confused. We reject 38a, a repetition of 37a.

k. Lit. 'The spirit of the king' Greek.

14 a. About eleven miles S. of Jerusalem; home of the prophet Amos.

b. As Nathan had done, 12:1f, Joab puts an imaginary case to secure a pronouncement from the king.

c. Formula of appeal to the crown.

d. 'let the king make' Greek; 'and he (God) made' Hebr.

e. Amnon is dead; nothing more can be done; the banished Absalom may as well return.

f. The king's eyes are opened; the woman has applied the fictitious case to Absalom. She now reverts to her former role. V. 17 is applicable to both cases, imaginary and real.

g. In the early texts, Gn 16:7+, the angel of God is God himself in the visible form in which he appears to men. David's wisdom is divine, cf. also v. 20.

h. I.e. everything, cf. 13:22.

lord the king has said. Yes, it was your servant Joab who asked me to
do this; he put all these words into your servant's mouth. •Your servant Joab 20
acted in this way to disguise the matter, but my lord has the wisdom of the
1 S 29:9 angel of God; he knows all that takes place on earth.'

The king then said to Joab, 'Very well, the suit is granted. Go and bring the 21
young man Absalom back.' •Joab fell with his face to the ground, did homage 22
and blessed the king. 'My lord king,' Joab said 'your servant knows now that
he has won your favour, since the king has done what his servant asked.' •Joab 23
then set off and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. •The 24
king, however, said, 'Let him retire to his own house; he is not to appear in my
presence'. So Absalom retired to his own house and was not received by the king.

Some details about Absalom

1 S 16:12 In the whole of Israel there was no man who could be praised for his beauty as 25
much as Absalom; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there
was not a blemish on him. •When he cut the hair of his head—and he would 26
cut it every year; he would cut it then because it grew too heavy for him—he
18:18 would weigh the hair; two hundred shekels, king's weight. •To Absalom were 27
born three sons and one daughter called Tamar; she was a beautiful woman.

Absalom obtains his pardon

Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years without being received by the king. 28
Then Absalom sent for Joab to send him to the king, but Joab would not come 29
to him. He sent for him a second time, but Joab would not come. •So he said 30
to his servants, 'Look, Joab's field is next to mine and he has barley in it;
Jg 15:4-5 go and set fire to it'. Absalom's servants set fire to the field. •At this, Joab went 31
off to Absalom at his house. 'Why' he asked him 'have your servants set fire
to the field belonging to me?' •Absalom answered Joab, 'Look now, I sent word 32
to you to say I wanted you to go to the king with this message, "Why did
I come back from Geshur? Better for me to be there still. Now I wish to be
received by the king, and if I am guilty, let him put me to death." ' •Joab went 33
to the king and told him this. He then summoned Absalom who went to the
king and bowed low before him, throwing himself on his face to the ground
before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

24:13
1 S 8:11
1 K 1:5 ### Absalom's intrigues

15 After this, Absalom procured a chariot and horses, with fifty men to run 1
ahead of him. •He would rise early and stand beside the road leading to 2
the gate; and whenever a man with some lawsuit had to come before the king's
court, Absalom would call out to him and ask, 'What town are you from?' He
would answer, 'Your servant is from one of the tribes in Israel'.[a] •Then Absalom 3
would say, 'Look, your case is sound and just, but there is not one deputy of the
king's who will listen to you'. •Absalom would go on to say, 'Oh, who will 4
appoint me judge in the land? Then anyone with a lawsuit or a plea could come
to me and I would see he had justice.' •And whenever anyone came up to do 5
homage to him, he would stretch out his hand and take him[b] and kiss him.
Absalom acted in this way with all the Israelites who came to the king for 6
justice, and so Absalom seduced the hearts of the men of Israel.

Absalom's rebellion

At the end of four[c] years Absalom said to the king, 'Allow me to go to Hebron[d] 7
13:37a to fulfil the vow I made to Yahweh; •for when I was at Geshur in Aram, your 8
servant made this vow: "If Yahweh brings me back to Jerusalem," I said "I will
offer worship to Yahweh in Hebron".'[e] •The king said to him, 'Go in peace'. 9
So he set off and went to Hebron.

10 Absalom sent couriers throughout the tribes of Israel saying, 'When you hear
11 the trumpet sound you are to say, "Absalom is king at Hebron!" ' •With Absalom
there went two hundred men from Jerusalem; they were invited guests and came
12 in all innocence, quite unaware. •Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, 16:23
David's counsellor, from Giloh his town, and had him with him[f] while he was
offering the sacrifices. The conspiracy grew in strength and Absalom's supporters
grew in number.

David's flight

13 A messenger came to tell David, 'The hearts of the men of Israel are now Ps 3
14 with Absalom.' •So David said to all his officers who were with him in Jerusalem,
'Let us be off, let us fly, or we shall never escape from Absalom. Leave as quickly
as you can in case he mounts a surprise attack and worsts us and puts the city
15 to the sword.'[g] •The king's officers answered, 'Whatever my lord the king decides,
16 we are at your service'. •The king left on foot with all his household, leaving
17 ten concubines to look after the palace. •The king left on foot with all the people 16:21-22; 20:3
18 and stopped at the last house. •All his officers stood[h] at his side. All the Chere- 8:18
thites and all the Pelethites, with Ittai and all the six hundred Gittites who had
19 come in his retinue from Gath, marched past the king. •The king said to Ittai
the Gittite, 'You, why are you coming with us? Go back and stay with the king,
20 for you are a foreigner, an exile too from your homeland. •You came only
yesterday; should I take you wandering today with us, when I do not know
myself where I am going? Go back, take your fellow countrymen with you, and
21 may Yahweh show[i] you kindness and faithfulness.' •But Ittai answered the king,
'As Yahweh lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king Rt 1:16
22 may be, for death or life, there will your servant be too'. •So David said to
Ittai, 'Go then, pass on'. And Ittai of Gath passed on with all his men and
23 retinue. •All the people wept aloud. The king took his stand in the wadi Kidron,
and all the people marched past him towards the wilderness.

The ark leaves the city

24 [j]Zadok was there too and all the Levites carrying the ark of God. They set
down the ark of God beside Abiathar until the people had all passed out of the
25 city. •Then the king said to Zadok, 'Take the ark of God back to the city. Should
I win the favour of Yahweh, he will bring me back and permit me to see it and
26 its dwelling place again. •But should he say, "I take no pleasure in you", then 16:10
27 here I am, let him deal with me as he likes.' •The king said to Zadok the
priest, 'Look, you and Abiathar go back[k] in peace to the city, with your two
28 sons, your own son and Jonathan son of Abiathar. •I intend to wait in the
29 plains of the wilderness[l] until word comes from you bringing me news.' •So
Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and remained there.

Hushai undertakes to work for David

30 David then made his way up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, his 19:5 Mi 1:8
head covered and his feet bare.[m] And all the people with him had their heads

15 a. Here probably the northern tribes as opposed to Judah. Absalom exploits the latent antagonism of the two sections within the nation, see 19:42f.

b. 'would take him' corr.

c. 'four' Greek; 'forty' Hebr.

d. Absalom has canvassed in the N. and now seeks support in the S. Hebron, the original capital, 2:1f, might possibly resent David's preference for Jerusalem.

e. 'If Yahweh brings me back' corr. 'in Hebron' Greek; omitted by Hebr.

f. 'sent for' Greek, cf. Syr. 'and had him with him' conj.

g. David does not despair, since he leaves supporters behind, vv. 27f and 34f; but, caught between the northern and southern rebels, makes a strategic withdrawal.

h. 'stood' conj. 'Ittai' restored.

i. 'and may Yahweh show' Greek.

j. Text of verse uncertain.

k. 'Look, you and Abiathar go back' conj.

l. The barren region between Jerusalem and the Jordan.

m. Mourning ritual, 19:5; Ezk 24:17, which came to be used as a sign of sorrow in general, Jr 14:3f; Est 6:12; Mi 1:8.

covered and made their way up, weeping as they went. •Then David was 31
told[n] that Ahithophel was among the conspirators with Absalom. David said,
'Yahweh, turn Ahithophel's counsels to folly'.

As David reached the summit, where God is worshipped,[o] he saw Hushai 32
the Archite, the companion of David, coming to meet him with his tunic torn
and with earth on his head. •David said, 'If you go on with me, you will be 33
a burden to me. •But if you go back to the city and say to Absalom, "I will be 34
your servant, my lord king; once I was in your father's service, but now I will
serve you", you will be able to thwart the counsels of Ahithophel for me. •Will 35
not the priests Zadok and Abiathar be with you? Anything you hear from the
palace you must report to the priests Zadok and Abiathar. •With them, you 36
will find, are their two sons, Zadok's son Ahimaaz, and Abiathar's son Jonathan;
through them you are to send me word of all you hear.' •Hushai, the companion 37
of David, re-entered the city just as Absalom was reaching Jerusalem.

David and Ziba

When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of 1
Meribbaal came to meet him with a pair of donkeys, saddled and laden with
two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of the
season's fruits, and a skin of wine. •The king said to Ziba, 'What are you going 2
to do with that?' 'The donkeys' Ziba replied 'are for the king's family to ride,
the bread and the fruit for the soldiers to eat, the wine is for drinking by those
who grow weary in the wilderness.' •'And where is your master's son?' the king 3
asked. Ziba answered the king, 'Why, he has stayed in Jerusalem because, he
says, "The House of Israel will give me back my father's kingdom today" '.
Then the king said to Ziba, 'All that Meribbaal owns is now yours'. Ziba said, 4
'My homage, lord king! May I deserve your favour!'

Shimei curses David

As David was reaching Bahurim, out came a man of the same clan as Saul's 5
family. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and as he came he uttered curse after
curse •and threw stones at David and at all King David's officers, though the 6
whole army and all the champions flanked the king right and left. •The words 7
of his curse were these, 'Be off, be off, man of blood, scoundrel! •Yahweh has 8
brought on you all the blood of the House of Saul[a] whose sovereignty you have
usurped; and Yahweh has transferred that same sovereignty to Absalom your
son. Now your doom has overtaken you, man of blood that you are.' •Abishai 9
son of Zeruiah said to the king, 'Is this dead dog to curse my lord the king?
Let me go over and cut his head off.' •[b]But the king replied, 'What business is 10
it of mine and yours, sons of Zeruiah? Let him curse. If Yahweh said to him,
"Curse David", what right has anyone to say, "Why have you done this?" '
David said to Abishai and all his officers, 'Why, my own son, sprung from my 11
body, is now seeking my life; so now how much the more this Benjaminite?
Let him curse on if Yahweh has told him to. •Perhaps Yahweh will look on my 12
misery[c] and repay me with good for his curse today.' •So David and his men 13
went on their way. But Shimei continued along the mountainside opposite him,
cursing as he went, throwing stones and flinging earth. •The king and all the 14
people who were with him arrived exhausted at...[d] where he refreshed himself.

Hushai with Absalom

Absalom entered Jerusalem with all the men of Israel; with him was Ahitho- 15
phel. •When Hushai the Archite, the companion of David, came to Absalom, 16
Hushai said to Absalom, 'Long live the king! Long live the king!' •'Is this your 17
affection for your friend?' Absalom said to Hushai. 'Why did you not leave
with your friend?' •Hushai answered Absalom, 'No, I belong to the man whom 18
Yahweh and these people and all the men of Israel have chosen, and on his side

19 I will remain. •Besides, whom should I serve, if not his son? As I served your
father, so I shall serve you.'

Absalom and David's concubines

20 21 Absalom said to Ahithophel, 'Think carefully. What shall we do?' •Ahithophel
answered Absalom, 'Go to your father's concubines whom he left to look after 15:16
the palace; then all Israel will hear that you have incurred your father's enmity,
22 and the resolution of all your supporters will be strengthened'.[e] •So they pitched 12:11-12
a tent for Absalom on the housetop and in the sight of all Israel Absalom went
23 to his father's concubines. •In those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like 15:12,31
an oracle asked from God; and so was all Ahithophel's advice respected, as by
David, so by Absalom.

Hushai thwarts Ahithophel's plans

1 17 Ahithophel said to Absalom, 'Let me choose twelve thousand men and
2 set off this very night in pursuit of David. •I shall fall on him while he is
tired and dispirited; I shall strike terror into him, and all the people who are
3 with him will take flight. Then I shall strike down the king alone •and bring all
the people back to you, as a bride returns to her husband. You seek the life
4 of only one man;[a] the rest of the people will go unharmed.' •The suggestion
appealed to Absalom and all the elders of Israel.
5 'Next call Hushai the Archite' Absalom said. 'Let us hear what he too has
6 to say.' •When Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom said, 'This is what Ahithophel
7 says. Are we to do as he suggests? If not, say something yourself.' •Hushai
answered Absalom, 'On this occasion the advice Ahithophel has offered is not
8 good. •You know' Hushai went on 'that your father and his men are champions
and as angry as a wandering bear robbed of her cubs. Your father is used to Ho 13:8
9 warfare; he will not let the army rest during the night. •At this very moment
he is hiding in a hollow or somewhere else. If at the outset there are casualties
among our troops, word will go round of disaster to the army supporting
10 Absalom. •And then even the valiant, with a heart like the heart of a lion, will
be quite unmanned; for all Israel knows that your father is a champion and
11 that the men with him are valiant. •For my part, I offer this advice: Let all Israel,
from Dan to Beersheba, muster round you,[b] numerous as the sand on the
12 seashore, with your royal person marching in their midst. •We shall come up
with him wherever he is to be found; we shall fall on him as the dew falls on the
13 ground, and not leave him or one of the men with him alive. •Should he retire
into a town, all Israel will bring ropes to that town, and we will drag it into
14 the wadi until not a pebble of it is to be found.' •Then Absalom and all the
people of Israel said, 'The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than the advice
of Ahithophel'. Yahweh had determined to thwart Ahithophel's shrewd advice 15:31
and so to bring disaster on Absalom.
15 Hushai then told the priests Zadok and Abiathar, 'Ahithophel gave such and
such advice to Absalom and the elders of Israel, but I advised so and so.
16 Now send quickly and tell David this, "Do not camp in the plains of the
wilderness tonight but cross to the other side as fast as you can, or the king and
all the army with him will be annihilated".'

David is warned and crosses the Jordan

17 Jonathan and Ahimaaz were stationed at the Fuller's Spring; a maidservant

n. 'Then David was told' Greek.
o. Possibly the sanctuary of Nob, 1 S 21:2.
16 a. An allusion perhaps to the massacre of 21:1-14, which probably took place at the beginning of David's reign.
b. Text of verse uncertain.
c. 'my misery' versions.
d. A place-name has dropped out of the text.
e. Absalom's action is more than an indecent exhibition; by usurping his father's harem he makes a public declaration of his right of succession, cf. 3:7+.
17 a. 'as a bride... one man' Greek.
b. This will involve delay: David, biding his time, 15:28, will be able to secure his position.

was to go and warn them and they in turn were to warn King David, for they dared not let themselves be seen entering the town. •A young man saw them 18
nonetheless and told Absalom. Then both of them hastily made off and came to the house of a man of Bahurim. In his courtyard was a cistern and they got down into it. •The woman took a covering and, spreading it over the mouth of 19
the cistern, scattered crushed grain on it so that nothing showed.

Absalom's servants came to the woman in the house and said, 'Where are 20
Ahimaaz and Jonathan?' 'They have gone further on towards the water'[c] the woman answered. They searched, but finding nothing went back to Jerusalem. When they had gone, the men climbed out of the cistern and went to warn King 21
David. 'Be on your way' they told David 'and cross the water quickly, for Ahithophel has given such and such advice about you.' •So David and all 22
the troops with him set off and crossed the Jordan. By dawn no one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.

When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his 23
donkey and set off and went home to his own town. Then having set his house in order, he strangled himself and so died.[d] He was buried in his father's tomb.

Absalom crosses the Jordan. David at Mahanaim

David had reached Mahanaim when Absalom crossed the Jordan with all 24
19:14; 20:4-13 the men of Israel. •Absalom had put Amasa in command of the army in place 25
of Joab. This Amasa was the son of a man called Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail the daughter of Jesse and sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother.[e]
Israel and Absalom pitched camp in the land of Gilead. 26

10:2 1 K 2:7 When David reached Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the 27
9:4; 19:32 Ezr 2:62 Ammonites, Machir son of Ammiel from Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim •brought mattresses, rugs, bowls and crockery, wheat, barley, 28
meal, roasted grain, beans, lentils, •honey, curds and cheese, sheep and oxen, 29
which they presented to David and the people with him for them to eat. 'The army' they said 'has been hungry and tired and thirsty in the wilderness.'

The defeat of Absalom's party

18 David reviewed the troops that were with him, and appointed commanders 1
of thousands and commanders of hundreds to lead them. •David divided 2
the army into three groups,[a] one under the command of Joab, another under the command of Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and the third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. Then David said to the troops, 'I too will march with you in person'. •But the troops replied, 'You must not go. 3
If we are routed, they will not give us a thought; and if half of us die, they will not give us a thought; but you, you are the equal of ten thousand of us. Besides, it is better for you to be ready to reinforce us from the town.' •David said, 4
'I will do as you think best'. And the king stood by the gate as the troops marched 5
out by their hundreds and their thousands. •The king gave orders to Joab,
18:12 Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake treat young Absalom gently'. And all the troops heard that the king had given these orders about Absalom to all the commanders. So the troops marched out to take the field against Israel, and battle was joined 6
in the Forest of Ephraim.[b] •There Israel's army was beaten by David's followers; 7
it was a great defeat that day, with twenty thousand casualties. •The fighting 8
spread throughout the region and, of the troops, the forest claimed more victims that day than the sword.

The death of Absalom

Absalom happened to run into some of David's followers. Absalom was 9
riding a mule and the mule passed under the thick branches of a great oak. Absalom's head caught fast in the oak and he was left hanging[c] between heaven and earth, while the mule he was riding went on. •Someone saw this and told 10

11 Joab. 'I have just seen Absalom' he said 'hanging from an oak.' •Joab said
to the man who told him, 'If you saw him, why did you not strike him to the
ground then and there? I would have taken it on myself to give you ten silver
12 shekels and a belt too.' •But the man answered Joab, 'Even were I to feel the
weight of a thousand silver shekels in my hand, I would not lift my hand against
the king's son. In our own hearing the king gave you and Abishai and Ittai these 18:5
13 orders, "For my sake[d] spare young Absalom". •Had I acted treacherously, thus
endangering my life, nothing is hidden from the king, and you yourself
14 would have stood by idle.' •Then Joab said, 'I cannot waste my time with you
like this'. And he took three lances in his hand and thrust them into Absalom's
15 heart while he was still alive there in the oak tree. •Then ten soldiers, Joab's
armour-bearers, stepped forward, cut Absalom down and finished him off. 1 S 14:13
16 Then Joab had the trumpet sounded and the troops stopped pursuing Israel,
17 for Joab held the troops back. •They took Absalom, flung him into a deep pit
in the forest and reared a great cairn over him. All the Israelites had fled, each Jos 7:26; 8:29; 10:27
man to his tent.
18 Now Absalom during his lifetime had undertaken the erection of the pillar
to himself which is in the Valley of the King. 'I have no son' he said 'to preserve 14:27 Gn 14:17+
the memory of my name.' So he had given the pillar his name, and it is called
to this day the Pillar of Absalom.

The news is brought to David

19 Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, 'I must run and tell the good news to the king
20 that Yahweh has vindicated his cause by ridding him of his enemies'. •But Joab
said, 'Today you would be no bearer of good news, some other day you will
be; but today you would not be bringing good news, for the king's son is dead'.
21 Then Joab said to the Cushite,[e] 'Go and tell the king what you have seen'. The
22 Cushite bowed to Joab and ran off. •But Ahimaaz son of Zadok persisted.
'Come what may,' he said to Joab 'I must myself run after the Cushite.' 'My son,'
23 Joab said 'why run? You will get no reward for your news.'[f] •But he replied,
'Come what may, I am going to run'. 'Then run' Joab said. And Ahimaaz
set off to run by way of the plain and passed the Cushite.
24 David was sitting between the two gates. The lookout had gone up to the roof
of the gate, on the ramparts; he looked up and saw a man running all by himself.
25 The watch called out to the king and told him. The king said, 'If he is by himself,
26 he has good news to tell'.[g] As the man drew still nearer, •the watch saw another
man running, and the watch who was on top of the gate[h] called out, 'Here comes
another man running by himself'. David said, 'He too is a bearer of good
27 news'. •The watchman said, 'I recognise the way the first man runs; Ahimaaz 2 K 9:20
son of Zadok runs like that'. 'He is a good man' the king said 'and he comes 1 K 1:42
with good news.'
28 Ahimaaz approached[i] the king. 'All hail!' he said, and bowed down before
the king with his face to the earth. 'Blessed be Yahweh your God' he said
29 'who has handed over the men who rebelled against my lord the king!' •'Is all
well with young Absalom?' the king asked. Ahimaaz replied, 'I saw there was a
great uproar when Joab despatched your servant, but I do not know what it was'.[j]
30 The king said, 'Move aside and stand there'. He moved aside and stood waiting.

c. 'further on towards the water' conj.

d. The only suicide mentioned in the O.T., apart from those of soldiers killing themselves to thwart the enemy, Jg 9:54; 1 S 31:4f; 1 K 16:18; 2 M 14:41f.

e. 'the Ishmaelite' Greek, cf. 1 Ch 2:17. 'Jesse' Greek and cf. 1 Ch 2:16. Amasa is therefore Joab's cousin. Both are cousins of Absalom and nephews of David.

f. Text uncertain.

18 a. 'divided into three groups' Greek.

b. Place uncertain.

c. 'was left hanging' versions.

d. 'For my sake' versions.

e. Ethiopian slave (Cush is Ethiopia) and therefore black, an ill-omened messenger. Cf. v. 27.

f. 'you will get no' conj. The one who brings good news is rewarded, 4:10.

g. A group of fugitives would have meant disaster.

h. 'on top of the gate' versions.

i. 'approached' Greek.

j. Discreet lie: Ahimaaz leaves the bad news to the second messenger.

Then the Cushite arrived. 'Good news for my lord the king!' cried the Cushite. 31
'Yahweh has vindicated your cause today by ridding you of all who rebelled
against you.' •'Is all well with young Absalom?' the king asked the Cushite. 32
'May the enemies of my lord the king' the Cushite answered 'and all who
rebelled against you to your hurt, share the lot of that young man.'

David mourns for Absalom

19 The king shuddered. He went up to the room over the gate and burst into 1 33
tears, and weeping[a] said, 'My son Absalom! My son! My son Absalom!
Would I had died in your place! Absalom, my son, my son!' •Word was brought 2 1
to Joab, 'The king is now weeping and mourning for Absalom'. •And the day's 3 2
victory was turned to mourning for all the troops, because they learned that
the king was grieving for his son. •And the troops returned stealthily that day 4 3
to the town, as troops creep back ashamed when routed in battle. •The king 5 4
15:30 had veiled his face and was crying aloud, 'My son Absalom! Absalom, my son,
my son!'

Then Joab went indoors to the king. 'Today' he said 'you are covering the 6 5
faces of all your servants with shame when they have saved your life today, and
the lives of your sons and daughters, of your wives too and your concubines,
all because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. Today 7 6
you have made it plain that commanders and soldiers mean nothing to you,
since now I see that if Absalom were alive today and we all dead, you would
be pleased. •Now get up, come out and reassure your soldiers, for if you do not 8 7
come I swear by Yahweh not one man will stay with you tonight; and this will
be a worse misfortune for you than all that has happened you from your youth
until now.' •So the king rose and took his seat at the gate. All the troops soon 9 8
heard the news: 'The king' they say 'has taken his seat at the gate'. And the
whole army assembled in front of the king.

Preparations for David's return

Israel had fled, each man to his tent. •Throughout the tribes of Israel all 10 9
were quarrelling. 'The king' they said 'delivered us from the power of our
enemies, he saved us from the hands of the Philistines, and now he himself has
had to flee the country to escape from Absalom; •while Absalom, whom we 11 10
had anointed to reign over us, has now died in battle. So now why not
do something about bringing the king back?'

Word of what was being said throughout Israel reached the king.[b] •Then 12 12
King David sent word to the priests Zadok and Abiathar, 'Say to the elders of
Judah,[c] "Why should you be the last to bring the king home? •You are my 13 12
brothers, you are my own flesh and blood, why should you be the last to bring the
20:4 Rt1:17+ king back?" •Say to Amasa[d] too, "Are you not my own flesh and blood? May God 14 13
do this to me and more, if you are not my army commander from now on,
in place of Joab." ' •Then all the men of Judah were won over as one man, 15 14
sending word to the king, 'Come back, you and all who serve you'.

Episodes connected with David's return: Shimei

So the king turned about and reached the Jordan. Judah, coming to meet 16 15
16:5-13 the king to escort the king across the Jordan, had arrived at Gilgal. •Shimei son 17 16
of Gera the Benjaminite from Bahurim hurried down with the men of Judah
16:1-4 to meet King David. •With him were a thousand men from Benjamin. Ziba, the 18 17
19:25-31 servant of the House of Saul, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants, arrived
1 K 2:8 at the Jordan before the king •and worked manfully[e] ferrying the king's family 19 18
across and doing whatever he wanted.

16:13 While the king was crossing the Jordan, Shimei son of Gera fell at his feet
and said to the king, 'Let not my lord hold me guilty. Do not remember the 20 19
wrong your servant did, the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Put it out of

21/20 your mind. •For your servant admits that he has sinned, and here I am today,
first of all the House of Joseph[f] to come down and meet my lord the king.'
22/21 Then Abishai son of Zeruiah spoke out. 'Does not Shimei deserve death for
23/22 cursing Yahweh's anointed?' •But David said, 'What is there between me and 16:9-10
you, sons of Zeruiah, for you to be my enemies today? On such a day, could 1 S 11:13
anyone in Israel be put to death? Today I know for sure that I am king over
24/23 Israel. •Your life is spared' the king said. And the king gave him his oath.[g]

Meribbaal 16:1-4

25/24 Meribbaal son of Saul had also gone down to meet the king. He had not
cared for his feet or his hands,[h] he had neither trimmed his moustache nor Dt 21:12
washed his clothes from the day the king left to the day he came back in peace.
26/25 When he arrived from Jerusalem[i] to greet the king, the king asked him, 'Why
27/26 did you not come with me, Meribbaal?' •'My lord king,' he answered 'my 9:2-13
servant deceived me. Your servant said to him, "Saddle my donkey;[j] I shall
28/27 ride it and go with the king", for your servant is lame. •He has slandered your
servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do 1 S 29:9
29/28 as you think right. •For all my father's family earned no better than death from
the hands of my lord the king, and yet you have admitted your servant among
those who eat at your table. What right have I to make further appeal to the 9:10
30/29 king?' •The king said, 'Why say any more? I rule that you and Ziba are to share
31/30 the property.' •'Let him take it all,' Meribbaal said to the king 'since my lord
the king has come home in peace.'

Barzillai

32/31 Barzillai the Gileadite, too, had gone down from Rogelim and had stayed with 17:27
33/32 the king to escort him as far as the Jordan. •Barzillai was a man of great age; 1 K 2:7
Ezr 2:62
he was eighty years old. He had kept the king in provisions during his stay at
34/33 Mahanaim, for he was a very rich man. •'Come with me' the king said to
35/34 Barzillai 'and I will provide for your old age[k] in Jerusalem with me.' •But
Barzillai answered the king, 'How many years have I left to live, for me to go
36/35 up to Jerusalem with the king? •I am eighty years old now; can I tell the good
from the bad? Has your servant any taste for his food and drink? Can I still
hear the voices of men and women singers? Why should your servant be a further
37/36 burden to my lord the king? •'Your servant will just cross the Jordan with the
38/37 king; why should the king grant me such reward? •Allow your servant to go
back to die in my own town near the grave of my father and mother. But here
is your servant Chimham;[m] let him go with my lord the king; treat him as
39/38 you think right.' •The king said, 'Let Chimham go with me then; I will do
things for him that will please you, and anything you request I will do for him
40/39 for your sake'. •All the people then crossed the Jordan and the king crossed too;
he kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and the latter returned to his home.

Judah and Israel dispute over the king

41/40 The king went on to Gilgal and Chimham stayed with him. All the people
42/41 of Judah accompanied the king and half the people of Israel too. •Then all the
men of Israel came to the king. 'Why' they asked the king 'have our brothers,

19 a. 'weeping' Greek.
b. V. 12b (its last words excepted) is here transposed as in some of the versions.
c. David wants his own tribe to recall him first: blood-ties prompt him, but also a suspicion that his dynasty can count only on the loyalty of Judah.
d. The military leader of the rebellion, 17:25; he especially must be won over. David mistrusts the bloodthirsty Joab and is prepared to dismiss him, but Joab gets rid of his rival, 20:8-13, and remains at his post till David's death, 1 K 2:5f, 28f.
e. Lit. 'served their service' Greek.
f. The phrase sometimes includes Benjamin.
g. But David sees to it that after his death vengeance will be exacted, 1 K 2:8f, 36-46.
h. 'or his hands' Greek.
i. 'from Jerusalem' some Greek MSS.
j. 'said to him... donkey' versions.
k. 'for your old age' Greek.
l. Text uncertain.
m. Son of Barzillai.

the men of Judah, carried you off and brought the king and his family across the Jordan, and all David's men with him?' •All the men of Judah retorted to 43 42
the men of Israel, 'Because the king is more closely related to us. Why do you take offence at this? Have we eaten at the king's expense or levied portions for
1K 11:31 ourselves?' •The men of Israel replied to the men of Judah, 'We have ten shares 44 43
in the king. We are your elder too.[a] Why have you despised us then? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back the king?' But the language of the men of Judah was more vehement than that of the men of Israel.

The revolt of Sheba[a]

20 Now there happened to be a scoundrel there called Sheba son of Bichri, 1
a Benjaminite, who sounded the trumpet and cried:

1K 12:16
'We have no share in David,
we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
Every man to his tents, Israel!'

At this all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bichri. 2
But the men of Judah stayed with their king on his way from Jordan to Jerusalem.

15:16; 16:20-22 So David came to his palace at Jerusalem. He took the ten concubines he 3
had left to look after the palace and put them under guard. He provided for their upkeep but never went to them again; they were shut away until the day
6:23 they died, widows, as it were, of a living man.[b]

The assassination of Amasa

17:25; 19:14 The king said to Amasa, 'Summon the men of Judah to me, and be here yourself 4
within three days'. •Amasa went to summon Judah, but he delayed beyond the 5
time David had fixed. •[c]David then said to Abishai, 'Sheba son of Bichri is more 6
dangerous to us than ever Absalom was, so take your master's guards and be after him, or he may reach fortified towns and elude us'. •Behind Abishai marched 7
8:18; 23:8f Joab, the Cherethites, the Pelethites and all the champions, marching from Jerusalem in pursuit of Sheba son of Bichri. •They were near the great stone 8
2:13 at Gibeon when Amasa came face to face with them. Joab was wearing his uniform, over which he had buckled on a sword hanging from his waist in its scabbard; the sword came out[d] and fell. •Joab said to Amasa, 'Are you well, 9
my brother?' And with his right hand he took Amasa by the beard to kiss him.
1K 2:5 Amasa paid no attention to the sword Joab was holding, and Joab struck him 10
with it in the belly and spilled his entrails on the ground. He did not need to strike a second blow; and so Amasa died. Joab and Abishai hurried on in pursuit of Sheba son of Bichri.

One of Joab's soldiers stood on guard beside Amasa. 'Whoever is on Joab's 11
side,' he said 'whoever is for David, let him follow Joab.' •Meanwhile Amasa 12
lay in the middle of the road in pools of his blood. Seeing that everyone was stopping, the man dragged Amasa off the road into the field and threw a cloak over him, because he saw that everyone stopped on reaching him. •When 13
Amasa had been taken[e] off the road, the men all went on their way, following Joab[f] in pursuit of Sheba son of Bichri.

The rebellion ends

The latter went all through the tribes of Israel as far as Abel of Beth-maacah[g] 14
and all the Bichrites...[h] They mustered and went in after him.[i] •[j]Besieging him 15
in Abel of Beth-maacah, they threw up earthworks against the city. •As all the 16
troops who were with Joab were sapping the wall to bring it down, a quick-witted woman stood on the outer wall and shouted from the town, 'Listen! Listen! Say to Joab, "Come here, I want to speak to you".' •He came forward, 17
and the woman said, 'Are you Joab?' 'I am' he answered. She said to him, 'Listen to what your servant says'. 'I am listening' he replied. •Then she spoke. 18

'In olden days' she said 'they used to say, "Let them ask in Abel and in Dan Gn49:16
19 if all is over •with what Israel's faithful ones have laid down".[k] Yet you are trying
to destroy a town, yes a mother city, in Israel. Why do you wish to devour the
20 heritage of Yahweh?' •'Far, far be it from me' Joab said. 'I neither wish to
21 devour nor to destroy. •This is not the issue; but a man of the highlands
of Ephraim called Sheba son of Bichri has revolted against the king, against
David. Hand that one man over and I will raise the siege of the town.' 'Very
well,' the woman said to Joab 'his head shall be thrown over the wall to you.'
22 The woman went back into the town and spoke[l] to all the people as her intelligence dictated. They cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it down to Joab. He had the trumpet sounded and they withdrew from the town, each man to his tents. Joab himself returned to the king in Jerusalem.

David's officials =8:16-18

23 Joab commanded the whole army; Benaiah son of Jehoiada commanded the
24 Cherethites and Pelethites; •Adoram was in charge of forced labour; Jehoshaphat
25 son of Ahilud was recorder; •Sheva, secretary; Zadok and Abiathar, priests. 8:18+
26 Ira the Jairite was also a priest of David.

II. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION[a]

The great famine and the execution of Saul's descendants[b] 1Ch27:33

1 21 In the time of David there was a famine lasting for three whole years. 24:13
David consulted Yahweh,[c] and Yahweh said, 'There is blood on Saul and his
2 family because he put the Gibeonites to death'. •The king then summoned the
Gibeonites and said to them—now the Gibeonites were not Israelites, they were Jos9:3-27
a remnant of the Amorites to whom the Israelites had bound themselves by
oath; but Saul in his zeal for the Israelites and for Judah had tried to crush
3 them[d]—•'What must I do for you?' David therefore asked the Gibeonites, 'how
make amends, for you to call down a blessing[e] on the heritage of Yahweh?'
4 The Gibeonites answered, 'It is no mere matter of silver or gold between
ourselves and Saul and his family; nor is it for us to have any man in Israel put
5 to death'. David said, 'Say what you want and I will do it for you'. •So they
told the king, 'It is about the man who decimated us and planned to annihilate
6 us so that we should no longer exist anywhere in Israelite territory. •Let seven
of his sons be handed over to us, for us to impale them before Yahweh at Gibeon
7 on the mountain of Yahweh.'[f] 'I will hand them over' the king said. •The king

n. 'your elder' versions; 'in David' (?) Hebr.

20 a. There is more in this rebellion, instigated by a Benjaminite, than the resentment of Saul's tribe: the antagonism between Israel and Judah shows through it.

b. 'widows of a living man' Targ.

c. Text uncertain.

d. 'it (the sword) came out' Greek; 'he came out' Hebr.

e. 'had been taken' conj.

f. Joab uses his prestige to maintain his position despite the king; and the bulk of the army rally to him.

g. A fortified town near Dan, v. 18, in the extreme N. of Israelite territory.

h. A lacuna in the MSS suggests that some words have been lost. The text of the verse is uncertain.

i. Into the town.

j. The word order of vv. 15-16, apparently upset in the Hebr., has been restored.

k. Vv. 18-19 according to Greek. The woman quotes a proverb to the effect that these two towns were the custodians of Israelite tradition.

l. 'went back into the town and spoke' following Greek.

21 a. Ch. 21-24 interrupt the long story of David's family and of the royal succession, which is resumed in 1 K: 1. They embody six appendices arranged in pairs: the two narratives of 21:1-14 (three years' famine) and ch. 24 (three days' pestilence); two series of military exploits: 21:15-22 (the four Philistine giants) and 23:8-39 (David's warriors); two poetic passages: ch. 22 (canticle of David) and 23:1-7 (last words of David).

b. This narrative is detached from its context and the events are probably to be placed before 9:1. V. 7 must be a subsequent gloss.

c. Lit. 'sought the face of Yahweh', just as one seeks audience of a king, 1 K 10:24. 'blood... family' Greek.

d. The account of these events has not been preserved.

e. The Gibeonites had solemnly cursed Israel; only a blessing can undo the curse, cf. Jg 17:2; 1 K 2: 33,44-45.

f. Saul being dead, blood-vengeance must fall on his descendants. 'at Gibeon on the mountain of Yahweh' following Greek; 'at Gibeah of Saul, the elect of Yahweh' Hebr.

9:13
1S20:15f,42 spared Meribbaal son of Jonathan, son of Saul, on account of the oath by Yahweh
that bound them together, David and Jonathan son of Saul. 8 But the king took
3:7 the two sons that Rizpah the daughter of Aiah had borne Saul, Armoni and
1S 18:19 Meribbaal; also the five sons that Merab[g] the daughter of Saul had borne Adriel
son of Barzillai, of Meholah. 9 He handed these over to the Gibeonites who
impaled them on the mountain before Yahweh. The seven of them perished
together; they were put to death in the first days of the harvest, at the beginning
of the barley harvest.

3:31;12:16 Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth[h] and spread it for herself on the 10
rock from the beginning of the barley harvest until the rain fell from the sky
on them;[i] she did not allow the birds of heaven to come at them by day nor the
wild beasts by night. 11 David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Saul's
concubine, had done. 12 David went and took the bones of Saul and his son
Jonathan from the chief men of Jabesh-gilead. These had stolen them from the
1S31:10-13 square in Beth-shan where the Philistines had hung them when the Philistines
had defeated Saul at Gilboa. 13 David brought the bones of Saul and his son
Jonathan from there and put them together with the bones of those who had been
impaled. 14 They buried the bones of Saul, of his son Jonathan, and of those
who had been impaled,[j] in the land of Benjamin at Zela in the tomb of Saul's
24:25 father, Kish. They did all that the king ordered; and after that, God took
pity on the country.

Various exploits against the Philistines[k]

15 Once again the Philistines made war on Israel. David went down with his
guards; they pitched camp at Gob[l] and fought the Philistines. Then there arose
Dt2:10+ 16 Dodo son of Joash,[m] a descendant of Rapha. His spear weighed three hundred
shekels of bronze; he was wearing a new sword and was confident he could kill
David. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah went to his rescue; he struck down the
Philistine and killed him. It was then that David's men urged him, 'You must
1K11:36; 15:4 2K 8:19 never again go into battle with us' they said 'in case you put out the lamp of
Israel.'

||1Ch20:4-8 18 After this, war with the Philistines broke out at Gob again. This was when
23:27 Sibbecai of Hushah killed Saph, a descendant of Rapha.

19 Again war with the Philistines broke out at Gob, and Elhanan son of Jair[n]
1S 17:4 from Bethlehem killed Goliath of Gath, the shaft of whose spear was like a
1S 17:7 weaver's beam. 20 There was another battle at Gath, where there was a man of
huge stature[o] with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four
in all. He too was a descendant of Rapha. 21 Jonathan, son of David's brother,
13:3
1S 16:9 Shimeah, killed him when he defied Israel.

22 These four were descended from Rapha of Gath and fell at the hands of
David and his guards.

A psalm of David[a]

22 David addressed the words of this song to Yahweh when Yahweh had 1
delivered him from all his enemies and from the hands of Saul. 2 He said:

||Ps 18
Yahweh is my rock and my bastion,
my deliverer is my God. 3
1S 2:2 I take refuge in him, my rock,
1S 2:1 my shield, my horn of salvation,
my stronghold and my refuge.
From violence you rescue me.
He is to be praised; on Yahweh I call 4
and am saved from my enemies.

The waves of death encircled me, 5
23:6 the torrents of Belial burst on me;

6 the cords of Sheol girdled me,
the snares of death were before me.

7 In my distress I called to Yahweh
and to my God I cried;
from his Temple he heard my voice,
my cry came to his ears.

8 Then the earth quivered and quaked, Ex 19:16+
the foundations of the heavens trembled
(they quivered because he was angry);
9 from his nostrils a smoke ascended,
and from his mouth a fire that consumed
(live embers were kindled at it).

10 He bent the heavens and came down, Ps 144:5
a dark cloud under his feet;
11 he mounted a cherub and flew, Ex 25:18+
and soared on the wings of the wind.

12 Darkness he made a veil to surround him,
his tent a watery darkness, dense cloud;
13 before him a flash enkindled
hail and fiery embers.

14 Yahweh thundered from heaven,
the Most High made his voice heard;
15 he let his arrows fly and scattered them, Ps 144:6
launched the lightnings and routed them.

16 The bed of the seas was revealed,
the foundations of the world were laid bare
at Yahweh's muttered threat,
at the blast of his nostrils' breath.

17 He sends from on high and takes me,
he draws me from deep waters, Ps 144:7
18 he delivers me from my powerful enemy,
from foes too strong for me.

19 They assailed me on my day of disaster,
but Yahweh was my support;
20 he freed me, set me at large,
he rescued me, since he loves me.

21 Yahweh requites me as I act justly,
as my hands are pure so he repays me,
22 since I have kept the ways of Yahweh,
and not fallen away from my God.

23 His judgements are all before me,
his statutes I have not put from me;

g. 'Merab' versions, cf. 1 S 18:19; 'Michal' Hebr.
h. Worn as a sign of mourning, 3:31; 12:16.
i. The coming of the rain shows that the famine will soon be over and that God has accepted the expiation. Only then does David have the bodies removed. In this special case, Dt 21:22-23 (cf. Jos 10:27) is not applied.
j. 'and of those who had been impaled' Greek.
k. These events of the Philistine wars would be better placed after 5:17-25, at the beginning of David's reign. The literary form is that of 1 S 17.
l. 'they pitched camp at Gob' transferred here from the beginning of v. 16. 'Gob' cf. vv. 18-19; 'Nob' Hebr.
m. 'Then... Joash' conj.
n. 'son of Jair' following 1 Ch 20:5.
o. 'of huge stature' 1 Ch 20:6; 'of strife' Hebr.

22 a. This canticle, with many variants, figures as Ps 18; see the notes on that Psalm. It can hardly be attributed to the royal poet himself.

I am blameless in his presence, 24
I keep sin at arm's length.

And Yahweh repays me as I act justly, 25
as my purity is in his sight.
1 S 2:30 Faithful you are with the faithful, 26
blameless with the blameless,

pure with the one who is pure, 27
but crafty with the devious,
you save a people that is humble 28
and humiliate eyes that are haughty.

Yahweh, you yourself are my lamp, 29
my God lights up my darkness;
with you I storm the barbican, 30
with my God I leap the rampart.

This God, his way is blameless, 31
the word of Yahweh is without dross.
Pr 30:5 He it is who is the shield
of all who take refuge in him.

Who else is God but Yahweh, 32
who else a rock save our God?
This God who girds me with strength 33
and makes my way without blame,

who makes my feet like the hinds' 34
and holds me from falling on the heights,
who trains my hands for battle, 35
my arms to bend a bow of bronze.

You give me your saving shield 36
and your armour covers me over.
Wide room you have made for my steps under me; 37
my feet have never faltered.

I pursue my enemies and destroy them, 38
nor turn back till an end is made of them;
I strike them down, and they do not rise, 39
they fall, they are under my feet.

You have girt me with strength for the fight, 40
bent down my assailants beneath me,
made my enemies turn their backs to me; 41
and those who hate me I destroy.

They cry out, there is no one to save, 42
to Yahweh, but there is no reply;
I crush them fine as the dust of the squares, 43
trample them like the mud of the streets.

You deliver me from a people in revolt, 44
you place me at the head of the nations,
a people I did not know are now my servants,

foreigners come wooing my favour, 45
no sooner do they hear than they obey me,
foreigners grow faint of heart, 46
they come trembling out of their fastnesses.

47 Life to Yahweh! Blessed be my rock!
Exalted be the God of my salvation,
48 the God who gives me vengeance
and crushes the peoples beneath me,

49 who rescues me from my enemies.
You lift me high above those who attack me,
you deliver me from the man of violence.

50 For this I will praise you, Yahweh, among the heathen, Ps 22:23
and sing praise to your name.
51 His king he saves and saves again,
displays his love for his anointed,
for David and his heirs for ever.

The last words of David[a] 1 K 2:3-9

1 23 These are the last words of David:

Oracle of David son of Jesse,
oracle of the man raised to eminence, Sl 47:8
the anointed of the God of Jacob,
the singer of the songs of Israel.

2 The spirit of Yahweh speaks through me, Is 59:21 Jr 1:9
his word is on my tongue;
3 the God of Jacob has spoken, Jg 5:31
the Rock of Israel has said to me:

He who rules men with justice, Ps 72:1-6
who rules in the fear of God,
4 is like morning light at sunrise
(on a cloudless morning)
making the grass of the earth sparkle after rain.

5 Yes, my House stands firm with God:
he has made an everlasting covenant with me, 7:11-16 Is 55:3
all in order, well assured;
does he not bring to flower all that saves me, all I desire?

6 But godless men are all like desert thorns, 22:5 Dt 13:14+
for these are never gathered by hand:
7 no one touches them
unless with iron or the shaft of a spear,
and then they are burnt in the fire.

David's champions[b] 1 Ch 11:11-41; 27:1-15+

8 These are the names of David's champions: Ishbaal the Hachmonite, leader 20:7
of the three;[c] it was he who wielded his battle-axe against eight hundred whom
9 he killed at one time. •After him there was Eleazar son of Dodo, the Ahohite,
one of the three champions. He was with David at Pas-dammim when the Phil- 1 S 17:1
istines[d] mustered for battle there and the men of Israel retreated before them.

23 a. 'Last words' are ascribed to David (as to Jacob, Gn 49, and Moses, Dt 33) in the style of Ps 1 and of Pr 4:10-19, with an introduction modelled on the oracles of Balaam, Nb 24:3,15f. The text has suffered considerably and the restorations are conjectural. David's actual testament is given in 1 K 2:5-9.

b. This section originally followed ch. 21. It groups: vv. 8-12, information on the three, the peerless warriors; vv. 13-17, an episode from the Philistine wars, here introduced because it shows 'three' heroes in action; vv. 18-24a, information on Abishai, Benaiah, and probably on Asahel (see note to v. 24); vv. 24b-39, a list of the thirty.

c. 'three' Greek; 'thirty' Hebr. 'wielded his battle-axe' following Ch. Here and subsequently the Hebr., the versions and Ch give varying forms of the names.

d. 'at Pas-dammin when the Philistines' following Ch.

But he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines until his hand was so 10
numb that it stuck to the sword. Yahweh brought about a great victory that
day, and though the army rallied behind Eleazar it was only to plunder. •After 11
Jg 3:31 him there was Shamma son of Elah, the Hararite. The Philistines had mustered
Jg 15:9 at Lehi. There was a field full of lentils there; the army took flight before the
Philistines, •but he positioned himself in the middle of the field, defended it, 12
and struck down the Philistines. So Yahweh brought about a great victory.

Three[e] out of the thirty went down at the beginning of the harvest and came 13
1 S 22:1 Mi 1:15 to David at the Cave of Adullam while a company of Philistines was encamped
5:18 in the Valley of the Rephaim. •David was then in the stronghold, and there was 14
a Philistine garrison in Bethlehem. •'Oh,' David sighed 'if someone would fetch 15
me a drink of water from the well that stands by the gate at Bethlehem!' •At this 16
the three champions, forcing their way through the Philistine camp, drew water
from the well that stands by the gate of Bethlehem, and bringing it away presented
it to David. But he would drink none of it and poured it out as a libation to
Yahweh. •'Yahweh keep me' he said 'from drinking this! This is the blood of men 17
who went at the risk of their lives.' And so he would not drink. Such were the
deeds of the three champions.

Abishai, the brother of Joab and son of Zeruiah, was leader of the thirty. 18
It was he who wielded his spear against three hundred whom he killed, winning
himself a name among the thirty.[f] •He was more famous than the thirty[g] and 19
became their captain, but he was no rival for the three.

8:18; 20:23 1 K 2:29f Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a hero from Kabzeel, a man of many exploits, 20
struck down the two champions of Moab and, one snowy day, went down and
Jg 14:6 killed the lion in the cistern. •He was also the man who killed an Egyptian of 21
great stature. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but he went down against
him with a staff, tore the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed the man
with it. •Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada, winning him a name 22
among the thirty champions. •He was more famous than the thirty, but he was 23
1 S 22:14 no rival for the three. David put him in command of his bodyguard.

2:18-23 Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty;[h] 24
Elhanan son of Dodo, from Bethlehem;
Shammah from Harod; 25
Elika from Harod;
Helez from Beth-pelet; 26
Ira son of Ikkesh, from Tekoa;
Abiezer from Anathoth; 27
21:18 Sibbecai from Hushah;
Zalmon from Ahoh; 28
Maharai from Netophah;
Heled son of Baanah, from Netophah; 29
Ittai son of Ribai, from Gibeah of Benjamin;
Benaiah from Pirathon; 30
Hiddai from the wadis of Gaash;
Abialbon from Beth-arabah; 31
Azmaveth from Bahurim;
Eliahba from Shaalbon; 32
Jashen from Gimzo;
Jonathan •son of Shammah, from Harar; 33
Ahiam son of Sharar, from Harar;
Eliphelet son of Ahasbai, from Beth-maacah; 34
Eliam son of Ahithophel, from Gilo;
Hezro from Carmel; 35
Paarai from Arab;
Igal son of Nathan, from Zobah; 36

Bani the Gadite;
37 Zelek the Ammonite;
Naharai, from Beeroth, armour-bearer to Joab son of Zeruiah;
38 Ira from Jattir;
Gareb from Jattir;
39 Uriah the Hittite— 11:3f

thirty-seven in all.[f]

The census[a] ‖1 Ch 21:1-5

1 24 The anger of Yahweh once again blazed out against the Israelites and he
incited David against them. 'Go,' he said 'take a census of Israel and
2 Judah.'[b] •The king said to Joab and to the senior army officers who were with
him, 'Now go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and take
3 a census of the people; I wish to know the size of the population.' •Joab said
to the king, 'May Yahweh your God multiply the people a hundred times while
my lord the king still has eyes to see it, but why should my lord the king be so
4 set on this?' •But the king enforced his order on Joab and the senior officers,
and Joab and the senior officers went from the king's presence to take a census
of the people of Israel.
5 They crossed the Jordan and made a start with Aroer and the town that is
6 in the middle of the wadi,[c] moving on to the Gadites and towards Jazer. •They
then went to Gilead and to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites; next they went
7 on to Dan and from Dan made their way round towards Sidon.[d] •They then
came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites,
8 ending up in the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba. •Having covered the whole
country, they returned to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.
9 Joab gave the king the figures for the census of the people; Israel numbered
eight hundred thousand armed men capable of drawing sword, and Judah five
hundred thousand men.[e]

The pestilence. God's forgiveness ‖1 Ch 21: 7-17

10 But afterwards David's heart misgave him for having taken a census of the 1 S 24:6
people. 'I have committed a grave sin' David said to Yahweh. 'But now, Yahweh,
11 I beg you to forgive your servant for this fault. I have been very foolish.' •But
when David got up next morning, the following message had come from Yahweh
12 to the prophet Gad, David's seer, •'Go and say to David, "Yahweh says this: 1 S 22:5
I offer you three things; choose one of them for me to do to you" '.
13 So Gad went to David and told him. 'Are three years of famine to come on 21:1
you in your country' he said 'or will you flee for three months before your 15-17
pursuing enemy,[f] or would you rather have three days' pestilence in your country?

e. 'three' versions, Ch; 'thirty' Hebr. *ketib*. 'at the beginning of the harvest' conj.

f. 'thirty' Syr.; 'three' Hebr.

g. 'thirty' conj.; 'three' Hebr. So also in v. 22.

h. Possibly information similar to the preceding was given about Asahel before the list of the thirty which begins with Elhanan. This small group of picked warriors is mentioned only here. They were doubtless David's principal companions in his days of struggle, developing into a permanent unit perhaps during the time in Ziklag.

i. An editorial calculation which seems to include the thirty (vv. 24b-39) plus Joab (mentioned in v. 37) plus Abishai, Benaiah, Asahel (vv. 18-24a), plus the three (vv. 8-12).

24 a. The whole of the chapter originally followed the narrative of 21:1-14.

b. The carrying out of what seems to be a divine command comes to be seen by David as a 'sin', v. 10, and is punished by pestilence, vv. 15f. In ancient Israel everything that happened was attributed to God as the ultimate cause. The author of Ch writes 'Satan' for 'Yahweh'. In those days a census was considered impious because it usurped the prerogative of God to whom alone it belonged to give increase to family and nation.

c. 'made... town' Greek. Aroer, on the Arnon, marks the southern boundary of Israelite territory in Transjordania, according to Dt 2:36; Jos 13:9,16. To the W. of Jordan the boundaries are Dan on the N., Beersheba on the S., vv. 2, 6, 7, 15. Thus the whole territory of Israel is accounted for. But the text adds Tyre and Sidon and, it seems, Hittite Kadesh on the Orontes, far to the N.; some try to explain this in terms of Nb 34:7-9; Ezk 47:15-17 and David's conquests, 2 S 8:3-12.

d. 'to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites' Greek. 'and from Dan made their way round towards Sidon' following Greek.

e. Like many similar figures in the O.T. these are clearly too high; Ch makes them still higher.

f. 'three years' Greek, Vet. Lat. 'your enemy, conj.

Now think, and decide how I am to answer him who sends me.' •David said to 14
Gad, 'This is a hard choice. But let us rather fall into the power of Yahweh,
since his mercy is great, and not into the power of men.' •So David chose 15
pestilence.

It was the time of the wheat harvest. Yahweh sent a pestilence on Israel from
the morning till the time appointed and plague ravaged the people,[g] and from
Ex12:23+ 2K19:35 Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of them died. •The angel stretched out 16
his hand towards Jerusalem to destroy it, but Yahweh thought better of this
evil, and he said to the angel who was destroying the people, 'Enough! Now
withdraw your hand.' The angel of Yahweh was beside the threshing-floor of
Araunah the Jebusite. •[h]When David saw the angel who was ravaging the people, 17
he spoke to Yahweh. 'It was I who sinned;' he said 'I who did this wicked thing.
But these, this flock, what have they done? Let your hand lie heavy on me then,
and on my family.'

1Ch21: 18-28 **An altar is built**

Gn 23:3 Gad went to David that day and said, 'Go up and erect an altar to Yahweh 18
on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite'. •So at Gad's bidding David 19
went up as Yahweh had ordered him. •When Araunah looked down and 20
saw the king and his officers advancing towards him—Araunah was threshing
the wheat[i]—he came forward and with his face to the ground did the king
homage. •'Why has my lord the king come to his servant?' Araunah asked. 21
David answered, 'To buy the threshing-floor from you, in order to build an
altar to Yahweh, so that the plague may leave the people'. •'Let my lord the king 22
take it' Araunah said to David 'and offer up what he thinks right. Here are the
1S 6:14 1K19:21 oxen for the holocaust, the threshing-sled[j] and the oxen's yoke for the wood.
The servant of my lord the king gives all this to the king. And' Araunah said 23
to the king 'may Yahweh your God accept your offering.'

But the king said to Araunah, 'No, I must pay you money for it; I will not 24
offer Yahweh my God holocausts that have cost me nothing'. So David paid
fifty shekels in silver[k] for the threshing-floor and oxen. •David built an altar to 25
Yahweh there and offered holocausts and communion sacrifices. Then Yahweh
21:14 took pity on the country and the plague was turned away from Israel.

g. The translation follows the Greek.

h. The narrative probably fuses two traditions: according to one, Yahweh halts the plague at the gates of Jerusalem out of his love for the city, v. 16, and David offers a sacrifice or thanksgiving 'as Yahweh had ordered', v. 19. According to the second, it is David's prayer and his building of the altar that save the city, vv. 17, 21, 25.

i. The parenthesis is inserted here in accordance with Ch.

j. A board with stones set in the underside still used in Palestine for threshing.

k. Six hundred golden shekels according to Ch. Araunah's threshing-floor was outside the city on the hill dominating old Jerusalem from the N. This is the future site of Solomon's Temple, cf. 5:9+.

THE BOOKS OF THE KINGS

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS

I. THE DAVIDIC SUCCESSION[a]

David's last days. The intrigues of Adonijah

1 1 King David was an old man well on in years and though they laid coverlets 1Ch23:1
2 over him he could not keep warm. •So his servants said to him, 'Let some
young girl be found for my lord the king, to wait on the king and look after him;
3 she shall lie on your breast and this will keep my lord the king warm'. •Having
searched for a beautiful girl throughout the territory of Israel, they found Abishag
4 of Shunem and brought her to the king. •The girl was of great beauty. She 2K 4:8
looked after the king and waited on him but the king had no intercourse with her.
5 Now Adonijah, Haggith's son, was ambitious; he thought he might be king; 2S 3:4
accordingly he procured a chariot and team with fifty men to run in front of 1S 8:11 2S 15:1
6 him. •At no time in his life had his father ever crossed him by asking, 'Why do you
behave like this?' He was also very handsome; his mother had given birth to him
7 after Absalom. •He conferred with Joab son of Zeruiah and with the priest
8 Abiathar[b] who rallied to Adonijah's cause; •but neither Zadok the priest, nor
Benaiah son of Jehoiada, nor the prophet Nathan, nor Shimei and his companions,[c] David's champions, supported Adonijah.
9 One day when Adonijah was sacrificing sheep and oxen and fattened calves
at the Sliding Stone which is beside the Fuller's Spring, he invited all his brothers,
10 the royal princes, and all the men of Judah in the king's service; •but he did not
invite the prophet Nathan, or Benaiah, or the champions, or his brother Solomon.

The intrigues of Nathan and Bathsheba

11 Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, 'Have you not heard that 2S12:24
12 unknown to our lord David, Adonijah, Haggith's son, has become king? •Well,
this is my advice to you if you want to save your own life and the life of
13 your son Solomon. •Go straight in to King David and say, "My lord king, did
you not make your servant this promise on oath:[d] Your son Solomon is to be
king after me; he is the one who is to sit on my throne? How is it, then, that
14 Adonijah is king?" •And while you are still there talking to the king, I will
come in after you and confirm what you say.'
15 So Bathsheba went to the king in his room (he was very old and Abishag of
16 Shunem was in attendance on him). •She knelt down and did homage to the
17 king, and the king said, 'What is your wish?' •'My lord,' she answered 'you swore
this to your servant by Yahweh your God, "Your son Solomon is to be king after

1 a. Ch. 1-2 continue the narrative of 2 S 13-20.
b. Joab: David's nephew and companion of his early days, still commander-in-chief, 2 S 19:14+; Abiathar: sole survivor of the priests of Nob, 1 S 22:20, and still loyal to David.
c. 'and his companions' following Greek. The factions of Solomon and Adonijah are opposed on personal grounds: Zadok is a rival of Abiathar; the captain of the guard, Benaiah, is jealous of Joab, commander-in-chief; Nathan had been God's mouthpiece for David, especially at the time of Solomon's birth, 2 S 12:24-25.
d. This oath has not hitherto been mentioned in the history of David.

me; he is the one who is to sit on my throne". •And now here is Adonijah king 18
and you, my lord king, knowing nothing about it. •He has sacrificed quantities 19
of oxen and fattened calves and sheep, and invited all the royal princes, the
priest Abiathar, and Joab the army commander; but he has not invited your
servant Solomon. •Yet you are the man, my lord king, to whom all Israel looks, 20
to name for them the successor of my lord the king.[e] •And when my lord the 21
king sleeps with his fathers, my son Solomon and I will be made to suffer for
this.'

She was still speaking when the prophet Nathan entered. •'The prophet 22 23
Nathan is here' they told the king; and he came into the king's presence and
bowed down to the ground on his face before the king. •'My lord king,' said 24
Nathan 'is this, then, your decree: "Adonijah is to be king after me; he is the
one who is to sit on my throne"? •For he has gone down today and sacrificed 25
quantities of oxen and fattened calves and sheep, and invited all the royal princes,
the army chiefs, and the priest Abiathar; and they are there now, eating and
drinking in his presence and shouting, "Long live King Adonijah!" •He has not, 26
however, invited me your servant, Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, or
your servant Solomon. •Is this with my lord the king's approval? Or have you 27
not told those loyal to you who is to succeed to the throne of my lord the king?'

Solomon is consecrated king at David's nomination

Then King David spoke. 'Call Bathsheba to me' he said. And she came into 28
the king's presence and stood before him. •Then the king swore this oath, 'As 29
Yahweh lives, who has delivered me from all adversity, •just as I swore to you 30
by Yahweh the God of Israel that your son Solomon should be king after me and
take my place on the throne, so I will bring it about this very day'. •Bathsheba 31
knelt down, her face to the ground, and did homage to the king. 'May my lord
King David live for ever!' she said. •Then King David said, 'Summon Zadok 32
the priest, the prophet Nathan and Benaiah son of Jehoiada'. So they came
2K11:11-20 into the king's presence. •'Take the royal guard with you,' said the king 'mount 33
Est 6:9 Mt 21:7 my son Solomon on my own mule and escort him down to Gihon. •There Zadok 34
1S9:26+ the priest and the prophet Nathan are to anoint him king of Israel; then sound
the trumpet and shout, "Long live King Solomon!" •Then you are to follow him 35
up and he is to come and take his seat on my throne and be king in place of me,
for he is the man I have appointed as ruler of Israel and of Judah.' •Benaiah son 36
of Jehoiada answered the king. 'Amen!' he said 'And may Yahweh too say
Amen to the words of my lord the king! •As Yahweh has been with my lord the 37
king, so may he be with Solomon and make his throne even greater than the
throne of my lord King David!'

2S8:18+ Then Zadok the priest, the prophet Nathan, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and 38
the Cherethites and Pelethites went down; they mounted Solomon on King
Ex30:22+ 1 S 10:1;16:2 David's mule and escorted him to Gihon. •Zadok the priest took the horn of oil 39
1Ch29:22 from the Tent and anointed Solomon. They sounded the trumpet and all the
1S10:24 people shouted, 'Long live King Solomon!' •The people all followed him up, with 40
pipes playing and loud rejoicing and shouts to split the earth.

Adonijah is afraid

Adonijah and his guests, who had by then finished their meal, all heard the 41
noise. Joab too heard the sound of the trumpet and said, 'What is that noise of
uproar in the city?' •While he was still speaking, Jonathan the son of Abiathar 42
2S18:27 the priest arrived. 'Come in,' Adonijah said 'you are an honest man, so you
must be bringing good news.' •'Yes,' Jonathan answered 'our lord King David 43
has made Solomon king. •The king sent Zadok the priest with him, and the 44
prophet Nathan and Benaiah son of Jehoiada and the Cherethites and Pelethites;
they mounted him on the king's mule, •and Zadok the priest and the prophet 45
Nathan anointed him king at Gihon; and they went up from there with shouts

46 of joy and the city is now in an uproar; that was the noise you heard. •What is
47 more, Solomon is seated on the royal throne. •And further, the king's officers
have been to congratulate our lord King David with the words, "May your God
make the name of Solomon more glorious even than yours, and his throne more
48 exalted than your own!" And the king bowed down on his bed, •and then said, Gn47:31
"Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see one of
my descendants sitting on my throne today".'
49 At this, all Adonijah's guests, taking fright, rose and made off in their several
50 directions. •Adonijah, in terror of Solomon, rose too and ran off to cling to 2:28 Ex21:13-14; 27:2+
51 the horns of the altar. •Solomon was told, 'You should know that Adonijah is in
terror of King Solomon and is now clinging to the horns of the altar, saying,
"Let King Solomon first swear to me that he will not have his servant put to the
52 sword" '. •'Should he bear himself honourably,' Solomon answered 'not one
hair of his shall fall to the ground; but if he is found malicious, he shall die.'
53 King Solomon then sent for him to be brought down from the altar; he came
and did homage to King Solomon; Solomon said to him, 'Go to your house'.

David's testament. His death[a]

1 2 As David's life drew to its close he laid this charge on his son Solomon,
2 'I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong and show yourself a man. Ws 7:6
3 Observe the injunctions of Yahweh your God, following his ways and keeping Dt17:18-20 2 S 23:1f
his laws, his commandments, his customs and his decrees, as it stands written
in the Law of Moses, that so you may be successful in all you do and undertake, Dt 29:8
4 so that Yahweh may fulfil the promise he made me, "If your sons are careful 2S7:11-16
how they behave, and walk loyally before me with all their heart and soul, you
shall never lack for a man on the throne of Israel".
5 'You know too what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the 2:31
two commanders of the army of Israel, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of 2 S 3:27; 20:10
Jether; how he murdered them, how in time of peace he took vengeance for
blood shed in war, staining the belt round my waist and the sandals on my feet
6 with innocent blood.[b] •You will be wise not to let his grey head go down to
7 Sheol in peace. •As regards the sons of Barzillai of Gilead, treat them kindly, Nb16:33+ Ezr 2:61 2S17:27f; 19:32f
let them be among those who eat at your table, for they were as kind to me when
8 I was fleeing from your brother Absalom. •You also have with you Shimei son 2 S 16:5f
of Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahurim. He called down a terrible curse on me
the day I left for Mahanaim, but he came down to meet me at the Jordan and
9 I swore to him by Yahweh I would not put him to the sword.[c] •But you,[d] you 2S19:19f
must not let him go unpunished; you are a wise man and will know how to deal
with him to bring his grey head down to Sheol in blood.'
10 So David slept with his ancestors and was buried in the Citadel of David. 2S5:9+
11 David's reign over Israel lasted forty years: he reigned in Hebron for seven years, 1I Ch 29:26-27
and in Jerusalem for thirty-three.

The death of Adonijah

12 Solomon was seated upon the throne of David, and his sovereignty was
securely established.

e. The order of succession was not yet determined by statute. Saul and David had been the choice of God and of the people. The monarchy is about to become hereditary, but primogeniture is not seen as an adequate claim and the king himself is expected to choose between his sons. David not only chooses Solomon but actually transfers the royal authority by the ritual he prescribes, vv. 33-35.

f. 'too say Amen to the words' versions.

2 a. This 'testament' by which Solomon is appointed to execute vengeance on David's personal enemies reflects the ideas of this period of the O.T. on blood-revenge and the lasting efficacy of the curse, cf. v. 8. Vv. 3-4 are an addition, in the deuteronomic style, to the original narrative.

b. End of verse corrected in accordance with the versions. Joab's crimes have tarnished David's soldierly reputation; David had even been accused of prompting them, 2 S 16:7. The king and his descendants are therefore liable to blood-revenge until the true culprit has been killed.

c. Shimei's curse will lie heavy on David's descendants since a curse, like a blessing, retains its efficacy. Only by turning it against its originator can it be undone, vv. 44-45. David's oath has prevented him from doing this, but Solomon is free.

d. 'But you' Vulg.

Adonijah, Haggith's son, went to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon and 13
bowed down before her.[e] 'Do you bring peace?' she asked. He answered, 'Yes,
peace'. •Then he said, 'I have something to say to you'. 'Speak' she replied. 14
'You know' he said 'that the kingdom should have come to me,[f] and that all 15
Gn4:5+ Israel expected me to be king; but the crown eluded me and fell to my brother,
since it came to him from Yahweh. •Now I have one request to make you; 16
do not refuse me.' 'Speak' she said. •He went on, 'Please ask King Solomon—for 17
he will not refuse you—to give me Abishag of Shunem in marriage'. •'Very well,' 18
Bathsheba replied 'I will speak to the king about you.' •So Bathsheba went to 19
King Solomon to speak to him about Adonijah; the king rose to meet her and
bowed before her; he then sat down on his throne; a seat was brought for the
mother of the king, and she sat down at his right hand. •She said, 'I have one 20
small request to make you; do not refuse me'. 'My mother,' the king answered
'make your request, for I will not refuse you.' •'Let Abishag of Shunem' she 21
said 'be given in marriage to your brother Adonijah.' •King Solomon answered 22
his mother. 'And why' he said 'do you request Abishag of Shunem for Adonijah?
You might as well request the kingdom for him,[g] since he is my elder brother
and Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah are on his side.' •And King 23
Rt1:17+ Solomon swore by Yahweh: 'May God do this to me and more' he said 'if
Adonijah does not pay for these words of his with his life! •As Yahweh lives 24
2S7:11-16 who has set me securely on the throne of David my father, and who, as he
promised, has given him[h] a dynasty, Adonijah shall be put to death this very
day.' •And King Solomon commissioned Benaiah son of Jehoiada to strike him 25
down, and he died.

The fate of Abiathar and Joab

Jr 1:1 As for Abiathar the priest, the king said to him, 'Go to Anathoth[i] to your 26
estate. You deserve to die, but I am not going to put you to death now, since
you carried the ark of Yahweh in the presence of David my father and shared
all my father's hardships.' •Solomon deprived Abiathar of the priesthood of 27
1S2:30-36 Yahweh, thus fulfilling the oracle Yahweh had uttered against the House of
Eli at Shiloh.

When the news reached Joab—for Joab had lent his support to Adonijah, 28
though he had not supported Absalom—he fled to the Tent of Yahweh and
1:50
Ex27:2+ clung to the horns of the altar. •King Solomon was told, 'Joab has fled to the 29
Tent of Yahweh; he is there beside the altar'. Then Solomon sent word to Joab,
'What reason did you have for fleeing to the altar?' Joab replied, 'I was afraid
2S23:20 of you and fled to Yahweh'. Then Solomon sent Benaiah[j] son of Jehoiada.
'Go' he said 'and strike him down.' •Accordingly Benaiah went to the Tent 30
Ex 21:14 of Yahweh. 'By order of the king,' he said 'come out!' 'No,' he said 'I will die
here.'[k] So Benaiah brought back word to the king, 'This is what Joab said, and
the answer he gave me'. •'Do as he says' the king replied. 'Strike him down 31
2:5+ and bury him, and so rid me and my family today of the innocent blood Joab
has shed. •Yahweh will bring his blood down on his own head, because he struck 32
down two more honourable and better men than he, and put to the sword,
without my father David's knowledge, Abner son of Ner, commander of the army
of Israel, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah. •May their 33
blood come down on the head of Joab and his descendants for ever, but may
David, his descendants, his dynasty, his throne, have peace for ever from Yahweh.'
Whereupon Benaiah son of Jehoiada went out, struck Joab down and put him 34
to death; he was buried at his home in the wilderness. •In his place as head of 35
the army the king appointed Benaiah son of Jehoiada and, in place of Abiathar,
Zadok the priest.

The disobedience and death of Shimei[l]

The king had Shimei summoned to him. 'Build yourself a house in Jerusalem,' 36

37 he told him 'you are to live there; do not move anywhere else. •The day you go out
and cross the wadi Kidron, be sure you will certainly die. Your blood will be
38 on your own head.' •'Very well,' Shimei answered the king 'your servant will
do as my lord the king orders.' And for a long time Shimei lived in Jerusalem.
39 But when three years had gone by, it happened that two of Shimei's slaves
ran away to Achish son of Maacah, king of Gath; Shimei was told, 'Your slaves 1S21:11; 27:2f
40 are in Gath'. •At this, Shimei set about saddling his donkey and went to Achish at
Gath to find his slaves. He went off and brought his slaves back from Gath.
41 Solomon was informed that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had
come back.
42 The king had Shimei summoned to him. 'Did I not make you swear by
Yahweh,' he said 'and did I not solemnly warn you: The day you go out to go
43 anywhere else, be sure you will certainly die?[m] •Why did you not keep the oath
44 of Yahweh and the order I laid on you? •You know all the evil[n] you did to my
father David' the king went on. 'Yahweh will bring your wickedness down on
45 your own head. •But may King Solomon be blessed,[o] and may the throne of
46 David be kept secure before Yahweh for ever.' •The king gave orders to Benaiah
son of Jehoiada; he went out and struck down Shimei; and he died.

And now the sovereignty was securely in the hands of Solomon.

II. SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY

A. SOLOMON THE SAGE

Introduction

1 3 Solomon allied himself by marriage with Pharaoh[a] king of Egypt; he married
Pharaoh's daughter, and took her to the Citadel of David until he could :8;9:16f,24
complete the building of his palace and the Temple of Yahweh and the wall
2 surrounding Jerusalem. •The people, however, were still sacrificing on the high 2S5:6+
places, because at that time a dwelling place for the name of Yahweh had not 1S9:12+
3 yet been built. •Solomon loved Yahweh: he followed the precepts of David his
father, except that he offered sacrifice and incense on the high places.

Solomon's dream at Gibeon

||2Ch1:3-12
Ws8:19–9:12
4 The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, since that was the greatest of the Pr 8:15
5 high places—Solomon offered a thousand holocausts on that altar. •At Gibeon Si 47:14
Yahweh appeared in a dream[b] to Solomon during the night. God said, 'Ask what 9:2
6 you would like me to give you'. •Solomon replied, 'You showed great kindness Ws7:7;9:1
to your servant David, my father, when he lived his life before you in faithfulness
and justice and integrity of heart; you have continued this great kindness to
7 him by allowing a son of his to sit on his throne today. •Now, Yahweh my God,
you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am
8 a very young man, unskilled in leadership. •Your servant finds himself in the Ws 8:10 Jm 1:5
midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its number 4:20

e. 'and bowed down before her' Greek.
f. Since he was the elder.
g. To take the wife of a dead or deposed king gave a title to succession, cf. 2 S 3:8; 16:22. 'and Abiathar the priest is on his side' versions.
h. 'him' corr.
i. Levitical town near Jerusalem.
j. Text restored, following Greek.
k. Benaiah tries to adopt the procedure of Ex 21:14, which is precisely Joab's case: 'If a man kills his neighbour treacherously, you shall take him even from my altar to put him to death'. Joab, however, is determined that Solomon shall incur the odium of profanation.
l. On pain of death Shimei must take up residence in Jerusalem, and Solomon binds him under oath. Shimei breaks his oath and is thus executed 'justly'. Nevertheless, Solomon admits, v. 44, that his true motive is the curse that Shimei had pronounced on David.

m. The Hebr. adds 'and you said to me' "The word I have heard is good", cf. v. 38.
n. The text adds 'that your heart has conceived'.
o. As in v. 33, Solomon immediately adds a blessing so that his curse may not recoil on himself.

3 a. Probably Psusennis, last king of the 21st Dynasty. The 'Citadel of David': the part of Jerusalem that had been the old Jebusite town, cf. 2 S 5:9+.
b. Before the prophetic period, dreams were one of God's main channels of communication with man, cf. Gn 20:3; 28; 31:11,24; Nb 12:6.

Pr 2:6-9 cannot be counted or reckoned. •Give your servant a heart to understand[c] 9
Nb 11:14 Is 7:16 how to discern between good and evil; for who could govern this people of yours
that is so great?' •It pleased Yahweh that Solomon should have asked for this. 10
'Since you have asked for this' Yahweh said 'and not asked for long life for 11
yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning
5:9 Ws 7:7 judgement for yourself, •here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart 12
Qo 1:16 Si 47:14 wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you. •What 13
Ws 7:11 Mt 6:33 you have not asked I shall give you too: such riches and glory as no other king
Dt 5:33 ever had.[d] •And I will give you a long life, if you follow my ways, keeping my 14
Pr 3:1-2 Qo 2:4-10 laws and commandments, as your father David followed them.' •Then Solomon 15
awoke; it was a dream. He returned to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the
Lv 1:1+ covenant of Yahweh; he offered holocausts and communion sacrifices, and
Lv 3:1+ held a banquet for all his servants.

The judgement of Solomon

2 S 14:4f Ws 8:11 Then two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. •'If it please 16 17
you, my lord,' one of the women said 'this woman and I live in the same house,
and while she was in the house I gave birth to a child. •Now it happened on the 18
third day after my delivery that this woman also gave birth to a child. We were
alone together; there was no one else in the house with us; just the two of us
in the house. •Now one night this woman's son died; she overlaid him. •And in 19 20
the middle of the night she got up and took my son from beside me while your
servant was asleep; she put him to her breast and put her own dead son to mine.
When I got up[e] to suckle my child, there he was, dead. But in the morning 21
I looked at him carefully, and he was not the child I had borne at all.' •Then 22
the other woman spoke. 'That is not true! My son is the live one, yours is the
dead one'; and the first retorted, 'That is not true! Your son is the dead one,
mine is the live one.' And so they wrangled before the king. •'This one says,' the 23
king observed ' "My son is the one who is alive; your son is dead", while the
other says, "That is not true! Your son is the dead one, mine is the live one."
Bring me a sword' said the king; and a sword was brought into the king's 24
presence. •'Cut the living child in two,' the king said 'and give half to one, 25
half to the other.' •At this the woman who was the mother of the living child 26
addressed the king, for she burned with pity for her son. 'If it please you, my
lord,' she said 'let them give her the child; only do not let them think of killing
it!' But the other said, 'He shall belong to neither of us. Cut him up.' •Then 27
the king gave his decision. 'Give the child to the first woman,' he said 'and
do not kill him. She is his mother.' •All Israel came to hear of the judgement 28
the king had pronounced, and held the king in awe, recognising that he possessed
divine wisdom for dispensing justice.

Solomon's high officials

4 King Solomon was king over all Israel, •and these were his high officials:[a] 1 2
18:3 Azariah son of Zadok, priest.
Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha, secretaries. 3
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud, recorder.
(Benaiah son of Jehoiada, commander of the army. 4
Zadok and Abiathar, priests.)[b]
4:7f Azariah son of Nathan, chief administrator. 5
Zabud son of Nathan, Friend of the King,
and his brother, master of the palace. 6
Eliab son of Joab, commander of the army.
5:27,28; 12:18 Adoram son of Abda, in charge of forced labour.[c]

Solomon's administrators

4:5 Solomon had twelve administrators[d] for the whole of Israel who saw to the 7

provisioning of the king and his household; each had to provide for one month in the year.

8 These are their names:[c]
...son of Hur, in the mountain country of Ephraim.
9 ...son of Deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth-shemesh,
Aijalon as far as Beth-hanan.
10 ...son of Hesed, in Arubboth; his district was Socoh
and all the land of Hepher.
11 ...son of Abinadab: the whole region of Dor.
Taphath, Solomon's daughter, was his wife.
12 Baana son of Ahilud, in Taanach and Megiddo
as far as the other side of Jokmeam, and
all Beth-shean below Jezreel, from Beth-shean
as far as Abel Meholah, which is beside Zarethan.[f]
13 ...son of Geber, in Ramoth-gilead: his district was
the Encampments of Jair, son of Manasseh, which
are in Gilead; he had the region of Argob, which
is in Bashan, sixty fortified towns, walled-in
and with bolts of bronze.
14 Ahinadab son of Iddo, in Mahanaim.
15 Ahimaaz in Naphtali; he too married a daughter of Solomon, Basemath.
16 Baana son of Hushai, in Asher and in the highlands.[g]
17 Jehoshaphat son of Paruah, in Issachar.
18 Shimei son of Ela, in Benjamin.
19 Geber son of Uri, in the land of Gad, the land of Sihon
king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan.
In addition, there was one governor in the land.[h]

4:27 5 [a]These administrators provided the food for Solomon and for all those who
were admitted by him to the royal table,[b] each for the period of a month; they
28 saw to it that nothing was wanting. •They also provided the barley and straw
for the horses and draught animals, where required, each according to his own
22 assignment. •The daily provisions for Solomon were: thirty measures of fine
23 flour and sixty measures of meal, •ten fattened oxen, twenty free-grazing oxen,
one hundred sheep, besides deer and gazelles, roebucks and fattened cuckoos.[c]
24 For he was master of all Transeuphrates[d]—of all the kings of Transeuphrates from
25 Tiphsah to Gaza—and he enjoyed peace on all his frontiers. •Judah and Israel 2 S 7:1

c. The text adds 'to govern your people'. Solomon prays for wisdom in practical affairs, not in his own interest but in those of the nation. Cf. 5:13+ and Ex 31:3+.

d. The Hebr. adds 'all your life'.

e. The text adds 'in the morning'.

4 a. The recorder (lit. 'remembrancer') is head of the diplomatic service and intermediary between king and people. The master of the palace is the prime minister, the 'vizir' of oriental courts. The title 'Friend of the King' is one of honour rather than of jurisdiction. The priest, chief representative of the priestly class, is ranked with the royal officials. Solomon retains David's recorder and appoints the sons of his priest, secretary and commander-in-chief, 2 S 8:16f; 20:23f. The form of some of these names varies in Hebr. and versions.

b. A gloss the second half of which contradicts v. 2 and 2:26f.

c. 'and his brother' corr. The name and title of the commander-in-chief are absent from Hebr. and are restored from the Greek. 'Adoram' following Greek.

d. The office was created by Solomon; it saw to the raising of the labour force and the application of taxes to public works. The 12 districts fall into 3 groups: first, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph, v. 8, together with the conquered or recaptured Canaanite towns, vv. 9-12, and the annexed districts of Transjordania, vv. 13-14; second, the northern tribes, vv. 15-17; third, Benjamin, v. 18, and Gad, v. 19. There was a special arrangement for Judah, v. 19 and note.

e. This document from the state archives was damaged at the edges; this explains why, for the first administrators, only their fathers' names are preserved.

f. Our translation corrects the confused geographical order.

g. Lit. 'ascents'. The hilly coast between Acre and Tyre.

h. 'Gad' Greek; 'Gilead' Hebr. 'The land', without specification, is the royal territory of Judah as opposed to the provinces of Israel. Judah, therefore, had its own régime and appears to have been exempt from taxes for public works.

5 a. The translation follows the order of the Greek which gives the list of administrators in logical order. The Hebr. order has been upset by glosses; v. 4 dates, at the earliest, from the Exile; the remainder, up to the end of the paragraph, is late.

b. Not only the royal family and its dependants, but all the servants, officials, regular troops.

c. Translation conjectural: cuckoo was a delicacy.

d. Official title for the area between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean during the Persian period, when this verse was added.

1M14:12 Si 47:13 lived in security, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, throughout the lifetime of Solomon.

Qo3:12-13 4 Judah and Israel were like the sand by the sea for number; they ate and drank 20
||2Ch9:26 Ws 8:14 and lived happily. 5 Solomon extended his power over all the kingdoms 1 4:21
from the river[e] to the land of the Philistines and the Egyptian border. They
=10:26 ||2Ch1:14; 9:25 brought tribute and served him all his life long. •For his chariots Solomon had 6 26
four thousand[f] stalls and twelve thousand horses.

Ws 7:7 Si 47:14 **Solomon's fame**

3:12 Qo1:16 Yahweh[g] gave Solomon immense wisdom and understanding, and a heart 9 29
Gn22:17; 32:13 as vast as the sand on the seashore. •The wisdom of Solomon surpassed 10 30
the wisdom of all the sons of the East, and all the wisdom of Egypt. •He was 11 31
1 Ch 2:6 wiser than any other, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite,[h] wiser than Heman and
Calcol and Darda, the cantors. •He composed three thousand proverbs, and his 12 32
songs numbered a thousand and five. •He could talk about plants from the cedar 13 33
Ws 7:20 in Lebanon to the hyssop growing on the wall; and he could talk of animals,
Ws 8:11 and birds and reptiles and fish.[i] •Men from all nations came to hear Solomon's 14 34
wisdom, and he received gifts from all the kings of the world, who had heard
of his wisdom.

B. SOLOMON THE BUILDER

Preparations for building the Temple

2 S 5:11 ||2Ch2:2-3 Hiram the king of Tyre sent an embassy to Solomon, having learnt that he 15 1
had been anointed king in succession to his father and because Hiram had
always been a friend of David. •And Solomon sent this message to Hiram, 16 2
Si 47:13 'You are aware that David my father was unable to build a temple for the name of 17 3
Yahweh, his God, because his enemies waged war on him from all sides, until
Yahweh should put them under his control. •But now Yahweh my God has 18 4
given me rest on every side: not one enemy, no calamities. •I therefore plan 19 5
S7:12-13 Ws 9:8 to build a temple for the name of Yahweh my God, just as Yahweh said to
Is 60:13 David my father, "Your son whom I will place on your throne to succeed you
shall be the man to build a temple for my name". •So now have cedars of 20 6
Lebanon cut down for me; my servants will work with your servants, and I will
pay for the hire of your servants at whatever rate you fix. As you know, we have
||2 Ch 2: 10-11 no one as skilled in felling trees as the Sidonians.'[j] •When Hiram heard what 21 7
Ws 8:11 Solomon had said, he was delighted. 'Now blessed be Yahweh' he said 'who
||2Ch2:15 has given David a wise son to rule over this great people!' •And Hiram sent 22 8
word to Solomon, 'I have received your message. For my part, I will supply
all you want in the way of cedar wood and juniper. •Your servants[k] will bring 23 9
these down from Lebanon to the sea, and I shall have them towed by sea to any
place you name; I shall discharge them there, and you will take them over.
For your part, you will see to the provisioning of my household as I direct.'
9:11 So Hiram provided Solomon with all the cedar wood and juniper he wanted, 24 10
||2 Ch 2:9 while Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand kors of wheat to feed his household, 25 11
and twenty thousand kors[l] of pure oil. Solomon gave Hiram this every year.
Yahweh gave Solomon wisdom as he had promised him; good relations persisted 26 12
Am 1:9 between Solomon and Hiram, and the two of them concluded a treaty.

4:6;12:18 King Solomon raised a levy throughout Israel for forced labour: the levy 27 13
numbered thirty thousand men. •He sent these to Lebanon in relays, ten thousand 28 14
a month; they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoram
4:6 2Ch2:1,18 was in charge of the forced labour. •Solomon also had seventy thousand porters 29 15
and eighty thousand quarrymen in the mountains, •as well as the administrators' 30 16
officials who supervised the work, three thousand three hundred of them in
charge of the men employed in the work. •At the king's orders they quarried huge 31 17

stones, special stones, for the laying of the temple foundations, dressed stones.
32 18 Solomon's workmen and Hiram's workmen and the Giblites[m] cut and assembled
the wood and stone for the building of the Temple.

The Temple building

||2Ch3:1-7
Si 47:13

1 6 In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites came out of the
land of Egypt,[a] in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month
of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the Temple of Yahweh.
2 The Temple[b] that King Solomon built for Yahweh was sixty cubits long, twenty Ac 7:47
3 cubits wide and twenty-five in height. •The Ulam in front of the Hekal of the Ezk40:48; 41:1
Temple was twenty cubits long across the width of the Temple and ten cubits
4 wide along the length of the Temple. •He made windows for the Temple with
5 frames and latticework.[c] •He also built an annex against the Temple wall,[d] Ezk 41:5
6 round the Hekal and the Debir, and made side tiers all round. •The lower story
was five cubits wide, the middle one six cubits, and the third seven cubits, for
round the Temple on the outside he had placed offsets so that this was not
7 attached to the Temple walls. •(The building of the Temple was done with
quarry-dressed stone; no sound of hammer or pick or any iron tool was to be
8 heard in the Temple while it was being built.) •The entrance to the lower story
was at the right-hand corner of the Temple, and access to the middle story above
9 was by trap-doors, and so from the middle story to the third. •He built the
10 Temple,[e] completed it, and covered it with cedar wood. •He built the annex on
to the whole length of the Temple; it was five cubits high and was attached to the
11 Temple by beams of cedar wood. •And the word of Yahweh came to Solomon,
12 'This house you are building[f]... if you follow my statutes and obey my ordinances
and faithfully follow my commandments, I will fulfil that promise I made about 2S7:11- 6
13 you to your father David. •And I will make my home among the sons of Israel,
14 and never forsake Israel my people.' •Solomon built the Temple, and completed
it.

Interior furnishings. The Holy of Holies

||2Ch3:8-9

15 He lined the inside of the Temple walls with panels of cedar wood—panelling Ezk41:17
them on the inside from the floor of the Temple to the rafters in the roof—and
16 laid the floor of the Temple with juniper planks. •The twenty cubits measured
from the end of the Temple he built of cedar planks from floor to rafters, and this
17 part was reserved as the Debir, the Holy of Holies. •The Temple measured
18 forty cubits—the Hekal—in front of the Debir. •There was cedar wood round
the inside of the Temple, ornamentally carved with gourds and rosettes; all was
19 cedar wood, with no stone showing. •In the inner part of the Temple he designed
20 a Debir, to contain the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. •The Debir was twenty 7:48 2K18:16 Ezk 41:3
cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty high, and he plated it on the inside

e. Euphrates, see v. 4.
f. 'four thousand' following 2 Ch 9:23.
g. 'Yahweh' following versions.
h. I.e. the native. The names that follow are probably those of sages famous in Canaan. Ps 89 is attributed to Ethan.
i. Solomon is the first of the 'sages of Israel' (see Introduction to Wisdom Books). That he engaged in literary and poetic activity there is no doubt, cf. 8: 12-13, and part of Pr may possibly derive from him. Ps 72 and 127, Qo, Sg, Ws, all bear his name.
j. The 'Sidonians' means the Philistines as a whole. Hiram was king of Tyre and Sidon.
k. 'Your servants' conj.; 'My servan s' Hebr.
l. 'twenty thousand measures' Greek.

m. Workmen from Gebal (the Greek Byblos) to the N. of Beirut.

6 a. According to the chronological system in which the tabernacle, Solomon's Temple, and the post-exilic Temple, were reckoned equidistant in time. In fact the date is about 960 B.C.
b. The Temple was an oblong building consisting of three successive compartments: the Porch: Ulam; the Great Chamber for worship: Hekal, later called the Holy (Place); the Sanctuary: Debir, i.e. back room, later called the Holy of Holies, the most sacred place, containing the ark of the covenant, 6:19. The difference in height between the Hekal and the Debir (6:2 and ch. 10), indicates that the floor of the Debir was raised to form a kind of rostrum for the ark. The Debir must have been separated from the Hekal by a partition. Three outer walls of the Temple sustained a low three-story erection (6:10). Cf. the description of the tabernacle in the desert, Ex 26-36, and that of the future Temple in Ezk 40-42.
c. Translation uncertain.
d. The Hebr. here repeats 'round the Temple walls', omitted by Greek.
e. The Hebr. has here two unintelligible words which are absent from the Greek.
f. The phrase is broken off.

Ezk41:22 with pure gold. He made an altar of cedar wood[g] •[h] in front of the Debir and 21
plated it with gold. •He plated the whole Temple with gold, the whole Temple 22
entirely.[i]

Ex25:18+ ||2Ch3:10-13 **The cherubs**

In the Debir he made two cherubs of olive wood[j]... It was ten cubits high. 23
One cherub's wing was five cubits long and the other wing five cubits: ten cubits 24
from wing tip to wing tip. •The other cherub also measured ten cubits; both 25
cherubs had the same measurements and the same shape. •The height of one 26
cherub was the same as the other's. •He placed the cherubs in the middle of the 27
inner chamber; their wings were spread out so that the wing of one touched
one of the walls and the wing of the other touched the other wall, while their
wings met in the middle of the chamber, wing to wing. •And he plated the 28
Ezk41:17 cherubs with gold. •All round the Temple walls he carved figures of cherubs, 29
palm trees and rosettes, both inside and outside.[k] •He plated the floor of the 30
Temple with gold, both inside and outside.

The doors.[l] The court

Ezk41:23 He made the door of the Debir with uprights of olive wood, and five-sided 31
door jambs, •and the two leaves of olive wood. He carved figures of cherubs, 32
palm trees and rosettes which he plated with gold; he put a gold surface on the
cherubs and palm trees. •Similarly, he made uprights of olive wood for the door 33
of the Hekal, and four-sided door jambs, •and the two leaves of juniper: one 34
leaf had two ribs binding it, and the other had two ribs binding it. •He carved 35
cherubs, palm trees and rosettes, which he plated with gold laid evenly over the
carvings.

He built the wall of the inner court[m] in three courses of dressed stone and one 36
course of cedar beams.

The date

In the fourth year, in the month of Ziv, the foundations of the Temple were 37
laid; •in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul—that is, the eighth month—the 38
Temple was completed exactly as it had been planned and designed. Solomon
took seven years to build it.

Solomon's palace[a]

Qo 2:4 Is 22:8 7 As regards his palace, Solomon spent thirteen years on it before the building 1
was completed. •He built the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon,[b] a hundred 2
cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high, on four rows of cedar wood
pillars with cedar capitals on the pillars. •It was panelled in cedar on the upper 3
part as far as the planks above the pillars.[c] •There were three rows of architraves,[d] 4
forty-five in all, that is, fifteen in each row, facing one another from three sides.
All the doors and uprights were of rectangular design, facing one another from 5
three sides. •And he made the Hall of Pillars, fifty cubits long and thirty cubits 6
wide... with a porch in front.[e] •He also made the Hall of the Throne where he 7
Ps 122:5 used to dispense justice, that is, the Hall of Justice; it was panelled in cedar
from floor to rafters. •His own living quarters, in the other court and inwards 8
from the Hall, were of the same construction. And there was a house similar
3:1+ to this Hall for the daughter of Pharaoh whom he had taken in marriage.

All these buildings were of special stones cut to measure, trimmed on the 9
inner and outer sides with the saw, right from the foundations to the wood course[f]
—their foundations were of special stones, huge stones, stones of ten and eight 10
cubits, •and, above these, special stones, cut to measure, and cedar wood—•and, 11 12
||2 Ch 4:9 on the outside, the great court had three courses of dressed stone round it and
one course of cedar beams; so also had the inner court of the Temple of Yahweh
and the vestibule of the Temple.

Hiram, the bronzeworker

||2Ch2:13-14

13 14 King Solomon sent for Hiram of Tyre; •he was the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali but his father had been a Tyrian, a bronzeworker. He was Ex35:30-35 a highly intelligent craftsman, skilled in all types of bronzework. He came to King Solomon and did all this work for him:

The bronze pillars

||2Ch3:15-17

15 He cast two bronze pillars;[g] the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and 2K25:13 Jr 27:19 a cord twelve cubits long gave the measurement of its girth; so also was the second
16 pillar. •He made two capitals of cast bronze for the tops of the pillars; the
17 height of one capital was five cubits, and the height of the other five cubits.•[h] He made two sets of filigree to cover the moulding of the two capitals surmounting the pillars, one filigree for one capital and one filigree for the other capital.
18 19b He also made pomegranates: two rows of them round each filigree, •four
20 hundred in all, •applied on the raised moulding behind the filigree; there were two hundred pomegranates round one capital and the same round the other
19a 21 capital. •The capitals surmounting the pillars were flower-shaped. •He set up the pillars in front of the vestibule of the sanctuary; he set up the right-hand Ezk40:49 pillar and named it Jachin; he set up the left-hand pillar and named it Boaz.[i]
22 So the work on the pillars was completed.

The bronze 'Sea'

||2Ch4:2-5

23 He made the Sea[j] of cast metal, ten cubits from rim to rim, circular in shape 2K16:17; 25:13 Jr 27:19 and five cubits high; a cord thirty cubits long gave the measurement of its girth.
24 Under its rim and completely encircling it were gourds; they went round the Sea over a length of thirty[k] cubits; the gourds were in two rows, of one and
25 the same casting with the rest. •It rested on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, three facing east; on these, their hind-
26 quarters all turned inwards, stood the Sea. •It was a hand's breadth in thickness, and its rim was shaped like the rim of a cup, like a flower. It held two thousand baths.

The wheeled stands and the bronze basins[l]

27 He made the ten stands of bronze; each stand was four cubits long, four 2K16:17 Jr 27:19
28 cubits wide, and three high. •They were designed as follows: they had an under-
29 carriage and crosspieces to the undercarriage. •On the crosspieces of the undercarriage were lions and bulls and cherubs, and on top of the undercarriage was a support; under the lions and oxen there were scrolls in the style of...
30 Each stand had four bronze wheels with bronze axles; its four feet had shoulder-
31 ings under the basin, and the shoulderings were cast... •Its mouth measured one

g. The altar of incense, cf. Ex 30:1+.

h. The Hebr. has some extra words at the beginning of the verse but the text is corrupt.

i. Hebr. adds 'and he plated the whole altar of the Debir with gold'; omitted by Greek.

j. One or two words have dropped out of the text.

k. Here, as in v. 30, 'inside' means the Debir, or inner Temple, v. 27; 'outside' means the Hekal. The two verses have been added.

l. The description is hard to understand. The text needs correction and the meaning of several technical terms is uncertain.

m. The Temple court itself as distinct from the great court that surrounded both Temple and palace.

7 a. The description is mostly confined to the public rooms. The buildings lay to the south of the Temple area, on the Hill of Ophel.

b. A great pillared hall; the columns were of cedar. It served as a guardroom and as an ante-chamber for audience with the king. It had a vestibule, v. 6, and communicated with the royal apartments, v. 8, and with the throne room, v. 7. 'capitals' (in v.2) Targ. and Syr.

c. The Hebr. here has 'Forty-five in all, that is, fifteen in each row', transposed from v. 4.

d. Meaning uncertain.

e. End of verse corrupt.

f. The text adds 'and on the outside as far as the great court', corrupted doublet of the end of v. 12.

g. These two columns stood in front of the porch of the Temple, on either side of the entrance.

h. The text of vv. 17-22 is disordered and in places corrupt. Restoration conjectural.

i. The two names are obscure; possibly (with corr.) 'it is firm' and 'it is strong'.

j. A large source of supply of water for sacred uses, cf. Nb 19.

k. 'thirty' conj.; 'ten' Hebr.

l. Text corrupt and interpretation difficult. (The words at the end of vv. 29, 30, 36 are unintelligible.) The stands were quadrangular and surmounted by a rounded support to hold the bowl.

and a half cubits from where the shoulderings met to the top; its mouth was round like a rest for a vessel, and on the mouth there were engravings too; the crosspieces, however, were rectangular and not round. •The four wheels 32
were under the crosspieces. The axles of the wheels were inside the stands; the height of the wheels was one and a half cubits. •The wheels were designed 33
like chariot wheels: their axles, felloes, spokes and naves had all been cast. There were four shoulderings at the four corners of each stand: the stand and the 34
shoulderings were all of a piece. •At the top of the stand there was a support, 35
circular in shape and half a cubit high; and on top of the stand there were lugs. The crosspieces were of a piece with the stand. •On the bands he engraved cherubs 36
and lions and palm leaves... and scrolls right round. •He made the ten stands 37
like this: the same casting and the same measurements for all.

‖2 Ch 4:6 He made ten bronze basins; each basin held forty baths and each basin 38
measured four cubits, one basin to each of the ten stands. •He arranged the 39
stands, five on the right-hand side of the Temple, five on the left-hand side of
2 Ch 4:10 the Temple; the Sea he placed on the right-hand side of the Temple to the south-east.

‖2 Ch 4: 11-18 **The utensils. Summary**

Hiram made the ash containers,[m] the scoops and the sprinkling bowls. He 40
finished all the work that he did for King Solomon on the Temple of Yahweh:
two pillars; the two mouldings of the capitals surmounting the pillars; the 41
two sets of filigree to cover the two mouldings of the capitals surmounting the
pillars; •the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of filigree; the pome- 42
granates of each set of filigree were in two rows;[n]
the ten stands and the ten basins on the stands; 43
the one Sea and the twelve oxen beneath the Sea; 44
2 K 25:14 the ash containers, the scoops, the sprinkling bowls. 45
All these furnishings made by Hiram for King Solomon for the Temple of Yahweh were of burnished bronze. •He made them by the process of sand 46
casting,[o] in the Jordan area between Succoth and Zarethan.•[p] There were so 47
many of them, that the weight of the bronze was never calculated.
Solomon placed all the furnishings he had made in the Temple of Yahweh: 48
6:20-21 Ex 25:23+ the golden altar[q] and the table for the loaves of offering, which was of gold;
‖2 Ch 4:7 the lamp-stands, five on the right and five on the left in front of the Debir, of 49
2 K 25:14 pure gold; the floral work, the lamps, the extinguishers, of gold; •the basins, 50
‖2 Ch 4:8 knives, sprinkling bowls, incense boats, censers, of pure gold; the door sockets for the inner shrine—that is, the Holy of Holies—and for the Hekal, of gold.[r]
‖2 Ch 5:1 So all the work that King Solomon did for the Temple of Yahweh was 51
completed, and Solomon brought what his father David had consecrated, the silver and the gold and the vessels, and put them in the treasury of the Temple of Yahweh.

‖2 Ch 5: 2-10 **The ark brought to the Temple**

8 [a] Then Solomon called the elders of Israel together in Jerusalem to bring the 1
Ex 25:10+ 25 6:7+ ark of the covenant of Yahweh up from the Citadel of David, which is Zion.
All the men of Israel assembled round King Solomon in the month of Ethanim, 2
8:65 at the time of the feast[b] (that is, the seventh month), •and the priests took up 3
the ark •and the Tent of Meeting[c] with all the sacred vessels that were in it. 4
In the presence of the ark, King Solomon and all Israel sacrificed sheep and oxen, 5
countless, innumerable. •The priests brought the ark of the covenant of Yahweh 6
to its place, in the Debir of the Temple, that is, in the Holy of Holies, under the cherubs' wings. •For there where the ark was placed the cherubs spread out 7
their wings and sheltered the ark and its shafts. •These were long enough for 8a
their ends to be seen from the Holy Place in front of the Debir, but not from
Ex 25:21; 40:20 outside. •There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets Moses had 9

placed in it at Horeb, the tablets of the covenant[d] which Yahweh had made with Dt10:2,5
8b the Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt; •they are still there today.

The Lord takes possession of his Temple ||2Ch5:11–6:2

10 Now when the priests came out of the sanctuary, the cloud[e] filled the Temple 2 M 2:8
11 of Yahweh, •and because of the cloud the priests could no longer perform their *Ex40:34-35* Is 6:4 Ezk10:4 ↗ Rv15:8
duties: the glory of Yahweh filled Yahweh's Temple.
12 Then Solomon said:[f] Ex 24:16+ Ezk43:4-5

'Yahweh has chosen to dwell in the thick cloud. Ps 18:11; 97:2
13 Yes, I have built you a dwelling, Ex 15:17
a place for you to live in for ever.' Ps132:13-14

Solomon addresses the people ||2 Ch 6:3-11

14 Then the king turned and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while the whole
15 assembly of Israel stood. •He said, 'Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who
has carried out by his hand what he promised with his mouth to David my father
16 when he said, •"From the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt I chose 2S7:4-16+ Ps 132
no city, in any of the tribes of Israel, to have a house built where my name might 2 K 21:7
17 make its home;[g] but I chose David, to rule over Israel my people". •My father Ezk48:35
David had set his heart on building a house for the name of Yahweh, the God
18 of Israel, •but Yahweh said, "You have set your heart on building a house for
19 my name, and in this you have done well; •and yet, you are not the man to build
the house; your son, born of your own body, shall build the house for my name". 2 S 7:12f
20 Yahweh has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father and
am seated on the throne of Israel, as Yahweh promised; I have built the house
21 for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel, •and have made a place in it for the
ark containing the covenant that Yahweh made with our fathers when he brought
them out of the land of Egypt.'

Solomon's prayer for himself[h] ||2 Ch 6: 12-20

22 Then (in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel) Solomon stood before
23 the altar of Yahweh and, stretching out his hands towards heaven, •said, 'Yahweh,
God of Israel, not in heaven above nor on earth beneath is there such a God Dt 4:39;7:9
as you, true to your covenant and your kindness towards your servants when
24 they walk wholeheartedly in your way. •You have kept the promise you made
to your servant David my father; what you promised with your mouth, today 2S7:11-16
25 you have carried out by your hand. •And now, Yahweh, God of Israel, keep
the promise you made your servant David when you said, "You shall never
lack for a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are

m. 'ash containers' some MSS and Greek.
n. The Hebr. here repeats a phrase of v. 41.
o. Following Greek.
p. The Hebr. begins this verse with the same phrase as v. 48.
q. The altar of incense.
r. The end of the verse is redundant in Hebr.

8 a. In vv. 1-5 certain redundancies of the Hebr. have been eliminated, following Greek.
b. Ethanim is a month of the Canaanite calendar which corresponds with the 7th month of the later Israelite one, as the gloss explains. The most important feast is that of Tabernacles, cf. Ex 23:14+.
c. The tent that sheltered the ark, 2 S 7:2; 1 K 1:39. A glossator calls it 'the Tent of Meeting' after the tabernacle of desert days, the meeting place of Moses with God, Ex 25:22+.

d. 'the tablets of the covenant' Greek.
e. The cloud, cf. Ex 13:24+; 19:16+, is the visible manifestation of the presence of Yahweh who now takes possession of his sanctuary.
f. Some Greek MSS place this short and undoubtedly authentic poem after 8:53 in a slightly more developed form (and with some variants), adding that it is taken from 'the Book of Song'. The poem as they present it seems to contrast the sun shining in the heavens with Yahweh deigning to dwell in the darkness of the Holy of Holies.
g. 'The name' of Yahweh dwells in the Temple in which Yahweh himself cannot be confined, cf. the insertion of v. 27 which excludes the crass interpretation that God himself resides in the Temple. Nonetheless, a name is a person's true expression and representative, and where 'the name of Yahweh' is, God is present in a very special way, though not in any exclusive sense.
h. The author here develops, in the manner of Dt, ideas contained in the discourse of vv. 15-21. He begins with the principle of mutual fidelity, v. 23: God's kindness to his people flows from the Sinaitic pact, but is conditional on their faithfulness; in this is contained the whole theology of the covenant, the central doctrine of the O.T. Then follow two particular applications: Yahweh has kept his promise regarding the Temple, v. 24; may he keep it also in regard to the stability of the dynasty, v. 25.

careful how they behave, walking before me as you yourself have done". •So 26
now, God of Israel, let the words come true which you spoke to your servant
Dt 4:7+ Jn 1:14 David my father. •Yet will God really live with men[i] on the earth? Why, the 27
Ps 148:4 heavens and their own heavens cannot contain you. How much less this house
Is 66:1 Jr 23:24 that I have built! •Listen to the prayer and entreaty of your servant, Yahweh my 28
Ac7:48; 17:24 God; listen to the cry and to the prayer your servant makes to you today. •Day 29
Dt12:5,11 and night let your eyes watch over this house, over this place of which you have
Ezk48:35 said, "My name shall be there". Listen to the prayer that your servant will offer
in this place.

‖2 Ch 6: 21-31 **Solomon's prayer for the people**

'Hear the entreaty of your servant and of Israel your people as they pray in 30
Ps20:2;132:1 this place. From heaven where your dwelling is, hear; and, as you hear, forgive.
'If a man sins against his neighbour, and the neighbour calls down a curse 31
on him[j] and makes him swear an oath before your altar in this Temple, •hear 32
from heaven, and act; decide between your servants: pronounce the wicked one
guilty, bringing his conduct down on his own head; and vindicate the innocent,
rewarding him as his innocence deserves.
Lv26:14,17 Dt28:25,45 Jos 7 'When your people Israel are defeated by the enemy because they have sinned 33
against you, if they return to you and praise your name and pray to you and
entreat you in this Temple, •hear from heaven; forgive the sin of your people 34
Israel, and bring them back to the land you gave to their ancestors.
Dt11:17; 28:23-24 'When the heavens are shut and there is no rain because they have sinned 35
against you, if they pray in this place and praise your name and, having been
humbled by you,[k] repent of their sin, •hear from heaven and forgive the sin of 36
your servant and of your people Israel—show them the good way they ought
to follow—and send rain on your land which you have given your people for an
inheritance.
Dt28:21,38, 42 51 Am 4:9 'Should there be famine in the land, or pestilence, blight or mildew, locust 37
or caterpillar; should this people's enemy lay siege to one of its city gates;[l] if there
is any plague or sickness; •if anyone[m] should feel remorse in his own heart and 38
pray or make entreaty, stretching out his hands towards this Temple, •hear from 39
Ps 130:4 heaven where your home is; forgive and act, dealing with each as his conduct
Jr11:20+ deserves; for you know every heart,—you alone know the hearts of all mankind—
Dt 12:1 and so they may come to revere you as long as they live in the land you gave to 40
our fathers.

Supplementary section[n]

Ex12:48+ ‖2 Ch 6: 32-39 Is 2:2-5; 56:7 'And the foreigner too, not belonging to your people Israel, if he comes from 41
a distant country for the sake of your name—•for men will hear of your name, 42
Jr16:19-21 Mi 4:1-3 Ac 8:27 *Dt 26:15* Si 36:4 Zc8:20-23 of your mighty hand and outstretched arm—if he comes and prays in this Temple,
hear from heaven where your home is, and grant all the foreigner asks, so that 43
all the peoples of the earth may come to know your name and, like your people
Israel, revere you, and know that your name is given to the Temple I have built.
'If your people go out to war against their enemies on the way that you send 44
Tb 3:11 Ps 5:7 Dn 6:11 them, and if they turn towards the city you have chosen and towards the Temple
I have built for your name, and pray to Yahweh, •hear from heaven their prayer 45
and their entreaty, and uphold their cause.
Pr 20:9 Qo 7:20 Rm 3:21 1Jn1:8-10 *Dt28:63-64; 30:1-2* 'If they sin against you—for there is no man who does not sin—and you 46
are angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and their conquerors lead
them captive to a country far or near, •if in the land of their exile they come 47
Dt 9:5 to themselves and repent, and in the country of their conquerors they entreat
Dn 9:5 you saying, "We have sinned, we have acted perversely and wickedly", •and if 48
they turn again to you with all their heart and soul in the country of the enemies
Tb 3:11 Ps 28:2; 106:6 who have deported them, and pray to you, turning towards the land you gave
to their ancestors, towards the city you have chosen, and towards the Temple

49 50 I have built for your name, •hear from heaven where your home is,[o] •forgive
your people the sins they have committed against you and all the crimes they have
been guilty of, grant them to win favour with their conquerors so that they may 2Ch30:9
51 have pity on them; •for they are your people and your heritage whom you brought Dt 4:20; 9:26; 32:9 Est 4:17g Jr 11:4
out of Egypt, that iron furnace.

Conclusion of the prayer and blessing of the people ||2Ch6:40

52 'Be always watchful for the entreaty of your servant and of your people
53 Israel, always hearing them when they call to you. •For it was you who set them
apart from all the peoples of the earth to be your own heritage, as you declared Dt 7:6+
through Moses your servant when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt, Lord
Yahweh.'

54 When Solomon had finished offering this whole prayer and entreaty, he rose
from where he was kneeling with hands stretched out towards heaven before the
55 altar of Yahweh, •and stood erect. And in a loud voice he blessed the whole
56 assembly of Israel. •'Blessed be Yahweh' he said 'who has granted rest to
his people Israel, keeping all his promises; of all the promises of good that he
57 made through Moses his servant, not one has failed. •May Yahweh our God be Is 55:10f
with us, as he was with our ancestors; may he never desert us or cast us off. Dt 31:6 Jos 1:5
58 May he turn our hearts towards him so that we may follow all his ways and Jr31:31+
keep the commandments, and laws, and ordinances he gave to our ancestors.
59 May these words of mine, of my entreaty before Yahweh, be present with Yahweh
our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the
60 cause of Israel his people, as each day requires, •so that all the peoples of the
earth may come to know that Yahweh is God indeed, and that there is no other.
61 May your hearts be wholly with Yahweh our God, following his laws and
keeping his commandments as at this present day.'

The sacrifices on the feast of Dedication ||2Ch7:4-10

62 63 The king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before Yahweh. •Solomon
offered twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep
as communion sacrifices to Yahweh; and so the king and all the Israelites Lv 3:1+
64 dedicated the Temple of Yahweh. •On the same day the king consecrated the
middle of the court lying in front of the Temple of Yahweh; and there he offered
the holocaust, oblations and fatty parts of the communion sacrifices, since the Lv 1-3+
bronze altar[p] that stood before Yahweh was too small to hold the holocaust, 2K16:12 1M 4:44 Ezk43:13
65 oblation and the fatty parts of the communion sacrifices. •And so at that time,
Solomon celebrated the feast,[q] and all the Israelites with him, a great gathering 12:32 Jr20:1+
from the Pass of Hamath to the wadi of Egypt, before Yahweh our God for 2M 2:12
66 seven days.[r] •Then, on the eighth day, he dismissed the people, who blessed
the king and went to their homes, rejoicing and happy in heart for all the goodness
Yahweh had shown to David and to his people Israel.

Yahweh appears a second time ||2Ch7:11-22

1 2 9 When Solomon had finished building the Temple of Yahweh and the royal
palace and all he had a mind to build, •Yahweh appeared to Solomon a 3:5-15

8 i. 'with men' Greek, Targ. and 2 Ch 6:18.
j. 'calls down' corr. Prayer for divine judgement; the accuser who lacks proof stands before the altar and calls down a curse on the accused. God will show the guilt or innocence of the accused by implementing or not implementing the curse. Cf. Nb 5:19-28; Jg 17:1-3.
k. 'humbled' Greek, Vulg.
l. 'one of its city gates' Greek, Syr.
m. Greek, Hebr. adds 'of all the people of Israel'.
n. Added after the return from exile. Note the universalism of vv. 41-43, the custom of praying with the face turned to Jerusalem, v. 44, the concern for those still far from home, vv. 47f.
o. The Hebr. adds 'their prayer and their entreaty' and uphold their cause', doublet of v. 45.
p. The altar of holocaust stood before the entrance to the Temple. It was a metal structure which was moveable, cf. 2 K 16:14, and recalled the moveable altar of the desert tabernacle, the description of which is idealised, Ex 27:1f. The altar erected by Solomon, 9:25, remained in use till the time of Ahaz, 2 K 16:10.
q. The dedication of the Temple coincides with the feast of Tabernacles, v. 2, which lasted for seven days, Dt 16:13-15.
r. The Hebr. adds 'and seven more days, that is fourteen days', a gloss absent from the Greek and contradicted by v. 66.

second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. •Yahweh said to him, 'I grant 3
Ps 93:5 your prayer and the entreaty you have made before me. I consecrate this house
you have built: I place my name there for ever; my eyes and my heart shall
Ps 101:2 be always there. •For your part, if you walk before me with innocence of heart 4
and in honesty, like David your father, if you do all I order you and keep my
laws and my ordinances, •I will make your royal throne secure over Israel for 5
ever, as I promised David your father when I said: You shall never lack for a
man on the throne of Israel. •But if you turn away from me, you or your sons, 6
Dt 28:15 and do not keep the commandments and laws I have set before you, and go
Jr 22:9 and serve other gods and worship them, •then I will cut Israel off from the land 7
I have given them, and I will cast out from my presence this Temple that I have
consecrated for my name, and Israel shall become a proverb and a byword
among all the nations. •As for this exalted Temple,[a] all who pass by will be 8
Dt 28:37; 29:23-26; Jr 18:16; 19:8; 29:18; 1 S 8:8 astounded; they will whistle and say, "Why has Yahweh treated this country
and this Temple like this?" •And the answer will be, "Because they deserted 9
Yahweh their God who brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt, and
they adopted other gods and worshipped them and served them; that is why
Yahweh has brought all these disasters on them".'

||2Ch 8:1-6 The bargain with Hiram

At the end of the twenty years it took Solomon to erect the two buildings, 10
5:24-25 the Temple of Yahweh and the royal palace •(Hiram king of Tyre had provided 11
Am 1:9 Solomon with as much cedar wood, juniper wood and gold as he had wanted),[b]
King Solomon gave Hiram twenty towns in the land of Galilee. •But when 12
Hiram came from Tyre to view the towns Solomon had given him, he was not
pleased with them. •He said, 'What kind of towns are these you have given me, 13
my brother?' And to this day they are called 'the land of Cabul'.[c] •Hiram sent 14
the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

Forced labour for Solomon's building programme

This is an account of the forced labour King Solomon levied for the building 15
11:27 of the Temple of Yahweh, his own palace, the Millo[d] and the wall of Jerusalem,
Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer •(Pharaoh king of Egypt went up and captured Gezer, 16
he burnt it down and massacred the Canaanites living there; he then gave the
3:1 town as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife, •and Solomon rebuilt Gezer), 17
Lower Beth-horon, •Baalath, Tamar in the wilderness, inside the country, •all 18 19
10:26 the garrison towns owned by Solomon, all the towns for his chariots and horses,[e]
and all it pleased Solomon to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and in all the
Jos 17:13; ||2Ch 8:7-10 countries subject to him. •All those who survived of the Amorite, Hittite, Perizzite, 20
Dt 7:1+ Hivite and Jebusite peoples, who were not Israelites, •their descendants who were 21
left in the country after them, those on whom the Israelites had not been able
Dt 7:2; 20:16 to enforce the ban, these Solomon conscripted as slave-labourers, as they are
still. •However, Solomon did not impose slave-labour on the Israelites;[f] these 22
served as fighting men: they were his guards, officers, equerries, chariot and
cavalry commanders. •These were the administrators' officials who supervised 23
Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty of them in charge of the people employed
3:1; ||2Ch 8:11 in the work. •After Pharaoh's daughter had moved from the Citadel of David 24
to the house which he had built for her, he then built the Millo.

The maintenance of the Temple

Ex 23:14+; Dt 16:16; ||2Ch 8:12-16 Three times a year Solomon offered holocausts and communion sacrifices 25
on the altar he had built for Yahweh...[g] and he kept the Temple in good repair.

C. SOLOMON THE TRADER

Solomon as ship-owner

||2Ch8:17-18

26 King Solomon equipped a fleet at Ezion-geber, which is near Elath on the 22:49
27 shores of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. •For this fleet Hiram sent men of Nb 33:36
28 his, sailors who knew the sea, to serve with Solomon's men. •They went to Ophir
and from there they brought back four hundred and twenty talents of gold, Qo 2:8
which they delivered to King Solomon.[h]

The queen of Sheba visits Solomon[a]

Jg 14:12
||2Ch9:1-12
Qo 1:16;2:8
↗ Mt 12:42p

1 10 The fame of Solomon having reached the queen of Sheba...[b] she came Ps 72:10
2 to test him with difficult questions. •She brought immense riches to Jerusa- Sl 47:17
lem with her, camels laden with spices, great quantities of gold, and precious Is 43:3
3 stones. On coming to Solomon, she opened her mind freely to him; •and Solomon Jr 6:20
had an answer for all her questions, not one of them was too obscure for the Ezk 38:13
4 king to expound. •When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon, Lk 11:31
5 the palace he had built, •the food at his table, the accommodation for his officials, Dn 1:20
the organisation of his staff and the way they were dressed, his cup-bearers, and
6 the holocausts he offered in the Temple of Yahweh, it left her breathless, •and Ws 8:11
she said to the king, 'What I heard in my own country about you and your
7 wisdom was true, then! •Until I came and saw it with my own eyes I could not
believe what they told me, but clearly they told me less than half: for wisdom
8 and prosperity you surpass the report I heard. •How happy your wives are![c]
How happy are these servants of yours who wait on you always and hear your wisdom!
9 Blessed be Yahweh your God who has granted you his favour, setting you on
the throne of Israel! Because of Yahweh's everlasting love for Israel, he has
10 made you king to deal out law and justice.' •And she presented the king with
a hundred and twenty talents of gold and great quantities of spices and precious
stones; no such wealth of spices ever came again as those given to King Solomon
11 by the queen of Sheba. •And the fleet of Hiram, which carried gold from Ophir, Sl 47:18
12 also brought great cargoes of almuggim wood[d] and precious stones. •The king
made supports with the almuggim wood for the Temple of Yahweh and for
the royal palace, and lyres and harps for the musicians; no more of this almuggim
13 wood has since come or been seen to this day. •And King Solomon in his turn,
presented the queen of Sheba with all she expressed a wish for, besides those
presents he made her out of his royal bounty. Then she went home, she and
her servants, to her own country.

Solomon's wealth

||2Ch9:13-24

14 The weight of gold coming to Solomon in one year was six hundred and

9 a. 'this exalted Temple' versions; 'this Temple will be exalted' Hebr.

b. This reminiscence is a clumsy addition since it refers to a different bargain: Solomon sells part of his territory for gold, v. 14.

c. The connection of the place-name with Hiram's comment is doubtful.

d. The 'filling' of earth that levelled the craggy hill surrounding the Temple and palace.

e. The towns just enumerated. The war chariots, core of Solomon's standing army, were stationed there. They formed a line of defence round what was strictly Israelite territory.

f. The author's remark does not square with the ancient, and preferable, data used in 5:27; 11:28.

g. Text corrupt.

h. Ezion-geber, near Aqaba, was a port at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. Ophir is a gold-bearing region situated probably on the W. coast of Arabia, possibly opposite Somaliland.

10 a. The kingdom of Sheba was the S.W. portion of the Arabian peninsula, but the queen mentioned ruled more probably over one of the Sabaean settlements of N. Arabia. The Hebr. Bible distinguishes between the more usual Sheba (used here) and Seba which it associates more closely with Cush, or Ethiopia, Gn 10:7; Is 43:3; 45:14. The name Seba came to be used for the far S., just as Tarshish stands for the W. limits of the earth, Ezk 38:13 and Ps 72:10. Sheba is several times mentioned in association with Dedan, another Arabian group, Gn 10:7; 25:3; Ezk 38:13, figuring as one of the great tribes of travelling merchants, Ezk 27:20f; Jr 6:20; Jl 4:8; Jb 6:19. This far-off people will come to do homage to the future king, Ps 72:10,15, in the new Jerusalem, Is 45:14 and 60:6f, cf. Mt 2:11.

b. Unintelligible, lit. 'for the name of Yahweh'; phrase absent from 2 Ch 9:1.

c. 'your wives' versions.

d. Rare and unidentifiable species.

sixty-six talents of gold, •not counting what came in from merchants' dues and 15
traders' profits, and from all the foreign kings and the governors of the country.[e]
14:26 King Solomon made three hundred[f] great shields of beaten gold, and plated each 16
shield with six hundred shekels of gold; •also three hundred small shields of 17
beaten gold, and plated each of these with three minas of gold; and he put them
in the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon. •The king also made a great ivory throne, 18
and plated it with refined gold. •The throne had six steps, and bulls' heads at the 19
back of it, and arms at either side of the seat; two lions stood beside the arms,
and twelve lions stood on either side of the six steps. No throne like this was ever 20
made in any other kingdom.
Ws 7:11 All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the furnishings in the 21
Si 47:18 Hall of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; silver was thought little of in
22:49 the time of Solomon. •And the king also had a fleet of Tarshish[g] at sea with 22
Hiram's fleet, and once every three years the fleet of Tarshish would come back
laden with gold and silver, ivory, apes and baboons. •For riches and for wisdom 23
Qo 2:10 King Solomon outdid all the kings of the earth. •The whole world sought audience 24
of Solomon to hear the wisdom God had implanted in his heart •and each would 25
bring his own present: gold vessels, silver vessels, robes, armour, spices, horses
and mules; and this went on year after year.

‖2Ch 1:14-17 **Solomon's chariots**

5:6
‖2Ch1:14; 9:25 9:19 Solomon built up a force of chariots and horses; he had one thousand four 26
hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses; these he stationed in the chariot
towns and near the king in Jerusalem. •In Jerusalem the king made silver common 27
‖2Ch1:15; 9:27 Si 47:18 as pebbles, and cedars plentiful as the sycamores of the Lowlands. •Solomon's 28
horses were imported from Cilicia;[h] the king's agents took delivery of them from
Cilicia at a fixed rate. •A chariot was imported from Egypt for six hundred 29
shekels, a horse for a hundred and fifty. These were exported through the king's
agents to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram in the same way.[i]

D. HIS DECLINE

Ne 13:26 Si 9:2 **Solomon's wives**

Dt 17:17 Si 47:19 11 King Solomon loved many foreign women: not only Pharaoh's daughter 1
Dt 7:3-4 but Moabites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites, •from those peoples of 2
whom Yahweh had said to the Israelites, 'You are not to go to them nor they
to you, or they will surely sway your hearts to their own gods'. But Solomon
was deeply attached to them. •He had seven hundred wives of royal rank, and 3
2Ch11:23–12:1 three hundred concubines.[a] •When Solomon grew old his wives swayed his 4
21:25 heart to other gods; and his heart was not wholly with Yahweh his God as his
Jg 2:13+ father David's had been. •Solomon became a follower of Astarte, the goddess 5
of the Sidonians, and of Milcom, the Ammonite abomination. •He did what was 6
displeasing to Yahweh, and was not a wholehearted follower of Yahweh, as his
Lv 20:5 2K 23:13 2Ch11:23 Zp 1:5 father David had been. •Then it was that Solomon built a high place for Chemosh 7
the god of Moab on the mountain to the east of Jerusalem, and to Milcom the
god of the Ammonites.[b] •He did the same for all his foreign wives, who offered 8
incense and sacrifice to their gods.

Yahweh was angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from Yahweh 9
the God of Israel who had twice appeared to him •and who had then forbidden 10
him to follow other gods; but he did not carry out Yahweh's order. •Yahweh 11
1 S 15:26 therefore said to Solomon, 'Since you behave like this and do not keep my
covenant or the laws I laid down for you, I will most surely tear the kingdom
away from you and give it to one of your servants. •For your father David's sake, 12
however, I will not do this during your lifetime, but will tear it out of your son's
hands. •Even so, I will not tear the whole kingdom from him. For the sake of 13

my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen, I will leave your son one tribe.'[c]

Solomon's foreign enemies

14 Yahweh raised an enemy against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite, of the
15 kingly stock of Edom. •After David had crushed Edom, Joab, the commander 2S8:13-14
of the army, had gone to bury the dead and he had slaughtered the entire male
16 population of Edom •(Joab stayed there with all Israel for six months until he
17 had exterminated the entire male population of Edom), •but Hadad with a
number of Edomites in his father's service had fled to Egypt. Hadad had been
18 only a boy at the time. •They set out from Midian, and on reaching Paran,
took a number of men from Paran with them and went on to Egypt, to Pharaoh,
the king of Egypt, who provided him with a house, undertook to maintain him,
19 and assigned him an estate. •Hadad became a great favourite of Pharaoh who
gave him his own wife's sister in marriage, the sister of the Great Lady[d] Tahpenes.
20 The sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son whom Tahpenes brought up
21 in Pharaoh's palace, Genubath living with Pharaoh's children. •But when news
reached Hadad in Egypt that David slept with his ancestors and that Joab the
commander of the army was dead, he said to Pharaoh, 'Give me leave to return
22 to my own country'. •'Do you want for anything here with me' said Pharaoh
'that you now ask to return to your own country?' 'No,' he replied 'but please let
25b me go.' •This is where the harm of Hadad comes from: he loathed Israel and
ruled Edom.

23 God raised a second enemy against Solomon, Rezon son of Eliada. He had
24 fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah. •A number of men having rallied 2 S 8:3; 10:16f
to him, he had become leader of a marauding band (which was then massacred
by David). Rezon captured Damascus and settled there and became king of
25a Damascus. •He was hostile to Israel as long as Solomon lived.[e]

The revolt of Jeroboam

26 Jeroboam was the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zeredah; the name of
his mother, a wisdow, was Zeruah; he was in Solomon's service but revolted
27 against the king. •This is the account of his revolt.

Solomon was building the Millo and closing the breach in the Citadel of 9:15
28 David his father. •Now this Jeroboam was a man of rank; Solomon, noticing 2 S 5:6+ 2Ch11:23
how the young man set about his work, put him in charge of all the forced
29 labour of the House of Joseph. •One day when Jeroboam had gone out of 14:2
Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah of Shiloh accosted him on the road. Ahijah was 1 S 1:3+
wearing a new cloak; the two of them were in the open country by themselves.
30 31 Ahijah took the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve strips,[f] •saying 1 S 15:26
to Jeroboam, 'Take ten strips for yourself, for thus Yahweh speaks, the God of
Israel, "I am going to tear the kingdom from Solomon's hand and give ten tribes 2 S 19:44

e. Text uncertain.

f. 'three hundred' Greek.

g. Meaning of phrase uncertain. See 10:1+.

h. 'from Cilicia' corr.

i. Vv. 28-29 may mean that Solomon's agents are international middlemen: they supply Egypt with horses imported from Cilicia; they supply 'the kings of the Hittites' in N. Syria and 'the kings of Aram' in S. Syria with chariots imported from Egypt.

11 a. The Hebr. adds 'and his wives swayed his heart', duplicate of v. 4; absent in Greek.

b. 'the god' Greek, cf. v. 33; 'the abomination' Hebr. 'Milcom' Greek; 'Molech' Hebr. Milcom is the national god of the Ammonites, Jr 49:1,3; 2 S 12:30 (Greek). Chemosh that of the Moabites, Nb 21:29; Jr 48:46.

c. Solomon's foreign marriages were contracted for political ends and the pagan shrines were intended for his wives and for traders. Such contacts, however, jeopardised the purity of the religion of Yahweh, and the author interprets the situation in the spirit and language of Dt: God punishes this form of impiety by raising up enemies abroad, vv. 14f, and at home, vv. 26f.

d. This 'Great Lady' is the principal wife of the pharaoh and is here given a Hebr. title used of the queen mother, 1 K 15:13, and of the queen, 2 K 10:13.

e. Text restored according to Greek. Damascus, once controlled by David, 2 S 8:6, becomes an independent kingdom: it will prove a bitter enemy of Israel.

f. The symbolic gestures of the prophets are not only meaningful but have a real effect, cf. Jr 18:1+. The ten pieces assigned to Jeroboam are the ten N. tribes (cf. 2 S 19:44); the two remaining pieces represent the one tribe left for Solomon's successor, namely Judah which had absorbed Simeon, Jos 19:1.

to you. •He shall keep one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the 32
sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel; •for he 33
has forsaken me to worship Astarte the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the
Zp 1:5 god of Moab, Milcom the god of the Ammonites; he has not followed my ways[g]
by doing what is right in my eyes or keeping my laws and ordinances as his
father David did. •But I will not take the kingdom out of his own hands, since 34
I have made him a prince for as long as he lives, for the sake of my servant David
who kept my commandments and laws. •I will, however, take the kingdom 35
from the hand of his son, giving the ten tribes to you. •I will keep one tribe to 36
15:4
2 S 21:17 give to his son, so that my servant David may always have a lamp[h] in my presence
2 K 8:19
2 Ch 21:7 in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen as a dwelling place for my name. •You 37
nonetheless I will take to rule over as much as you wish, and you shall be king
of Israel. •If you listen to all my orders and follow my ways, by doing what 38
is right in my eyes and keeping my laws and commandments as my servant
David did, then I will be with you and will build you as enduring a House as
the one I built for David. I will give Israel to you, •thus humbling the descendants 39
of David; but not for ever." '

14:25 Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam but he made off and fled to Egypt, to Shishak 40
king of Egypt, and he remained in Egypt until Solomon's death.

‖2 Ch 9:29-31 **The end of the reign of Solomon**

The rest of the history of Solomon, his entire career, his wisdom, is not all 41
this recorded in the Book of the Acts of Solomon?[i] •Solomon's reign in Jerusalem 42
over all Israel lasted forty years. •Then Solomon slept with his ancestors and was 43
buried in the Citadel of David his father; Rehoboam his son succeeded him.

III. THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS SCHISM

1 S 8:11
‖2 Ch 10 **The assembly at Shechem**
Sl 47:21,23

12 As soon as Jeroboam son of Nebat heard the news[a]—he was still in Egypt, 2
where he had taken refuge from King Solomon—he returned from Egypt.
Rehoboam went to Shechem, for it was to Shechem that all Israel[b] had gone to 1
proclaim him king, •[c] and they said this to him, •'Your father gave us a heavy 3 4
1 S 8:17 burden to bear; lighten your father's harsh tyranny now, and the weight of the
burden he laid on us, and we will serve you'. •He said to them, 'Go away for three 5
days and then come back to me'. And the people went away.

King Rehoboam consulted the elders, who had been in the service of his 6
father Solomon while he was alive. 'What reply' he asked 'do you advise me to
give to this people?' •'Act as servant of this people now,' they said 'humour 7
them, treat them fairly, and they will be your servants for ever.' •But he rejected 8
the advice given him by the elders and consulted the young men who had grown
up with him and were in his service. •'How do you advise us' he asked 'to answer 9
this people who have said to me, "Lighten the burden your father imposed
on us"?' •The young men who had grown up with him replied, 'Give this answer 10
to these people who have said, "Your father gave us a heavy burden to bear, you
must lighten it for us", say this to them, "My little finger is thicker than my father's
loins! •So then, my father made you bear a heavy burden. I will make it heavier 11
still. My father beat you with whips; I am going to beat you with loaded
scourges." '

Pr 15:1 On the third day all the people[d] came to Rehoboam in obedience to the 12
king's command: 'Come back to me on the third day'. •The king, rejecting the 13
advice given him by the elders, gave the people a harsh answer, •speaking to 14
them as the young men had recommended. 'My father made you bear a heavy
burden,' he said 'but I will make it heavier still. My father beat you with whips;
I am going to beat you with loaded scourges.' •The king in fact took no notice 15

of the people's wishes, and this was brought about by Yahweh to carry out the promise he had spoken through Ahijah of Shiloh to Jeroboam son of Nebat.
16 When all Israel saw that the king took no notice of their wishes, they gave him 11:29-39
this answer:

'What share have we in David? 2 S 20:1
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
To your tents, Israel!
Henceforth look after your own house, David!'

17 And Israel went off to their tents. 18 •Rehoboam, however, reigned over those sons of Israel who lived in the towns of Judah. •King Rehoboam sent Adoram 4:6;5:27
who was in charge of forced labour, but the Israelites stoned him to death; whereupon King Rehoboam was obliged to mount his chariot and escape to
19 Jerusalem. •And Israel has been separated from the House of David until the Si 47:21
present day.

The political schism

20 When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they summoned him 2K 17:18
to the assembly and made him king of all Israel; no one remained loyal to the House of David, except the tribe of Judah.
21 Rehoboam went to Jerusalem and mustered the whole House of Judah and the ||2 Ch 11:1-4
tribe of Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand picked warriors, to fight the House of Israel and win back the kingdom for Rehoboam son of Solomon.
22 23 But the word of Yahweh came to Shemaiah the man of God, •'Say this to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, to the whole House of Judah, to
24 Benjamin and to the rest of the people, •"Yahweh says this: Do not go to fight against your brothers, the sons of Israel; let everyone go home, for what has happened is my doing" '.
25 Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the mountain country of Ephraim, and lived there. Then, leaving there, he fortified Penuel.

The religious schism

26 Jeroboam thought to himself, 'As things are, the kingdom will revert to Jg 8:27 2K 17:21
27 the House of David. •If this people continues to go up to the Temple of Tb 1:5 Si 47:24
Yahweh in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, the people's heart will turn back again Ho 13:2
28 to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will put me to death.'[e] •So the king thought this over and then made two golden calves; he said to the people, Ex 32:4 2K 10:29; 17:16 Ho 8:5
'You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough. Here are your gods, Israel;
29 30 these brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'[f] •He set up one in Bethel[g] •and Am 3:14; 7:13
31 the people went in procession all the way to Dan in front of the other. •He set 2K 17:32
up the temple of the high places and appointed priests from ordinary families,
32 who were not of the sons of Levi. •Jeroboam also instituted a feast in the eighth 8:65 Ho 8:5; 13:2
month, on the fifteenth of the month, like the feast that was kept in Judah, and he went up to the altar.[h] That was how he behaved in Bethel for the high

g. Verbs in singular, with versions.

h. Symbolising an enduring dynasty.

i. This book, now lost, seems to have been one of the ancient sources of 1 K 3-11.

12 a. Of Solomon's death; v. 2 must be read before v. 1. 'he returned from Egypt' versions.

b. Here, as in the ancient historical texts, 'all Israel' means the N. tribes as distinct from Judah. In Jerusalem the people of Judah recognise Rehoboam. In Shechem the Israelites, whose interests Solomon had subordinated to those of Judah, demand a charter. The crisis had long threatened.

c. The Hebr. inserts at the beginning 'And they sent and called Jeroboam and he came, he and all the assembly of Israel', a gloss omitted by the Greek and contradicted by v. 20.

d. Greek. The Hebr. adds 'Jeroboam' in accordance with the gloss of v. 3.

e. The Hebr. adds 'They will return to Rehoboam, king of Judah', omitted by Greek.

f. Jeroboam's intention was not to adopt another god, but by using the symbol of Baal-hadad to represent the invisible God; he was reducing Yahwism to the level of the surrounding religions.

g. The Hebr. continues 'and he put the other in Dan. This thing led to sin.' Dan, near the source of the Jordan, and Bethel, on the Jerusalem road, delimit the new kingdom. These places were already hallowed shrines, Gn 12:8 etc.; Jg 17-18.

h. The new temple of Bethel, like Solomon's Temple, is dedicated on the feast of Tabernacles.

places he had established. •On the fifteenth of the eighth month, the month he 33
had deliberately chosen, he went up to the altar he had made; he instituted a feast
for the Israelites, and went up to the altar to offer incense.

The condemnation of the altar in Bethel

1 S 9:6 Am 3:14 13 There came to Bethel at Yahweh's command a man of God from Judah, 1
just as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to offer the sacrifice, •and at 2
Yahweh's command this man denounced the altar. 'Altar, altar,' he said
2K 23:15-16 'Yahweh says this, "A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name,
who shall immolate on you the priests of the high places who have offered sacrifice
on you, and on you shall he burn the bones of men".'[a] •At the same time he gave 3
a sign. 'This is the sign' he said 'that Yahweh has spoken, "This altar here will
burst apart and the ashes that are on it will be scattered". ' •When the king 4
heard how the man of God denounced the altar of Bethel, he stretched out his
hand from the altar, saying, 'Seize him!' But the hand he stretched out against
Lv 1:16 the man withered, and he could not draw it back, •and the altar burst apart 5
and the ashes from the altar were scattered, in accordance with the sign given by
the man of God at Yahweh's command. •The king said to the man of God, 'I beg 6
you to placate Yahweh your God,[b] and so restore me the use of my hand'.
The man of God placated Yahweh; the king's hand was restored as it had been
before. •The king then said to the man of God, 'Come home with me and refresh 7
Nb 22:18 yourself, and I will give you a present'; •but the man of God answered the king, 8
'Were you to give me half your house, I would not go with you. I will eat and
drink nothing here, •for I have had Yahweh's order: "You are to eat or drink 9
Mt 2:12 nothing, nor to return by the way you came".' •And he left by another road and 10
did not return by the way he had come to Bethel.

The man of God and the prophet[c]

Now there was an old prophet living in Bethel and his sons came to tell him 11
all that the man of God had done in Bethel that day; and the words he had said
to the king, they told these to their father too. •'Which road did he take?' their 12
father asked. His sons showed him[d] the road that the man of God who came from
Judah had taken. •'Saddle the donkey for me' he said to his sons; they saddled 13
the donkey for him and he mounted. •He followed the man of God and found 14
him sitting under a terebinth. 'Are you the man of God' he said 'who came from
Judah?' 'I am' he replied. •'Come home with me' he said 'and take some food.' 15
'I cannot go back with you,' he answered 'or eat or drink anything here,[e] •for 16 17
I have received Yahweh's order: "You are to eat or drink nothing there, nor
to return by the way you came".' •'I too am a prophet like you,' the other replied 18
'and an angel told me this by Yahweh's order: "Bring him back with you to
your house to eat and drink".' He was lying to him.[f] •The man of God went 19
back with him; he ate and drank at his house.

20:36 As they were sitting at table a word of Yahweh came to the prophet who had 20
brought him back, •and he addressed the man of God who came from Judah. 21
'Yahweh says this,' he said ' "Since you have defied Yahweh's command and
not obeyed the orders Yahweh your God gave you, •but have come back and 22
eaten and drunk where he forbade you to eat or drink, your corpse will never
reach the tomb of your ancestors". ' •After he had eaten and drunk, the prophet 23
saddled the donkey for him, and he turned about and went away.[g] •A lion met 24
him on the road and killed him; his corspe lay stretched out on the road; the
donkey stood there beside it; the lion stood by the corpse too. •People going 25
by saw the corpse lying on the road and the lion standing by the corpse, and went
and spoke about it in the town where the old prophet lived. •When the prophet 26
who had made the man turn back heard about it, he said, 'That is the man of God
who defied Yahweh's command! Yahweh has handed him over to the lion, which
has mauled and killed him, just as Yahweh had foretold it would.' •He said 27

28 to his sons, 'Saddle the donkey for me', and they saddled it. •He set off and
found the man's corpse lying on the road with the donkey and the lion standing
beside the corpse; the lion had neither eaten the corpse nor mauled the donkey.
29 The prophet lifted the corpse of the man of God and put it on the donkey and
brought it back to the town where he lived to hold mourning for him and bury
30 him. •He laid the corpse in his own tomb, and they raised the mourning cry
31 for him, 'Alas, my brother!' •After burying him, the prophet said to his sons, Jr 22:18
'When I die, bury me in the same tomb as the man of God, lay my bones beside 2 K 23:17-18
32 his. •For the word he uttered at Yahweh's command against the altar of Bethel
and against all the shrines of the high places in the towns of Samaria will certainly
come true.'
33 Jeroboam did not give up his wicked ways after this incident, but went on Si 47:24
appointing priests for the high places from the common people. He consecrated
34 as priests of the high places any who wished to be. •Such conduct made the
House of Jeroboam a sinful House, and caused its ruin and extinction from the
face of the earth.

IV. THE TWO KINGDOMS UNTIL ELIJAH

Continuation of the reign of Jeroboam I (931-910)

1 2 14 At that time Abijah, Jeroboam's son, fell sick, •and Jeroboam said to his
wife, 'Come, please disguise yourself so that no one will recognise you as 1 S 28:8
Jeroboam's wife, and go to Shiloh; the prophet Ahijah is there, the man who 11:29-39
3 said I was to be king over this people. •Go to him, and take ten loaves and some
savoury food and a jar of honey; he will tell you what will happen to the child.' 1S9:7+
4 Jeroboam's wife did this: she set out, went to Shiloh and came to Ahijah's house.
5 Now Ahijah could not see, his eyes were dimmed with age, •but Yahweh had told
him, 'Jeroboam's wife is now on her way to ask you for an oracle about her son,
as he is sick. You will tell her such and such. When she comes, she will pretend
6 to be some other woman.' •So when Ahijah heard her footsteps at the door, he
called, 'Come in, wife of Jeroboam; why pretend to be someone else? I have
7 bad news for you. •Go and tell Jeroboam, "Yahweh says this, the God of
Israel: I raised you from the people and made you leader of my people Israel; 16:2
8 I tore the kingdom from the House of David and gave it to you. But you have
not been like my servant David who kept my commandments and followed me
9 with all his heart doing only what is right in my eyes; •you have done more
evil than all your predecessors, you have gone and made yourself other gods,
idols of cast metal,[a] provoking my anger, and you have turned your back on Ex20:3-5
10 me. •For this I will bring disaster on the House of Jeroboam, I will wipe out 21:21 2K14:26
every male belonging to the family of Jeroboam, fettered or free[b] in Israel, I will
sweep away the House of Jeroboam as a man sweeps dung away till none is left. 1 S 25:22
11 Those of Jeroboam's family who die in the city, the dogs will eat; and those 15:27-30; 16:4;21:24
who die in the open country, the birds of the air will eat,[c] for Yahweh has spoken."
12 Now get up and go home; at the moment your feet enter the town, the child
13 will die. •All Israel will mourn for him, and bury him; and he alone of Jeroboam's

13 a. 'he will burn' versions; 'will be burnt' Hebr. This forecast, the precision of which is foreign to the prophetic style, has been added to the original oracle which was v. 3 only.

b. The Hebr. adds 'and pray for me' absent from versions.

c. The 'prophet', *nabi*, at this period, is of a lower grade than the true 'man of God'. Compare Elijah and Elisha with the 'sons of the prophets' of 2 K 2, etc., and cf. Am 7:14.

d. 'showed him' versions.

e. The Hebr. is somewhat redundant.

f. To test him. What follows, written in a markedly popular style, teaches this lesson: God's orders must be obeyed absolutely; the man of God had no right to question the order he had originally received, not even at the bidding of an angel, cf. Ga 1:8.

g. 'turned about and went away' versions.

14 a. The phrase reflects the instinct of true Yahwism: though Jeroboam intended his golden calves to form part of Yahwistic worship, 12:28+, they were not suitable symbols of Yahweh, they were 'false gods' and no more.

b. Two alliterative words, each of uncertain sense but together expressing totality: 'every single man'.

c. Whether in town or country they will lie unburied; cf. the contrasting v. 13.

household will go to the tomb, for it is in him alone of the House of Jeroboam that anything pleasing to Yahweh, the God of Israel, is found. •Yahweh will 14
raise up a king for himself over Israel to wipe out the House of Jeroboam.[d]
Yahweh will make Israel shake as a reed shakes in the water, he will uproot 15
Israel from this prosperous land which he gave to their ancestors and scatter
them beyond the river for provoking Yahweh to anger by making their sacred
poles. •He will abandon Israel for the sins Jeroboam has committed and made 16
Israel commit.' •Jeroboam's wife rose and left. She arrived at Tirzah,[e] and when 17
she crossed the threshold of the house, the child was already dead. •They buried 18
him, and all Israel mourned him, just as Yahweh had foretold through his servant
Abijah the prophet.

The rest of the history of Jeroboam, what wars he waged, how he governed, 19
these may be found recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel.
Jeroboam's reign lasted twenty-two years; then he slept with his ancestors; his son 20
Nadab succeeded him.

The reign of Rehoboam (931-913)

||2Ch 12: 13-14 In Judah Rehoboam son of Solomon became king; he was forty-one years old 21
when he came to the throne and he reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem,
the city which Yahweh had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to give his
name a home there. His mother's name was Naamah, the Ammonitess. •He[f] did 22
2Ch 12:1 what is displeasing to Yahweh, arousing his resentment more than his ancestors
1S 9:12+ did by all the sins they committed, •they who had built themselves high places, 23
Ex 23:24+; 34:13+ and had set up pillars and sacred poles on every high hill and under every spread-
Dt 12:2+; 23:19+ ing tree. •There were even men in the country who were sacred prostitutes. He 24
2 K 23:7 copied all the shameful practices of the nations whom Yahweh had dispossessed
for the sons of Israel.

11:40 ||2Ch 12:2, 9-11 In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak[g] the king of Egypt marched on 25
Jerusalem. •He took all the treasures from the Temple of Yahweh and the 26
treasures from the royal palace, he took everything, including all the golden
10:16 shields that Solomon had made; •in place of them King Rehoboam had bronze 27
shields made, entrusting them to the care of the officers of the guard[h] who
guarded the king's palace gate. •Whenever the king went to the Temple of 28
Yahweh, the guards would carry them, returning them to the guardroom after-
wards.

The rest of the history of Rehoboam, his entire career, is not all this recorded 29
in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •Rehoboam and Jeroboam were 30
2Ch 12:16 at war with each other throughout their reigns. •Then Rehoboam slept with his 31
ancestors and was buried in the Citadel of David; his son Abijam succeeded him.[i]

The reign of Abijam in Judah (913-911)

||2 Ch 13: 1-2 15 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijam became king 1
of Judah •and reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name 2
2Ch 11:20 was Maacah, daughter of Absalom. •He followed the sinful example of his father 3
before him in everything; his heart was not wholly with Yahweh his God, as the
heart of David his ancestor had been. •However, for David's sake, Yahweh his 4
11:36+ 1S 21:17 2K 8:19+ God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, assuring him sons[a] after him and keeping
Jerusalem secure; •for David had done what is right in the eyes of Yahweh and 5
had never in all his life disobeyed whatever he ordered him.[b]

The rest of the history of Abijam, his entire career, is not all this recorded in (6)7
||2Ch 13:2b the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? Abijam and Jeroboam were at
||2Ch 13:23 war with each other. •Then Abijam slept with his ancestors and they buried him in 8
the Citadel of David; his son Asa succeeded him.

The reign of Asa in Judah (911-870)

In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king of Judah 9

10 and reigned for forty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah,
11 daughter of Absalom. •Asa did what is right in the eyes of Yahweh, as his ‖2 Ch 14: 1-3
12 ancestor David had done. •He drove out of the country the men who had been
13 sacred prostitutes and cleared away all the idols his ancestors had made. •He 22:47 Dt 23:19+
even deprived his grandmother of the dignity of queen mother for making an 11:19+
obscenity[c] for Asherah; Asa cut down her obscenity and burned it in the wadi ‖2 Ch 15: 16-18
14 Kidron. •Though the high places were not abolished, the heart of Asa was
15 wholly with Yahweh throughout his life. •He deposited the offerings dedicated
by his father and his own offerings too, in the Temple of Yahweh, silver and gold
and furnishings.

16 Asa and Baasha king of Israel were at war with each other as long as they ‖2 Ch 16: 1-6
17 lived. •Baasha king of Israel marched on Judah and fortified Ramah to blockade Jr 41:9
18 Asa king of Judah. •Asa then took the remaining silver and gold from the
treasuries of the Temple of Yahweh and the royal palace. Entrusting this to
his servants, he sent them with the following message to Ben-hadad[d] son of
19 Tabrimmon son of Hezion, the king of Aram who lived in Damascus, •'An
alliance between myself and you, as between my father and your father! With Ho 5:13
this I send you a gift of silver and gold. Come, break off your alliance with
20 Baasha king of Israel, and he will have to retire from my territory.' •Ben-hadad
agreed, and sent his generals against the towns of Israel; he conquered Ijon,
Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, all Chinneroth,[e] and the whole land of Naphtali too.
21 When Baasha heard this he gave up fortifying Ramah and returned to Tirzah.
22 King Asa then summoned the whole of Judah, no one was exempt; they took
away the stones and timber with which Baasha had been fortifying Ramah,
and with them the king fortified Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.

23 The rest of the history of Asa, all his valour, his entire career,[f] is not all this
recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? In his old age, ‖2 Ch 16:12
24 however, he suffered from a disease of the feet. •Then Asa slept with his ancestors ‖2 Ch 16: 13-14
and was buried in the Citadel of David his ancestor; his son Jehoshaphat
succeeded him.

The reign of Nadab in Israel (910-909)

25 Nadab son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in the second year of Asa king
26 of Judah, and he reigned over Israel for two years. •He did what is displeasing
to Yahweh; he copied his father's example and the sin into which he had led
27 Israel. •Baasha son of Ahijah, of the House of Issachar, plotted against him
and murdered him at Gibbethon, a Philistine town which Nadab and all Israel
28 were besieging. •Baasha killed Nadab and succeeded him in the third year of
29 Asa king of Judah. •No sooner was he king than he butchered the entire House 2 K 10:1
of Jeroboam, not sparing a soul, and wiped it out, just as Yahweh had foretold
30 through his servant Ahijah of Shiloh, •because of the sins into which he had 14:10-11
led Israel, and because he had provoked the anger of Yahweh, the God of
Israel.

31 The rest of the history of Nadab, his entire career, is not all this recorded
(32) in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?[g]

d. The text adds 'This is the day; and what more now?' A gloss on v. 15 inserted by an exile.

e. Capital of the kingdom of Israel before Samaria was built, 16:24. Site disputed.

f. Verbs in singular, following Greek; Hebr. has plural, referring to Judah as a whole.

g. First Pharaoh of the 22nd Dynasty. It seems that he invaded Palestine but spared Judah, probably because Rehoboam paid tribute.

h. Bodyguards (or 'couriers', cf. 1 K 1:5) who escorted the king's chariot.

i. Text corrected in accordance with 2 Ch 12:16.

15 a. 'sons' Greek; 'a son' Hebr.

b. The Hebr. adds 'except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite', gloss absent from Greek. V. 6, a doublet of 14:30, is wanting in the best Greek MSS.

c. Translation doubtful. Possibly a canopy over the image of the goddess.

d. Ben-hadad I. On the dynasty's subsequent history see 20:1. Asa imitates the policy of foreign alliance for which the great prophets constantly reproach the kings of Judah, cf. Is 7:4-9; 8:6-8, etc.

e. The district W. of Lake Tiberias.

f. The Hebr. here adds 'and the towns he built'.

g. V. 32 simply repeats v. 16 and is omitted by Greek.

The reign of Baasha in Israel (909-889)

In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha son of Ahijah became king 33
of Israel at Tirzah for twenty-four years. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh; 34
he copied the example of Jeroboam and the sin into which he had led Israel.

14:7-11; 16:13 16 The word of Yahweh came to Jehu son of Hanani against Baasha, •'I raised 1 2
you from the dust and made you leader of my people Israel, but you have
followed Jeroboam's example and led my people Israel into sins that provoke
21:21; 2 K 9:8 my anger. •Now I will sweep away Baasha and his House; I will make your 3
House like the House of Jeroboam son of Nebat. •Those of Baasha's family 4
14:11; 2 K 9:7 who die in the city, the dogs will eat; and those who die in the open country,
the birds of the air will eat.'

The rest of the history of Baasha, his career, his valour, is not all this 5
recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? •Then Baasha slept 6
with his ancestors and was buried in Tirzah; his son Elah succeeded him.

Furthermore, the word of Yahweh was delivered through the prophet Jehu 7
Ho 5:13 son of Hanani against Baasha and his House, firstly because of all the evil he did
in the sight of Yahweh, provoking him to anger by his actions and becoming
like the House of Jeroboam; secondly because he destroyed that House.[a]

The reign of Elah in Israel (886-885)

In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah son of Baasha became 8
king of Israel at Tirzah, for two years. •Zimri, one of his officers, captain of 9
half his chariotry, plotted against him. While he was at Tirzah, drinking himself
Is 5:11 senseless in the house of Arza who was master of the palace in Tirzah, •Zimri 10
came in, struck him down and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa
king of Judah, and succeeded him. •On his accession, as soon as he was seated 11
1 S 25:22; 2 K 10:1 on the throne, he butchered Baasha's entire family, not leaving him a single
male, or any relations, or friends. •Zimri destroyed the whole House of Baasha, 12
in accordance with the word which Yahweh had spoken through the prophet
16:1-4; 2 K 9:13 Jehu, •because of all the sins of Baasha and his son Elah into which they 13
had led Israel, provoking the anger of Yahweh, the God of Israel, with their
useless idols.

The history of Elah, his entire career, is not all this recorded in the Book 14
of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?

The reign of Zimri in Israel (885)

In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri became king for 15
seven days, in Tirzah. The people were then encamped in front of Gibbethon,
a Philistine town. •When news reached the camp of how Zimri had not only 16
plotted against but actually killed the king, all Israel proclaimed Omri, their
general, king of Israel in the camp the same day. •Omri, and all Israel with him, 17
raised the siege of Gibbethon and laid siege to Tirzah. •When Zimri saw that 18
the town was captured, he went into the keep of the royal palace, burned
the palace over his own head, and died. •This was because of the sin he 19
committed by doing what is displeasing to Yahweh, by copying the example of
Jeroboam and the sin into which he had led Israel.

The rest of the history of Zimri and the plot he hatched, is not all this 20
recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?

The people of Israel then split into two factions: one half following Tibni 21
son of Ginath to make him king, the other half following Omri. •But the faction 22
of Omri proved stronger than that of Tibni son of Ginath; Tibni died, and Omri
became king.

The reign of Omri in Israel (885-874)[b]

In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king of Israel and 23
reigned for twelve years. He reigned for six years in Tirzah. •Then for two 24

talents of silver he bought a hill[c] from Shemer and on it built a town which
25 he named Samaria after Shemer who had owned the hill. •Omri did what is
26 displeasing to Yahweh, and was worse than all his predecessors. •In every way
he copied the example of Jeroboam son of Nebat and the sins into which he
had led Israel, provoking the anger of Yahweh, the God of Israel, with their
useless idols.
27 The rest of the history of Omri, his career, his valour, is not all this recorded
28 in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? •Then Omri slept with his
ancestors and was buried in Samaria; his son Ahab succeeded him.

Introduction to the reign of Ahab (874-853)

29 Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king
30 of Judah, and reigned over Israel for twenty-two years in Samaria. •Ahab son
of Omri did what is displeasing to Yahweh, and was worse than all his prede- 21:25
31 cessors. •The least that he did was to follow the sinful example of Jeroboam 2K23:15
son of Nebat: he married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians,[d]
32 and then proceeded to serve Baal and worship him. •He erected an altar to him
33 in the temple of Baal which he built in Samaria. •Ahab also put up a sacred Ex34:13+ 2K10:21
pole and committed other crimes as well, provoking the anger of Yahweh, the 2 K 21:3
God of Israel, more than all the kings of Israel who were his predecessors.
34 It was in his time that Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho; he laid its foundations Lv18:21+
at the price of Abiram, his first-born; its gates he erected at the price of his
youngest son Segub,[e] just as Yahweh had foretold through Joshua son of Nun Jos 6:26

V. THE ELIJAH CYCLE

A. THE GREAT DROUGHT

Elijah foretells the drought

1 17 Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead,[a] said to Ahab, 'As Yahweh lives, Sl 48:2 Lk 4:25
the God of Israel whom I serve, there shall be neither dew nor rain these
years except at my order'.

At the wadi Cherith

2 3 The word of Yahweh came to him, •'Go away from here, go eastwards, and
4 hide yourself in the wadi Cherith which lies east of Jordan. •You can drink
5 from the stream, and I have ordered the ravens to bring you food there.' •He did
as Yahweh had said; he went and stayed in the wadi Cherith which lies east
6 of Jordan. •The ravens brought him bread in the morning and meat in the Ex16:8,12
evening,[b] and he quenched his thirst at the stream.

At Zarephath. The miracle of the flour and the oil 2 K 4:1-7

7 8 But after a while the stream dried up, for the country had no rain. •And then
9 the word of Yahweh came to him, •'Up and go to Zarephath, a Sidonian town, ↗ Lk4:25-26
10 and stay there. I have ordered a widow there to give you food.' •So he went

16 a. The whole verse is an addition repeating vv. 1-4 and offering a second reason for Baasha's punishment, and not consistent with the spirit of the book.

b. Omri was without doubt a great ruler, but the Books of Kings, concerned with the kingdom of Israel exclusively from the religious point of view, mentions only the founding of Samaria which was to remain the capital until the kingdom finally collapsed.

c. The text adds 'Samaria'.

d. 'The least' Greek. Ethbaal (Ittobaal in the Greek) was a priest of Astarte who seized power in Tyre at the same time as Omri in Israel; the two usurpers came to terms and sealed their alliance by a family marriage. The effects on the religion of Israel of this association with the Philistines were to be increasingly felt throughout the reign of Ahab.

e. His two sons were slaughtered as a foundation sacrifice.

17 a. 'of Tishbe' Greek. The document dealing with the history of Elijah, of which use now begins to be made (cf. Introduction to Joshua etc.) probably recounted the earlier life of the prophet, but our author takes it up at the point where it fits into his own narrative: the drought is presented as a punishment for the introduction of the cult of Baal, 16:32-33.

b. Translation following Greek.

off to Sidon. And when he reached the city gate, there was a widow gathering
sticks; addressing her he said, 'Please bring a little water in a vessel for me to
drink'. •She was setting off to bring it when he called after her. 'Please' he said 11
'bring me a scrap of bread in your hand.' •'As Yahweh your God lives,' she 12
replied 'I have no baked bread, but only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in
a jug; I am just gathering a stick or two to go and prepare this for myself and
my son to eat, and then we shall die.' •But Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid, 13
go and do as you have said; but first make a little scone of it for me and bring
it to me, and then make some for yourself and for your son. •For thus Yahweh 14
speaks, the God of Israel:

"Jar of meal shall not be spent,
jug of oil shall not be emptied,
before the day when Yahweh sends
rain on the face of the earth".'

The woman went and did as Elijah told her and they ate the food, she, himself 15
and her son.[c] •The jar of meal was not spent nor the jug of oil emptied, just as 16
Yahweh had foretold through Elijah.

2K 4:18-37 Lk 7:11-17 **The widow's son raised to life**

2 K 4:20 Si 48:5 It happened after this that the son of the mistress of the house fell sick; 17
his illness was so severe that in the end he had no breath left in him. •And the 18
woman said to Elijah, 'What quarrel have you with me, man of God? Have you
come here to bring my sins home to me and to kill my son?'[d] •'Give me your son' 19
he said, and taking him from her lap, carried him to the upper room where
Ac 9:37 he was staying and laid him on his own bed. •He cried out to Yahweh, 'Yahweh 20
my God, do you mean to bring grief to the widow who is looking after me by
2K 4:33-36 Ac 20:10 killing her son?' •He stretched himself on the child three times and cried out to 21
Yahweh, 'Yahweh my God, may the soul of this child, I beg you, come into
him again!' •Yahweh heard the prayer of Elijah and the soul of the child 22
returned to him again and he revived. •Elijah took the child, brought him down 23
from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. 'Look,' Elijah
Heb 11:35 said 'your son is alive.' •And the woman replied, 'Now I know you are a man 24
of God and the word of Yahweh in your mouth is truth itself'.

1S 12:17 **Elijah and Obadiah**

Lk 4:25 Jm 5:17 **18** A long time went by, and the word of Yahweh came to Elijah in the third 1
year, 'Go, present yourself to Ahab; I am about to send down rain on the
Si 48:2 land'. •So Elijah set off to present himself to Ahab. 2
4:2+ As the famine was particularly severe in Samaria, •Ahab summoned Obadiah, 3
the master of the palace—Obadiah held Yahweh in great reverence: •when 4
Jezebel was butchering the prophets of Yahweh, Obadiah took a hundred of
them and hid them, fifty at a time, in a cave, and kept them provided with food
and water[a]—•and Ahab said to Obadiah, 'Come along, we must scour the 5
country, all the springs and all the wadis in the hope of finding grass to keep
horses and mules alive, or we shall have to slaughter some of our stock'. •They 6
divided the country for the purpose of their survey; Ahab went one way by
himself and Obadiah went another way by himself. •While Obadiah was on his 7
way, whom should he meet but Elijah; recognising him he fell on his face and
said, 'So it is you, my lord Elijah!' •'Yes,' he replied 'go and tell your master, 8
"Elijah is here".' •But Obadiah said, 'What sin have I committed, for you to 9
put your servant in Ahab's power and cause my death? •As Yahweh your God 10
lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent in search
of you; and when they said, "He is not there", he made the kingdom or nation
swear on oath that they did not know where you were. •And now you say to me, 11
"Go and tell your master: Elijah is here". •But as soon as I leave you, the spirit 12

of Yahweh will carry you away and I shall not know where;[b] I shall come and
tell Ahab; he will not be able to find you, and will kill me. Yet from his youth
13 your servant has revered Yahweh. •Has no one told my lord what I did when
Jezebel butchered the prophets of Yahweh, how I hid a hundred of them in
14 a cave, fifty at a time, and kept them provided with food and water? •And now
you say to me, "Go and tell your master: Elijah is here". Why, he will kill me!'
15 Elijah replied, 'As Yahweh Sabaoth lives, whom I serve, I shall present myself 1 S 1:3+ 2 K 3:14
before him today!'

Elijah and Ahab

16 Obadiah went to find Ahab and tell him the news, and Ahab then went to
17 find Elijah. •When he saw Elijah, Ahab said, 'So there you are, you scourge of
18 Israel!' •'Not I,' he replied 'I am not the scourge of Israel, you and your family
19 are; because you have deserted Yahweh[c] and gone after the Baals. •Now give Jg 2:13+
orders for all Israel to gather round me on Mount Carmel, and also the four
hundred prophets of Baal[d] who eat at Jezebel's table.'

The sacrifice on Carmel

20 Ahab called all Israel together and assembled the prophets on Mount
21 Carmel. •Elijah stepped out in front of all the people. 'How long' he said
'do you mean to hobble first on one leg[e] then on the other? If Yahweh is God,
22 follow him; if Baal, follow him.' But the people never said a word. •Elijah
then said to them, 'I, I alone, am left as a prophet of Yahweh, while the prophets
23 of Baal are four hundred and fifty. •Let two bulls be given us; let them
choose one for themselves, dismember it and lay it on the wood, but not set
24 fire to it. I in my turn will prepare the other bull, but not set fire to it. •You
must call on the name of your god, and I shall call on the name of mine; the
god who answers with fire, is God indeed.'[f] The people all answered, 'Agreed!'
25 Elijah then said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one bull and begin, for there Ho 11:7
26 are more of you. Call on the name of your god but light no fire.' •They took
the bull and prepared it, and from morning to midday they called on the name 2 S 6:13
of Baal. 'O Baal, answer us!' they cried, but there was no voice, no answer,
27 as they performed their hobbling dance round the altar they had made. •Midday
came, and Elijah mocked them. 'Call louder,' he said 'for he is a god: he is
preoccupied or he is busy, or he has gone on a journey; perhaps he is asleep
28 and will wake up.' •So they shouted louder and gashed themselves, as their Zc 13:6
29 custom was, with swords and spears until the blood flowed down them. •Midday
passed, and they ranted on until the time the offering is presented;[g] but there 18:36 2 K 3:20 Dn 9:21
was no voice, no answer, no attention given to them.
30 Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come closer to me', and all the people
came closer to him. He repaired the altar of Yahweh which had been broken
31 down. •Elijah took twelve stones, corresponding to the number of the tribes
of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of Yahweh had come, 'Israel shall be Gn 32:29

c. 'and her son' corr., cf. vv. 12-13.

d. The woman attributes her misfortune to Elijah's visit: a man of God is like a hostile witness, at his presence secret or unconscious sins are brought to light and draw down retribution.

18 a. The parenthesis prepares for v. 13. On these 'prophets' cf. 1 S 10:5+; they play a prominent part in the Elisha cycle.

b. These sudden disappearances seem to have been a feature of the story of Elijah, 2 K 2:16, until the last disappearance of all, 2 K 2:11f. The spirit of Yahweh is an external force which carries the prophet from place to place, cf. Ezk 3:12; 8:3; 11:1; 43:5; Ac 8:39.

c. 'Yahweh' Greek; 'the commandments of Yahweh' Hebr.

d. A gloss adds 'and the four hundred prophets of Asherah'. There were many such 'prophets' among the peoples contiguous to Israel, Jr 27:3,9f; they formed numerous groups, like the prophets of Yahweh, 18:4. Here they are the devotees of the Tyrian Baal, invited into Israel and maintained by Jezebel.

e. The meaning of the last word is uncertain but the translation (cf. Greek) accords with the performance in v. 26: the Israelites dance in honour both of Yahweh and of Baal.

f. It is not merely a matter of deciding whether Yahweh or Baal is lord of the mountain or which is the stronger, but simply which is God. Elijah's own statement, his prayer, v. 37, and the people's acclamation, v. 39, make this clear: monotheism itself is at stake here.

g. The mention of the evening sacrifice, Ex 29:39; Nb 28:4; 2 K 16:15, is merely an indication of the time of day.

your name', •and built an altar in the name of Yahweh.[h] Round the altar he 32
dug a trench of a size to hold two measures of seed. •He then arranged the 33
wood, dismembered the bull, and laid it on the wood. •Then he said, 'Fill four 34
jars with water and pour it on the holocaust and on the wood'; this they did.
He said, 'Do it a second time'; they did it a second time. He said, 'Do it a third
time'; they did it a third time. •The water flowed round the altar and the trench 35
18:29 Sl 48:3 itself was full of water.[i] •At the time when the offering is presented, Elijah 36
the prophet stepped forward. 'Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel,'
he said 'let them know today that you are God in Israel, and that I am your
servant, that I have done all these things at your command. •Answer me, 37
Yahweh, answer me, so that this people may know that you, Yahweh, are God
and are winning back their hearts.'[j]

Lv 9:24 Nb 11:1; 16:35 Jg 6:21 Then the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the holocaust and wood[k] and 38
licked up the water in the trench. •When all the people saw this they fell on their 39
faces. 'Yahweh is God,' they cried 'Yahweh is God.' •Elijah said, 'Seize the 40
prophets of Baal: do not let one of them escape'. They seized them, and Elijah
took them down to the wadi Kishon, and he slaughtered them there.[l]

The drought ends

Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go back, eat and drink;[m] for I hear the sound of rain'. 41
↗Jm 5:18 While Ahab went back to eat and drink, Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel 42
and bowed down to the earth, putting his face between his knees. •'Now go up,' 43
he told his servant 'and look out to the sea.' He went up and looked. 'There
is nothing at all' he said. 'Go back seven times' Elijah said. •The seventh time, 44
the servant said, 'Now there is a cloud, small as a man's hand, rising from the
sea'. Elijah said, 'Go and say to Ahab, "Harness the chariot and go down before
the rain stops you" '. •And with that the sky grew dark with cloud and 45
Ho 1:4 storm, and rain fell in torrents. Ahab mounted his chariot and made for Jezreel.[n]
2 K 3:15 Ezk 1:3+ The hand of Yahweh was on Elijah, and tucking his cloak he ran in front of 46
Ahab as far as the outskirts of Jezreel.

B. ELIJAH AT HOREB

The journey to Horeb

19 When Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had put 1
all the prophets to the sword, •Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 2
Rt 1:17+ Mk 9:13 'May the gods do this to me and more, if by this time tomorrow I have not made
your life like the life of one of them!' •He was afraid[a] and fled for his 3
life. He came to Beersheba, a town of Judah, where he left his servant. •He 4
Gn 21:14-21 himself went on into the wilderness, a day's journey, and sitting under a furze
Nb 11:14 Tb 3:6 Jb 6:9; 7:15 Jon 4:3, 8 bush wished he were dead. 'Yahweh,' he said 'I have had enough. Take my life;
I am no better than my ancestors.' •Then he lay down and went to sleep. But an 5
Ac 12:5-7 angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat'. •He looked round, and there at 6
his head was a scone baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank
and then lay down again. •But the angel of Yahweh came back a second time 7
and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, or the journey will be too long for
you'. •So he got up and ate and drank, and strengthened by that food he walked 8
Ex 24:18 Mt 4:2+; 4:3 for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.[b]

Ex 33:18-34:9 ### The encounter with God

Sl 48:7 There he went into the cave[c] and spent the night in it. Then the word of 9
Yahweh came to him saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' •He replied, 10
2 K 9:7 Sl 48:2 Mk 9:13 'I am filled with jealous zeal for Yahweh Sabaoth, because the sons of Israel
have deserted you, broken down your altars and put your prophets to the sword.
I am the only one left, and they want to kill me.'[d] •Then he was told, 'Go out 11

and stand on the mountain before Yahweh'. Then Yahweh himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before Yahweh. But Yahweh was not in the wind. After the wind came an
12 earthquake. But Yahweh was not in the earthquake. •After the earthquake came a fire. But Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the
13 sound of a gentle breeze.[e] •And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then a voice
14 came to him, which said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' •He replied, 'I am filled with jealous zeal for Yahweh Sabaoth, because the sons of Israel have deserted you, broken down your altars and put your prophets to the sword. I am the only one left and they want to kill me.'
15 'Go,' Yahweh said 'go back by the same way to the wilderness of Damascus.
16 You are to go and anoint Hazael as king of Aram. •You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king of Israel,[f] and to anoint[g] Elisha son of Shaphat, of Abel
17 Meholah, as prophet to succeed you. •Anyone who escapes the sword of Hazael will be put to death by Jehu; and anyone who escapes the sword of Jehu will be
18 put to death by Elisha. •But I shall spare seven thousand in Israel: all the knees that have not bent before Baal, all the mouths that have not kissed him.'

Ex 13:22+; 19:16+
Gn 3:8 Jb 4:16
Ex 3:6; 33:20+
Si 48:2
↗ Rm 11:3
2K 8:7-15
2K 9:1-13
19:19-21
Si 48:2
Is 4:3+ Ho 13:2
↗ Rm 11:4-5

The call of Elisha

19 Leaving there,[h] he came on Elisha son of Shaphat as he was ploughing behind twelve yoke of oxen, he himself being with the twelfth. Elijah passed
20 near to him and threw his cloak over him.[i] •Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah. 'Let me kiss my father and mother, then I will follow you' he said.
21 Elijah answered, 'Go, go back; for have I done anything to you?' •Elisha turned away, took the pair of oxen and slaughtered them. He used the plough for cooking the oxen, then gave to his men, who ate. He then rose, and followed Elijah and became his servant.

19:16
2 K 2:13
Lk 9:61
Mt 14:18,22

C. THE ARAMAEAN WARS

The siege of Samaria

1 **20** Ben-hadad king of Aram[a] mustered his whole army—thirty-two kings[b] were with him, and horses and chariots—and went up to lay siege to
2 Samaria and storm it. •He sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel
3 to tell him, 'Thus says Ben-hadad, "Your silver and gold are mine; you may

h. Vv. 31-32a appear to be a gloss.

i. This is not rain-making magic but a way of enhancing the fire miracle.

j. The miracle will demonstrate: 1. to the prophets of Baal and to Jezebel's entourage of foreigners ('let them know', v. 36) that there is no place for them in Israel where Yahweh is God; and 2. to the Israelites ('this people', v. 37) that Yahweh is the only God, the God who wins back wayward hearts.

k. The text adds 'stones and soil', a gloss.

l. In this war between Yahweh and Baal those who serve Baal suffer the fate of the conquered in the warfare of the times.

m. A fast had been observed to prepare for the sacrifice and to bring rain.

n. Then serving as an alternative capital for the kings of Israel, 21:1; 2 K 8:29; 9:30f.

19 a. 'He was afraid' versions: 'He saw' Hebr.

b. Cf. Ex 19:1+. Zealous to maintain the covenant and restore the ancient faith, Elijah visits the place where the true God revealed himself, Ex 3 and 33:18–34:9, and where the covenant had been concluded, Ex 19 and 24: he sees his own task as that of continuing the work of Moses. Moses and Elijah have in common a theophany at Horeb; both also witness the N.T. theophany, Christ's transfiguration, Mt 17:1-9p.

c. The 'crevice of the rock' where Moses crouched when God appeared, Ex 33:22.

d. 'you' versions; 'your covenant' Hebr.; so also v. 14. Vv. 9b-10 are a doublet of vv. 13-14.

e. The storm, earthquake, and lightning, which in Ex 19 manifested God's presence, are here only the heralds of his coming. The whisper of a light breeze signifies that God is a spirit and that he converses intimately with his prophets; it does not mean that God's dealings are gentle and unperceived—this common interpretation is refuted by the terrible commission of vv. 16-17.

f. These tasks were in fact later performed by Elisha.

g. Anointing, Ex 30:24+, was reserved for kings, 1 K 1:34; parallelism explains the use of the word here.

h. Vv. 19-21 are borrowed from the Elisha cycle.

i. The cloak symbolises the person and rights of its owner. That of Elijah has, moreover, miraculous properties, 2 K 2:8. Elijah thus acquires an authority over Elisha which the latter cannot resist. By destroying plough and oxen Elisha formally renounces his old way of life.

20 a. Ben-hadad II, ruler of the Aramaean kingdom of Damascus, successor to Ben-hadad I, 1 K 15:18+.

b. Princely vassals of Ben-hadad, cf. v. 24.

keep your wives and children".'[c] •The king of Israel replied, 'As you command, 4
my lord king.[d] Myself and all I have are yours.'

But the messengers came back and said, 'Ben-hadad says this, "I sent you 5
this order: Hand over your silver and your gold, your wives and your children.
Count on it that this time tomorrow I will send my servants to search your 6
house and your servants' houses and lay hands on all they[e] fancy and take
it away." '

The king of Israel summoned all the elders of the land and said, 'You can 7
see clearly how this man intends to ruin us. He now claims my wives and my
children, although I have not refused him my silver and my gold.'[f] •All the elders 8
and all the people said, 'Take no notice. Do not consent'. •So he gave this answer 9
to Ben-hadad's messengers, 'Say to my lord the king, "All you first required
of your servant I will do, but this I cannot do" '. And the messengers went back
with the answer.

Rt1:17+ Ben-hadad then sent him the following message, 'May the gods do this to 10
me and more if there are enough handfuls of rubble in Samaria for all the people
in my following'. •But the king of Israel returned this answer, 'The proverb[g] 11
says: The man who puts on his armour is not the one who can boast, but the
man who takes it off'. •When Ben-hadad heard this message—he was under the 12
awnings drinking with the kings—he gave orders to his servants, 'Take post!'
And they took up their positions against the city.

Victory for Israel

22:5 A prophet then arrived, looking for Ahab king of Israel. 'Yahweh says 13
this' he said. 'You have seen this mighty army? This very day I will deliver
it into your hands, and you shall know that I am Yahweh.' •'By whose means?' 14
asked Ahab. The prophet replied, 'Yahweh says this, "By means of the young
soldiers of the district governors" '. 'Who is to open the attack?' Ahab asked.
'Yourself' the prophet answered.[h]

So Ahab inspected the young soldiers of the district governors: there were 15
two hundred and thirty-two. After these he reviewed the whole army, all the
Israelites: there were seven thousand. •They made a sortie at midday, when 16
Ben-hadad was drinking himself senseless under the awnings, he and the thirty-
two kings who were his allies. •The young soldiers of the district governors led 17
the sortie. Ben-hadad was informed, 'Some men have come out of Samaria'.
He said, 'If they have come out for peace, take them alive; if they have come 18
out for war, take them alive too'. •So they made a sortie from the town, the 19
young soldiers of the district governors and behind them the army, •and each 20
struck down his man. Aram took to flight and Israel pursued; Ben-hadad king
2S24:22 of Aram escaped on a chariot horse. •Then the king of Israel came out, capturing 21
horses and chariots and inflicting a great defeat on Aram.

Respite

The prophet went up to the king of Israel. 'Come,' he said to him 'take 22
courage and think carefully what you should do, for at the turn of the year[i]
the king of Aram will march against you.'

The servants of the king of Aram said to him, 'Their god is a god of the 23
Jdt 7:10 mountains; that is why they have proved stronger than us. But if we fight them
on level ground, we will certainly beat them. •This is what you must do: remove all 24
these kings from their posts and appoint commanders instead. •You, for your 25
part, must recruit an army as large as the one that deserted you, with as many
horses and as many chariots; then if we fight them on level ground, we will
certainly beat them.' He listened to their advice and acted accordingly.

The victory of Aphek

At the turn of the year, Ben-hadad mustered the Aramaeans and went up 26

27 to Aphek to fight Israel. •The Israelites had also mustered, and marched out
to meet them. Encamped opposite them, the Israelites looked like two herds of
goats, whereas the Aramaeans filled the countryside.
28 The man of God[j] accosted the king of Israel. 'Yahweh says this' he said.
' "Since Aram has said that Yahweh is a god of the mountains and not a god of Jdt 7:10
the plains, I will put all this mighty host into your power, and you shall know
29 that I am Yahweh." ' •For seven days they were encamped opposite each other.
On the seventh day battle was joined and the Israelites slaughtered the
30 Aramaeans, a hundred thousand foot soldiers[k] in one day. •The rest fled to
Aphek, into the town itself, but the walls fell down on the twenty-seven thousand
who remained.
Now Ben-hadad had fled and taken refuge within the town in an inner room.
31 'Look,' his servants said to him 'we have heard that the kings of Israel are 2 K 6:30
merciful kings. Let us put sackcloth round our waists and ropes on our heads[l]
32 and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life.' •So they
wrapped sackcloth round their waists and put ropes on their heads and went
to the king of Israel, and said, 'Your servant Ben-hadad says, "Spare my life" '.
33 'So he is still alive?' he answered. 'He is my brother.'[m] •The men took this
for a good omen and quickly seized on his words. 'Yes,' they said 'Ben-hadad
is your brother.' Ahab said, 'Go and fetch him'. Then Ben-hadad came out to
34 him and Ahab made him get up into his chariot. •Ben-hadad said, 'I will restore
the towns my father took from your father and you may set up bazaars for
yourself in Damascus as my father did in Samaria. Myself, by the terms of this
treaty, you will set free.'[n] So Ahab made a treaty with him and let him go free.

A prophet condemns Ahab's policy

35 At Yahweh's order a member of the brotherhood of prophets said to 2K2:3+
36 a companion of his, 'Strike me', but the man refused to strike him. •So he said
to him, 'Since you have disobeyed the order of Yahweh, the very moment 13:20-25
you leave me a lion will kill you'. And no sooner had he left him than he met
37 a lion, which killed him.[o] •The prophet then went to find another man and said,
38 'Strike me', and the man struck him and wounded him.[p] •The prophet then 2S12:1-12; 14:1-20
went and stood waiting for the king on the road, disguising himself with his
39 headband over his eyes. •As the king passed, he called out to him, 'Your
servant was making his way to where the fight was thickest when someone left
the fighting to bring a man to me, and said, "Guard this man; if he is found
missing, your life will pay for his, or else you will have to pay one talent of
40 silver". •But while your servant was busy with one thing and another, the man
disappeared.' The king of Israel said, 'That is your sentence, then. You have
41 pronounced it yourself.' •At this the man quickly pulled off the headband
covering his eyes, and the king of Israel recognised him as one of the prophets.[q]
42 He said to the king, 'Yahweh says this, "Since you have let the man escape
who was under my ban, your life will pay for his, your people for his people" '.

20 c. 'children' Greek; 'good children' Hebr. 'you keep', lit. 'yours' conj.; 'mine' Hebr.

d. Ahab speaks like one vanquished and already a vassal. The siege had been preceded by Israelite reverses (the text only alludes to these, v. 34).

e. 'they fancy' versions; 'you fancy' Hebr.

f. 'although . . . my gold' Greek; 'my silver and my gold I did not refuse him' Hebr.

g. 'The proverb says' conj.; 'Say you' Hebr.

h. God is consulted about military strategy, cf. Jg 1:1f; 20:18; see Ex 33:7+.

i. The Spring equinox, cf. 2 S 11:1.

j. The prophet of vv. 13 and 22. 'you (singular) shall know' Greek.

k. This figure, like the following one, is fantastically high; this is popular history.

l. Signifying mourning and repentance.

m. Vassal kings confessed themselves 'servants' of their suzerain; kings of equal standing were 'brothers'. Ben-hadad now admits defeat but Ahab declines his homage, and the envoys, hearing the word 'brother', deduce that their master is now safe.

n. 'Myself you will set free' conj.; 'I shall set you free' Hebr.

o. There is a similar story, in the same popular style, in 1 K 13:24f; all who disobey the word of God or of a man of God, even for good motives, will be punished. This idea is not perfect and is not that of the great prophets, but it reflects the mentality of the ancient prophetic communities.

p. The wound is to help the prophet to pose as a combatant, v. 39.

q. The prophets perhaps carried a distinguishing mark on the forehead (tattoo, incision?), or shaved their heads, cf. 2 K 2:23.

And off went the king of Israel, gloomy and out of temper, on his way back to Samaria. 43

Is5:8-10+

D. NABOTH'S VINEYARD

2 K 9:7.25

Naboth refuses to hand over his vineyard

1 S 8:14

21 This is what happened next: Naboth of Jezreel had a vineyard close by the palace of Ahab[a] king of Samaria, 2 and Ahab said to Naboth, 'Give me your vineyard to be my vegetable garden, since it adjoins my house; I will give you a better vineyard for it or, if you prefer, I will give you its worth in money'. 3 But Naboth answered Ahab, 'Yahweh forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my ancestors!'

21:4

Ahab and Jezebel

Ahab went home gloomy and out of temper at the words of Naboth of Jezreel, 'I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers'. He lay down on his bed and turned his face away and refused to eat. 5 His wife Jezebel came to him. 'Why are you so dispirited' she said 'that you will not eat?' 6 He said, 'I have been speaking to Naboth of Jezreel; I said: Give me your vineyard either for money or, if you prefer, for another vineyard in exchange. But he said, "I will not give you my vineyard".' 7 Then his wife Jezebel said, 'You make a fine king of Israel, and no mistake! Get up and eat; cheer up, and you will feel better; I will get you the vineyard of Naboth of Jezreel myself.'

21:3

Naboth is murdered

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, sending them to the elders and nobles who lived where Naboth lived. 9 In the letters she wrote, 'Proclaim a fast, and put Naboth in the forefront of the people.[b] Confront him with a couple of scoundrels[c] who will accuse him like this, "You have cursed God and the king" Then take him outside and stone him to death.'[d]

2Ch20:4 Ex 22:27 Lv 24:14

The men of Naboth's town, the elders and nobles who lived in his town, did what Jezebel ordered, what was written in the letters she had sent them. They proclaimed a fast and put Naboth in the forefront of the people. 13 Then the two scoundrels came and stood in front of him and made their accusation, 'Naboth has cursed God and the king'. They led him outside the town and stoned him to death. 14 They then sent word to Jezebel, 'Naboth has been stoned to death'. 15 When Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, 'Get up! Take possession of the vineyard which Naboth of Jezreel would not give you for money, for Naboth is no longer alive, he is dead.' 16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth of Jezreel and take possession of it.

2 S 12

Elijah pronounces God's sentence[e]

Si 48:6

Then the word of Yahweh came to Elijah the Tishbite, 18 'Up! Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, in Samaria. You will find him in Naboth's vineyard; he has gone down to take possession of it. 19 You are to say this to him, "Yahweh says this: You have committed murder; now you usurp as well. For this[f] —and Yahweh says this—in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, the dogs will lick your blood too." ' 20 Ahab said to Elijah, 'So you have found me out, O my enemy!' Elijah answered, 'I have found you out. For your double dealing, and since you have done what is displeasing to Yahweh, 21 I will now bring disaster down on you; I will sweep away your descendants, and wipe out every male belonging to the family of Ahab, fettered or free in Israel. I will treat your House as I treated the House of Jeroboam son of Nebat and of Baasha son of Ahijah, for provoking my anger and leading Israel into sin. 22

2K9:25-26 Ps 68:23

14:10-11; 16:3-4 2 K 9:8; 10:10

25 (Against Jezebel too Yahweh spoke these words: The dogs will eat Jezebel in 2 K 9:10,36
24 the Field of Jezreel.) •Those of Ahab's family who die in the city, the dogs 14:11
will eat; and those who die in the open country, the birds of the air will eat.'
25 And indeed there never was anyone like Ahab for double dealing and for 16:30-34
26 doing what is displeasing to Yahweh, urged on by Jezebel his wife. •He behaved 11:4 Gn 3:12
in the most abominable way, adhering to idols, just as the Amorites used to 2 K 21:11
do whom Yahweh had dispossessed for the sons of Israel.

Ahab repents

27 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his garments and put sackcloth next 2 S 12:16 2 K 6:30
28 his skin and fasted; he slept in the sackcloth; he walked with slow steps. •Then
29 the word of Yahweh came to Elijah the Tishbite, •'Have you seen how Ahab
has humbled himself before me? Since he has humbled himself before me, I will 2 S 12:13-15
not bring the disaster in his days; I will bring the disaster down on his House 2 K 9-10
in the days of his son.'

E. ANOTHER WAR WITH ARAM

Ahab plans a campaign against Ramoth-gilead

||2 Ch 18:1-3

1 22 There was a lull of three years, with no fighting between Aram and Israel.
2 Then, in the third year, Jehoshaphat king of Judah paid a visit to the
3 king of Israel.[a] •The king of Israel said to his officers, 'You are aware that
Ramoth-gilead belongs to us? And yet we do nothing to wrest it away from
4 the king of Aram.'[b] •He said to Jehoshaphat, 'Will you come with me to fight 2 K 3:7; 8:28; 9:14
at Ramoth-gilead?' Jehoshaphat answered the king of Israel, 'I am as ready as
you, my men as your men, my horses as your horses'.

The spurious prophets predict success

||2 Ch 18:4-11

5 Jehoshaphat, however, said to the king of Israel, 'First, please consult the 20:13-14+
6 word of Yahweh'. •So the king of Israel called the prophets together, about four
hundred of them.[c] 'Should I march to attack Ramoth-gilead' he asked 'or
should I refrain?' 'March,' they replied 'Yahweh will deliver it into the power
7 of the king.' •But Jehoshaphat said, 'Is there no other prophet of Yahweh here 2 K 3:7
8 for us to consult?' •The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, 'There is one more
man through whom we can consult Yahweh, but I hate him because he never
has a favourable prophecy for me, only unfavourable ones; he is Micaiah son Is 30:10 Am 2:12
9 of Imlah'.[d] 'The king should not say such things' Jehoshaphat said. •Accordingly
the king of Israel summoned one of the eunuchs and said, 'Bring Micaiah son
of Imlah immediately'.
10 The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were both sitting on their
thrones in full regalia, at the threshing-floor outside the gate of Samaria, with

21 a. His palace in Jezreel, 1 K 18:45, not the one in Samaria, 2 K 9:25-26.

b. In times of disaster, public fasting and public prayer were proclaimed, Jg 20:26; Jl 1:14; 2:15, etc., to placate God and to discover the fault that had provoked his anger. There must have been some widespread calamity (drought? famine?) to give Jezebel an opportunity for her plot.

c. For capital trial two witnesses were required, Nb 35:30; Dt 17:6; cf. Mt 26:60f. The Hebr. has substituted 'blessed' for 'cursed' as in v. 13, so also Jb 1:5,11; 2:5,9.

d. Apparently the possessions of those condemned to death reverted to the king.

e. Note the similarity with the episode of Nathan and David in 2 S 12: on each occasion Yahweh defends the helpless against the powerful and there is the same reprieve for the repentant offender who is punished only through his son. But there are differences, too: David's dynasty retains the divine promise, whereas Ahab's is 'swept away'; Nathan remains David's prophet and blesses Solomon, but Elijah is Ahab's 'enemy'.

f. 'For this' Greek.

22 a. The two kingdoms had drawn closer together; Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram had married Athalia, sister of Ahab, 2 K 8:18.

b. Probably still Ben-hadad II, cf. 20:1. The town, captured by the Aramaeans during or before the reign of David, had not been handed back after the treaty of Aphek, 20:34. See also 2 K 8:28.

c. These 'prophets' were in the king's service and were not pure Yahwists, unlike the prophets slain by Jezebel, 18:4,13;19:4. Hence Jehoshaphat's question, v. 7.

d. Not the Micaiah ('Micah') numbered among the twelve 'minor prophets', who lived a century-and-a-half later.

all the prophets raving in front of them. •Zedekiah son of Chenaanah had 11
made himself iron horns.[e] 'Yahweh says this' he said. ' "With these you
will gore the Aramaeans till you make an end of them." ' •And all the prophets 12
prophesied the same. 'March to Ramoth-gilead' they said 'and conquer. Yahweh
will deliver it into the power of the king.'

||2 Ch 18: 12-27 **The prophet Micaiah predicts defeat**

The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said, 'Here are all the 13
prophets as one man speaking favourably to the king. Try to speak like one of
them and foretell success.' •But Micaiah answered, 'As Yahweh lives, what 14
Yahweh says to me, that will I utter!' •When he came to the king, the king said, 15
'Micaiah, should we march to attack Ramoth-gilead, or should we refrain?' He
answered, 'March and conquer. Yahweh will deliver it into the power of the
king.'[f] •But the king said, 'How often must I put you on oath to tell me nothing 16
but the truth in the name of Yahweh?' •Then Micaiah spoke: 17

Na 3:17b
'I have seen all Israel scattered on the mountains
like sheep without a shepherd.
22:25-36 Nb 27:18
And Yahweh said, "These have no master,
let each go home unmolested".'

22:36 At this the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'Did I not tell you that he never 18
gives me favourable prophecies, but only unfavourable ones?' •Micaiah went 19
Jb 1:6; 2:1 Is 6:1; 19:14 on, 'Listen rather to the word of Yahweh. I have seen Yahweh seated on his
throne; all the array of heaven[g] stood in his presence, on his right and on his left.
Yahweh said, "Who will trick Ahab into marching to his death at Ramoth- 20
gilead?" At which some answered one way, and some another. •Then the spirit[h] 21
2 Th 2:11 came forward and stood before Yahweh. "I," he said "I will trick him." "How?"
Yahweh asked. •He replied, "I will go and become a lying spirit in the mouths 22
of all his prophets". "You shall trick him," Yahweh said "you shall succeed.
Jg 9:23 Go and do it." •Now see how Yahweh has put a lying spirit into the mouths 23
of all your prophets here. But Yahweh has pronounced disaster on you.'

Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah came up and struck Micaiah on the jaw. 24
Jb 26:4 'Which way' he asked 'did the spirit of Yahweh leave me, to talk to you?' •'That 25
22:17 is what you will find out,' Micaiah retorted 'the day you flee to an inner room
to hide.' •The king of Israel said, 'Seize Micaiah and hand him over to Amon, 26
governor of the city, and to Prince Joash, •and say, "These are the king's orders: 27
Put this man in prison and feed him on nothing but bread and water until I come
Am 2:12 back safe and sound" '. •Micaiah said, 'If you come back safe and sound, Yahweh 28
has not spoken through me'.[i]

||2 Ch 18: 28-34 **Ahab falls at Ramoth-gilead**

The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up against Ramoth- 29
gilead. •The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'I will disguise myself to go[j] 30
into battle, but I want you to wear your royal uniform'. The king of Israel went
into battle disguised. •The king of Aram had given his chariot commanders[k] the 31
following order: 'Do not attack anyone of whatever rank, except the king of
Israel'. •When the chariot commanders caught sight of Jehoshaphat, they said, 32
'That is obviously the king of Israel'. And they wheeled to the attack. But
Jehoshaphat shouted his war cry •and the chariot commanders, realising that 33
he was not the king of Israel, called off their pursuit.

Now one of the men, drawing his bow at random, hit the king of Israel 34
between the corslet and the scale-armour of his breastplate. 'Turn about' the
king said to his charioteer. 'Get me out of the battle;[l] I have been hurt.' •But 35
the battle grew fiercer as the day went on; the king was held upright in his chariot
facing the Aramaeans, and in the evening he died; the blood from the wound
flowed into the bottom of the chariot. •At sundown a shout ran through the 36

37 camp, 'Every man back to his town, every man back to his country; •the king 22:17
38 is dead!'[m] They went to Samaria, and in Samaria they buried the king. •They
washed the chariot[n] at the Pool of Samaria; the dogs licked up the blood, and Ps 68:23
the prostitutes washed in it, in accordance with the word that Yahweh had spoken.

F. AFTER THE DEATH OF AHAB

The end of the reign of Ahab

39 The rest of the history of Ahab, his entire career, the ivory house he erected, Am 3:15
all the towns he built, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the
40 Kings of Israel? •Then Ahab slept with his ancestors; his son Ahaziah succeeded
him.

The reign of Jehoshaphat in Judah (870-848)

||2 Ch 20:31–21:1

41 Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab
42 king of Israel. •Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he came to the
throne, and he reigned for twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name
43 was Azubah, daughter of Shilhi. •In every way he followed the example of his 15:12 Dt 23:19+
44 father Asa undeviatingly, doing what is right in the eyes of Yahweh. •The high
places, however, were not abolished; the people still offered sacrifice and incense 9:26-28; 10:22
45 on the high places. •Jehoshaphat was at peace with the king of Israel.
46 The rest of the history of Jehoshaphat, the valour he showed, the wars he
waged, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah?
47 The remaining male sacred prostitutes of those who had lived in the time of his
48 father Asa, he swept out of the country. •There was no king in Edom,[o] and
49 king •Jehoshaphat built a ship[p] of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but his ship
50 never reached there: it was wrecked at Ezion-geber. •Then Ahaziah son of
Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, 'Let my men man the ships with yours'. But
51 Jehoshaphat would not agree. •Then Jehoshaphat slept with his ancestors and was
buried in the Citadel of David, his ancestor; his son Jehoram succeeded him.

King Ahaziah of Israel and the prophet Elijah (853-852)

52 Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth
53 year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned over Israel for two years. •He
did what is displeasing to Yahweh, by following the example of his father and
54 mother, and of Jeroboam son of Nebat who had led Israel into sin. •He served
Baal and worshipped him, and provoked the anger of Yahweh the God of Israel
just as his father had done.

22 e. This Zedekiah, otherwise unknown, is apparently the spokesman for the troop of ecstatics. His mime, cf. 11:30+ and Jr 18:1+, is intended to symbolise and even effect the triumph of Ahab. The horns represent strength, Dt 33:17, etc.

f. Micaiah takes up the exact words of the false prophets; but he is ridiculing the king, and the king knows it.

g. The angels.

h. Not an angel but a personification of the prophetic spirit which the divine intention will transform into a spirit of lies, v. 22.

i. The text adds 'And he said: Listen, peoples all'. These opening words of the Book of Micah (Mi 1:2) are inserted by a glossator who confused this Micaiah with the canonical prophet.

j. 'I will disguise myself to go' versions.

k. The text adds 'thirty-two', a gloss absent from 2 Ch 18:20.

l. 'battle' Greek.

m. 'The king is dead' Greek; 'And the king died' Hebr.

n. 'They washed' Greek; 'He washed' Hebr. The verse is a gloss referring back to 21:19, though in fact Naboth had been killed at Jezreel, and 21:19 had reserved the punishment of Ahab for his son.

o. Text uncertain and interpretation disputed.

p. 'a ship' Greek.

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS[a]

3:4-27 1 After the death of Ahab Moab rebelled against Israel. 1
Ahaziah had fallen from the balcony of his upper room in Samaria, and 2
was lying ill; so he sent messengers, saying to them, 'Go and consult Baalzebub[b]
the god of Ekron and ask whether I shall recover from my illness'. •But the 3
angel of Yahweh said to Elijah the Tishbite, 'Up! Go and intercept the mes-
sengers of the king of Samaria. Say to them, "Is there no God in Israel, for you
to go and consult Baalzebub the god of Ekron? •Yahweh says this: The 4
bed you have got into you will not get out of; you are certainly going to die." '
And Elijah set out.

The messengers returned to the king, who said, 'Why have you come back?' 5
'A man came to meet us' they answered 'and said, "Go back to the king who 6
sent you and tell him: Yahweh says this: Is there no God in Israel for you
to go and consult Baalzebub the god of Ekron? For this, the bed you have
got into you will not get out of; you are certainly going to die." ' •He said, 'This 7
man who met you and said all this, what was he like?' •'A man wearing a hair 8
Zc 13:4 cloak' they answered 'and a leather loincloth.'[c] 'It was Elijah the Tishbite'
he said.

He then sent a captain of fifty soldiers with his contingent to Elijah, whom 9
they found sitting on top of the hill; the captain went up to him and said, 'Man
of God, the king says, "Come down" '. •Elijah answered the captain, 'If I am 10
Lv 10:2 Si 48:4 Lk 9:54-55 Rv 11:5 a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy both you and your
fifty men'. And fire came down from heaven and destroyed him and his fifty
men. •The king sent a second captain of fifty to him, again with fifty men, and 11
he too went up and said, 'Man of God, this is the king's order: "Come down
Si 48:4 at once" '. •Elijah answered them, 'If I am a man of God, let fire come down 12
from heaven and destroy both you and your fifty men'. And fire came down
from heaven and destroyed him and his fifty men. •Then the king sent a third 13
captain of fifty to him, with another fifty men. The third captain of fifty came
up to Elijah, fell on his knees before him and pleaded with him. 'Man of God,'
he said 'let my life and the lives of these fifty servants of yours have some value
in your eyes. •Fire has fallen from heaven and destroyed two captains of fifties, 14
but let my life have some value now in your eyes.' •The angel of Yahweh said 15
to Elijah, 'Go down with him; do not be afraid of him'. He rose and accom-
panied him down to the king, •and said to him, 'Yahweh says this, "Since 16
Si 48:6 you sent messengers to consult Baalzebub the god of Ekron,[d] the bed you have
got into you will not get out of; you are certainly going to die" '.[e]

And, in accordance with the word of Yahweh that Elijah had uttered, he died. 17
Since he had no son, his brother[f] Jehoram succeeded him, in the second year
of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.[g] •The rest of the history of 18
Ahaziah, and his career, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the
Kings of Israel?

VI. THE ELISHA CYCLE

A. ITS OPENING

Elijah is taken up and Elisha succeeds him[a]

4:38 Am 4:4 2 This is what happened when Yahweh took Elijah up to heaven in the 1
whirlwind: Elijah and Elisha set out from Gilgal,[b] •and Elijah said to Elisha, 2

'Please stay here, for Yahweh is only sending me to Bethel'. But Elisha replied, 'As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!' and they went Rt 1:16
3 down to Bethel. •The brotherhood of prophets[c] who live at Bethel came out 2:35
to meet Elisha and said, 'Do you know that Yahweh is going to carry your lord
4 and master away today?' 'Yes, I know,' he said 'be quiet.' •Elijah said, 'Elisha,
please stay here, Yahweh is only sending me to Jericho'. But he replied, 'As
Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!' and they went on
5 to Jericho. •The brotherhood of prophets who live at Jericho went up to Elisha
and said, 'Do you know that Yahweh is going to carry your lord and master
6 away today?' 'Yes, I know,' he said 'be quiet.' •Elijah said, 'Elisha, please stay
here, Yahweh is only sending me to the Jordan'. But he replied, 'As Yahweh lives
and as you yourself live, I will not leave you!' And they went on together.
7 Fifty of the brotherhood of prophets followed them, halting some distance
8 away as the two of them stood beside the Jordan. •Elijah took his cloak, rolled
it up and struck the water; and the water divided to left and right, and the two Ex14:16,22
9 of them crossed over dry-shod. •When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha,
'Make your request. What can I do for you before I am taken from you?' Elisha
10 answered, 'Let me inherit a double share of your spirit'.[d] •'Your request is a Nb11:17,25
difficult one' Elijah said. 'If you see me while I am being taken from you, it shall
11 be as you ask; if not, it will not be so.' •Now as they walked on, talking as 6:16-17
they went, a chariot of fire appeared and horses of fire, coming between the Gn 5:24 Ac1:9-10
12 two of them; and Elijah went up to heaven in the whirlwind. •Elisha saw it, and ↗ Si48:9,12
shouted, 'My father! My father! Chariot of Israel and its chargers!' Then he 13:14
13 lost sight of him, and taking hold of his clothes he tore them in half. •He picked
up the cloak of Elijah which had fallen, and went back and stood on the bank 1K19:19
of the Jordan.
14 He took the cloak of Elijah[e] and struck the water. 'Where is Yahweh, the
God of Elijah?' he cried. He struck the water, and it divided to right and left,
15 and Elisha crossed over. •The brotherhood of prophets[f] saw him in the distance,
and said, 'The spirit of Elijah has come to rest on Elisha'; they went to meet
16 him and bowed to the ground before him. •'Look,' they said 'your servants
have fifty strong men with them; let them go and look for your master; the
spirit of Yahweh may have taken him up and thrown him down on a mountain 1K18:12+
17 or into a valley.' 'Send no one' he replied. •But they so shamed him with their
insistence that he consented. So they sent fifty men who searched for three days Dt 34:6 Mi3:23+
18 without finding him. •They then came back to Elisha who had stayed in Jericho;
he said, 'Did I not tell you not to go?'[g]

Two miracles of Elisha[h]

19 The men of the town said to Elisha, 'The town is pleasant to live in, as my

1 a. The division of Kings into two volumes is artificial; the earliest Hebr. Bible made no division.

b. Baalzebub 'Baal of Flies'; mocking pun on the god's real name which was Baalzebul 'Baal the Prince', cf. Mt 10:25+.

c. Elijah wore a loincloth and a flowing cloak, cf. 1 K 18:46 and 2 K 2:8,13. So, too, certain other prophets, Zc 13:4, and the second Elijah, John the Baptist, Mt 3:4p.

d. The Hebr. here repeats the question of vv. 3 and 6.

e. Vv. 9-16 are apparently an addition traceable back to disciples of Elisha, cf. 2:23-24. Its one purpose is to inculcate the respect and obedience owed to God's representatives; other moral considerations are ignored.

f. 'his brother' versions; omitted by Hebr.

g. The date does not agree with 3:1 and is taken from a different system of reckoning.

2 a. This fine passage properly belongs to the Elisha cycle to which it acts as an introduction.

b. This Gilgal, to the N. of Bethel, is not the Gilgal of Jos 4:19, see note.

c. Lit. 'the sons of the prophets'; these prophets formed compact groups and lived in community. Elisha, unlike the lone prophet Elijah, was closely associated with them.

d. The elder son inherited a double portion of his father's goods, Dt 21:17. Elisha wants to be acknowledged as Elijah's principal spiritual heir—an ambitious request since the prophetic spirit is not inherited, but is a gift of God; God, however, indicates that the request is granted by allowing Elisha to see what is hidden from human eyes, cf. v. 12 and 2 K 6:17; the 'sons of the prophets' see only the human circumstances, not the spiritual reality behind them.

e. There is a gloss here 'that had fallen from him'.

f. Gloss 'who are at Jericho'.

g. The fruitless search merely establishes the fact that Elijah is no longer in this world; what has become of him is a mystery on which Elisha is not prepared to elaborate. The text does not say that Elijah did not die, though this conclusion was in fact drawn. On the 'second coming' of Elijah, cf. Ml 3:23+.

h. Narratives in the same vein as those of ch. 4. Elisha possesses a divine power to save or to destroy.

lord indeed can see, but the water is foul and the country suffers from miscarriages'. •'Bring me a new bowl,' he said 'and put some salt in it.' They 20
brought it to him. •Then he went to the place the water came from and threw 21
salt into it. 'Thus Yahweh speaks,' he said ' "I make this water wholesome:
neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it any more". ' •And the water 22
was made wholesome, and is so today, exactly as Elisha had said it would.

From there he went up to Bethel, and while he was on the road up, some 23
small boys came out of the town and jeered at him. 'Go up, baldhead!' they
shouted 'Go up, baldhead!' •He turned round and looked at them; and he 24
cursed them in the name of Yahweh. And two she-bears came out of the wood
and savaged forty-two of the boys. •From there he went on to Mount Carmel, 25
and then returned to Samaria.

B. THE MOABITE WAR

Introduction to the reign of Jehoram in Israel (852-841)

3 Jehoram son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year 1
of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned for twelve years.[a] •He did what is 2
displeasing to Yahweh, though not like his father and mother, for he did away
with the pillar of Baal that his father had made. •Nonetheless, he continued 3
to practise the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel, and did
not give them up.

The expedition of Israel and Judah against Moab

Mesha king of Moab[b] was a sheep-breeder and used to pay the king of Israel 4
a hundred thousand lambs and the wool of a hundred thousand rams in tribute.
But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. 5
1 K 22 At once King Jehoram went out of Samaria and mustered all Israel. After 6
this he sent word to the king of Judah,[c] 'The king of Moab has rebelled 7
1 K 22:4 against me. Will you join with me fighting Moab?' 'I will' he replied. 'I am as
ready as you, my men as your men, my horses as your horses,' •and added 8
'which way are we to attack?' 'Through the wilderness of Edom' the other
answered.

So they set out, the king of Israel, the king of Judah and the king of Edom.[d] 9
They followed a devious route for seven days, until there was no water left for
the troops or for the beasts in their baggage train. •'Alas!' the king of Israel 10
exclaimed 'Yahweh has summoned us three kings, only to put us into the power
1 K 22:7 of Moab.' •But the king of Judah said, 'Is there no prophet of Yahweh here 11
for us to consult Yahweh through him?' One of the king of Israel's servants
1K19:21 answered, 'Elisha son of Shaphat is here, who used to pour water on the hands
of Elijah'. •'The word of Yahweh is with him' the king of Judah said. So they 12
went to him, the king of Israel, the king of Judah and the king of Edom. •But 13
Elisha said to the king of Israel, 'What business have you with me? Go to the
prophets of your father and your mother.' 'No,' the king of Israel answered
'Yahweh has summoned us three kings, only to put us into the power of Moab.'
Elisha replied, 'As Yahweh Sabaoth lives, whom I serve, if I did not respect 14
1K18:15 Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I should not take any notice of you, or so much
as look at you. •Now bring me someone who can play the lyre.'[e] And as the 15
1 S 10:6 musician played, the hand of Yahweh was laid on him •and he said, 'Yahweh 16
1K18:46 1Ch25:3 says this, "Dig ditch on ditch in this wadi", •for Yahweh says, "You 17
shall see neither wind nor rain, but this wadi shall be filled with water, and
you and your troops and your baggage animals shall drink". •But this is only 18
a little thing in the sight of Yahweh, for he will put Moab itself into your power.
Dt 20:19 Jb 5:23 You shall storm every fortified town,[f] fell every sound tree, block every water- 19
spring, ruin all the best fields with stones.' •Next morning at the time when 20

the oblation was being offered, water came from the direction of Edom, and the country was filled with it. 1K18:29

21 When the Moabites learned that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were of age to bear arms were called up; they took up position
22 on the frontier. •In the morning when they got up, the sun was shining on the
23 water; and in the distance the Moabites saw the water as red as blood.[g] •'This is blood!' they said. 'The kings must have fought among themselves and killed one another. So now for the booty, Moab!'
24 But when they reached the Israelite camp, the Israelites launched their attack and the Moabites fled before them, and as they advanced[h] they cut the Moabites
25 to pieces. •They laid the towns in ruins, and each man threw a stone into all Jb 5:23 the best fields to fill them up, and they blocked every water-spring and felled every sound tree. In the end, there was only Kir-hareseth[i] left, which the slingers
26 surrounded and battered. •When the king of Moab saw that the battle had turned against him, he mustered seven hundred swordsmen in the hope of breaking
27 a way out and going to the king of Aram,[j] but he failed. •Then he took his eldest Jg 11:30 son who was to succeed him and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall. There was bitter indignation[k] against the Israelites, who then withdrew, retiring to their own country.

C. SOME MIRACLES OF ELISHA

The widow's oil

1K17:8-15

1 4 The wife of a member of the prophetic brotherhood appealed to Elisha. Mi 2:9 'Your servant my husband is dead,' she said 'and you know how your servant revered Yahweh. A creditor has now come to take my two children and make
2 them his slaves.' •Elisha said, 'What can I do for you? Tell me, what have you in the house?' 'Your servant has nothing in the house,' she replied 'except a pot
3 of oil.' •Then he said, 'Go outside and borrow jars from all your neighbours,
4 empty jars and not too few. •When you come back, shut the door on yourself and your sons, and pour the oil into all these jars, putting each aside when it is
5 full.' •So she left him; and she shut the door on herself and her sons; they passed
6 her the jars and she went on pouring. •When the jars were full, she said to her son, 'Pass me another jar'. 'There are no more' he replied. Then the oil stopped
7 flowing. •She went and told the man of God, who said, 'Go and sell the oil and redeem your pledge; you and your children can live on the remainder'.

The woman of Shunem and her son

8 One day as Elisha was on his way to Shunem, a woman of rank who lived 1 K 1:3 there pressed him to stay and eat there. After this he always broke his journey
9 for a meal when he passed that way. •She said to her husband, 'Look, I am

3 a. This figure derives from some less accepted chronological scheme. According to the most reliable dating, Jehoram of Israel reigned only eight years.

b. The '*stele* of Mesha', discovered at Dibon, mentions the fact that Moab had been subject to Israel under Omri and Ahab, and it records the war of liberation, but it passes over the inglorious episode narrated here.

c. Here and in vv. 11, 12, 14 the text gives the name of the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat; but the chronological data show that the war did not take place until the reign of his son, Jehoram of Judah. The name Jehoshaphat seems to have been added to the original text because of that king's piety and of the similar part he plays in 1 K 22: here, too, a king of Judah, as opposed to a king of Israel, appears as a devoted Yahwist, vv. 11, 13-14.

d. The king of Israel needs the co-operation of Judah and Edom, her vassal, if he is to attack Moab from the S. by passing round the Dead Sea through Edomite territory.

e. Music helps to stimulate ecstasy.

f. The Hebr. adds 'and every choice city'.

g. A tint due, probably, to the sands of the wadi el-Hesa. There is a play on the words *adom* 'red', *dam* 'blood', and the name Edom.

h. 'and as they advanced' Greek.

i. Conjectural restoration of a damaged text. Kir-hareseth is the Moabite capital, Is 16:7,11; Jr 48: 31,36, on the present site of Kerak.

j. 'Aram' corr., cf. Vet. Lat.; 'Edom' Hebr.

k. Interpretation disputed: the anger of Yahweh or (the more common opinion) that of Chemosh, god of Moab? There are difficulties on both sides. The simple explanation may be that the Moabites, incensed by the sacrifice of their crown prince, made a desperate but successful counter-attack.

sure the man who is constantly passing our way must be a holy man of God.
Jdt 8:5 Let us build him a small room on the roof, and put him a bed in it, and a table 10
and chair and lamp; whenever he comes to us he can rest there.' •One day when 11
he came, he retired to the upper room and lay down. •He said to his servant 12
Gehazi, 'Call our Shunammitess'. He called her, and she came and stood before
him. •'Tell her this,' Elisha said ' "Look, you have gone to all this trouble for 13
us, what can we do for you? Is there anything you would like said for you to
the king or to the commander of the army?" ' But she replied, 'I live with my
own people about me'.[a] •'What can be done for her then?' he asked. Gehazi 14
answered, 'Well, she has no son and her husband is old'. •Elisha said, 'Call her'. 15
Gn 18:10 The servant called her and she stood at the door. •'This time next year,' he said 16
'you will hold a son in your arms.' But she said, 'No, my lord, do not deceive
your servant'. •But the woman did conceive, and she gave birth to a son at the 17
time[b] Elisha had said she would.

The child grew up; one day he went out to his father who was with the reapers, 18
and exclaimed to his father, 'Oh, my head! My head!' The father told a servant 19
1K 17:17-24 to carry him to his mother. •He lifted him up and took him to his mother, and 20
the boy sat on her knee until midday, when he died. •She went upstairs, laid 21
him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door on him and went out.[c] •She 22
called her husband and said, 'Send me one of the servants with a donkey. I must
hurry to the man of God and back.' •'Why go to him today?' he asked 'It is 23
not New Moon or sabbath.'[d] But she answered, 'Never mind'. •She had the 24
donkey saddled, and said to her servant, 'Lead on, go! Do not draw rein until
I give the order.' •She set off and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel; 25
when he saw her in the distance, he said to his servant Gehazi, 'Look, here
comes our Shunammitess! •Now run and meet her and ask her, "Are you well? 26
Is your husband well? Your child well?" ' She answered, 'Yes'. •When she came 27
to the man of God there on the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi
stepped forward to push her away, but the man of God said, 'Leave her; there
is bitterness in her soul and Yahweh has hidden it from me, he has not told me'.
She said, 'Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say: Do not deceive me?' 28

Elisha said to Gehazi, 'Tuck up your cloak, take my staff in your hand and go. 29
Lk 10:4 If you meet anyone, do not greet him; if anyone greets you, do not answer him.[e]
Ac 20:10-12 You are to stretch out my staff[f] over the child.' •But the child's mother said, 'As 30
Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you'. Then he stood up
and followed her. •Gehazi had gone ahead of them and had stretched out the 31
staff over the child, but there was no sound or response. He went back to meet
Elisha and told him. 'The child has not woken up' he said. •Elisha then went to 32
1K 17:21 Mt 6:6 the house, and there on his bed lay the child, dead. •He went in and shut the door 33
on the two of them and prayed to Yahweh. •Then he climbed on to the bed and 34
stretched himself on top of the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes
to his eyes, and his hands on his hands, and as he lowered himself on to him,
the child's flesh grew warm. •Then he got up and walked to and fro inside the 35
house, and then climbed on to the bed again and lowered himself on to the child
Heb 11:35 seven times in all; then the child sneezed[g] and opened his eyes. •He then sum- 36
moned Gehazi. 'Call our Shunammitess' he said; and he called her. When she
came to him, he said, 'Take up your son'. •She went in and, falling at his feet, 37
bowed down to the ground; and taking up her son went out.

The poisoned soup

2:1 Elisha went back to Gilgal while there was famine in the country. As the 38
brotherhood of prophets were sitting with him, he said to his servant, 'Put the
large pot on the fire and cook some soup for the brotherhood'. •One of them 39
went into the fields to gather herbs and came on some wild vine off which he
gathered enough gourds[h] to fill his lap. On his return, he cut them up into the
pot of soup; they did not know what they were. •They then poured the soup out 40

for the men to eat, but they had no sooner tasted the soup than they cried, 'Man
41 of God, there is death in the pot!' And they could not eat it. •'Bring some meal
then' Elisha said. This he threw into the pot, and said, 'Pour out for these men,
and let them eat'. And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

The multiplication of loaves

42 A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread from the Mt 14:13-21+; 15:32-38 Jn 6:13
first-fruits, twenty barley loaves and fresh grain in the ear.[f] 'Give it to the people
43 to eat', Elisha said. •But his servant replied, 'How can I serve this to a hundred
men?' 'Give it to the people to eat' he insisted 'for Yahweh says this, "They
44 will eat and have some left over".' •He served them; they ate and had some
left over, as Yahweh had said.

Naaman is healed

1 5 Naaman, army commander to the king of Aram, was a man who enjoyed
his master's respect and favour, since through him Yahweh had granted
2 victory to the Aramaeans.[a] But the man was a leper.[b] •Now on one of their
raids, the Aramaeans had carried off from the land of Israel a little girl who had
3 become a servant of Naaman's wife. •She said to her mistress, 'If only my master
would approach the prophet of Samaria. He would cure him of his leprosy.'
4 Naaman went and told his master. 'This and this' he reported 'is what the girl
5 from the land of Israel said.' •'Go by all means,' said the king of Aram 'I will
send a letter to the king of Israel.' So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents
6 of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten festal robes. •He presented the
letter to the king of Israel. It read: 'With this letter, I am sending my servant
7 Naaman to you for you to cure him of his leprosy'. •When the king of Israel Gn 30:2 Dt 32:39 1 S 2:6 Jn 5:21
read the letter, he tore his garments. 'Am I a god to give death and life,' he said
'that he sends a man to me and asks me to cure him of his leprosy? Listen to his,
and take note of it and see how he intends to pick a quarrel with me.'
8 When Elisha heard that the king of Israel had torn his garments, he sent word
to the king, 'Why did you tear your garments? Let him come to me, and he will
9 find there is a prophet in Israel.' •So Naaman came with his team and chariot
10 and drew up at the door of Elisha's house. •And Elisha sent him a messenger
to say, 'Go and bathe seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will become clean Jn 9:7
11 once more'. •But Naaman was indignant and went off, saying, 'Here was I
thinking he would be sure to come out to me, and stand there, and call on the
name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the spot and cure the leprous
12 part. •Surely Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than
any water in Israel? Could I not bathe in them and become clean?' And he turned
13 round and went off in a rage. •But his servants approached him and said, 'My
father, if the prophet had asked you to do something difficult, would you not
have done it? All the more reason, then, when he says to you, "Bathe, and you
14 will become clean".' •So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Lk 4:27
Jordan, as Elisha had told him to do. And his flesh became clean once more
like the flesh of a little child.

4 a. Elisha has offered to approach the king. The woman proudly answers that the benevolence of her own people is enough for her.

b. 'at the time' corr.

c. Her faith in Elisha is absolute: he has obtained a son for her, he can restore him; meanwhile, no one must know of the death, v. 23, which she conceals.

d. It was evidently the custom on feastdays to visit some man of God.

e. 'Do not greet him': sign that one's mission is urgent.

f. It seems that the staff of Elisha (like that of Moses, Ex 4:17) is credited with magical power, but the sequel will show that nothing can be done without the prophet's prayer and presence.

g. Following the order of the Greek and Vet. Lat. God breathes the breath of life into Adam's nostrils, Gn 2:7, and it is through the nostrils that man breathes, Is 2:22. The sneeze shows that life has returned.

h. Bitter fruit, violently purgative.

i. Translation conjectural.

5 a. Yahweh, God of all nations, guides the destiny of Aram as he guides that of Israel: the doctrine of this chapter is that of 1 K 18.

b. This 'leprosy', like that of Gehazi, v. 27, is perhaps no more than some lesser skin disease since it does not preclude social contacts. Cf. Lv 13:1+.

Returning to Elisha with his whole escort, he went in and stood before him. 15
'Now I know' he said 'that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel.[c]
1 S 9:7 Now, please, accept a present from your servant.' •But Elisha replied, 'As Yahweh 16
lives, whom I serve, I will accept nothing'. Naaman pressed him to accept, but
he refused. •Then Naaman said, 'Since your answer is "No", allow your servant 17
to be given as much earth as two mules may carry, because your servant will no
longer offer holocaust or sacrifice to any god except Yahweh. •Only—and may 18
Yahweh forgive your servant—when my master goes to the temple of Rimmon
to worship there, he leans on my arm, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon
when he does;[d] may Yahweh forgive your servant this act!' •'Go in peace'[e] 19
Elisha answered.

Naaman had gone a small distance, •when Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, 20
said to himself, 'My master has let this Aramaean Naaman off lightly, by not
accepting what he offered. As Yahweh lives, I will run after him and get
something out of him.' •So Gehazi set off in pursuit of Naaman. When Naaman 21
saw him running after him, he jumped down from his chariot to meet him.
'Is all well?' he asked. •'All is well' he said. 'My master has sent me to say, 22
"This very moment two young men of the prophetic brotherhood have arrived
from the highlands of Ephraim. Be kind enough to give them a talent of
silver." ' •'Please accept two talents'[f] Naaman replied, and pressed him, tying 23
up the two talents of silver in two bags and consigning them to two of his
servants who carried them in front of Gehazi. •When he reached Ophel,[g] he took 24
them from their hands and put them away in the house. He then dismissed the
men, who went away.

He, for his part, went and presented himself to his master. Elisha said, 'Gehazi, 25
where have you been?' 'Your servant has not been anywhere' he replied. •But 26
Elisha said to him, 'Was not my heart[h] present there when someone left his
chariot to meet you? Now you have taken the money, you can buy gardens with
it, and olive groves, sheep and oxen, male and female slaves. •But Naaman's 27
Ex 4:6 Nb 12:10 leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants for ever.' And Gehazi left his
presence a leper, white as snow.

The axe lost and found

6 The brotherhood of prophets said to Elisha, 'Look, the place[a] where we live 1
side by side with you is too confined for us. •Let us go to the Jordan, then, 2
and each of us cut a beam there, and we will make our living quarters there.'
He replied, 'Go'. •'Be good enough to go with your servants' one of them said. 3
'I will go' he answered, •and went with them. On reaching the Jordan they 4
cut down timber. •But, as one of them was felling his beam, the iron axehead 5
fell into the water. 'Alas, my lord,' he exclaimed 'and it was a borrowed one
too!' •'Where did it fall?' the man of God asked; and he showed him the spot. 6
Then, cutting a stick, Elisha threw it in at that point and made the iron axehead
float. •'Lift it out' he said; and the man stretched out his hand and took it. 7

D. THE ARAMAEAN WARS

Elisha captures an armed band of Aramaeans

The king of Aram was at war with Israel. He conferred with his officers, 8
and said, 'You are to attack[b] at such and such a place'. •But Elisha sent word 9
to the king of Israel, 'Be on your guard at this place, because the Aramaeans
are going to attack it'.[c] •The king of Israel accordingly sent men to the place 10
Elisha had named. And he kept warning the king, and the king stayed on the
alert; and this happened more than once or twice.

The king of Aram was disturbed in mind at this; he summoned his officers, 11
and said, 'Tell me which of you is betraying us[d] to the king of Israel'. •'No, my 12

lord king,' one of his officers replied 'it is Elisha, the prophet in Israel, who
13 reveals to the king of Israel the words you speak in your bedchamber.' •'Go and
find out where he is,' the king said 'so that I can send people to capture him.'
14 Word was brought to him, 'He is now in Dothan'. •So he sent horses and chariots
there, and a large force; and these, arriving during the night, surrounded the town.
15 Next day, Elisha rose early[e] and went out; and there surrounding the town
was an armed force with horses and chariots. 'Oh, my lord,' his servant said
16 'what are we to do?' •'Have no fear,' he replied 'there are more on our side than
17 on theirs.' •And Elisha prayed. 'Yahweh,' he said 'open his eyes and make him
see.' Yahweh opened the servant's eyes, and he saw the mountain covered with 2:10-12;7:6 Ps 68:17
horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha.
18 As the Aramaeans came down towards him, Elisha prayed to Yahweh,
'I beg you to strike this people with blindness'. And at the word of Elisha he Gn 19:11
19 struck them blind.[f] •Then Elisha said to them, 'This is not the road, nor is this
the town. Follow me; I will lead you to the man you are looking for.' But he
20 led them to Samaria. •As they entered Samaria, Elisha said, 'Yahweh, open the
eyes of these men, and let them see'. Yahweh opened their eyes and they saw;
they were inside Samaria.
21 When the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, 'Shall I kill them, my 8:9
22 father?'[g] •'Do not kill them' he answered. 'Do you put prisoners to death when
you have taken them with your sword and your bow?[h] Offer them bread and
23 water for them to eat and drink, and let them go back to their master.' •So the
king provided a great feast for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he
sent them off and they returned to their master. Aramaean raiding parties never
invaded the territory of Israel again.

Samaria besieged; the famine

24 It happened after this that Ben-hadad king of Aram[i] mustered his whole
25 army and came to lay siege to Samaria. •In Samaria there was great famine,
and so strict was the siege that the head of a donkey sold for eighty shekels of
silver, and one quarter-kab of wild onions[j] for five shekels of silver.
26 Now as the king was passing along the city wall, a woman shouted, 'Help, 2 S 14:14
27 my lord king!' •'May Yahweh leave you helpless!' he retorted.[k] 'Where can
28 I find help for you? From the threshing-floor? From the winepress?' •Then the
king asked, 'What is the matter?' 'This woman here' she answered 'has said Dt 28:53-57
to me, "Give up your son; we will eat him today, and eat my son tomorrow".
29 So we cooked my son and ate him. Next day, I said to her, "Give up your son
30 for us to eat". But she has hidden her son.' •On hearing the woman's words,
the king tore his garments; the king was walking on the wall, and the people 1K 20:31; 21:27
31 saw that underneath he was wearing sackcloth next his body. •'May God do Rt 1:17+
this to me and more,' he said 'if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on
his shoulders today!'[l]

c. Yahweh alone is truly God. Nevertheless, though he is the only God there is a special relationship between him and the land and people of Israel; hence Naaman takes soil from Samaria to raise an altar to Yahweh in Damascus.

d. 'Only' some Greek MSS. 'when he does' Greek and Vulg. Rimmon: another name for Hadad, the storm-god, chief deity of Damascus.

e. Elisha tolerates the outward appearance of idolatry.

f. The text adds 'and two festal robes', cf. v. 5.

g. There was also an Ophel in Jerusalem.

h. 'was it not' versions; 'it was not' Hebr. The text of what follows is uncertain, and is here restored from the Greek.

6 a. Probably Gilgal where Elisha sometimes lived in the company of the prophets, 2 K 4:38.

b. 'You are to attack' conj.

c. 'because' conj. 'are going to attack' conj.

d. 'is betraying us' Greek.

e. Text uncertain.

f. Not total blindness but delusions. To the servant, v. 17, on the other hand, God had revealed what is hidden to the human eye.

g. The appelation shows the king's respect for the prophet, cf. 8:9 and 13:14.

h. Unless an anathema had been pronounced by Yahweh, and apart from individual cases, it was not Israelite custom to kill prisoners of war, cf. 1 K 20:31.

i. Possibly Ben-hadad III of Damascus, see ch. 13. The order of all these narratives seems to be artificial.

j. 'wild onions' corr.; 'pigeon dung' Hebr.

k. The king's curse proceeds from anxiety; indeed the panic is widespread; only Elisha remains calm.

l. No doubt Elisha had promised help from Yahweh and thus encouraged resistance; the king has heard of this and now believes that Elisha has deceived him.

Elisha foretells imminent relief

Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. The king 32
sent a messenger ahead but, before the man arrived, Elisha had said to the elders,
'Do you see how this born assassin has given orders to cut off my head? Look,
when the messenger comes, shut the door; hold the door against him. Is not the
sound of his master's step following behind him?' •Even as he spoke, the king[m] 33
Jb 2:9 arrived. 'This misery plainly comes from Yahweh,' he said 'why should I still
trust in Yahweh?' 7 'Listen to the word of Yahweh' Elisha said. 'Yahweh says 1
this, "By this time tomorrow a measure of finest flour will sell for one shekel,
and two measures of barley for one shekel, at the gate of Samaria".' •The 2
equerry on whose arm the king was leaning retorted to Elisha, 'Even if Yahweh
Gn 7:11;8:2 Is 24:18 Ml 3:1 2 K 7:17 Ps 78:23 made windows in the sky, could this come true?' 'You will see it with your
own eyes,' Elisha answered 'though you will eat none of it.'

19:35-36 **The Aramaean camp is found abandoned**

Lv 13:46 Now at the entrance to the gate—for they were lepers—there were four men 3
and they debated among themselves, 'Why sit here waiting for death? •If we 4
decide to go into the town, what with the famine in it, we shall die there; if
we stay here we shall die just the same. Come on, let us go over to the Aramaean
camp; if they spare our lives, we live; if they kill us, well then we die.' •So at 5
dusk they set out and made for the Aramaean camp, but when they reached the
confines of the camp there was not a soul there. •For Yahweh had caused the 6
6:17 2 S 5:24 Ps 68:17 Aramaeans in their camp to hear a noise of chariots and horses, the noise of
a great army; and they had said to one another, 'Hark! The king of Israel has
hired the Hittite kings[a] against us and the kings of Egypt to attack us.' •So 7
in the dusk they had made off and fled, abandoning their tents, their horses and
their donkeys; leaving the camp just as it was, they had fled for their lives.
The lepers, then, reached the confines of the camp. They went into one of the 8
tents and ate and drank, and from it carried off silver and gold and clothing;
these they went and hid. Then they came back and, entering another tent, looted
it too, and went and hid their booty.

The siege at an end; the famine ceases

Then they said to one another, 'We are doing wrong. This is a day of good 9
news, yet we are holding our tongues! If we wait till morning, we shall surely
be punished. Come on, let us go and take the news to the palace.' •Off they 10
went, called the city guards, and said, 'We have been to the Aramaean camp.
There was not a soul there, no sound of anyone, only tethered horses and tethered
donkeys, and their tents just as they were.' •The gatekeepers shouted the news, 11
which was reported inside the palace.

The king got up while it was still dark and said to his officers, 'I can tell you 12
what the Aramaeans have done to us. They know we are starving, so they have
left the camp to hide in the open country. "They will come out of the town,"
they think "we will catch them alive and get into the town." ' •One of his officers 13
replied, 'Five of the surviving horses still left us had better be taken—they
would die in any case like all the rest.[b] Let us send them and see.' •So they took 14
two chariot teams and the king sent them after the Aramaean army, saying,
'Go and see'. •They tracked them as far as the Jordan, finding the whole way 15
strewn with clothes and gear that the Aramaeans had thrown away in their
panic. The scouts returned and informed the king.

Then the people went out and plundered the Aramaean camp: a measure 16
of finest flour sold for one shekel, and two measures of barley for one shekel,
as Yahweh had promised they would be. •The king had detailed the equerry, 17
on whose arm he leaned, as commander of the guard on the gate, but the people
7:2 trampled on him in the gateway and he died, as the man of God had foretold
when the king had come down to him. •(What Elisha had said to the king came 18

true, 'Two measures of barley will sell for one shekel, and a measure of finest
19 flour for one shekel, by this time tomorrow at the gate of Samaria'. •The equerry
had retorted to Elisha, 'Even if Yahweh made windows in the sky, could this
come true?' 'You will see it with your own eyes,' Elisha had answered 'though you
20 will eat none of it.' •And this is what happened to him: the people trampled
on him in the gateway and he died.)[c]

Epilogue to the story of the woman of Shunem[a]

1 8 Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had raised to life, 'Move away with
your family, and live where you can in some foreign country, for Yahweh has
called up a famine—it is coming on the country already—for seven years.'
2 The woman hurried to do what the man of God had told her: she set out, she
3 and her family, and for seven years she lived in the land of the Philistines. •When
the seven years were over, the woman came back from the land of the Philistines
and went to lodge a claim with the king for her house and lands.[b]
4 Now the king was talking to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. 'Tell me'
5 he was saying 'all the great things Elisha has done.' •Gehazi was just telling the
king how Elisha had raised the dead child to life, when the woman whose son
Elisha had raised lodged her claim with the king for her house and lands. 'My lord
king,' Gehazi said 'this is the very woman, and that is her son whom Elisha
6 raised to life.' •The king questioned the woman, who told him the story. The
king then referred her to one of the eunuchs, giving him this order: 'See that all
her property is restored to her, and all the revenue from her land from the day
she left the country until now'.

Elisha and Hazael of Damascus

7 Elisha came to Damascus. Ben-hadad[c] the king of Aram was ill, and was 12:18
8 told, 'The man of God has come all the way to us'. •Then the king said to Hazael,[d]
'Take a present with you and go to meet the man of God; consult Yahweh 5:1-2
through him, and find out if I shall recover from my illness'.
9 So Hazael went to meet Elisha, taking with him as a present the best Damascus
could offer, a load for forty camels. He came and standing before him said,
'Your son Ben-hadad has sent me to ask you, "Shall I recover from my illness?" ' 6:21+
10 Elisha answered, 'Go and tell him, "You will certainly recover",[e] though Yahweh
11 has shown me that he will certainly die'. •Then his face went rigid and his look 1K19:15
12 grew fixed,[f] and the man of God wept. •'Why' Hazael asked 'does my lord
weep?' 'Because I know' Elisha replied 'all the harm you will do the Israelites:
you will burn down their fortresses, put their picked warriors to the sword,
13 dash their little children to pieces, rip open their pregnant women.' •'But 15:16
what is your servant?' Hazael said. 'How could this dog[g] achieve anything so Am 1:13
great?' 'In a vision from Yahweh,' Elisha replied 'I have seen you king of
Aram.'
14 Leaving Elisha, Hazael went back to his master who asked, 'What did Elisha
15 say to you?' He answered, 'He told me you would certainly recover'. •Next day
he took a blanket, soaked it in water, and spread it over his face.[h] So died Ben-
hadad, and Hazael succeeded him.

m. 'the king' conj.; 'the messenger' Hebr.

7 a. The princes of N. Syria.

b. They may as well sacrifice the horses for purposes of reconnaissance; they would die of hunger anyway. The text is redundant.

c. Vv. 17b-20 are probably an addition; they repeat vv. 1, 2 and 17a.

8 a. Natural sequel of 4:37.

b. Taken over in her absence by neighbours or receivers.

c. Ben-hadad II, as in 1 K 20:1.

d. Evidently an official of Ben-hadad; he was to seize the throne later, v. 15.

e. 'Go and tell him... you will recover' versions: 'Go and say: you will not recover' Hebr.

f. 'his face went rigid' corr. The physical signs of prophetic ecstasy.

g. Expressing humility, cf. 1 S 24:15; 2 S 9:8; Hazael is surprised by this prophecy of future greatness.

h. The subject of the phrase is not expressed. Presumably this was how Hazael murdered Ben-hadad, not how Ben-hadad committed suicide.

The reign of Jehoram in Judah (848-841)

In the fifth year of Jehoram son of Ahab king of Israel,[i] Jehoram son of 16
‖2 Ch 21:5-7 Jehoshaphat became king of Judah. •He was thirty-two years old when he came 17
to the throne, and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem. •He followed the 18
example of the kings of Israel as the family of Ahab had done, having taken a wife
from the family[j] of Ahab; he did what is displeasing to Yahweh. •Yahweh, 19
2 S 7:11-16+; 21:17 1K 11:36+; 15:4 ‖2Ch 21:8-10 however, did not intend to destroy Judah, because of his servant David, and was
faithful to the promise he had made to leave him a lamp for ever in his presence.[k]
In his time Edom threw off the domination of Judah and set up a king for 20
itself.[l] •Jehoram crossed to Zair,[m] and with him all the chariots... He rose 21
during the night and, with his chariot commanders, broke through the
Edomites encircling him; the people fled to their tents. •Thus Edom threw off 22
the domination of Judah, remaining free to the present day. Libnah[n] also
revolted. At that time...
The rest of the history of Jehoram, his entire career, is not all this recorded 23
‖2Ch 21:20 in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •Then Jehoram slept with his 24
ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in the Citadel of David; his son
Ahaziah succeeded him.

The reign of Ahaziah in Judah (841)

‖2 Ch 22:1-6 In the twelfth year of Jehoram son of Ahab king of Israel, Ahaziah son of 25
Jehoram became king of Judah. •Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he 26
came to the throne, and he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name
was Athaliah, daughter of Omri king of Israel. •He followed the example of the 27
family of Ahab and did what is displeasing to Yahweh as the family of Ahab
had done, to whom he was related by marriage.
9:14-15 1K 22:3-4 He went with Jehoram son of Ahab to fight against Hazael king of Aram 28
at Ramoth-gilead, but the Aramaeans wounded Jehoram. •King Jehoram 29
returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which he had received at Ramah,
fighting against Hazael king of Aram. Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah
went down to Jezreel to visit Jehoram son of Ahab because he was ill.

E. THE HISTORY OF JEHU

1K 21:29 **A disciple of Elisha anoints Jehu king**

Ho 1:4 9 Elisha the prophet summoned a member of the prophetic brotherhood to 1
him, 'Tuck up your cloak, take this flask of oil, and go to Ramoth-gilead.
When you arrive there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi. Then, 2
when you find him, tell him to get up and leave his companions, and take
him into an inner room. •Take the flask of oil then and pour it over his head, 3
1K 19:16 and say, "This is Yahweh's word: I have anointed you king of Israel". Then
throw open the door and escape as fast as you can.'
The young man left for Ramoth-gilead •and when he arrived, he found the 4 5
senior officers of the army sitting together. 'I have a message for you, commander'
he said. 'For which of us?' asked Jehu. 'For you, commander' he answered.
Then Jehu got up and went into the house. And the young man poured the oil 6
on his head, saying, 'Yahweh the God of Israel says this, "I have anointed
1K 16:4,13; 19:10,21 you king over the people of Yahweh, king of Israel. •You are to strike down the 7
family of Ahab your master, and I will avenge the blood of my servants the
1K 21:21-24 prophets and of all the servants of Yahweh on Jezebel •and the whole family of 8
Ahab. I will wipe out every male belonging to the family of Ahab, fettered or
1K 14:10-11 free in Israel. •I will make the family of Ahab like the family of Jeroboam son 9
1K 16:3-4 of Nebat and of Baasha son of Ahijah. •As for Jezebel, the dogs shall eat her in 10
9:36 1K 21:23 the territory of Jezreel; no one will bury her." '[a] With this, he opened the door
and made his escape.

Jehu proclaimed king

11 Jehu came out to the officers of his master. 'Is all well?' they asked him.[b] 'Why
did this madman[c] come to you?' 'You know the fellow and how he talks' he
12 answered. •'Evasion!' they cried 'Come on, tell us.' He replied, 'His drift was
this— he said, "Yahweh says this: I have anointed you king of Israel" '.
13 Whereupon they all took their cloaks and spread them under him[d] on the bare Mt 21:8
steps; they sounded the trumpet and shouted, 'Jehu is king!'

Jehu prepares to usurp power

14 Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi plotted against Jehoram. (Jehoram, 8:28
with all Israel, was at that time defending Ramoth-gilead[e] against Hazael king 1 K 22:3
15 of Aram, •although Jehoram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds
which he had received from the Aramaeans while he was fighting against Hazael
king of Aram.) 'If this is how you feel,' Jehu said 'let no one escape from the
16 town to go and take the news to Jezreel.' •Jehu then mounted his chariot and
left for Jezreel; Jehoram had taken to his bed there, and Ahaziah king of Judah
had gone down to visit him.
17 The lookout posted on the tower of Jezreel saw Jehu's troop approaching,
'I can see a body of men' he shouted. Jehoram gave the order: 'Have a horseman
18 sent to meet them and ask, "Is all well?" '[f] •The horseman went to meet Jehu
and said, 'The king says, "Is all well?" ' 'What has it to do with you whether
all is well?' Jehu replied. 'Fall in behind me.' The lookout reported, 'The messenger
19 has reached them and is not coming back'. •The king sent a second horseman
who reached them and said, 'The king says, "Is all well?" ' 'What has it to do
20 with you whether all is well?' Jehu replied. 'Fall in behind me.' •The lookout
reported, 'He has reached them and is not coming back. The manner of driving
21 is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi: he drives like a madman.' •'Harness!' Jehoram 2 S 18:27
cried; and they harnessed his chariot. Then Jehoram king of Israel and Ahaziah ‖2 Ch 22:7-8
king of Judah, each in his chariot, set out to meet Jehu. They reached him in the
field of Naboth of Jezreel.

The assassination of Jehoram

22 As soon as Jehoram saw Jehu he asked, 'Is all well, Jehu?' 'What a question!'
he replied 'when all the while the prostitutions[g] and countless sorceries of your
23 mother Jezebel go on.' •At this, Jehoram wheeled and fled, saying to Ahaziah,
24 'Treason, Ahaziah!' •But Jehu had drawn his bow; he struck Jehoram between
the shoulder-blades, the arrow went through the king's heart, and he sank down
25 in his chariot. •'Pick him up,' Jehu said to Bidkar, his equerry 'and throw him
into the field of Naboth of Jezreel. Remember how, when you and I both rode[h] 1 K 21
26 behind Ahab his father, Yahweh pronounced this sentence against him: •"This
I swear. Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons—it is 1 K 21:9
Yahweh who speaks. In this same field I will requite you—it is Yahweh who
speaks." So pick him up, and throw him into the field, as Yahweh declared
should happen.'

i. The Hebr. adds here 'Jehoshaphat being king of Judah', absent from versions.

j. 'from the family' corr.; 'daughter' Hebr. The woman is Athaliah, see ch. 11, Omri's daughter, v. 26, not therefore Ahab's daughter but his sister.

k. 'in his presence' cf. 1 K 11:36; 'to his sons' Hebr.

l. Edom, cf. Nb 20:23+, was a subject-kingdom of Judah under Jehoshaphat, 1 K 22:48, and until the early days of the reign of Jehoram, 2 K 3:9.

m. Unidentified site in Transjordania. The text that follows is mutilated: an attempt has been made to expunge the record of a defeat. So also in v. 22.

n. The town passed to the Philistines.

9 a. Vv. 7-10a have been added by the author of Kings: in the original story the young man must have fled immediately after anointing Jehu, as ordered by Elisha, v. 3.

b. 'they asked him' versions.

c. Attitude of the people at large to the prophets, Jr 29:26; Ho 9:7. The term is not a direct insult though containing an element of mockery, and Jehu adopts the same tone.

d. As the crowd offered royal honours to Jesus, Mt 21:8p.

e. The king does not at first suspect treason, but he is uneasy about the news from Ramoth-gilead.

f. The town had evidently been recaptured by the Israelites; the Aramaeans were trying to retake it.

g. In the metaphorical sense, as in the prophets, of the worship of false gods, with a possible allusion to sacred prostitution, cf. Dt 23:19+, a vice characteristic of the Phoenician cult.

h. Meaning doubtful.

‖2 Ch 22:8-9 **The assassination of Ahaziah**

When Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled along the Beth-haggan road, 27
but Jehu went in pursuit of him. 'Strike him down too' he said. And they wounded
him[i] in his chariot at the slope of Gur, which is near Ibleam, and he took refuge
2 Ch 22:9 in Megiddo, where he died. •His servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem 28
and buried him in his tomb in the Citadel of David. •Ahaziah had become king 29
of Judah in the eleventh year of Jehoram son of Ahab.

The assassination of Jezebel

Jehu went back to Jezreel and Jezebel heard of it. She made up her eyes with 30
kohl and adorned her head and appeared at the window. •As Jehu came through 31
1 K 16:9-18 the gateway she said, 'Is all well, Zimri, you murderer of your master?'[j] •Jehu 32
looked up to the window and said, 'Who is on my side? Who?' And two or three
eunuchs looked down at him. •'Throw her down' he said. They threw her down, 33
and her blood spattered the walls and the horses; and Jehu rode over her. •He 34
went in and ate and drank, then said, 'See to this accursed woman, and give her
burial; after all, she was a king's daughter'. •But when they went to bury her, 35
they found nothing but her skull, feet and hands. •They came back and told 36
Jehu, who said, 'This is the word of Yahweh which he spoke through his servant
9:10 1 K 21:23 Elijah the Tishbite, "The dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel in the territory of
Ps 68:23 Jr 8:2 Jezreel; •the corpse of Jezebel will be like dung spread on the fields,[k] so that no 37
one will be able to say: This was Jezebel" '.

11:1 Jg 9:5 1 K 15:29; 16:11 Ho 1:4 **The massacre of the royal family of Israel**

10 There were seventy sons of Ahab in Samaria.[a] Jehu sent to Samaria, to the 1
authorities of the city, to the elders and to the guardians of the children
of Ahab. He said, •'At this time, when this letter reaches you, you have your 2
master's sons with you; you also have chariots and horses, fortified towns and
weapons. •See which of your master's sons is the best and worthiest, put him 3
on his father's throne and fight for the dynasty of your master.' •They were 4
utterly terrified. 'We have seen how the two kings could not stand up to him,'
they said 'so how could we do so?' •Consequently the master of the palace, the 5
governor of the city, the elders and the guardians sent word to Jehu, 'We are
your servants. We will do whatever you order us. We will not proclaim a king;
act as you think best.'

Jehu then wrote them a second letter. He said, 'If you are for me and if you 6
are prepared to accept orders from me, take the heads[b] of the men of your master's
house and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow'. (There were seventy sons
of the king being educated there by the leading men of the city.) •When this 7
letter reached them, they took the king's sons and butchered all seventy of them,
put their heads in baskets and sent them to him at Jezreel.

The messenger came and told Jehu, 'They have brought the heads of the 8
king's sons'. 'Leave them in two heaps at the entrance to the gate until morning'
he replied. •When morning came, he went out and, standing, said to all the people, 9
'Be guiltless! I certainly plotted against my master and murdered him; but who
killed all these? •Know, then, nothing will fail to be fulfilled of the oracle uttered 10
1 K 21:21-24 by Yahweh against the family of Ahab: Yahweh has done what he said through
his servant Elijah.' •Jehu then killed everyone of the House of Ahab surviving 11
in Jezreel, all his leading men, his close friends, his priests; he did not leave a
single one alive.

‖2 Ch 22:8 **The massacre of the princes of Judah**

Jehu then set out and went to Samaria. As he was on his way •he met, at 12 13
Beth-eked of the Shepherds, the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah. 'Who are
you?' he asked. 'We are brothers of Ahaziah,' they answered 'and we are going
down to pay our respects to the sons of the king and the sons of the queen.'[c]

14 'Take them alive' he said. They took them alive, and he slaughtered them at the cistern of Beth-eked, forty-two of them; he did not spare a single one.

Jehu and Jehonadab

15 Leaving there, he came upon Jehonadab son of Rechab who was on his way 1Ch 2:55 Jr 35:1-11
to meet him. He greeted him and said, 'Is your heart true to mine,[d] as my heart
is to yours?' Jehonadab replied, 'Yes'. 'If so,' Jehu said 'give me your hand.'
Jehonadab gave him his hand, and Jehu took him up beside him in his chariot.
16 'Come with me,' he said 'and witness my zeal for Yahweh', and drove him on
17 in his chariot. •When he entered Samaria, he killed all the survivors of Ahab's
family in Samaria; he wiped it out, as Yahweh had told Elijah it would happen.

The destruction of the adherents and temple of Baal

18 Then Jehu assembled all the people. 'Ahab did Baal some small service,'
19 he said 'but Jehu will do him a great one. •Now call me all the prophets of Baal[e]
and all his priests. Let no one be missing: I have a great sacrifice to offer to Baal.
If anyone is missing, he shall forfeit his life.' This was a trick on Jehu's part to
20 destroy the devotees of Baal. •'Summon a sacred assembly for Baal' he com-
21 manded; and they summoned it. •Jehu sent messengers throughout Israel, and
all the devotees of Baal arrived, not a man was left who did not attend. They
22 packed into the temple of Baal until it was full from wall to wall. •Jehu then said 1K 16:32
to the keeper of the wardrobe, 'Bring out vestments for all the devotees of Baal';[f]
23 he brought out the vestments for them. •Jehu then went into the temple of Baal
with Jehonadab son of Rechab and said to the devotees of Baal, 'Make quite
sure there are no devotees of Yahweh in here with you, but only devotees of
24 Baal'. •He then proceeded to offer sacrifices and holocausts.

Now Jehu had stationed eighty of his men outside, having said, 'If any of
you lets anyone of those I am handing over to you escape, his life will pay for
25 the life of the other'. •When he had finished offering the holocaust, he gave the
order to the guards and squires: 'Go in, strike them down! Let no one out!'
The guards and squires went in, putting everyone to the sword, until they had
26 reached the sanctuary of the temple of Baal.[g] •They took the sacred pole[h] out
27 of the temple of Baal and burned it. •They demolished the altar[i] of Baal, and
demolished the temple of Baal too, making it into a latrine, which it still is
today.

The reign of Jehu in Israel (841-814)

28 Thus Jehu rid Israel of Baal. •Even so, Jehu did not give up the sins into
29 which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel, the golden calves of Bethel and 1K 12:28-29
30 Dan.[j] •Yahweh said to Jehu, 'Since you have done properly what was pleasing
in my sight, and have achieved all I set my heart on against Ahab's family, your
31 sons shall sit on the throne of Israel down to the fourth generation'. •But Jehu 15:12

i. 'And they wounded him' Syr.; absent from Hebr.

j. Sarcastic allusion to Zimri who reigned only eight days after assassinating Elah, king of Israel.

k. The Hebr. adds 'in the field of Jezreel', a gloss.

10 a. 'Seventy': conventional number used to indicate the entire offspring, Gn 46:27; Jg 8:30; 9:2; 12:14. Here it means the sons and grandsons of Ahab, but more particularly the sons of Jehoram. 'Children' Greek; omitted by Hebr.

b. The Hebrew *rosh* means both 'leader' and 'head'. Jehu's correspondents take grim advantage of the ambiguity, v. 7; perhaps they were intended to, though Jehu subsequently throws the responsibility on them, v. 9.

c. 'brothers' in the wide sense of 'relations', or perhaps a court title as also probably 'son of the king', 'son of the queen'.

d. 'Is your heart... mine' Greek. Jehonadab son of Rechab was an ardent Yahwist and had imposed the simple desert régime on his clan, Jr 35:1-11. It was natural for him to support Jehu, but this episode, like the preceding, is certainly misplaced.

e. The text adds 'all his devotees'.

f. The change of clothing is a purification preparatory to worship, a known custom of the Phoenicians; cf. Gn 35:2.

g. Vv. 24-25 are corrected.

h. 'the sacred pole' conj.

i. 'the altar' conj.

j. The author's own verdict; the source he was following in the preceding narratives gave unstinted praise, v. 30, to Jehu's sincere, if brutal, zeal for Yahweh. At the same time, however, by wiping out the devotees of Baal, Jehu intended to eliminate any remaining support for the dynasty of Ahab.

did not follow the law of Yahweh, the God of Israel faithfully and wholeheartedly:
he did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel.
Am 1:3 At that time, Yahweh began to whittle Israel down, and Hazael defeated the 32
Israelites throughout the territory •from the Jordan eastwards: all the land of 33
Gilead, of the Gadites, the Reubenites and the Manassites, from Aroer which
is by the wadi Arnon, Gilead and Bashan.[k]
The rest of the history of Jehu, his entire career, all his prowess, is not all this 34
recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? •Then he slept with 35
his ancestors, and they buried him in Samaria; his son Jehoahaz succeeded him.
Jehu's reign over Israel in Samaria lasted twenty-eight years. 36

F. FROM THE REIGN OF ATHALIAH TO THE DEATH OF ELISHA

Athaliah (841-835)[a]

||2Ch22:9-23:21
10:1 Jg 9:5
11 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah learned that her son was dead, she 1
promptly did away with all those of royal stock. •But Jehosheba,[b] daughter 2
of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah, secretly took away Jehoash, her brother's
son, from among the sons of the king who were being murdered, and put him with
his nurse in the sleeping quarters; in this way she hid him from Athaliah, and he
was not put to death. •He stayed with her for six years, hidden in the Temple 3
of Yahweh, while Athaliah governed the country.
||2Ch23:1 In the seventh year, Jehoiada[c] sent for the commanders of hundreds of the 4
Carians[d] and of the guards, and had them brought to him in the Temple of
Yahweh. He made a pact with them and, putting them under oath, showed them
the king's son. •He gave them this order:[e] 'This is what you must do: one third of 5
you, those who are off duty on the sabbath, are to mount guard at the royal (6)
palace, •while the other two thirds of you, mounting guard at the Temple of 7
Yahweh,[f] •are to surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand; anyone 8
who tries to break through your ranks is to be put to death. Wherever the king
goes or comes, you are to escort him.'
The commanders of hundreds did everything as Jehoiada the priest had 9
ordered. They brought their men, those coming off duty on the sabbath together
with those mounting guard on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.
2 S 8:7 The priest equipped the commanders of hundreds with King David's spears and 10
1 K 1:33f shields which were in the Temple of Yahweh.[g] •The guards formed up, each man 11
with his weapon in his hand, from the south corner to the north corner of the
Temple, surrounding the altar and the Temple.[h] •Then Jehoiada brought out 12
the king's son, put the crown and armlets on him, and he anointed him king.[i]
1 S 10:24 They clapped their hands and shouted, 'Long live the king!'
Athaliah, on hearing the shouts of the people,[j] made for the Temple of 13
Yahweh where the people were. •When she saw the king standing there beside 14
the pillar,[k] as the custom was, with the captains and trumpeters at the king's
side, and all the country people rejoicing and sounding trumpets, Athaliah tore
her garments and shouted, 'Treason, treason!' •Then Jehoiada the priest gave 15
the order to the army officers: 'Take her outside the precincts[l] and put to death
anyone who follows her'. 'For' the priest had reasoned 'she must not be put
to death in the Temple of Yahweh.' •They seized her, and when she had reached 16
the palace through the Entry of the Horses, she was put to death there.
Jehoiada made a covenant between Yahweh and king and people, by which 17
the latter undertook to be the people of Yahweh; and also between king and
people.[m] •All the country people then went to the temple of Baal and demolished 18
it;[n] they smashed his altars and his images and killed Mattan, priest of Baal,
in front of the altars.
The priest posted sentries to guard the Temple of Yahweh. •He then took the 19
commanders of hundreds, the Carians, the guards and all the country people

and made them escort the king down from the Temple of Yahweh and through the Gate of the Guards into the palace. Jehoash took his seat on the throne of
20 the kings. •All the country people were delighted,[o] and the city made no move. 23:30
And they put Athaliah to death in the royal palace.

The reign of Jehoash in Judah (835-796) ||2 Ch 24: 1-16

1,2 / 21,1 12 Jehoash was seven years old when he came to the throne. •Jehoash became king in the seventh year of Jehu, and reigned for forty years in Jerusalem.
3 / 2 His mother's name was Zibiah, of Beersheba. •Jehoash did what is pleasing to
4 / 3 Yahweh all his life, having been instructed by Jehoiada the priest.[a] •The high places, however, were not abolished, and the people still offered sacrifices and incense on the high places.

5 / 4 Jehoash said to the priests, 'All the money from the sacred dues brought to the Temple of Yahweh, the money from personal taxes,[b] and the money given
6 / 5 spontaneously to the Temple •is to be accepted by the priests, from people of their acquaintance, and the priests are to carry out all repairs to the Temple as
7 / 6 required'.[c] •Now in the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, the priests had done
8 / 7 no repairs to the Temple; •so King Jehoash summoned Jehoiada the priest and the other priests. 'Why are you not repairing the Temple?' he asked. 'You are no longer to accept money from people of your acquaintance, but are to hand it
9 / 8 over for the Temple repairs.' •The priests agreed to accept no money from the people and no longer to be responsible for repairs to the Temple.

10 / 9 Jehoiada the priest procured a chest, bored a hole in the lid of it, and placed it beside the pillar, to the right as you enter the Temple of Yahweh; in it the priests who guarded the threshold put all the money that was given for the
11 / 10 Temple of Yahweh.[d] •Whenever they saw that there was a lot of money in the 22:4
chest, the king's secretary[e] would come, and they would melt down and reckon
12 / 11 the money then in the Temple of Yahweh. •Once checked, they paid this money over to the masters of works attached to the Temple of Yahweh, and these in turn spent it on carpenters and builders working on the Temple of Yahweh,
13 / 12 on masons and stonecutters, and on buying wood and dressed stone to be used for repairs to the Temple of Yahweh; in short, for all the costs of the Temple
14 / 13 repairs. •No silver basins, however, no knives, sprinkling bowls, trumpets, no gold or silver objects whatever were made for the Temple of Yahweh out of the
15 / 14 money presented, •for this was all given to the workmen who used it for repairing

k. Thus the Israelites lost all their Transjordanian territory. The verse is heavily glossed in the spirit of Dt 3:12f.

11 a. Two combined narratives are recognisable here. The first, vv. 1-12 and 18b-20, attributes the fall of Athaliah to the action of the priesthood, supported by the royal guard. The second, which is incomplete, vv. 13-18a, attributes it to a popular uprising.

b. According to 2 Ch 22:11 she was the wife of Jehoiada the priest, v. 4; this explains how she could keep Joash hidden in the Temple, v. 3.

c. Head of the Jerusalem priesthood, 12:8.

d. Mercenaries from Asia Minor. Cf. the 'Cherethites' of David's guard, 1 K 1:38.

e. On weekdays, it seems, one third of the guard was posted at the Temple, two thirds at the palace; on the sabbath the proportion was reversed. Jehoiada takes advantage of a sabbath: the two thirds go on duty at the Temple as usual but he keeps the other third there too. We omit v. 6 'and one third at the Gate Sur (?) and one third at the gate behind the guards, and you are to go on duty at the house of (word unknown)'; obscure text, perhaps composed of several corrupt glosses.

f. The text adds 'at the king's side'.

g. Probably a gloss from the parallel narrative of 2 Ch 23:9 in which the Levites assume the role of the guards and have to be armed.

h. Last words uncertain. The Hebr. has a different order and adds 'at the king's side'.

i. 'the armlets' conj.: part of the royal insignia, see 2 S 1:10; 'the testimony' Hebr. 'he anointed' Greek; 'they anointed' Hebr.

j. The Hebr. inserts 'of the guard', a gloss.

k. There was evidently a place reserved for the king beside one of the pillars in front of the Temple, 1 K 7:15-22.

l. 'officers' Greek; 'outside the precincts' Greek.

m. The last words are possibly an addition: they are absent from 2 Ch 23:16.

n. This revolution is a parallel to that of Jehu in the Northern Kingdom, ch. 10:18-28.

o. It is the country people therefore ('the people of the land') who support a return to the Davidic and Yahwistic tradition; the city has to be forced to accept it.

12 a. And not as in 2 Ch 24:2,17f 'as long as the priest Jehoiada was his instructor'.

b. Text doubtful, restored from the Greek. The Hebr. here adds 'the money from the persons whom he (the priest?) has assessed'.

c. First of the new king's dispositions: payment for the repair of the Temple is to be made out of the revenues of the priesthood.

d. The royal edict is carried out. 'the pillar' Greek; 'the altar' Hebr.

e. Add. 'and the high priest'. 'they would melt down' corr.

the Temple of Yahweh. •No accounts were kept with the men to whom the money was paid over to be spent on the workmen, since they were honest in
Lv 5:6 their dealings. •Money offered in expiation of an offence or of a sin was not given to the Temple of Yahweh; that was for the priests.
8:7-15 ‖2 Ch 24: 23-27 At that time Hazael king of Aram went to war against Gath, and captured it; he then prepared to attack Jerusalem. •Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred offerings dedicated by his ancestors, the kings of Judah, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, with those that he himself had dedicated, and all the gold that was to be found in the treasuries of the Temple of Yahweh and of the royal palace; he sent it all to Hazael king of Aram, who retired from Jerusalem.

The rest of the history of Jehoash, his entire career, is not all this recorded in
14:5 the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •His officers rebelled and hatched a plot; they struck Jehoash down at Beth-millo...[1] •Jozacar son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer were the two who struck him down and killed him. They buried him with his ancestors in the Citadel of David; his son Amaziah succeeded him.

The reign of Jehoahaz in Israel (814-798)

13 In the twenty-third year of Joash son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for seventeen years. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh and persisted in the sin into which Jeroboam had led Israel; he did not give it up.

Am 1:3 Then the anger of Yahweh blazed out against the Israelites, and he delivered them without respite into the power of Hazael king of Aram and of Ben-hadad[a] son of Hazael. •Jehoahaz, however, tried to placate Yahweh, and Yahweh
14:26-27 heard him, for he had seen the oppression the king of Aram was inflicting on them. •Yahweh gave Israel a saviour who freed them[b] from the grip of Aram, and the Israelites lived in their tents as in the past. •But they did not give up the sin into which Jeroboam had led Israel; they persisted in it, and even the
Ex 34:13+ sacred pole remained in Samaria. •Yahweh left of the army of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand foot soldiers. The king of Aram had destroyed them, making them like the dust that is trampled under foot.

The rest of the history of Jehoahaz, his entire career, his prowess, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? •Then Jehoahaz slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in Samaria; his son Joash succeeded him.

The reign of Joash in Israel (798-783)

In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Joash became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for sixteen years. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, he did not give up the sin into which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel; he persisted in it.

=14:15-16 The rest of the history of Joash, his entire career, his prowess, how he waged
14:8-14 war on Amaziah king of Judah, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? •Then Joash slept with his ancestors, and Jeroboam ascended his throne. Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

The death of Elisha

Jos 8:18 When Elisha had fallen ill of the illness he was to die of, Joash king of Israel
Gn 50:1 went down to him and shedding tears over him said, 'My father! My father!
2:12 Chariot of Israel and its chargers!' •Elisha said to him, 'Bring bow and arrows'; and he sent for a bow and arrows. •Then Elisha said to the king, 'Draw the bow'; and he drew it. Elisha put his hands over the hands of the king, •then he said, 'Open the window towards the east', and he opened it. Then Elisha said, 'Arrow of victory over Aram! You will defeat Aram at Aphek completely.'[c]

Elisha said, 'Take the arrows'; and he took them. Then he said to the king,

19 'Strike the ground'; and he struck it three times, then stopped. •At this, the man 13:25
of God grew angry with him. 'You should have struck half a dozen times'
he said 'and you would have beaten Aram completely; now you will only beat
Aram three times.'
20 Elisha died, and was buried. Now bands of Moabites were making incursions
21 into the country every year.[d] •Some people happened to be carrying a man out
for burial; at the sight of one of these bands, they flung the man into the tomb
of Elisha and made off. The man had no sooner touched the bones of Elisha
than he came to life and stood up on his feet.

Victory over the Aramaeans

22 Hazael king of Aram had oppressed the Israelites throughout the lifetime of
23 Jehoahaz, •but Yahweh was kind and took pity on them. Because of the covenant
he had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he relented towards them; he had Dt 9:27+
24 no wish to destroy them, he did not cast them out of his presence.[e] •Hazael king
25 of Aram died, and his son Ben-hadad succeeded him. •Joash son of Jehoahaz
recaptured from Ben-hadad son of Hazael the towns which Hazael had seized
from his father Jehoahaz by force of arms. Joash defeated him three times and
recovered the Israelite towns. 13:19

VII. THE TWO KINGDOMS TO THE FALL OF SAMARIA

The reign of Amaziah in Judah (796-781) ‖2 Ch 25: 1-4.11-12. 17-28

1 14 In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah son
2 of Joash became king of Judah. •He was twenty-five years old when he
came to the throne, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His
3 mother's name was Jehoaddin, of Jerusalem. •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh,
though not like his ancestor David; he imitated his father Joash in all respects.
4 The high places, however, were not abolished, and the people still offered sacri-
fices and incense on the high places.
5 Once the kingdom was firmly under his control, he killed those of his officers
6 who had murdered the king his father. •But he did not put the murderers' sons 12:21-22
to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of Moses, where Yahweh Dt 24:16+ Ezk 14:12+
has ordered: 'Fathers must not be put to death for sons, nor sons for fathers;
every one must be put to death for his own sin'.
7 It was he who defeated the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, ten thousand of 2 S 8:13
them, and who took the Rock by assault; he gave it the name Joktheel, which
it bears to this present day.
8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Joash son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king 13:12
9 of Israel, saying, 'Come and make a trial of strength!' •Joash king of Israel sent Jg 9:8-15
word to Amaziah king of Judah, 'The thistle of Lebanon sent a message to the
cedar of Lebanon, "Give my son your daughter in marriage"; but the wild
10 animals of Lebanon trampled down the thistle as they passed. •You have con-
quered Edom, and now hold your head in the air; boast on, but stay at home. Why
challenge disaster, to your own ruin and the ruin of Judah?'
11 But Amaziah would not listen, and Joash king of Israel marched to the attack.
And at Beth-shemesh, which belongs to Judah, they made their trial of strength,
12 Joash and Amaziah king of Judah. •Judah was defeated by Israel, and everyone

f. 'The house of the Millo', cf. 1 K 9:15. Two words corrupt at the end of verse 'that goes down to Silla'.

13 a. Ben-hadad III, enemy of Joash of Israel, v. 25.

b. 'who freed them' Greek; 'and they freed them' Hebr. The liberator was not Jehoahaz nor, despite v. 25, his son Joash, but Jeroboam II, see 14:27 on which the editor who added vv. 4-5 drew by way of anticipation.

c. By laying his hands on the king Elisha bestows divine strength on him. The flight of the arrow is eastward, against the Aramaeans. The prophet's gesture prefigures the event and thus brings it about, cf. Jr 18:1+.

d. 'every year' corr.

e. The Hebr. adds 'yet', a gloss.

fled to his tent. •The king of Judah, Amaziah son of Joash, son of Ahaziah, was 13
taken prisoner at Beth-shemesh by Joash king of Israel who led him off[a] to
Jerusalem, where Joash demolished the city wall from the Gate of Ephraim to
the Gate of the Corner[b] for a distance of four hundred cubits. •He took all the 14
gold and silver, and all the furnishings to be found in the Temple of Yahweh and
in the treasury of the royal palace, and hostages besides, and then returned to
Samaria.

=13:12-13 The rest of the history of Joash, his entire career, his prowess, how he waged 15
war on Amaziah king of Judah, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals
of the Kings of Israel? •Then Joash slept with his ancestors, and was buried in 16
Samaria with the kings of Israel; his son Jeroboam succeeded him.

Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, lived for fifteen years after the death 17
of Joash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel.

The rest of the history of Amaziah, is not all this recorded in the Book of 18
the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •A plot having been hatched against him in 19
Jerusalem, he fled to Lachish; but he was followed to Lachish where he was
put to death. •He was brought back by horse, and buried in Jerusalem with 20
‖2 Ch 26:1-2 his ancestors in the Citadel of David. •All the people of Judah chose Uzziah,[c] 21
then sixteen years old, and made him king in succession to his father Amaziah.
It was he who rebuilt Elath[d] and recovered it for Judah, after the king had 22
slept with his ancestors.

The reign of Jeroboam II in Israel (783-743)

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam son 23
of Joash became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for forty-one years.
He did what is displeasing to Yahweh and did not give up any of the sins into 24
which Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel.

It was he who recovered the territory of Israel from the Pass of Hamath 25
as far as the Sea of the Arabah, in accordance with the word that Yahweh,
the God of Israel, had spoken through his servant Jonah[e] son of Amittai, the
13:4-5 prophet from Gath-hepher. •For Yahweh had seen how very bitter[f] the affliction 26
1K 14:10+ of Israel was, with no one, neither fettered nor free, to come to the help of Israel.
But Yahweh had resolved not to blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; 27
he rescued them by means of Jeroboam son of Joash.

The rest of the history of Jeroboam, his entire career, his prowess, what 28
wars he waged, how he...[g] is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals
of the Kings of Israel? •Then Jeroboam slept with his ancestors. They buried him 29
in Samaria[h] with the kings of Israel; his son Zechariah succeeded him.

‖2 Ch 26:3-4, 21-23 **The reign of Uzziah in Judah (781-740)**

15 In the seventeenth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Uzziah son of Amaziah 1
became king of Judah. •He was sixteen years old when he came to the 2
throne, and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was
Jecoliah, of Jerusalem. •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, just as his father 3
Amaziah had done. •The high places, however, were not abolished, and the 4
people still offered sacrifices and incense on the high places.

But Yahweh struck the king, and he became a leper till his dying day. He lived 5
1K 4:2+ confined to his room;[a] his son Jotham was master of the palace and ruled the
country.

The rest of the history of Uzziah, his entire career, is not all this recorded 6
in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •Then Uzziah slept with 7
his ancestors, and they buried him in the Citadel of David; his son Jotham
succeeded him.

The reign of Zechariah in Israel (743)

Am 7:9 In the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah king of Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam 8

9 became king of Israel in Samaria for six months. •He did what is displeasing
to Yahweh, as his fathers had done; he did not give up the sins into which
Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel.
10 Shallum son of Jabesh plotted against him, murdered him at Ibleam,[b] and
succeeded him.
11 The rest of the history of Zechariah is recorded in the Book of the Annals
12 of the Kings of Israel. •It happened as Yahweh had said to Jehu, 'Your sons will 10:30
sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation'. And so it turned out.

The reign of Shallum in Israel (743)

13 Shallum son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king
of Judah, and reigned for one month in Samaria.
14 Then Menahem son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, entered Samaria, murdered
Shallum son of Jabesh there, and succeeded him.
15 The rest of the history of Shallum, and the plot he hatched, all this is recorded
16 in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel. •It was at that time that
Menahem sacked Tappush[c]—killing all who were in it—and its territory from
Tirzah onwards, because it had not opened its gates to him; he sacked the town
and ripped open all the pregnant women. 8:12+ Am 1:13
17 In the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah, Menahem son of Gadi
18 became king of Israel. He reigned for ten years in Samaria. •He did what is
displeasing to Yahweh, he did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam son
of Nebat had led Israel.
19 In his times,[d] •Pul[e] king of Assyria invaded the country. Menahem gave Pul
a thousand talents of silver in return for his support in strengthening his hold
20 on the royal power. •Menahem levied this sum from Israel, from all the men
of rank, at the rate of fifty shekels a head, to be given to the king of Assyria,
who then withdrew, and did not stay in the country.
21 The rest of the history of Menahem, his entire career, is not all this recorded
22 in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? •Then Menahem slept with
his ancestors; his son Pekahiah succeeded him.

The reign of Pekahiah in Israel (738-737)

23 In the fiftieth year of Uzziah king of Judah, Pekahiah son of Menahem
24 became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for two years. •He did what is
displeasing to Yahweh; he did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam son
of Nebat had led Israel.
25 Pekah son of Remaliah, his equerry, plotted against him and struck him
down in Samaria, in the keep of the royal palace.../ He had fifty men of Gilead
with him. He killed the king, and succeeded him.
26 The rest of the history of Pekahiah, his entire career, all this is recorded in
the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

The reign of Pekah in Israel (737-732)

27 In the fifty-second year of Uzziah king of Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah

14 a. 'who led him off' versions, 2 Ch 25:23.
b. The wall on the W. height, cf. 2 S 5:9+. It was to be moved further N. by Hezekiah, 2 Ch 32:5, outside this new 'Gate of Ephraim' (Ne 8:16; 12:39) lie Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre. A third wall, still further N., was built by Herod Agrippa I.
c. The text names him Azariah here and several times subsequently but, apart from 2 K, the usual form is Uzziah.
d. Near Ezion-geber, 1 K 9:28+, and later confused with it. Elath had been lost under Jehoram, 2 K 8:20-21.
e. The 'Book of Jonah' is pseudonymously assigned to him.
f. 'bitter' Greek.
g. Text corrupt, lit. 'how he recovered Damascus and Hamath for Judah in Israel'.
h. 'they buried him in Samaria' Greek Luc.; omitted by Hebr.

15 a. Translation doubtful.
b. 'at Ibleam' Greek Luc.; Hebr. corrupt.
c. Text uncertain, site disputed.
d. 'In his times' Greek; 'throughout his time' (joined to the preceding phrase) Hebr.
e. According to the Assyro-Babylonian documents Pulu was the coronation name taken by Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria (745-727), when he assumed power in Babylon in 729. The tribute of v. 20 is mentioned in the Assyrian texts in connexion with the Syrian campaign of this king in 738.
f. Text uncertain, lit. 'Argob (a district of Transjordania) and the lion (or: and Arieh?)'.

became king of Israel in Samaria. He reigned for twenty years.[g] •He did what 28
is displeasing to Yahweh; he did not give up the sins into which Jeroboam
son of Nebat had led Israel.

In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and 29
captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead and Galilee,
Jg 18:31 all the land of Naphtali,[h] and deported the population to Assyria.[i] •Hoshea 30
son of Elah hatched a plot against Pekah son of Remaliah; he murdered the
king, and succeeded him.[j]

The rest of the history of Pekah, and his entire career, is not all this recorded 31
in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?

‖2 Ch 27:1-4; 7-9 **The reign of Jotham in Judah (740-736)**

In the second year of Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham son of 32
Uzziah became king of Judah. •He was twenty-five years old when he came to 33
the throne, and he reigned for sixteen years[k] in Jerusalem. His mother's name was
Jerusha, daughter of Zadok. •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, just as his 34
father Uzziah had done. •The high places, however, were not abolished, and 35
the people still offered sacrifices and incense on the high places.

It was he who built the Upper Gate of the Temple of Yahweh.

The rest of the history of Jotham, his entire career, is not all this recorded 36
in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •At that time, Yahweh began 37
sending Rezin[l] king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah. •Then 38
Jotham slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the Citadel of David, his
ancestor; his son Ahaz succeeded him.

The reign of Ahaz in Judah (736-716)

‖2 Ch 28:1-4 16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah son of Remaliah, Ahaz son of Jotham 1
became king of Judah. •Ahaz was twenty years old when he came to the 2
throne, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what is
pleasing to Yahweh his God, as his ancestor David had done. •He followed the 3
Lv 18:21+ example of the kings of Israel, even causing his son to pass through fire, copying
the shameful practices of the nations which Yahweh had dispossessed for the sons
Dt 12:2+ of Israel. •He offered sacrifices and incense on the high places, on the hills and 4
under every spreading tree.

2 Ch 28:5f; Is 7-8 It was then that Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of 5
Israel, launched their campaign against Jerusalem. They besieged it but could
‖2 Ch 28:17 not reduce it.[a] •(At that time, the king of Edom recovered Elath for Edom; 6
he drove out the men of Judah from Elath, and the Edomites occupied it and
‖2 Ch 28:16 live there to this present day.)[b] •Then Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser 7
king of Assyria to say, 'I am your servant and your son.[c] Come and rescue me
from the king of Aram and the king of Israel who are making war against me.'
‖2 Ch 28:21 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the Temple of Yahweh 8
and in the treasury of the royal palace, and sent this as a present to the king
of Assyria. •The king of Assyria granted his request and, going up against 9
Am 1:5 Damascus, captured it; he deported its population to Kir, and put Rezin to
death.[d]

When King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, 10
Is 8:2 he saw the altar that was in Damascus.[e] He then sent the measurements and a
model of the altar with the detail of its workmanship to Uriah the priest.
Uriah the priest constructed the altar; all the instructions sent by King Ahaz 11
from Damascus were carried out by Uriah the priest before King Ahaz returned
from Damascus. •When the king arrived from Damascus, he inspected the altar, 12
1 K 8:64 he approached it and ascended it. •He burned his holocaust and his oblation; 13
‖2 Ch 28:23 he poured out his libation and sprinkled the blood of his communion sacrifice.[f]
The altar that used to stand before Yahweh[g] he removed from the front of the 14
Temple, where it had stood between the new altar and the Temple of Yahweh,

15 and placed it at the north side of the new altar. •King Ahaz gave this order to
Uriah the priest: 'In future you will burn the morning holocaust, the evening Ex 29:39 Nb 28:4
oblation, the king's holocaust and his oblation, the holocaust, the oblation and
the libations of all people on the great altar; on it you will pour out all the blood
of the holocausts and sacrifices. As regards the altar of bronze, I shall see to
16 that.'[h] •Uriah the priest did everything that King Ahaz had ordered.
17 King Ahaz dismantled the wheeled stands, removed the crosspieces and the 1K 7:27-37 ||2Ch 28:24
basins from them, and took the bronze Sea off the oxen supporting it, and rested 1K 7:23-26
18 it on the stone pavement.[i] •In deference to the king of Assyria, he removed
from the Temple of Yahweh the dais for the throne, which had been set up
there, and the royal entry on the outside.[j]
19 The rest of the history of Ahaz, his entire career, is not all this recorded in ||2Ch 28: 26-27
20 the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •Then Ahaz slept with his an-
cestors, and was buried in the Citadel of David; his son Hezekiah succeeded him.

The reign of Hoshea in Israel (732-724)

1 17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became
2 king of Israel in Samaria, and reigned for nine years. •He did what is
displeasing to Yahweh, though not like the preceding kings of Israel.
3 Shalmaneser[a] king of Assyria made war on Hoshea who submitted to him Ho 1:4 Am 3:11
4 and paid him tribute. •But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was
playing a double game with him: he had sent messengers to So,[b] king of Egypt,
and had not, as in previous years, handed over the tribute to the king of Assyria.
For this the king of Assyria imprisoned him, in chains.[c] Dt 28:36

The fall of Samaria (721) =18:9-11

5 The king of Assyria invaded the whole country and, coming to Samaria, laid 18:34f
6 siege to it for three years. •In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria 19:12 Dt 4:27
captured Samaria[d] and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in
Halah on the Habor, a river of Gozan,[e] and in the cities of the Medes.[f]

g. Five years at most according to known dates.

h. The towns mentioned ('all Naphtali') were subdued as Tiglath-pileser advanced in his campaign against Philistia in 734. Gilead and Galilee were conquered in the campaign of 733-732 aimed principally against Damascus, but are included summarily in this list.

i. First Israelite deportation.

j. The Hebr. adds 'in the twentieth year of Jotham, son of Uzziah'.

k. If the figure is exact it includes the years of Jotham's regency, v. 5.

l. Rezin was the last king of Damascus before the town fell into Assyrian hands, 16:9. The war now being prepared breaks out in the reign of Ahaz, 16:5-9.

16 a. 'they besieged it' Syr., cf. Is 7:1; 'they besieged Ahaz' Hebr. The purpose of this war, occasioning the prophecies of Is:7-8, was to bring Judah into the anti-Assyrian coalition.

b. The translation conjecturally reads 'Edom' for Hebr. 'Aram' and drops Hebr. 'Rezin' before 'the king of Edom'. The Edomites avail themselves of this opportunity to retake Elath, see 14:22.

c. Ahaz acknowledges himself vassal of Tiglath-pileser (in 734) but this bargaining for protection paves the way for the downfall of his kingdom, cf. Is 8:5f.

d. Tiglath-pileser's campaign against Damascus, 733-732.

e. The high altar of the temple of Damascus, 5:18, and not an altar raised by the army of occupation. 'the measurements' Greek; 'the pattern' Hebr.

f. The king himself consecrates the altar by exercising priestly functions; he reserved to himself the right to act as priest in certain circumstances. The king is also the administrator of the Temple, and lays down the ceremonial (see 12:5-17, under Joash); Uriah only appears as a royal official.

g. The bronze altar (as the Hebr. gloss correctly notes) installed by Solomon, 1 K 8:64; 9:25, in front of the Temple entrance.

h. Translation doubtful.

i. Hebr. text disturbed. It is not known whether the changes introduced by Ahaz have a ceremonial purpose or whether they are made to provide him with the bronze he needs (to pay his tribute to the Assyrian king?).

j. Interpretation disputed. Probably 'the dais' and 'the royal entry' are symbols of sovereignty which Tiglath-pileser makes his vassal remove.

17 a. Shalmaneser V (727-722) successor of Tiglath-pileser III.

b. This 'So, king of Egypt' probably the Egyptian general called Sibe in Assyrian texts, possibly a prince of the Delta.

c. The imprisonment of Hoshea, who had marched against Shalmaneser or had fled from Samaria, took place at the beginning of the siege of Samaria and marked the end of his reign (9th year).

d. Shalmaneser had laid siege to the city in 724, but it held out until the beginning of the reign of his son Sargon, probably early in 721. The 'ninth year of Hoshea' refers to the beginning of the siege.

e. Not far from Haran to the extreme N. of Mesopotamia.

f. E. of Mesopotamia. Israelite settlements here took the place of the natives whom Tiglath-pileser had deported. This is the background of Tb.

18:12 **Observations on the fall of the Northern Kingdom**[g]

This happened because the Israelites had sinned against Yahweh their God 7
who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the grip of Pharaoh
king of Egypt. They worshipped other gods, •they followed the practices of the 8
nations that Yahweh had dispossessed for them.[h] •The Israelites, and the kings 9
they had made for themselves, plotted[i] wicked schemes against their God. They
built high places for themselves wherever they lived, from watchtower to fortified
Ex23:24+; 34:13+ Dt12:2+ town. •They set up pillars and sacred poles for themselves on every high hill 10
and under every spreading tree. •They sacrificed[j] there after the manner of the 11
nations that Yahweh had expelled before them, and did wicked things there,
provoking the anger of Yahweh. •They served idols, although Yahweh had told 12
them, 'This you must not do'.

And yet through all the prophets and all the seers, Yahweh had given Israel 13
and Judah this warning, 'Turn from your wicked ways and keep my command-
ments and my laws in accordance with the entire Law I laid down for your
fathers and delivered to them through my servants the prophets'. •But they 14
Dt9:13+ would not listen, they were more stubborn than[k] their ancestors had been who
had no faith in Yahweh their God. •They despised his laws and the covenant 15
he had made with their ancestors, and the warnings he had given them. They
Jr 2:5 pursued emptiness, and themselves became empty through copying the nations
round them although Yahweh had ordered them not to act as they did.
They rejected all the commandments of Yahweh their God and made idols of 16
21:3 1K12:38 cast metal for themselves, two calves; they made themselves sacred poles, they
Ex34:13+ Dt 4:19;17:3 worshipped the whole array of heaven, and they served Baal. •They made their 17
Lv18:21+ Dt 18:10 sons and daughters pass through fire, they practised divination and sorcery,
they sold themselves to evil-doing in the sight of Yahweh, provoking his anger.
For this, Yahweh was enraged with Israel and thrust them away from him. 18
1K12:20 There was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

Judah did not keep the commandments of Yahweh their God either, but 19
copied the practices that Israel had introduced. •Yahweh rejected the whole 20
race of Israel; he brought them low, delivering them into the hands of marauders,
1K12:26-33 until at length he thrust them away from him. •And indeed he had torn Israel 21
away from the House of David, and they had made Jeroboam son of Nebat
Si 47:24 king; Jeroboam had drawn Israel away from Yahweh and led them into a great
sin. •The Israelites copied the sin[l] Jeroboam had committed; they did not 22
give it up, •until at length Yahweh thrust Israel away from him, as he had foretold 23
through all his servants the prophets; he deported the Israelites from their own
country to Assyria, where they still are today.

The origin of the Samaritans[m]

18:34 Am 7:17 The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath 24
and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the
Israelites; they took possession of Samaria and lived in its towns.

When they first came to live there, they did not worship Yahweh, so Yahweh 25
sent lions against them, which killed a number of them. •They said to the king 26
of Assyria, 'The nations you deported and settled in the towns of Samaria do
not know how to worship the god of the country, and he has sent lions against
them; and now these are killing them because they do not know how to worship
the god of the country'. •So the king of Assyria gave this order: 'Send back 27
one of the priests whom I deported from there; let him go[n] and live there and
teach them how to worship the god of the country'. •Accordingly, one of the 28
priests they had deported from Samaria came to live in Bethel; he taught them
how to worship Yahweh.

Each national group made idols representing its own gods and put them in 29
Jn 4:9+ the temples of the high places made by the Samaritans; each national group
did this in the towns allocated to it. •The men of Babylon had made a Succoth- 30

31 benoth, the men of Cuthah a Nergal, the men of Hamath an Ashima, •the
Avvites a Nibhaz and a Tartak; while the Sepharvites burnt their children in
the fire in honour of Adrammelech and of Anammelech, gods of Sepharvaim.
32 They worshipped Yahweh as well, and they appointed priests out of their own 1K 12:31
number for the high places who officiated for them in the temples of the high
33 places. •They worshipped Yahweh and served their own gods at the same time,
34 with the rites of the countries from which they had been deported. •They still
follow their old rites even now.

They did not worship Yahweh[o] and did not conform to his statutes or
ritual, or the law or the commandments, which Yahweh had laid down for the
35 sons of Jacob to whom he gave the name Israel. •Yahweh had made a covenant Gn 32:29 Ex 19:1+
with them and had given them this command: 'You are not to worship alien
gods, you are not to bow down to them or serve them or offer them sacrifices.
36 You are to bow down and offer sacrifice to Yahweh who brought you out of
37 the land of Egypt with great power and outstretched arm. •You are to observe
the statutes and ritual, the law and the commandments which he has given you
in writing and to which you are always to conform; you are not to worship
38 alien gods. •Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not
39 venerate alien gods. •Venerate Yahweh alone, your God, and he will deliver
40 you out of the power of all your enemies.' •But they would not listen, and still
followed their old rites.

41 These nations, then, worshipped Yahweh and served their carved images as
well, their children, too, and their children's children still behave today as their
fathers behaved in the past.

VIII. THE LAST YEARS OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

A. HEZEKIAH, THE PROPHET ISAIAH; ASSYRIA

Introduction to the reign of Hezekiah (716-687)

1 18 In the third year of Hoshea[a] son of Elah, king of Judah, Hezekiah son of ||2 Ch 29:1-2
2 Ahaz became king of Judah. •He was twenty-five years old when he came
to the throne, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's
3 name was Abijah,[b] daughter of Zechariah. •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, Is 8:2
4 just as his ancestor David had done. •It was he who abolished the high places, ||2Ch 31:1
broke the pillars, cut down the sacred poles[c] and smashed the bronze serpent 18:22; 21:3 Ex 23:24+ 34:13+ Dt 12:2+ Nb 21:4-9 Ws 16:6 +
that Moses had made; for up to that time the Israelites had offered sacrifice
5 to it; it was called Nehushtan.[d] •He put his trust in the God of Israel. No king

g. These observations do not come from one source. For the principal author of the book the grievous fault of Israel is the religious schism, 1 K 12:26-33, an 'original sin' of which every king of Israel is accused in vv. 7a and 21-23. A development rich in reminiscences of Dt and the prophets (especially Jr) has been added; it denounces religious compromise and the local shrines, vv. 7b-18. A second addition extends the condemnation to Judah, vv. 19-20.

h. The Hebr. adds a few words 'and (the practices) of the kings of Israel which they made their own' or 'and (the practices) which the kings of Israel had introduced', probably a gloss (in accordance with v. 21) intended for the beginning of v. 9 but transposed here.

i. 'plotted' text uncertain. Cf. note h.

j. The text adds 'on all the high places'.

k. 'more than' Greek; 'as' Hebr.

l. 'the sin' Greek; 'all the sins' Hebr.

m. Vv. 24-28 and 41 offer a simplified view of the resettlement of the Northern Kingdom: they presuppose a wholesale deportation of the Israelite population and fuse several successive colonisations; by the story of vv. 25-28 they explain the persistence of Yahwistic worship in these pagan surroundings. The details of vv. 29-34a were added during the Exile. The development in vv. 34b-40 reverts to the sins responsible for the ruin of Israel, and would be more appropriately placed in the first part of the chapter.

n. 'I deported from there' Targ. 'let him go' versions.

o. Faithless Israelites are meant here, as in vv. 14f, not (as in the preceding verses) pagans. 'his statutes' conj.; 'their statutes' Hebr.

18 a. Chronology uncertain.

b. 'Abijah' 2 Ch 29:1; 'Abi' Hebr.

c. By thus centralising the cult and declaring war on idolatry Hezekiah prepares the way for the reforms of Josiah, ch. 23, and well deserves the eulogy of vv. 3 and 5-6.

d. The name alludes to the material of which it was made (*nehosheth*, bronze) and to its shape (*nahash*, serpent). It was said to be the image made by Moses in the desert, Nb 21:8-9, and was the object of idolatrous worship, Ws 16:6-7.

of Judah after him could be compared with him—nor any of those before him.
He was devoted to Yahweh, never turning from him, but keeping the command- 6
Gn 39:2 ments that Yahweh had laid down for Moses. •And so Yahweh was with him, 7
and he was successful in all that he undertook. He rebelled against the king of
Assyria[e] and refused to serve him. •It was he who harassed the Philistines as far 8
as Gaza, laying their territory waste from watchtower to fortified town.

=17:1-6 **The fall of Samaria; recapitulation[f]**

In the fourth year of Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son 9
of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria made war on Samaria and
laid siege to it. •He captured it after three years. Samaria fell in the sixth year 10
of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel. •The king of 11
Assyria deported the Israelites to Assyria and settled them in Halah on the
17:7-18 Habor, a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. •This happened because 12
they had not obeyed the voice of Yahweh their God and had broken his
covenant, violating all that Moses the servant of Yahweh had laid down. They
neither listened to it nor put it into practice.

Sennacherib's invasion[g]

||2Ch32:1 Sl 48:18 ||Is 36:1 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked 13
the fortified towns of Judah and captured them. •Then Hezekiah king of Judah 14
sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish, 'I have been at fault. Call
off the attack, and I will submit myself to whatever you impose on me.' The
king of Assyria exacted three hundreds talents of silver and thirty talents of
gold from Hezekiah king of Judah, •and Hezekiah gave him all the silver in 15
the Temple of Yahweh and in the treasury of the royal palace. •It was then that 16
Hezekiah stripped the facing from the leaves and jambs of the doors of the
1K6:20-22 Temple of Yahweh, which...[h] king of Judah had plated, and gave it to the
king of Assyria.

The embassy of the cupbearer-in-chief

||2 Ch 32: 9-19 ||Is36:2-22 From Lachish the king of Assyria sent the cupbearer-in-chief with a large 17
force to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem.[i] He went up to Jerusalem, and when he
Is 7:3 arrived,[j] he took a position near the conduit of the upper pool which is on the
road to the Fuller's Field. •He summoned the king. The master of the palace, 18
1K4:2+ Is22:13-25 Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebnah the secretary and the herald Joah son of
Asaph went out to him. •The cupbearer-in-chief said to them, 'Say to Hezekiah, 19
"Thus speaks the great king, the king of Assyria: What makes you so confident?
Do you think empty words are as good as strategy and military strength? Who 20
are you relying on, to dare to rebel against me? •We know you are relying 21
Is30:1-7; 31:1-3 Ezk29:6-7 on that broken reed Egypt,[k] which pricks and pierces the hand of the man
who leans on it.—That is what Pharaoh king of Egypt is like to all who rely
on him.—•You may say to me: We rely on Yahweh our God, but are they not 22
18:4 his high places and altars that Hezekiah has suppressed, saying to the people
of Judah and Jerusalem: This in Jerusalem, is the altar, before which you must
worship? •Come, make a wager with my lord the king of Assyria: I will give 23
you two thousand horses if you can find horsemen to ride them. •How could 24
you repulse a single one[l] of the least of my master's servants? And yet you have
relied on Egypt for chariots and horsemen. •And lastly, have I come up against 25
this place to lay it waste without warrant from Yahweh? Yahweh himself said
to me: March against this country and lay it waste." '

Eliakim,[m] Shebnah and Joah said to the cupbearer-in-chief, 'Please speak 26
to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the
Judaean language within earshot of the people on the ramparts'. •But the 27
cupbearer-in-chief said, 'Do you think my lord sent me here to say these things
to your master or to you? On the contrary, it was to the people sitting on the

ramparts who, like you, are doomed to eat their own dung and drink their own urine.'[n]
28 Then the cupbearer-in-chief stood erect and, shouting loudly in the Judaean
language, called out, 'Listen to the word of the great king, the king of Assyria.
29 Thus the king speaks: "Do not let Hezekiah delude you. He will be powerless
30 to save you from my hands. •Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to rely on
Yahweh by saying: Yahweh is sure to save us; this city will not fall into the
31 power of the king of Assyria. •Do not listen to Hezekiah, for the king of
Assyria says this: Make peace with me, surrender to me, and every one of you
will eat the fruit of his own vine and of his own fig tree and drink the water
32 of his own cistern •until I come and deport you to a country like your own, a land
of corn and good wine, a land of bread and of vineyards, a land of oil and of
honey, so that you may not die but live. Do not listen to Hezekiah who is
33 deluding you when he says: Yahweh will save us. •Has any god of any nation
34 saved his country from the power of the king of Assyria? •Where are the gods
of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivvah? 17:5,6,24; 19:13
Where are the gods of the land of Samaria?[o] Did they save Samaria from me?
35 Tell me which, of all the gods of any country, have saved their countries from
my hands, for Yahweh to be able to save Jerusalem?" '
36 They kept silence and said nothing in reply, since such was the king's order:
37 'Do not answer him' he had said. •The master of the palace, Eliakim son of
Hilkiah, Shebnah the secretary and the herald Joah son of Asaph, with their
garments torn, went to Hezekiah and reported what the cupbearer-in-chief
had said.

The prophet Isaiah is consulted

||Is37:1-7

1 19 On hearing this, King Hezekiah tore his garments, covered himself with 1K21:27
2 sackcloth and went to the Temple of Yahweh. •He sent the master of the
palace, Eliakim, Shebnah the secretary and the elders of the priests, covered in
3 sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.[a] •They said to him, 'This is what
Hezekiah says, "Today is a day of suffering, of punishment, of disgrace. Children
4 come to birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth.[b] •May Yahweh
your God hear the words of the cupbearer-in-chief whom his master, the king
of Assyria, has sent to insult the living God, and may Yahweh your God punish 1S17:26; Is4:3+
the words he has heard. Offer your prayer for the remnant that is left." '[c]
5 6 When the ministers of King Hezekiah had come to Isaiah, •he replied, 'Say
to your master, "Yahweh says this: Do not be afraid of the words you have Is10:5-19
heard or the blasphemies the minions of the king of Assyria have uttered against
7 me. •I am going to put a spirit[d] in him, and when he hears a rumour he will
return to his own country, and in that country I will bring him down with the
sword." '

e. Either in 711 or, more probably, before the campaign of 701, vv. 13f.

f. This passage recapitulates the events of ch. 17.

g. Sennacherib was son and successor of Sargon; his Palestinian campaign took place in 701. The Annals of his reign record it in detail, confirming the data of vv. 13-16, but saying nothing of the ultimate repulse of Sennacherib and so containing nothing corresponding to 18:17–19:37. In the biblical text there are two parallel narratives: first, 18:17–19:9a with 19:36-37, and second, 19:9b-35; these report the events in the same order but in a slightly different way. The whole passage, 18:13–19:37, is repeated with some variants in Is 36-37.

h. By an oversight the text reads 'Hezekiah' instead of the name of some previous king.

i. The text of 2 K inserts 'the commander-in-chief and the chief eunuch'; omitted by Is 36:2.

j. The Hebr. here repeats the preceding words.

k. Attempts to form an alliance with Egypt have been condemned by Isaiah.

l. 'a single one' conj.; 'a single satrap' Hebr.

m. 'Eliakim' Is 36:11.

n. Graphic description of the straits to which a beleaguered city is reduced.

o. 'where are the gods of the land of Samaria' Greek.

19 a. Hezekiah consults Isaiah just as the earlier kings of Israel and Judah consulted the prophets, as their counsellors in war, such as Elijah and Elisha, cf. 1 K 22:8f; 2 K 1:9f; 3:11f; 6:8f, etc.

b. Probably a proverbial expression for a desperate situation.

c. The saving of a 'remnant' of the chosen people is one of the themes of the preaching of Isaiah, cf. Is 4:3+ and, here, vv. 30-31.

d. 'spirit' is not here personified: it is an imperative inspiration from God.

‖Is37:8-9 **The cupbearer returns to his master**

The cupbearer went back and rejoined the king of Assyria at Libnah, 8
which he was attacking. The cupbearer had already learnt that the king of Assyria
had left Lachish, •since he had received this news about Tirhakah[e] king of Cush, 9
'He has set out to fight you'.

‖2Ch32:17
‖Is37:9-20 **Sennacherib's letter to Hezekiah**

Sennacherib sent messengers to Hezekiah again, saying, •'Tell this to Hezekiah 10
king of Judah, "Do not let your God on whom you are relying deceive you,
when he says: Jerusalem shall not fall into the power of the king of Assyria.
You have learnt by now what the kings of Assyria have done to every country, 11
putting them all under the ban. Are you likely to be spared? •What power to 12
17:6 help did the gods have of those nations my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran,
18:34 Rezeph and the Edenites who were in Tel Basar?[f] •Where are the king of Hamath, 13
the king of Arpad,[g] the kings of Sepharvaim, of Hena, of Ivvah?" '
Hezekiah took the letter from the hands of the messenger and read it; he then 14
‖2Ch32:20 went up to the Temple of Yahweh and spread it out before Yahweh. •Hezekiah 15
said this prayer in the presence of Yahweh, 'Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel,
Ex25:18+
Est4:17c enthroned on the cherubs, you alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth,
you have made heaven and earth.

'Give ear, Yahweh, and listen. 16
1S17:26
Dn9:18 Open your eyes, Yahweh, and see.
Hear the words of Sennacherib
who has sent to insult the living God.

Jr10:1+ 'It is true, Yahweh, that the kings of Assyria have exterminated all the nations,[h] 17
Ws13:10 they have thrown their gods on the fire, for these were not gods but the work 18
Is40:20+ of men's hands, wood and stone, and hence they have destroyed them. •But 19
1K18:24+ now, Yahweh our God, save us from his hand, I pray you, and let all the kingdoms of the earth know that you alone are God, Yahweh.'

‖Is37:21-35 **Isaiah intervenes**

Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah. 'Yahweh, the God of Israel' he 20
said 'says this, "I have heard the prayer you have addressed to me about
Sennacherib king of Assyria". •Here is the oracle that Yahweh has pronounced 21
against him:[i]

"She despises you, she scorns you,
the virgin, daughter of Zion;
she tosses her head behind you,
the daughter of Jerusalem.
Whom have you insulted, whom did you blaspheme? 22
Against whom raised your voice
and lifted your haughty eyes?
Against the Holy One of Israel!
Through your envoys you have insulted the Lord, 23
you have said: With my many chariots
I have climbed the tops of mountains,
the utmost peaks of Lebanon.
I have felled[j] its tall forest of cedars,
its finest cypresses.
I have reached its furthest recesses,
its forest garden.
Yes, I have dug wells 24
and drunk of alien waters;

I have put down my feet,
and I have dried up all the rivers of Egypt.[k]

25 "Do you hear? Long ago
I planned for it,
from days of old I designed it,
now I carry it out.
Your part was to bring down in heaps of ruins
fortified cities.
26 Their inhabitants, hands feeble,
dismayed, discomfited,
were like plants of the field,
like tender grass,
like grass of housetop and meadow
under the east wind.[l]
27 But I am there whether you rise[m] or sit; Ps139:2-3
whether you go out, or you come in, I know it.
28 Because you have raved against me
and your insolence has come to my ears,
I will put my ring through your nostrils,
my bit between your lips,
to make you return by the road
on which you came.

A sign for Hezekiah ||Is 37:30

29 "This shall be the sign[n] for you: 1S14:10+
this year will be eaten the self-sown grain,
next year what sprouts in the fallow,
but in the third year sow and reap,
plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
30 The surviving remnant of the House of Judah shall bring forth Rv 14:1
new roots below and fruits above;
31 for a remnant shall go out from Jerusalem,
and survivors from Mount Zion.
The jealous love of Yahweh Sabaoth shall accomplish this."

32 'This, then, is what Yahweh says about the king of Assyria: ||Is 37:33

"He will not enter this city,
he will let fly no arrow against it,
confront it with no shield,
throw up no earthwork against it.
33 By the road that he came on he will return;
he shall not enter this city. It is Yahweh who speaks.
34 I will protect this city and save it 1S17:47
for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David." ' 2S7:12-17+ Ho1:7+

19 e. Pharaoh of the 25th Dynasty; he reigned from 690 to 664, approximately, but could have commanded the Egyptian army as early as 701. His dynasty was Ethiopian, hence 'king of Cush' (Ethiopia).

f. 'Tel Basar' conj.

g. A gloss adds 'one king to each town'.

h. Greek; the Hebr. adds 'and their countries'.

i. The poem is typical of Isaiah; though it has been at least edited by one of the prophet's disciples.

j. Vv. 23-25: verbs in past tense, with Greek; future in Hebr.

k. The first Assyrian king to invade Egypt was actually Esarhaddon, Sennacherib's successor.

l. 'and meadow' Is 37:27; 'under the east wind' conj.

m. 'I am there whether you rise' conj. At the end of the verse the text adds 'and your raving against me', doublet from v. 28.

n. Isaiah addresses Hezekiah. The 'sign' is hard to interpret: for two years it is impossible to sow, and at first they eat whatever springs from the grain dropped during the previous harvest, and after that whatever the neglected land has to offer; but Sennacherib did not stay even one year in Palestine, and deliverance came immediately, v. 35. Alternative explanations: either the oracle was pronounced on some different occasion, or else its import is a very general one, namely that after lean days prosperity follows.

Sennacherib is punished

2 S 24:16 ‖2 Ch 32: 21-22 2 M 8:19 Ps 46:5 Si 48:21 ‖Is 37:36-38 Na 1:12

That same night the angel of Yahweh went out and struck down a hundred 35
and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. In the early morning when
it was time to get up, there they lay, so many corpses.[o]
Sennacherib struck camp and left; he returned home and stayed in Nineveh. 36
One day when he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons 37
Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and escaped into
the land of Ararat.[p] His son Esarhaddon succeeded him.

‖2 Ch 32:24 ‖Is 38:1-8 Ps 21:4

The illness and cure of Hezekiah

20 [a] In those days[b] Hezekiah fell ill and was at the point of death. The prophet 1
Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, 'Yahweh says this, "Put
your affairs in order, for you are going to die, you will not live" '. •Hezekiah 2
turned his face to the wall and addressed this prayer to Yahweh, •'Ah, Yahweh, 3
remember I beg you, how I have behaved faithfully and with sincerity of heart
in your presence and done what is right in your eyes'. And Hezekiah shed many
tears.

Si 48:23 Isaiah had not left the middle court,[c] before the word of Yahweh came to 4
him, •'Go back and say to Hezekiah, prince of my people, "Yahweh, the God of 5
Ps 56:8 David your ancestor, says this : I have heard your prayer and seen your tears.
I will cure you: in three days' time you shall go up to the Temple of Yahweh.
I will add fifteen years to your life. I will save you and this city from the hands 6
of the king of Assyria, I will protect this city for my own sake and the sake
of my servant David." '

'Bring a fig poultice' Isaiah said; they brought one, applied it to the ulcer, 7
and the king recovered.

1 S 14:10+ Hezekiah said to Isaiah, 'What is the sign to tell me that Yahweh will cure 8
me and that I shall be going up to the Temple of Yahweh in three days?' •'Here' 9
Isaiah replied 'is the sign from Yahweh that he will do what he has said; would
Jos 10:13 you like the shadow to go forward[d] ten steps, or to go back ten steps?' •'It is easy 10
for the shadow to lengthen ten steps,' Hezekiah answered 'no, I would rather
the shadow went back ten steps.' •The prophet Isaiah then called on Yahweh 11
who made the shadow go back ten steps on the steps of Ahaz.[e]

‖Is 39

The Babylonian embassy

‖2 Ch 32:23 2 Ch 32: 25-29 Ezk 23:16+

At that time the king of Babylon, Merodach-baladan son of Baladan,[f] sent 12
letters and a gift to Hezekiah, for he had heard of his illness and his recovery.[g]
Hezekiah was delighted at this[h] and showed the messengers his treasure-house, 13
the silver, gold, spices, precious oil, his armoury too, and everything there was
in his storehouses. There was nothing Hezekiah did not show them in his palace
or in his whole domain.

Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked him, 'What have 14
these men said, and where have they come from?' Hezekiah answered, 'They
have come from a faraway country, from Babylon'. •Isaiah said, 'What have 15
they seen in your palace?' 'They have seen everything in my palace' Hezekiah
answered. 'There is nothing in my storehouses that I have not shown them.'

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Listen to the word of Yahweh, •"The days 16 17
24:13 are coming when everything in your palace, everything that your ancestors have
amassed until now, will be carried off to Babylon. Not a thing will be left" says
Yahweh. •"Sons sprung from you, sons begotten by you, will be chosen to be 18
eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." ' •Hezekiah said to Isaiah, 'This 19
word of Yahweh that you announce is reassuring', for he was thinking, 'And
why not? So long as there is peace and security during my own lifetime.'[i]

The end of the reign of Hezekiah

‖2 Ch 32:30 Si 48:17

The rest of the history of Hezekiah, all his prowess, how he constructed 20

the pool and the conduit to bring water into the city,[j] is not all this recorded in
21 the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah •Then Hezekiah slept with his fathers; his son Manasseh succeeded him.

B. TWO WICKED KINGS

The reign of Manasseh in Judah (687-642)

||2Ch 33:1-10

1 21 Manasseh was twelve years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned Ezk 16:28
2 for fifty-five years[a] in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, copying the shameful practices of the nations
3 whom Yahweh had dispossessed for the sons of Israel. •He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed, he set up altars to Baal and made 18:4; 23:4; 1K 16:32-33
a sacred pole as Ahab king of Israel had done, he worshipped the whole array
4 of heaven and served it. •He built altars[b] in the Temple of Yahweh of which 17:16; Zp 1:5
Yahweh had said, 'Jerusalem is where I will give my name a home'.
5 He built altars to the whole array of heaven in the two courts of the 23:12
6 Temple of Yahweh. •He caused his son to pass through the fire. He practised Lv 18:21+
soothsaying and magic and introduced necromancers and wizards. He did very 23:24
7 many more things displeasing to Yahweh, thus provoking his anger. •He placed
the carved image of Asherah[c] which he had made in the Temple, of which 23:24
Yahweh had said to David and his son Solomon, 'In this Temple and in 1 K 8:16
Jerusalem, the city I chose out of all the tribes of Israel, I will give my name
8 a home for ever. •I will no longer make Israel's footsteps wander from the
land I gave their fathers, provided they observe all I have ordered them in accord-
9 ance with the whole Law that my servant Moses prescribed for them.'[d] •But
they did not listen, Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than
those nations Yahweh had destroyed before the sons of Israel.
10 Then Yahweh spoke through his servants the prophets, •'Since Manasseh
11 king of Judah has done these shameful deeds, acting more wickedly than all the 1K 21:26
Amorites did before him, and has led Judah itself into sin with his idols,
12 Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this, "Look, I will bring such disaster as to
13 make the ears of all who hear of it tingle. •I will stretch over Jerusalem the same Is 34:11; Lm 2:8; Am 7:7-9
measuring line as over Samaria, the same plumb-rule as for the House of Ahab;
I will scour Jerusalem as a man scours a dish and, having scoured it, turns it
14 upside down.[e] •I will cast away the remnant[f] of my inheritance, delivering them
into the power of their enemies, and making them serve as prey and booty to
15 all their enemies, •because they have done what is displeasing to me and have
provoked my anger from the day their ancestors came out of Egypt until now." '

o. The Assyrian army is decimated by a scourge of God, possibly a plague, cf. 2 S 24:15f.

p. 'Nisroch', probably a distortion of some other divine name, Marduch or Ninurta. 'his sons' versions, Is 37:38. Sennacherib was in fact assassinated in 681.

20 a. This ch. 20 is found again in Is 38-39 with an abbreviated text, a somewhat different ordering of verses, and the addition of the song of Hezekiah.

b. Vague time indication. The illness of Hezekiah and the embassy of Merodach-baladan both certainly occurred before the campaign of Sennacherib described in ch. 18-19.

c. 'the court' versions; 'the city' Hebr.

d. 'Would you like the shadow to go forward' conj.; 'The shadow has gone forward' Hebr.

e. 'on the steps of Ahaz' conj.; 'on the steps by which it (the sun?) went down in the steps of Ahaz' Hebr., cf. Is 38:8. These 'steps' (degrees) refer either to a sundial or to a staircase built by Ahaz.

f. In Assyrian: Marduch-apal-iddina champion (against Assyria) of Babylonian independence.

g. 'and his recovery' Is 39:1; 'Hezekiah' Hebr.

h. 'was delighted at this' versions, Is 39:2; 'heard' Hebr.

i. Isaiah foretells the sack of Jerusalem and the deportation of the nobility, cf. 24:13f. Hezekiah selfishly infers that he will at least be left in peace.

j. The Gihon spring was outside the city. Hezekiah had a tunnel dug through the rock to bring the water to the pool called Siloam, Jn 9:7, the reservoir of Is 22:11 and Si 48:17, inside the city walls. This aqueduct replaced an older one which, for some of its length, lay open to the sky, on the E. slopes of Mt. Zion and brought the water to a different pool, situated below the level of the Pool of Siloam, Is 7:3; 2 K 18:17–Is 36:2; Is 22:9.

21 a. We should probably subtract 10 years from this figure.

b. To these pagan gods.

c. Here an image of the Canaanite goddess Asherah, not one of the sacred pillars bearing her name, Ex 34:13+.

d. Reference to Dt to which the whole passage alludes; cf. Dt 17:3; 18:9-14; 12:5 and 29f.

e. 'having... it' conj.

f. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom the inhabitants of Judah are the 'remnant' of the chosen people, cf. Is 4:3+, the inheritance of Yahweh.

24:4 Manasseh shed innocent blood, too, in such great quantity that he flooded 16
Jerusalem from end to end,[g] apart from the sins into which he led Judah by
doing what is displeasing to Yahweh.
||2 Ch 33: 18-20 The rest of the history of Manasseh, his entire career, the sins he committed, 17
is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •Then 18
Manasseh slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the garden of his palace,
the garden of Uzza; his son Amon succeeded him.

||2 Ch 33: 21-25 **The reign of Amon in Judah (642-640)**

Amon was twenty-two years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned 19
for two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth, daughter
of Haruz, of Jotbah. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, as Manasseh his 20
father had done. •In every respect he followed the example of his father, serving 21
the idols his father had served, and worshipping them. •He abandoned Yahweh, 22
the God of his ancestors; he did not follow the way of Yahweh.
Amon's officers plotted against the king and killed him in his palace. •But 23 24
the country people[h] struck down all those who had plotted against king Amon,
23:30 and proclaimed his son Josiah as his successor.
The rest of the history of Amon, his entire career, is not all this recorded in 25
the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •He was buried in his father's 26
tomb[i] in the garden of Uzza; his son Josiah succeeded him.

C. JOSIAH AND THE RELIGIOUS REFORM

||2 Ch 34:1-2 Si 49:2 **Introduction to the reign of Josiah (640-609)**

22 Josiah was eight years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for 1
thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah, daughter
of Adaiah, of Bozkath. •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, and in every respect 2
followed the example of his ancestor David, not deviating from it to right or left.

||2 Ch 34: 8-18 **The Book of the Law discovered**

In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent the secretary Shaphan 3
12:11-16 son of Azaliah son of Meshullam to the Temple of Yahweh. •'Go to Hilkiah 4
the high priest,' he told him 'and tell him to melt down[a] the silver that has
been brought to the Temple of Yahweh and that those who guard the threshold
have collected from the people. •Let him hand it over to the masters of works 5
attached to the Temple of Yahweh, for them to spend on the workmen working
on the repairs to the Temple of Yahweh, •on the carpenters, builders and masons, 6
and on buying wood and dressed stone for the Temple repairs. •But they are 7
not to be asked to render account of the money handed over to them, since
they are honest in their dealings.'
||2Ch34:14 The high priest Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, 'I have found the 8
Book of the Law in the Temple of Yahweh'.[b] And Hilkiah gave the book to
Shaphan, who read it. •Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported 9
to him as follows, 'Your servants' he said 'have melted down the silver which
was in the Temple and have handed it over to the masters of works attached to
the Temple of Yahweh'. •Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, 'Hilkiah 10
the priest has given me a book'; and Shaphan read it aloud in the king's presence.

||2 Ch 34: 19-28 **Huldah the prophetess is consulted**

On hearing the contents of the Book of the Law, the king tore his garments,
and gave the following order to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, 11
Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's minister: 12
'Go and consult Yahweh, on behalf of me and the people, about the contents of
this book that has been found. Great indeed must be the anger of Yahweh 13

blazing out against us because our ancestors did not obey what this book says by practising everything written in it.'[c]

14 Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to Huldah[d] the prophetess, wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, the keeper of the wardrobe; she lived in Jerusalem in the new town. They put the matter to
15 her, •and she replied, 'Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this, "To the man
16 who sent you to me say this: •Yahweh says this: I am bringing disaster on this place and those who live in it, carrying out everything said in the book
17 the king of Judah has read, •because they have deserted me and sacrificed to 24:20
other gods, to provoke my anger by everything they did. My anger blazes out
18 against this place; it will not be extinguished. •And you are to say to the king of Judah who sent you to consult Yahweh: Yahweh, the God of Israel, says
19 this: The words you have heard...[e] •But since your heart has been touched and you have humbled yourself before Yahweh on hearing what I have decreed against this place and those who live in it, how they will become an object of horror and cursing; and since you have torn your garments and wept before me,
20 I for my part have heard—it is Yahweh who speaks. •For this reason I will gather you to your ancestors, you shall be gathered into your grave in peace; your eyes will not see all the disasters that I mean to bring on this place." ' They took this answer to the king.

The covenant renewed

||2 Ch 34: 29-31
Si 49:2
Dt 31:9f

1 23 The king then had all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem summoned to
2 him, •and the king went up to the Temple of Yahweh with all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, priests, prophets and all the people, of high or low degree. In their hearing he read out everything that was said
3 in the book of the covenant[a] found in the Temple of Yahweh. •The king stood beside the pillar, and in the presence of Yahweh he made a covenant to follow Yahweh and keep his commandments and decrees and laws with all his heart and soul, in order to enforce the terms of the covenant as written in that book. All the people gave their allegiance to the covenant.

Religious reform in Judah

||2 Ch 34:3-5

4 The king ordered Hilkiah[b] with the priest next in rank and the guardians 25:18
of the threshold[c] to remove all the cult objects that had been made for Baal, 2Ch34:33
Zp 1:4
Asherah and the whole array of heaven; he burnt them outside Jerusalem in 21:3,7
5 the fields of the Kidron and had the ashes taken to Bethel. •He did away with the spurious priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed and who offered sacrifice[d] on the high places, in the towns of Judah and the neighbourhood of Jerusalem; also those who offered sacrifice to Baal, to the sun, the moon, the Dt 17:3
6 constellations and the whole array of heaven.[e] •From the Temple of Yahweh he removed the sacred pole right out of Jerusalem to the wadi Kidron, and in Dt 16:21+ 1K 14:23
the wadi Kidron he burnt it; he reduced it to ashes and threw its ashes on the
7 common burying-ground. •He pulled down the house of the sacred male Dt23:18-19+ 1K 14:24
prostitutes which was in the Temple of Yahweh and where the women wove clothes for Asherah.

g. According to Jewish tradition Isaiah was one of the victims of this persecution.

h. The loyalty of the common people to the dynasty of David is also recorded in 11:20 and 14:21.

i. 'his father's tomb' Greek.

22 a. 'melt down' Greek, Vulg.

b. This 'Book of the Law' is certainly Dt or, to be precise, its legislative portion, the main statutes of which form the guiding principles of the subsequent reform. It was the sacred law of the Temple of Jerusalem, hidden or lost or at least completely forgotten during the reign of the impious Manasseh.

c. A gloss ('and the whole of Judah') follows 'the people'. 'written in it' Greek Luc.; 'written against us' Hebr.

d. A prophetess not mentioned elsewhere.

e. Sentence unfinished; perhaps ssupply 'will be fulfilled'.

23 a. The 'Book of the Law' of 22:8. Dt itself claims to be the code of the covenant with Yahweh, Dt 5:3; 28:69.

b. The Hebr. adds 'the high priest'.

c. 'the priest' Targ.; 'the priests' Hebr. The next in rank to the high priest. The 'guardians of the threshold', cf. 2 K 12:10, were also priests of high rank. Cf. also 25:18.

d. 'and who offered sacrifice' Greek, Targ.; 'and he offered sacrifice' Hebr.

e. Vv. 4b-5 must be an addition.

Dt 12 He brought all the priests in from the towns of Judah, and from Geba to 8
Beersheba he desecrated the high places where these priests had offered sacrifice.[f]
He pulled down the shrine of the goats[g] which stood at the gate of Joshua,
the governor of the city, to the left as you enter the city gate. •The priests of 9
the high places, however, could not go up to the altar of Yahweh in Jerusalem,
but they ate unleavened bread in the company of their brother priests.[h] •He 10
Lv18:21+ desecrated the furnace in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, so that no one could make
his son or daughter pass through fire in honour of Molech. •He did away with 11
the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun[i] at the entrance
to the Temple of Yahweh, near the apartment of Nathan-melech the eunuch,
in the precincts, and he burned the chariot of the sun. •The altars on the roof[j] 12
21:5 Zp 1:4 that the kings of Judah had built, with those that Manasseh had built in the two
courts of the Temple of Yahweh, the king pulled down, and broke them to
pieces on the spot, then carried them away and threw their rubble into the wadi
Kidron. •The king desecrated the high places facing Jerusalem, to the south 13
1 K 11:7 of the Mount of Olives,[k] which Solomon king of Israel had built for Astarte
the Sidonian abomination, for Chemosh the Moabite abomination, and for
Dt16:21-22+ 1K14:23 Zp 1:5 Milcom the Ammonite abomination. •He also smashed the sacred pillars, cut 14
down the sacred poles, and covered the places where they had stood with human
bones.[l]

The reform is extended to the former Northern Kingdom[m]

Ho 10:8 Similarly, as regards the altar that was at Bethel, the high place built by 15
1K12:31-32 Jeroboam son of Nebat who had led Israel into sin, this altar and this high
place he also demolished, breaking up its stones[n] and reducing them to powder.
The sacred pole he burned.
As he looked around, Josiah saw the tombs there on the hillside; he had the 16
bones fetched from the tombs and burned them on the altar. Thus he desecrated it,
1K12:33-13:32 in accordance with the word of Yahweh which the man of God had proclaimed
when Jeroboam was standing by the altar at the time of the feast. As he looked
around, Josiah caught sight of the tomb of the man of God[o] who had foretold
these things. •'What is that monument I see?' he asked. The townspeople replied, 17
'It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and foretold what
you have done to the altar'.[p] •'Let him rest,' the king said 'and let no one disturb 18
1K13:31 his bones.' So they left his bones untouched, with the bones of the prophet
who was from Samaria.
||2 Ch 34:6-7 Josiah also did away with all the temples of the high places that the kings 19
of Israel had built in the towns of Samaria, provoking the anger of Yahweh;
he treated these places exactly as he had treated the one at Bethel. •All the 20
priests of the high places who were there he slaughtered on the altars, and on
those altars burned human bones. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

2Ch35:1, 18-19 The Passover celebrated

The king gave this order to the whole people: 'Celebrate a Passover in honour 21
Dt16:1-8 of Yahweh your God, as prescribed in this book of the covenant'. •No Passover 22
like this one had ever been celebrated since the days when the judges ruled
Israel or throughout the entire period of the kings of Israel and the kings of
||2 Ch 35:19 Judah. •The eighteenth year of King Josiah was the only time when such a 23
Passover was celebrated in honour of Yahweh at Jerusalem.

Last words on the religious reform

21:6 Dt 18:11 What is more, the necromancers and wizards, the household gods and idols, 24
Gn31:19+ Jg 18:14 and all the abominations to be seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, all
these were swept away by Josiah to give effect to the words of the Law written
in the book found by Hilkiah the priest in the Temple of Yahweh. •No king 25
Dt 6:5 before him had turned to Yahweh as he did, with all his heart, all his soul,

all his strength, in perfect loyalty to the Law of Moses; nor was any king like him seen again.

26 Yet Yahweh did not renounce the heat of his great anger which blazed out against Judah because of all the provocation Manasseh had offered him. 24:20
27 Yahweh decreed, 'I will thrust Judah away from me too, as I have already thrust Israel; I will cast away Jerusalem, this city I had chosen, and the Temple of which I had said: There my name shall be.'

The end of the reign of Josiah

28 The rest of the history of Josiah, his entire career, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? ||2 Ch 35: 26-27
29 During his reign Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt was on his way to the king of Assyria[q] at the river Euphrates when King Josiah intercepted him; but Neco 30 killed him at Megiddo in the first encounter. •His servants carried his body from Megiddo by chariot; they brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. The country people took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and anointed him, proclaiming him king in succession to his father. ||2 Ch 35: 20-24 Jr 22:10-11 2K 11:20; 21:24 ||2Ch 36:1

D. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

The reign of Jehoahaz in Judah (609)

||2 Ch 36:2-4

31 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned for three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal, daughter 32 of Jeremiah,[r] from Libnah. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, just as his ancestors had done.
33 Pharaoh Neco put him in chains at Riblah,[s] in the territory of Hamath,[t] and imposed a levy of a hundred talents of silver and ten talents of gold on the 34 country. •Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim son of Josiah king in succession to Josiah his father, and changed his name to Jehoiakim.[u] Jehoahaz he took and carried away[v] into Egypt, where he died. Ezk 19:4 Jr 22:10
35 Jehoiakim paid over the silver and gold to Pharaoh, but first had to tax the country before he could raise the sum that Pharaoh demanded: he levied the silver and gold to be paid over to Pharaoh Neco from each according to his means.

23 f. Josiah imposed the law of the unique sanctuary by force; all the worship of Judah was to be centralised in Jerusalem, Dt 12. The 'high places' (1 K 3:2) are Yahwistic shrines, condemned only because they contravene this law.

g. Text corrected. The reference is to demons represented as he-goats, after the fashion of satyrs, see Lv 17:7; 2 Ch 11:15.

h. The law provided, Dt 18:6-8, that provincial priests who came to Jerusalem should enjoy the same privileges as their 'brothers', the priests of the city. But when the 'priests of the high places' all settled in Jerusalem it is probable that the city priests saw to it that their status was reduced.

i. Not mentioned elsewhere and difficult to explain. 'at the entrance to the Temple' versions. 'the precincts' translation uncertain. 'the chariot' Greek.

j. Small altars dedicated to astral deities, Jr 19:13; Zp 1:5.

k. 'of Olives', lit. 'of oil' Greek, Targ.; 'of Perdition' Hebr.

l. To desecrate the sites once and for all, see vv. 16 and 20. Josiah takes steps, first to destroy the scattered shrines where a more or less contaminated worship of Yahweh was performed, and secondly to wipe out practices that were completely pagan, with gods and ritual borrowed from the Canaanites or, in the case of astral cults, imported from Assyria. All this gives a sad picture of the religious situation in Judah; the impression is confirmed by Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Ezekiel.

m. Josiah took advantage of the decline of Assyria to restore the independence of Judah and even to extend his control to a portion of the former territory of Israel.

n. 'breaking up its stones' Greek; 'burning the high place' Hebr.

o. 'when Jeroboam... man of God' Greek.

p. The text adds 'Bethel', a gloss.

q. And not 'against the king of Assyria'. Necas (609-595), called Neco in the Bible, marched in 609 to the assistance of the last king of Assyria, driven from Babylonia and then from Haran by the Medes and Babylonians. Josiah wanted to prevent the joining of the Assyrians with the Egyptians since he calculated that the kingdom of Judah would profit from the final ruin of Assyria.

r. Not the prophet Jeremiah.

s. Necas was returning from his N. expedition, v. 29; the collapse of Assyria had left him master of Syria and Palestine.

t. The text adds 'when he was king in Jerusalem', or (versions): 'that he might no longer reign in Jerusalem'. 'ten talents' versions; 'one talent' Hebr.

u. The name is almost the same ('Yahweh rises up' for 'God rises up') but the enforced change emphasises the vassalage of the king of Judah.

v. 'and carried away' Greek.

‖2 Ch 36:5-7 **The reign of Jehoiakim in Judah (609-598)**

Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne, and he 36
reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah, daughter
of Pedaiah, from Rumah. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, just as his 37
ancestors had done.

Dn 1:1 24 During his time Nebuchadnezzar[a] king of Babylon invaded, and Jehoiakim 1
became his vassal for three years, but then rebelled against him a second
Jr 18:22-23 time. •So he[b] sent armed bands of Chaldaeans, Aramaeans, Moabites and 2
Ammonites against him; he sent these against Judah to destroy it, in accordance
with the word that Yahweh had spoken through his servants the prophets.
That this happened in Judah was due entirely to the anger[c] of Yahweh: he had 3
resolved to thrust them away from him because of the sins of Manasseh and
21:16 all that he had done, •and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed, 4
flooding Jerusalem from end to end with innocent blood. Yahweh would not
forgive.

‖2 Ch 36:8 The rest of the history of Jehoiakim, his entire career, is not all this recorded 5
in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? •Then Jehoiakim slept with 6
his ancestors; his son Jehoiachin succeeded him.

The king of Egypt did not leave his own country again, because the king of 7
Babylon had conquered everywhere belonging to the king of Egypt, from the
wadi of Egypt to the river Euphrates.[d]

‖2 Ch 36:9 **Introduction to the reign of Jehoiachin (598)**

Est 1:1c
Jr 27:20
Ba 1:3
Ezk 19:9 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned 8
for three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehushta, daughter of
Elnathan, from Jerusalem. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, just as his 9
father had done.

‖2 Ch 36:10 **The first deportation**

Ezk 17:12 At that time the troops of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched on 10
Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. •Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon himself 11
Jr 24:1; 29:2 came to attack the city while his troops were besieging it. •Then Jehoiachin king 12
of Judah surrendered to the king of Babylon, he, his mother, his officers, his
nobles and his eunuchs, and the king of Babylon took them prisoner. This was
in the eighth year of King Nebuchadnezzar.[e]

Lm 1:10 The latter carried off all the treasures of the Temple of Yahweh and the 13
treasures of the royal palace, and broke up all the golden furnishings that Solomon
20:17 king of Israel had made for the sanctuary of Yahweh, as Yahweh had foretold.
Ba 1:9 He carried off all Jerusalem into exile, all the nobles and all the notables, ten 14
thousand of these were exiled, with all the blacksmiths and metalworkers; only the
Est 1:1c poorest people in the country were left behind. •He deported Jehoiachin to 15
Babylon,[f] as also the king's mother, his eunuchs and the nobility of the country;
he made them all leave Jerusalem for exile in Babylon. •All the men of distinction, 16
seven thousand of them, the blacksmiths and metalworkers, one thousand of
them, all of them men capable of bearing arms, were led into exile in Babylon
by the king of Babylon.[g]

Jr 37:2 The king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in succession 17
to him, and changed his name to Zedekiah.[h]

‖2 Ch 36:11-12
‖Jr 52:1-3 **Introduction to the reign of Zedekiah in Judah (598-587)[i]**

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he came to the throne, and he reigned 18
for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamital, daughter of
Jeremiah, from Libnah. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, just as Jehoiakim 19
22:17;
23:26-27;
‖2 Ch 36:13
Jdt 5:18 had done. •That this happened in Jerusalem and Judah was due to the anger of 20
Yahweh, with the result that in the end he cast them away from him.

The siege of Jerusalem Jr52:3-11

1 Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. **25** In the ninth year of his
reign,[a] in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar ‖Jr39:1-7
king of Babylon came with his whole army to attack Jerusalem; he pitched camp
2 in front of the city and threw up earthworks round it. •The city lay under siege
3 till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. •In the fourth month, on the ninth day
of the month,[b] when famine was raging in the city and there was no food for the
4 populace, •a breach was made in the city wall. At once, the king made his
escape[c] under cover of dark, with all the fighting men, by way of the gate between
the two walls, which is near the king's garden—the Chaldaeans had surrounded
5 the city—and made his way towards the Arabah.[d] •The Chaldaean troops pursued
the king and caught up with him in the plains of Jericho, where all his troops Dt 28:36
6 deserted. •The Chaldaeans captured the king and took him to the king of Babylon Lm 4:20
7 at Riblah, who passed sentence on him.[e] •He had the sons of Zedekiah slaughtered
before his eyes, then put out Zedekiah's eyes and, loading him with chains,
carried him off to Babylon. Lm 2:9

The sack of Jerusalem. The second deportation Jr39:8-10; 52:12-27

8 In the fifth month,[f] on the seventh day of the month—it was in the nineteenth
year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, commander of the
9 guard, an officer of the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. •He burned down the
10 Temple of Yahweh, the royal palace and all the houses in Jerusalem. •The ‖2Ch36:19
Chaldaean troops who accompanied the commander of the guard demolished Ps 79:1
11 the walls surrounding Jerusalem. •Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, Dt 28:36
deported the remainder of the population left behind in the city, the deserters
who had gone over to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the common people.
12 The commander of the guard left some of the humbler country people as vineyard
workers and ploughmen.
13 The Chaldaeans broke up the bronze pillars from the Temple of Yahweh, the 16:17
wheeled stands[g] and the bronze Sea that were in the Temple of Yahweh, and 1K7:15-22, 23-26, 27-39
14 took the bronze away to Babylon. •They also took the ash containers, the scoops, ‖2Ch36:18
the knives, the incense boats, and all the bronze furnishings used in worship. 1K7:45,50
15 The commander of the guard took the censers and the sprinkling bowls, everything
16 that was made of gold and everything made of silver. •As regards the two pillars,
the one Sea and the wheeled stands, which Solomon had made for the Temple
of Yahweh, there was no reckoning the weight of bronze in all these objects.
17 The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and on it stood a capital of bronze,
the height of the capital being five cubits; round the capital were filigree and
pomegranates, all in bronze. So also for the second pillar...[h]
18 The commander of the guard took prisoner Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah 23:4
19 the priest next in rank, and the three guardians of the threshold. •In the city he
took prisoner a eunuch who was in command of the fighting men, five of the

24 a. Nabu-kudur-usur, founder of the Neo-Babylonian, or Chaldaean, empire which succeeded that of Assyria, ruled from 605 to 562. His first expedition to Palestine and Jehoiakim's surrender took place in about 602, the revolt of Judah occurred in 599.

b. 'he' (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar) Greek; 'Yahweh' Hebr.

c. 'due to the anger' versions and v. 20; 'at the command' Hebr.

d. The defeat of the Egyptians at Carcemish in 605 left Nebuchadnezzar master of Syria and Palestine.

e. The year 598 according to Hebr. reckoning which counted the fractional first year of accession; Jr 52:28 has 'seventh year' following Babylonian usage.

f. He was to remain there for 37 years until Nebuchadnezzar's death, cf. 25:27; his captivity was not harsh.

g. Vv. 13-14 and 15-16 are doublets slightly differing in their way of estimating the extent of the first deportation.

h. Mattaniah: 'Gift-of-Yahweh' Zedekiah: 'Yahweh-is-my-justice'. cf. 23:34+.

i. The narrative of 24:18–25:21 is used again as a conclusion to Jr (ch. 52). 2 K 25:1-12, is also made use of in Jr 39:1-10 (with an addition in v. 3), though possibly both passages are from a common source.

25 a. The reign of Zedekiah. End of December 589.

b. 'In the fourth month' Jr 52:6. June-July 587.

c. 'At once, the king made his escape' Greek Luc.

d. The arid Jordan valley.

e. As a rebellious vassal. 'who passed' versions, cf. Jr 52:9.

f. Still in the 11th year of Zedekiah, v. 2, 587.

g. Translation uncertain.

h. The Hebr. has two words here 'on the filigree'.

king's personal friends who were discovered in the city, the secretary to the army commander, responsible for military conscription, and sixty men of distinction discovered in the city. •Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, took these men 20
and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah, •and at Riblah, in the land 21
of Hamath, the king of Babylon had them put to death. Thus Judah was deported from its land.

Gedaliah, governor of Judah

As regards the people who remained in the land of Judah whom Nebuchad- 22
Jr40:5 nezzar king of Babylon had left behind, he appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam
Jr 40:7-41:18 son of Shaphan as their governor. •When the commanders of the troops and their 23
men all heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor, they went to him at Mizpah: Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the Netophathite, Jaazaniah the Maacathite, they and their men. •To them and to their men Gedaliah swore an oath. 'Do not be 24
afraid of the Chaldaeans,' he said 'live in the country, obey the king of Babylon, and all will go well with you.'

But in the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama, who 25
was of royal descent, and ten men with him, came and murdered Gedaliah, as well as the Judaeans and Chaldaeans who were with him at Mizpah. •Then the 26
people, of high and low degree, with the commanders of the troops, all set out and made for Egypt, in fear of the Chaldaeans.

‖Jr52:31-34 **King Jehoiachin pardoned**

In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the 27
twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach[i] king of Babylon, in the year he came to the throne, pardoned Jehoiachin king of Judah and released him[j] from prison. •He treated him kindly and allotted him a seat 28
above those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. •So Jehoiachin 29
Dn 1:5 laid aside his prisoner's garb, and for the rest of his life always ate at the king's table. •And his upkeep was permanently ensured by the king, day after day, 30
for the rest of his life.

i. Evil-merodach, son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, came to the throne in 562 which was the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity.

j. 'and released him' Jr 52:31.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF

CHRONICLES, EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

The Old Testament contains a second group of historical books which in large measure reduplicate but ultimately extend the 'Deuteronomic' history beginning with Joshua and ending with Kings. These are the two Books of Chronicles, then the Book of Ezra, and the Book of Nehemiah. Originally, the two Books of Chronicles were one book and those of Ezra and Nehemiah were part of the same collection, the whole being the work of one author. That the same style and the same fundamental ideas are found throughout, and that the closing verses of 2 Ch 36 are repeated at the beginning of Ezr 1, is evidence that the whole was composed as one work.

The Books of Chronicles (to give them their Hebrew title; the Greek Bible and the Vulgate call them the Books of Paralipomena, of 'things left out' therefore 'complementary' books) are a work of post-exilic Judaism, in a period when the nation, despite its political dependence, enjoyed a measure of self-rule by favour of its eastern overlords. The priesthood was its guide, the Law its charter. The Temple and its ritual were the centre of national life. But this framework of law and ritual was quickened by a current of personal devotion, by wisdom doctrines, by the memory of past glories and failures, and by faith in the promises of the prophets.

The author of Chronicles, very probably a Jerusalem Levite, essentially belongs in such surroundings. He writes after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah but before the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. (when Ben Sirach seems to have been influenced by him); probably some time in the 3rd century B.C. He shows great interest in the Temple. Throughout his work the clergy play a leading part, not merely the priests and Levites (as in Deuteronomy and the Priestly sections of the Pentateuch) but the inferior clergy; the gatekeepers and cantors who are henceforth associated with the Levites. The sacred character of the clergy extends to the laity by their participation in communion sacrifices to which the Chronicler restores their primitive importance. This community of the faithful is not restricted merely to the citizens of Judah; despite the Northern Kingdom's apostasy, of which he says as little as possible, he contemplates the union of the twelve tribes under the sceptre of David; undismayed by the times in which he lives, he confidently awaits the ingathering of all the children of Israel. Not even the pagans are excluded from praying in the Temple. For him 'Israel' means the community of God's faithful people with whom God made a covenant long ago, renewing this sacred covenant in the person of David. The kingdom of God on earth having achieved its highest form in the Davidic theocracy, the community must live in the spirit of David, always alert

to the need for reform, that is to say, to a return for tradition, if God is to continue his favour and fulfil his promises.

These dominant ideas of the Chronicler account for the form his work has taken. The earlier chapters, 1 Ch 1-9, give genealogical lists, principally concerned with the tribe of Judah and the descent of David, with the Levites and the population of Jerusalem. This serves to introduce the history of David with which the remainder of the first book is concerned, ch. 10-29. The hostility of Saul, David's sin with Bathsheba, the domestic disputes and dissensions, are all omitted; prominence, however, is given to the prophecy of Nathan, ch. 17, and to religious activities: such as the transportation of the ark, the organisation of worship in Jerusalem, ch. 13, 15-16, and the preparations for the building of the Temple, ch. 21-29. David is responsible for the design, the collection of materials, the detailed assignment of clerical functions, leaving the task of putting all this into effect to his son Solomon. The history of Solomon devotes most of its space, 2 Ch 1-9, to the building of the Temple, the king's prayer at its dedication and the promises God makes in answer to that prayer. For the period following the schism the Chronicler treats only of the kingdom of Judah and the dynasty of David. The kings are assessed according to their fidelity or infidelity to the principles of the covenant and the example set by David, 2 Ch 10-36. Religious infidelity is followed by reforms, of which the most radical are those of Hezekiah and Josiah, but the latter is succeeded by kings whose evil ways lead to disaster, and the Books of Chronicles end with the destruction of Jerusalem. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah then take up the story.

The sources of Chronicles are, in the first place, the canonical books: Genesis and Numbers for the opening genealogies, Samuel and Kings for much of the rest. The author treats his sources with freedom, adding to them, subtracting, selecting what suits his purpose. Though we are able to identify these main sources, the author never explicitly mentions them. On the other hand, he appeals to certain other works like the 'Books' of the kings of Israel, or of the kings of Israel and Judah, a 'midrash' on the Books of Kings, the 'Annals' of such and such a prophet. These writings are not extant and their contents and mutual relationships are disputed. Possibly they were accounts of the various reigns from the point of view of the part the prophets played in them. The author must also have made use of oral traditions, handed down from before the Exile and mingled with more recent reminiscences.

Merely because the Chronicler has used sources which, though unknown to us, may well have been trustworthy, there is no *a priori* reason to suspect what he adds to our canonical books. Each case must be judged on its own merits, and recent research has vindicated Chronicles on several points against many commentators who in the past have held a low opinion of the books. Nevertheless there are times when the Chronicler gives facts at variance with the account offered by Samuel and Kings, or when he even deliberately modifies these accounts. This would be unforgivable in a historian of today whose job is to narrate and explain the sequence of events. But the author of Chronicles has no such intention. He is not a historian; he is a theologian. Contemplating the long history of Israel and particularly the Davidic episode, he paints a picture of the ideal kingdom. Past, present and future merge into one; into the age of David he projects the ritual organisation of his own, omits all that

might diminish his hero, David, who for him is the type of the longed-for messianic king. Apart from certain fresh items of information, the value of which must be independently tested, the work is not so much a record of the past as a picture of the conditions and interests of the author's own period.

For he is writing for his contemporaries. He reminds them that the nation can only truly live if it remains faithful to God, that is to say, obedient to his Law and worship in a spirit of sincere devotion. He wants his people to be a devout community for whom the promises made to David can come true. Devout Jews living in the times of Christ will share his aspirations, though with modifications he did not foresee. His assertion of the primacy of the spirit and his doctrine of God's control of all this world's affairs have lasting value. They should be reflected on in days like ours when the upsurge of materialism seems to be indefinitely postponing the establishment of the kingdom of God.

The Books of Ezra and of Nehemiah are, as we have said, a continuation of the Chronicler's work. After the fifty years of Exile, on which he is silent, he resumes his history with the edict of Cyrus, 538 B.C., permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. The return begins forthwith, but the work of rebuilding is halted by the hostility of the Samaritans and not resumed until the reign of Darius I. The Temple is finished in 515. For the next fifty years attempts to restore the walls of Jerusalem are hindered, again by the Samaritans, Ezr 1-6. Under Artaxerxes, the scribe Ezra, representative for Jewish affairs at the Persian court, arrives in Jerusalem with a new contingent of returning exiles, bringing with him an official authorisation to impose the Mosaic Law, now approved by the king. He has to take severe measures against those Jews already married to foreigners, Ezr 7-10. Next, Nehemiah, cupbearer to Artaxerxes, secures the king's commission to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. Despite opposition, the work is soon finished and the city once more inhabited, Ne 1:1–7:72a. Meanwhile, Nehemiah has been appointed high commissioner. With all solemnity the Law is read to the people by Ezra, the feast of Tabernacles is celebrated, the people confess their sins and promise to observe the Law, Ne 7:72b–10:40. Then follow various lists of names, a few supplementary measures, and the dedication of the city walls, 11:1–13:3. After again visiting Persia, Nehemiah returns; on his second mission he finds it necessary to deal with certain irregularities which have meanwhile crept into the community, Ne 13:4-31.

This summary demonstrates the importance of these books for the history of the Jewish Restoration after the Exile. The first chapters of Ezra complement the information supplied by Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The two books are the only source we have on the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. Their date is the same as that of Chronicles, the 3rd century B.C., but they make use of, and quote verbatim, documents that are contemporary with the events recounted; lists of returned exiles, of the population of Jerusalem, acts of the kings of Persia, correspondence with the chancery, and in particular Ezra's report of his own mission and Nehemiah's apologetic memoir.

But for all this wealth of source material the interpretation of Ezra and Nehemiah is extremely difficult, because the documents are arranged in a baffling order. The list of immigrants is given twice, Ezr 2 and Ne 7; in Ezr 4:6–6:18, written in Aramaic, the events that took place under Darius are narrated after the events of the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes, though in

fact they occurred half a century before. Writings composed by Ezra and Nehemiah themselves have been dismembered and recombined. The dates given in those writings enable us to restore Ezra's report thus: Ezr 7:1–8:36; Ne 7:72b–8:18; Ezr 9:1–10:44; Ne 9:1-37. And the memoir of Nehemiah thus: Ne 1:1–7:72a; 11:1-25a; part of ch. 12 (first mission) and Ne 13 with 10 (second mission). For the period following Nehemiah some particulars have been inserted in Ne 11 and 12.

Apparently the Chronicler wanted to proceed by a series of broad surveys. The main subject of Ezr 1-6 is the rebuilding of the Temple under Darius: the successive returns from Exile are all dealt with together; the figure of Sheshbazzar is blocked out to throw Zerubbabel into relief; various hostile activities of the Samaritans are narrated in adjacent sections. In the following chapters the books represent Ezra and Nehemiah as working side by side for the one great purpose. Hence, until the 15th century A.D. the Hebrew text did not separate the books; they appeared as the one 'Book of Ezra'. Nor did the Greek translation. It was only in the first centuries of our era that a distinction was made.

Such methods of composition create certain problems for the historian. Thus the identification of Sheshbazzar, Ezr 1:8; 5:14, with Zerubbabel, Ezr 2:2; 3:2; 5:2, has been accepted by many scholars, but it seems more likely that these are two distinct persons: Sheshbazzar, prince of Judah, appointed high commissioner by Cyrus, was the leader of the first immigrants; Zerubbabel, who returned later, was high commissioner in the days of Darius, and saw to the rebuilding of the Temple. The question of dating is even more involved and controversial. If we accept the book's own sequence, Ezra reached Jerusalem in 458, the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, Ezr 7:8. Nehemiah joined him in 445, the twentieth year of the same reign, Ne 2:1. He stayed for twelve years, Ne 13:6; it was therefore in 433 that he returned to Persia for an unstated period; he went back to Palestine before the death of Artaxerxes I, i.e. before 424. This traditional order of events is upheld by able commentators who, however, restrict the mission of Ezra to a single year, accepting the precise figures given in the book, and make Ezra leave before the arrival of Nehemiah. Others reverse the order, judging that the work done by Ezra could have been done only after Nehemiah had finished his. In this hypothesis, the dates assigned to Ezra relate to the reign of Artaxerxes II, not, as for Nehemiah, to that of Artaxerxes I; Ezra did not therefore reach Palestine until 398. A third and recent school admits that Ezra followed Nehemiah but objects that the text gives no indication that two different reigns are being referred to; it therefore places the mission of Ezra between the two missions of Nehemiah. This theory requires a textual emendation of Ezr 7:8; Ezra arrives not in the seventh but in the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes, i.e. in 427. This solution is implied in our footnotes to the text but is by no means certain; the other two are both possible and the question remains open.

In any case, so far as a religious appreciation of the books is concerned, the problem is of minor importance. The author's intention is to present a composite, though not misleading, picture of the Jewish Restoration; and to assess the significance of this event it is more important to appreciate the ideas inspiring it than to discover the precise sequence of its various stages. Taking advantage of the liberal religious policy that the Achmenids applied in their

empire, the Jews return to their Promised Land, restore the ancient worship, rebuild the Temple and the city walls, and live as a community governed by men of their own race and regulated by the Law of Moses. All that the imperial power requires is loyalty, no great price to pay when that power shows such respect for Jewish customs. This is an event of great importance—nothing less than the birth of Judaism, prepared by long meditation in Exile and assisted by the actions of leaders raised up by God.

After Zerubbabel, who rebuilt the Temple (but on whom the Chronicler does not confer the messianic titles awarded by Haggai and Zechariah, Hg 2:23; Zc 6:12f), come Ezra and Nehemiah as pioneers of this restoration. The real father of Judaism is Ezra with his three dominant conceptions: the chosen race, the Temple, the Law. If his reforming measures seem severe and his isolationism narrow, it is because his zeal was great and the need to safeguard the infant community urgent. He is the pattern of all scribes, the great and growing hero of Judaic tradition. Nehemiah, though inspired by the same ideals, acts in a different sphere, restoring and repopulating Jerusalem and making it possible and attractive for its citizens to lead a national life. The record he has left us, more intimate than that of Ezra, reveals a vivid and human personality, ungrudging of effort yet prudent and deliberate, trusting in God, whose help he seeks in frequent prayer. Behind him he left a noble memory, and Ben Sirach sings the praises of him who 'rebuilt our walls which lay in ruins', Si 49:13.

It is not surprising that in this restored community, gathered round the Temple and obedient to the Law, the Chronicler sees a realisation of the ideal God-governed society for which he has pleaded in the Books of Chronicles. He well knows that the realisation is not perfect, that the future has something better in store, but here he is more dependent on documents, which he reproduces, than he was in the Chronicles. He retains their exclusivist tone prompted by circumstances, and respects their silence on the messianic hope. Doubtless literary integrity prevented the author from adjusting these characteristics. He writes midway through the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., a time of which we know little and during which the community in Jerusalem, withdrawn into itself, grew quietly to maturity and deepened its spirituality.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES

I. DAVID AND HIS ENTOURAGE: THE GENEALOGIES[a]

A. FROM ADAM TO ISRAEL[b]

||Gn 5 **The origin of the three ethnic groups**

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, •Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, •Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, 1.2 3
Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth. 4

||Gn10:2-4 **The Japhethites**

Sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, the Medes, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Tiras. 5
Sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Diphath, Togarmah. •Sons of Javan: Elishah, 6 7
Tarshish, the Kittim, the Dananites.

The Hamites

||Gn10:6-8 Sons of Ham: Cush, Misraim, Put, Canaan. 8
Sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, Sabteca. Sons of Raamah: Sheba, 9
Dedan. •Cush became father of Nimrod, the first potentate on earth. 10
||Gn10:13-18 Misraim became father of the people of Lud, of Anam, of Lehab, of Naphtuh, 11
of Pathros, Casluh and Caphtor, from which the Philistines came. •Canaan 12 13
became father of Sidon, his first-born, then Heth, •and the Jebusites, the Amorites, 14
Girgashites, •Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, •Arvadites, Zemarites, Hamathites. 15 16

||Gn10:22-29 **The Semites**

Sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram. 17
Sons of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech.
Arpachshad became father of Shelah, and Shelah became father of Eber. 18
To Eber were born two sons; the first was called Peleg, because it was in his 19
time the earth was divided, and his brother was called Joktan.
Joktan became father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, •Hadoram, 20 21
Uzal, Diklah, •Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, •Ophir, Havilah, Jobab; all these are 22 23
sons of Joktan.

||Gn11:10-26 **From Shem to Abraham**

Arpachshad, Shelah, •Eber, Peleg, Reu, •Serug, Nahor, Terah, •Abram, 24.25 26.27
that is, Abraham. •Sons of Abraham: Isaac and Ishmael. •These are their 28 29
descendants:

The Ishmaelites

||Gn25:13-16 The first-born of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, •Mishma, 30
Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, •Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. These are the 31
sons of Ishmael.
||Gn25:2-4 Sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, 32
Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Sons of Jokshan: Sheba and Dedan. •Sons 33
of Midian: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, Eldaah. All these are sons of Keturah.

Isaac and Esau

34 Abraham became father of Isaac. Sons of Isaac: Esau and Israel. ||Gn25:19
35 Sons of Esau: Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam and Korah. ||Gn36:10-13
36
37 •Sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna, Amalek. •Sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, Mizzah. ||Gn36:15-17

Seir

38 Sons of Seir: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, Dishan. ||Gn36:20-28
39
40 •Sons of Lotan: Hori and Homam. Sister of Lotan: Timna. •Sons of Shobal: Alian,
41 Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, Onam. Sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. •Son of
42 Anah: Dishon. Sons of Dishon: Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, Cheran. •Sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, Jaakan. Sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

The kings of Edom

43 Here are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before an Israelite king ||Gn36:31-39
44 ruled: Bela son of Beor; his city was called Dinhabah. •Bela died and Jobab
45 son of Zerah, from Bozrah, succeeded. •Jobab died and Husham of the land of
46 the Temanites succeeded. •Husham died and Hadad son of Bedad succeeded; he defeated the Midianites in the country of Moab, and his city was called Avith.
47 Hadad died and Samlah of Masrekah succeeded. •Samlah died and Shaul of
48
49 Rehoboth-han-nahar succeeded. •Shaul died and Baal-hanan son of Achbor
50 succeeded. •Baal-hanan died and Hadad succeeded. His city was called Pai; his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, from Mezahab.

The chiefs of Edom ||Gn36:40-43

51 Hadad died, and then there were chiefs in Edom: Chief Timna, Chief Aliah,
52 Chief Jetheth, •Chief Oholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, •Chief Kenaz, Chief
53
54 Teman, Chief Mibzar, •Chief Magdiel, Chief Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom.

B. JUDAH

The sons of Israel ||Gn35:23-26

1 2 These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and
2 Zebulun, •Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

The descendants of Judah[a]

3 Sons of Judah: Er, Onan and Shelah. These three were born to him by Bath-shua 4:1,21 ||Gn38:2-5
the Canaanite woman. Er, Judah's first-born, displeased Yahweh who put him ||Gn 38:7
4 to death. •Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, bore him Perez and Zerah. Judah ||Gn38:27-30
had five sons in all.
5 Sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul. ||Gn46:12
6 Sons of Zerah: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Dara, five in all. ||1 K 5:11
7 Sons of Carmi: Achar, who brought trouble on Israel by violating the ban. Jos 7
8 Sons of Ethan: Azariah.

The ancestors of David

9 Sons of Hezron: there were born to him Jerahmeel, Ram, Chelubai.[b]

1 a. These first chapters consist almost entirely of genealogies. The 'Priestly' genealogies of Gn make Abraham the centre from whom blessings radiate to the nations, Gn 12:3. Here, however, the central figure is David, ancestor and prototype of the Messiah, with his retinue of priests, Levites and cantors. Cf. the genealogy of Christ in Mt 1:1-17 and Lk 3:23-38. In many cases the genealogies of Ch register no more than the relationship between tribes or clans; several names are those of clans or of towns. The form of many names varies in the Hebr. and the versions; details of variations are not given in the notes.

b. The long lists of Gn 5 and 11 are abbreviated and some important passages are copied from Gn 10; of all the peoples descended from the first man only the Semites interest the author, Abraham first and then his sons, Isaac and Jacob.

2 a. The Chronicler begins with Judah, the tribe of David.

b. Chelubai, like Chelub, 4:11, is apparently to be identified with Caleb, Jos 14:6+. Cf. 1 Ch 2:18.

Ram became father of Amminadab, Amminadab father of Nahshon, prince 10
||Nb 1:7 of the sons of Judah, •Nahshon became father of Salma, Salma father of Boaz. 11
Rt 4:19-22 Boaz became father of Obed, Obed father of Jesse. •Jesse became father of Eliab, 12 13
his first-born, of Abinadab second, Shimea third, •Nethanel fourth, Raddai 14
fifth, •Ozem sixth, David seventh. •Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. Sons 15 16
1 S 26:6 of Zeruiah: Abishai, Joab and Asahel: three. •Abigail gave birth to Amasa; the 17
father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.

Jos14:6+ **Caleb**

2:24f;4:11f Caleb son of Hezron became father of Azubah,[c] Ishshah and Jerioth; these 18
are the sons:[d] Jesher, Shobab and Ardon. •Azubah died, and Caleb took Ephrath, 19
2:50 2 Ch 1:5 who bore him Hur. •Hur became father of Uri, Uri father of Bezalel. 20
Then Hezron married the daughter of Machir, father of Gilead; he took her 21
when he was sixty years old and she bore him Segub. •Segub became father of 22
Jair who held twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead. •Then from Geshur 23
Nb32:41-42 and Aram he won the Encampments of Jair, Kenath and its outlying villages,
sixty towns. All this belonged to the sons of Machir,[e] father of Gilead.
2:18 After Hezron's death, Caleb married Ephrathah,[f] wife of Hezron his father, 24
who bore him Ashhur, father of Tekoa.

Jerahmeel

1S27:10 Jerahmeel, Hezron's eldest son had sons: Hezron, his first-born, Ram, Bunah, 25
Oren, Ozem, Ahijah. •Jerahmeel had another wife called Atarah; she was the 26
mother of Onam.
Sons of Ram, Jerahmeel's first-born: Maaz, Jamin and Eker. 27
Sons of Onam: Shammai and Jada. Sons of Shammai: Nadab and Abishur. 28
Abishur's wife was called Abihail; she bore him Ahban and Molid. •Sons of 29 30
Nadab: Seled and Ephraim. Seled died leaving no son. •Sons of Ephraim: Ishi; 31
sons of Ishi: Sheshan; sons of Sheshan: Ahlai. •Sons of Jada, Shammai's brother: 32
Jether and Jonathan. Jether died leaving no sons. •Sons of Jonathan: Peleth and 33
Zaza.
These are the sons of Jerahmeel.
Sheshan had no sons,[g] only daughters. He had an Egyptian slave Jarha •to 34 35
whom Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage. She bore him Attai. •Attai became 36
father of Nathan, Nathan father of Zabad, •Zabad father of Ephlal, Ephlal 37
father of Obed, •Obed father of Jehu, Jehu father of Azariah, •Azariah father of 38 39
Helez, Helez father of Eleasah, •Eleasah father of Sismai, Sismai father of 40
Shallum, •Shallum father of Jekamiah, Jekamiah father of Elishama. 41

2:18f;4:11f Jos14:6+ **Caleb**[h]

Sons of Caleb, Jerahmeel's brother: Mesha, his first-born, who was the father 42
of Ziph. His son was[i] Mareshah, father of Hebron. •Sons of Hebron: Korah, 43
Tappuah, Rekem and Shema. •Shema became father of Raham, Jorkeam's 44
father. Rekem became father of Shammai. •Shammai's son was Maon, and Maon 45
became father of Bethzur.
Ephah, Caleb's concubine, gave birth to Haran, Moza and Gazez. Haran 46
became father of Gazez.
Sons of Jahdai: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah and Shaaph. 47
Maacah, Caleb's concubine, gave birth to Sheber and Tirhanah. •She gave 48 49
birth to Shaaph, father of Madmannah, and Sheva, father of Machbenah and
father of Gibea.
Jos15:16-19 The daughter of Caleb was Achsah.
These are the sons of Caleb. 50

Hur[j]

2:19;4:1f Sons of Hur, the first-born of Ephrathah: Shobal, father of Kiriath-jearim,

51 52 Salma, father of Bethlehem, Hareph, father of Beth-gader. •Shobal, father of
53 Kiriath-jearim had sons: Haroeh, that is, half of the Manahathites, •and the clans of Kiriath-jearim: the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites and Mishraites. Their descendants are the people of Zorah and Eshtaol. Jg 13:2;18:2

54 Sons of Salma: Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab, half of the
55 Manahathites, the Zorathites, •the Sophrite clans living at Jabez, the Tirathites, 4:9 the Shimeathites, the Sucathites. These are the Kenites who came from Hammath; their descendants are the House of Rechab. Nb24:21+ 2K10:15

C. THE HOUSE OF DAVID

The sons of David

1 3 These are the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the first-born ||2S3:2-5
2 Amnon, by Ahinoam of Jezreel; second, Daniel, by Abigail of Carmel; •third, Absalom son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; fourth, Adonijah
3 son of Haggith; •fifth, Shephatiah by Abital; sixth, Ithream by his wife Eglah.
4 Six, therefore, were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned for three years ||2 S 5:5 and six months.

5 He reigned for thirty-three years in Jerusalem. •These are the sons who were =14:3-7 born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, the four of them ||2S5:14-16
6 children of Bath-shua,[a] the daughter of Ammiel; •Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet,
7 8 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, •Elishama, Eliada, Eliphelet: nine.

9 These are all the sons of David, not counting the sons of the concubines. Tamar 2 S 13:1f was their sister.

The kings of Judah[b]

10 Sons of Solomon: Rehoboam; Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his
11 12 son, •Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, •Amaziah his son, Azariah
13 his son, Jotham his son, •Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son,
14 15 Amon his son, Josiah his son. •Sons of Josiah: Johanan,[c] the first-born,
16 Jehoiakim second, Zedekiah third, Shallum fourth. •The sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. 2Ch36:1f

The royal line after the exile[d]

17 18 Sons of Jeconiah the captive: Shealtiel. His sons: •Malchiram, Pedaiah,
19 Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, Nedabiah. •Sons of Pedaiah: Zerubbabel[e] and Shimei. Sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam and Hananiah; Shelomith was their
20 sister. •Sons of Meshullam:[f] Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed:
21 five. •Sons of Hananiah: Pelatiah; Jeshaiah his son, Rephaiah his son, Arnan
22 his son, Obadiah his son, Shecaniah his son. •Sons of Shecaniah: Shemaiah, Ezr 8:3
23 Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, Shaphat: six. •Sons of Neariah: Elioenai,
24 Hizkiah, Azrikam: three. •Sons of Elioenai: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, Anani: seven.

c. Var. (Vulg.) 'Caleb married Azubah'.
d. Of Azubah.
e. Corr.; Hebr. 'All these were descendants of Machir'.
f. 'Caleb married Ephrathah' corr.; 'In Caleb of Ephrathah' Hebr.
g. According to a tradition differing from that in v. 31.
h. Another genealogical record of Caleb's descendants, cf. vv. 18f, no doubt representing a different period when the relationships of the clans had changed.
i. 'His son was' corr.; 'son of (Mareshah)' Hebr.
j. The name 'Hur' is found in the Aaron traditions, Ex 17:10; 24:14; it is also the name of a people that appears to have once lived to the S. and W. of Jerusalem.

3 a. Greek reads 'Bersabee' ('Bathsheba').
b. The list derives from Kings. Shallum, son of Josiah is the same, Jr 22:11, as the Jehoahaz of Kings.
c. Some MSS read 'Joahaz' for 'Johanan'.
d. This list probably extends to the author's own day.
e. In all the other texts, cf. Ezr 3:2; Hg 1:1, Zerubbabel is son of Shealtiel.
f. 'Sons of Meshullam' is not in the text.

D. THE SOUTHERN TRIBES[a]

Judah. Shobal

2:3, 50 4 Sons of Judah: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, Shobal.[b] 1
Reaiah son of Shobal became father of Jahath, and Jahath father of Ahumai 2
and Lahad. These are the Zorathite clans.

2:50+ **Hur**

These are Abi-etam, Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash, whose sister was called 3
Hazzelelponi.
Rt 1:2 Penuel became father of Gedor, Ezer father of Hushah. 4
These are the sons of Hur, the first-born of Ephrathah, father of Bethlehem.

Ashhur

Ashhur, father of Tekoa, had two wives: Helah and Naarah. 5
Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hepher, the Timnites, and the Ahashtarites. 6
These are the sons of Naarah.
Sons of Helah: Zereth, Zohar, Ethnan. 7
2:55 Koz became father of Anub, Hazzobebah and the clans of Aharhel son of 8
Harum. •Jabez won himself more honour than his brothers. His mother gave 9
Gn 35:18 him the name Jabez, 'because' she said 'in distress I gave birth to him'.[c] •Jabez 10
called on the God of Israel. 'If you truly bless me,' he said 'you will extend my
lands, your hand will be with me, you will keep harm away and my distress
will cease.' God granted him what he had asked.

2:18f, 42f Jos 14:6+ **Caleb**[d]

2:9+ Chelub, Shuhah's brother, became father of Mehir, who was the father of 11
Eshton. •Eshton became father of Bethrapha, Paseah and Tehinnah father of 12
Irnahash, brother of Eselon the Kenizzite. These are the men of Recah.
‖Jg 1:13 Sons of Kenaz: Othniel and Seraiah. Sons of Othniel: Hathath and 13
Meonothai, •who became father of Ophrah. Seraiah became father of Joab, father 14
Ne 11:35 of Geharashim—and they were in fact craftsmen.[e]
‖Nb 13:6 Sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh: Iru, Elah and Naam. Sons of Elah: Kenaz. 15
Sons of Jehallelel: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiri-a, Asarel. 16
Sons of Ezrah: Jether, Mered, Epher, Jalon. Then she[f] conceived Miriam, 17
Shammai, and Ishbah, the father of Eshtemoa, •whose Judaean wife gave birth 18
to Jered father of Gedor, Heber father of Soco, and Jekuthiel, father of Zanoah.
These are the sons of Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh whom Mered married.
The sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham father of Keilah the 19
Garmite and of Eshtemoa the Maacathite.
Sons of Shimon: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, Tilon. 20
Sons of Ishi: Zoheth and Ben-zoheth.

Shelah[g]

2:3 Sons of Shelah son of Judah: Er father of Lecah, Laadah father of Mareshah, 21
and the clans of linenworkers at Beth-ashbea, •Jokim, the men of Cozeba, Joash 22
and Saraph who went to Moab to take wives[h] before returning to Bethlehem.[i]
(Events, these, of long ago.) •These were potters and lived at Netaim and 23
Gederah; they stayed with the king there, employed in his workshop.

Simeon

‖Gn 46:10 ‖Nb 26:12f Sons of Simeon: Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul; •Shallum was his son, 24 25
Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. •The sons of Mishma: Hammuel his son, 26
1:29-30 Gn 25:13 Zaccur his son, Shimei his son. •Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, 27

but his brothers did not have many children, and the sum of their clans did not multiply as the sons of Judah did.

28 They lived in Beersheba, Moladah and Hazar-shual, 29 •Bilhah, Ezem and 30 Tolad, 31 •Bethuel, Hormah and Ziklag, •Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri, 32 Shaaraim. These were their towns until the reign of David. 33 •Their outlying villages were: Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen and Ashan, five towns, •with all the outlying villages round these towns as far as Baalath. Here they had their settlements and sorted themselves into their various groups. ||Jos19:1-8

34 Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah, 35 •Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, 36 son of Seraiah, son of Asiel, •Elioenei, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, 37 Jesimiel, Benaiah, •Ziza, Ben-shiphi, Ben-allon, Ben-jedaiah, Ben-shimri, Ben- 38 shemaiah, •These men here named came with their clans and families; they grew 39 in number and spread. •In search of pasture for their flocks they travelled from 40 the Gerar[j] pass to the eastern end of the valley, •where they found good, fat pasture; the land was broad, untroubled, peaceful. Hamites[k] had been living there before them. Nb 1:2

41 The Simeonites, registered by name, arrived there in the time of Hezekiah king of Judah; they overran their tents and the dwellings[l] they found there. They put them under a ban still in force today and settled in their place, since there was pasturage for their flocks. Jos6:17+

42 Some of them, belonging to the sons of Simeon, reached Mount Seir: five hundred men led by Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. 43 They defeated the surviving fugitives of Amalek and still live there today. Ex17:8+

E. THE TRANSJORDANIAN TRIBES

Reuben

1 5 Sons of Reuben, first-born of Israel. He was indeed the first-born but, when he violated his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel. Gn 5:22

2 The group of Reuben forfeited the birthright •because Judah proved more powerful than his brothers—a prince having come from him—with Joseph having the birthright.[a]

3 Sons of Reuben, first-born of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, Carmi. ||Gn 46:9 ||Nb26:5f

Joel[b]

4 5 Sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, 6 •Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, •Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria carried off into exile. He was a prince of the Reubenites.

7 His kinsmen, by clans, grouped according to their kinship: Jeiel, the chief, 8 Zechariah, •Bela son of Azaz, son of Shema, son of Joel.

4 a. Survey of the clans of each tribe. Levi occupies the central place as in Nb 2 and Ezk 48.

b. This new series substitutes three more genuinely Israelitic clans for the three more or less Canaanite clans of 2:3.

c. Playing on Jabez and *ozeb* 'distress'.

d. In this passage the Chronicler assembles traditional data on the clans in Judah without fixed territory, some no doubt still existing in his own time; he makes no attempt to harmonise the data.

e. The name means 'Valley of Craftsmen', cf. Ne 11:35.

f. Bithiah, v. 18.

g. The clans mentioned in connexion with Shelah are not, as in the preceding passage, nomadic or semi-nomadic but craftsmen of settled abode, weavers and potters who in very early times had immigrated from Moab. On the post-exilic guilds cf. Ne 3:8,31.

h. Cf. Rt 1. Alternative translation 'ruled in Moab'.

i. 'before returning to Bethlehem' corr.

j. 'Gerar' Greek.

k. Name used for the non-Israelitic peoples to the S. of Palestine, sometimes styled 'Egyptians', cf. Gn 21:9.

l. Alternative translation 'and the Meunim', cf. 2 Ch 20:1.

5 a. In this way the Chronicler harmonises his faith in the messianic character of the Judaean dynasty of David and the pre-eminence of the tribes of Joseph, Gn 49:26; cf. 48:18. The Greek text corrects 'birthright' to 'blessing'.

b. Joel is the Reubenite clan deported after Tiglath-pileser's conquest of Damascus and Samaria in 732, 2 K 15:29. It returned after the Exile and figures here as the sole Reubenite representative, though the precise family connexion with Reuben is not stated. At that time its head must have been Bela, v. 8.

Reuben's territory

||Nb32: 37f Reuben, having settled at Aroer, spread as far as Nebo and Baal-meon. •To 9
the east his lands stretched to the beginning of the desert that ends at the river
Euphrates, for he had many herds in the land of Gilead.

Ps 83:6 During the reign of Saul they waged war on the Hagrites; they suffered 10
defeat at their hands and the Hagrites occupied their tents throughout the
region east of Gilead.

Gad[c]

Jos13:24-28 The sons of Gad lived next to them, inhabiting the land of Bashan as far as 11
Gn46:16 Nb26:15-18 Salecah: •Joel, the chief, Shapham second, then Janai and Shaphat in Bashan. 12
Dt 3:10f Their kinsmen, by families: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, 13
Eber: seven.

These are the sons of Abihail: Ben-huri, Ben-jaroah, Ben-gilead, Ben-michael, 14
Ben-jeshishai, Ben-jahdo, Ben-buz. •Ahi son of Abdiel, son of Guni, was head 15
of their family.

They had settled in Gilead, in Bashan and its dependencies, as well as 16
throughout the pasturages of Sharon to their furthest limit. •They sorted 17
themselves into their various groups in the days of Jotham king of Judah.

The sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, the half-tribe of Manasseh, a number 18
of their fighting men, men who carried shield and spear and could handle the bow,
men used to warfare, forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty of them fit
Ps 83:6 for service, •waged war against the Hagrites, against Jetur, Naphish and Nodab. 19
God came to their help against them, and the Hagrites with all their allies fell 20
Dt33:20-21 into their hands, for they had called on God as they fought, and because they put
their trust in him their prayer was heard. •They carried off of the Hagrites' live- 21
stock fifty thousand camels, two hundred and fifty thousand sheep, two thousand
donkeys and a hundred thousand people, •for, God directing the battle, the 22
greater part had been killed. And they settled in what had been Hagrite territory
until the exile.

The half-tribe of Manasseh

||Nb32:39 The sons of the half-tribe of Manasseh settled in the country between Bashan 23
and Baal-hermon, Senir and Mount Hermon.

They were numerous. •These are the heads of their families: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, 24
Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, Jahdiel. These were stout fighting men, men of
renown, heads of their families.

But they were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors and prostituted themselves 25
to the gods of the peoples of the land whom God had destroyed before them.
So the God of Israel roused the hostility of Pul[d] king of Assyria and of Tiglath- 26
pileser king of Assyria. He deported Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh,
taking them off to Halah near Habor and the river Gozan. They are still there
today.

F. LEVI

The lineage of the high priests[e]

Gn46:11 Sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath and Merari. •Sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, 27,28 6:1,2
Ex 6:18 ||Nb26:59-60 Hebron, Uzziel. •Children of Amram: Aaron, Moses and Miriam. Sons of Aaron: 29 3
Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

Eleazar became father of Phinehas, Phinehas father of Abishua, •Abishua 30,31 4,5
father of Bukki, Bukki father of Uzzi. •Uzzi father of Zerahiah, Zerahiah 32 6
father of Meraioth, •Meraioth father of Amariah, Amariah father of Ahitub, 33 7
Ahitub father of Zadok, Zadok father of Ahimaaz. •Ahimaaz father of Azariah, 34,35 8,9
Azariah father of Johanan, •Johanan father of Azariah. It was he who officiated 36 10

37 as priest in the Temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem. •Azariah became father
38 of Amariah, Amariah father of Ahitub, •Ahitub father of Zadok, Zadok father
39,40 of Shallum, •Shallum father of Hilkiah, Hilkiah father of Azariah, •Azariah
41 father of Seraiah, Seraiah father of Jehozadak, •and Jehozadak had to go into
exile when, at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, Yahweh exiled Judah and Jerusalem.

The line of Levi

||Nb3:17-20

1 6 Sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath and Merari.
2,3 These are the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. •Sons of
4 Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, Uzziel. •Sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi.
These are the clans of Levi grouped according to their fathers.
5,6 For Gershom:[a] Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, •Joah his son,
Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son.
7,8 Sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, •Elkanah
9 his son, Ebiasaph his son, Assir his son, •Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziah
10,11 his son, Shaul his son. •Sons of Elkanah: Amasai and Ahimoth. •Elkanah his
12 son, Zophai his son, Nahath his son, •Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah 1 S 1:1
13 his son. •Sons of Elkanah: Samuel his first-born, the second Abijah.
14,15 Sons of Merari: Mahli, Libni his son, •Shimei his son, Haggiah his son, Ex 6:19 Nb 26:58
Asaiah his son.

The cantors[b]

16 These are the men David nominated to lead the singing in the Temple of
17 Yahweh when the ark had come to rest there. •They were responsible for the
singing before the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting until Solomon had built the
Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem, and in accordance with the rules laid down for
them they did their office.
18 These are the men who were in office, and their sons:[c]
Of the sons of Kohath: Heman the cantor, the son of Joel, son of Samuel, 1 S 1:1
19,20 son of Elkanah, son of Jeroham, son of Eliel, son of Toah, •son of Zuph, son
21 of Elkanah, son of Mahath, son of Amasai, •son of Elkanah, son of Joel, son
22 of Azariah, son of Zephaniah, •son of Tahath, son of Assir, son of Ebiasaph,
23 son of Korah, •son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, son of Israel.
24 His brother Asaph stood at his right hand: Asaph son of Berechiah, son of
25,26 Shimea, •son of Michael, son of Baaseiah, son of Malchijah, •son of Ethni,
27 son of Zerah, son of Adaiah, •son of Ethan, son of Zimmah, son of Shimei,
28 son of Jahath, son of Gershom, son of Levi.
29 At the left hand, the sons of Merari: Ethan son of Kishi, son of Abdi, son
30,31 of Malluch, •son of Hashabiah, son of Amaziah, son of Hilkiah, •son of Amzi, son
32 of Bani, son of Shemer, •son of Mahli, son of Mushi, son of Merari, son of Levi.

The other Levites

33 Their brothers the Levites were completely dedicated[d] to the service of the 9:2

c. The lists for Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, which are at variance with the biblical data, must attach to the clans exiled in 732.

d. Pul and Tiglath-pileser are the same, cf. 2 K 15:19+.

e. The Chronicler introduces his survey of the levitical clans with a list of high priests up to the Exile, matching the list of David's descendants in ch. 3. This parallelism tallies with the theological ideas of Ezekiel for whom the community is poised on priesthood and prince; it is even closer to those of Zechariah who, 3:8f, associates the privileges of Zerubbabel's descendant with those of the high priest, and after his vision of the crowning of the high priest Joshua foresees that this 'branch', too, will be crowned, 6:11f. This list of high priests has been compiled with the help of 6:35-38 and the list of Ezra's ancestors, Ezr 7:2f.; but the names in vv. 33-36 (excepting Johanan) are redundant.

6 a. Gershom (called Gershon in Nb) was, according to the N. traditions, Ex 2:22; Jg 18:30, probably a descendant of Moses. This family had been in charge of the schismatic shrine at Dan; for this reason the 'Priestly' tradition gives preference to the Kohathites.

b. The Chronicler considers the sacred chant (praise, confession, thanksgiving) to be the heart of sacrificial worship—the outlook of Ho 14:3; Is 12; 25-26, and probably Ml 1:11. He assigns its institution to David.

c. The most famous cantors belong, according to the Chronicler, to the three great levitical families; but Heman and Ethan were sages of old, 1 K 5:11, of the Zerah clan, Ps 89: inscr.; 1 Ch 2:6, a branch of Judah.

d. The oblates *(nethinim)* of Ezr 2:43+

tabernacle of the Temple of Yahweh. •Aaron and his sons burned the offerings 34 49
Lv 2:3+ on the altar of holocaust and on the altar of incense; they were concerned
Lv 1:4 exclusively with the most holy things and with the ritual of atonement for Israel,
in accordance with all that Moses the servant of God had laid down.

These are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his 35 50
son, •Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, •Meraioth his son, Amariah 36,37 51,52
his son, Ahitub his son, •Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son. 38 53

Where these lived

Jos21: 4-40 **a. The Aaronitic priests**

These are the places they lived in, according to the boundaries of their settle- 39 54
ments:

||Jos21:4, 10-19 To the sons of Aaron of the Kohath clan (for to these the lot fell) •they gave 40 55
Hebron in the land of Judah and the pasture lands adjoining. •The fields and 41 56
villages of this town they gave to Caleb son of Jephunneh, •but to the sons of 42 57
Aaron they gave the cities of refuge, Hebron, Libnah with its pasture lands,
Jattir, Eshtemoa with its pasture lands, •Hilen, Debir, •Ashan, Beth-shemesh 43,44 58,59
each with its pasture lands. •From the tribe of Benjamin they gave Geba, Alemeth 45 60
and Anathoth, each with its pasture lands. In all, their clans took in thirteen
towns.

b. Other Levites

||Jos21: 5-8 The remaining sons of Kohath were allotted ten towns taken from the 46 61
clans of the tribe, from the half-tribe, the half of Manasseh. •The sons of 47 62
Gershom and their clans were allotted thirteen towns taken from the tribe of
Issachar, the tribe of Asher, the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Manasseh
in Bashan. •The sons of Merari and their clans were allotted twelve towns 48 63
taken from the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad and the tribe of Zebulun.
The sons of Israel gave these towns with their pasture lands to the Levites. 49 64

||Jos 21:9 Also from the tribes of the sons of Judah, the sons of Benjamin and the sons 50 65
of Simeon, they allotted the towns to which they gave their names.

||Jos21: 20-39 Towns from the tribe of Ephraim also were assigned to the territory of some 51 66
clans of the sons of Kohath. •They were given the following cities of refuge: 52 67
Shechem with its pasture lands in the highlands of Ephraim, together with
Gezer and its pasture lands, •Jokmeam, Beth-horon, •Aijalon and Gath-rimmon, 53,54 68,69
each with its pasture lands, •and from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Aner and 55 70
Bileam, each with its pasture lands. This for the clan of the remaining sons of
Kohath.

The sons of Gershom were given, from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in 56 71
Bashan, and Ashtaroth, each with its pasture lands; •from the tribe of Issachar: 57 72
Kedesh, Daberath, •Ramoth, Anem, each with its pasture lands; •from the tribe 58,59 73,74
of Asher: Mashal, Abdon, •Hukok, Rehob, each with its pasture lands; •from 60,61 75,76
the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon, Kiriathaim, each with its
pasture lands.

To the remainder of the sons of Merari: from the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmono, 62 77
Tabor, each with its pasture lands; •beyond the Jordan near Jericho, east of 63 78
Jordan, from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness, Jahzah, •Kedemoth, 64 79
Mephaath, each with its pasture lands; •from the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in 65 80
Gilead, Mahanaim, •Heshbon, Jazer, each with its pasture lands. 66 81

G. THE NORTHERN TRIBES

Issachar

||Gn46:13 ||Nb26: 23-24 Jg 10:1 7 For the sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub, Shimron: four. 1
Sons of Tola: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, Shemuel, heads of the 2

families of Tola. In the time of David these numbered twenty-two thousand six hundred stout fighting men, grouped according to their kinship.

3 Sons of Uzzi: Izrahiah. Sons of Izrahiah: Michael, Obadiah, Joel, Isshiah.
4 Five chiefs in all, •answerable for a battle force numbering thirty-six thousand men, grouped according to their kinship and families; for there were many
5 women and children. •They had kinsmen belonging to all the clans of Issachar, eighty-seven thousand stout fighting men, all belonging to one related group.

Benjamin 8:1f ||Gn46:21 ||Nb26:38

6 Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Jediael: three.
7 Sons of Bela: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth and Iri: five, heads of families, stout fighting men, forming a related group of twenty-two thousand and thirty-four men.
8 Sons of Becher: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah,
9 Anathoth, Alemeth, all these were the sons of Becher; •the heads of their families, Jos 21:18 stout fighting men, formed a related group, according to their kinship, of twenty thousand two hundred men.
10 Sons of Jediael: Bilhan. Sons of Bilhan: Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah,
11 Zethan, Tarshish, Ahishahar. •All these sons of Jediael became heads of families, stout fighting men, numbering seventeen thousand two hundred men fit for active service.
12 Shuppim and Huppim. Sons of Ir: Hushim; his son: Aher. Nb26:38-39

Naphtali ||Gn46:24 ||Nb26:48-50

13 Sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, Shallum. They were the sons of Bilhah.[a]

Manasseh

14 Sons of Manasseh: Asriel, born of his Aramaean concubine.[b] She gave birth
15 to Machir, father of Gilead. •Machir took a wife for Huppim and Shuppim. His sister's name was Maacah.
The name of the second[c] was Zelophehad. Zelophehad had daughters. Nb26:33
16 Maacah the wife of Machir gave birth to a son whom she called Peresh. His brother was called Sheresh and his sons Ulam and Rakem.
17 Sons of Ulam: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead son of Machir, son of Manasseh.
18 His sister was Malchath. She gave birth to Ishhod, Abiezer and Mahlah. Jg 6:11f
19 Shemida had sons: Ahian, Shechem, Likhi and Aniam.

Ephraim

20 Sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, ||Nb26:35
21 Tahath his son, •Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, Ezer and Elead.[d]
The men of Gath[e] killed them because they had come down to raid their
22 cattle. •Ephraim their father mourned long for them and his brothers came to
23 comfort him. •Then Ephraim went to his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to a son whom she called Beriah, 'because' she said 'in my house one is in 8:13
24 misfortune.'[f] •He had a daughter, Sheerah, who built both Lower and Upper Jos 16:3 Beth-horon and Uzzen-sheerah.

7 a. The sons of Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali, Gn 30:6-8. No doubt Hushim, cf. Gn 46:23, here represents the tribe of Dan which otherwise does not appear.
b. Manasseh was in contact with the Aramaeans, cf. Gn 31:46f. Machir is the Transjordanian half of Manasseh, Nb 32:39f, and doubtless the older half, Jg 5:14. Huppim and Shuppim are Benjaminites, but the Manassite Jabesh of Gilead was an ally of the Benjaminites, cf. Jg 21:12.
c. The first was probably Asriel.
d. The Chronicler completes the list of Nb 25:35f with a second list which adds two Benjaminite names: Zabad, cf. 8:15f, and Ezer, cf. 4:4. Ephraim and Benjamin were neighbours and some clans may have passed from one tribe to the other.
e. The Hebr. adds 'who were born in the land'.
f. Following Greek. The name Beriah is interpreted as meaning 'in misfortune *(raah)*'. Beriah is therefore an Ephraimitic clan which later went over to Benjamin, cf. 8:13. It was perhaps at that time that Benjamin became an independent tribe.

Nb 1:10 Rephah his son, Shuthelah his son, Tahan his son, •Ladan his son, Ammihud 25 26
Ex 33:11 his son, Elishama his son, •Nun his son, Joshua his son. 27

They had lands and settlements in Bethel and its outlying towns, in Naaran 28
to the east, in Gezer and its outlying towns to the west, Shechem[g] and its outlying
towns, as far as Ayyah and its outlying towns. •Beth-shean, Taanach, Megiddo, 29
Dor, each with its outlying towns, were in the hands of the sons of Manasseh.
There lived the sons of Joseph son of Israel.

Asher[h]

||Gn46:17 ||Nb26:44f Sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah; their sister Serah. 30

Sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel. He was the father of Birzaith. •Heber 31 32
became father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham and their sister Shua.

Sons of Japhlet: Pasach, Bimhal and Ashvath. These are the sons of Japhlet. 33

Sons of Shomer his brother:[i] Rohgah, Hubbah and Aram. 34

Sons of Helem his brother: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh and Amal. •Sons of 35 36
Zophah: Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri and Imrah, •Bezer, Hod, Shamma, 37
Shilshah, Ithran and Beerah. •Sons of Ithran: Jephunneh, Pispa, Ara. 38

Sons of Ulla: Arah, Hanniel, Rizia. 39

Nb 1:2 All these were sons of Asher, heads of families, stout fighting men; when 40
numbered, they formed a related group of twenty-six thousand men for active
service.

H. BENJAMIN AND JERUSALEM

The line of Benjamin[a]

7:6 ||Gn46:21 ||Nb26:38-40 8 Benjamin became father of Bela, his first-born, Ashbel second, Ahiram third, 1
8 Nohah fourth, Rapha fifth. •Bela had sons: Addar, Gera father of Ehud, 2 3
Jg 3:15f Abishua, Naaman and Ahoah, •Gera, Shephuphan and Huram. 4 5

In Geba

These are the sons of Ehud. They were heads of families of the inhabitants 6
of Geba and led them into exile at Manahath: •Naaman, Ahijah and Gera. 7
It was he who led them into exile;[b] he became the father of Uzza and Ahihud.

In Moab

He became father of Shaharaim in the plains of Moab after he had dismissed 8
his wives, Hushim and Baara. •By his new wife he had sons: Jobab, Zibia, 9
Mesha, Malcam, •Jeuz, Sachia, Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of families. 10

In Ono and Lud

By Hushim he had sons: Abitub and Elpaal. •Sons of Elpaal: Eber, Misham 11 12
and Shemed: it was he who built Ono, and Lud with its outlying towns.

In Aijalon

7:23+ Beriah and Shema. They were heads of families of the inhabitants of Aijalon 13
and put the inhabitants of Gath to flight.

His brother: Shashak. 14

In Jerusalem[c]

Jeremoth, •Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, •Michael, Ishpah, Joha were sons of 15 16
Beriah.

Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Haber, •Ishmerai, Izliah, Jobab were sons of 17 18
Elpaal.

Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, •Elioenai, Zille-thai, Eliel, •Adaiah, Beraiah, Shimrath 19,20 21
were sons of Shimei.

22,23 24 Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 25 Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, 26 Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah,
25 Iphdeiah, Penuel were sons of Shashak.
26 27 Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27 Jaareshaiah, Elijah, Zichri were sons of
Jeroham.
28 These were the heads of families, grouped according to their kinship. They =9:34
lived in Jerusalem.

In Gibeon[d] =9:35-38

29 30 31 32 At Gibeon lived Abi-gibeon, whose wife was called Maacah. 30 His first-born
son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner,[e] Nadab, 31 Gedor, Ahio, Zecher 32 and
Mikloth who became father of Shimeah. These also, near their kinsmen, lived
with their kinsmen in Jerusalem.

Saul and his family[f]

33 34 35 36 37 38 Ner became father of Kish, Kish father of Saul, Saul father of Jonathan, =9:39-43 ||1S 14:49-51
Malchi-shua, Abinadab and Eshbaal. 34 Son of Jonathan: Meribbaal. Meribbaal
became father of Micah. 36 Sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, Ahaz. 37 Ahaz
became father of Jehoaddah, Jehoaddah father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and
Zimri. Zimri became father of Moza, 38 Moza father of Binea.
Raphah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 39 Azel had six sons, whose
names were these: Azrikam, his first-born,[g] then Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah,
Hanan. All these were sons of Azel.
39 40 Sons of Eshek his brother: Ulam, his first-born, Jeush second, Eliphelet third.
Ulam had sons, stout fighting men and bowmen.[h] They had numerous sons and
grandsons, a hundred and fifty of them.
All these were sons of Benjamin.

Jerusalem, the holy city of Israel

1 9 All the Israelites were classified in related groups, and these were already
listed in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah when they were deported
2 to Babylon for their faithlessness. 2 The first to take up residence in their towns ||Ne 11:3-19
and their estates[a] were the Israelites, the priests, the Levites and the oblates; 6:33+
3 in Jerusalem lived Judaeans, Benjaminites, Ephraimites and Manassites.[b]
4 Uthai son of Ammihud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, one of the Ne 11:4
5 sons of Perez son of Judah. 5 Of the Shilonites: Asaiah, the first-born, and his
6 sons. 6 Of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel. Also their kinsmen: six hundred and ninety.
7 Of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Hodaviah, son of
8 Hassenuah; 8 Ibneiah son of Jeroham; Elah son of Uzzi, son of Michri;
9 Meshullam son of Shephatiah, son of Reuel, son of Ibnijah. 9 They had nine

g. Shechem is usually associated with Manasseh. Here the Chronicler seems to call the Ephraim-Manasseh combination 'Ephraim'.

h. Asher occupied the district between Phoenicia and Carmel, Jos 19:24-31; but the clan names here mentioned are apparently not restricted to this area.

i. 'his brother' corr.

8 a. The Chronicler returns to the Benjaminite lists, not, this time, as part of the survey of Israelite tribes, but to lead up to Jerusalem, traditionally Benjaminite territory, Jos 18:28, and the scene of David's preparations for the Temple.

b. The story of Geba (confused with Gibeah), Jg 19-21, cf. Ho 9:9, is thus connected with Moab's oppression of Benjamin from which Ehud delivered them; the author sees this oppression as a deportation which he puts in the time of Gera, Ehud's father.

c. This list of Benjaminite families must have been drawn up subsequently to the repopulation of Jerusalem after the Exile, cf. Ne 11:4-9.

d. Before the time of David the tabernacle was at Gibeon, according to the Chronicler, 21:29.

e. 'Ner' is absent from Hebr.

f. The Chronicler follows the line to the eighth generation after Saul, vv. 33-37a, and adds a second list, vv. 37b-38, going to the twelfth generation. He listed David's descendants to the Exile and after in order to emphasise the prosperity of the Davidic dynasty.

g. To reach the total of six sons the Hebr. reads 'Bocheru' for 'his first-born'.

h. Familiar description of the Benjaminites, 12:2; 2 Ch 14:7; 2 S 1:22.

9 a. The Chronicler describes the population of Jerusalem and of the countryside in a manner corresponding to the actual process of Israel's post-exilic restoration: small groups settled one after another in various places.

b. That the Manassites were there (cf. 12:20-21) is not recorded by the ancient documents, even Ezr and Ne. It is possible that we have here a reminiscence of the arrival, in the 4th century, of certain Israelites from the N. who were opposed to the Samaritan schism. In the Chronicler's eyes the holy city is the property of all the tribes.

hundred and fifty-six kinsmen, grouped according to their kinship. All these men were heads, each of his family.

Of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin, 10
•Azariah son of Hilkiah, son of 11
Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, ruler of the house of God. •Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, Maasai 12
son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of Meshillemith, son of Immer. •They had kinsmen, heads of families, one thousand seven hundred and 13
sixty stout fighting men who undertook the duties of the Temple of God.

Of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah 14
2Ch20:14 of the sons of Merari, •Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, Mattaniah son of Mica, son 15
of Zichri, son of Asaph, •Obadiah son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun, 16
and Berechiah son of Asa, son of Elkanah who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

26:1 The keepers of the gate: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman and their kinsmen. 17
Shallum, their head, •still keeps station at the royal gate, to the east. These were 18
the gatekeepers of the camps of the Levites. •Shallum son of Kore, son of 19
Ebiasaph, son of Korah, with his brother Korahites, of the same family, were
2Ch31:3 responsible for the liturgical service; they were keepers of the threshold for the Tent, as their fathers, in charge of the camp of Yahweh, had guarded the entrance to it.[c] •At one time, Phinehas son of Eleazar had ruled them (may Yahweh 20
be with him!). •Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was keeper of the gate at the 21
entrance to the Tent of Meeting. •All the keepers of the gate at the thresholds 22
were picked man; there were two hundred and twelve of them. They were grouped by relationship in their various villages. These were confirmed in office by David and Samuel the seer because of their loyalty. •They and their sons had the 23
guardianship of the gates of the Temple of Yahweh, the house of the Tent.[d]

26:13 On the four sides stood the keepers of the gate, east, west, north, and south. 24
Their kinsmen in their villages would come to join them for a week from time 25
to time, •since the four head gatekeepers themselves lived there permanently. 26
They were the Levites responsible for the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. •They spent the night in the precincts of the house of God, their duties 27
being to guard it and open it every morning.

Some of them were responsible for the furnishings of worship; they counted 28
them whenever they put them away and took them out. •Certain others were in 29
charge of the furniture and all the sacred furnishings, the fine flour, the wine, the oil, the incense, the spices, •while those who prepared the mixture for the 30
spices were priests.

One of the Levites, Mattithiah—he was the first-born of Shallum the 31
Lv 2:4-7 Korahite—was, because of his loyalty, made responsible for making the offerings that were baked on the pan. •Some of their kinsmen the Kohathites were 32
responsible for the loaves to be set out in rows sabbath by sabbath.

Ps 134:2 These are the cantors,[e] heads of the levitical families. When free from service 33
they lived in the Temple chambers, because they were on duty day and night.

=8:28 These were the heads of the levitical families, grouped according to their 34
kinship. These heads lived in Jerusalem.[f]

I. SAUL, DAVID'S PREDECESSOR

=8:29-38 **The ancestors of Saul**

At Gibeon lived Abi-gibeon and Jeiel, whose wife was called Maacah, 35
His first-born son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, •Gedor, Ahio, 36 37
Zechariah and Mikloth. •Mikloth became father of Shimeam. These also, near 38
their kinsmen, lived with their kinsmen in Jerusalem.

Ner became father of Kish, Kish father of Saul, Saul father of Jonathan, 39
Malchi-shua, Abinadab and Eshbaal. •Son of Jonathan: Meribbaal. Meribbaal 40

41 42 became father of Micah. •Sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tahrea.• Ahaz
became father of Jarah, Jarah father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri; Zimri
43 became father of Moza, •Moza father of Binea.
44 Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. •Azel had six sons; their
names were these: Azrikam, his first-born, then Ishmael, Shearíah, Obadiah,
Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.

The death of Saul

1 10 The Philistines made war on Israel, and the Israelites fled from the ‖1S31:1-13
2 Philistines and were slaughtered on Mount Gilboa. •The Philistines pressed
Saul and his sons hard and killed Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the
3 sons of Saul. •The fighting grew heavy about Saul; the bowmen took him off
4 his guard, so that he fell wounded by the bowmen. •Then Saul said to his
armour-bearer, 'Draw your sword and run me through with it. I do not want
these uncircumcised men to come and gloat over me'. But his armour-bearer was
5 afraid and would not do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. •His
armour-bearer, seeing that Saul was dead, fell on his sword too and died with
6 him. •And so Saul died, he and his three sons and all his House together.
7 When all the Israelites who were in the valley saw that the men of Israel had
taken to flight and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their towns
and fled away. The Philistines then came in and occupied them.
8 When the Philistines came on the following day to strip the dead, they found
9 Saul and his sons lying on Mount Gilboa. •They stripped him and, taking his
head and his armour, had them carried round the land of the Philistines to
10 proclaim the good news to their idols and their people. •They placed his armour
in the temple of their god, but his head they nailed up in the temple of Dagon.
11 When all the inhabitants of Gilead[a] heard all that the Philistines had done
12 to Saul, •all the warriors set off; and they took the bodies of Saul and his sons
away and, bringing them to Jabesh, they buried their bones under the tamarisk
of Jabesh; and they fasted for seven days.
13 Saul died because he had shown himself unfaithful to Yahweh: he had not
kept the word of Yahweh; he had even questioned and consulted a necromancer.
14 He had not consulted Yahweh, who therefore put him to death and transferred
the monarchy to David son of Jesse.

II. DAVID, FOUNDER OF THE TEMPLE WORSHIP

A. DAVID THE KING

David is anointed king[a] ‖2S5:1-3

1 11 All the tribes of Israel then rallied to David at Hebron. 'Look,' they said
2 'we are your own flesh and blood. •In days past when Saul was our king,
it was you who led Israel in all their exploits; and Yahweh your God said to
you, "You are the man who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you shall
3 be the leader of my people Israel". ' •So all the elders of Israel came to the king
at Hebron, and David made a pact with them at Hebron in the presence of

c. The Chronicler likens Jerusalem to the Israelite camp described in the 'Priestly' texts.

d. In this chapter (which preludes the Davidic organisation in ch. 26) the tabernacle is not in Jerusalem but at Gibeon, 21:29. The Levites have their own quarters (beginning of the process of settlement) but come to the tabernacle (already called 'Temple') to carry out their functions; some of them live near it. It remains only for David to see them housed in the city itself.

e. Sung worship did in fact pre-date David, but the Chronicler transfers to the Gibeon period the Jerusalem organisation as known to himself.

f. The Levites did not yet live in Jerusalem; the Chronicler is simply repeating 8:28-38 verbatim.

10 a. 'all the inhabitants of Gilead' corr.; 'all Jabesh of Gilead' Hebr., cf. 1 S 31:11.

11 a. It was only some years after Saul's death that this alliance of the N. tribes took place, but the Chronicler wishes to present David as the one who united all the tribes under Yahweh.

1S16:1-13 Yahweh, and they anointed David king of Israel, in accordance with the word of Yahweh through Samuel.

The capture of Jerusalem

||2S5:6-10 Js 19:10 David with all Israel marched on Jerusalem (that is to say, Jebus); the 4
inhabitants of the country were Jebusites. •The inhabitants of Jebus said to 5
David, 'You will not get in here'. But David captured the fortress of Zion,
that is, the Citadel of David. •David said, 'The first to strike down a Jebusite 6
shall become leader and commander'. Joab son of Zeruiah was first to go up,
and became leader. •David went to live in the fortress, and that is how it came 7
to be called the Citadel of David. •He then built a wall round the city, and the 8
Millo as well as the surrounding wall, while Joab restored the rest of the city.[b]
David grew greater and greater, and Yahweh Sabaoth was with him. 9

David's champions

These are the principal champions of David, those who in his reign grew in 10
power with him and who, with all Israel, had made him king in accordance
||2S23:8-39 with the word of Yahweh concerning Israel. •This is the roll of David's 11
27:2 champions: Jashobeam the Hachmonite, leader of the Thirty; it was he who
wielded his battle-axe against three hundred whom he killed at one time.
27:4 After him there was Eleazar son of Dodo, the Ahohite, one of the three 12
champions. •He was with David at Pas-dammim when the Philistines mustered 13
for battle there. There was a field full of barley there; the army took flight before
the Philistines, •but they positioned themselves in the middle of the field, defended it 14
and struck down the Philistines. So Yahweh brought about a great victory.

Three out of the Thirty went down to David at the rock near the Cave of 15
Adullam while a company of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of the
Rephaim. •David was then in the stronghold and there was a Philistine garrison 16
in Bethlehem. •'Oh' David sighed 'if someone would fetch me a drink of water from 17
the well that stands by the gate at Bethlehem!' •At this the three champions, forcing 18
their way through the Philistine camp, drew water from the well that stands by
the gate of Bethlehem and, bringing it away, presented it to David. But David
would drink none of it and poured it out as a libation to Yahweh. •'God keep 19
me' he said 'from doing this! Am I to drink the blood of these men? For at
the risk of their lives they brought it.' And so he would not drink. Such were
the deeds of the three champions.

Abishai, the brother of Joab, was leader of the Thirty. It was he who wielded 20
his spear against three hundred whom he killed, winning himself a name among
the Thirty. •He was more famous than the Thirty and became their captain, 21
but he was no rival for the Three.[c]

Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a hero from Kabzeel, a man of many exploits, 22
struck down the two champions of Moab and, one snowy day, went down and
killed the lion in the cistern. •He was also the man who killed an Egyptian, 23
a huge man five cubits tall. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand like a weaver's
beam, but he went down against him with a staff, tore the spear from the
Egyptian's hand and killed the man with it. •Such were the exploits of Benaiah 24
son of Jehoiada, winning him a name among the thirty champions. •He was more 25
famous than the Thirty, but he was no rival for the Three. David put him in
command of his bodyguard.

The valiant champions: 26
Asahel the brother of Joab.
Elhanan son of Dodo, from Bethlehem.
Shammoth from Harod. 27
Helez the Pelonite.
Ira son of Ikkesh, from Tekoa. 28
Abiezer from Anathoth.

29 Sibbecai from Hushah.
Ilai from Ahoh.
30 Maharai from Netophah.
Heled son of Baanah, from Netophah.
31 Ithai son of Ribai, from Gibeah of Benjamin.
Benaiah from Pirathon.
32 Hurai from the wadis of Gaash.
Abiel from Beth-ha-arabah.
33 Azmaveth from Baharum.
Eliahba from Shaalbon.
34 Bene-hashem from Gizon.
Jonathan son of Shagee, from Harar.
35 Ahiam son of Sachar, from Harar.
Eliphelet son of Ur.
36 Hepher from Mecherah.
Ahijah the Pelonite.
37 Hezro from Carmel.
Naarai son of Ezbai.
38 Joel the brother of Nathan.
Mibhar son of Hagri.
39 Zelek the Ammonite.
Naharai from Beeroth, armour-bearer to Joab son of Zeruiah.
40 Ira from Jattir.
Gareb from Jattir.
41 Uriah the Hittite.
Zabad son of Ahlai.
42 Adina son of Shiza the Reubenite, leader of the Reubenites and over the Thirty.
43 Hanan son of Maacah.
Joshaphat the Mithnite.
44 Uzzia from Ashteroth.
Shama and Jeiel, sons of Hotham the Aroerite.
45 Jediael son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite.
46 Eliel the Mahavite.
Jeribai and Joshaviah, sons of Elnaam.
Ithmah the Moabite.
47 Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel from Zoba.

David's first supporters[a]

1 12 These are the men who rallied to David at Ziklag when he was still kept
from the presence of Saul son of Kish; they were champions, a standby
2 in battle, •who could handle the bow with right hand or with left, who could 8:40+
use stones or arrows.
3 Of the kinsmen of Saul the Benjaminite: •Ahiezer the leader, and Joash, sons
of Hasshemar from Gibeah, Jeziel and Pelet, sons of Azmaveth, Beracah and
4 Jehu from Anathoth, •Ishmaiah from Gibeon, a champion among the Thirty,
5 and over the Thirty; •Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan and Jozabad from Gederoth,
6,7 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, Shephatiah from Hariph, •Elkanah,
5,6
8 Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, Jashobeam, Korahites, •Joelah, Zebadiah, sons of
7 Jeroham from Gedor.

b. The Chronicler credits David alone with the building of the walls (what the Millo was his contemporaries no longer knew, cf. 1 K 9:15+) and attributes to Joab the minor work of building the houses. Nehemiah was to perform the same task, Ne 3:17f.

c. A gloss adds 'among the two'.

12 a. To the list of David's knights the Chronicler adds a representative list of all the tribes who rallied to David; he sees David as the one who gathers Israel together. Cf. 11:42 where a Reubenite is already mentioned.

Some Gadites seceded to David in the stronghold in the wilderness. They 9 8
Dt 33:20 were stout fighting men and trained, well used to shield and spear. Lions they
were in aspect, and, for speed, gazelles on the mountains. •Ezer was the leader, 10 9
Obadiah second, Eliab third, •Mishmannah fourth, Jeremiah fifth, •Attai sixth, 11,12 10,11
Eliel seventh, •Johanan eighth, Elzabad ninth, •Jeremiah tenth, Machbannai 13,14 12,13
eleventh. •These sons of Gad were troop commanders, each one in command, 15 14
the lesser of a hundred, the greater of a thousand. •These are the men who 16 15
crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it overflows its course, and put to
flight all who lived on its banks, both east and west.

Certain Benjaminites, too, and Judaeans came to David in the stronghold. 17 16
David went forward to them and addressed them. 'If you come to me as friends' 18 17
he said 'to give me help, then I am ready to join with you. But if it is to betray
me to my enemies, when I have done no wrong, then may the God of our
ancestors take note and give judgement.'

Then the spirit took possession of Amasai, leader of the Thirty: 19 18

'Go forth, David! Peace be with you, son of Jesse!
Peace to you, peace to him that helps you,
for your help is your God.'

David accepted them and added them to his other company commanders.

Certain Manassites deserted to David as he was setting out with the 20 19
Philistines to fight Saul. But he gave them no help because the Philistine chiefs,
1 S 29 after consultation, dismissed him. 'If he deserted to his master Saul' they said
'it would cost us our heads.' •He was on his way to Ziklag when these 21 20
Manassites deserted to him: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu,
Zillethai, commanders of thousands in Manasseh. •This was a reinforcement 22 21
for David and his troops, since they were all valiant champions and became
officers in the army.

Indeed reinforcements reached David every day, so that his camp grew into 23 22
a camp of prodigious size.[b]

The warriors who assured David's kingship[c]

These are the figures from the roll of warriors equipped for battle who joined 24 23
David at Hebron to transfer Saul's kingship to him in accordance with the
order of Yahweh:

Sons of Judah carrying shield and spear: six thousand eight hundred warriors 25 24
equipped for battle;

of the sons of Simeon; seven thousand one hundred champions valiant in war; 26 25

of the sons of Levi: four thousand six hundred, •in addition to Jehoiada,[d] 27,28 26,27
27:5 in command of the Aaronites, with three thousand seven hundred of these,
Zadok, a young and valiant champion, and twenty-two commanders of his family; 29 28

of the sons of Benjamin: three thousand kinsmen of Saul, most of them 30 29
hitherto in the service of the House of Saul;

of the sons of Ephraim: twenty thousand eight hundred valiant champions, 31 30
men famous in their families;

of the half-tribe of Manasseh: eighteen thousand men assigned by name to 32 31
go and proclaim David king;

of the sons of Issachar, sound judges of the times when Israel should take 33 32
action, and the way to do it: two hundred chiefs and all their kinsmen under
their command;

of Zebulun: fifty thousand men fit for service, marshalled for battle, with 34 33
warlike weapons of every kind, staunch-hearted auxiliaries;

of Naphtali: a thousand commanders, and with them thirty-seven thousand 35 34
men armed with shield and spear;

of the Danites: twenty-eight thousand six hundred men marshalled for battle; 36 35

of Asher: forty thousand men fit for service, marshalled for battle; 37 36

38/37 from Transjordania: a hundred and twenty thousand men of Reuben, Gad
and the half-tribe of Manasseh, with warlike weapons of every kind.
39/38 All these fighting men, marshalled reinforcements, came to Hebron with the
purpose and determination to proclaim David king over all Israel; and the rest of
40/39 Israel, too, were all of one mind in making David king. •For three days they
stayed there, eating and drinking with David.
41/40 Their kinsmen had made preparations for them; •furthermore, from as far
as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali their neighbours brought provisions, by
donkey and camel, mule and ox—flour cakes, fig cakes, bunches of raisins, wine,
oil, quantities of oxen and sheep; for there was joy in Israel.

The ark brought back from Kiriath-jearim

1 13 David conferred with the commanders of thousands and of hundreds and
2 with all the leaders. •To the whole assembly of Israel David said, 'If this
has your approval, and if Yahweh our God wills it so, we will send messengers
to the rest of our brothers throughout the territories of Israel, and also to the
priests and Levites in their towns and adjacent lands, bidding them join us.
3 We will then recover the ark of our God, for in the time of Saul we
neglected it.'
4 The whole assembly agreed to this, for in the eyes of all the people it was
5 the right thing to do. •So David gathered all the people together from the Shihor ||2S6:1-11
of Egypt to the Pass of Hamath to bring the ark of God from Kiriath- Jg 20:1+
6 jearim. •Then David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kiriath-jearim in
Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which bears the name of Yahweh
7 who is seated on the cherubs. •At Abinadab's house they placed the ark of God
8 on a new cart. Uzzah and Ahio were leading the cart. •David and all Israel
danced before God with all their might, singing to the accompaniment of lyres,
9 harps, tambourines, cymbals, trumpets. •When they came to the threshing-
floor of the Javelin, Uzzah stretched his hand out to hold the ark, as the oxen
10 were making it tilt. •Then the anger of Yahweh blazed out against Uzzah and
he struck him down because he had laid his hand on the ark, and he died there
11 in the presence of God. •David was displeased that Yahweh had broken out
against Uzzah, and that place was called Perez-uzzah as it still is now.
12 David went in fear of God that day. 'However can I bring the ark of God
13 to my home?' he said. •So David did not take the ark home to the Citadel of
14 David, but took it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath. •The ark of God
remained with the family of Obed-edom, in his house, for three months, and
Yahweh blessed the family of Obed-edom and everything that belonged to him.

David at Jerusalem, his palace, his children

1 14 Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to David with cedar wood and stone- ||2S5:11-16
2 masons and carpenters to build him a palace. •David then knew that
Yahweh had confirmed him as king over Israel, and that for the sake of his
people Israel his reign was being made glorious.
3 At Jerusalem David took more wives and fathered more sons and daughters. =3:5-8 ||2S5:13-15
4 These are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab,
5,6/7 Nathan, Solomon, •Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, •Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, •Elishama,
Beeliada, Eliphelet.

Victories over the Philistines

8 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of all Israel,
they all marched up to seek him out. On hearing this, David went out to meet

12 b. Lit. 'camp of the gods', Hebr. expression for superlative.
c. Census of warriors on the model of Nb 1-3; 26.
d. The Chronicler appears to identify the Benaiah son of Jehoiada of 11:22 with the priest of the same name, 15:24; 16:5. He did not choose to mention Abiathar whom Solomon dismissed in favour of Zadok.

them. •When the Philistines arrived they deployed in the Valley of the Rephaim. 9
David consulted God; 'Shall I attack the Philistines?' he asked. 'Will you deliver 10
them into my power?' Yahweh answered him, 'Attack! I will deliver them into
your power.' •Accordingly they went up to Baal-perazim and there David defeated 11
them. David said, 'Through me God has made a breach in my enemies like a
breach the waters make'. For this reason that place was called Baal-perazim.
They had left their gods behind them there, and David ordered them to be burnt. 12

Again the Philistines deployed in the valley. •David again consulted God, 13 14
and God answered, 'Do not attack them from the front; go round and engage
them opposite the balsam trees. •When you hear the sound of steps in the tops 15
of the balsam trees, launch your attack, for that will be God going out ahead
of you to rout the army of the Philistines.' •David did as God had ordered, and 16
they routed the Philistine army from Gibeon as far as Gezer.

The fame of David spread into every region, and Yahweh made him feared 17
by every nation.

B. THE ARK IN THE CITADEL OF DAVID

Preparations for moving the ark[a]

15 He put up buildings for himself in the Citadel of David and prepared 1
a place for the ark of God, and he pitched a tent for it. •Then he said, 2
Nb 1:50; 3:5f;4; 7:9 Dt 31:25 'The ark of God may be moved only by the Levites, since Yahweh has chosen
them to carry the ark of Yahweh and to serve him always'.

Then David gathered all Israel together in Jerusalem to bring the ark of 3
God up to the place he had prepared for it. •David called together the sons of 4
Aaron and the sons of Levi: •of the sons of Kohath: Uriel the chief and his 5
hundred and twenty kinsmen; •of the sons of Merari: Asaiah the chief and his 6
two hundred and twenty kinsmen; •of the sons of Gershom: Joel the chief and 7
his hundred and thirty kinsmen; •of the sons of Elizaphan: Shemaiah the chief 8
and his two hundred kinsmen; •of the sons of Hebron: Eliel the chief and eighty 9
kinsmen; •of the sons of Uzziel: Amminadab the chief and his hundred and 10
twelve kinsmen.

David summoned the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites Uriel, 11
Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab. •To these he said, 'You are 12
2Ch29:34 the heads of the levitical families. Sanctify yourselves,[b] you and your kinsmen,
and bring the ark of Yahweh, the God of Israel, up to the place I have prepared
for it. •It was because you were not there the first time that Yahweh our God 13
broke out against us,[c] because we did not approach him in the right way.' •So the 14
priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of Yahweh,
2Ch35:3 the God of Israel, •and the Levites carried the ark of God with the shafts on 15
Nb 7:9 their shoulders, as Moses had ordered in accordance with the word of Yahweh.

David then told the heads of the Levites to assign duties for their kinsmen 16
as cantors, with their various instruments of music, harps and lyres and cymbals,
to play joyful tunes. •The Levites then appointed Heman son of Joel, Asaph 17
son of Berechiah, one of his brothers, Ethan son of Kushaiah, one of their
Merarite kinsmen; •and with them, next in rank, their kinsmen: Zechariah son 18
of Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah,
Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, keepers of the gate. •Heman, Asaph 19
and Ethan, the cantors, were to clash the cymbals of bronze; •Zechariah, 20
Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah were to play
26:4,29 the keyed harp.[d] •Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel and 21
Azaziah, giving the beat, were to play the octave lyre. •Chenaniah, a chief of 22
the Levites and versed in divine oracles, was to expound these, being expert
in them. •Berechiah and Elkanah were to be gatekeepers to the ark. •The priests 23 24
Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah and Eliezer were

to sound the trumpet before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah were to be gatekeepers to the ark.[e]

The ark is brought to Jerusalem

25 So David, with the elders of Israel and the commanders of thousands, went ||2S6:12-19
to bring up the ark of the covenant of Yahweh from Obed-edom's house with
26 great rejoicing. •And since God was helping the Levites who carried the ark of
27 the covenant of Yahweh, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. •David
was wearing a cloak of fine linen, like all the Levites who carried the ark, the
cantors and Chenaniah, the officer in charge of its transportation. David also
28 wore the linen ephod. •Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of
Yahweh with acclaim, to the sound of the horn, of trumpets, of cymbals, making
29 harp and lyre resound. •Now as the ark of the covenant of Yahweh entered the
Citadel of David, Michal the daughter of Saul was watching from the window
and saw King David dancing and exultant; and she despised him in her heart.

1 16 They brought the ark of God in and put it inside the tent that David had ||2S6:17-19
pitched for it; and they offered holocausts before God, and communion
2 sacrifices. •And when David had finished offering holocausts and communion
3 sacrifices, he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh. •He then distributed
to all the Israelites, men and women, a loaf of bread each, a portion of dates,
and a raisin cake.[a]

The service of the Levites before the ark

4 David appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of Yahweh, Si 47:9
5 to commemorate, glorify and praise Yahweh, the God of Israel: •first Asaph,
second Zechariah, then Uzziel,[b] Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah,
Obed-edom, Jeiel. These were to play the harp and the lyre, Asaph was to clash
6 the cymbals. •The priests Benaiah and Jahaziel were to keep sounding the
7 trumpet before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh. •That day, David, foremost
in praising Yahweh, entrusted this song of praise[c] to Asaph and his kinsmen:

8 Give thanks to Yahweh, call his name aloud, ||Ps105:1-15
proclaim his deeds to the peoples.
9 Sing to him, play to him,
tell over all his marvels.
10 Glory in his holy name,
let the hearts that seek Yahweh rejoice!

11 Seek Yahweh and his strength,
seek his face untiringly;
12 remember the marvels he has done,
his wonders, the judgements from his mouth.
13 Stock of Israel his servant,
sons of Jacob his chosen one,
14 he is Yahweh our God;
his authority is over all the earth.

15 a. The Chronicler is about to define the part played in the ceremony by priests and Levites, after the fashion of the 'Priestly' texts.

b. By ceremonial ablution, eating of sacrificial meat, cf. Lv 22:2, and abstention from sexual intercourse, 1 S 21:6.

c. The author's interpretation of Uzzah's death, 13:10f, cf. 2 S 6:8+.

d. Translation uncertain. The names of the other musical instruments are found in Ps.

e. The Chronicler has combined three lists: first, that of the famous cantors Heman, Asaph and Ethan, cf. 6:18-32; second, a list of twelve keepers of the gate; third, a list of seven priests together with the mention of Obed-edom and Jehiah as 'gatekeepers to the ark', an expression corresponding to the situation in his day; there are two legitimate sanctuaries, the ark and the tabernacle, 16:37-42. Among these people the Chronicler has divided the various musical functions. The oracular and prophetic function which the author sees in the liturgical chant, 25:1, is attributed to Chenaniah who, in v. 27, is charged with the 'bearing' (*massa*) of the ark; but *massa* also means 'oracle'.

16 a. Or one might correct, and read 'each had his portion of food, a sacred morsel of beef and a sacred morsel of mutton'.

b. 'Uzziel', cf. 15:18; 'Jeiel' Hebr.

c. This hymn is made up of fragments of Ps 105, 96 and 106, with a few textual variants.

Remember his covenant for ever,
his word of command for a thousand generations,
the pact he made with Abraham,
his oath to Isaac.

He established it as a statute for Jacob,
an everlasting covenant for Israel.
'I give you a land,' he said
'Canaan, your allotted heritage,
'there where you were easily counted,
'few in number, strangers to the country.'

They went from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
he let no man oppress them,
he punished kings on their behalf.
'Do not touch my anointed ones,' he said
'do not harm my prophets.'

||Ps 96

Sing to Yahweh, all the earth.
Proclaim his salvation day after day,
tell of his glory among the nations,
tell his marvels to every people.

Yahweh is great, loud must be his praise,
he to be feared beyond all gods.
Nothingness, all the gods of the nations.

Yahweh himself made the heavens;
in his presence are splendour and majesty,
in his sanctuary power and joy.

Pay tribute to Yahweh, families of the peoples,
tribute to Yahweh of glory and power,
tribute to Yahweh of his name's due glory.

Bring out the offering, bear it before him,
worship Yahweh in his sacred court,
tremble before him, all the earth!

Firm has he made the world, and unshakeable.
Let the heavens be glad, let earth rejoice!
Say among the nations, 'Yahweh is king!'
Let the sea thunder and all that it holds,
let the fields exult and all that is in them,
let all the woodland trees cry out for joy,
at the presence of Yahweh;
for he comes to judge the earth.

Ps 106:1, 47-48
Jr 33:11

Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good,
his love is everlasting.

Say, 'God of our salvation, save us,
gather us, rescue us from among the heathen,
to give thanks to your holy name
and to find our happiness in praising you.'

Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel
from all eternity and for ever!
And let all the people say, 'Amen!'
Alleluia!

37 There before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh David left Asaph and his 25:1
kinsmen to maintain a permanent ministry before the ark as each day's ritual
38 required, •and also Obed-edom, with his sixty-eight kinsmen. Obed-edom son
of Jeduthun, and Hosah[d] were to be keepers of the gate.
39 Zadok the priest and the priests, his kinsmen, he left before the tabernacle
40 of Yahweh on the high place at Gibeon •to offer holocausts to Yahweh
unfailingly, morning and evening, on the altar of holocaust, and to carry out
41 all that is written in the Law of Yahweh laid down for Israel. •With them were
Heman and Jeduthun and the rest of those who were chosen and assigned by
42 name to give praise to God, 'for his love is everlasting'. •With them were Heman
and Jeduthun who were to sound the trumpets, cymbals and musical instruments
accompanying the hymns to God. The sons of Jeduthun were given charge of
the gate.
43 Then all went away, each to his own house, and David returned to bless his ||2S6:19-20
household.

The prophecy of Nathan[a] ||2S7:1-17

1 17 Once David had settled into his house, he said to the prophet Nathan,
'Here am I living in a house of cedar, while the ark of Yahweh's covenant
2 is still beneath the awning of a tent'. •Nathan said to David, 'Do all that is in
your mind, for God is with you'.
3 But that very night the word of Yahweh came to Nathan,
4 'Go and tell my servant David, "Yahweh says this: You are not the man
5 to build me a house to dwell in. •I have never stayed in a house from the
day I brought Israel out until today, but went from tent to tent, from one shelter
6 to another. •In all my journeying with the whole of Israel, did I say to any one
of the judges of Israel, whom I had appointed as shepherds of my people: Why
7 have you not built me a house of cedar? •This is what you must say to my
servant David: Yahweh Sabaoth says this: I took you from the pasture,
8 from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel. •I have been with
you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will
9 give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. •I will provide 2 M 5:19
a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall live in that
place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to destroy
10 them, as they did •in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel;
I will subdue all their enemies. I will make you great;[b] Yahweh will make
11 you a House. •And when your days are ended and you must go to your ||2S7:12f
ancestors, I will preserve your offspring after you, a son of your own, and make
12 his sovereignty secure. •It is he who shall build a house for me and I will make 28:6
13 his throne firm for ever. •I will be a father to him and he a son to me. I will
not withdraw my favour from him, as I withdrew it from your predecessor.
14 I will preserve him for ever in my house and in my kingdom; and his throne
shall be established for ever." '
15 Nathan related all these words to David and this whole revelation.

David's prayer ||2S7:18-29

16 King David then went in and, seated before Yahweh, said:
'Who am I, Yahweh God, and what is my House, that you have led me as
17 far as this? •Yet in your eyes, O God, this is still not far enough, and you make
your promises extend to your servant's House into the distant future. You show
18 me as it were a line of men, and it is Yahweh God, who promises it. •What
more can David say to you for the honour you have given to your servant?

d. Jeduthun, known also from the titles of Ps 39, 62 and 77, is apparently the same as Ethan. He appears here as the father of Obed-edom, v. 38, and therefore of the gatekeepers, v. 42. Certain Levites in the times of Nehemiah were descendants of his, Ne 11:17; 1 Ch 9:16. On Hosah, cf. 26:10.

17 a. The author follows 2 S 7 closely with a few characteristic modifications.

b. 'I will make you great' corr.; 'I declare to you' Hebr.

You yourself have singled out your servant. •For your servant's sake, this dog 19
of yours,[c] you have done such a great thing by revealing all this greatness to come.
Si 36:4 There is none like you, no God except you alone, that we have ever heard of. 20
Is there another people on the earth like your people Israel, with a God setting 21
out to redeem it and make it his people, giving yourself a name for great and
terrible things by driving nations out before your people whom you redeemed
from Egypt? •You made your people Israel your own people for ever; and you, 22
Yahweh, have become their God. •Now, Yahweh, let the promise you have 23
made to your servant and to his House be always kept, and do as you have said.
May this promise hold good and your name be exalted for ever; may they say, 24
"Yahweh Sabaoth is the God of Israel, he is God for Israel." The House of your
servant David will be made secure in your presence, •since you yourself, 25
my God, have made the revelation to your servant that you would build him a
House; and so your servant has ventured to offer this prayer in your presence.
Yes, Yahweh, you are God indeed, and you have made this kind promise to your 26
Ps 21:6 servant. •Be pleased, then, to bless the House of your servant, that it may 27
continue for ever in your presence; for what you, Yahweh, have blessed is
blessed for ever.'

‖2S8:1-14 **The wars of David**

18 After this, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them. From the 1
hands of the Philistines he took Gath and its outlying villages. •He also 2
defeated the Moabites; the Moabites became subject to David, paying him tribute.
At Hamath David defeated Hadadezer[a] king of Zobah on his way to 3
consolidate his power over the river Euphrates. •David captured one thousand 4
chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers from
him; David hamstrung all the chariot teams, keeping only a hundred of them.
The Aramaeans of Damascus came to the help of Hadadezer king of Zobah, 5
but David killed twenty-two thousand men of the Aramaeans. •Then David 6
imposed governors on Aram of Damascus, and the Aramaeans became subject
to David, paying him tribute. Wherever David went, God gave him victory.
David took the golden shields carried by the guards of Hadadezer and brought 7
them to Jerusalem. •From Tibhath and from Cun, towns belonging to Hadadezer, 8
22:3 David took a great quantity of bronze; with this Solomon made the bronze Sea
and the bronze pillars and furnishings.
When Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army 9
of Hadadezer king of Zobah, •he sent his son Hadoram to King David to greet 10
him and to congratulate him on fighting and defeating Hadadezer, since
Hadadezer was the enemy of Tou. He sent articles of every kind in gold, silver
26:26 and bronze, •which King David also consecrated to Yahweh together with the 11
silver and gold he had levied from all the nations: Edom, Moab, Ammonites,
Philistines, Amalek.
Abishai son of Zeruiah defeated the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, eighteen 12
thousand of them. •He imposed governors on Edom, and all the Edomites 13
became subject to David. Wherever David went, God gave him victory.

The exploits of David's commanders

‖2S8:15-18 David ruled over all Israel, administering law and justice to all his people. •Joab 14 15
son of Zeruiah was in command of the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was
recorder; •Zadok son of Ahitub and Abiathar son of Ahimelech[b] were priests; 16
Shavsha was secretary; •Benaiah son of Jehoiada was in command of the 17
Cherethites and Pelethites; David's sons held the first place at the king's side.[c]
‖2S10:1-19 19 After this, Nahash king of the Ammonites died and his son Hanun suc- 1
ceeded him. •David thought, 'I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash 2
since his father was kind to me'. And David sent messengers with his condo-
lences on his father's death. But when David's servants reached Hanun in the

3 land of the Ammonites to present these condolences, •the Ammonite leaders,
said to Hanun, 'Do you imagine David means to honour your father when he
sends you messengers of sympathy? On the contrary, the reason why his servants
have come to you is to explore, overthrow and reconnoitre the country.'
4 Whereupon Hanun seized David's servants, shaved them, cut their clothes half-
5 way up to the buttocks, and sent them away. •David was soon told what had
happened to these men; he sent someone to meet them, for the men were covered
with shame. 'Stay in Jericho' the king said 'until your beards have grown again,
and come back then.'
6 The Ammonites saw that they had incurred the enmity of David, and
accordingly Hanun and the Ammonites sent a thousand talents of silver to
hire chariots and charioteers from the Aramaeans of Upper Mesopotamia, of
7 Maacah and of Zobah. •They hired thirty-two thousand chariots; also the king
of Maacah with his army. These came and encamped before Medeba, while
the Ammonites, having left their towns and mustered, were advancing to the
8 war. •When David heard this, he sent Joab with all the common soldiers and
9 the champions. •The Ammonites marched out and drew up their line of battle
at the approaches to the town, but the kings who had come kept their distance
10 in the open country. •Joab, seeing that he had to fight on two fronts, to his
front and to his rear, chose the best of Israel's picked men and drew them up
11 in line facing the Aramaeans. •He entrusted the rest of the army to his brother
12 Abishai, and drew them up in line facing the Ammonites. •'If the Aramaeans
prove too strong for me,' he said 'you must come to my help; if the Ammonites
13 prove too strong for you, I will come to yours. •Take courage and stand firm
for the sake of our people and the towns of our God. And may Yahweh do as he
14 thinks right.' •Joab and the force with him joined battle with the Aramaeans,
15 who fled before him. •When the Ammonites saw that the Aramaeans had taken
flight, they too fled before Abishai, Joab's brother, and withdrew into their
town. Then Joab came back to Jerusalem.
16 Seeing that they had been defeated by Israel, the Aramaeans sent messengers
and mobilised the Aramaeans from beyond the river, with Shophach, commander
17 of Hadadezer's army, at their head. •Word of this was brought to David, who
mustered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, made contact with them and took up
position near them. David drew up his line of battle facing the Aramaeans, who
18 then engaged him. •But the Aramaeans gave ground before Israel, and David
killed seven thousand of their chariot teams and forty thousand foot soldiers.
19 He also killed Shophach their general. •When the vassals of Hadadezer saw
that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became
subject to him. The Aramaeans were reluctant to give any more help to the
Ammonites.

1 **20** At the turn of the year, the time when kings go campaigning, Joab led out ||2 S 11:1
the troops and ravaged the land of the Ammonites and went to lay siege
to Rabbah. David, however, remained in Jerusalem. Joab reduced Rabbah and ||2S12:26
2 dismantled it. •David took the crown from the head of Milcom[a] and found that ||2S12:30-31
it weighed a talent of gold; in it was set a precious stone which made an
ornament for David's head. He carried off a great quantity of spoil from the
3 town. •He brought away its population and set them to work with saws, iron 2 S 12:31
picks and axes. David treated all the Ammonite towns in the same way. Then
David and the whole army returned to Jerusalem.
4 After this, war with the Philistines was resumed at Gezer. This was when ||2S21:18-22

c. 'this dog of yours' corr.; 'according to your own heart' Hebr.

18 a. 'Hadadezer' with the present Hebr.; the original text (cf. Greek) probably read 'Hadarezer' here and in what follows.
b. Var. 'Abimelech'.
c. According to 2 S they were priests; but for the Chronicler, as for the 'Priestly' texts and Ezekiel, the priests are of levitical, and not Judaean descent; moreover, the political and the religious authorities are distinct.

20 a. In place of 'Milcom' the Hebr. reads 'their king'.

Dt2:10+ Sibbecai of Hushah killed Sippai, a descendant of the Rephaim. The Philistines were subdued.

War with the Philistines broke out again, and Elhanan son of Jair killed 5
Lahmi, the brother of Goliath of Gath,[b] the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

There was another battle at Gath, where there was a man of huge stature 6
with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all. He too was a descendant of Rapha. •Jonathan, son of David's brother Shimea, 7
killed him when he defied Israel.

These men were descended from Rapha of Gath and they fell at the hands 8
of David and his guards.

C. PRELUDE TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE[a]

||2S24:1-9 **The census**

21 Satan[b] rose against Israel and incited David to take a census of the 1
Israelites. •David said to Joab and to the senior army officers, 'Go, and 2
take a census of Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, then come back and tell me the total.' •Joab said, 'May Yahweh multiply the people a hundred times! My lord 3
king, are they not all servants of my lord? Why should my lord make this enquiry? Why should guilt be brought on Israel?' •But the king enforced his 4
order on Joab, and Joab went away, covered the whole of Israel, and then returned to Jerusalem. •Joab gave David the figures for the census of the people: the 5
whole of Israel numbered one million one hundred thousand men capable of drawing sword, and Judah four hundred and seventy thousand capable of drawing sword.[c] •Joab had found the king's command so distasteful that he had 6
taken no census of Levi or of Benjamin.

||2S24:10-17 **The pestilence. God's forgiveness**

God looked with displeasure on these proceedings, and he struck Israel. 7
Then David said to God, 'I have committed a grave sin by doing this. But now 8
I beg you to forgive your servant for this fault. I have been very foolish.' •Then 9
Yahweh spoke to Gad, David's seer, •'Go and say to David, "Yahweh 10
says this: I offer you three things; choose one of them for me to do to you".' So Gad went to David and said, 'Yahweh, says this, "Take your choice: 11
three years of famine, three months of disaster at the hands of your enemies, 12
with the sword of your enemies thrusting at you, or the sword of Yahweh and three days' pestilence in the country, with the angel of Yahweh ravaging all the territory of Israel". Now decide how I am to answer him who sends me.' 'This is a hard choice' David said to Gad. 'But let me rather fall into the power 13
of Yahweh, since his mercy is very great; and not into the power of men.'

So Yahweh sent a pestilence on Israel, and seventy thousand men of the 14
2 Ch 3:1 Israelites died. •Then God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he 15
was about to destroy it, Yahweh looked and thought better of this evil;[d] and he said to the destroying angel, 'Enough! Now withdraw your hand.' The angel of Yahweh was standing beside the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
Jos 5:13 [e]David, raising his eyes, saw the angel of Yahweh standing between earth and 16
heaven, a drawn sword in his hand stretched out towards Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. •'Was it not I who 17
sinned, who did this most wicked thing? But these, this flock, what have they done? Yahweh my God, let your hand lie heavy on me and on my family; but let your people escape the plague.'

||2S24:18-25 **The altar is built**[f]

The angel of Yahweh then said to Gad, 'David must go up and erect an altar 18

19 to Yahweh on the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.' •So David went up
20 at the word which Gad had spoken in the name of Yahweh. •Now Ornan, as
he turned, had seen the angel and had hidden, with his four sons. Ornan was
21 threshing wheat •when David came to him. Ornan looked down, saw David, came
off the threshing-floor and with his face to the ground did homage to David.
22 Then David said to Ornan, 'Let me have the site of this threshing-floor, to build
an altar to Yahweh. Let me have it at its full price. For then the plague will
23 be turned away from the people.' •'Take it' Ornan said to David 'and let my
lord the king do as he thinks right. Look, I will give you the oxen for holocausts,
the threshing-sled for the wood and the wheat for the oblation. I give them all.'
24 But King David said to Ornan, 'No. I must buy it from you at the full price;
I will not take for Yahweh what belongs to you, offering holocausts that cost
25 me nothing.' •So David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for
the site.
26 David built an altar there to Yahweh and offered holocausts and communion Jg 6:21
sacrifices. He called on Yahweh, and Yahweh answered him with fire from
27 heaven on the altar of holocaust •and ordered the angel to sheathe his sword. 1K18:38
28 Then it was, seeing that Yahweh had answered him on the threshing-floor of
29 Ornan the Jebusite, that David offered sacrifice there. •The tabernacle of Yahweh
that Moses had made in the wilderness and the altar of holocaust were at that
30 time on the high place at Gibeon, •but David had not been able to go into
God's presence there to consult him, so fearful was he of the sword of the angel
1 of Yahweh. **22** Then David said, 'Here is the house of Yahweh God; and this
shall be the altar of holocaust for Israel'.

Preparations for the building of the Temple[a]

2 David gave orders for the gathering of all the strangers living[b] in the land 2Ch2:16
of Israel and set stonecutters preparing dressed stones for building the house of 1K5:31-32
3 God. •David furthermore stored up great quantities of iron to make nails for 18:8
the leaves of the doors and for clamps, and more bronze than could be weighed;
4 logs of cedar too, beyond number, the Sidonians and Tyrians having brought Ezr 3:7
cedar logs to David in great quantities.
5 Then David said, 'My son Solomon is young, of tender years, and the house
to be built for Yahweh must be of great splendour, renowned for its magnificence in every country. I will make preparations for him.' And so, before he
6 died, David made ample preparations. •He then summoned his son Solomon
7 and instructed him to build a house for Yahweh, the God of Israel. •'My son,'
David said to Solomon 'my heart was set on building a house for the name
8 of Yahweh my God. •But the word of Yahweh came to me, "You have shed
much blood and fought great battles; it is not for you to build a house for my
9 name, since you have shed so much blood on the earth in my presence.[c] •But

b. The Chronicler thus interprets 2 S 21:19 with an eye to 1 S 17 where David is credited with the defeat of Goliath.

21 a. This chapter begins a most important section: the organisation of worship and sacred officials in the Davidic community to which the messianic promises of Nathan's oracle were addressed. The Chronicler goes further than Ezk 40-48 and boldly puts the organisation of the Temple officials (assuming uniformity of Temple worship) before the building of the Temple itself.

b. The Chronicler, with his developed theology, attributes to Satan (cf. Jb 1:6+) what 2 S, with the ultimate cause in mind, ascribed to 'the anger of Yahweh'.

c. Different figures in 2 S 24, cf. 1 Ch 27:24. As in Nb 1, Levi is excluded from the census.

d. The Chronicler stresses God's protection of the holy city more than 2 S does.

e. This verse, peculiar to the Chronicler, presents a hitherto unfamiliar picture of angels rather like that in Dn 9:21 and 2 M 10:29.

f. The Chronicler distinguishes the building of the altar from that of the Temple, as he does for the post-exilic period, Ezr 3:1f. It is not a temporary altar, unlike 2 S, but the permanent Temple altar, 22:1.

22 a. The chapters that follow are not derived from any biblical source. They treat of the Chronicler's favourite themes, but several passages seem to point to an earlier source.

b. Commonly understood to refer to conquered Canaanites, cf. Ex 12:48+, but in 2 Ch 30:25 the same term (*ger*) is used of proselytes. According to Ezr 1:4, cf. 3:1–4:5, the faithful from afar will rebuild the Temple; according to Is 60:10 the Jerusalem of messianic times is to be rebuilt by those from abroad.

c. Abhorrence of spilt blood is a feature of the 'Priestly' texts. Cf. Gn 9:4f; Lv 1:5+.

now a son is born to you. He shall be a man of peace, and I will give him peace from all the enemies that surround him; for Solomon is his name,[d] and in his days I will give Israel peace and quiet. •He shall build a house for my name; 10
28:6 2 S 7:12f he shall be a son to me and I a father to him, and I will make his royal throne secure in Israel for ever." •Now, my son, may Yahweh be with you and give 11 you success in building a house for Yahweh your God, as he has said concerning you. •Yet may he give you discretion and discernment, may he give you his 12 orders for Israel so that you may observe the Law of Yahweh your God. Success will be yours if you carefully observe the statutes and the ordinances 13
Dt31:23 that Yahweh has prescribed to Moses for Israel. Be strong and stand fast, be fearless, be dauntless. •Poor as I am, I have set aside for the house of Yahweh 14 one hundred thousand talents of gold, a million talents of silver and more bronze and iron than can be weighed; I have stored up wood and stone too, to which you must add more. •You will have many workmen, stonecutters, 15 masons, carpenters, skilled artisans of every kind, •while your gold and silver, 16 bronze and iron, will be beyond reckoning. Set to work, then, and may Yahweh be with you!'

David then ordered all the Israelite leaders to help his son Solomon. 17 'Is not Yahweh your God with you?' he said. 'He has given you peace on all 18 sides, since he has put the inhabitants of the country into my power and the land has been subdued for Yahweh and for his people. •So now devote heart 19 and soul to the search for Yahweh your God. Set to and build the sanctuary of Yahweh your God, so that you can bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh and the holy things of God to the house that is built for the name of Yahweh.'

The orders and functions of the Levites[a]

1K 1:1–2:1 2Ch 8:14 Ne 12:45 **23** David, an old man now with his fill of days, made his son Solomon king 1 over Israel. •He gathered all the Israelite leaders together, with the priests 2 and Levites.

23:27 Nb 4:3 2Ch 31:16 A census was taken of those Levites thirty years old and upwards. On a 3 count of heads their number was thirty-eight thousand;[b] •twenty-four thousand 4 of these were responsible for the services[c] of the house of Yahweh; six thousand were scribes and judges; •four thousand were keepers of the gate; four thousand 5
Am 6:5 praised Yahweh on the instruments David had made[d] for that purpose.

[e] Then David divided the Levites into orders: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. 6
26:21f 2Ch 31:17 For the Gershonites:[f] Ladan and Shimei. •Sons of Ladan: Jehiel first, 7 8 Zetham, Joel; three in all. •Sons of Shimei: Shelomoth, Haziel, Haran; three 9 in all. These are the heads of families of Ladan. •Sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina, 10 Jeush, Beriah; these were the sons of Shimei; four in all. •Jahath was the eldest, 11 Zizah the second, then Jeush and Beriah, who had not many children and were reckoned as one family.

Sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, Uzziel; four in all. •Sons of Amram: 12 13
Dn 9:24 Aaron and Moses. Aaron was set apart to consecrate the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense in the presence of Yahweh, to serve him and to bless in his name for ever.[g] •Moses was a man of God whose sons were 14 given the name of the tribe of Levi. •Sons of Moses: Gershom[h] and Eliezer. 15
24:20-30 Sons of Gershom: Shebuel, the first. •Eliezer had sons: Rehabiah, the first. 16 17 Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very numerous. •Sons 18 of Izhar: Shelomith, the first. •Sons of Hebron: Jeriah first, Amariah second, 19 Jahaziel third, Jekameam fourth. •Sons of Uzziel: Micah first, Isshiah second. 20

Sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. Sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. •Eleazar 21 22 died leaving no sons but only daughters; their kinsmen, the sons of Kish, married these. •Sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder, Jeremoth; three in all. 23

23:27 These were the sons of Levi by their families, the heads of families, and those 24 registered by name, individually; whoever was twenty years old or upwards had his function in the service of the Temple of Yahweh.

For David had said, 'Yahweh, the God of Israel, has given peace to his people; and he dwells in Jerusalem for ever. •The Levites are no longer required to carry the tabernacle or any thing used in its service.' •For, according to the last words of David, the Levites who had been registered were of twenty years 23:3,24
and upwards. •Their duty is to be at the disposal of the sons of Aaron for the service of the Temple of Yahweh, in the courts and chambers, to purify everything consecrated; their duty is to serve the Temple of God. •They are also responsible for the loaves set out in rows, and for the flour for the oblation, the wafers of unleavened bread, the cakes baked on the griddle or mixed, and with the various measures of volume and of length.[f] •They have to be present every morning to give glory and praise to Yahweh, and also in the evening, •and Ps 134:2
at every offering of holocaust to Yahweh on the sabbath, New Moon or solemn Nb28-29
feast—a set number of them laid down by rule. This is a perpetual obligation for them in the presence of Yahweh. •In serving the Temple of Yahweh they observe the ritual of the Tent of Meeting, the ritual of the sanctuary and the ritual of their kinsmen, the sons of Aaron.

The classification of the priests

24 Orders of the sons of Aaron: Sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, ‖Nb 3:2-4 2Ch5:12; 8:14 Ne 12:45
Ithamar. •Nadab and Abihu died in their father's lifetime leaving no
children, so Eleazar and Ithamar became priests. •David divided them into orders with the help of Zadok, one of Eleazar's sons, and Ahimelech, one of the sons of Ithamar,[a] and made a register of them according to their duties.
The sons of Eleazar were found to have more leading men than the sons of Ithamar; accordingly, from the heads of families of the sons of Eleazar they
made sixteen orders, and from those of the sons of Ithamar, eight. •They divided them, both parties, by lot: there were consecrated officials, officials of God,
among the sons of Eleazar, as among the sons of Ithamar. •One of the Levites, the scribe Shemaiah son of Nethanel, recorded them in the presence of the king, his officers, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech son of Abiathar and the heads of the priestly and levitical families. They drew lots for each family of the sons of Eleazar and for the sons of Ithamar, turn and turn about.[b]

The first lot fell to Jehoiarib, to Jedaiah the second, •Harim the third, 1 M 2:1
Seorim the fourth, •Malchijah the fifth, Mijamin the sixth, •Hakkoz the seventh,
Abijah[c] the eighth, •Jeshua the ninth, Shecaniah the tenth, •Eliashib the eleventh, Lk 1:5
Jakim the twelfth, •Huppah the thirteenth, Ishbaal the fourteenth, •Bilgah the

d. The name Solomon comes from *shalom*, 'peace'.

23 a. Following Ezekiel's arrangement in which David organises the ministerial staff after planning for the Temple.

b. Cf. Nb 4:3. Vv. 6f, on the other hand, make 20 the age for levitical service, cf. v. 24.

c. Presumably the cantors; the categories are the same as in ch. 25 and 26: cantors, cf. ch. 25, gatekeepers, 26:1f, scribes and judges, 26:29, instrumentalists, cf. 15:19f.

d. 'David had made' corr.; 'I had made' Hebr.

e. Vv. 6-32 are an introduction, modelled on Nb 8:5f, to the organisation of sacred offices. But the functions of the Levites are not those contemplated by Nb. They no longer have to see to the transport of ark and tabernacle, Nb 3-4, because God has chosen a settled home; they are to remain in the Temple and help the priests in the task mentioned in Lv: the purifying of everything consecrated, i.e. the washing of the victims, cf. Ne 12:45; Lv 1:9,13 etc.; the loaves of offering, Lv 24:6; the fine flour for oblation, Lv 2:2; the various cakes, Lv 2:4f. The sons of Aaron do indeed enjoy special powers, vv. 13f, but the author does not here distinguish priests and Levites. This new disposition, definitive and established, derives from David, just as the old unstable and provisional one derived from Moses. In Ezr 8:28 the Levites share the sacred character of the priests, cf. 2 Ch 35:3.

f. This list is most closely related to 26:21f; it differs from the other Gershonite lists, Ex 6:17; Nb 3:18; 1 Ch 6:2,5. It seems to include non-levitical Israelites whom the Chronicler presents as Gershonites.

g. The three essential priestly functions: consecration (rite unknown; ritual eating?) of sacred food in some holy place, Lv 6:19; cf. 1 Ch 15:12+, offering of incense, cf. Nb 16:7f, blessing, cf. Nb 6:22-27.

h. Notwithstanding 5:27 and 6:1 (cf. 23:7) the Chronicler here distinguishes Gershom from Gershon.

i. Allusion to the 'sanctuary shekel', cf. e.g. Ex 30:1,3, and probably to the special cubit of 2 Ch 3:3 (the old cubit measure used in the construction of the Temple). See also Lv 19:35-36.

24 a. Eleazar's line is that of the Zadokites, cf. 6:35-38. Ithamar's is much less certain; the family returned from exile with Ezra, Ezr 8:2, and our passage connects it, through Ahimelech, with Abiathar, David's second priest. The Books of Samuel make Ahimelech father, not son, of Abiathar, 1 S 22:20; cf. 2 S 8:17. Ezekiel had recognised the Zadokites only, but the Chronicler wishes to make David's throne the rallying point of all the rival families.

b. Translation uncertain.

c. Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, was a member of this group, Lk 1:5.

fifteenth, Immer the sixteenth, •Hezir the seventeenth, Happizzez the eighteenth, 15
Pethahiah the nineteenth, Jehezkel the twentieth, •Jachin the twenty-first, Gamul 16 17
the twenty-second, •Delaiah the twenty-third, Maaziah the twenty-fourth.[d] 18

2Ch23:8 These were the men as registered by their various duties, to enter the Temple 19
of Yahweh in conformity to their rule handed on by Aaron their father as
Yahweh, the God of Israel, had laid it down for him.

As regards the rest of the sons of Levi: 20

23:16f For the sons of Amram: Shubael. For the sons of Shubael: Jehdeiah. •For 21
Rehabiah, for the sons of Rehabiah: the eldest, Isshiah. •For the Izharites: 22
Shelomoth; for the sons of Shelomoth: Jahath. •The sons of Hebron: Jeriah 23
the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. •Sons 24
of Uzziel: Micah; for the sons of Micah: Shamir; •the brother of Micah: Isshiah; 25
for the sons of Micah: Isshiah, Zechariah. •Sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. 26
Sons of Jaaziah: his son; •sons of Merari: for Jaaziah his son: Shoham, Zaccur, 27
Ibri; •for Mahli: Eleazar who had no sons; •for Kish: the sons of Kish: 28 29
Jerahmeel. •Sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder, Jerimoth. 30

These were the sons of Levi by their families. •Like their kinsmen, the sons 31
of Aaron, these families, senior and junior, drew lots in the presence of king
David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the priestly and levitical families.

The cantors

16:37-43 2Ch8:14; 23:18 Ne12:45 25 For the liturgy, David and the senior army officers set apart the sons of 1
Asaph, of Heman and of Jeduthun, prophets[a] who accompanied themselves with lyre and harp and cymbal, and a list was made of those with these duties to perform.[b]

For the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, Asharelah; the sons of 2
Asaph were under the direction of Asaph who prophesied at the king's direction.

For Jeduthun: sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, 3
Mattithiah; there were six of them under the direction of their father Jeduthun
2K3:15 who, to the sound of the lyre, prophesied to the glory and praise of Yahweh.

For Heman: sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, 4
Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi,
Hothir, Mahazioth. •All these were sons of Heman, the king's seer; these 5
sounded the trumpet to accompany God's words.[c] God gave Heman fourteen
sons and three daughters; •all of them sang in the Temple of Yahweh under 6
their father's direction to the sound of cymbal, harp and lyre, for the liturgy
in the house of Yahweh at the king's direction.

Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman, •these who had learnt to sing to Yahweh, 7
were registered with their kinsmen; the total of those so trained was two hundred
and eighty-eight. •Junior and senior, master and pupil alike, they drew lots for 8
their term of duty. •The first to whom the lot fell was the Asaphite, Joseph. 9
The second was Gedaliah, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The third was 10
Zaccur, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The fourth was Izri, twelve with 11
his sons and brothers. •The fifth was Nethaniah, twelve with his sons and brothers. 12
The sixth was Bukkiah, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The seventh was 13 14
Jesharelah, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The eight was Jeshaiah, twelve 15
with his sons and brothers. •The ninth was Mattaniah, twelve with his sons and 16
brothers. •The tenth was Shimei, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The 17 18
eleventh was Azarel, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The twelfth was 19
Hashabiah, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The thirteenth was Shubael, 20
twelve with his sons and brothers. •The fourteenth was Mattithiah, twelve with 21
his sons and brothers. •The fifteenth was Jeremoth, twelve with his sons and 22
brothers. •The sixteenth was Hananiah, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The 23 24
seventeenth was Joshbekashah, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The eighteenth 25
was Hanani, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The nineteenth was Mallothi, 26
twelve with his sons and brothers. •The twentieth was Eliathah, twelve with his 27

28 sons and brothers. •The twenty-first was Hothir, twelve with his sons and brothers.
29 30 The twenty-second was Giddalti, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The twenty-
31 third was Mahazioth, twelve with his sons and brothers. •The twenty-fourth was Romamti-ezer, twelve with his sons and brothers.

The keepers of the gate[a] 9:17-27 2Ch8:14; 23:19 Ne 12:45

1 26 As regards the orders of the gatekeepers:
For the Korahites: Meshelemiah son of Kore, one of the sons of Ebiasaph.[b]
2 Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the first-born, Jediael the second, Zebadiah
3 the third, Jathniel the fourth, •Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh.
4 Obed-edom had sons: Shemaiah the first-born, Jehozabad the second, Joah 15:21 2 S 6:10f
5 the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, •Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the
6 seventh, Peullethai the eighth; God had indeed blessed him. •To his son Shemaiah sons were born who had authority in their families, for they were
7 stout fighting men. •Sons of Shemaiah: Othni, Rephael, Obed, Elzabad and his
8 brothers[c] Elihu and Semachiah, brave men. •All these were sons of Obed-edom. These and their sons and brothers were well fitted for their task. For Obed-edom, sixty-two.
9 Meshelemiah had sons and brothers: eighteen brave men.[d]
10 Hosah, one of the sons of Merari, had sons: Shimri was the first, for although Gn48:13-20
11 he was not the first-born his father had made him the chief. •Hilkiah was the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth. The sons and brothers of Hosah were thirteen in all.
12 These, as keepers of the gate, had their orders, and the leaders of these heroes had duties corresponding to those of their kinsmen in the service of the Temple
13 14 of Yahweh. •They drew lots, junior and senior family alike, for each gate. •For 9:24 the east side the lot fell to Shelemiah, whose son Zechariah was a shrewd counsel-
15 lor; when they drew lots, the lot for the north side fell to the latter. •To
16 Obed-edom went the south, and to his sons the storehouse.[e] •To Shuppim and Hosah went the west with the Gate of the Felled Tree-trunk on the upper road.
17 The watch, turn and turn about: •on the east, six daily;[f] on the north, four daily;
18 on the south, four daily; at the storehouse, two each side; •for the Parbar[g]
19 on the west: four at the road, two at the Parbar. •These were the orders of the gatekeepers among the Korahites and Merarites.

Other levitical duties

20 The Levites, their kinsmen,[h] were responsible for those in charge of the 28:12 treasuries of the Temple of God and in charge of the treasuries of votive offerings:
21 The sons of Ladan, sons, through Ladan, of Gershon, had the Jehielites for 23:8 2 Ch 7:1
22 heads of the families of Ladan the Gershonite. •The Jehielites, Zetham and Joel his brother,[i] were responsible for the treasuries of the Temple of Yahweh.

d. Ne 12 gives two lists of priestly families with only 22 (or 21) names in all. The classification of the Chronicler seems to be of later date.

25 a. The Chronicler attributes prophetic characteristics to the sacred chant.

b. Parallel with the 24 orders of priests the Chronicler places 24 orders of cantors which he relates to the three famous names, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. The only names sufficiently attested elsewhere are of Zaccur son of Asaph, Ne 12:35 and 1 Ch 9:15 (Zichri), Mattithiah, 15:18, 21; 16:5, and Mattaniah, Ne 11:17, cf. 1 Ch 9:15. It may be that the last nine names of the sons of Heman derive from a document which was not in fact a list of names but the fragment of a psalm, the translation of which would read 'Be gracious to me, Yahweh, be gracious to me. You are my God. I have grown great, I have grown tall, you are the help I sought. Grant me many visions.'

c. Meaning uncertain.

26 a. The gatekeepers, cf. 9:17-27, are numbered with the cantors in 16:37-43. In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah they were still distinct, Ezr 2:42; Ne 11:19. This chapter, too, appears to distinguish them but it is deliberately picturing a past age.

b. 'Ebiasaph' corr.; 'Asaph' Hebr.

c. 'and his brothers' corr.

d. This remark follows on v. 3 and introduces v. 14. The observations on Obed-edom and on Hosah seem to be insertions.

e. Translation uncertain.

f. 'daily' corr.

g. Derivation and meaning uncertain.

h. 'their kinsmen' corr.

i. Zetham and Joel with Shebuel and Shelomoth are made officially responsible for the public funds or treasury, like the commission in the days of Nehemiah, Ne 13:13, or of Ezra, Ezr 8:33.

As regards the Amramites, Izharites, Hebronites, and Uzzielites: 23
Shebuel son of Gershom, son of Moses, was the officer responsible for the 24
treasuries. •His kinsmen through Eliezer: Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiah his son, 25
Joram his son, Zichri his son, Shelomoth his son. •This Shelomoth and his 26
18:11 kinsmen were responsible for all the treasuries of votive offerings dedicated by
Nb31:48-54 King David and by the heads of families as officers of thousands, of hundreds,
or other senior officers, •(they had dedicated a part of the spoils of war to make 27
the house of Yahweh more impressive), •and also for all that Samuel the seer 28
had dedicated, and Saul son of Kish, Abner son of Ner, and Joab son of Zeruiah.
All that had been dedicated was the responsibility of Shelomoth and his kinsmen.
15:22 For the Izharites: Chananiah and his sons were assigned to outside duties 29
for Israel[b] as scribes and judges.
27:17 For the Hebronites: Hashabiah and his kinsmen, one thousand seven hundred 30
fighting men to guard Israel west of Jordan in all that had to do with Yahweh and
in the service of the king. •For the Hebronites: Jerijah the chief. In the fortieth 31
year of David's reign, the pedigrees of the Hebronite families were investigated
and stout fighting men were found belonging to them at Jazer in Gilead. •King 32
David nominated two thousand seven hundred fighting men, kinsmen to Jerijah
and heads of families, as overseers of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the
half-tribe of Manasseh in all the business of God and of the king.

Military and civil organisation[a]

27 The sons of Israel; their enumeration. 1
The heads of families, the commanders of thousands and hundreds, their
scribes, these performed their duties among the people. The orders played their
part in all royal business. There was one on duty for a month, every month of
the year.[b] Each order was made up of twenty-four thousand men.
11:11 The commissioner for the first order detailed for the first month was Jashobeam 2
||2S23:8-39 son of Zabdiel. He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men. •He was 3
a son of Perez and chief of all the officers of the group detailed for the first month.
11:12 The commissioner for the order for the second month was Dodai the Ahohite.[c] 4
He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
12:28 The officer of the third group detailed for the third month was Benaiah son 5
of Jehoiada, the chief priest. He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand
men. •This was the Benaiah who was champion of the Thirty, and who was 6
commissioner for the Thirty and for his order. Ammizabad was his son.
2S2:18-23 The fourth, detailed for the fourth month, was Asahel, the brother of Joab; 7
his son Zebadiah succeeded him. He had charge of an order of twenty-four
thousand men.
The fifth, detailed for the fifth month, was the officer Shamhuth the Izrahite. 8
He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
The sixth, detailed for the sixth month, was Ira son of Ikkesh of Tekoa. 9
He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
The seventh, detailed for the seventh month, was Helez the Pelonite, one 10
of the sons of Ephraim. He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
The eighth, detailed for the eighth month, was Sibbecai of Hushah, a Zerahite. 11
He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
The ninth, detailed for the ninth month, was Abiezer of Anathoth, a Benja- 12
minite. He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
The tenth, detailed for the tenth month, was Maharai of Netophah, a Zerahite. 13
He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
The eleventh, detailed for the eleventh month, was Benaiah of Pirathon, a son 14
of Ephraim. He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
The twelfth, detailed for the twelfth month, was Heldai from Netophah, of 15
Othniel. He had charge of an order of twenty-four thousand men.
Commissioners for the tribes of Israel:[d] Eliezer son of Zichri was chief officer 16

17 for the Reubenites, Shephatiah son of Maacah for the Simeonites, •Hashabiah
18 son of Kemuel for the Levites, Zadok for the Aaronites, •Elihu, one of David's 26:30
19 brothers, for the Judaeans, Omri son of Michael for the Issacharites, •Ishmaiah
son of Obadiah for the Zebulunites, Jeremoth son of Azriel for the Naphtalites,
20 Hoshea son of Azaziah for the Ephraimites, Joel son of Pedaiah for the half-tribe
21 of Manasseh, •Iddo son of Zechariah for the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gad,
22 Jaasiel son of Abner for the Benjaminites, •Azarel son of Jeroham for the
Danites. These were the officials for the tribes of Israel.

23 David took no census of those who were twenty years old and under, since 21
24 Yahweh had promised to make Israel as numerous as the stars of heaven. •Joab
son of Zeruiah began a census, though he did not finish it. That is why the wrath
came on Israel, and the figure never reached the figure found in the Annals of
King David.[e]

25 Commissioner for the king's stores: Azmaveth son of Adiel. Commissioner 2Ch27:10
for the stores in provincial towns, villages, castles: Jonathan son of Uzziah.
26 Commissioner for the agricultural workers employed on the land: Ezri son of
27 Chelub. •Commissioner for the vineyards: Shimei of Ramah. Commissioner for Qo 2:4
those in the vineyards who looked after the wine cellars: Zabdi of Shepham.
28 Commissioner for the olives and sycamores in the lowlands: Baal-hanan of
29 Geder. Commissioner for the stores of oil: Joash. •Commissioner for cattle in
pasture at Sharon: Shitrai of Sharon. Commissioner for cattle in the valleys:
30 Shaphat son of Adlai. •Commissioner for camels: Obil the Ishmaelite. Commis-
31 sioner for donkeys: Jehdeiah of Meranoth. •Commissioner for flocks: Jaziz the
Hagrite. All these were bailiffs for King David's property.[f]

32 Jonathan, David's uncle, who was a councillor, a shrewd man and a scribe,
33 had charge of the royal children, with Jehiel son of Hachmoni. •Ahithophel was
34 the king's counsellor. Hushai the Archite was Friend of the King. •Jehoiada son 2S15:31f; 16:17
of Benaiah, and Abiathar[g] succeeded Ahithophel. Joab was commander of the
king's armies.

David's instructions for the Temple[a]

1 28 David held a meeting in Jerusalem of all the officials of Israel, the commis-
sioners for the tribes, and the officials of the orders in the royal service,
the commanders of thousands, the commanders of hundreds, the bailiffs for all
the property and livestock of the king and his sons, together with the eunuchs
2 and champions and all the stout fighting men. •Then King David rose to his
feet and said:

'My brothers and my people, listen to me. I had set my heart on building Ps132:3-7
a settled home for the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, as a footstool for our
3 God. I have made preparations for building, •but God has said to me, "You are
not to build a house for my name, for you have been a man of war and have 22:8
shed blood".

j. The office existed in Nehemiah's day, Ne 11:16. Ezekiel uses the term 'outside' for outside the sanctuary, cf. Ezk 40:17f, 31; 44:1; the reference here is therefore to ceremonial functions performed outside the sanctuary, such as carrying the ark; but there may also be a reference to levitical jurisdiction in the countryside, cf. 2 Ch 19:4f.

27 a. In Ezekiel and in the 'Priestly' documents (e.g. Nb 27:22) we find, besides the sacred functions, others that do not rest with the Levites (commissioners for the tribes, for the royal treasury, etc., privy councillors); to these the Chronicler extends his system of orders, thus imposing a scheme on the data of 2 S 23; cf. 1 Ch 11. The underlying principle is already found in Solomon's twelve prefectures or commissions, 1 K 4:7-19.

b. The translation follows the Greek.

c. The text adds 'and his group and Migloth the chief officer'.

d. As well as the Solomonic division into prefectures the Chronicler retains the old tribal division, cf. Nb 1.

e. These two observations refer to ch. 21; their purpose is apparently to solve two difficulties: what precisely David's sin was, 21:3, and why the figures of 1 Ch 21 are lower than those of 2 S 24:9.

f. This list, modelled on 2 S 8:16f; 20:23-26; 1 K 4:2f, is at variance with the data of 1 Ch 26:20f. It makes David appear more a great landowner than a king.

g. Probably the priest of that name, 1 S 22:20f. The Chronicler does not however refer to his priesthood: in the tradition of Ezk 44:15f he regards the line of Zadok, cf. 1 K 1:7f, as the one assurance that the worship is genuine.

28 a. This chapter, it seems, takes up the narrative where 23:2 left it.

'Of all my father's House it was I whom Yahweh, the God of Israel, chose 4
to be king over Israel for ever. He chose Judah for leader, my family within the
House of Judah, and of my father's sons myself, in his good pleasure, he gave
to all Israel as king. •Of all my sons—and many sons Yahweh has granted 5
me—he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the sovereign throne of Yahweh
17:12f; 22:10f; 2 S 7:12f over Israel. •He said to me, "Solomon your son is the man to build my house 6
and my courts, for I have chosen him to be a son to me and I will be a father
to him. •I will make his sovereignty secure for ever if he sturdily maintains my 7
commandments and my ordinances, as they are now."

'So now in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of Yahweh, and in the 8
hearing of our God, observe and make sure you understand all the commandments
Dt 4:5 of Yahweh your God, so that you may possess this prosperous land and leave
it to your children after you as an inheritance for ever.

'And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, serve him with 9
an undivided heart and a willing mind; for Yahweh searches every heart, and
knows every plan it devises. If you seek him, he will let you find him; once forsake
him, and he casts you off for ever. •Think at this moment how Yahweh has 10
chosen you to build a house for his sanctuary. Be strong and set to work.'[b]

David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule,[c] the buildings, the 11
treasuries, the upper rooms, the inner apartments and the room for the throne
of mercy; •he also gave him a description of all he had in mind[d] for the courts 12
Ezk 42 of the Temple of Yahweh, all the surrounding apartments, the treasuries of the
26:20 Temple of God and the treasuries of votive offerings; •also of the orders of 13
priests and Levites, the liturgical duties in the Temple of Yahweh, •the gold 14
bullion, gold for every article for whatever function, the silver bullion for all
the silver articles, for every article for whatever function, •the bullion for the 15
golden lamp-stands and their lamps, the gold bullion for each lamp-stand[e] and
its lamps, the bullion for the silver lamp-stands, for the lamp-stand and its lamps
according to the requirements for each lamp-stand, •gold bullion for the tables 16
2 Ch 3:6 on which the rows of bread were set, for each of these tables, the silver for the
Ex 27:3; Nb 4:14 silver tables,[f] •the forks, the sprinkling bowls, basins of pure gold, the gold 17
bullion for the bowls, for each of the bowls, •the bullion of refined gold for the 18
altar of incense. He gave him the plans for the chariot,[g] for the golden cherubs
with wings outspread covering the ark of the covenant of Yahweh—•all this in 19
accordance with what Yahweh with his hand had written in order to make the
whole work clear for which he was providing the plans.

Then David said to his son Solomon, 'Be strong, stand firm; be fearless, be 20
dauntless and set to work, because Yahweh God, my God, is with you. He will
not fail you or forsake you before you have finished all the work to be done
for the house of Yahweh. •Here are the orders of priests and Levites for all the 21
duties of the house of God; every willing man of any aptitude will help you in
all this work; the officials and all the people are entirely at your command.'

The voluntary offerings

29 Then King David said to the whole assembly, 'Solomon my son, whom 1
alone Yahweh has chosen, is young, of tender years, and the work is great;
this palace is not for man but for Yahweh God. •With all the resources I have, 2
I have provided for the house of my God, adding gold to gold, silver to silver,
bronze to bronze, iron to iron, wood to wood, onyx, inlaid stones, coloured and
striped stones, precious stones of every kind, masses of alabaster. •What is 3
2Ch 31:3 more; what gold and silver I have in my own treasury I give out of love for the
house of my God, over and above what I have provided already for the holy
Temple—•three thousand talents of gold, gold of Ophir, seven thousand talents 4
of refined silver for plating the walls of the buildings. •Whatever gold you have, 5
whatever silver, or workmanship of the craftsman's hand, which of you today
will undertake to consecrate it to Yahweh?'

6 Then the heads of families, the officials for the tribes of Israel, the commanders 2Ch35:13
of thousands and of hundreds, and those who managed the king's affairs,
7 undertook •to give for the service of the house of God five thousand talents of Nb 7
gold, ten thousand darics, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand
8 talents of bronze, a hundred thousand talents of iron. •All this, with what there
were in the way of stones, they paid into the treasury of the house of Yahweh,
9 for Jehiel the Gershonite to administer. •The people rejoiced at what these had
given so readily, since their generous gift to Yahweh had been made whole-
10 heartedly. King David too was filled with joy. •In sight of the whole assembly
David blessed Yahweh and said:[a] Tb 13:1 Dn 3:26

'May you be blessed, Yahweh, the God of Israel our ancestor, for ever and
11 for ever! •Yours, Yahweh, is the greatness, the power, splendour, length of days, Ps145:11
glory, for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours. Yours is the
12 sovereignty, Yahweh; you are exalted over all, supreme. •Riches and honour
go before you, you are ruler of all, in your hand lie strength and power; in your Ws 6:3
13 hand it is to give greatness and strength to all. •At this time, our God, we give you
14 glory, we praise the splendour of your name. •For who am I and what is my
people to have the means to give so generously? All comes from you; from your
15 own hand we have given them to you. •For we are strangers before you, settlers Ws 2:5
only, as all our ancestors were; our days on earth pass like a shadow, and there is
16 no hope. •Yahweh our God, this store we have provided to build a house for
17 your holy name, all comes from your hand, all is yours. •O my God, you search
the heart, I know, and delight in honesty, and with honesty of heart I have
willingly given all this; and now with joy I have seen your people here offer
18 you their gifts willingly.[b] •Yahweh, God of our ancestors, of Abraham, of
Isaac, of Israel, watch over this for ever, shape the purpose of your people's
19 heart and direct their hearts to you. •Give Solomon my son a heart determined
to keep your commandments, your decrees, your statutes; may he practise
them all, and build this palace I have prepared for you.'

20 Then David said to the whole assembly, 'Bless now Yahweh your God!' And Dn 3:26
the whole assembly blessed Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, and went on
their knees to do homage to Yahweh and to the king.

The accession of Solomon and the end of the reign of David

21 On the day following this, the Israelites offered sacrifices and holocausts to
Yahweh: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs with their libations, Ex 24:5
22 as well as many sacrifices for the whole of Israel. •They ate and drank[c] that day Ex 24:11
in Yahweh's presence with great joy. Then having made Solomon son of David
their second king, they anointed him leader in the name of Yahweh, and anointed 1 K 1:39
23 Zadok as priest. •Solomon took his seat on the throne of Yahweh, to reign in
24 succession to David his father. He prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. •All the
officials, all the champions, and even all the sons of King David, pledged allegiance
25 to King Solomon. •Yahweh brought Solomon's greatness to its height in the
sight of all Israel, and gave him a reign of such splendour as none that had
reigned over Israel before him had ever known.

26 David son of Jesse had reigned over the whole of Israel. •His reign over Israel
27

b. Moralising passage in the style of Dt; coming before a section exclusively on the furniture of worship, it bears the impress of the prophets' teaching on the worship of the heart.

c. Moses had received the pattern of the tabernacle from God, Ex 25:9. David himself plans the new institution he initiates. Nevertheless, v. 19 attributes all to God.

d. Alternative translation 'received through the spirit'.

e. There are several, 1 K 7:49; the tabernacle had only one, Ex 25:31-40.

f. According to 2 Ch 4:8 there were ten of these. There was only one in the tabernacle, Ex 25:23f, and one in Solomon's Temple, 1 K 7:48.

g. The ark of the covenant represented a throne, not a chariot, but the Chronicler is thinking of the chariot in Ezk 1 and 10.

29 a. Thanksgiving in the manner of the great Jewish liturgical prayers.

b. Ezk 18 had emphasised personal initiative as a requirement of the new covenant.

c. As after the conclusion of the old covenant, cf. Ex 24:5,11.

||1 K 2:11 had lasted forty years; he had reigned in Hebron for seven years, and in Jerusalem
for thirty-three. •He died in happy old age, with his fill of days, of riches, of 28
honour. Then his son Solomon succeeded him. •The history of King David, from 29
first to last, is not all this recorded in the Annals of Samuel the seer, the Annals
of Nathan the prophet, and the Annals of Gad the seer, •with his entire reign, 30
his prowess, and the turns of fortune that came to him and to Israel and to all
the kingdoms of the other countries?

THE SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES

III. SOLOMON AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE[a]

Solomon's gift of wisdom[b]

1 Solomon son of David made himself secure on the throne. Yahweh his God 1
was with him and brought his greatness to its height. •Solomon then spoke 2
to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges,
||1K3:4-15 and to all the princes of all Israel, the heads of families. •Then Solomon, and 3
1Ch16:39; 21:29 with him the whole assembly, went to the high place of Gibeon, where God's
Tent of Meeting was, which Moses, the servant of God, had made in the
wilderness;[c] •David, however, had brought the ark of God from Kiriath- 4
jearim to the place he had prepared for it, having pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem.
Ex27:1-2; 31:2 1Ch2:20 The bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, had made stood there 5
in front of the tabernacle of Yahweh; to this went Solomon, with the
assembly. •And there Solomon, in Yahweh's presence, ascended the bronze altar 6
that was by the Tent of Meeting, and on it he offered a thousand holocausts.[d]

That night, God appeared to Solomon and said, 'Ask what you would like 7
me to give you'. •Solomon replied to God, 'You showed great kindness to 8
David my father; and you have made me king in succession to him. •Yahweh 9
God, the promise you made to David my father has now been fulfilled, since you
have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth for number.
Therefore now give me wisdom and knowledge to act as leader of this people, 10
for who could govern a people so great as yours?'

'Since that is what you want,' God said to Solomon 'since you have asked, 11
not for riches, treasure, honour, the lives of your enemies, or even for a long
life, but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people of whom I have made
Mt 6:33 you king, •therefore wisdom and knowledge are granted you. I give you riches 12
too, and treasure, and honour such as none of the kings had that were before
you, nor shall any have that come after you.'

Solomon left the high place of Gibeon for Jerusalem, away from the Tent 13
=9:25 ||1 K 5:6; 10:26-29 of Meeting. He reigned over Israel. •Solomon built up a force of chariots and 14
horses; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses;
these he stationed in the chariot towns and with the king in Jerusalem. •In 15
Jerusalem the king made silver common as pebbles, and cedars plentiful as the
1K10:28 sycamores of the lowlands. •Solomon's horses were imported from Cilicia;[e] 16
the king's agents took delivery of them from Cilicia at a fixed rate. •They imported 17
chariots from Egypt at six hundred shekels apiece, and horses at one hundred
and fifty shekels. These men acted in a similar capacity for all the kings of
the Hittites and the kings of Aram.

The final preparations. Huram of Tyre

Solomon decided to build a house for the name of Yahweh and another 18 2:1
for himself and his court.

1 2 He impressed seventy thousand men for carrying loads, eighty thousand to quarry in the hill country, and three thousand six hundred overseers in charge
2 3 of them. •Solomon then despatched this message to Huram king of Tyre, 'Deal with me as you dealt with my father David when you sent him cedars for him
3 4 to build a house to live in. •I am now building a house for the name of Yahweh my God, to acknowledge his holiness, by burning incense of scented spices in his presence, by the loaves that are perpetually set out, by offering holocausts morning and evening, on the sabbath, New Moon, and the solemn festivals[a]
4 5 of Yahweh our God—and this for ever in Israel. •The house I am building will
5 6 be large, for our God is greater than all gods. •Who would have the means to build him a house when the heavens and their own heavens cannot contain him? And I, for what purpose could I build him a house other than to burn incense
6 7 in his presence?[b] •So send me a man skilled in the use of gold, silver, bronze, iron, scarlet, crimson, violet,[c] and the art of engraving too; he is to work with my skilled men here in Judah and Jerusalem, men my father David provided.
7 8 From Lebanon send me cedar wood, juniper and algummim,[d] since I know your servants know the art of felling the trees of Lebanon. My servants will work
8 9 with yours. •They will prepare wood in bulk for me, since the house I wish to
9 10 build is to be of astounding size. •For the woodmen who are to fell the trees I assign twenty thousand kors of grain, twenty thousand kors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil—this is for the maintenance[e] of your servants.'

10 11 In a letter sent to King Solomon, Huram king of Tyre replied, 'Because
11 12 Yahweh loves his people he has made you king. •Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel' Huram went on to say. 'He has made the heavens and the earth, and given King David a wise son, endowed with discretion and discernment, who is
12 13 going to build a house for Yahweh and another for himself and his court. •And
13 14 I am also sending you a skilled craftsman, Huram-abi, •the son of a Danite woman by a Tyrian father. He is skilled in the use of gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, wood, scarlet, violet, fine linen, crimson, in engraving of all kinds, and in the execution of any design suggested to him. Let him be put to
14 15 work with your craftsmen and those of my lord David, your father. •So now let my lord send his servants the wheat, barley, oil and wine, as already suggested.

15 16 'For our part, we will fell all the wood you need from Lebanon, and bring it you in rafts by sea to Joppa, and it will be your responsibility to transport it to Jerusalem.'

The construction[f]

16 17 Solomon took a count of all the aliens resident in the land of Israel, following the census that David his father had taken; it was found there were a hundred
17 18 and fifty-three thousand six hundred. •He impressed seventy thousand of these for carrying loads, eighty thousand for quarrying in the hill country, and three thousand six hundred as overseers to make sure the people worked.

=2:17 1K 5:29-30
‖1K 5:15-20
1Ch 14:1
29:7
Nb 20:12
Lv 24:6 Nb 17:5
Nb 28-29
6:18
‖1K 5:25 Ezr 3:7
‖1K 5:21f
‖1K 7:14
Ex 31:2f
Ezr 3:7
‖1K 5:22-26
1Ch 22:2+
=2:1

1 a. David has laid the foundations of God's worshipping society; it is for his successors to complete the work, and in this Solomon's part is unique, as builder of the Temple.
b. Of the intrigues for the succession, cf. 1 K 1-2, the Chronicler says nothing, restricting himself to religious considerations: all the glory of Solomon springs from the wisdom granted him at Gibeon.
c. In this way the Chronicler relates the Temple worship to the Mosaic institutions of Ex.
d. The deuteronomic author of Kings found these sacrifices somewhat odd, offered as they were outside Jerusalem's holy place, 1 K 3:2,4, cf. Dt 12. But Ezekiel had shown that God's presence is not restricted to one place, Ezk 1, etc.; and to the Chronicler this presence is all that matters. Cf. Jn 4:21-24+.
e. The text reads 'Egypt' (Misraim) in place of 'Cilicia' (Musur).

2 a. In the 'priestly' texts these expressions are used of the tabernacle ceremonial.
b. The Temple is only the 'footstool' of God whose dwelling is in the heavens, cf. 6:21.
c. These materials are mentioned in the description of the tabernacle, e.g. Ex 28:5, not in that of Solomon's Temple, 1 K 6:7.
d. 'almuggim' in 1 K 10:11.
e. 'maintenance' corr.
f. Some of the details and the measurements are different in 1 K.

||1 K 6 Gn 22:2 1Ch21:15f
3 Solomon then began to build the house of Yahweh in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah where David his father had a vision. It was the place prepared by David, the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. •Solomon began building in the second month of the fourth year of his reign, on the second day. •Now the structure of the house of God founded by Solomon was sixty cubits long—cubits of the old standard—and twenty cubits wide. •The Ulam in front of the Hekal of the Temple was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and its height was a hundred and twenty cubits. He plated it on the inside with pure gold. •The Great Hall he faced with juniper which he plated with pure gold, and on it set palms and festoons. •He adorned the hall with precious stones of great beauty; the gold was gold from Parvaim, •and with this he faced the hall, the rafters, thresholds, walls and doors; on the walls he carved cherubs.

1 2 29:7 Ezk40:5+ Ezk40:48 Ezk 41:1

1 K 6:15f Ezk 41:3
He then built the hall of the Holy of Holies;[a] its length, across the width of the Great Hall, was twenty cubits, and its width twenty cubits. He plated it with six hundred talents of fine gold; •the gold nails weighed fifty shekels. He also plated the upper rooms with gold. •In the hall of the Holy of Holies he made two cherubs of wrought metal work and plated them with gold. •The total span of the cherubs' wings was twenty cubits, each being five cubits long, with one wing touching the wall of the hall, while the other touched that of the other cherub. •One wing of a cherub, five cubits long, touched the wall of the apartment; the second, five cubits long, touched the wing of the other cherub. •The spread of these cherubs' wings was twenty cubits. They stood on their feet, facing the Hall.

1 K 6:23f

He made the Veil[b] of violet, scarlet, crimson and fine linen; he worked cherubs on it.

||1K7:15-22 Ezk40:49
In front of the hall he made two pillars thirty-five cubits high, and on the top of each a capital measuring five cubits. •In the Debir he made festoons, setting them at the tops of the pillars, and a hundred pomegranates which he placed on the festoons. •He set up the pillars in front of the Hekal, one on the right, the other on the left; the one on the right he called Jachin, the one on the left Boaz.

1K7:23-26 Ezk43:13
4 He made an altar of bronze, twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide and ten high. •He made the Sea of cast metal, ten cubits from rim to rim, circular in shape and five cubits high; a cord thirty cubits long gave the measurement of its girth. •Under it and completely encircling it were animals shaped like oxen; they went round the Sea over a length of thirty cubits; the oxen were in two rows, of one and the same casting with the rest. •It rested on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, three facing east; on these, their hindquarters all turned inwards, stood the Sea. •It was a hand's breadth in thickness, and its rim was shaped like the rim of a cup, like a flower. It could hold three thousand baths.

||1K7:38-39 Ezk40:38
He made ten basins, arranging five on the right-hand side, five on the left-hand side, for washing the victim for the holocaust which was purified there; but the Sea was for the priests to wash in. •He made the ten golden lamp-stands in the way prescribed and placed them in the Hekal, five on the right and five on the left. •He made ten tables and placed them in the Hekal, five on the right and five on the left. He made a hundred golden sprinkling bowls.

||1 K 7:49 1Ch28:16+ ||1 K 7:50

1 K 7:12 1 K 7:39
He made the court of the priests[a] and the great court with its gates and plated the gates with bronze. •He placed the Sea some distance from the right-hand side, to the south-east.

1K7:40-51
Huram made the ash containers, the scoops and the sprinkling bowls. He finished all the work that he did for King Solomon on the Temple of God:

two pillars; the two mouldings of the capitals surmounting the pillars; the two sets of filigree to cover the two mouldings of the capitals surmounting the pillars; •the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of filigree; the pomegranates of each set of filigree were in two rows;[b]

14 the ten[c] stands and the ten basins on the stands;
15 the one Sea and the twelve oxen beneath it;
16 the ash containers, the scoops, the forks, and all their accessories made by Huram-abi of burnished bronze for King Solomon, for the Temple of Yahweh.
17 The king made them by the process of sand casting, in the Jordan area between
18 Succoth and Zeredah. •Solomon made all these articles in great quantities, no reckoning being made of the weight of bronze.
19 Solomon placed all the furnishings he had made in the Temple of God:
20 the golden altar and the tables for the loaves of offering; •the lamp-stands with
21 their lamps to burn, as prescribed, in front of the Debir, of pure gold; •the floral
22 work, the lamps, the extinguishers, of gold (and it was pure gold[d]); •the knives, the sprinkling bowls, incense boats, of fine gold; the door of the Temple, the inner doors (for the Holy of Holies) and the Temple doors (for the Hekal), of gold.

1 5 So all the work that Solomon did for the Temple of Yahweh was completed, and Solomon brought what his father David had consecrated, the silver and the gold and the vessels, and put them in the treasury of the Temple of God. 1 K 7:51

The ark is brought to the Temple ||1K8:1-9

2 Then Solomon called the elders of Israel together in Jerusalem to bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh up from the Citadel of David, which is Zion.
3 All the men of Israel assembled round the king in the seventh month, at the time
4 of the feast. •All the elders of Israel came, and the Levites[a] took up the ark 35:3
5 and the Tent of Meeting with all the sacred vessels that were in it; the levitical priests brought them up.
6 King Solomon, and all the community of Israel gathering with him in front
7 of the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, countless, innumerable. •The priests brought the ark of the covenant of Yahweh to its place, in the Debir of the
8 Temple, that is, in the Holy of Holies, under the cherubs' wings. •For there where the ark was placed the cherubs spread out their wings and sheltered the
9a ark and its shafts. •These were long enough for their ends to be seen from the
10 Holy Place[b] in front of the Debir, but not from outside. •There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where Yahweh had made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of Egypt;
9b they are still there today.

The Lord takes possession of his Temple[c] ||1K8:10-13

11a 13b Now when the priests came out of the sanctuary, •a cloud filled the sanctuary, the Temple of Yahweh.
11b Now all the priests present, whatever order they belonged to, had sanctified
12 themselves. •The entire body of levitical cantors, Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun 1 Ch 24 with their sons and brothers, was stationed to the east of the altar, robed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps, and lyres. A hundred and twenty priests
13a accompanied them on the trumpet. •All those who played the trumpet, or who sang, united in giving praise and glory to Yahweh. Lifting their voices to the 7:3

3 a. For the 'Debir' (cf. v. 16) of 1 K the Chronicler uses 'Holy of Holies'. The older name suggested the word (*dabar*) of Yahweh speaking from the ark of the covenant, Nb 7:89. The more recent term suggests the pre-eminent sanctity of the priesthood and of the high priest who alone, and once in the year, enters this chamber, Lv 16:17.
b. The veil is that of the tabernacle, Ex 26:31. Solomon's Temple had a door instead, 1 K 6:31.
4 a. The inner court of Solomon's Temple. It was not reserved to the priests until the time of Ezekiel, Ezk 42:13.
b. As in 1 K 7:42 the text adds a doublet of the preceding verse.
c. 'ten' corr.; 'he made' Hebr.
d. Meaning uncertain.
5 a. 1 K speaks of priests here, but the Chronicler is thinking of Nb 1:50f, cf. 1 Ch 15:2. The deuteronomic expression 'the levitical priests' at the end of the verse combines the two traditions. Cf. 23:18; 30:27.
b. 'Holy (Place)' corr.; 'ark' Hebr.
c. Elaboration of the narrative in 1 K. The Chronicler emphasises the part played in the ceremonies by psalms and music.

sound of the trumpet and cymbal and instruments of music, they gave praise to Yahweh, 'for he is good, for his love is everlasting'.

7:2 Because of the cloud the priests could no longer perform their duties: the 14
glory of Yahweh filled the Temple of God.

6 Then Solomon said: 1

'Yahweh has chosen to dwell in the thick cloud.
Yes, I have built you a dwelling,
a place for you to live in for ever.' 2

||1K8:14-21 **Solomon addresses the people**

Then the king turned and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while the 3
whole assembly of Israel stood. •He said, 'Blessed be Yahweh, the God of 4
Israel, who has carried out by his hand what he promised with his mouth to
David, my father, when he said, •"From the day I brought my people out of 5
the land of Egypt I chose no city, in any of the tribes of Israel, to have a house
built where my name might make its home, and chose no man to be prince of
my people Israel; •but I chose Jerusalem for my name to make its home there, 6
and I chose David to rule over Israel my people". •My father David had set his 7
heart on building a house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel, •but 8
Yahweh said, "You have set your heart on building a house for my name, and
in this you have done well; •and yet, you are not the man to build the house; 9
your son, born of your own body, shall build the house for my name". •Yahweh 10
has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father and am seated
on the throne of Israel, as Yahweh promised; I have built the house for the
name of Yahweh, the God of Israel, •and have placed in it the ark containing 11
the covenant that Yahweh made with the sons of Israel.'

||1K8:22-29 **Solomon's prayer for himself**

Then in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel Solomon stood before 12
the altar of Yahweh and stretched out his hands. •Now Solomon had made a bronze 13
pedestal and had placed it in the middle of the court; it was five cubits long,
five cubits wide and five cubits high. Solomon mounted it, and knelt down on
it in the presence of the whole assembly of Israel;[a] he stretched out his hands
to heaven, •and said, 'Yahweh, God of Israel, not in heaven nor on earth is 14
there such a God as you, true to your covenant and your graciousness towards
your servants when they walk wholeheartedly in your way. •You have kept the 15
promise you made to your servant David my father; what you promised with
your mouth, today you have carried out by your hand. •And now, Yahweh, 16
God of Israel, keep the promise you made your servant David when you
said, "You shall never lack for a man seated before me on the throne of Israel,
if only your sons are careful how they behave, following my law as you yourself
have done". •So now, God of Israel, let the words come true which you spoke 17
2:5 to your servant David my father. •Yet will God really live with men on the 18
earth? Why, the heavens and their own heavens cannot contain you! How much
less this house that I have built! •Listen to the prayer and entreaty of your servant, 19
Yahweh my God; listen to the cry and to the prayer your servant makes to you.
Day and night let your eyes watch over this house, over this place in which you 20
have promised to make a home for your name. Listen to the prayer that your
servant will offer in this place.

||1K8:30-51 **Solomon's prayer for the people**

'Hear the entreaties of your servant and of Israel your people as they pray 21
in this place. From heaven where your dwelling is, hear; and, as you hear,
forgive.

'If a man sins against his neighbour, and the neighbour calls down[b] a curse 22
on him and makes him swear an oath before your altar in this Temple, •hear from 23

heaven, and act; decide between your servants: punish the wicked one, bringing
his conduct down on his own head; and vindicate the innocent, rewarding him
as his innocence deserves.
24 'If Israel your people are defeated by the enemy because they have sinned
against you, if they return to you and praise your name and pray to you and
25 entreat you in this Temple, •hear from heaven; forgive the sin of your
people Israel, and bring them back to the land you gave to them and their
ancestors.
26 'When the heavens are shut and there is no rain because they have sinned
against you, if they pray in this place and praise your name and, having been
27 humbled by you, repent of their sin, •hear from heaven and forgive the sin of
your servant and of your people Israel; show them the good way they ought to
follow; and send rain on your land which you have given your people as an
inheritance.
28 'Should there be famine in the land or pestilence, blight or mildew, locust
or caterpillar, should this people's enemies lay siege to one of its city gates,
29 if there is any plague or sickness, •if any one man, or all Israel your people,
should feel remorse and sorrow and pray or make entreaty, stretching out his
30 hands towards this Temple, •hear from heaven where your home is; forgive,
and deal with each as his conduct deserves, for you know each heart—you
31 alone know the hearts of all mankind—•that they may come to revere you and
follow your ways as long as they live in the land you gave to our ancestors.
32 'And the foreigner too, not belonging to your people Israel, if he comes from 1 K 8:41f
a distant country for the sake of your name and of your mighty hand and
33 outstretched arm, if he comes and prays in this Temple, •hear from heaven where
your home is, and grant all the foreigner asks, so that all the peoples of the
earth may come to know your name and, like your people Israel, revere you,
and know that your name is given to the Temple I have built.
34 'If your people go out to war against their enemies on the way you send
them, and if they turn towards the city you have chosen and towards the Temple
35 I have built for your name and pray to you, •hear from heaven their prayer
and their entreaty, and uphold their cause.
36 'If they sin against you—for there is no man who does not sin—and you are
angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they are led away captive
37 to a land far or near, •if in the land of their exile they come to themselves and
repent, and in the country of their captivity they entreat you saying, "We have
38 sinned, we have acted perversely and wickedly", •and if they turn again to you
with all their heart and soul in the country of their captivity to which they have
been deported, and pray, turning towards the land you gave their ancestors,
towards the city you have chosen, and towards the Temple I have built for your
39 name, •hear from heaven where your home is, hear their prayer and their
entreaty, uphold their cause, and forgive your people the sins they have committed
against you.

Conclusion of the prayer

40 'Now, O my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the ‖1 K 8:52 Ne 1:6 Ps 130:2
41 prayer offered in this place. •And now

Rise Yahweh God, come to your resting place, ‖Ps 132:8-10,16
you and the ark of your power.
Your priests, Yahweh God, are vested in salvation,
your faithful rejoice in prosperity.
42 Yahweh God, do not turn away from the face of your anointed;
remember your favours to David your servant.'

6 a. The phrase is an insertion by the Chronicler who pictures the king praying at the head of the congregation, not, like a priest, before the altar.
b. 'calls down' corr.; 'binds himself' Hebr.

The dedication

Jg 6:21 1 Ch 21:26+ 2 M 2:10
7 When Solomon had finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the holocaust and the sacrifices; and the glory of Yahweh filled
5:14 Ex 24:16+ the Temple. 2 The priests could not enter the house of Yahweh, because the glory of Yahweh filled the house of Yahweh. 3 All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of Yahweh resting on the Temple, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the earth; they worshipped and gave praise to
5:13 Ps 136:1 Yahweh, 'for he is good, for his love is everlasting'. 4 Then the king and all the
‖1K 8:62-63 people offered sacrifice before Yahweh. 5 King Solomon offered twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep in sacrifice; and so the king and all the people dedicated the Temple of Yahweh. 6 The priests stood in their places, while the Levites gave praise to Yahweh[a] on the instruments
Ps 136:1 that David had made to accompany the canticles of Yahweh, 'for his love is everlasting'. These performed the hymns of praise that David had composed.
Nb 10:1-10 By their side were the priests sounding the trumpet, while all Israel stood.
Ezk 43:13 7 Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that is in front of the Temple of Yahweh; he offered the holocaust there and the fatty parts of the communion sacrifices, since the bronze altar Solomon had made could not hold the holocaust, the oblation and the fatty parts. 8 Solomon then celebrated the feast for seven days and all the Israelites gathered together with him in enormous numbers from the Pass of Hamath to the wadi of Egypt. 9 On the eighth day they held a propitiation ceremony,[b] for they had been seven days dedicating the altar and seven days celebrating the feast. 10 On the twenty-third day[c] of the seventh month Solomon dismissed the people to their homes, rejoicing and with happy hearts for the goodness Yahweh had shown to David and to Solomon and to his people Israel

‖1K 9:1-9 **Yahweh appears and gives a warning**[d]

11 Solomon finished the Temple of Yahweh and the royal palace and successfully concluded all he had set his heart on doing in the house of Yahweh and in his own. 12 Then Yahweh appeared to Solomon in the night and said, 'I grant your prayer. I choose this place for myself to be a house of sacrifice. 13 When I close the skies and there is no rain, when I command the locust to devour the land, when I send pestilence among my people, 14 then if my people who bear my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my presence and turn from their wicked ways, I myself will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and restore their
Ps 130:2 land. 15 Now and for the future my eyes are open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is offered in this place. 16 Now and for the future I have chosen and consecrated this house for my name to be there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for ever. 17 For your part, if you walk before me as David your father did, if you do all that I order you and keep my statutes and my ordinances, 18 I will make your royal throne secure, according to the compact I made with David your father when I said: You shall never lack for a man to rule in Israel. 19 But if you turn away from me and forsake the commandments and statutes I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, 20 then I will tear the Israelites from the land I have given them, and I will reject from my presence this Temple that I have consecrated for my name and make it a proverb and a byword among all the nations. 21 As for this Temple, now so exalted, all who pass by will be astounded; they will whistle and say, "Why has Yahweh treated this country and this Temple like this?" 22 And the answer will be, "Because they forsook Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and worshipped them and served them; that is why he has brought all these disasters on them". '

‖1K 9:10-25 **Conclusion. The completion of the building programme**

8 At the end of the twenty years which it took Solomon to build the Temple 1
of Yahweh and his own palace, 2 he rebuilt the towns that Huram[a] had given

him and settled Israelites in them. •He then went to Hamath of Zobah,[b] which he captured; •he rebuilt Tadmor in the wilderness[c] and all the garrison towns he had built in Hamath. •He rebuilt Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon, fortified towns with walls and gates and bars, •also Baalath and all the garrison towns owned by Solomon, all the towns for his chariots and horses, and all it pleased Solomon to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and in all the countries subject to him. •All those who survived of the Hittite, Amorite, Perizzite, Hivite and Jebusite peoples, who were not Israelites •and whose descendants were left in the country after them, and not exterminated by the Israelites, these Solomon levied for forced labour, as they are levied still. •On the Israelites, however, Solomon did not impose slave-labour; these served as fighting men: they were officers of his equerries and his chariot and cavalry commanders. •These were the administrators' officials in the service of King Solomon: two hundred and fifty in charge of the people. 1 K 9:20f

Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter from the Citadel of David up to the house he had built for her. 'It is not for me' he said 'to let a woman live in the palace of David king of Israel; these are holy places, where the ark of Yahweh has been.'[d] 1 K 9:24

Solomon then offered holocausts to Yahweh on Yahweh's altar which he had built in front of the porch.[e] •Observing the daily rule for holocausts laid down in the commandment of Moses for sabbath, New Moon and the three annual feasts: the feast of Unleavened Bread, the feast of Weeks and the feast of Tabernacles, •he maintained the regulations of his father David, as also the priestly orders in their duties, the rules affecting the Levites who offered praise and served with the priests according to the daily ritual, and the different orders of gatekeepers at each gate, for such had been the commandments of David, the man of God. •They did not deviate in anything, not even in the matter of the treasuries, from the royal ordinances applying to the priests and the Levites. And all Solomon's work which, until the day when the foundations of the Temple of Yahweh were laid, had been only in preparation, was completed when the Temple of Yahweh was finished. 1 K 9:25 Ex 23:14+ Nb 28-29 1 Ch 23-26 Ne 12:46

Solomon in his glory

Then Solomon went as far as Ezion-geber and Elath on the shores of the sea, in the land of Edom. •Huram sent him ships manned by his own men, and experienced sailors. These went with Solomon's men to Ophir and from there they brought back four hundred and fifty talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon. 1 K 9:26-28

9 The fame of Solomon having reached the queen of Sheba, she came to Jerusalem to test him with difficult questions. She came with immense riches, camels laden with spices, great quantities of gold and precious stones. On coming to Solomon, she opened her mind freely to him; •and Solomon had an answer for all her questions, not one was too recondite for Solomon to expound. When the queen of Sheba saw the wisdom of Solomon, the palace he had built, the food at his table, the accommodation for his officials, the organisation of his ‖1 K 10:13-1

7 a. The Chronicler makes the levitical performance of the psalmody (outward expression of inward worship, Am 5:21+) go back to the days of David, and seems to think that it was accompanied by the priestly trumpets of ancient times, Nb 10:1-10.

b. The Chronicler makes the eighth day of the feast, Lv 23:36; Nb 29:35-38, a propitiation ceremony, cf. 2 S 24:21, as in Ne 8:18, a form of thanksgiving for the festivities that have taken place.

c. This figure implies that the feast of Tabernacles of that year (from the fifteenth to the twenty-second of the month) was added to the feast of Dedication (from the eighth to the fourteenth).

d. It is also God's answer to the king's admirable prayer. Vv. 12b-16 are peculiar to the Chronicler.

8 a. According to 1 K it was Solomon who gave them to Hiram (Huram).

b. This campaign is not mentioned in Kings. The Books of Kings and Samuel make a distinction between Hamath and Zobah. To embellish Solomon's reputation the Chronicler may have credited him with the victory of David referred to in 2 S 8:3; 10:8. Cf. 1 Ch 18:3f; 19:16.

c. The Chronicler has taken the Tamar of 1 K for the great city of Tadmor, i.e. Palmyra.

d. This explanation is absent from 1 K. After the Exile, fear of abuses led to strict regulations governing the presence of women in the Temple.

e. The Chronicler completely transforms 1 K 9:25. In his eyes the Temple worship is the exact carrying out of the Mosaic ritual and of David's regulations.

staff and the way they were dressed, his cupbearers and the holocausts he offered[a]
in the Temple of Yahweh, it left her breathless, •and she said to the king, 'What 5
I heard in my own country about you and your wisdom was true, then! •Until 6
I came and saw it with my own eyes I could not believe what they told me, but
evidently what they told me was less than half the real extent of your wisdom;
you surpass the report I heard. •How happy your wives are! How happy these 7
servants of yours who wait on you always and hear your wisdom! •Blessed be 8
Yahweh your God who has granted you his favour, setting you on his throne
as king in the name of Yahweh your God.[b] Because your God loves Israel and
means to uphold him for ever, he has made you king over them to administer law
and justice.' •And she presented the king with a hundred and twenty talents 9
of gold and great quantities of spices and precious stones. There never were
spices like those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. •Similarly the servants 10
of Huram and the servants of Solomon, who carried gold from Ophir, brought
algummim wood and precious stones. •Of the algummim wood the king made 11
floorboards for the Temple of Yahweh and for the royal palace, and lyres and
harps for the musicians; the like of them had never been seen before in the land
of Judah. •And King Solomon, in his turn, presented the queen of Sheba with 12
everything she expressed any wish for, besides returning what she had brought to
the king. Then she went home, she and her servants, to her own country.

||1K10:14-15 The weight of gold coming to Solomon in one year was six hundred and 13
sixty-six talents of gold, •not counting the merchants' dues that the import 14
agents brought in; all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the country also
||1K10:16-17 brought gold and silver to Solomon. •King Solomon made two hundred great 15
shields of beaten gold, and plated each shield with six hundred shekels of gold.
Also three hundred small shields of beaten gold, and plated each of these with 16
three hundred shekels of gold; and he put them in the Hall of the Forest of
||1K10:18-20 Lebanon. •The king also made a great ivory throne, and plated it with purest 17
gold. •The throne had six steps, and at the back of it a lamb in gold,[c] and arms 18
at either side of the seat; two lions stood beside the arms, •and twelve lions stood 19
on either side of the six steps. No throne like this was ever made in any other
kingdom.

||1K10:21-25 All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the furnishings in 20
the Hall of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; silver was thought little
of in the time of Solomon. •And the king also had ships that went to Tarshish 21
with Huram's men, and once every three years the ships of Tarshish would come
back laden with gold and silver, ivory, apes and baboons. •For riches and for 22
wisdom King Solomon outdid all the kings of the earth. •All the kings of the 23
earth sought audience of Solomon to hear the wisdom God had implanted in
his heart, •and each would bring his own present: gold vessels, silver vessels, 24
robes, armour, spices, horses and mules; and this went on year after year.

||1 K 5:6; 10:26 Solomon had four thousand stalls for his horses and chariots, and twelve 25
=1:14 thousand horses; these he stationed in the chariot towns and near the king in
||1 K 5:1 Jerusalem. •Solomon extended his power over all the kingdoms from the river 26
to the land of the Philistines and the Egyptian border. •In Jerusalem the king 27
=1:15 ||1K10:27-28 made silver common as pebbles, and cedars plentiful as the sycamores of the
Lowlands. •Horses were imported for Solomon from Cilicia[d] and all the other 28
countries too.

||1K11:41-43 **The death of Solomon**

The rest of the history of Solomon, from first to last, is not all this recorded 29
in the History of Nathan the prophet, in the Prophecy of Ahijah of Shiloh, and
in the Vision of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat? •Solomon 30
reigned in Jerusalem for forty years over all Israel. •Then Solomon slept with 31
his ancestors and was buried in the Citadel of David his father; his son Rehoboam
succeeded him.

IV. FIRST REFORMS OF THE MONARCHICAL PERIOD

A. REHOBOAM AND THE REGROUPING OF THE LEVITES

The schism ‖1 K 12:1-19

1 10 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for it was to Shechem that all Israel had
2 gone to proclaim him king. •As soon as Jeroboam son of Nebat heard the
news—he was still in Egypt, where he had taken refuge from King Solomon—he
3 returned from Egypt. •They sent and summoned him, and he came, with the
whole assembly.[a]
4 And they said this to Rehoboam, •'Your father gave us a heavy burden to
bear; lighten your father's harsh tyranny now, and the weight of the burden he
5 laid on us, and we will serve you'. •He said, 'Come back to me in three days'.
And the people went away.
6 King Rehoboam consulted the elders, who had been in the service of his 22:4
father Solomon while he was alive. 'What reply' he asked 'do you advise me
7 to give to this people?' •'If you are kind to these people,' they said 'if you are
pleasant to them and treat them fairly, then they will be your servants for ever.'
8 But he rejected the advice given him by the elders and consulted the young men
9 who had grown up with him and were in his service. •'How do you advise us'
he asked 'to answer these people who have said to me, "Lighten the burden your
10 father imposed on us"?' •The young men who had grown up with him replied,
'Give this answer to these people who have said, "Your father gave us a heavy
burden to bear, you must lighten it for us", say this to them, "My little finger is
11 thicker than my father's loins! •So then, my father made you bear a heavy
burden; I will make it heavier still! My father beat you with whips; I am
going to beat you with loaded scourges!" '
12 On the third day all the people came to Rehoboam in obedience to the king's
13 command: 'Come back to me on the third day'. •The king gave them a harsh
14 answer. King Rehoboam, rejecting the advice of the elders, •spoke to them as
the young men had recommended. 'My father made[b] you bear a heavy burden,'
he said 'but I will make it heavier still. My father beat you with whips; I am
15 going to beat you with loaded scourges!' •The king in fact took no notice of the
people's wishes, and this was brought about by God to carry out the promise
Yahweh had spoken through Ahijah of Shiloh to Jeroboam son of Nebat.
16 When all Israel saw that the king took no notice of their wishes, they gave
him this answer:

'What share have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
To your tents, Israel, each one of you.
Henceforth look after your own House, David!'

17 And all Israel went off to their tents. •Rehoboam however ruled over those
18 sons of Israel who lived in the towns of Judah. •King Rehoboam sent Adoram
who was in charge of forced labour, but the Israelites stoned him to death;
whereupon King Rehoboam was obliged to mount his chariot and escape to
19 Jerusalem. •And Israel has remained separated from the House of David until
the present day.

9 a. Text corr.; Hebr. 'his upper rooms by which he went up to the Temple'.
b. Lit. 'for Yahweh your God'. The Chronicler emphasises the fact that Yahweh remains the king of Israel.
c. Probably the Chronicler's misgivings about Canaanite idolatry make him substitute the lamb of sacrifice for the bull of 1 K.
d. 'Cilicia' (Musur) corr.; 'Egypt' Hebr., cf. 1:16.

10 a. 'assembly' Greek; 'Israel' Hebr.
b. 'My father made' corr.; 'I shall make' Hebr.

The activities of Rehoboam

‖1K12:21-24 **11** Rehoboam went to Jerusalem and mustered the House of Judah with 1
Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand picked warriors, to fight the
12:5 House of Israel and win back the kingdom of Rehoboam. •But the word of 2
Yahweh came to Shemaiah the man of God, •'Say this to Rehoboam son of 3
Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin,
"Yahweh says this: Do not set out to fight against your brothers; let everyone go 4
home, for what has happened is my doing" ' The yobeyed Yahweh's command
and went back instead of marching against Jeroboam.

Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built fortified towns in Judah. •He rebuilt 5 6
Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, •Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, •Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 7 8
Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, •Zorah, Aijalon, Hebron; these were fortified towns 9 10
in Judah and Benjamin. •He fortified them strongly and put commanders in 11
them with stores of food, oil and wine. •In each of these towns were shields 12
and spears. He made them very strong to keep Judah and Benjamin under
control.

Rehoboam's relations with the priests and Levites[a]

The priests and the Levites throughout Israel left their districts to take up 13
Nb 35:2 residence near him. •The Levites, indeed, abandoned their pasture lands and 14
their holdings, and came to Judah and Jerusalem, since Jeroboam and his sons
had excluded them from the priesthood of Yahweh, •and had set up for himself 15
Lv17:7+ a priesthood of the high places, for the satyrs and the calves he had made.
Ezr2:43+ Members of all the tribes of Israel, men wholeheartedly devoted to the worship 16
of Yahweh the God of Israel, followed them and came to Jerusalem to sacrifice
to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. •These added strength to the kingdom of 17
Judah, and gave their support to Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years,
because during three years he followed the example of David and Solomon.

1K11:1-13 ### Rehoboam turns unfaithful[b]

Rehoboam took as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth son of David, 18
and of Abihail, daughter of Eliab[c] son of Jesse, •and she bore him sons: Jeush, 19
1 K 15:2 Shemariah and Zaham. •After her, he married Maacah daughter of Absalom, 20
who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith. •Rehoboam loved Maacah, 21
daughter of Absalom, more than all his other wives and concubines. He had
in fact a total of eighteen wives and sixty concubines and had twenty-eight sons and
sixty daughters. •Rehoboam appointed Abijah, Maacah's son, as head of the 22
family, to be prince among his brothers, with a view to making him king. •He 23
12:1 built more and demolished more than any of his descendants throughout the
1K 11:7,27 territories of Judah and Benjamin and in all the fortified towns, which he equipped
with numerous granaries.

1K11:4 But he consulted the many gods of his wives,[d] **12** and no sooner was his 1
1K 14:22 royal authority securely consolidated than he, and all Israel with him, abandoned
‖1K14:25 the Law of Yahweh. •In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak the king of Egypt 2
marched on Jerusalem, since it had been unfaithful to Yahweh. •With twelve 3
hundred chariots and sixty thousand horses and a countless army of Libyans,
Sukkiim and Ethiopians who came from Egypt with him, •he captured the 4
fortified towns of Judah and reached Jerusalem. •Rehoboam and the Judaean 5
captains, at the advance of Shishak, had mustered near Jerusalem; to them came
11:2 Shemaiah the prophet. 'Yahweh says this' he said to them. ' "You have
abandoned me, now I have abandoned you into the hands of Shishak." ' •Then 6
the Israelite captains and the king humbled themselves. 'Yahweh is just!' they
said. •When Yahweh saw that they had humbled themselves, the word of Yahweh 7
came to Shemaiah. 'They have humbled themselves,' it said 'I will not destroy
them. In a little while I will grant them deliverance; my wrath shall not fall
on Jerusalem through the power of Shishak. •Nevertheless they shall become his 8

slaves, so that they may come to understand the difference between serving me and serving the kingdoms of foreign countries.'

9 Shishak the king of Egypt marched on Jerusalem. He took all the treasures ||1K14:25-28
from the Temple of Yahweh and the treasures from the royal palace, he took
10 everything, including the golden shields that Solomon had made; •in place of
them King Rehoboam had bronze shields made, entrusting them to the care
11 of the officers of the guard who guarded the king's palace gate. •Whenever the
king went to the Temple of Yahweh, the guards would come out carrying them,
and return them to the guardroom afterwards.

12 Since he had humbled himself, the wrath of Yahweh turned away from him
13 and did not destroy him altogether. Indeed, things went well in Judah, •and
King Rehoboam was able to strengthen his position in Jerusalem and to govern.
Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he came to the throne and he ||1K14:21
reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city chosen by Yahweh out of all
the tribes of Israel, in which to give his name a home. His mother's name was
14 Naamah the Ammonitess. •He did evil, because he had not set his heart on
seeking Yahweh.

15 The history of Rehoboam, from first to last, is not all this recorded in the 13:23 ||1K14:29-31
Annals of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer concerning the grouping
of the Levites[a] and the incessant warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam?
16 Then Rehoboam slept with his ancestors and was buried in the Citadel of David;
his son Abijah succeeded him.

B. ABIJAH AND LOYALTY TO THE LEGITIMATE PRIESTHOOD

War

1 13 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah[a] became king of Judah ||1K15:1-2,7
2 and reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Micaiah,[b] 1 K 15:8
3 daughter of Uriel, from Gibeah. Abijah and Jeroboam were at war. •Abijah
went into battle with an army of brave fighters, four hundred thousand picked
men, while Jeroboam drew up his battle line against him with eight hundred
thousand picked men, stout fighters.

Abijah addresses the Israelites[c]

4 Abijah took his stand on Mount Zemaraim, in the highlands of Ephraim.
5 'Jeroboam and all Israel' he cried 'listen to me! •Do you not know that
Yahweh the God of Israel has given the sovereignty of Israel to David for ||2S6:1-11
6 ever? It is an inviolable covenant[d] for him and for his sons. •Yet Jeroboam
son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon son of David, has risen in revolt against
7 his lord; •worthless men, scoundrels, have rallied to him and forced their will Dt 13:14+
on Rehoboam the son of Solomon, on Rehoboam, then a young man and timid,
8 powerless to resist them. •Now you talk of resisting the sovereignty of Yahweh,

11 a. The Chronicler is of the opinion that, in accordance with Jos 21, the Levites had their own towns scattered throughout the country; he gives the list of these in 1 Ch 6. Where Jeroboam rules they find true worship impossible and emigrate to Judah. A similar emigration occurred after the fall of Samaria.

b. 1 K 11 blamed Solomon for his many wives and for the idolatrous practices into which they had led him. The Chronicler passes over this, but taxes Rehoboam with similar conduct. Convinced of the doctrine of individual retribution, Ezk 14:12+, he is always anxious to show how each king suffers for his own sins.

c. 'daughter' Greek; 'son' Hebr. According to the Hebr., Abihail was Rehoboam's wife.

d. Lit. 'he consulted the multitude of his wives'. The Chronicler apparently shrinks from calling these alien deities 'gods'.

12 a. 'Levites' is not in the text.

13 a. The Abijam of 1 K 14:31; 15:1,7,8.

b. She is called Maacah in the Greek and in 1 K, and represented as Absalom's daughter. Cf. 11:20. But 1 K 15:10, followed by 2 Ch 15:16, has a Maacah daughter of Absalom who is the mother of Asa, and therefore wife of Abijah.

c. This discourse, similar to those composed by ancient historians, elaborates one of the Chronicler's favourite themes: there is no legitimate priesthood but that of the priests and Levites. God favours only those who worship him in accordance with the 'Priestly' legislation of the Pentateuch with its Aaronic priesthood, v. 10, cf. Lv 8, its holocausts and incense, Lv 1f, its loaves of offering. The golden lamp-stand, cf. Ex 37:17; Lv 24:2, is substituted for the candlesticks of Solomon's Temple, 1 K 7:49; 2 Ch 4:7.

d. Lit. 'covenant of salt', cf. Lv 2:13.

which belongs to the sons of David, and you stand there in a great horde, with your golden calves that Jeroboam made you for gods! •Have you not driven 9
out the priests of Yahweh, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, to make priests of your own like the peoples of foreign countries? Anyone who comes with a bull and seven rams to get himself consecrated can become priest of what is no god at all! •But for our part, our God is Yahweh, and we have not abandoned him: 10
our priests are sons of Aaron who minister to Yahweh, and those who serve are Levites. •Every morning, every evening, we burn holocausts to Yahweh our 11
God; we have the incense of sweet spices, the loaves set out in rows on the pure table, the golden lamp-stand with its lamps that burn each evening; for we observe the ritual of Yahweh our God, but you have abandoned him. •See how 12
Nb 19:9 God is with us, at our head; see his priests with the trumpets, who will sound them to raise the war cry against you. Sons of Israel, do not fight against Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, for you will not succeed.'

The battle

Jeroboam outflanked the Judaeans by setting an ambush in their rear; the 13
Judaeans were facing the Israelites with the ambush in their rear. •The Judaeans, 14
turning about, found themselves attacked in front and rear. They called on Yahweh, the priests sounded the trumpets, •and the men of Judah raised the war cry, and 15
as they raised the cry God scattered Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. •The Israelites fled before Judah and God delivered them into the power 16
of the Judaeans. •Abijah and his army inflicted a crushing defeat on them: five 17
hundred thousand of Israel's chosen men fell killed. •So the sons of Israel 18
were humbled on that occasion, and the sons of Judah reassured since they had relied on Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

The end of the reign of Abijah

Abijah pursued Jeroboam and captured certain towns from him: Bethel with 19
its outlying villages, Jeshanah with its outlying villages and Ephron with its outlying villages.[e] •So in the lifetime of Abijah, Jeroboam could no longer 20
maintain his power; and Yahweh struck him down, and he died. •But Abijah 21
grew in strength; he took fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen
‖1K15:7-8 daughters. •The rest of the history of Abijah, his conduct and his deeds, is not 22
12:15 all this recorded in the Midrash of the prophet Iddo? •Then Abijah slept with 23 14:1
his fathers and they buried him in the Citadel of David; his son Asa succeeded him.

C. ASA AND HIS REFORM OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

Peace under Asa

34:3 ‖1K15:11-12 In his time the country was at peace for ten years.
33:15 Ex23:24+; 34:13+ 1S9:12+ 14 Asa did what is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh. •He abolished 1,2
the foreign altars and the high places, broke the pillars, cut down the 2,3
sacred poles, •and urged the Judaeans to look to Yahweh, the God of their 3
ancestors, and to observe law and commandment.[a] •He abolished the high 4
places and the altars of incense in every town of Judah. The kingdom was at 5
peace under his rule. •He rebuilt the fortified towns of Judah, since the country 5
was at peace and free of war during those years, Yahweh having granted him peace.
32:24 'Let us rebuild these towns,' he told Judah 'let us surround them with wall 6
and tower, with gate and bar; we shall be left in this land, since we have looked to Yahweh our God; and he has looked to us and given us peace on every side.'
They built and prospered. •Asa had an army of three hundred thousand 7
Judaeans armed with buckler and spear, and two hundred and eighty thousand
1Ch8:40+ Benjaminites bearing shield and wielding the bow, all of them valiant champions.

Zerah's invasion[b]

8 9 10 Zerah the Cushite and an army one million strong with three hundred chariots made an incursion, and penetrated to Mareshah. •Asa marched out to intercept him and drew up his battle line in the Valley of Zephathah, at Mareshah. 10 11 He called on Yahweh, his God. 'Yahweh,' he said 'no one but you can stand up for the powerless against the powerful. Come to our help, Yahweh our God! We rely on you, and confront this horde in your name. Yahweh, you are our God. Let man leave everything to you!' 16:8; 21:17 32:7 Ps 20:7-8; 60:11-12

11 12 12 13 Yahweh defeated the Cushites before Asa and the Judaeans, the Cushites fled, •and Asa pursued them with his army as far as Gerar. So many of the Cushites fell that recovery was impossible, for they had been shattered before 13 14 Yahweh and his army. They collected great quantities of booty, •they conquered all the towns in the area of Gerar, for the terror of Yahweh had fallen on these; 14 15 they plundered them all since they were full of loot. •They also set on the enclosures of livestock and carried off great numbers of sheep and camels; then they returned to Jerusalem.

The prophecy of Azariah and the oath of fidelity

1 2 15 The spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded; •he went out to meet Asa and said, 'Listen to me, Asa, and all you of Judah and of Benjamin. Yahweh is with you so long as you are with you. When you seek him, he lets 3 you find him; when you desert him, he deserts you. •Many a day Israel will 4 spend without a faithful God, without priest to teach, without law; •but in their distress they will return to Yahweh, the God of Israel; they will seek him, and 5 he will let them find him. •When that time comes no grown man will know peace, 6 for many troubles will afflict all the inhabitants of the country. •Nation will be shattered by nation, city shattered by city, since God will afflict them with every 7 kind of distress. •But for your part, take courage, do not let your hands weaken, for your deeds will be rewarded.' Ws 1:1 Jr 29:13-14 Ho 3:4-5 Dt 4:29-30 Is 19:2 Is 7:4 Jr 31:16

8 When Asa heard these words and this prophecy,[a] he was emboldened to remove all the abominable idols throughout the land of Judah and Benjamin, and in the towns he had captured in the highlands[b] of Ephraim; he then 9 repaired the altar of Yahweh that stood in front of the Porch of Yahweh.[c] •He gathered all Judah and Benjamin together, and also the Ephraimites, Manassites and Simeonites who had settled with them, since great numbers of Israelites had 10 gone over to Asa when they saw that Yahweh was with him. •In the third month 11 of the fifteenth year of Asa they assembled in Jerusalem; •and they sacrificed to Yahweh that day seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep out of the 12 spoil they had brought back. •They made a compact[d] to seek Yahweh, the God of 13 their ancestors, with all their heart and soul; •anyone who would not seek Yahweh the God of Israel was to be put to death, whether of high or low degree, man 14 or woman. •They pledged their oath to Yahweh aloud with shouts to the sound 15 of trumpet and horn; •all Judah rejoiced at the oath they had wholeheartedly taken. They sought Yahweh so earnestly that he let them find him, and granted them peace on every side. Ne 10:30 Dt 4:29

Further activities of Asa

16 Maacah herself, the mother of King Asa, was deprived by him of the dignity 29:17 ‖1K 15:13-15

e. The conquest proved not to be conclusive.

14 a. The Chronicler credits Asa with measures like those taken by Josiah, 2 K 22:4f.

b. Apparently an invasion of nomads from the Negeb.

15 a. The Hebr. adds 'Oded the prophet', thus referring what precedes to him and not, unlike v. 1, to his son.

b. 'in the highlands' versions; 'from the highlands' Hebr.

c. It was Hezekiah who restored the altar which Ahaz had removed, 2 K 16:11,14, and whose reforms were prompted, according to Jr 26:18-19, by the words of the prophet Micah. It was Hezekiah, too, who welcomed the N. Israelites into Jerusalem, 2 Ch 30:25. Doubtless by the time of the Chronicler these recollections had been connected with the name of Asa.

d. Lit. 'They entered into the covenant'.

of queen mother for making an obscenity for Asherah; Asa cut down her obscenity and burnt it in the wadi Kidron. •Though the high places were not abolished 17
in Israel,[c] the heart of Asa was blameless all his life. •He deposited the offerings 18
dedicated by his father and his own offerings too, in the Temple of God, silver and gold and furnishings.

Up to the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign there was no war. **16** In the thirty- 19 1
1K15:16-22 sixth year of Asa's reign, Baasha king of Israel marched on Judah and fortified Ramah to blockade Asa king of Judah. •Asa then took the silver and gold from 2
the treasuries of the Temple of Yahweh and the royal palace, and sent this with the following message to Ben-hadad king of Aram who lived in Damascus, 'An alliance between myself and you, as between my father and your father! With 3
this I send you silver and gold. Come, break off your alliance with Baasha king of Israel, and he will have to retire from my territory.' •Ben-hadad agreed, and 4
sent his generals against the towns of Israel; he conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim and all the garrison towns of Naphtali. •When Baasha heard this he gave 5
up fortifying Ramah, abandoning this work. •King Asa then brought all Judah; 6
they took away the stones and timber with which Baasha had been fortifying Ramah, and the king used them to fortify Geba and Mizpah.

It was then that Hanani[a] the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said, 'Since 7
you have relied on the king of Aram and not on Yahweh your God, the army of the king of Aram will slip through your fingers. •Did not the Cushites and 8
14:8-14 Libyans form a vast army with great numbers of chariots and horses? And were they not delivered into your power because you relied on Yahweh? •Since the 9
Ps33:13-15 eyes of Yahweh rove to and fro across the whole world to display his might on behalf of those whose hearts are wholly his, you have acted on this occasion like a fool; and from now on you will have war.' •Enraged with the seer, Asa 10
Jr 20:2 had him put in the stocks in prison, he was so angry with him for this; at the same time Asa began treating part of the population harshly too.

The end of the reign of Asa

The history of Asa, from first to last, is recorded in the Book of the Kings 11
‖1K15:23 of Judah and Israel. •A disease attacked Asa from head to foot[b] in the thirty- 12
ninth year of his reign; and, what is more, he turned in his sickness, not to
‖1K15:24 Yahweh, but to doctors.[c] •Then Asa slept with his ancestors, dying in the 13
forty-first year of his reign. •They buried him in the tomb[d] he had ordered to 14
be dug for himself in the Citadel of David. They laid him on a couch entirely covered with spices and varied ointments, products of the perfumer's skill, and lit a huge fire for him.[e]

D. JEHOSHAPHAT AND HIS GOVERNMENT

His power[a]

17 His son Jehoshaphat succeeded him and consolidated his power over Israel. 1
He put troops in all the fortified towns in Judah, and appointed governors 2
in the land of Judah and in all the towns of Ephraim captured by his father Asa.

His observance of the Law

Yahweh was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father's[b] 3
earlier days and did not have recourse to the Baals; •he sought the God of his 4
father, following his commandments and not following the example of Israel.
Yahweh made the kingship secure in his hands; all Judah paid tribute to Jehosha- 5
phat, and ample riches and honour were his. •His heart advanced in the ways 6
20:33 Ex34:13+ 1S9:12+ Jdt 3:8 of Yahweh, and once again he did away with the high places and sacred poles in Judah.

In the third year of his reign he sent his officers: Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, 7

8 Nethanel and Micaiah, to give instruction in the towns of Judah. •With them
went the Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, 19:8
Jehonathan, Adonijah and Tobijah, the Levites, together with the priests,
9 Elishama and Jehoram.[c] •They gave instruction in Judah, having with them the Ezr 7:25
book of the Law of Yahweh, and went round all the towns of Judah instructing
10 the people. •The terror of Yahweh fell on all the kingdoms of the land
11 surrounding Judah; they did not make war on Jehoshaphat. •Some of the
Philistines brought him gifts and silver in tribute; the Arabs[d] themselves brought Is 16:1
him, in small stock, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand
12 seven hundred he-goats. •Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful.
He built fortresses and garrison towns in Judah.

The army

13 He had strong formations in the towns of Judah and a garrison of valiant
14 champions in Jerusalem. •This was their disposition by families: for Judah,
commanders of thousands: Adnah, the commanding officer, with three hundred
15 thousand valiant champions; •under his command, Jehohanan with two hundred
16 and eighty thousand; •under his command, Amasiah son of Zichri, who had
volunteered for Yahweh's service, with two hundred thousand valiant champions.
17 From Benjamin: the valiant champion Eliada with two hundred thousand,
18 armed with bow and shield; •under his command, Jehozabad with a hundred 1 Ch 8:40
and eighty thousand equipped for war.
19 These were the men who served the king, not counting those the king had
put in the fortified towns throughout Judah.

The alliance with Ahab; the prophets' attitude ||1K22:1-35

1 18 Jehoshaphat, then, enjoyed great wealth and honour, and allied himself
2 by marriage to Ahab.[a] •After some years he went to visit Ahab in Samaria.
Ahab slaughtered for him and for his retinue great numbers of sheep and oxen[b]
3 to induce him to attack Ramoth-gilead. •'Will you come with me to Ramoth-
gilead?' Ahab king of Israel asked Jehoshaphat king of Judah. Jehoshaphat
answered the king of Israel, 'I am as ready for battle as you, my men as your
men'.

The spurious prophets predict success

4 Jehoshaphat, however, said to the king of Israel, 'First, please consult the
5 word of Yahweh'. •So the king of Israel called the prophets together, four hundred
of them. 'Should we march to attack Ramoth-gilead,' he asked 'or should
I refrain?' 'March,' they replied 'Yahweh will deliver it into the power of the
6 king.' •But Jehoshaphat said, 'Is there no other prophet of Yahweh here for
7 us to consult?' •The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, 'There is one more
man through whom we can consult Yahweh, but I hate him because he never
has a favourable prophecy for me, always unfavourable ones; he is Micaiah son
8 of Imlah'. 'The king should not say such things' Jehoshaphat said. •Accordingly

e. The Chronicler follows 1 K without troubling to harmonise it with 2 Ch 14:4.

16 a. His reproach is the same as that of Isaiah to Ahaz, Is 7:13f. The prophets could never tolerate civil war in the nation God had chosen.

b. Alternative translation 'a malignant disease attacked his feet'.

c. In those days medicine and magic were often confused. The Hebr. word for 'doctor' is also used for spirits of the underworld, consulted in crises, 1 S 28:6f; cf. 2 K 1:2f.

d. Hebr. 'the tombs'.

e. Possibly cremation, more probably a reference to the burning of spices, cf. 21:19.

17 a. The Chronicler sees Asa as a type of the peaceful, Jehoshaphat of the strong king. The king's name means 'Yahweh-is-judge'.

b. Hebr. 'his father David's'.

c. No doubt this was also a military mission but the Chronicler takes its primary purpose to be instruction in the Law, like the mission of Ezra when he was sent by Artaxerxes, Ezr 7:25; teachers of the Law and synagogue instructions were already features of the Chronicler's times.

d. Not all the Arabian tribes but a nomadic group which had infiltrated into Edom and Moab, cf. 21:16.

18 a. His son Joram married Athaliah, Ahab's daughter.

b. In violation of Lv 17 the sacrifice was offered outside the accredited sanctuary and would prove disastrous.

the king of Israel summoned one of the eunuchs and said, 'Bring Micaiah son of Imlah immediately'.

The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were both sitting on their 9
thrones in full regalia; they sat at the threshing-floor outside the gate of Samaria,
with all the prophets raving in front of them. •Zedekiah son of Chenaanah had 10
made himself iron horns. 'Yahweh says this' he said. ' "With these you will
gore the Aramaeans till you make an end of them." ' •And all the prophets 11
prophesied the same. 'March to Ramoth-gilead,' they said 'and conquer. Yahweh
will deliver it into the power of the king.'

The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said, 'Here are all the 12
prophets as one man in speaking favourably to the king. Try to speak like one
of them and foretell success.' •But Micaiah answered, 'As Yahweh lives, what 13
my God says, that will I utter!' •When he came to the king, the king said, 14
'Micaiah, should we march to attack Ramoth-gilead, or should I refrain?' He
answered, 'March and conquer. They will be delivered into your power.' •But 15
the king said, 'How often must I put you on oath to tell me nothing but the
truth in the name of Yahweh?' •Then Micaiah spoke: 16

> 'I have seen all Israel scattered on the mountains
> like sheep without a shepherd.
> And Yahweh said, "These have no master,
> let each one go home unmolested".'

At this the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'Did I not tell you that he 17
never gives me favourable prophecies, but only unfavourable ones?' •Micaiah 18
went on, 'Listen rather to the word of Yahweh. I have seen Yahweh seated on
his throne; all the array of heaven stood to his right and to his left. •Yahweh 19
said, "Who will trick Ahab king of Israel into marching to his death at Ramoth-
gilead?" At which some answered one way, and some another. •Then the spirit 20
came forward and stood before Yahweh. "I," he said "I will trick him." "How?"
Yahweh asked. •He replied, "I will go and become a lying spirit in the mouths 21
of all his prophets". "You shall trick him," Yahweh said "you shall succeed.
Go and do it." •Now see how Yahweh has put a lying spirit into the mouths 22
of your prophets here. But Yahweh has pronounced disaster on you.'

Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah came up and struck Micaiah on the jaw. 23
'Which way' he asked 'did the spirit of Yahweh leave me, to talk to you?'
'This is what you will find out,' Micaiah retorted 'the day you flee to an inner 24
room to hide.' •The king of Israel said, 'Seize Micaiah and hand him over to 25
Amon, governor of the city, and to Prince Joash, •and say, "This is the king's 26
order: Put this man in prison and feed him on nothing but bread and water
until I come back safe and sound" '. •Micaiah said, 'If you come back safe 27
and sound, Yahweh has not spoken through me'.[e]

The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up against Ramoth- 28
gilead. •The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'I will disguise myself to go 29
into battle, but I want you to wear your royal uniform.' The king of Israel
disguised himself, and they went into battle. •The king of Aram had given his 30
chariot commanders the following order: 'Do not attack anyone of whatever
rank, except the king of Israel'. •When the chariot commanders caught sight 31
of Jehoshaphat, they said, 'That is the king of Israel'. And they wheeled to the
attack. But Jehoshaphat gave a shout and Yahweh came to his help, God drew
them away from him, •for the chariot commanders, realising that he was not 32
the king of Israel, called off their pursuit.

35:23 Now one of the men, drawing his bow at random, hit the king of Israel 33
between the corslet and the scale-armour of his breastplate. 'Turn about,' the
king said to his charioteer 'get me out of the battle;[d] I have been hurt.' •But 34
the battle grew fiercer as the day went on; until evening the king held himself
upright in his chariot facing the Aramaeans, and at sunset he died.[e]

19 Jehoshaphat came back safe and sound to Jerusalem. •Jehu, son of Hanani
the seer, went to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, 'Should a man
give help to the wicked?[a] Should you love those who hate Yahweh and so bring
his wrath on you? •There is some good in you, however, since you have removed
the sacred poles from the land and have set your heart on seeking God.'

Measures taken to spread the true religion of Yahweh

After a stay in Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat made another progress through his
people, from Beersheba to the highlands of Ephraim, to bring them back to
Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. •He appointed judges in the country in
every one of all the fortified towns of Judah. •He said to these judges, 'Give
due thought to your duties, since you are not judging in the name of men but in Dt1:16-17; 16:19
the name of Yahweh, who is with you whenever you pronounce sentence. •May
the fear of Yahweh now be on you. Keep the Law,[b] apply it, for Yahweh our Dt 10:17+
God has no part in fraud or partiality or the taking of bribes.'
In addition, Jehoshaphat appointed priests, Levites and heads of Israelite 17:8 Dt17:8-13
families[c] in Jerusalem to pronounce the verdicts of Yahweh and to judge disputed Ps122:3-5
cases. They lived in Jerusalem[d] •and Jehoshaphat gave them the following
instructions, 'You are to perform these duties in the fear of Yahweh, faithfully
and with all your heart. •Whatever dispute comes before you from your brothers
living in their towns: a question of blood-vengeance, of the Law, of some com- Nb35:19+
mandment, of statute, or of ordinance, you are to clarify these matters for them
so that they do not incur guilt before Yahweh, whose wrath will otherwise come
on you and your brothers. Do this and you will incur no guilt.
'Amariah, the chief priest, will preside over you in all religious matters,[e] and
Zebadiah son of Ishmael, controller of the House of Judah, in all matters
affecting the king.[f] The Levites will serve as your scribes. Be resolute, carry out
these instructions, and Yahweh will be there to bring success.'

An act of faith and song of praise in the war against Edom

20 After this the Moabites and Ammonites, with some of the Meunites[a] 26:7
started to make war on Jehoshaphat. •Jehoshaphat received the following
intelligence, 'A vast horde is advancing against you from Edom, from the other
side of the sea; they are already at Hazazon-tamar, that is, En-gedi'.
Jehoshaphat was alarmed and resolved to have recourse to Yahweh; he
proclaimed a fast for all Judah. •Judah assembled to seek help from Yahweh; 1 K 21:9 Jr 36:6 Jl 1:14
they came seeking Yahweh from every single town in Judah.
At this assembly of the people of Judah and Jerusalem in the Temple of
Yahweh, Jehoshaphat stood before the new court •and said,[b] 'Yahweh, God of
our ancestors, are you not the God who dwells in the heavens? Do you not rule 32:7 Dt 4:39 Est4:17b
over all the kingdoms of the nations? Such power and might are in your hands
that no one can resist you. •Are you not our God, you who have dispossessed the
inhabitants of this land for Israel your people, and given it to the descendants of Dn 3:35
Abraham whom you will love for ever? •They have settled in it and built a Is 41:8
sanctuary there for your name, •saying, "Should calamity befall us, or war,

c. The Hebr. adds 'And he said: Listen, peoples all', the opening (Mi 1:2) of the Book of Micah of Moresheth whom the Chronicler, perhaps deliberately, associates with Micaiah ben-Imlah.

d. Hebr. 'out of the camp'.

e. Here the Chronicler deserts 1 K which concentrates on Ahab and Samaria; he is concerned with Jehoshaphat and Judah.

19 a. Fresh light on the teaching of the prophets. Hosea, Isaiah and Ezekiel condemned Israel's resorting to foreign alliance as a useless policy. Jehu's words reveal the religious and moral principles behind this attitude.

b. 'the Law' is not in the text.

c. Provision is made, as in Dt 17:8-13, for a supreme council of priests and laity in addition to the local councils. Its primary function is to interpret the Law of Yahweh.

d. Text corr.; 'and to judge disputed cases. They returned to Jerusalem' Hebr.; 'to judge the inhabitants of Jerusalem' Greek.

e. Lit. 'the business of Yahweh'.

f. This distinction of religious and profane betrays the influence of Ezekiel.

20 a. 'Meunites'; the Hebr. has 'Ammonites'. Meon is in Edom, near Petra. This seems to be a raid like that of Zerah the Cushite, 14:8-14.

b. The opening of this prayer repeats the themes of the prayer of Solomon, 6:1f.

punishment, pestilence, or famine, then we shall stand before this Temple and before you, for your name is in this Temple. From the depths of our distress we shall cry to you, and you will hear and save us."

'Here now are the Ammonites and Moab and the mountain folk of Seir; 10
Dt 2:4f,9f, 18f when Israel came out of the land of Egypt you would not let Israel invade them;
instead, Israel turned away from them and did not destroy them; •and this 11
is how they reward us, by coming to drive us out of the possessions you have
given us as our inheritance. •Will you our God not execute judgement on them, 12
since we are helpless against this vast horde attacking us? We ourselves do not
know what to do; we look to you.'

All the men of Judah, even down to their youngest children and their wives, 13
stood in the presence of Yahweh. •In the middle of the assembly the spirit of 14
Yahweh came on Jahaziel[c] son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son
1Ch 9:15 Ne 11:17,22 of Mattaniah the Levite, one of the sons of Asaph. •'Listen all you men of 15
Judah,' he cried 'and you who live in Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat!
Yahweh says this to you, "Do not be afraid, do not be daunted by this vast
horde; this battle is not yours but God's. •March out against them tomorrow; 16
they are coming up by the Slope of Ziz and you will come on them in the Valley
of Soph,[d] near the wilderness of Jeruel. •You will not need to fight there. Take 17
up your position, stand firm, and see what salvation Yahweh has in store for
you. Judah and Jerusalem, be fearless, be dauntless; march out against them
Is 8:10 tomorrow and Yahweh will be with you." '

Jehoshaphat bent his head, his face to the ground, and all Judah with those 18
who lived in Jerusalem fell down before Yahweh, worshipping him. •Then the 19
Levites—Kohathites and Korahites—began praising Yahweh the God of Israel
at the tops of their voices.

They rose early in the morning and left for the wilderness of Tekoa. As they 20
were setting out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Listen to me Judah and all who
Is 7:9b live in Jerusalem! Have faith in Yahweh your God and you will be secure; have
faith in his prophets and you will be successful.' •Then, having held a conference 21
with the people, he set the cantors of Yahweh in sacred vestments at the head of
Ps 136:1 the army, to sing praises to him. 'Give praise to Yahweh,' they sang 'for his love is
everlasting.' •As they began to sing their joy and their praise, Yahweh laid an 22
ambush for the Ammonites and Moab and the mountain folk of Seir who had
come to attack Judah, and routed them. •The Ammonites and Moabites turned 23
Jos 6:17+ Ezk 38:21 on the mountain folk of Seir to inflict the ban on them and destroy them
altogether, but they only helped each other to their own undoing.

When the men of Judah reached the spot that looks out on the wilderness 24
and turned to face the horde, they found only corpses lying on the ground;
no one had escaped. •Jehoshaphat came with his troops to plunder them, and 25
found quantities of cattle, goods, clothing and valuables;[e] they collected more
than they could take away; the booty was so plentiful they were three days
gathering it. •On the fourth day they mustered in the Valley of Beracah; 26
and there they did indeed bless Yahweh,[f] hence the name of the Valley of Beracah
by which the place is still called today. •Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin, 27
with Jehoshaphat at their head, went back joyfully to Jerusalem, for Yahweh
had given them cause to rejoice over their enemies. •To the music of harp and 28
lyre and trumpet they came to Jerusalem and to the Temple of Yahweh, •and 29
Dt 2:25 the Terror of God came on all the kingdoms of foreign countries when they
came to hear how Yahweh had fought against the enemies of Israel. •The kingdom 30
of Jehoshaphat was calm, his God granting him peace on all his frontiers.

||1K 22:41-51 **The end of the reign of Jehoshaphat**

Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he came 31
to the throne and he reigned for twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name
was Azubah, daughter of Shilhi. •He followed the example of his father Asa 32

33 undeviatingly, doing what is right in the eyes of Yahweh. •The high places, 17:6
however, were not abolished; the people had still not turned their hearts to the
34 God of their ancestors. •The rest of the history of Jehoshaphat, from first to last,
is recorded in the Annals of Jehu son of Hanani which have been transcribed
into the Book of the Kings of Israel.
35 After this, Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of
36 Israel, who led him into evil ways. •He combined with him to build ships that
37 would sail to Tarshish; they built them at Ezion-geber. •Eliezer son of Dodavahu
of Mareshah then made a prophecy against Jehoshaphat. 'Because you have
allied yourself with Ahaziah,' he said 'Yahweh has broken your work.' The
ships broke up and were never fit to sail for Tarshish.
1 21 Jehoshaphat slept with his ancestors and was buried in the Citadel of
David; his son Jehoram succeeded him.

E. IMPIETY AND DISASTERS UNDER JEHORAM, AHAZIAH, ATHALIAH AND JOASH

The accession and crime of Jehoram

2 Jehoram had six brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah,
Azariahu, Michael and Shephatiah; these are all the sons of Jehoshaphat king
3 of Israel.[a] •Their father had made them many gifts of silver, gold and jewels,
and of fortified towns in Judah, but he bequeathed the throne to Jehoram since
4 he was the first-born. •Jehoram, having maintained his hold over his father's
kingdom and secured his own position, put all his brothers to the sword and
some officials of Israel too.
5 Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he came to the throne and he reigned ||2K8:17-19
6 for eight years in Jerusalem. •He followed the example of the kings of Israel
as the family of Ahab had done, having married one of Ahab's daughters;
7 and he did what is displeasing to Yahweh. •Yahweh however did not intend
to destroy the House of David, because of the covenant[b] he had made with
David, and was faithful to the promise he had made to leave a lamp for him 1K11:36+
and his sons for ever.

The punishment

8 In his time Edom threw off the domination of Judah and set up a king for ||2K8:20-22
9 itself. •Jehoram crossed the frontier with his commanders and all his chariots.
He rose during the night and broke through the Edomites encircling him and
10 his chariot commanders. •Thus Edom threw off the domination of Judah, and
has remained free to the present day. Libnah threw off Jehoram's domination
at the same time.
11 He had indeed deserted Yahweh, the God of his ancestors. •He also set up
high places in the highlands of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem
12 to prostitute themselves, and Judah to go astray. •Then something written by the
prophet Elijah[c] came into his hands. It ran, 'This is the word of Yahweh, the
God of David your ancestor. "Since you have not followed the example of
13 your father Jehoshaphat or of Asa king of Judah, •but the example of the
kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to

c. The Chronicler sees this cantor as a prophet, cf. 1 Ch 25:1+.
d. Alternative translation 'at the end of the valley'.
e. 'of cattle' corr.; 'among them' Hebr. 'clothing' corr.; 'corpses' Hebr.
f. Beracah means 'blessing'.

21 a. 'six' omitted by Hebr. 'Israel'; Greek reads 'Judah'.
b. Terminology peculiar to the Chronicler who applies the word to the new messianic, and therefore Davidic, covenant.
c. The only mention of Elijah in the book; Kings knows nothing of any activity of Elijah in Judah. According to the chronology of 2 K, Elijah had disappeared before Jehoram of Israel came to the throne, 2 K 2 and 3:1, and so before Jehoram of Judah. cf. 2 K 8:16; cf. however 2 K 1:17. But the Chronicler speaks of a prophetic document, not of the prophet in person.

prostitute themselves, just as the House of Ahab did, and since you have also murdered your brothers, your own family, better men than yourself, •Yahweh will strike you[d] with a great calamity, your people, your descendants, your wives and all your property. •You yourself shall suffer dire[e] diseases, and a disease of your bowels so severe that within two years[f] it will make your bowels drop out." '

Am 1:6 Yahweh roused against Jehoram the hostility of the Philistines, and of the
14:8+ Arabs bordering on the Cushites. •They attacked Judah, invading it and carrying off all the property they found belonging to the king's household, including his sons and his wives; the only son left him was Ahaziah, the youngest of them. And after all this, Yahweh struck him down with an incurable disease of the bowels; •it lasted for more than one year, and when two years were over and his last hour had come, his bowels dropped out with disease and he died in great
16:14 pain. The people did not light a fire for him as they had for his father.

He was thirty-two years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem. He passed away with no one to regret him, and
||2K 8:24 they buried him in the Citadel of David, though not in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah and his policy

2K8:24-29 22 The population of Jerusalem made his youngest son Ahaziah king in succession to him, since the armed band that had broken into the camp with the Arabs had killed all the elder sons. That was why Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah. •Ahaziah was twenty[a] years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, daughter of Omri. •He too followed the example of Ahab's family, since his mother gave him wicked advice. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh as
10:6f Qo 10:16 Ahab's family had done, for these were his advisers after his father's death, to his undoing. •He also put their policy into practice and went with Jehoram son of Ahab, king of Israel, to fight against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-gilead. But the Aramaeans[b] wounded Jehoram, •who returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that he had received at Ramoth, fighting against Hazael king of Aram. Ahaziah[c] son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to Jezreel to visit Jehoram son of Ahab because he was ill. •Through this visit to Jehoram Yahweh
||2K9:21; 10:12-14 brought ruin to Ahaziah. On his arrival he went out with Jehoram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi whom Yahweh had anointed to make an end of the House of
||2K 9:27 Ahab. •While Jehu was busy executing justice on the House of Ahab, he came across the officials of Judah and the nephews of Ahaziah who were in the king's service; he killed them, •and then went in search of Ahaziah. The latter was
||2K 11:1 captured while trying to hide in Samaria, and taken to Jehu who put him to
||2K9:28-29 death. But they gave him burial. 'This was a son of Jehoshaphat,' they said 'who sought Yahweh with all his heart.'

||2K11:1-3 The crime of Athaliah

There was no one left in the House of Ahaziah strong enough to reign. •As soon as Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah learned that her son was dead, she promptly did away with[d] all the royal stock of the House of Judah. •But Jehosheba, daughter of the king, secretly took away Joash, her brother's son, from among the sons of the king who were being murdered, and put him with his nurse in the sleeping quarters; in this way Jehosheba the daughter of King Joram and wife of Jehoiada the priest (a sister, too, of Ahaziah) hid him from Athaliah, and prevented her from killing him. •He stayed with them for six years, hidden in the Temple of God, while Athaliah governed the country.

2K11:4-16 The *ministers* of the Temple oppose Athaliah

23 In the seventh year Jehoiada took strong measures. He sent for the commanders of hundreds, Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah and Elishaphat son of Zichri,

and made a pact with them. •They went through Judah, gathering the Levites
2 from all the towns of Judah, and the heads of the Israelite families.[a] They came
3 to Jerusalem, •and this whole assembly made a pact with the king in the Temple
of God. 'Here is the son of the king' Jehoiada told them. 'Let him reign, as
4 Yahweh has promised of the sons of David! •This is what you must do: one
third of you,[b] priests, Levites and keepers of the gate, must come in for the
5 sabbath, •one third must be at the royal palace, one third at the Gate of Foun-
6 dation, and all the people will be in the court of the Temple of Yahweh. •Let no
one enter the Temple of Yahweh except the priests and the Levites on duty,
since they are consecrated and may enter. The people must all observe the
7 injunctions of Yahweh. •The Levites must surround the king, each with his
weapons in his hand; anyone who tries to enter the Temple is to be put to death.
Wherever the king comes or goes, you must escort him.'

8 The Levites and all Judah carried out all the orders of Jehoiada the priest.
Each brought his men, those coming off duty on the sabbath together with those
mounting guard on the sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest had exempted none of 1Ch24:19
9 the orders.[c] •Then Jehoiada the priest issued the commanders of hundreds with
King David's spears and large and small shields, which were in the Temple
10 of God. •He drew all the people up, each man with his weapon in his hand,
from the south corner to the north corner of the Temple, surrounding the altar
11 and the Temple, to form a circle round the king. •Then Jehoiada brought out
the king's son, crowned him, and imposed the Law[d] on him; and they proclaimed
him king. Jehoiada and his sons[e] then anointed him and shouted, 'Long live
the king!'

12 Athaliah, on hearing the shouts of the people rushing to the king and
13 acclaiming him, made for the Temple of Yahweh where the people were. •When
she saw the king standing there at the entrance beside the pillar, with the captains
and trumpeters at the king's side, and all the country people rejoicing and
sounding trumpets, and the cantors with their musical instruments leading the
14 hymns,[f] Athaliah tore her garments and shouted, 'Treason, treason!' •Then
Jehoiada the priest called out the military officers. 'Take her outside the precincts,'
he ordered 'and put anyone to the sword who follows her.' For the priest had
15 said, 'You must not put her to death in the Temple of Yahweh'. •They seized
her, and when she had reached the palace at the entry to the Gate of the Horses,
they put her to death there.

The reforms by Jehoiada

||2K11:17-20

16 Jehoiada made a covenant between the king and all the people, by which
17 they undertook to be the people of Yahweh. •All the people then went to the
temple of Baal and demolished it; they smashed his altars and his images and
killed Mattan, priest of Baal, in front of the altars.

18 Jehoiada posted sentries to guard the Temple of Yahweh under the authority
of the levitical priests. David had given the Temple of Yahweh to these as their 1Ch23:13

d. 'will strike you' with Greek.
e. 'dire' corr. according to Greek; 'many' Hebr.
f. Cf. v. 19. Lit. 'days on days'.

22 a. Var. 'twenty-two', cf. 2 K 8:26; 'forty-two' Hebr.
b. 'Aramaeans' corr.; 'bowmen' Hebr.
c. Hebr. 'Azariah'.
d. 'did away with' corr.

23 a. From 'Azariah son of Jeroham' to here is the Chronicler's own composition. It assumes an initial agreement with Israelite army officers, whereas 2 K implies foreign guards. Ezk 44:9 had forbidden foreigners access to the sanctuary. On the other hand, the Chronicler had to bear in mind the part that had to be played by the Levites in all the Temple liturgy, Nb 1-4, and 8; 1 Ch 15-28: hence the great assembly of vv. 2-3 of which 2 K says nothing. The Chronicler sees the *coup d'état* more as a liturgical act than as a political conspiracy.
b. The Chronicler has adjusted the text of 2 K so that only the priests and Levites enter, while the guards stay at the gates or in the palace (where Athaliah was) and the people occupy the court as on solemn feasts.
c. The Chronicler turns the relief of the guard mentioned in 2 K into an observance of the Davidic regulations concerning the priestly groups, 1 Ch 24:19.
d. Lit. 'the Testimony'; but by the times of the Chronicler the word had come to mean 'covenant', i.e. the 'Law', and the writer is here thinking of Dt 17:18 which required the king to write out a copy of the Law.
e. The Hebr. text of 2 K does not say explicitly that the priests did the anointing.
f. Another observation peculiar to the Chronicler.

portion, so that they could offer the holocausts of Yahweh as is laid down in
1 Ch 25 the Law of Moses, with joy and song, in accordance with the orders of
1 Ch 26 David. •He stationed gatekeepers at the gates of the Temple of Yahweh so that 19
no one who was in any way unclean might enter.[g] •Then taking the com- 20
manders of hundreds, the notables, those holding public positions, and all the country people, he escorted the king down from the Temple of Yahweh. They entered the royal palace through the middle arch of the Upper Gate and seated the king on the royal throne. •All the country people were delighted, and the 21
city made no move. Athaliah was put to death.

‖2K12:1-17 **Joash repairs the Temple**

24 Joash was seven years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for 1
forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.
26:5 Joash did what is pleasing to Yahweh throughout the lifetime of Jehoiada the 2
priest. •Jehoiada found him two wives and he had sons and daughters. •Subse- 3 4
quently, Joash made up his mind to repair the Temple of Yahweh.

Calling the priests and the Levites together, he said, 'Go out to the towns of 5
Judah,[a] and collect enough money from all the Israelites to make possible annual repairs to the Temple of Yahweh. Do this quickly.' But the Levites
Ne 10:33 were in no hurry, •so the king summoned Jehoiada their leader, and said, 'Why 6
have you not insisted on the Levites collecting from Judah and Jerusalem what
Ex25:1-9; 38:24-31 Moses the servant of Yahweh levied from the community of Israel[b] for the Tent of the Testimony? •Athaliah and her sons, whom she perverted, not only damaged 7
the Temple of God but even assigned the sacred revenues of the Temple of
34:9 Yahweh to the Baals.' •The king ordered them to make a chest and to place 8
it outside the gate of the Temple of Yahweh. •Proclamation was then made in 9
Ne 10:33 Judah and in Jerusalem that what Moses the servant of God had levied from Israel in the wilderness should be brought to Yahweh. •All the officials and all 10
the people came joyfully with their contribution, dropping it into the chest until all was paid.

When the chest was taken to the royal office of control, run by the Levites, 11
these would check the amount of money in it; then the king's secretary would come with a representative of the chief priest; they would take up the chest, carry it away, and later return it to its place. They did this every day, and collected a large sum of money. •The king and Jehoiada handed it over to the master 12
of works attached to the Temple of Yahweh. The hired men, masons and carpenters, set about restoring the Temple of Yahweh; craftsmen in iron and bronze also worked on the repairing of it. •The masters of works having once 13
made a start, the repairs went ahead under their supervision; they rebuilt the Temple of God to its former state and strengthened the fabric. •When they 14
had finished, they brought the balance of the money to the king and Jehoiada, and with this furnishings were made for the Temple of Yahweh, vessels for the liturgy and for the holocausts, incense boats and objects of gold and silver.

So, for as long as Jehoiada lived they offered perpetual holocaust in the Temple of Yahweh. •Then Jehoiada, growing old, had his fill of days and died. 15
He died at the age of a hundred and thirty years, •and they buried him with 16
the kings in the Citadel of David because he had served God and his Temple well in Israel.

Joash falls away and is punished

After the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Judah came to pay court to the 17
king, and the king now turned to them for advice. •The Judaeans abandoned 18
Ex34:13+ the Temple of Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, for the worship of sacred poles and idols. Because of their guilt, God's anger fell on Judah and Jerusalem. He sent them prophets to bring them back to Yahweh, but when these gave 19
their message, they would not listen. •The spirit of God took possession of 20

Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood up before the people and said,
'God says this, "Why do you transgress the commandments of Yahweh to
21 no good purpose? You have deserted Yahweh, now he deserts you."' •They
then plotted against him and by order of the king stoned him in the court ↗Mt 23:35+
22 of the Temple of Yahweh. •King Joash, forgetful of the kindness that Jehoiada,
the father of Zechariah, had shown him, killed Jehoiada's son who cried out as
he died, 'Yahweh sees and he will avenge!'
23 When a year had gone by, the Aramaean army made war on Joash. They 2K12:18-22
reached Judah and Jerusalem, and executed all the officials among the people,
sending back to the king at Damascus all that they had plundered from them.
24 Though the Aramaean army had by no means come in force, Yahweh delivered Dt 32:30
into its power an army of great size for having deserted him, the God of their
ancestors.
25 The Aramaeans treated Joash as he had deserved, •and when they retired
they left him a very sick man; and his officers, plotting against him to avenge
the death of the son[c] of Jehoiada the priest, murdered him in his bed. So he
died, and they buried him in the Citadel of David, though not in the tombs of
26 the kings. •These were the conspirators: Zabad son of Shimeath the Ammonite
27 woman, and Jehozabad son of Shimrith the Moabitess. •As regards his sons,
the heavy tribute imposed on him, and the restoration of the Temple of God,
this is all recorded in the Midrash on the Book of the Kings. His son Amaziah
succeeded him.

F. THE HALF-HEARTED PIETY AND PARTIAL SUCCESS OF AMAZIAH, UZZIAH AND JOTHAM

The religious policy of Amaziah

1 25 Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne and he ||2K14:2-6
reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was
2 Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, though not
3 wholeheartedly. •Once the kingdom was firmly under his control, he killed
4 those of his officers who had murdered the king his father. •But he did not put
their sons to death, in obedience to what is written in the Law, in the book of
Moses, where Yahweh has ordered, 'Fathers must not be put to death for sons, Dt 24:16
nor sons for fathers; each one must be put to death for his own sin'.
5 Amaziah called the men of Judah together and organised them in families
with commanders of thousands and of hundreds for all Judah and Benjamin.
He took a census of those who were twenty years old and upwards, and found
there were three hundred thousand of them, eligible and fit for military service,
6 with spear and shield to hand. •Next, he enrolled one hundred thousand valiant
7 champions from Israel as mercenaries, for a hundred talents of silver. •A man
of God then came to him. 'O king,' he said 'the troops of Israel must not march
8 with you, for Yahweh is not with Israel, nor with anyone from Ephraim. •For
if they come, no matter how brave your conduct in the fight, God will still
bring you down before your enemies, for God's is the power to uphold or to
9 throw down.' •Amaziah answered the man of God, 'And what about the hundred
talents I have given the Israelite contingent?' 'Yahweh can give you far more
10 than that' the man of God replied. •At this, Amaziah dismissed from his army
the troops that had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home; these men
were furious with Judah and went home in a great rage.

g. The Chronicler sees Jehoiada's reform as a return to Davidic customs.

24 a. The Chronicler puts this collection in place of the ordinary Temple offerings, 2 K 12:5; it is similar to the post-exilic levy of a *didrachma* on all the Jews of the Dispersion, cf. Mt 17:24f.

b. Text corrected, cf. v. 9; Hebr. doubtful.

c. Hebr. 'the sons'.

His infidelity after the Edomite campaign

||2K14:7 Amaziah decided to lead out his troops and, having reached the Valley of 11
Salt, defeated ten thousand of the sons of Seir. •The men of Judah took ten 12
thousand captives alive and, taking them to the summit of the Rock, threw
them off the top; they were all dashed to pieces. •Then the contingent which 13
Amaziah had dismissed and not allowed to fight with him raided the towns of
Judah, from Samaria as far as Beth-horon, beating a force of three thousand
strong and capturing great quantities of plunder.

On returning from his defeat of the Edomites, Amaziah brought the gods 14
of the sons of Seir with him; he set these up as gods for himself, bowing down
before them and burning incense to them. •The anger of Yahweh blazed out 15
against Amaziah; he sent him a prophet, who said, 'Why do you resort to this
people's gods, to gods who could not save their own people from your hands?'
He was still speaking when Amaziah interrupted him. 'Have we appointed you 16
a royal counsellor? If you do not want to be hurt, be quiet!' The prophet paused;
then he said, 'I know that God has determined to destroy you, since you have
behaved like this and have refused to listen to my advice'.

||2K14:8-14 **The disaster at Beth-shemesh**

After consulting his advisers, Amaziah king of Judah sent a message to Joash 17
son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, 'Come and make a trial of
Jg 9:7-15 strength!' •Joash king of Israel sent back word to Amaziah king of Judah, 'The 18
thistle of Lebanon sent a message to the cedar of Lebanon, saying, "Give my
son your daughter in marriage"; but the wild animals of Lebanon trampled the
thistle down as they passed. •"Look at me, the conqueror of Edom" you say, 19
and now hold your head in the air; boast on, but stay at home. Why challenge
disaster, to your own ruin and the ruin of Judah?'

But Amaziah would not listen, and this was God's doing: he intended to 20
hand them over to their enemies for resorting to the gods of Edom. •And at 21
Beth-shemesh, which belongs to Judah, they made their trial of strength, Joash
and Amaziah king of Judah. •Judah was defeated by Israel, and everyone fled 22
to his tent. •The king of Judah, Amaziah son of Joash, son of Ahaziah,[a] was 23
taken prisoner at Beth-shemesh by Joash king of Israel who led him off to
Jerusalem, where Joash demolished the city wall from the Gate of Ephraim to
the Gate of the Corner for a distance of four hundred cubits. •He took all the 24
1Ch26:15 gold and silver, and all the furnishings to be found with Obed-edom in the
Temple of God, the treasures of the royal palace, and hostages besides, and
then returned to Samaria.

||2K14:17-20 **The end of the reign of Amaziah**

Amaziah son of Joash, king of Judah, lived for fifteen years after the death 25
of Joash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel.

The rest of the history of Amaziah, from first to last, is not all this recorded 26
in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel? •After the time when Amaziah 27
rejected Yahweh, a plot was hatched against him in Jerusalem; he fled to Lachish;
but he was followed to Lachish and was put to death there. •He was brought 28
back by horse, and buried with his ancestors in the Citadel of David.[b]

The beginning of the reign of Uzziah

||2K14:21-22 26 All the people of Judah chose Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and 1
made him king in succession to his father Amaziah. •It was he who rebuilt 2
Elath[a] and recovered it for Judah, after the king was sleeping with his ancestors.
||2K15:2-4 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for 3
fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah, of Jerusalem. •He 4
did what is pleasing to Yahweh, just as his father Amaziah had done;[b] •he 5
24:2 sought God devotedly throughout the lifetime of Zechariah,[c] who had advanced

so far in the fear of God. And for as long as he sought Yahweh, God gave him prosperity.

His military strength

6 He went out to fight the Philistines, demolished the walls of Gath, Jabneh Am 1:8
and Ashdod, then rebuilt the towns in the area of Ashdod and in Philistine
7 territory. •God helped him against the Philistines, the Arabs, the inhabitants
8 of Gur-baal[d] and the Meunites. •The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah. His 20:1+
fame spread as far as the approaches of Egypt, since he had become very
powerful indeed.
9 Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem, at the Gate of the Corner, at the Gate of
10 the Valley and at the Angle; and he fortified these.[e] •He built towers in the
wilderness too, and dug a great many cisterns, for he had large herds in the
lowlands and on the tableland; and he had farmers and vine dressers in the hills 1Ch 27:25-31
and on the fertile lands; he was fond of agriculture.
11 Uzziah had a professional army ready to go on campaign, divided into
contingents manned as detailed by the scribe Jeiel and the registrar Maaseiah,
12 and commanded by Hananiah, one of the king's officers. •The total number
of heads of families of these valiant champions was two thousand six hundred.
13 Under their command was a trained army of three hundred and seven thousand
five hundred fighting men, a powerful force to support the king against the enemy.
14 Uzziah provided them with shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows and
15 sling stones, for each campaign. •In Jerusalem he constructed engines, invented
by experts, which were mounted on the towers and at the corners to fire arrows
and great stones. His fame spread far and wide; he owed his strength to a help
nothing short of miraculous.

Pride and its punishment

16 But, as his power increased, his heart grew proud, and this was his ruin:
he broke faith with Yahweh his God.[f] He entered the great hall of the Temple
17 of Yahweh to burn incense on the altar of incense. •Azariah the priest followed
18 King Uzziah in, with eighty brave priests of Yahweh, •to resist him. 'Uzziah,'
they said 'it is not for you to burn incense to Yahweh, but for the priests, the
sons of Aaron, consecrated for the purpose. Leave the sanctuary; you have
19 broken faith; the glory from Yahweh God, is no longer yours.'[g] •Uzziah, censer
in hand for the burning of incense, flew into a rage. But while he was raging at
the priests, leprosy[h] broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests, Nb 12:10
20 in the Temple of Yahweh, there by the altar of incense. •Azariah the chief priest
and all the other priests turned towards him and saw the leprosy on his forehead.
They quickly hurried him out, and he himself was anxious to go, since Yahweh
had struck him.
21 King Uzziah was a leper till his dying day. He lived confined to his room, ||2 K 15:5-7
a leper, excluded from the Temple of Yahweh. Jotham, his son, was master of Lv 13:46 Nb 19:20
the palace, and ruled the people of the country.

25 a. 'Ahaziah'; Hebr. 'Jehoahaz'.
b. 'David'; Hebr. 'Judah'.

26 a. The Chronicler, it seems, wishes to emphasise that this victory was not that of the father whose later life was wicked. Uzziah also began well but finished badly.
b. The sentence, taken from 2 K, is hardly reconcilable with 2 Ch 25.
c. Unknown personage, evidently not a prophet but one whose wisdom was rooted in true piety, lit. 'who understood in the fear of God' Greek; 'in seeing God' Hebr. He was to Uzziah what Jehoiada was to Joash.
d. Possibly this name, 'Dwelling of Baal', here indicates Samaria; certainly the list is like that of the enemies of Nehemiah, Ne 4:1.
e. Uzziah repairs the damage from the late war.
f. 2 K speaks of the punishment but not of the sin. This is the sin for which Nb 16 blames the laymen Dathan and Abiram: the king has usurped a right which the Chronicler (and Ezekiel before him) reserves to the priests, 1 Ch 23:13
g. The glory of God that descended on the sanctuary, cf. Ex 40:34f, now fills the Temple, 2 Ch 7:2.
h. Miriam was punished in the same way for laying claim to the privileges of Moses, Nb 12:10. The leper was impure and was forbidden to enter the sanctuary, Lv 13:45.

The rest of the history of Uzziah, from first to last, has been written[i] by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 22 •Then Uzziah slept with his ancestors and they 23 buried him with his fathers in the burial ground of the kings,[j] for they said, 'He is a leper'. His son Jotham succeeded him.

||2K15:32-35 **The reign of Jotham**

27 Jotham was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne and he reigned 1 for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah, daughter of Zadok. 2 •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, just as his father Uzziah had done. But he did not enter the sanctuary of Yahweh.[a] As for the people, they were still corrupt.

It was he who built the Upper Gate of the Temple of Yahweh and carried 3 out considerable work on the wall of the Ophel. 4 •He built towns in the highlands of Judah, and fortified places and towers in the arable lands.

He fought against the king of the Ammonites.[b] He defeated these, and that 5 year the Ammonites had to give him a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat and ten thousand of barley. This was the amount that the Ammonites had to pay him, and the same for the second and third years. 6 •Jotham became powerful because he kept an even course in the presence of Yahweh his God.

||2K15:36-38 The rest of the history of Jotham, all his wars and his policy, are recorded in 7 the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. 8 •He was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9 •Then Jotham slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the Citadel of David; his son Ahaz succeeded him.

V. THE GREAT REFORMS UNDER HEZEKIAH AND JOSIAH

A. THE SINS OF AHAZ, FATHER OF HEZEKIAH

||2K16:2-4 **Summary of the reign**

28 Ahaz was twenty[a] years old when he came to the throne and he reigned 1 for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what is pleasing to Yahweh, as his ancestor David had done. 2 •He followed the example of the kings of Israel, even having idols cast for the Baals; 3 •he offered incense in the Valley of the Lv18:21+ Sons of Hinnom[b] and caused his sons to pass through fire, copying the shameful practices of the nations which Yahweh had dispossessed for the sons of Israel. He offered sacrifices and incense on the high places, on the hills and under every 4 spreading tree.

The invasion[c]

2K 16 Is 7-9 Yahweh his God delivered him into the power of the king of the Aramaeans 5 who defeated him and took great numbers of his people captive, carrying them off to Damascus. He was also delivered into the power of the king of Israel, who inflicted a crushing defeat on him. 6 •In a single day, Pekah son of Remaliah killed a hundred and twenty thousand in Judah, all stout fighting men; this was because they had deserted Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. 7 •Zichri, an Ephraimite champion, killed Maaseiah, son of the king, Azrikam the controller of the palace, and Elkanah the king's second-in-command. 8 •The Israelites took two hundred thousand of their brothers captive, with wives, sons, daughters; they also took quantities of booty, carrying everything off to Samaria.

The Israelites obey the prophet Oded

A prophet of Yahweh was there named Oded, who went out to meet the 9 troops returning to Samaria and said, 'Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, was

angry with Judah and so he delivered them into your power, but you have
10 slaughtered with such fury as reaches to heaven. •And now you propose to
reduce these children of Judah and Jerusalem to being your serving men and
women! And are you not all the while the ones who are guilty before Yahweh
11 your God? •Now listen to me: release the prisoners you have taken of your
brothers, for the fierce anger of Yahweh hangs over you.'
12 Some of the Ephraimite chieftains then protested to those who were returning
from the expedition: Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth,
13 Jehizkiah son of Shallum and Amasa son of Hadlai. •'You must not bring
the captives in here,' they said 'or we should be guilty before Yahweh. You are
proposing to add to our sins and to our guilt, but our guilt is already heavy and
14 the fierce anger of Yahweh is hanging over Israel.' •So in the presence of the
officials and of the whole assembly the army gave up the captives and the booty.
15 Men expressly nominated for the purpose saw to the relief of the prisoners.
From the booty they clothed all those of them who were naked; they gave them
clothing and sandals and provided them with food, drink and shelter. They Lk10:25-37
mounted all those who were infirm on donkeys and took them back to their
kinsmen at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.[d]

The sins of Ahaz

16 It was then that King Ahaz sent asking the kings of Assyria to come to his ||2 K 16:7 Is 7-8
assistance.
17 The Edomites once again invaded and defeated Judah, and carried off ||2 K 16:6
18 prisoners. •The Philistines encroached on the towns in the lowlands and in the
Negeb of Judah. They took Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, and Soco with
its outlying villages, Timnah with its outlying villages, Gimzo with its outlying
19 villages, and they settled in them. •For Yahweh humbled Judah on account of
Ahaz king of Israel,[e] since he neglected Judah and was unfaithful to Yahweh.
20 Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria attacked and besieged him but could not
21 overcome him.[f] •Ahaz however had to take part of the goods in the Temple ||2 K 16:8
of Yahweh and in the palaces of the king and princes, to hand over to the king
22 of Assyria, yet he received no help from him. •During the time he was under siege
23 he made his faithlessness graver still, this King Ahaz, •by offering sacrifices to ||2K16:12-13 Is 10:20
the gods of Damascus[g] who had defeated him. 'Since the gods of the kings of
Aram' he said 'have been of help to them, I will sacrifice to them in the hope
that they may be of help to me.' But they proved his downfall and that of Israel.
24 Ahaz collected a number of the furnishings of the Temple of God, and 29:3; 30:14 ||2K16:17
dismantled others;[h] he closed the doors of the Temple of Yahweh and put
25 up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem; •he set up high places in every
town of Judah to offer incense to other gods, and so provoked the anger of
Yahweh, the God of his ancestors.
26 The rest of his history, his whole policy, from first to last, is recorded in the ||2K16:19-20
27 Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. •Then Ahaz slept with his ancestors, and
they buried him in the Citadel, in Jerusalem, though he was not taken into the
tombs of the kings of Israel. His son Hezekiah succeeded him.

i. Probably a lost midrash on Is 6:1. Uzziah is mentioned in Is only in the headings, Is 1:1; 7:1.

j. In the burial ground, not in the tomb itself.

27 a. This could be praise (contrast the conduct of Uzziah, 26:16f) but is more probably blame.

b. Possibly the Meunites are again meant, cf. 20:1; 26:7.

28 a. Some Greek MSS read 'twenty-five'.

b. Gehenna, valley to the S. of Jerusalem.

c. This narrative of the Syro-Ephraimite war is told from a standpoint very different from that of the other Judaean sources, 2 K 16 and Is 7-9. The Chronicler seems to have used an Ephraimite source.

d. The Samaritan character rises above their worship and sacrifice. Note the broadmindedness of the Chronicler: the passage anticipates the parable of the Good Samaritan.

e. 'Israel'; Greek: 'Judah'.

f. It was actually Sennacherib, thirty years later, in the reign of Hezekiah. Tiglath-pileser's campaign and the tribute paid to him by Ahaz are regarded by the Chronicler as a divine punishment.

g. From the source, 2 K, the Chronicler selects the one fact that has religious significance: the servility of Ahaz to the victorious gods of the foreigners.

h. Lit. 'Ahaz collected the furnishings of the house of God, he broke up the furnishings of the Temple of God'.

B. REFORM UNDER HEZEKIAH

||2K18:1-3 **Summary of the reign**

29 Hezekiah came to the throne when he was twenty-five years old and reigned 1
for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah, daughter
of Zechariah. •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, just as his ancestor David 2
had done.

The Temple is purified

28:24 It was he who, in the first month of the first year of his reign, threw open 3
the doors of the Temple of Yahweh and repaired them. •Then he brought the 4
priests and the Levites, assembled them in the eastern square, •and said to them. 5
'Listen to me, Levites! Sanctify yourselves now and consecrate the Temple
of Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, and eject what is impure from the sanctuary.
Your ancestors have been unfaithful[a] and done what is displeasing to Yahweh 6
our God. They have deserted him; they have turned their faces away from the
place Yahweh has made his home, they have turned their backs on him. •They 7
2:3 have even closed the doors of the Vestibule, they have put out the lamps and
offered no incense, no holocaust, to the God of Israel in the holy place. •So the 8
anger of Yahweh has fallen on Judah and Jerusalem; he has made them an
Lv 26:32 Dt 28:25 Jr 25:18 object of terror, astonishment and derisive whistling, as you can see for your-
selves. •This is why our ancestors have fallen by the sword, and our sons, 9
our daughters, our wives, been taken captive. •I am now determined to make 10
a covenant with Yahweh, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger may be
turned away from us. •My sons, be negligent no longer, for Yahweh has chosen 11
you to stand in his presence and serve him, to conduct his worship, and offer
him incense.'

The Levites set to work:[b] Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah, 12
of the sons of Kohath; of the Merarites: Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of
Jehallelel; of the Gershonites: Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah;
of the sons of Elizaphan: Shimri and Jeuel; of the sons of Asaph: Zechariah 13
and Mattaniah; •of the sons of Heman: Jehiel and Shimei; of the sons of 14
Jeduthun: Shemaiah and Uzziel. •They gathered their brothers together, they 15
sanctified themselves, and in obedience to the king's order, in accordance with
the words of Yahweh, they began purifying the Temple of Yahweh.

The priests[c] went inside the Temple of Yahweh to purify it. They brought 16
out everything unclean they found in the sanctuary of Yahweh, out into the
court of the Temple of Yahweh, and the Levites collected it and carried it outside,
15:16 into the wadi Kidron. •They began this consecration on the first day of the 17
first month, and were able to enter the Vestibule of Yahweh on the eighth of the
month; they then took eight days to consecrate the Temple of Yahweh, and
finished on the sixteenth day of the first month.[d]

The sacrifice of Atonement

They then waited on King Hezekiah and said, 'We have purified the whole 18
Temple of Yahweh, the altar of holocaust with all its furnishings, and the tables
on which the rows of bread are set with all its furnishings. •All the furnishings 19
King Ahaz cast aside during his sacrilegious reign we have put back and conse-
crated; they are now in front of the altar of Yahweh.'

King Hezekiah lost no time but called the officials of the city together and 20
went up to the Temple of Yahweh. •They brought seven bulls, seven rams and 21
seven lambs, with seven he-goats as a sacrifice for sin on behalf of the royal
house, of the sanctuary, and of Judah. The king then told the priests, the sons
of Aaron, to offer the holocaust on the altar of Yahweh. •They slaughtered the 22
bulls and the priests took up the blood and poured it on the altar. They then

slaughtered the rams and poured their blood on the altar; and they slaughtered
23 the lambs and poured their blood on the altar. •Then they brought the he-goats,
the sacrifice for sin, before the king and the assembly who laid their hands on
24 them. •The priests slaughtered them, and with their blood on the altar offered
a sacrifice for sin, to perform the ritual of atonement for all Israel—since the
king had ordered the holocaust and the sacrifice for sin on behalf of all Israel.[e]
25 He then positioned the Levites in the Temple of Yahweh with cymbals, harps
and lyres, in accordance with the ordinances of David, of Gad the king's seer
and of Nathan the prophet; the order had in fact come from Yahweh
26 through his prophets. •When the Levites had taken their places with David's
27 musical instruments, and the priests with their trumpets, •Hezekiah ordered the
holocaust to be offered on the altar. And as the holocaust began, the hymns of
Yahweh began too, and the trumpets sounded, to the accompaniment of the
28 instruments of David king of Israel. •The whole assembly worshipped, cantors
singing, trumpets sounding, until the holocaust was over.
29 The offering at an end,[f] the king and all there with him fell to their knees
30 and worshipped. •Then King Hezekiah and the officials told the Levites to sing Ne 12:47
praise to Yahweh in the words of David and of Asaph the seer; they sang most
31 fervently and then fell down and worshipped. •Hezekiah spoke again, 'Now you
are dedicated to the service of Yahweh. Come forward,[g] bring the sacrifices of
communion and praise into the Temple of Yahweh.' The assembly brought
sacrifices of communion and praise, and every kind of holocaust as votive Lv 7:11+
32 offerings. •The number of victims for these holocausts was seventy bulls, a
33 hundred rams and two hundred lambs, all as holocausts for Yahweh; •six
34 hundred bulls and three thousand sheep were consecrated. •The priests were
too few, however, and could not dismember all the holocausts, so the Levites
helped them until the work was done and the priests were sanctified;[h] for the
Levites had been more conscientious about sanctifying themselves than the 1Ch 15:12
35 priests had. •There was, in addition, an abundant holocaust of fatty parts of the
communion sacrifices, and numerous libations in association with the holocaust.
36 And so the liturgy of Yahweh's Temple was restored. •Hezekiah and all the
people rejoiced that God had disposed the people to act so promptly.

The Passover assembly

1 **30** Hezekiah sent messengers to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters
to Ephraim and Manasseh, bidding them come to the Temple of Yahweh
in Jerusalem to celebrate a Passover in honour of Yahweh, the God of Israel. Ex 12:1+
2 The king and his officials and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to celebrate
3 it in the second month, •being unable to celebrate it at the proper time,[a] since Nb 9:6-13
the priests had not purified themselves in sufficient number, and the people had
4 not assembled in Jerusalem. •This arrangement seemed fitting to the king and
5 to all the assembly. •It was resolved to send a proclamation throughout Israel,
from Dan to Beersheba, calling on the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate
a Passover in honour of Yahweh, the God of Israel, for few had observed the
6 prescribed regulations. •Couriers set out with letters from the hands of the king

29 a. What follows is a public confession as in Dn 9:4-19; Ba 1:15–3:8. See also Lm 5 and Jr 3:22-25.

b. This list does not include Zadokite priests but only Levites, divided into the two groups of which Ch speaks: one group headed by Kohath, Merari, Gershon, and the other by Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. This union of cantors with Levites, portending a new priesthood, is found also in 1 Ch 6:18-32.

c. On the part played by the priests in purification, cf. Lv 13-16.

d. Seven days for the purifications. Lv 14:8f; Nb 19:14, twice seven for Solomon's dedication of the Temple, 2 Ch 7:8-10.

e. This ritual is suggested by Lv 4 (cf. vv. 13-21) but its ordered precision recalls Nb 29 (cf. vv. 7-11). The oblation of the fatty parts is omitted. The purification of the Temple in the Maccabaean period was apparently modelled on this pattern, 1 M 4:42-59.

f. To the ceremonies just described (fashioned on the 'priestly' traditions) the Chronicler adds a second, levitical, ritual which he justifies by reference to David and his seers.

g. The king is addressing the people; the sacred meal is about to begin.

h. By mentioning this sacrificial activity of the Levites, the Chronicler apparently intends to vindicate their priestly character.

30 a. It was usually celebrated in the first month (Nisan).

and his officials for every part of Israel and Judah. They had orders from the king to say, 'Sons of Israel, come back to Yahweh, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Israel, and he will come back to those of you who are left and have
Ac 7:51 escaped the grasp of the kings of Assyria. •Do not be like your fathers and 7
brothers who were unfaithful to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, and whom he handed over to destruction, as you can see. •Do not be stubborn now as 8
your ancestors were. Yield to[b] Yahweh, come to his sanctuary which he has consecrated for ever, serve Yahweh your God and he will turn his fierce anger from you.
1 K 8:50 If you come back sincerely to Yahweh, your brothers and your sons will win favour 9
with their conquerors and return to this land, for Yahweh your God is gracious and merciful. If you come back to him, he will not turn his face from you.'[c]

The couriers went from town to town through the land of Ephraim and 10
Manasseh, but the people laughed and scoffed at them, •though a few men from 11
Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun were humble enough to come to Jerusalem. It was in Judah, rather, that the hand of God worked to inspire them with a 12
united will to obey the order of the king and the officials as contained in the word of Yahweh. •A great number of people gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate 13
the feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month.[d] A very great assembly set to work removing the altars that were in Jerusalem and all the altars for 14
28:24-25 burning incense, and throwing them into the wadi Kidron.

The Passover and feast of Unleavened Bread

They slaughtered the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month. 15
Ezr 9:6 The priests and the Levites were ashamed; they sanctified themselves and so were able to bring holocausts into the Temple of Yahweh. •Then they took up 16
their positions as ordained for them according to the Law of Moses, the man of God. The priests poured out the blood handed to them by the Levites, •since 17
35:5 there were many people in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; the Levites were given the task of slaughtering the Passover victims[e] on behalf of those who lacked the requisite purity to consecrate their victims to Yahweh. In point of fact, most of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar 18
and Zebulun, had not purified themselves; they had eaten the Passover without observing the prescribed regulations. But Hezekiah interceded for them, saying, 'May Yahweh in his goodness cover up the fault of •anyone who sets his heart to 19
seeking God, Yahweh the God of his ancestors, even if he lacks the purity requisite for holy things'. •Yahweh heard Hezekiah and left the people unharmed.[f] 20

For seven days and with great rejoicing the Israelites in Jerusalem celebrated 21
the feast of Unleavened Bread, while each day the Levites and the priests praised Yahweh with all their might. •The words of Hezekiah encouraged the Levites 22
who all showed how versed they were in the things of Yahweh, and for seven days they ate their portion in the feast, offering communion sacrifices with praise to Yahweh,[g] the God of their ancestors. •Then all the assembly agreed to continue 23
the celebrations for a further seven days and made of them seven days of rejoicing, since Hezekiah king of Judah had provided a thousand bulls and seven thousand 24
sheep for the assembly, and the officials another thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep. The priests sanctified themselves in great numbers, •and the whole assembly 25
of Judah rejoiced, the priests too, and the Levites, and all who had come from Israel,[h] the refugees who came from Israel and those who lived in Judah. •There 26
was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon son of David, king of Israel, nothing comparable had ever occurred in Jerusalem. •The levitical 27
priests began to bless the people.[i] Their voices were heard and their prayer received in heaven, his holy dwelling place.

Idolatrous worship abolished

II2K 34:3 18:4 31 When all this was over, all the Israelites who were there set off for the 1
towns of Judah to smash the pillars, cut down the sacred poles, wreck the

high places and the altars, and so do away with them altogether throughout Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh.[a] Then all the Israelites returned to their towns, each man to his holding.

The reorganisation of the priests and Levites

2 Hezekiah re-established the priestly and levitical orders, each man in his proper order according to his duties, whether priest or Levite, whether for holocaust, communion sacrifice, liturgical service, thanksgiving or praise, within
3 the gates of the camp of Yahweh.[b] •The king set aside a portion of his own possessions for the morning and evening holocausts, and the holocausts of sabbath, New Moon, and solemn feast, as laid down in the Law of Yahweh.
4 He then told the people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to give the priests and the Levites their share so that they might devote themselves to the Law of Yahweh.
5 As soon as the order had been promulgated, the Israelites amassed the first fruits of corn, wine, oil, honey, and all agricultural produce, and brought in a generous
6 tithe of everything. •The Israelites and Judaeans living in the towns of Judah also brought in the tithe of cattle and sheep, and the tithe of the holy things
7 dedicated to Yahweh their God,[c] piling them up, heap after heap. •They began making these heaps in the third month and finished them in the seventh.[d]
8 Hezekiah and his officials came to inspect the heaps and blessed Yahweh and
9 his people Israel. •Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites about the
10 heaps, •and Azariah, the chief priest, of the family of Zadok, answered him. 'Since the contributions were first brought to the Temple of Yahweh,' he said, 'we have had enough to eat and still have plenty left over, for Yahweh has blessed his people; this huge pile is what is left.'[e]

1Ch9:19
1Ch29:3
Ezk45:17
Nb28-29
Nb18:8-24
Dt 14:22+
Ne12:44-47; 13:10-13
Lv25:19-22

11 Hezekiah then ordered them to have rooms prepared in the Temple of
12 Yahweh. They did this, •and then brought in the contributions, tithes and consecrated things, to keep them in a safe place. Conaniah the Levite was officer
13 in charge of them, with Shimei his brother as his second. •Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were appointed overseers under the command of Conaniah and his brother Shimei,
14 by order of King Hezekiah and of Azariah, ruler of the house of God. •Kore son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the eastern gate, was made responsible for the voluntary offerings to God; he provided the portion set aside for Yahweh
15 and the most holy offerings. •Under his command he had Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah, who resided permanently in the towns of the priests to carry out the distributions to their kinsmen according to their orders whether more or less important.
16 Further to this,[f] there was the organisation by related groups of all those men thirty years[g] old and upwards who went to the Temple of Yahweh, by daily
17 rotation, to perform the ritual duties appropriate to their orders. •There was

1Ch23:3f

b. Lit. 'give glory to'.

c. This appeal, resembling the exhortations of Dt, reveals a concern for brother Israelites in exile since the fall of Samaria, v. 9. The Chronicler's contemporaries dreamed of the ingathering of all the Jews of the Dispersion.

d. The 'Priestly' texts distinguished the feasts of Unleavened Bread and of Passover, Lv 23:5-8; Nb 28:16-17. The Chronicler, like Dt 16:1-8, combines them.

e. The Chronicler thus augments the sacrificial powers of the Levites, cf. Nb 18:3. It was the duty of the offerer himself to slaughter the victim, of the priests to offer the blood, Lv 1:5.

f. The passage reacts against too rigid an interpretation of the laws of purity, cf. Mt 15:1-20p.

g. The 'communion sacrifice with praise' of Lv 7:12f. The Chronicler gives it new prominence by stressing the devotion of which the chant is the outward expression.

h. Lit. 'the whole assembly that came out of Israel'.

. Another privilege accredited to the Levites, cf. Dt 10:8; 21:5. In Nb 6:22-27 only the priests give the blessing.

31 a. The Chronicler adopts, for Hezekiah, the procedure of Josiah's reform as described in Kings: successive purification of Temple, Judah, Israel.

b. The Chronicler here repeats the data of 1 Ch 23-25.

c. The tithe is now apparently extended to voluntary offerings.

d. Hence between Pentecost and Tabernacles which closes the harvest season.

e. Apparently Hezekiah fears that the people may have been coerced.

f. The Chronicler proceeds to describe there form of Hezekiah as a re-establishment of priestly orders and cult on the Davidic pattern, 1 Ch 23-26.

g. 'thirty years' corr., cf. 1 Ch 23:3; 'three years' Hebr. These men are the priests and the Levites.

1Ch23:7-23 also the organisation of priests by families; as also that of Levites twenty years old and upwards, by duties and orders. •There was also the organisation of all 18
their families, wives, sons and daughters for the whole assembly,[h] since they had an obligation to sanctify themselves faithfully by means of the holy things. As regards the priests, the sons of Aaron, who lived in the pasture lands belonging 19
to their towns, or in the towns themselves, there were men expressly named for the purpose of distributing portions to every male among the priests.[i] Each group was organised by the Levites.

Hezekiah enforced these arrangements throughout Judah. He did what is 20
good and right and loyal before Yahweh his God. •All he undertook in the 21
Ps119:2-3 service of the Temple of God as concerning law or commandments, he performed while seeking God with all his heart, and he prospered.

Sennacherib's invasion

||2K18:13 32 After these loyal acts of service came the invasion of Sennacherib king 1
of Assyria. He invaded Judah, pitched camp before the fortified towns and gave orders for them to be taken by storm. •Realising that Sennacherib's advance 2
was the preliminary to an attack on Jerusalem, Hezekiah •and his officers and 3
champions decided to cut off the water supply from the springs situated outside the city. His military staff supported this plan •and numbers of people banded 4
Ne 2:17f Is22:9-11 together to block all the springs and cut off the watercourse flowing through the fields. 'Why' they said 'should the kings of Assyria find plenty of water when they arrive?' •Hezekiah strengthened his defences: he had the broken parts of 5
the wall repaired, built towers on it, constructed a second wall on the outer side, strengthened the Millo of the Citadel of David and made quantities of missiles and shields. •He then appointed generals to command the people, 6
summoned them to him in the square by the city gate and spoke as follows to
14:10; 20:6-12 encourage them, •'Be strong and stand firm; be fearless, be undaunted when 7
you face the king of Assyria and the whole horde he brings with him, since he
Is 31:3 that is with us is stronger than he that is with him. •He has only an arm of 8
flesh, but we have Yahweh our God to help us and fight our battles.' The people took heart at the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

The blasphemies of Sennacherib

||2K18:17-37 ||Is36:1-22 Next, Sennacherib king of Assyria, who was then outside Lachish with 9
all his forces, sent his servants to Jerusalem, to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all the Judaeans who were in Jerusalem. They said, •'Hear the message from 10
Sennacherib king of Assyria, "What gives you the confidence to stay in Jerusalem under siege? •Is not Hezekiah deluding you? Is he not condemning you to die 11
of hunger and thirst when he says: Yahweh our God will save us from the king of Assyria? •Is not Hezekiah the very man who has suppressed his 12
high places and his altars, and given the order to Judah and to Jerusalem: Before one altar only are you to worship, and on that alone offer incense? Do you not know what I have done, I and my ancestors, to all the peoples 13
of other countries? Have the gods of any single nation in those countries ever been able to save them from me? •Of all the gods of those nations devoted 14
to the ban by my father, name a single one who has been able to save his people from me! So how could your god save you? •Do not let Hezekiah deceive 15
you. Do not let him delude you like this. Do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to save his people from me or from my ancestors'. No more will your god be able to save you from me." ' •The envoys 16
||2K19:9-13 ||Is37:9-13 were still maligning Yahweh God, and his servant Hezekiah, •when Sennacherib 17
wrote a letter insulting Yahweh the God of Israel. This is what he said about him, 'Just as the gods of the nations in other countries have failed to save their peoples from me, so will the god of Hezekiah fail to save his people'. •They 18
shouted this out in the language of Judah, to the people of Jerusalem on the

ramparts, to confuse and frighten them, and so that they might capture the city;
19 they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as of one of the gods of the peoples of the world, the work of men's hands.

The prayer of Hezekiah is heard

20 Faced with this situation, King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz ||2K19:15 ||Is 37:15
21 prayed and cried out to heaven. •Yahweh sent an angel who massacred all the mighty warriors, commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria. ||2K19:35-37 ||Is37:36-38 Covered with disgrace he retired to his own country. He went into the temple of his god, and there some of his own children struck him down with the sword.
22 So Yahweh saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the power of Sennacherib king of Assyria and of everyone else, and he gave them peace[a]
23 on every side. •Many people brought oblations to Yahweh in Jerusalem and 14:6 gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah; after what had happened, he stood high in the ||2K20:12 esteem of all the nations.
24 In those days, Hezekiah fell ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to ||2K20:1f ||Is 38:1f
25 Yahweh, who heard him[b] and granted him a sign. •But Hezekiah made no return for the benefit he received; his heart grew proud and the wrath came
26 on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. •Hezekiah did however humble the pride ||2K20:12-19 ||Is39:1-8 of his heart, and so did the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem; hence the wrath
27 of Yahweh did not come on them in the lifetime of Hezekiah. •Hezekiah enjoyed immense riches and honour. He built himself treasuries for gold, silver, precious ||2K20:13 ||Is 39:2
28 stones, spices, gems[c] and every sort of valuable. •He had storehouses for his returns of corn, wine and oil, buildings for his different sorts of cattle, and
29 sheep-runs for his sheep, •and, further, acquired donkeys[d] and enormous herds and flocks. God had indeed given him[e] immense possessions.

Summary of the reign; its end

30 It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and ||2K20:20-21 directed them down to the west side of the Citadel of David. Hezekiah succeeded
31 in all he undertook. •Even in the affair of the messengers from the authorities in Babylon, sent to him to inquire about the extraordinary thing that had taken place in the country, God only deserted him to test him, and to discover the secrets of his heart.[f]
32 The rest of the history of Hezekiah, and his deeds of piety, are recorded in the Vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah
33 and Israel. •Then Hezekiah slept with his ancestors, and they buried him on the slope going up to the tombs of the sons of David. At his death, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour. His son Manasseh succeeded him.

C. THE SINS OF MANASSEH AND OF AMON

Manasseh undoes the work of Hezekiah ||2K21:1-18

1 2 **33** Manasseh was twelve years old when he came to the throne and he reigned Ezk16:28 for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, copying the shameful practices of the nations whom Yahweh had dispossessed
3 for the sons of Israel. •He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had demolished, he set up altars to the Baals and made sacred poles, he worshipped

h. The assembly, *qahal*, always means priests and laity together. At the great Passover celebrated by Josiah, for which the reform of Hezekiah paves the way, the populace, divided in classes, consumes the sacred offerings, 35:12f. In the Chronicler's mind the families are sanctified by consuming what is most sacred, 30:24.

i. Cf. the commission in Ne 13:10-14.

32 a. 'gave them peace'; Hebr. 'guided'.
b. 'who heard him' Greek; 'who said to him' Hebr.
c. 'gems' corr.; 'shields' Hebr.
d. 'donkeys' corr.; 'towns' Hebr.
e. As to David, 1 Ch 29:2; 27:25-31, and Solomon, 2 Ch 9:10-28.
f. Another interpretation (cf. v. 26) of the narrative of 2 K 20:12-19.

the whole array of heaven and served it. •He built altars in the Temple of Yahweh, 4
the Temple of which Yahweh had said, 'In Jerusalem my name shall be for ever'.
He built altars to the whole array of heaven in the two courts of the Temple 5
of Yahweh. •He caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of Ben- 6
hinnom. He practised soothsaying, magic and witchcraft, and introduced necromancers and wizards. He did very many more things displeasing to Yahweh, thus provoking his anger. •He placed the image of the idol he had made in the 7
Temple of which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, 'In this Temple and in Jerusalem, the city I chose out of all the tribes of Israel, I will give my name a home for ever. •I will no longer turn Israel's footsteps away from the 8
land I assigned to their fathers,[a] provided they observe all I have ordered them in accordance with the whole Law, the statutes and the ordinances, given through Moses.' •Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, 9
so that they did more evil than those nations Yahweh had destroyed before the sons of Israel. •Yahweh spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. 10

The conversion of Manasseh[b]

Jb 36:7 Then Yahweh sent the generals of the king of Assyria against them, who 11
Ezk 19:9 captured Manasseh with hooks, put him in chains and led him away to Babylon.[c]
In his distress he sought to appease Yahweh his God, humbling himself deeply 12
before the God of his ancestors; •he prayed to him, and God relented at his prayer, 13
hearing his plea and bringing him back to Jerusalem and his kingdom. Manasseh realised then that Yahweh is God. •After this he rebuilt the outer wall of the 14
Citadel of David, west of Gihon in the wadi, as far as the Fish Gate; it encircled the Ophel, and he increased its height very considerably. He stationed military governors in all the fortified towns of Judah.
Next he removed the alien gods and the idol from the Temple of Yahweh, 15
14:2 and all the altars he had built on the mountain of the Temple of Yahweh and in Jerusalem, and threw them out of the city.[d] •He rebuilt the altar of Yahweh 16
and offered sacrifices of communion and of praise on it, and ordered Judah to offer worship to Yahweh the God of Israel; •however, the people continued to 17
sacrifice on the high places, although only to Yahweh their God.
||2K21:17-18 The rest of the history of Manasseh, his prayer to his God,[e] and the words 18
of the seers who spoke to him in the name of Yahweh the God of Israel, can be found in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. •His prayer and how God relented 19
at his prayer, all his sins, his unfaithfulness, the sites where he built high places and set up sacred poles and idols before he humbled himself, are recorded in the Annals of Hozai.[f] •Then Manasseh slept with his ancestors, and they buried him 20
in his palace. His son Amon succeeded him.

The obduracy of Amon[g]

||2K21:19-26 Amon was twenty-two years old when he came to the throne and he reigned 21
for two years in Jerusalem. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh, as Manasseh 22
his father had done. Amon offered sacrifice and worship to all the idols Manasseh his father had made. •He did not humble himself before Yahweh like Manasseh 23
his father; it was this very Amon who made the guilt of Judah so grave.[h] •His 24
officers plotted against him and killed him in his palace. •But the country people 25
struck down all those who had plotted against King Amon and proclaimed his son Josiah as his successor.

D. REFORM UNDER JOSIAH

||2K22:1-2 **Summary of the reign**

34 Josiah was eight years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for 1
thirty-one years in Jerusalem. •He did what is pleasing to Yahweh, and 2

followed the example of his ancestor David, not deviating from it to right or left.

The first reforms[a] ||2K23:4-20

3 In the eighth year of his reign, when he was still a youth, he began to seek
the God of his ancestor David. In the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and 14:1-4; 31:1
4 Jerusalem of high places, sacred poles and carved or cast idols. •He looked
on as the altars of the Baals were demolished; he tore down the altars of incense
standing on them, he smashed the sacred poles and the carved and cast idols;
he reduced them to dust, scattering it over the graves of those who had offered
5 them sacrifices. •He burned the bones of their priests on their altars, and so
6 purified Judah and Jerusalem; •he did the same in the towns of Manasseh,
Ephraim, Simeon, and even Naphtali, and in the ravaged districts round them.
7 He demolished the altars and sacred poles, smashed the idols and ground them
to powder, and tore down all the altars of incense throughout the land of Israel.
Then he returned to Jerusalem.

Work on the Temple ||2K22:3-7

8 In the eighteenth year of his reign, with the object of purifying land and
Temple, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, Maaseiah governor of the city and
9 the herald Joah son of Joahaz, to repair the Temple of Yahweh his God. •These
went to the high priest Hilkiah and handed over the money that had been brought 24:8f
to the Temple of God and that the Levites, the guardians of the threshold, had
collected; the money had come from Manasseh, Ephraim and all the rest of
10 Israel, and from all the Judaeans and Benjaminites who lived in Jerusalem.[b] •They
handed it over to the masters of works attached to the Temple of Yahweh, and
11 these used it for the repair and restoration of the Temple. •They gave it to the
carpenters and builders for buying dressed stone, and wood for the coupling
and the rafters of the buildings which the kings of Judah had allowed to fall
into ruin.
12 [c]The men were conscientious in doing their work; to supervise them they had
Jahath and Obadiah, Levites of the sons of Merari; Zechariah and Meshullam
of the sons of Kohath, who were masters of works; Levites who were all skilled
13 liturgical musicians; •others who were in charge of the carriers; others who
gave instructions to the masters of works of the various undertakings; and lastly
a number of Levites who were scribes, clerks and gatekeepers.

The Book of the Law discovered ||2K22:8-13

14 When they took out the money that had been brought to the Temple of
Yahweh, Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the Law given through
15 Moses. •At once Hilkiah told Shaphan the secretary, 'I have found the Book
of the Law in the Temple of Yahweh'. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.
16 Shaphan took the book to the king, and reported to him: 'Your servants' he

33 a. 'their fathers' 2 K; 'your fathers' Hebr.
b. This narrative is peculiar to 2 Ch.
c. A cylinder of Esarhaddon (680-669) names Manasseh of Judah as one of his vassals. Assurbanipal, (668-633) too, lists him as a tributary king. What the Chronicler says here of Manasseh recalls what Ezk 19:9 says of Jehoiachin, another wicked king, 2 K 24:15.
d. The Chronicler describes Manasseh's reform after the pattern of those of Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah.
e. There is an apocryphal work of the Psalm type called 'The Prayer of Manasseh' probably derived from this passage.
f. Unknown prophet; the name means 'seer'.
g. To Amon the Chronicler applies the condemnation of Manasseh in 2 K 21:12. Amon's reign was as short as Manasseh's was long; long life is considered a reward, Pr 4:10; Ps 34:12, etc.
h. 'of Judah' is not in the text. Possibly the Chronicler is thinking primarily of the dynasty.

34 a. Kings spoke only of reforms in the 18th year of the reign, 2 K 22:3, but the Chronicler precedes the discovery of the Law by a reform which he describes in the terms of 2 K 23. For him the great Passover does not initiate the reform but consecrates it.
b. 'who lived in Jerusalem' corr.; 'they returned to Jerusalem' Hebr. The Chronicler makes it clear that the Israelites, through their offerings, had a share in the restoration of the Temple. He always emphasises the unity of the chosen people, cf. Ezk 37:15f.
c. Paragraph peculiar to the Chronicler who ascribes the conduct of the operation to the Levites, especially to the cantors.

said 'are carrying out the commissions you gave them: •they have melted down 17
the silver which was in the Temple of Yahweh and have handed it over to the
overseers and masters of works,' •after which Shaphan the secretary informed 18
the king, 'Hilkiah the priest has given me a book'; and Shaphan read from it[d]
in the king's presence.

On hearing the contents of the Law, the king tore his garments, •and gave 19 20
the following order to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah,
Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's minister, •'Go and consult Yahweh, 21
on behalf of me and those left in Israel and Judah, about the contents of the
book that has been found. Great indeed must be the anger of Yahweh pouring
down on us because our ancestors did not observe the word of Yahweh by
practising everything written in this book.'

2K22:14-20 **Huldah the prophetess is consulted**

Hilkiah and the king's men went to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum 22
son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, the keeper of the wardrobe; she lived in Jerusalem
in the new town. They spoke to her about this, •and she replied, 'Yahweh, 23
the God of Israel says this, "To the man who sent you to me say this:
Yahweh says this: I am bringing disaster on this place and those who live in it, 24
carrying out all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence
of the king of Judah, •because they have deserted me and sacrificed to other gods, 25
to provoke my anger by everything they did. My anger blazes out against this
place; it will not be extinguished. •And you will say to the king of Judah who 26
sent you to consult Yahweh, Yahweh, the God of Israel says this: The words
you have heard... •But since your heart has been touched and you have humbled 27
yourself before God on hearing what he has threatened against this place and those
who live in it, since you have humbled yourself before me and torn your garments
and wept before me, I for my part have heard—it is Yahweh who speaks. •I will 28
gather you to your ancestors, you shall be gathered into your grave in peace;
your eyes will not see all the disasters that I mean to bring on this place and on
those who live in it." ' They took this answer to the king.

||2K23:1-3 **The covenant renewed**

The king then had all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem summoned, •and 29 30
the king went up to the Temple of Yahweh, with all the men of Judah and all
the inhabitants of Jerusalem, priests, Levites and all the people, of high or low
degree. In their hearing he read out everything that was said in the book of the
covenant found in the Temple of Yahweh. •The king stood beside the pillar,[e] 31
and in the presence of Yahweh he made a covenant to follow Yahweh and to
enforce the terms of the covenant as written in that book with all his heart and
soul. •He allotted a station[f] to everyone there in Jerusalem or in Benjamin; and 32
the inhabitants of Jerusalem complied with the covenant of God, the God of
2K 23:4f their ancestors. •Josiah removed all the abominations throughout the territories 33
belonging to the sons of Israel. His whole life long he made sure that every
member of Israel served their God. They did not fail to follow Yahweh, the
God of their ancestors.[g]

The preparation for the Passover

Ex12:1+ ||2K23:21 35 Josiah then celebrated a Passover in honour of Yahweh in Jerusalem and 1
they slaughtered the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.

He re-established the priests in their functions and made it possible for them 2
to discharge the duties of the Temple of Yahweh.[a] •Then he said to the Levites, 3
whose understanding[b] was at the disposal of all Israel and who were consecrated
to Yahweh, 'Place the holy ark in the Temple built by Solomon son of David,
5:4 1Ch15:5 king of Israel. It is no longer a burden for your shoulders. Now serve Yahweh
your God and Israel his people. •Take your places by families according to your 4

orders, in compliance with the written decree of David king of Israel and his 1Ch24-26
5 son Solomon. •Stand in the sanctuary at the disposal of the family groupings,
at the disposal of your brothers the laity; the Levites are to have a portion in
6 the family. •Slaughter the passover, sanctify yourselves, and be at the disposal 30:17+
of your brothers in acting in accordance with the word of Yahweh which was Dt12:18-19
spoken through Moses.'

The celebration of the Passover

7 Josiah then provided[c] for the laity lambs and kids from the flocks to the
number of thirty thousand, all as Passover victims for all who were present, and Ex 12:5
three thousand bulls as well; all these animals came from the king's possessions.[d]
8 His officials, for their part, made provision for the voluntary offerings on behalf Nb 7
of the people, the priests and the Levites. The senior officials gave the priests 1Ch29:6-9
of the Temple of God, Hilkiah, Zechariah and Jehiel, two thousand six hundred
9 lambs and kids and three hundred bulls as Passover victims. •The heads of the
Levites, Conaniah, Shemaiah and his brother Nathanel, Hashabiah, Jeiel and
Jozabad, provided five thousand lambs and kids and five hundred bulls as
10 Passover victims for the Levites. •The order of the service was arranged, the
priests at their places and the Levites in their orders, in compliance with the
11 king's order. •They slaughtered the passover, and the priests sprinkled the
12 blood as they received it from the Levites, and the Levites dismembered the
victims.[e] •They put the holocaust on one side to give it to the family groupings
among the laity as each made its offering to Yahweh,[f] as is written in the Book
13 of Moses; they did the same with the bulls. •They roasted the passover, as Ex12:2-11
ordained, and the sacred foods[g] in pots, dishes, pans, carrying them speedily
14 to the laity. •Afterwards they prepared the passover for themselves and for the
priests—the priests, the sons of Aaron, having been busy till nightfall offering
the holocaust and the fatty parts; that was why the Levites prepared the passover
15 for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. •The cantors, the sons
of Asaph, were at their places, in accordance with the ordinances of David; neither Ne 12:47
Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun the king's seer, nor the keepers of each gate, had to
leave their duties, since their brothers the Levites made all the preparations for them.
16 So the whole liturgical service of Yahweh was arranged that day to celebrate
the Passover and to offer holocausts on the altar of Yahweh, in accordance with
17 the ordinances of King Josiah. •And so it was that the Israelites who were present
celebrated the Passover and, for seven days, the feast of Unleavened Bread.
18 No Passover like this one had ever been celebrated in Israel since the days of the ||2K23:22||
prophet Samuel; no king of Israel had ever celebrated a Passover like the one
celebrated by Josiah[h] with the priests, the Levites, all of Judah and of Israel who
were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The tragic end of the reign

19 This Passover was celebrated in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah.[i] ||2K23:23, 29-30||

d. 2 K 22:10 has 'read it', but the Chronicler takes it to be the Pentateuch—too long for a single reading.

e. 'beside the pillar' (cf. 23:13; 2 K 11:14); Hebr. 'in his place'.

f. The Chronicler regards the covenant as already the charter of a well-ordered liturgical community.

g. The Chronicler briefly sums up the data of 2 K 23:4f which he has reproduced at the beginning of his account, 2 Ch 34:3f.

35 a. As in the case of Hezekiah the ceremony is preceded by the re-establishment of the clergy, cf. 31:2f, on Davidic lines, 1 Ch 24. Here again the Chronicler displays his particular interest in the Levites.

b. 'understanding' in the sense of the wisdom literature: a penetration of divine things.

c. Reference to the contributions of Nb 18:11,26, reserved to the priests. Here the contribution is made for the Levites and layfolk too, v. 8.

d. On this obligation on the king's part, cf. Ezk 45:17; 1 Ch 29:2f (David); 2 Ch 30:24 (Hezekiah).

e. The duty of the layman, according to Lv 1:6.

f. The practice mentioned in Lv 3:5 with regard to communion sacrifices is here, apparently, extended to the Passover, namely the burning of the fat as a holocaust.

g. Not the bitter herbs and unleavened loaves but the communion sacrifice provided for in Dt 12:6-7. The Chronicler perhaps wishes to associate this royal Passover with the messianic banquet of Is 25:6, cf. Mt 22:1-14.

h. Cf. also 30:24; the Chronicler emphasises that these two royal Passovers are an innovation and a departure from the pre-Davidic practice.

i. The Greek here inserts the eulogy on Josiah from 2 K 23:24-27.

After everything had been done by Josiah to set the Temple in order, Neco king of 20
Egypt came up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates. When Josiah marched out
to intercept him, •Neco sent him messengers to say, 'What quarrel is there between 21
me and you, king of Judah? I have not come today to attack you; my quarrel
is with another dynasty, and God has told me to hurry. Do not oppose the God
who is with me any more, or else he may destroy you.' •But Josiah continued[j] 22
to challenge him; he was in fact determined to fight him, and would not listen
to the words of Neco from God's own mouth. He gave battle in the plain of
18:33-34 Megiddo; •the bowmen fired on King Josiah, and the king said to his followers, 23
'Take me away; I am badly wounded'. •His servants lifted him out of his own 24
chariot, transferred him to another one and took him back to Jerusalem, where
he died. He was buried in the tombs of his ancestors. All Judah and Jerusalem
Jg 11:39 mourned for Josiah. •Jeremiah composed a lament for Josiah which all the 25
singing men and singing women still recite today when they lament for Josiah;
this has become a custom in Israel; the dirges are recorded in the Laments.[k]
||2K23:28 The rest of the history of Josiah, his deeds of piety conforming to everything 26
written in the Law of Yahweh, •his history from first to last, are recorded in the 27
Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

E. ISRAEL IN THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE MONARCHY[a]

Jehoahaz

||2K23:30-34
1Ch3:16 36 The country people took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and made him king in 1
Jerusalem in succession to his father. •Jehoahaz was twenty-three years 2
old when he came to the throne and he reigned for three months in Jerusalem.[b]
The king of Egypt carried him off from Jerusalem and imposed a levy of a hundred 3
talents of silver and one talent of gold on the country. •The king of Egypt then 4
made Eliakim, brother of Jehoahaz, king of Judah and Jerusalem, and changed
his name to Jehoiakim. Neco took his brother Jehoahaz and carried him off
to Egypt.

Jehoiakim

||2K23:36-37
Jr 22:19 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he came to the throne and he reigned 5
for eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what is displeasing to Yahweh his God.
||2K24:1f Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked him, loaded him with chains and 6
carried him off to Babylon.[c] •To Babylon Nebuchadnezzar also carried off part 7
of the furnishings of the Temple of Yahweh and put them in his palace at
||2K 24:5 Babylon. •The rest of the history of Jehoiakim, the shameful things he did and 8
those discovered to his discredit, these are recorded in the Book of the Kings of
Israel and Judah. His son Jehoiachin succeeded him.

Jehoiachin

||2K24:8-9 Jehoiachin was eight[d] years old when he came to the throne and he reigned for 9
three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what is displeasing to Yahweh.
||2K24:10-16 At the turn of the year, King Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and had him taken 10
to Babylon, with the precious furnishings of the Temple of Yahweh, and made
Zedekiah his brother[e] king of Judah and Jerusalem in his place.

Zedekiah

||2K24:18-20
||Jr52:1-3 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he came to the throne and he reigned 11
for eleven years in Jerusalem. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh his God. 12
Jr 37-39 He did not listen humbly to the prophet Jeremiah, accredited by Yahweh himself.
||2K24:20
Ezk17:13-16 He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar to whom he had sworn allegiance 13
by God. He became stubborn, and obstinately refused to return to Yahweh
the God of Israel.

The nation as a whole[f]

14 Furthermore, all the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added
infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and
defiling the Temple that Yahweh had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem.
15 Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, Jr 7:25 Heb 1:1
16 since he wished to spare his people and his house. •But they ridiculed the
messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until Mt23:34-36p
at last the wrath of Yahweh rose so high against his people that there was no
further remedy.

The end

17 He summoned against them the king of the Chaldaeans who put their young
warriors to the sword within their sanctuary; he spared neither youth nor virgin, Lm1:15; 5:11-14
18 neither old man nor aged cripple; God handed them all over to him. •All
the furnishings of the Temple of God, large and small, the treasures of the Temple ||2K25:14f
of Yahweh, the treasures of the king and his officials, he carried everything off
19 to Babylon. •They burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of ||2K25:9f Lm 2:6
Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it.
20 The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to
21 serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. •This is how
the word of Yahweh was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, 'Until this
land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep
sabbath throughout the days of its desolation'.[g]

Looking to the future[h]

22 And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of Yahweh ||Ezr1:1-3
that was spoken through Jeremiah, Yahweh roused the spirit of Cyrus king of
Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his
23 kingdom: •'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, "Yahweh, the God of heaven,
has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a
Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people,
may his God be with him! Let him go up." '

j. 'continued'; Hebr.: 'disguised himself', cf. 1 K 22:30.

k. The Chronicler seems to have Jr 22:10,15,18 in mind. He may have assumed allusions to Josiah in Lm 2:1,2,3, etc. Zc 12:11-14 seems to refer to a lament for Josiah.

36 a. Summary of the events recorded in 2 K; it introduces the story of the great reform under Ezra and Nehemiah, just as the reign of Ahaz introduced the reform of Hezekiah and the reigns of Manasseh and Amon the reform of Josiah.

b. The Greek adds 2 K 23:31-33.

c. This captivity and the spoliation are not reported elsewhere. It would appear that a later age transferred to the wicked Jehoiakim some of his son Jehoiachin's misfortunes. Cf. Dn 1:1-2.

d. Many MSS and versions correct to 'eighteen', cf. 2 K 24:8.

e. Actually his uncle, 2 K 24:17. But 1 Ch 3:16 mentions a second Zedekiah.

f. The Chronicler is apparently summarising the opening chapters of Jr and Ezk, cf. Ezk 8; Jr 7.

g. Only the last few words of this verse recall Jr, Jr 25:11 and 29:10. What precedes is found in the maledictions of Lv 26:34f. In the Chronicler's day sabbath observance was one of the basic principles of Judaism.

h. The two concluding verses also form the beginning of Ezr but their placing affects their tone: what is a summons to great labours in Ezr becomes here a triumphant cry that the Temple stands again, a guarantee that David's work will never fail.

THE BOOK OF
EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

EZRA

I. THE RETURN FROM EXILE AND THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

The return of the exiles

||2 Ch 36: 22-23 *Jr 25:11-12; 29:10 Zc 1:12* 1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia,[a] to fulfil the word of Yahweh that was spoken through Jeremiah,[b] Yahweh roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: 1

Is 45:1 •'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, "Yahweh, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah.[c] 2

•Whoever there is among you of all his people,[d] may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah to build the Temple of Yahweh, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. 3

•And let each survivor,[e] wherever he lives, be helped by the people of that place with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, as well as voluntary offerings for the Temple of God which is in Jerusalem." '[f] 4

Then the heads of families of Judah and of Benjamin, the priests and the Levites, in fact all whose spirit had been roused by God, prepared to go and 5

Ex 3:22; 11:2; 12:35 rebuild the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem; •and all their neighbours gave them every assistance with silver, gold, goods, cattle, quantities of costly gifts[g] and with voluntary offerings of every kind. 6

King Cyrus took the vessels of the Temple of Yahweh which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and dedicated to the temple of his god. 7

•Cyrus, king of Persia, handed them over to Mithredath, the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.[h] 8

•The inventory was as follows: thirty golden bowls for offerings; one thousand and twenty-nine silver bowls for offerings; 9

•thirty golden bowls; four hundred and ten silver bowls; one thousand other vessels.[i] 10

•In all, five thousand four hundred vessels of gold and silver. Sheshbazzar took all these with him when the exiles travelled back from Babylon to Jerusalem. 11

||Ne 7:6-72 **The list of the returning exiles[a]**

2 These were the people of the province who returned from captivity and exile. After being deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, they returned to Jerusalem and to Judah, each to his own town. 1

•They arrived with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum and Baanah.[b] 2

The list of the men of the people of Israel:[c] 3

•sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; 4

•sons of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; 5

•sons of Arah, seven hundred and seventy-five; 6

•sons of Pahath-moab, that is to say the sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve; 7

sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 8

•sons of Zattu, nine hundred and forty-five; 9

•sons of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; 10

•sons of Bani, six hundred and forty-two; 11

•sons of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-three;

12 13 sons of Azgad, one thousand two hundred and twenty-two; •sons of Adonikam,
14 15 six hundred and sixty-six; •sons of Bigvai, two thousand and fifty-six; •sons of
16 Adin, four hundred and fifty-four; •sons of Ater, that is to say of Hezekiah,
17 18 ninety-eight; •sons of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-three; •sons of Jorah,
19 one hundred and twelve; •sons of Hashum, two hundred and and twenty-three;
20 21 sons of Gibbar, ninety-five; •men of Bethlehem, one hundred and twenty-three;
22 23 men of Netophah, fifty-six; •men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight;
24 25 men of Beth-azmaveth, forty-two; •men of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah and
26 Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; •men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred
27 28 and twenty-one; •men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two; •men of Bethel
29 30 and Ai, two hundred and twenty-three; •sons of Nebo, fifty-two; •sons of
31 Magbish, one hundred and fifty-six; •sons of another Elam, one thousand two
32 33 hundred and fifty-four; •sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty; •men of
34 Lod, Hadid and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-five; •men of Jericho, three
35 hundred and forty-five; •sons of Senaah, three thousand six hundred and thirty. Ne 3:3

36 The priests: sons of Jedaiah, that is to say the House of Jeshua, nine hundred
37 38 and seventy-three; •sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; •sons of Pashhur,
39 one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; •sons of Harim, one thousand and seventeen.

40 The Levites: sons of Jeshua, that is to say Kadmiel, Binnui, Hodaviah, Ne 12:24 seventy-four.

41 The cantors:[d] sons of Asaph, one hundred and twenty-eight.

42 The gatekeepers: sons of Shallum, sons of Ater, sons of Talmon, sons of Akkub, sons of Hatita, sons of Shobai: in all, one hundred and thirty-nine.

43 44 The oblates:[e] sons of Ziha, sons of Hasupha, sons of Tabbaoth, •sons of Nb 3:9; 18:6
45 Keros, sons of Siaha, sons of Padon, •sons of Lebanah, sons of Hagabah, sons
46 47 of Akkub, •sons of Hagab, sons of Shamlai, sons of Hanan, •sons of Giddel,
48 sons of Gahar, sons of Reaiah, •sons of Rezin, sons of Nekoda, sons of Gazzam,
49 50 sons of Uzza, sons of Paseah, sons of Besai, •sons of Asnah, sons of the Meunites,
51 sons of the Nephisites, •sons of Bakbuk, sons of Hakupha, sons of Harhur,
52 53 sons of Bazluth, sons of Mehida, sons of Harsha, •sons of Barkos, sons of Sisera,
54 sons of Temah, •sons of Neziah, sons of Hatipha.

55 The sons of Solomon's slaves: sons of Sotai, sons of Hassophereth, sons of
56 57 Peruda, •sons of Jaalah, sons of Darkon, sons of Giddel, •sons of Shephatiah,

1 a. The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus dates from the autumn of 539; the first year of his reign (over the Babylonian empire) begins in Nisan (March-April) 538.

b. The 'seventy' years of captivity foretold by Jeremiah is a round number, though it could be understood literally by making the subjection of Judah begin with the reign of Jehoiakim (609), cf. 2 K 24:1. The part played by Cyrus is declared in Is 44:28; 45:1f.

c. The Persian kings were as a whole extremely sympathetic towards the religions of the subjected peoples; they reinstated and actively supported them while keeping a measure of control. Their attitude towards the Jewish religion was no exception. It is possible that Judaism further benefited because of the Persians' special devotion to 'the gods of heaven'. Yahweh, who in the official documents is always referred to as 'the God of heaven', may have been thought of as the supreme god acknowledged by the Persian kings.

d. The expression apparently includes the exiles from the N. Kingdom. But cf. v. 5.

e. Technical term for the faithful nucleus of Israel that had taken shape during the Exile, cf. Is 51:7; 49:13 and Is 4:3+.

f. This edict appears in the form of a proclamation, in Hebr., by public heralds to the exiled Jews and no doubt drawn up by Jews employed in the Persian chancellery. 6:3-5, on the other hand, is a memorandum for the use of Persian officials.

g. Text corr. following 1 Esd 2:9 (The Greek, uncanonical work called 1 Esd here, is in part a compilation from the books of the Chronicler and sometimes provides a useful check on the text of Ezr and Ne.)

h. Leader of the first party of immigrants, see Introduction.

i. Text corr.

2 a. This list, placed here by the author because it is necessary for the narrative that follows, is taken from the *Memoirs of Nehemiah*, where it is used as a basis for the repopulation of Jerusalem in about 445. Even if the list includes successive parties of immigrants, it still seems that a considerable number returned with Zerubbabel, who heads the list. The text has been corrected with the help of Ne 7:6-72, the Greek version and 1 Esd 5:4-45; these contain variants of the names and figures.

b. Twelve in all; the number of the tribes of Israel.

c. The layfolk are listed by clan for the upper classes, by place of origin for the lower.

d. Not reckoned among the Levites, unlike 3:10. One group only is mentioned, unlike 1 Ch 6:16f.

e. The origin of the Nethinim ('given ones' is the literal meaning of this Hebr. word and of the corresponding Greek) is described in Jos 9:27. The 'sons of Solomon's slaves' (v. 55 and Ne 11:3) are descendants of prisoners of war or of foreigners subject to forced labour. These two groups did the menial work of the Temple (woodcutters, water-carriers). Cf. Ezk 44:7-9. They resemble the 'oblates' of the medieval monasteries.

sons of Hattil, sons of Pochereth-haz-zebaim, sons of Ami. •The total of the 58
oblates and the sons of Solomon's slaves: three hundred and ninety-two.

The following, who came from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addan and 59
Immer, could not prove that their families and ancestry were of Israelite origin:
sons of Delaiah, sons of Tobiah, sons of Nekoda: six hundred and fifty-two. 60
2S 17-27; 19:32f; 1K 2-7 And among the priests: sons of Habaiah, sons of Hakkoz, sons of Barzillai, who 61
had married one of the daughters of Barzillai, the Gileadite, whose name he
adopted. •These people searched in their ancestral registers but could not be 62
located in them, so they were excluded from the priesthood[f] as unclean •and His 63
Excellency[g] forbade them to eat the sacred foods[h] until a priest could be found
for the Urim and Thummim.[i]

The whole assembly numbered forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty 64
people, •not counting their slaves and maidservants to the number of seven 65
thousand three hundred and thirty-seven. They also had two hundred male and
female singers. •Their horses numbered seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules 66
two hundred and forty-five, •their camels four hundred and thirty-five and their 67
donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

When they arrived at the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem, a certain number 68
of heads of families made voluntary offerings for the Temple of God, for its
rebuilding on its site. •In accordance with their means they gave sixty-one 69
thousand gold drachmas, five thousand silver minas and one hundred priestly
robes to the sacred funds.

The priests, Levites and part of the people settled in Jerusalem; the gatekeepers, 70
cantors, oblates and all the other Israelites, in their own towns.

The resumption of worship

‖Ne7:72b; 8:1 3 When the seventh month came and the sons of Israel were in their own towns, 1
they all gathered as one man in Jerusalem.[a] •Jeshua son of Jozadak, with his 2
brother priests, and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, with his brothers,[b] began to
1K8:64+ rebuild the altar of the God of Israel, to offer holocausts there, as it is written
Dn 9:25 in the Law of Moses the man of God. •The altar was set up on its old site,[c] 3
despite their fear of the surrounding peoples, and on it they offered holocausts
Ex23:14+ to Yahweh, holocausts morning and evening; •they celebrated the feast of 4
Nb28:3-8 Tabernacles, according to the written Law, with as many daily holocausts as are
ordained for each day; •then, in addition to the perpetual holocaust, they offered 5
those prescribed for the sabbaths,[d] New Moon feasts and all the solemnities
sacred to Yahweh, as well as those voluntary offerings made by individuals
to Yahweh.[e] •From the first day of the seventh month they began offering 6
holocausts to Yahweh, though the foundations of the sanctuary of Yahweh had
not yet been laid.[f]

1Ch22:4; 2Ch 2:9,14 Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters; to the Sidonians and 7
Tyrians they gave food, drink and oil, so that they would bring cedar wood from
Lebanon by sea to Jaffa, for which Cyrus king of Persia had given permission.[g]
It was in the second month of the second year[h] after their arrival at the Temple 8
of God in Jerusalem that Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak,
with the rest of their brothers, the priests, the Levites and all the people who
had returned to Jerusalem from captivity, began the work; they appointed the
Levites who were twenty years old or more to superintend the work on the
Temple of Yahweh.[i] •So Jeshua, his sons and his brothers, with Kadmiel, Binnui 9
and Hodaviah,[j] agreed to superintend the workmen at the Temple of God.[k]
When the builders had laid the foundations of the sanctuary of Yahweh, the 10
2:41 priests in fine linen[l] came with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph,
Jb 38:7 with cymbals, to praise Yahweh according to the ordinances of David king of
Israel; •they chanted praise and thanksgiving to Yahweh, 'For he is good, for 11
Nb10:5+; Ps100:5+; 136; Jr 33:11 his love for Israel is everlasting'. And all the people shouted aloud the praises of
Yahweh, since the foundations of the Temple of Yahweh had now been laid.

12 True, many priests and Levites, many heads of families, who were then old and
had seen with their own eyes the earlier Temple on its foundations,[m] wept aloud, Hg 2:3
13 but many others raised their voices in shouts of joy. •And nobody could distinguish Tb 14:5
the shouts of joy from the sound of the people's weeping; for the people shouted
so loudly that the noise could be heard far away.

An indictment of the Samaritans: their tactics under Cyrus[a]

1 4 But when the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were
2 building a sanctuary for Yahweh, the God of Israel, •they came to Zerubbabel
and Jeshua[b] and the heads of families and said, 'We would like to build with
you, for we seek your God as you do and we have sacrificed[c] to him since the
3 time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here'.[d] •Zerubbabel,
Jeshua, and the other heads of Israelite families replied, 'It is not right that you
should join us in building a Temple for our God; we alone may build for
Yahweh, the God of Israel, as we were ordered by Cyrus king of Persia'.
4 Then the people of the country[e] set out to dishearten and frighten the people of
5 Judah from building any further; •they lured counsellors[f] against them, to defeat
their purpose. This lasted throughout the reign of Cyrus king of Persia and
until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Samaritan tactics under Xerxes and Artaxerxes[g]

6 At the beginning of the reign of Xerxes[h] they[i] lodged a complaint against
the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.
7 In the time of Artaxerxes,[j] Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of their colleagues
denounced Jerusalem[k] in writing to Artaxerxes king of Persia. The text of the
document was in the Aramaic script and the Aramaic language.
8 Then Rehum the governor[l] and Shimshai the secretary wrote the following
9 letter denouncing Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes—•Rehum the governor and

f. The decision was later reversed, at least for the sons of Hakkoz, Ne 3:4,21; Ezr 8:33.

g. The governor, probably Sheshbazzar at this period, is called by his title of honour, *Tirshatha*, a Persian word apparently meaning 'His Reverence'; it recurs in Ne 7:65,69; 8:9; 10:2. The governor does not interfere in religious affairs. Ezekiel's instructions have borne fruit, cf. Ezk 45:7-17; 46:1-10,12,16-18.

h. On this priestly privilege see Lv 22:10f; 10:14-15.

i. To consult God by means of the sacred lots, cf. 1 S 14:41+. The high priest has not therefore yet been invested; cf. Zc 3.

3 a. The same phrase (corr.) is used to describe this first gathering of the immigrants and the one organized by Ezra, Ne 7:72b–8:1.

b. The mention of Zerubbabel and Jeshua as taking this initiative is editorial. The work has been officially assigned to Sheshbazzar, 5:13-16; 6:3-5.

c. 'on its site' Greek, Syr., cf. 2:68; 'on its foundations' Hebr.

d. 'for the sabbaths' 2 Esd, cf. 2 Ch 2:3; omitted by Hebr.

e. 'Voluntary' sacrifices as opposed to those prescribed by the Law or obligatory as the result of a vow, cf. Lv 7:11+.

f. For the Chronicler this is a resumption of the whole system of worship as laid down by the 'Priestly' texts of the Law.

g. Preparations similar to those made for Solomon's Temple.

h. Hg 1:14; 2:10f and Zc 4:9 put the beginning of the work in the second year of Darius; it actually began under Cyrus, Ezr 5:16, but can have made little progress.

i. It is a characteristic of the Chronicler to give prominence to the Levites.

j. 'Binnui and Hodaviah' corr., cf. 2:40; 'and his sons, the sons of Judah' Hebr.

k. The Hebr. adds 'the sons of Henadad, their sons and their brothers', gloss following Ne 3:18,24; 10:10.

l. 'in fine linen' corr., cf. 2 Ch 5:12.

m. 'on its foundations' corr.; 'when the foundations were being laid' Hebr., which adds 'that is, of the Temple'.

4 a. Hg 1:2 blamed the delay in building the Temple (from 538 to 520) on the indifference of the Jews. The Chronicler emphasises the Samaritan opposition.

b. 'Jeshua' Greek; omitted by Hebr.

c. 'we have sacrificed' *qere*, Greek, Syr.; 'we do not sacrifice' Hebr.

d. This deportation should perhaps be related to Esarhaddon's Egyptian campaign and to the capture of Tyre (671); see Is 7:8b (according to the Hebr. reading 'sixty-five years').

e. The expression 'people of the country' (*'am ha'arez*) means primarily those with landed property, 2 K 23:30,35, as opposed to those who have none (*dallath ha'arez*). The reference here is to Samaritan settlers, see 10:2,11; Ne 10:31f; the expression is therefore assuming a religious sense, that of common folk ignorant of the Law and in a permanent state of legal impurity.

f. Royal officials resident in Samaria.

g. Here the 'Aramaic source' begins; it ends at 6:18. The Chronicler, however, summarises a section of it, in Hebr.; vv. 6-7.

h. End of 486 to beginning of 485.

i. Those mentioned in v. 4.

j. Artaxerxes I (465-424).

k. Lit. 'wrote against Jerusalem' corr.; 'wrote with the agreement (of Mithredath)' Greek, Arab., Syr.; '*bishlam*' ('against Jerusalem') is regarded by 1 Esd, Vulg, as the name of the leading plaintiff.

l. Governor of Samaria, cf. v. 17. Samaria was the capital of the province which still included Judah; its governor therefore had supervisory rights over Jerusalem.

Shimshai the secretary and the rest of their colleagues, the judges and legates, Persian officials, the people of Uruk, Babylon and Susa—that is, the Elamites— and the other peoples whom Assurbanipal the Great deported and settled in the towns of Samaria and in the rest of Transeuphrates.[m] 10

This is a copy of the letter they sent: 11

'To King Artaxerxes, from your servants, the people of Transeuphrates:

'Whereas •the king should be informed that the Jews, who have come up from your country to Jerusalem, are now rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are working to restore the walls, and the foundations are already laid,[n] and whereas the king should be informed that if this city is rebuilt and the walls are restored, they will refuse to pay tribute, customs or tolls, and that in short this city will damage the authority of the kings, •and whereas, because we eat the salt of the palace, it does not seem proper to us to see this affront offered to the king; we therefore send this information to the king •so that a search may be made in the archives of your ancestors: in which archives you will find it proved that this city is a rebellious city, the bane of the kings and the provinces, and that sedition has been stirred up there from ancient times; which is why this city was destroyed. •We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are restored, you will soon have no territories left in Transeuphrates.' 12 13 14 15 16

The king sent this reply: 17

'To Rehum the governor, to Shimshai the secretary, and to the rest of their colleagues resident in Samaria and elsewhere in Transeuphrates, peace!

'Whereas •the document you sent to me has been translated and read before me, •and by my orders search has been made, and it has been found that from ancient times this city has risen against kings and that rebellion and sedition have been contrived in it; •and that powerful kings have reigned in Jerusalem, who dominated all Transeuphrates,[o] exacting tribute, customs and tolls, •you must now order the work of these men to cease immediately: this city is not to be rebuilt until I give further orders. •Beware of negligence in this matter lest further harm be done to the king's interests.' 18 19 20 21 22

As soon as the copy of King Artaxerxes' document had been read before Rehum the governor,[p] Shimshai the secretary and their colleagues, they hurried to the Jews in Jerusalem and stopped their work by force of arms. 23

Ne 1:3+

The building of the Temple (520-515 B.C.)

[q]Thus the work on the Temple of God in Jerusalem was brought to a standstill; it remained interrupted until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia. 24

Hg 1:14-29 Zc 4:9

5 Then the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo began to prophesy to the Jews of Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel who was with them. •At this, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak started again to build the Temple of God in Jerusalem; the prophets of God were with the people, giving them courage.[a] •It was then that Tattenai, satrap of Transeuphrates, Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues came to them and asked, 'Who gave you authority to build this Temple and to do this woodwork? [b]What are the names of the men responsible for this building?' •But the eyes of their God were on the elders of the Jews; they were not compelled to stop while a report on the matter was sent to Darius and an official edict awaited. 1 2 3 4 5

Copy of the letter that Tattenai, satrap of Transeuphrates, Shethar-bozenai and his colleagues, the officials in Transeuphrates, sent to King Darius. •They sent a report to him which ran as follows: 6 7

'To King Darius, all peace! •The king should be informed that we went to the district of Judah, to the Temple of the great God: it is being built of blocks of stone; the walls are being panelled with wood; the work is being done with great care and makes progress in their hands. •Questioning the elders, we asked, 8 9

"Who gave you authority to build this Temple and to do this woodwork?"
10 We also asked their names so that you might be informed; hence we have been
able to list the names of those who are superintending these men.
11 'They gave us this answer, "We are the servants of the God of heaven and
earth; we are rebuilding a Temple which until recently had been standing for
12 many years and which was built and finished by a great king of Israel. •But our
ancestors angered the God of heaven and he delivered them into the power of
Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldaean, king of Babylon, who destroyed that Temple and
13 deported the people to Babylon. •In the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon,
14 however, King Cyrus authorised the rebuilding of this Temple of God; •further-
more, those vessels of gold and silver belonging to the Temple of God, which
Nebuchadnezzar had removed from the sanctuary in Jerusalem and taken to
that of Babylon, King Cyrus in turn removed from the sanctuary in Babylon and
handed back to a man called Sheshbazzar, whom he appointed high com-
15 missioner, •with the words: Take these vessels; go and return them to the
sanctuary in Jerusalem and let the Temple of God be rebuilt on its original site;
16 the aforesaid Sheshbazzar therefore came and laid the foundations of the Temple
of God in Jerusalem; they have been building it ever since,[c] and it is still not
finished."
17 'Wherefore, if it please the king, let search be made in the king's muniment
rooms in Babylon, to find out if it is true that King Cyrus gave permission for
the rebuilding of this Temple of God in Jerusalem. And let the king's decision
on this matter be sent to us.'

1 6 Then, on the order of King Darius, a search was made in Babylonia in the
2 muniment rooms where the archives were kept; •at Ecbatana, the fortress
situated in the province of Media, a scroll was found which ran thus:
'Memorandum. 1:4+
3 'In the first year of Cyrus the king, King Cyrus decreed:
"Temple of God in Jerusalem.
"The Temple will be rebuilt as a place at which sacrifices are offered and to
which offerings are brought to be burnt.[a] Its height is to be sixty cubits, its width
4 sixty cubits.[b] •There are to be three thicknesses of stone blocks and one of wood.[c]
5 The expense is to be met by the king's household. •Furthermore, the vessels
of gold and silver from the Temple of God which Nebuchadnezzar took from
the sanctuary in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon are to be restored so that
everything may be restored to the sanctuary in Jerusalem and be put back in
the Temple of God."[d]
6 'Wherefore, Tattenai, satrap of Transeuphrates, Shethar-bozenai and you,
7 their colleagues, the officials of Transeuphrates, withdraw from there; •leave
the high commissioner of Judah[e] and the elders of the Jews to work on this
8 Temple of God; they are to rebuild this Temple of God on its ancient site. •This,
I decree, is how you must assist the elders of the Jews in the reconstruction of
this Temple of God: the expenses of these people are to be paid, promptly and

m. 'the towns' Greek; 'the town' Hebr. The Hebr. adds 'whereas', cf. v. 11c. The list of Samaritan plaintiffs includes the highest authorities in the province, the leading Persian officials and the heads of the various groups of settlers according to their countries of origin.

n. '(the foundations) are laid' cf. 5:16; 'they are assembling [or: repairing] (the foundations)' Hebr.

o. Deliberately exaggerated allusion to the empires of David and Solomon.

p. 'the governor' one Hebr. MS, versions.

q. Editorial verse linking what follows with 4:5.

5 a. These two verses combine information from Hg and Zc. The initial enthusiasm for building the Temple, stimulated by Sheshbazzar, 5:16, had petered out, and in the autumn of 520 there was nothing to show but ruins, Hg 1:4. It may therefore be said that the work only began then. The leading part played by Zerubbabel is stressed by Hg and Zc, but here the 'elders' come to the fore, v. 5.

b. Add. (cf. v. 9b) 'then we asked'; var. 'then they asked'.

c. The elders embroider the facts, cf. 4:1-5,23-24, to prevent the authorisation of 538 from lapsing.

6 a. 'offerings brought to be burnt' corr., cf. 1 Esd 'its foundation' Hebr.

b. Text corrupt.

c. 'one' (i.e. course of wood) Greek; 'new' (i.e. new wood, one course) Hebr. The wood lines the wall on the inside, cf. 5:8.

d. 'everything' added by conj. 'may be restored' versions; 'you will replace it' Greek.

e. 'of Judah' 1 Esd; 'of the Jews' Hebr.

without fail, from the royal revenue—that is, from the tribute of Transeuphrates.
What they need for holocausts to the God of heaven: young bulls, rams and 9
lambs, as also wheat, salt, wine and oil, is to be supplied to them daily, without
fail, as required by the priests of Jerusalem, •so that they may offer acceptable 10
sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the lives of the king and his sons.[f]
I also decree this: If anyone disobeys this edict, a beam is to be torn from his 11
house, he is to be pilloried upright on it and his house is to be made into a dung
heap for this crime. •May the God who causes his name to live there overthrow 12
any king or people who dares to defy this and destroy the Temple of God in
Jerusalem! I, Darius, have issued this decree. Let it be obeyed to the letter!'

Then Tattenai, satrap of Transeuphrates, Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues 13
obeyed to the letter the instructions sent by King Darius. •The elders of the Jews, 14
for their part, prospered with their building, inspired by Haggai the prophet
and Zechariah son of Iddo. They finished the building in accordance with the
order of the God of Israel and the order of Cyrus and of Darius.[g] •This 15
Temple was finished on the twenty-third day of the month of Adar; it was
the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.[h] •The Israelites—the priests, the 16
Ps 30:1 Levites and the remainder of the exiles[i]—joyfully dedicated this Temple of God;
for the dedication of this Temple of God they offered one hundred bulls, two 17
hundred rams, four hundred lambs and, as a sacrifice for sin for the whole of
Israel, twelve he-goats, corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel.
Then they installed the priests according to their orders in the service of the 18
Temple of God[j] in Jerusalem, as is written in the Book of Moses.[k]

The Passover of 515 B.C.

Ex12:1+ The exiles celebrated the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. 19
The Levites, as one man, had purified themselves; all were pure, so they sacrificed 20
the passover for all the exiles, for their brothers the priests and for themselves.[l]
Ps 47:9 The following ate the passover: the Israelites who had returned from exile and 21
all those who, having broken with the impurity of the surrounding peoples,
joined them to seek Yahweh, the God of Israel. •For seven days they joyfully 22
celebrated the feast of Unleavened Bread, for Yahweh had given them cause to
rejoice, having moved the heart of the king of Assyria to encourage their
work on the Temple of God, the God of Israel.

II. THE ORGANISATION OF THE COMMUNITY BY EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

The mission and personality of Ezra[a]

7 After these events, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra son of 1
Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, •son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son 2
of Ahitub, •son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Meraioth, •son of Zerahiah, 3 4
son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, •son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, 5
son of the chief priest Aaron,[b] •this man Ezra came up from Babylon. He was 6
a scribe versed[c] in the Law of Moses, which had been given by Yahweh, the God
7:28;8:18 Ne 2:8,18 of Israel. As the favour of his God, Yahweh, was with him, the king gave him all
he asked. •A certain number of Israelites, priests, Levites, cantors, gatekeepers 7
and oblates went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of the reign of King Arta-
xerxes. •He arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month: it was the seventh year of 8
the king's reign, •for he had decided to depart from Babylon on the first day of 9
the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month;
the kindly favour of his God was certainly with him. •For Ezra had devoted 10
Ps 119:45 himself to the study of the Law of Yahweh, to practising it and to teaching
Israel its laws and customs.

The edict of Artaxerxes[d]

11 This is a copy of the document which King Artaxerxes handed to Ezra,
the priest-scribe, the scribe who was especially learned in the text of Yahweh's
commandments and his laws relating to Israel:
12 'Artaxerxes,[e] king of kings, to the priest Ezra, scribe of the Law of the
God of heaven, perfect peace.[f] 1:2+
13 'Here then are my orders: Anyone in my kingdom who is of the people
of Israel, of their priests or their Levites and who freely chooses to go to Jeru-
14 salem, may go with you. •For you are sent by the king and his seven counsellors
to make an inspection of Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of your
15 God, which is in your possession, •and also to carry the silver and gold which the
king and his counsellors have voluntarily offered to the God of Israel who dwells
16 in Jerusalem, •as well as all the silver and gold you find in the whole province
of Babylonia, together with those voluntary offerings given by the people and
17 the priests for the Temple of their God in Jerusalem. •Further, with this money
take pains to buy bulls, rams and lambs, as well as the oblations and libations
which go with them; you must offer them on the altar of the Temple of your God in
18 Jerusalem. •The gold and silver left over you may spend as you and your brothers
19 think right, according to the will of your God. •Place the vessels that have been
given you for the service of the Temple of your God before your God in Jerusalem.
20 For anything else necessary for the Temple of your God, which you may find
21 occasion to provide, you may draw on the royal treasury. •I, King Artaxerxes,
give this command to all the treasurers of Transeuphrates: Whatever the priest
Ezra, scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you must be instantly
22 allowed: •up to one hundred talents of silver, one hundred measures of wheat,
one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and salt as requested.
23 Everything that the God of heaven commands must be carried out zealously for
the Temple of the God of heaven, lest the wrath should come on the realm of
24 the king and of his sons. •You are also informed that it is forbidden to impose
tribute, customs or tolls on any of the priests, Levites, cantors, gatekeepers,
oblates; in short, on the servants of this Temple of God.
25 'And you, Ezra, by virtue of the wisdom of your God, which is in your posses-
sion,[g] you are to appoint scribes[h] and judges to administer justice for the whole
people of Transeuphrates, that is, for all who know the Law of your God.[i] You 2 Ch 17:9 Est 8:12s
26 must teach those who do not know it. •If anyone does not obey the Law of
your God—which is the law of the king—let judgement be strictly executed on
him: death, banishment, confiscation or imprisonment.'

f. Prayer for a pagan sovereign is encouraged Jr 29:7; Ba 1:10-11; 1 M 7:33; cf. also Rm 13:1-7; 1 P 2:13-17.

g. The Hebr. adds 'and of Artaxerxes, king of Persia'.

h. 'the twenty-third day' 1 Esd; 'the third day' Hebr. The date is April 1st 515. This Temple, remodelled by Herod the Great, cf. Jn 2:20+, was in use for 585 years; it was destroyed by Titus in 70 A. D.

i. The élite of the community, cf. 4:1.

j. 'of the Temple of God' Syr., Rec. Luc.; 'of God' Hebr. and Greek.

k. The Aramaic document ends here. Vv. 19-22 are from the Chronicler's pen.

l. At the beginning of the verse the Hebr. has 'The priests and', but cf. v. 20b; 2 Ch 35:11. The Chronicler characteristically represents the Levites as slaughtering the paschal victims, cf. 2 Ch 35:6,11. For a long time laymen had done so, Dt 16:2; Ex 12:6.

7 a. Vv. 1-11 are by the Chronicler; he uses Ezra's report, see Introduction.

b. The genealogy of Ezra accommodates the exiles' anxiety to see a duly accredited priesthood, 2:62; 8:2. But it has probably been constructed by the Chronicler with 1 Ch 5:28f as its foundation.

c. Lit. 'rapid scribe', cf. Ps 45:1. Their skill in the art of writing made the scribes indispensable officials in an oriental court. The title of 'scribe' therefore (vv. 12 and 21) indicates that Ezra was a kind of minister for Jewish affairs at the Persian court. But the Chronicler, thinking of Ezra's activity in Jerusalem, Ne 8:8+, gives the official title a religious meaning; the scribe is the man who reads, translates, expounds the Law to God's people. Ezra is the father of these scribes who did much good work in the post-exilic period, which was continued by the scribes (*grammatels*) of the time of Christ.

d. Note three points about the edict: i. the permission for Jews living in Babylon to settle in Judah, v. 13; ii. the elevation of the Mosaic Law to the status of law of the state, vv. 25-26; not only the Palestinian community, v. 14, but also the Jewish communities west of the Euphrates, v. 25, are to be governed on the basis of this Law, which is to be obligatory for all, v. 26; iii. the financial arrangements, vv. 15-20. On the religious policy of the Persian kings, see 1:2+.

e. Vv. 12-26 are in Aramaic.

f. 'peace' 1 Esd, Syr.; omitted by Hebr.

g. The Law.

h. 'scribes' Greek; 'judges' Hebr.

i. 'the law' Greek, 1 Esd; 'the laws' Hebr. To 'know' the Law is to observe it.

The journey of Ezra from Babylonia to Palestine

Blessed be Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, who moved the king's heart in 27
this way to glorify the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem •and who won for me 28
7:6 the favour of the king, his counsellors and all the most powerful of the king's
officials. For my part, I took courage, for the favour of Yahweh my God
was with me, and I gathered the leading men of Israel together to set out with
me.

8 These, with their genealogies, are the heads of families who set out from 1
Babylon with me in the reign of King Artaxerxes:[a]

Of the sons of Phinehas: Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar:[b] Daniel; of the 2
sons of David: Hattush •son of Shecaniah; of the sons of Parosh: Zechariah, 3
with whom one hundred and fifty males were registered; •of the sons of Pahath- 4
moab: Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males; •of the 5
sons of Zattu: Shecaniah son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males;
of the sons of Adin: Ebed son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males; •of the 6 7
sons of Elam: Jeshaiah son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males; •of the 8
sons of Shephatiah: Zebadiah son of Michael, and with him eighty males; •of 9
the sons of Joab: Obadiah son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen
males; •of the sons of Bani: Shelomith son of Josiphiah, and with him a hundred 10
and sixty males; •of the sons of Bebai: Zechariah son of Bebai, and with him 11
twenty-eight males; •of the sons of Azgad: Johanan son of Hakkatan, and with 12
him a hundred and ten males; •of the sons of Adonikam: the younger sons, 13
whose names are: Eliphelet, Jeiel and Shemaiah, and with them sixty
males; •and of the sons of Bigvai: Uthai son of Zabud, and with him seventy 14
males.

I assembled them near the river that runs to Ahava,[c] where we camped for 15
three days. Observing them I saw laymen and priests, but no Levites. •So 16
I dispatched Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan,
Zechariah and Meshullam, men of judgement, •and sent them to Iddo, the 17
leading man in the region of Casiphia; I told them the words they were
to say to Iddo and his kinsmen, living in the region of Casiphia, to provide
7:6 us with servants for the Temple of our God. •Then, thanks to the kindly favour 18
of our God which was with us, they sent us a capable man, of the sons of Mahli
son of Levi son of Israel, Sherebiah with his sons and kinsmen: eighteen men;
also Hashabiah and with him his brother Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, as 19
2:43+ well as their sons: twenty men; •and of the oblates whom David and his notables 20
had assigned to serve the Levites: two hundred and twenty oblates. All were
registered by name.

There, beside the river of Ahava, I proclaimed a fast: we were to humble 21
ourselves before our God and pray to him for a successful journey for us, our
children and our belongings; •since I should have been ashamed to ask the 22
Ne 2:9 king for an armed guard and cavalry to protect us from an enemy on the road,
for we had already told the king, 'The hand of our God is held out in blessing over
all who seek him, his power and his anger over all who turn away from him'.
So we fasted, pleading with our God for this favour, and he answered our 23
prayers.

I chose twelve of the leading priests, and then Sherebiah and Hashabiah 24
and with them ten of their kinsmen; •I weighed out for them the silver, the gold 25
and the vessels, the offerings that the king, his counsellors, his nobles and all
the Israelites present had presented for the Temple of our God. •So I weighed 26
out and handed over to them six hundred and fifty talents of silver, one hundred
silver vessels worth two talents,[d] one hundred talents of gold, •twenty golden 27
bowls worth a thousand darics and two vessels of fine gilded bronze which
were as valuable as gold. •I told them, 'You are consecrated to Yahweh; these 28
vessels are sacred; the silver and gold are voluntary offerings to Yahweh, the God
of your ancestors. •Take charge of them and guard them until you weigh them 29

before the leading priests, the Levites and the heads of families of Israel in
30 Jerusalem in the chambers of the Temple of Yahweh.' •The priests and Levites
then took charge of the silver, the gold and the vessels thus weighed, to take
them to Jerusalem to the Temple of our God.
31 On the twelfth day of the first month we left the river of Ahava to go to
Jerusalem; the favour of our God was with us and protected us on the road from
32 enemies and thieves. •We arrived in Jerusalem and stayed there, resting, for
33 three days. •On the fourth day the silver, the gold and the vessels were weighed
in the Temple of our God and handed over to the priest Meremoth son of Uriah
and, with him, Eleazar son of Phinehas; with them were the Levites Jozabad
34 son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui. •Number and weight, all was there.
The total weight was put on record.
35 At that time •those who came back from captivity, the exiles, offered
holocausts to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams,
seventy-two lambs, twelve he-goats for sin; the whole as a holocaust to Yahweh.
36 The king's instructions were notified to the king's satraps and the governors
of Transeuphrates, who then assisted the people and the Temple of God.

The marriages with foreigners dissolved[a] Ml 2:10-12

1 9 Once this was done, the leaders approached me to say, 'The people of Israel, Ne 9:2
the priests and the Levites, have not broken with the natives of the countries
who are steeped in[b] abominations—Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Dt 7:1+
2 Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites—•but have found wives among
these foreign women for themselves and for their sons; the holy race has been Ne 9:2
mingling with the natives of the countries; in this act of treachery the chief
3 men and officials have led the way'. •At this news I tore my garment and my Ps119:136
4 cloak; I tore hair from my head and beard and sat down, quite overcome. •All
who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered round me, when faced Is 66:2,5
by this treachery of the exiles.[c] For my part, I went on sitting there, overcome,
5 until the evening oblation. •At the evening sacrifice I came out of my stupor
and falling on my knees, with my garment and cloak torn, I stretched out my
6 hands to Yahweh my God, •and said:[d]

'My God, I am ashamed, I blush to lift my face to you, my God. For our 2Ch30:15 Ps 38:4
crimes have increased, until they are higher than our heads, and our sin has Dn 3:24
7 piled up to heaven. •From the days of our ancestors until now our guilt has been
great; on account of our crimes we, our kings and our priests, were given into
the power of the kings of other countries, given to the sword, to captivity, to
8 pillage and to shame, as is the case today. •But now, suddenly, Yahweh our God
by his favour has left us a remnant and granted us a refuge in his holy place; this Is 4:3+
is how our God has cheered our eyes and given us a little respite in our slavery.
9 For we are slaves; but God has not forgotten us in our slavery; he has Ps106:46
shown us kindness in the eyes of the kings of Persia, obtaining permission for
us to rebuild the Temple of our God and restore its ruins, and he has found us
10 safety and shelter in Judah and in Jerusalem. •But now what can we say, my

8 a. The group which returned with Ezra numbered about 1500 men besides women and children; about 5000 in all. The layfolk are divided into twelve families, an arrangement favoured by Ezra, 8:24,35. Some names have been corrected following 1 Esd and versions.

b. The descendants of Ithamar had suffered the consequences of the disgrace of their ancestor Abiathar (1 K 2:27) and ministered in the provincial shrines. In the Jerusalem of the Chronicler's time they were represented by eight priestly groups, and the descendants of Eleazar (the Zadokites) by sixteen, 1 Ch 24:4.

c. Site unknown.

d. 'two talents' corr.

9 a. In ancient Israel such marriages were not forbidden, Gn 41:45; 48:5f; Nb 12:1f; Rt 1:4; 2 S 3:3. They were however forbidden by Dt to combat idolatry, which pagan women tended to bring with them into the home, Dt 7:1-4, cf. 23:4f. The danger increased after the Exile probably because the majority of the returning exiles were men. The reason for the divorce is still religious, 9:1,11, but a second reason now emerges: concern for racial purity, 9:2. Though belonging to the same period, Rt and Jon represent an entirely different school of thought.

b. 'steeped in' Greek; 'according to' Hebr.

c. The Jewish community in general is called after its most distinguished part, the Golah (exiles), 4:1; 6:16; 10:6,8,16; cf. Is 4:3+.

d. The prayer of Ezra, which is also a sermon, is inspired by Dt and the prophets, vv. 11f.

God, if after this kindness we have deserted your commandments, •which, 11
through your servants the prophets, you ordained in these words, "The land
Lv 18:24f Ezk 36:17 you are entering to possess is a land unclean because of the foulness of the
natives of the countries and of the abominations with which their impurities[e]
Dt 7:3 have infected it from end to end. •So you must not give your daughters to their 12
sons nor take their daughters for your sons; you must not be concerned for
their peace or their prosperity, so that you yourselves may grow strong, eat
the best of what the country produces and leave it as an inheritance to your
sons for ever."

'Now after all that has come upon us on account of our evil deeds and our great 13
fault—although you, our God, have rated[f] our crimes less than their wickedness
and left us this remnant here—•are we to break your commandments again and 14
intermarry with these people who practise such abominations? Would you not
be provoked to the point of destroying us, so that not even the smallest
remnant would survive? •Yahweh, God of Israel, by your justice[g] we survive 15
as the remnant we are today; here we are before you with our sin. And because
of it, no one can survive in your presence.'

10 While Ezra, weeping and prostrate before the Temple of God, prayed 1
and confessed, a great crowd of Israelites gathered round him, men, women
and children, weeping bitterly too. •Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the 2
sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, 'We have betrayed our God by marrying
foreign women, taken from the natives of the countries. But, in spite of this,
there is still some hope for Israel. •We will make a solemn promise before our God 3
to put away our foreign wives and the children born to them, as my lord[a] and
those who tremble at the commandment of our God may advise. Let us act in
accordance with the Law. •Up! This is for you to decide, but we will support 4
you. Take courage; to work!' •Then Ezra stood up and put the leading priests 5
and Levites and all Israel on oath to do what had been said. They took the oath.
Ezra left his place before the Temple of God and went to the room of Jehohanan 6
son of Eliashib, where he spent the night[b] without eating bread or drinking
water; he was in mourning for the exiles' treachery.

A proclamation was issued in Judah and in Jerusalem to all the exiles that 7
they were to assemble in Jerusalem: •anyone who did not come within three 8
days—such was the warning of the leaders and elders—would have all his goods
seized[c] and would himself be excluded from the community of the exiles. •As 9
a result, all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled in Jerusalem within the
three days; it was the ninth month, the twentieth day of the month; all the people
gathered in the square before the Temple of God; the occasion itself, and the
heavy rain, had them trembling. •Then Ezra the priest stood up and spoke, 10
'You have committed treason by marrying foreign women; you have added
to the sin of Israel. •But now give thanks to Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, 11
Ne 9:2 and do his will, by separating from the natives of the country and from your
foreign wives.' •In a loud voice the whole assembly answered, 'Yes, our duty 12
is to do as you say. •But there are a great many people here and it is the 13
rainy season; we cannot stay out in the open; besides, this is not something that
can be dealt with in one or two days, since many of us have sinned in this respect.
Our leaders could represent the full assembly;[d] all those from our towns who 14
have foreign wives could come at stated times, accompanied by elders and judges
from each town, until we have turned away God's anger which has been thus
roused against us.' •Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah, 15
supported by Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite, were opposed to this
procedure.[e] •The exiles acted on this suggestion. Ezra the priest chose[f] as 16
helpers the heads of families for each House, all designated by name. The session
for investigating individual cases began on the first day of the tenth month.
And by the first day of the first month they had dealt with all the men who had 17
married foreign women.

The list of the guilty[g]

18 Among the members of the priesthood,[h] these are the names of those who
were found to have married foreign women: among the sons of Jeshua son of
19 Jozadak and among his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib and Gedaliah; •they
pledged their word to put their wives away and, for their sin, offered a ram as
a sacrifice[i] of reparation;
20 among the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah;
21 among the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel and Uzziah;
22 among the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad
and Elasah.
23 Among the Levites: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah—that is, Kelita—Pethahiah, Ne 8:7; 10:11
Judah, and Eliezer.
24 Among the cantors: Eliashib and Zaccur.
Among the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem and Uri.
25 And among the Israelites:[j]
of the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin, Eleazar,
Malchijah and Benaiah;
26 of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth and Elijah;
27 of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad and
Aziza;
28 of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, Athlai;
29 of the sons of Bigvai: Meshullam, Malluch, Jedaiah, Jashub, Sheal, Jeremoth;
30 of the sons of Pahath-moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah,
Bezalel, Binnui and Manasseh;
31 of the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,
32 Benjamin, Malluch, Shemariah;
33 of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai,
Manasseh, Shimei;
34
35 of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, •Benaiah, Bediah, Cheluhi,
36
37 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, •Mattaniah, Mattenai and Jaasau;
38
39 of the sons of Binnui: Shimei, •Shelemiah, Nathan and Adaiah;
40
41 of the sons of Zaccai: Shashai, Sharai, •Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah,
42 Shallum, Amariah, Joseph;
43 of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, Benaiah.
44 All these had married foreign wives; they put them away, both women and
children.[k]

e. 'Foulness', 'abomination', 'impurity', are characteristics of idolatry.

f. 'rated' some Hebr. MSS, Syr.; 'taken away' Hebr.

g. God's saving justice which is also essentially merciful. See Rm 1:17.

10 a. 'my lord' corr.; '(the) Lord' Hebr.

b. 'spent the night' 1 Esd, Greek Rec. Luc.; 'went' Hebr.

c. Lit. 'put under the ban', cf. Jos 6:17+; Lv 27:28+.

d. Committee of inquiry consisting of the leading men.

e. The objection seems to come from enthusiasts who think the procedure too slow.

f. 'chose' 1 Esd. Greek Rec. Luc.

g. This list of clergy and laity is probably abbreviated, only members of the upper classes being named. Some names are corrected following 1 Esd and versions.

h. The four priestly families are the same as in 2:36-38; the list does not go back to Aaron as the Chronicler himself would have done, cf. 7:5+.

i. 'as a sacrifice' Greek Rec. Luc., 1 Esd; 'they were guilty' Hebr.

j. The lay families named here all occur in 2:3-35; four are found in the list of those who accompanied Ezra, 8:2-14.

k. 'they sent them away, both women and children' 1 Esd; 'among them were women who gave birth to children' Hebr.

NEHEMIAH

The call of Nehemiah: his mission to Judah

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah.[a] In the month of Chislev, in the 1
twentieth year of King Artaxerxes,[b] when I was in the citadel of Susa, •one 2
of my kinsmen, Hanani, arrived with some men from Judah. I asked them
about the Jews—the remnant rescued[c] from captivity—and about Jerusalem.
'Those who escaped from captivity,' they replied 'who are back there in the 3
province, are in great trouble and humiliation: the walls of Jerusalem are in
ruins and its gates burnt down.'[d] •On hearing this I sank down and wept; for 4
several days I mourned, fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Dt 7:9,12 Dn 9:1 And I said,[e] 'Yahweh, God of heaven, great God who must be feared, 5
maintaining covenant and kindness with those who love you and obey your
2Ch 6:40 commandments, •let your ear be listening, and your eyes open, to hear your 6
servant's prayer. I am making this to you now day and night on behalf of the
sons of Israel, your servants; and I confess the sins of the sons of Israel which
we have committed against you: I and my father's House have sinned. •We have 7
Dn 3:30 acted very wickedly towards you: we have not kept the commandments, laws
and customs you laid down for Moses your servant. •Remember, I beg you, 8
Dt 30:1-4 the charge you gave to Moses your servant: "If you prove faithless, I will
scatter you among the peoples; •but if you come back to me and keep my 9
commandments and practise them, even if your outcasts were at the very sky's
end, I would gather them from there and bring them back to the place I have
chosen for my name to dwell in". •Now these are your servants, your own people: 10
Dt 9:29 you have redeemed them with your mighty power and outstretched arm.
Ps 118:25 O Lord, let your ear be attentive to your servant's prayer and to the prayer 11
of your servants who delight to reverence your name. I beg you, let your servant
be successful today; make him acceptable to this man.'

At that time I was cupbearer to the king.

2 In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes,[a] the wine 1
being my concern, I took up the wine and offered it to the king. Now I had
never been downcast before.[b] •So the king said, 'Why is your face so sad? You 2
are not sick, surely? This must be a sadness of the heart.' A great fear came over
me •and I said to the king, 'May the king live for ever! How could my face be 3
other than sad when the city where the tombs of my ancestors are lies in ruins,
and its gates have been burnt down?' •'What' the king asked 'is your request?' 4
I called on the God of heaven •and made this reply to the king, 'If it pleases 5
the king, and if you are satisfied with your servant, give me leave to go to Judah,
to the city of my ancestors' tombs, and rebuild it'. •The king, with the queen 6
sitting there beside him, said, 'How long will your journey take, and when will
you return?' So I named a date that seemed acceptable to the king and he gave
me leave to go. •I spoke to the king once more, 'If it please the king, could letters 7
be given me for the governors of Transeuphrates to allow me to pass through
to Judah? •And also a letter for Asaph, keeper of the king's park, to supply 8
me with timber for the gates of the citadel of the Temple, for the city walls and
Ezr 7:6 for the house I am to occupy?' This the king granted me, for the kindly favour
of my God was with me.

So I travelled to the governors of Transeuphrates, and handed them the king's 9
Ezr 8:22 letters. The king had given me an escort of army officers and cavalry.

When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite slave[c] came to know 10
of this, they were much displeased that anyone should come to promote the
welfare of the sons of Israel.

The decision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem

And so I reached Jerusalem and stayed there for three days. •Then I rose 11 12

in the night, with a few other men, not having told anyone what work God had inspired me to do for Jerusalem, and having no animal with me but my own
13 mount. •At night, therefore, leaving by the Valley Gate, I went by way of the Well of the Dragon to the Dung Gate; I examined the walls of Jerusalem with
14 their gaps[d] and burnt-out gates. •I went on to the Fountain Gate and the King's
15 Pool, but found no further path for my mount. •So I returned, in the dark, through the wadi, still examining the walls, and came in again by the Valley
16 Gate.[e] And so I returned •without the officials knowing where I had gone or what I was doing. So far I had said nothing to the Jews: either to the priests,
17 the authorities, the officials or any other responsible persons. •Then I said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem is in ruins, its gates have been burnt down. Come, let us rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and suffer this indignity
18 no longer.' •And I told them how the kindly favour of God had been with Ezr 7:6 me, and also repeated the words the king had said to me. 'Let us start!' they exclaimed 'Let us build'; and with willing hands they set about the good work.

19 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite slave, and Geshem[f] the Arab came to know of this, they ridiculed us, and came[g] and asked, 'What
20 are you doing? Are you planning to revolt against the king?' •But I gave them this answer, 'The God of heaven will give us success. We, his servants, are going to build; you have neither share nor rights nor memorial in Jerusalem.'

The volunteer builders[a] Is 58:12

1 3 Eliashib the high priest and his brother priests set about building the Sheep Gate; they constructed its framework and set its doors, bolts and bars[b] in
2 place, and proceeded as far as the Tower[c] of Hananel. •The men of Jericho
3 built next to them; Zaccur son of Imri built next to them. •The sons of Ezr 2:35 Jr 31:38 Zp 1:10 Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they constructed its framework and set its doors,
4 bolts and bars in place. •Meremoth son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz carried out repairs next to them; Meshullam son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel carried
5 out repairs next to him. •The men of Tekoa carried out repairs next to him,
6 though their chiefs refused to bow their necks and work for their lords.[d] •Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah repaired the gate of the new quarter:[e] they constructed its framework and set its doors, bolts and bars in
7 place. •Next to them repairs were carried out by Melatiah of Gibeon and Jadon of Meronoth, and also by the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, on behalf of[f] the
8 governors of Transeuphrates. •Next to them repairs were carried out by Uzziel, a member of the goldsmiths' guild, and next to him repairs were carried out

1 a. The *Memoirs of Nehemiah* begin here, see Introduction.
b. December 446.
c. Those faithful people back from exile now centred round Jerusalem. Cf. Ezr 1:4+ and Is 4:3+.
d. The ambition to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was born during the Exile, Is 54:11-12, and subsequently grew, Is 60:10-17; Zc 2:5f. The first step was taken probably in the reign of Xerxes, Ezr 4:6, and we have clear evidence for the reign of Artaxerxes, Ezr 4: 12-13,16. It was seen as a claim to independence and a threat to the acquired interests of Samaria; hence the antagonism of the Samaritans who extorted permission from the Persian authority to bring the work to a halt by force, Ezr 4:23. It is to this recent event that Hanani alludes.
e. The prayer of Nehemiah owes much to Dt.
2 a. March-April 445.
b. 'before' corr.; 'before his face' Hebr.
c. Sanballat is known from the Elephantine papyri to have been governor of Samaria; Tobiah seems to have been an official under him.
d. Lit. 'where there were gaps' corr.; 'which were destroyed' Hebr.
e. The 'Valley' of v. 15 is the Kidron valley.
f. Probably the governor of the Arab province which included Edom.
g. 'came' Greek; 'jeered' Hebr.
3 a. Ch. 3 reproduces a document taken from the Temple archives and incorporated in the *Memoirs of Nehemiah*. It contains information on the topography of Jerusalem, cf. 2 S 5:9+; 2 K 14:13+, and on the political geography of the province, which had five chief towns: Jerusalem, Beth-hac-cherem, Mizpah, Beth-zur, Keilah.
b. 'constructed its framework' corr. following vv. 3, 6; 'consecrated it' Hebr. 'bolts and bars' corr. following vv. 3, 6, 13-15.
c. The Hebr. adds 'Meah which they consecrated as far as the tower'.
d. Nehemiah and his colleagues.
e. 'of the new quarter' Syr.; 'Old (Gate)' Hebr. The new quarter was the most recent addition to the town on the N., cf. Zp 1:10-11. In Ne 12:39 this gate is called 'the Gate of Ephraim'.
f. Meaning uncertain.

by Hananiah, of the perfumers' guild: they strengthened Jerusalem as far as
the Wall of the Square.[g] •Next to them repairs were carried out by Rephaiah 9
son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem. •Next to them Jedaiah son 10
of Harumaph carried out repairs opposite his own house; next to him repairs
were carried out by Hattush son of Hashabneiah. •Malchijah son of Harim 11
and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab repaired the next section as far as the Tower
of the Furnaces.[h] •Next to them repairs were carried out by Shallum son of 12
Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, by him and his sons.[i] •Hanun 13
and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate; they restored it,
constructed its framework and set its doors, bolts and bars in place, and repaired
a thousand cubits of wall up to the Dung Gate.[j] •Malchijah son of Rechab, 14
ruler of the district of Beth-hac-cherem, repaired the Dung Gate, he and his
sons:[k] he set its doors, bolts and bars in place.

Shallum son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the 15
Fountain Gate; he restored it, covered it, and set its doors, bolts and bars in
place. He also rebuilt the wall of the conduit cistern, adjoining the king's garden,
as far as the steps coming down from the Citadel of David.[l] •Next to him, 16
Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, carried out repairs
up to a point opposite the tombs of David, the artificial pool[m] and the House
of Heroes.[n] •Next to him repairs were carried out by the Levites: Rehum son 17
of Bani; next to him Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, carried out
repairs for his own district. •Next to him repairs were carried out by their 18
brothers: Binnui son of Henadad, ruler of half the district of Keilah; •next to 19
him, Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite
the slope up to the Armoury, towards the Angle.

Next to him Baruch son of Zabbai repaired another section from the Angle as 20
far as the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. •Next to him Meremoth 21
son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired another section from the door of Eliashib's
house to its farther end. •Next to him repairs were carried out by the priests 22
who lived locally in the country. •Next to them repairs were carried out by 23
Benjamin and Hasshub, opposite their own houses. Next to them repairs were
carried out by Azariah son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah, beside his own house.
Next to him Binnui son of Henadad repaired another section from the house of 24
Azariah as far as the Angle. •Next to him Palal son of Uzai carried out repairs 25
opposite the corner of the tower jutting out over the upper palace of the king
and standing in the prison courtyard. Next to him Pedaiah son of Parosh
carried out repairs •[o]as far as the Water Gate, in an easterly direction and 26
up to a point opposite the projecting tower. •Next to him the men of Tekoa 27
repaired another section opposite the great projecting tower as far as the wall
of Ophel.

From the Horse Gate onwards repairs were carried out by the priests, each 28
opposite his own house. •Next to them repairs were carried out by Zadok son 29
of Immer opposite his own house. Next to him repairs were carried out by
Ezk 40:6 Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, keeper of the East Gate. •Next to him[p] Hananiah 30
son of Shelemiah and Hanun sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section.
Next to him repairs were carried out by Meshullam son of Berechiah opposite
where he lived. •Next to him Malchijah, of the goldsmiths' guild, repaired as 31 30
far as the quarters of the oblates and of the merchants, opposite the Watch
Gate as far as the high chamber of the corner. •And between the high chamber 32 31
of the corner and the Sheep Gate repairs were carried out by the goldsmiths
and the merchants.

The effect on the Jews' opponents[q]

When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the walls he flew into a rage, 33 4:1
beside himself with anger. He ridiculed the Jews •and in front of his kinsmen 34 2
and the wealthy men of Samaria he exclaimed, 'What are these pathetic Jews

trying to do?...[r] Do they expect to finish in one day? Do they think they can
put new life into these charred stones, salvaged from the heaps of rubble?'
35 3 Tobiah the Ammonite was standing beside him. 'Let them build,' he said
36 4 'a jackal jumping on their wall will soon knock the stones down again.' •See,
our God, how we are despised! Make their sneers fall back on their own heads.
37 5 Give them over to shame in a land of exile. •Do not hide their guilt or let their Jr 18:23
sin be blotted out before you, for heaping insults on the builders.
38 6 Meanwhile we were rebuilding the wall which was soon finished all the way
round to mid-height, since the people put their hearts into the work.
1 7 **4** When news reached Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the
Ashdodites, that repairs to the walls of Jerusalem were going forward—since
2 8 the gaps were beginning to be made good—they were furious, •and conspired
together to come and attack Jerusalem and upset my plans.
3 9 Then we called on our God and set a watch against them, day and night,
4 10 to guard the city.[a] •Judah, however, was saying, 'The strength of the carriers is
failing and the amount of rubble enormous; we shall never finish the wall'.
5 11 And our enemies were saying, 'We will appear among them before they know
or see anything; then we will cut them down and put an end to the business'.
6 12 Now on ten occasions Jews who lived near them gave us warning, 'They are
7 13 coming up against us from every place they live in'.[b] •So we took up positions[c]
down behind the wall where the place was clear; I posted the people by
8 14 families with their swords, spears and bows. •I had seen their fear[d] and
I stood up and addressed the authorities, the officials and the rest of the people,
'Do not be afraid of them. Keep your minds on the Lord, who is great and to
be feared, and fight for your kinsmen, your sons, your daughters, your wives
9 15 and your homes.' •Learning, however, that we were forewarned, and that God
had thwarted their plan, our enemies withdrew,[e] and we all went back, everyone
to his work on the wall.
10 16 But from that day onwards only half of my men continued the work; the
rest, with spears, shields, bows and breastplates,[f] stood behind all the House Ps 149:6
11 17 of Judah •who were building the wall. The carriers, too, were armed[g] so that
each did his work with one hand while gripping his weapon with the other.
12 18 And as each builder worked, he wore his sword at his side. Beside me stood a
13 19 trumpeter. •I addressed the authorities, the officials and the rest of the people,
'The work is important and extensive, and we are deployed along the wall at
14 20 some distance from each other. •Rally round us wherever you hear the trumpet
15 21 sounding, and our God will fight for us.' •So we went on with the work[h] from
16 22 break of day till the stars appeared. •Then I spoke to the people again, 'Let
each man, with his servant, spend the night inside Jerusalem: in this way we can
17 23 employ the night in watching and the day in working'. •But none of us, neither

g. 'member of the goldsmiths' guild' corr. following Syr.; 'son of Hananiah, goldsmiths' Hebr. 'of the Square' versions; 'broad (wall)' Hebr.

h. Or Corner Tower, 2 Ch 26:9.

i. 'his sons' corr.; 'his daughters' Hebr.

j. 'Dung' *qere* and Greek; 'of the Cheeses' *ketib*. Later called the Gate of the Essenes.

k. 'he and his sons' some Greek MSS; 'he built it' Hebr.

l. The Citadel of David lies S. of the palace which itself adjoins the Temple on the S. side, cf. 2 S 5:9+. The steps mentioned here have been discovered, cut in the rock.

m. An old reservoir which once drew off the waters of Gihon at their source. King Hezekiah had it filled in when he excavated the tunnel conveying this water to the Pool of Siloam, cf. 2 K 20:20+.

n. Once the barracks of the king's bodyguard, 2 S 16:6; 23:8.

o. At the beginning the Hebr. has 'and the Nethinim (oblates) were living on Ophel', gloss from 11:21 and more applicable to v. 27.

p. 'him' *qere*, versions; 'me' Hebr. The same in v. 31.

q. Stress is laid on the difficulties experienced by Nehemiah from those outside the community. Sanballat and his supporters threaten to pass from mockery and insult, 2:19-20; 3:33-35, to active intervention, ch. 4. Later they try blackmail, ch. 6.

r. Three Hebr. words, difficult to explain in this context: 'Will they leave them alone? Will they sacrifice?'

4 a. 'to guard the city' corr.; 'against them' Hebr.

b. Text corr.

c. Lit. 'Positions were taken up' Greek MSS; 'I posted them' Hebr.

d. 'their fear' is added.

e. 'withdrew' corr.

f. The Hebr. adds 'the leaders'.

g. 'were armed' Greek; 'were laden' Hebr.

h. The Hebr. inserts 'half of them held spears', cf. v. 10.

myself, my kinsmen, my servants, nor the members of my personal guard, ever took off our clothes; every man kept his weapon to hand.[t]

The social problems of Nehemiah. He vindicates his administration

10:32 Jr34:8-22 5 The ordinary people and their wives began complaining loudly against their 1
brother Jews. •Some said, 'We are having to barter[a] our sons and daughters 2
to get enough corn to eat and keep us alive'. •Others said, 'We are having to 3
mortgage our fields, our vineyards, our houses to get corn during the famine'.
Still others said, 'We have had to borrow money on our fields and our vineyards 4
Ex 21:7 Lv 25:39 to pay the king's tax; •and though we are of the same flesh as our brothers, and 5
our children as good as theirs, we are having to sell our sons and our daughters
into slavery; some of our daughters have even been raped! We can do
nothing about it, since our fields and our vineyards are now the property
of others.'[b]

When I heard their complaints and these words I was very angry. •Having 6 7
turned the matter over in my mind, I reprimanded the authorities and
officials. 'What a burden[c] you impose,' I said 'every one of you on his brother!'
Summoning a great assembly to deal with them, •I said to them, 'To the best 8
Lv 25:48 of our power, we have redeemed our brother Jews who had been sold to
foreigners, and now you in turn are selling our brothers for us to redeem them!'[d]
They were silent and could find nothing to say. •'What you are doing' I[e] went 9
on 'is wrong. Do you not want to walk in the fear of our God and escape the
sneers of the nations, our enemies? •I too, my kinsmen, and my servants have 10
lent them money and corn. Let us cancel this debt. •Return them their fields, 11
their vineyards, their olive groves and their houses forthwith, and remit the debt[f]
on the money, corn, wine and oil which you have lent them.'[g] •'We will make 12
restitution,' they replied 'we will claim nothing more from them; we will do
as you say.' At once I summoned the priests and made them swear to do as they
Jr 18:1+ had promised. •Then I shook out the lap of my gown with the words, 'May 13
God do this, and shake out of his house and property any man who does not keep
this promise; may he be shaken out like this and left empty!' And the whole
assembly answered, 'Amen' and gave praise to Yahweh. And the people kept
this promise.

What is more,[h] from the day the king appointed me governor in the land of 14
Judah, from the twentieth to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, for
twelve years, neither I nor my kinsmen ever ate governor's bread.[i] •Now the 15
former governors, my predecessors,[j] had been a burden on the people, from
whom they took forty silver shekels each day as their subsistence allowance,[k]
while their servants oppressed the people too. But I, fearing God, never did
this.

And furthermore I worked on this wall all the time, though I owned no land; 16
and my servants also were all employed on the work.

Leaders[l] and officials to the number of a hundred and fifty ate at my table, 17
not to mention those who came to us from the surrounding nations. •Every day, 18
one ox, six fine sheep, and poultry, were prepared at my expense; every ten
days skins of wine were brought[m] in bulk. But even so, I never claimed the
governor's subsistence allowance, since the people already had burden enough
to bear.

In my favour, my God, remember all I have done for this people. 19

The intrigues of Nehemiah's enemies. The wall is finished[a]

6 When Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and our other enemies heard 1
that I had rebuilt the wall and that not a single gap was left—though at that
time I had not fixed the doors to the gates—•Sanballat and Geshem sent me a 2
message, 'Come and meet us at Hac-chepirim in the Vale of Ono'. Now they
intended some harm to me. •So I sent messengers to them to say, 'I am engaged 3

in a great undertaking and so cannot come down. The work would come to
4 a halt if I left it to come down to you.' •Four times they sent me the
5 same invitation and I made them the same reply. •The fifth time, with the same
6 purpose in mind, Sanballat sent me his servant bearing an open letter. •It ran,
'There is a rumour among the nations, so Gashmu[b] says, that you and the Jews
are thinking of rebelling, which is why you are building the wall; that you
7 yourself are to become their king;[c] •that you have even briefed prophets[d] in
your own interest in Jerusalem to proclaim: "Judah has a king". These rumours
will soon be reaching the king; so you had better come and talk things over
8 with us.' •To this, however, I replied, 'As regards what you say, nothing of the
9 sort has occurred; it is a figment of your own imagination'. •For they were
trying to frighten us, thinking, 'Their hands will tire of the work, and it will
never be finished'. But I meanwhile was making my hands even stronger.[e]
10 I had been to visit Shemaiah son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, since he was
prevented from coming to me.[f] He said:

'Let us meet at the Temple of God,
in the innermost part of the sanctuary;
let us shut the sanctuary doors,
for they are coming to kill you,
they are coming to kill you tonight'.

11 But I retorted, 'Is a man like me to run away? A man in my position to go
12 into the sanctuary to save his life?[g] I will not go.' •I realised that God had not sent
him to say this, but that he had pronounced this oracle over me because Tobiah[h]
13 was paying him •to frighten me into doing this, and so committing a sin[i] as a
result of which they would have been able to blacken my reputation and ridicule
14 me. •Remember Tobiah, my God, for what he has done; and Noadiah the Jr 23:9-40 Zc 13:2f
prophetess, and the other prophets who tried to frighten me.
15 The wall was finished within fifty-two days, on the twenty-fifth of Elul.[j]
16 When all our enemies heard about it, and all the surrounding nations had seen
it, they were deeply impressed[k] and acknowledged that this work had been
accomplished by the power of our God. Ps 118:22-23; 127:1
17 During this same period several of the authorities[l] of Judah kept sending letter
18 after letter to Tobiah, and letters from Tobiah kept arriving for them; •for he
had many sworn to his interest in Judah, since he was son-in-law to Shecaniah
son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam
19 son of Berechiah. •They even cried up his good deeds in my presence, and
they reported what I said back to him. And Tobiah kept on sending letters to
frighten me.

i. 'to band' corr.; 'the water' Hebr.

5 a. 'We are having to barter' corr.; 'We are many' Hebr.

b. The crisis cannot have had the work on the wall as its sole cause; this particular social evil was endemic in Israel, cf. 2 K 4:1; Am 2:6; 8:6; Is 50:1.

c. 'burden' certain MSS; 'debt' Text, Rec.

d. 'for us to redeem them' Vulg.; 'and have them sold to us' Hebr.

e. 'I' *qere*, versions; 'He' *ketib*.

f. 'the debt' corr.; 'the hundredth' Hebr.

g. Nehemiah, like Jr 34:8-22, here displays the outlook of Dt 15 though the remission of debt is not tied to the sabbatical year, Lv 25:1+.

h. This passage is connected with v. 10 and offers further proof of Nehemiah's selflessness.

i. Never drew the subsistence allowance for a governor, vv. 15 and 18.

j. Probably the governors of Samaria, capital of the province that included Judah.

k. Lit. 'in payment of the bread' corr.; 'in bread' Hebr. 'each day' Vulg.; 'and subsequently wine' Hebr.

l. 'Leaders' Syr.; 'Jews' Hebr.

m. Text corr.

6 a. Ch. 6 is a continuation of ch. 4.

b. Geshem.

c. It may have been true that such hopes were entertained respecting Nehemiah, cf. the precedent of Zerubbabel, Zc 6:9-14.

d. Haggai and Zechariah had supported Zerubbabel by such means.

e. 'I was making' versions; 'make' Hebr.

f. The prophet must have summoned the governor to hear his message.

g. Shemaiah has probably advised him to claim sanctuary, a privilege first attaching to the altar, Ex 21:14; 1 K 1:50f; 2:28f; later to the whole Temple, Ps 27:5; 1 M 10:43.

h. The Hebr. adds 'and Sanballat'. So too in v. 14.

i. Through faintheartedness.

j. Beginning of October 445.

k. 'had seen' some MSS; 'were afraid' Hebr. Lit. 'it was a wonderful thing in their eyes' corr.; 'they fell' Hebr.

l. 'several of the authorities' corr.; 'the authorities' Hebr.

7 When the wall had been rebuilt and I had set the doors in place, keepers 1
were appointed for the gates (besides cantors and Levites).[a] •I entrusted the 2
administration of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and to Hananiah the commander of the citadel, for he was a trustworthy man and God-fearing above the ordinary. •I said to them, 'The gates of Jerusalem must not be opened until 3
the sun gets hot; and you are to shut and bar the doors while it is still high;[b] and detail guard pickets from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some for the lookout posts, and others for duty outside their own houses'.

The repopulation of Jerusalem[c]

The city was large and spacious but the population was small, and no new 4
families were growing up.[d] •My God therefore inspired me to assemble the 5
authorities, the officials and the people for the purpose of taking a census by families. I discovered the genealogical register of those who had returned in the first group, and there I found entered:

‖Ezr 2:1-70 **A list of the first exiles to return**

These are the people of the province who returned from captivity and exile. 6
After being deported by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, they returned to Jerusalem and to Judah, each to his own town. •They arrived with Zerubbabel, 7
Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel: •sons of Parosh, two thousand 8
one hundred and seventy-two; •sons of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy- 9
two; •sons of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two; •sons of Pahath-moab, that is 10 11
to say sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen; sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; •sons of Zattu, eight 12 13
hundred and forty-five; •sons of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; •sons of 14 15
Binnui, six hundred and forty-eight; •sons of Bebai, six hundred and twenty- 16
eight; •sons of Azgad, two thousand three hundred and twenty-two; •sons of 17 18
Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-seven; •sons of Bigvai, two thousand and 19
sixty-seven; •sons of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five; •sons of Ater, that is to 20 21
say of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; •sons of Hashum, three hundred and twenty- 22
eight; •sons of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-four; •sons of Hariph, one 23 24
hundred and twelve; •men of Gibeon, ninety-five; •men of Bethlehem and 25 26
Netophah, one hundred and eighty-eight; •men of Anathoth, one hundred and 27
twenty-eight; •men of Beth-azmaveth, forty-two; •men of Kiriath-jearim, 28 29
Chephirah and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; •men of Ramah and 30
Geba, six hundred and twenty-one; •men of Michmas, one hundred and 31
twenty-two; •men of Bethel and Ai, one hundred and twenty-three; •men of 32 33
Nebo, fifty-two; •sons of another Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty- 34
four; •sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty; •men of Jericho, three hundred 35 36
and forty-five; •men of Lod, Hadid and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one; 37
sons of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty. 38

The priests: sons of Jedaiah, that is to say the House of Jeshua, nine hundred 39
and seventy-three; •sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; •sons of 40 41
Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; •sons of Harim, one 42
thousand and seventeen.

The Levites: sons of Jeshua, that is to say of Kadmiel, Binnui, Hodiah, 43
seventy-four.

The cantors: sons of Asaph, one hundred and forty-eight. 44

The gatekeepers: sons of Shallum, sons of Ater, sons of Talmon, sons of 45
Akkub, sons of Hatita, sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-eight.

The oblates: sons of Ziha, sons of Hasupha, sons of Tabbaoth, •sons of 46 47
Keros, sons of Sia, sons of Padon, •sons of Lebana, sons of Hagaba, sons of 48
Shalmai, •sons of Hanan, sons of Giddel, sons of Gahar, •sons of Reaiah, 49 50

51 sons of Rezin, sons of Nekoda, •sons of Gazzam, sons of Uzza, sons of Paseah,
52 53 sons of Besai, sons of the Meunites, sons of the Nephusites, •sons of Bakbuk,
54 sons of Hakupha, sons of Harhur, •sons of Bazlith, sons of Mehida, sons of
55 56 Harsha, •sons of Barkos, sons of Sisera, sons of Temah, •sons of Neziah, sons of Hatipha.

57 The sons of Solomon's slaves: sons of Sotai, sons of Sophereth, sons of
58 59 Perida, •sons of Jaala, sons of Darkon, sons of Giddel, •sons of Shephatiah,
60 sons of Hattil, sons of Pochereth-haz-zebaim, sons of Amon. •The total of the oblates and the sons of Solomon's slaves: three hundred and ninety-two.

61 The following, who came from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon and Immer, could not prove that their families and ancestry were of Israelite origin:
62 sons of Delaiah, sons of Tobiah, sons of Nekoda: six hundred and forty-two.
63 And among the priests: sons of Hobaiah, sons of Hakkoz, sons of Barzillai—who had married one of the daughters of Barzillai, the Gileadite, whose name he
64 adopted. •These people searched in their ancestral registers but could not be
65 located in them, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean, •and His Excellency forbade them to eat the sacred foods until a priest could be found for the Urim and Thummim.

66 The whole assembly numbered forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty
67 people, •not counting their slaves and maidservants to the number of seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven. They also had two hundred and
68 forty-five male and female singers. •They had (seven hundred and thirty-six horses, two hundred and forty-five mules) four hundred and thirty-five camels and six thousand seven hundred and twenty donkeys.

69 A certain number of heads of families gave offerings for the building. His Excellency contributed one thousand gold drachmas, fifty bowls, thirty priestly
70 robes and five hundred (silver minas)[e] to the fund. •And heads of families gave twenty thousand gold drachmas and two thousand two hundred silver
71 minas to the building fund. •The gifts made by the rest of the people amounted to twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly robes.

72a The priests, Levites and part of the people settled in Jerusalem; the gatekeepers, cantors, oblates and all the other Israelites, in their own towns.

Judaism is born. Ezra reads the Law. The feast of Tabernacles[f]

72b 1 When the seventh month came,[g] **8** all the people gathered as one man on Ezr 3:1
the square before the Water Gate.[a] They asked Ezra the scribe to bring the Book
2 of the Law of Moses which Yahweh had prescribed for Israel.[b] •Accordingly Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, consisting of men, women, and children old enough to understand. This was the first day of the seventh
3 month.[c] •On the square before the Water Gate, in the presence of the men and women, and children old enough to understand, he read from the book from early morning till noon; all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

4 Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden dais erected for the purpose; beside him stood, on his right, Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah;

7 a. The parenthesis makes the guards at the city gates look very like the gatekeepers of the Temple who are usually listed with the Levites and cantors, cf. vv. 43-45.

b. 'I said' *qere*, versions; 'he said' Hebr. 'it is still high', cf. Arab.; 'they are still standing' Hebr.

c. The repopulation of Jerusalem by Nehemiah, 7:4-72a; 11:1-2,20,25a, may be compared with the Greek *sunoikismos*, i.e. either the unification of several previously scattered groups, or the centralisation in one city of the civil and religious administration of a whole region.

d. Lit. 'and the houses were not rebuilt', 'house' here meaning 'family'.

e. 'thirty robes' Greek; 'five hundred and thirty robes' Hebr. 'silver minas' added by conj.

f. Ne 7:72b and ch. 8 follow on Ezr 8:36. Ezra had come from Babylon to promulgate the Law, Ezr 7:25-26.

g. The Hebr. adds 'when the Israelites were in their towns', imported from Ezr 3:1.

8 a. S.E. of the Temple, not on sacred ground.

b. The Pentateuch in the state in which it existed then.

c. In pre-exilic times the feast of the seventh month (September-October) began the new year, Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lv 23:24f; Nb 29:1.

on his left, Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam.[d] •In full view of all the people—since he stood higher than all 5
the people—Ezra opened the book; and when he opened it all the people stood
up. •Then Ezra blessed Yahweh, the great God, and all the people raised their 6
hands and answered, 'Amen! Amen!'; then they bowed down and, face to the
Ezr10:23 ground, prostrated themselves before Yahweh. •(Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, 7
Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabab, Hanan,
Pelaiah, who were Levites, explained the Law to the people while the people
Ezr7:6+ remained standing.)[e] •And Ezra read[f] from the Law of God, translating and 8
giving the sense, so that the people understood what was read.

Then (Nehemiah—His Excellency[g]—and) Ezra, priest and scribe (and the 9
Levites who were instructing the people) said to all the people, 'This day is
sacred to Yahweh your God. Do not be mournful, do not weep.' For the people
were all in tears as they listened to the words of the Law.

Est 9:19 He then said, 'Go, eat the fat, drink the sweet wine, and send a portion to 10
the man who has nothing prepared ready. For this day is sacred to our Lord.
Do not be sad: the joy of Yahweh is your stronghold.' •And the Levites calmed 11
all the people, saying, 'Be at ease; this is a sacred day. Do not be sad.' •And 12
all the people went off to eat and drink and give shares away and begin to enjoy
themselves since they had understood the meaning of what had been
proclaimed to them.

On the second day the heads of families of the whole people, and the priests 13
and Levites, gathered round Ezra the scribe to study the words of the Law. •And 14
written in the Law that Yahweh had prescribed through Moses they found this,
Ex23:14+; Lv23:33-36; 39-43 'The sons of Israel are to live in shelters during the feast of the seventh month'.[h]
As soon as they heard this, they issued a proclamation[i] in all their towns and in 15
Ps118:27 Jerusalem: 'Go into the hills and bring branches of olive, pine, myrtle, palm
and other leafy trees to make shelters, as it says in the book'. •The people went; 16
they brought back branches and made themselves shelters, each man on his own
roof, in their courtyards, in the precincts of the Temple of God, on the square
of the Water Gate and the square of the Gate of Ephraim. •The whole assembly, 17
all who had returned from captivity, put up shelters and lived in them; the sons
of Israel had never done such a thing from the days of Joshua son of Nun till
the present.[j] And there was great merrymaking.

Each day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the 18
Law of God. They celebrated the feast for seven days; on the eighth day, as
prescribed, there was a solemn assembly.

Dn 9:1 **The ceremony of atonement**[a]

Ezr 9:1-2+; 10:11 9 On the twenty-fourth day of this month the Israelites, in sackcloth and with 1
dust on their heads, assembled for a fast.[b] •Those of Israelite stock separated 2
themselves from all those of foreign origin; they stood confessing their sins and
the transgressions of their ancestors. •(Standing, each man in his right position, 3
they read from the Book of the Law of Yahweh their God for one quarter of
the day; for another quarter they confessed their sins and prostrated themselves
before Yahweh their God.)[c] •(On the Levites' platform stood Jeshua, Binnui,[d] 4
Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Chenani, calling loudly to
Yahweh their God; •and the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, 5
Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah said, 'Arise and bless Yahweh
our God'.)[e]

Ps 78+ Blessed be you, Yahweh our God,[f]
from everlasting to everlasting.
Dn2:20;3:52 And blessed be your name of glory
that surpasses all blessing and praise.

Dt 6:4 Yahweh, you are the only one. 6

You made the heavens, the heaven of heavens, with all their array,
the earth and all it bears,
the seas and all they hold.
To all of these you give life
and the array of the heavens bows down before you.

7 Yahweh, you are the God
who chose Abram, Gn 12:1
brought him out from Ur in Chaldaea,
and gave him the name of Abraham. Gn 17:5
8 Finding him faithful of heart before you,
you made a covenant with him, Gn15:18f
to give him the land of the Canaanite,
of the Hittite and Amorite,
of the Perizzite, Jebusite, Girgashite,
to him and his posterity.
And you kept your promise
because you are just.

9 You saw the distress of our fathers in Egypt, Ex2:23-24; 13:21
you heard their cry by the Sea of Reeds.
10 You worked portents and miracles against Pharaoh, Ex 7-12
against his servants and all the people of his land;
for you knew how they treated them with arrogance.
You won a reputation which you keep to this day.
11 You divided the sea in front of them: Ex 14
they passed through the deep sea dry-shod.
Into the depths you hurled their pursuers Ex 15:5,10
like a stone into rushing waters.
12 With a pillar of cloud you led them by day, Ex13:21f
with a pillar of fire by night:
to light the way ahead of them
by which they should go.
13 You came down on Mount Sinai Ex 19
and spoke with them from heaven;
you gave them Dt 4:5-8
ordinances that are just,
laws that are sure,
good statutes and commandments;
14 you taught them to know
your holy sabbath, Ex20:8+
laid down for them commandments (statutes) and Law
through Moses your servant.

d. These assessors are prominent laymen.

e. 'who were Levites' 1 Esd, Vulg.; 'and the Levites' Hebr. The verse has been added by the Chronicler who credits the Levites with the ceremonial importance they enjoyed at a later date.

f. 'Ezra read' Greek, cf. v. 3; 'they read' Hebr.

g. 1 Esd omits 'Nehemiah'; Greek omits 'His Excellency'. Both are editorial additions.

h. Lv 23:33-36,39-43 also puts the feast of Tabernacles in the 7th month; the feast lasts 8 days. But in Lv 23:40 the branches are used in the procession, whereas in Ne 8:15 they are for building shelters. According to Lv 23:27,34,39; Nb 29:12-38, the feast begins on the 15th of the 7th month. Our narrative says nothing of the Day of Atonement, Lv 16, which must have been celebrated (being on the 10th of the 7th month Lv 23:27) between the reading of the Law by Ezra and the feast of Tabernacles.

i. Text corr.; 'and they will announce and proclaim' Hebr.

j. Ho 12:10 seems to attest this feast in the 8th century. According to 2 Ch 7:8; 8:13 it was celebrated from the time of Solomon.

9 a. For the sin of mixed marriage. The narrative follows on Ezr 10:44. But only vv. 1-2 are part of the *Memoirs of Ezra*.

b. The penitential liturgy, Jl 1-2, included a sung lament, cf. Ps 74; 79; 83, and this chapter vv. 5b-37.

c. This gloss makes the gathering resemble the liturgical penitential gatherings of the Chronicler's day.

d. 'Binnui' corr.

e. 'our' Greek; 'your' Hebr. The Chronicler represents the Levites as addressing a liturgical invitation to the people and reciting the psalm that follows (probably taken from the liturgy of his own time). The psalm recalls Si 36:1-17.

f. This line restored by conj.

Ex16:1+ Ex17:1+ For their hunger you gave them bread from heaven, 15
for their thirst you brought them water spurting from the rock.
You bade them go in
and take possession of the land
that you had sworn
to give to them.

But our fathers grew proud, 16
were obstinate, and flouted your commands.
They refused to obey, forgetful of the wonders 17
that you had worked for them;
Nb14:1-4 they became obstinate, they even thought
of going back to Egypt[g] and their slavery.
Ex34:6+ Dn 9:9 But you are a God of forgiveness,
gracious and loving,
slow to anger, abounding in goodness,
you did not forsake them.

When they cast themselves a calf 18
out of molten metal
Ex 32:4 and said, 'This is your God
who brought you up from Egypt'
(and were guilty of grave blasphemies),
Dn 9:19 you, so greatly loving, 19
still did not forsake them in the wilderness:
the pillar of cloud did not leave them
that led them on their path by day,
nor the pillar of fire by night,
to light the way ahead of them
by which they should go.
Dt 2:7 You gave them your good spirit 20
to make them wise,
you did not withhold your manna from their mouths,
you gave them water for their thirst.
Forty years you cared for them in the wilderness: 21
they went short of nothing,
Dt 8:4 their clothes did not wear out,
their feet were not swollen.

Nb 21:21-35 Dt 1:4; 2:26–3:11 You gave to them kingdoms and peoples, 22
allotted them these as frontier regions;
they occupied the land of Sihon king of Heshbon,
and of Og king of Bashan.
Dt 1:10 You multiplied their sons 23
as the stars of heaven
and led them to the land that you had told their fathers
to enter and possess.
The sons invaded and conquered the land, 24
and before them you humbled
the land's inhabitants, the Canaanites,
whom you gave into their hands;
with their kings and the population of that country,
to be treated just as they pleased;
Dt 3:5; 6:10-11; 11:11 they captured fortified towns 25
and a fertile countryside,
took possession of houses stocked with all kinds of goods,
of cisterns ready-hewn, of vineyards and olive groves,
of fruit trees in profusion;

they ate, ate their fill, Dt 32:15
regaling themselves on the good things you lavished on them.

26 But, disobedient as they were and rebellious towards you,
they thrust the Law behind their backs,
they killed the prophets who admonished them
to bring them back to you
(and were guilty of grave blasphemies). Ws 2:10-20

27 So you delivered them into the hands of their oppressors
who oppressed them.
In the days of their oppression they cried to you, Dn 9:19
and from heaven you heard them
and, greatly loving, you granted them saviours
who freed them from the hands of their oppressors.

28 But, once at peace, again they did wrong before you
and you gave them over to the hands of their enemies who treated them tyrannically.
And once more they cried to you
and from heaven you heard them:
how often are you, so loving, to deliver them?

29 You admonished them to bring them back to your Law; Lv 18:5 Dt 11:21; 30:16; 32:47
but they grew proud, they did not obey your commandments,
they sinned against your ordinances Pr 3:3
in which a man finds life if he observes them;
they shrugged their shoulders,
they were obstinate, they would not obey.

30 You were patient with them
for many years;
you admonished them by your spirit
through your prophets,
but they would not listen.
You delivered them then into the hands of the natives of the countries.

31 But, greatly loving,
you did not make an end of them,
you did not forsake them,
for you are a gracious and a loving God.

32 Now therefore, our God, Lm 5
great and mighty God who must be feared, Sl 36:1.9
maintaining your covenant and your kindness,
count as no small thing this misery
that has happened to us, our kings, our leaders,
our priests, our prophets,[h] and all your people
from the time of the kings of Assyria
to the present day.

33 You have been just Dn 3:27; 9:14
in all that has happened to us,
for you have shown your faithfulness,
we our wickedness:

34 our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers Dn 9:6
have not kept your Law,
they have been unmindful of your commandments and the warnings
that you gave them.

35 While they were in their kingdom
with the good things you lavished on them,

9 g. 'to Egypt' Greek, some Hebr. MSS; 'in their rebellion' Hebr. h. The Hebr. adds 'our fathers'.

in the wide and fertile land
that you had set before them,
they did not renounce their evil deeds.
Here are we now, enslaved; 36
here in the land you gave our fathers
to enjoy its fruits and its good things,
we are slaves.
Its rich fruits swell the profit of the kings 37
whom for our sins you have set over us,
who dispose as they please of our bodies and our cattle.
Such the distress we endure!

A record of the promises made by the community[a]

10 ...As a result of all this we make a firm agreement, in writing. Our leaders, our Levites, and our priests have put their names to the document under seal...[b] 1 38

12:12-26 On the sealed document were the names of:[c] Nehemiah son of Hacaliah, 2 1
and Zedekiah, •Seraiah,[d] Azariah, Jeremiah, •Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, 3,4 2,3
Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, •Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, •Daniel, Ginnethon, 5-7 4-6
Baruch, •Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, •Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these are 8,9 7,8
the priests.

Then the Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, 10 9
Ezr10:23 Kadmiel, •and their kinsmen Shebaniah, Hodaviah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, 11 10
Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, •Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, •Hodiah, Bani, Chenani. 12-14 11-13

The leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, •Bunni, 15,16 14,15
Azgad, Bebai, •Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, •Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, •Hodiah, 17-19 16-18
Hashum, Bezai, •Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, •Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, 20,21 19,20
Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, •Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, •Hoshea, Hananiah, 22-24 21-23
Hasshub, •Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, •Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, •Ahiah, 25-27 24-26
Hanan, Anan, •Malluch, Harim, Baanah. 28 27

...but also the rest of the people, priests and Levites—gatekeepers, cantors, 29 28
oblates—in short, all who have broken with the natives of the countries to adhere to the Law of God; as also their wives, sons and daughters, all those who are old enough to understand, •join with their kinsmen and leaders and 30 29
undertake, under curse and oath, to walk according to the Law of God given through Moses, the servant of God, and to observe and practise all the commandments of Yahweh our Lord, his customs and his laws.

In particular: we will not give our daughters to the natives of the land 31 30
13:23-27 nor take their daughters for our sons.[e]

13:15-22 Ex20:8+ If the natives of the land bring goods or any foodstuff whatever to sell 32 31
on the sabbath day, we will buy nothing from them on sabbath or holy day.

5:1-13+ Lv25:1+ We will forego the fruits of the soil[f] in the seventh year, and all debts.

We recognise the following obligations: 33 32

Ex30:11f 2Ch24:6,9 to give one third of a shekel yearly for the liturgical requirements of the Temple of our God: •for the loaves set out, for the perpetual oblation, for the 34 33
Lv24:5-9 Nb28:3-8 perpetual holocaust, for the sacrifices on sabbaths, on New Moon feasts and on solemnities, for sacred foods, for sacrifices for sin to atone for Israel; in short, for all the services of the Temple of our God;[g]

13:31 Gn22:1+ Dt26:1+ Ex13:11+ [h] and further, to bring yearly to the Temple of our God the first-fruits of our 36 35
soil and the first-fruits of every fruit of every tree, •also the first-born of our 37 36
sons and of our cattle, as is written in the Law—those first-born of our herds and flocks taken to the Temple of our God being intended for the priests officiating in the Temple of our God. •Furthermore, we will bring to the priests, 38 37
13:10-14 to the chambers of the Temple of our God, the best of our meal,[i] the fruit of
Nb18:21,24f Dt14:22+ every tree, new wine and oil; and to the Levites the tithe on our soil—the Levites themselves will collect the tithes from all our agricultural towns; •a priest, a son 39 38

of Aaron, is to accompany the Levites when they collect the tithes, and the Levites will pay a tenth part of the tithes into the Temple of our God, into the Nb 18:26
40ab 39ab treasury offices; •since these rooms are where the Israelites and the Levites bring the contributions of corn, wine and oil, and where the supplies are kept for the sanctuary, the officiating priests, the gatekeepers and cantors.
35 34 Furthermore, as regards deliveries of wood for burning on the altar of our 13:31
God as is written in the Law, we have arranged, by drawing lots among the priests, Levites and people, that these deliveries are to be made at the Temple of our God by each family in turn at stated times every year.
40c 39c We will no longer neglect the Temple of our God.

The repopulation policy of Nehemiah.[a] Various lists 7:4+

1 11 ...Then the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem. The rest of the people drew lots: one man in ten was to come and live in Jerusalem, the
2 holy city,[b] while the remaining nine were to stay in their towns. •And the people blessed all those who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.[c]
3 These are the provincial leaders who settled in Jerusalem—and those who settled in the towns of Judah. So Israel, the priests, the Levites, the oblates ||1 Ch 9:2
and the sons of Solomon's slaves, made their homes in their appropriate towns, each man on his own property.[d]

The Jewish population in Jerusalem[e]

4 In Jerusalem there lived some of the sons of Judah and some of the sons ||1 Ch 9: 4-17
of Benjamin.

Of the sons of Judah: Athaiah son of Uzziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mehalalel, of the descendants of Perez;
5 Maaseiah son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiah, son of Adaiah, son
6 of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, descendant of Shelah. •The total number of the descendants of Perez living in Jerusalem was four hundred and sixty-eight adult men.
7 These are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Jeshaiah,
8 and his kinsmen, adult men: nine hundred and twenty-eight.
9 Joel son of Zichri was in charge of them, and Judah son of Hassenuah was second in command of the city.
10 11 Of the priests: Jedaiah son of Joiakim, son[f] of •Seraiah, son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, prefect of
12 the Temple of God,[g] •and his kinsmen who were responsible for the Temple liturgy: eight hundred and twenty-two; Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pelaliah,
13 son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, •and his kinsmen, heads of families: two hundred and forty-two; and Amashai son of

10 a. There is clearly a relationship between 10:31f and ch. 13. During his second mission, described in ch. 13, Nehemiah must have corrected a certain number of religious abuses. To prevent their recurrence he has appealed to the community as a whole; we have here the official report of the proceedings. The Chronicler has linked this community gesture with the reading of the Law, ch. 8-9.

b. The report is continued in v. 29.

c. The list of signatories, vv. 2-28, interrupts the official report. Some names are corrected.

d. Family name of the high priest, 2 K 25:18f; 1 Ch 5:39f; Ezr 7:1.

e. Less severe than Ezr 10:44.

f. 'fruits of the soil' corr. following Ex 23:10.

g. V. 35 is to be read after v. 40ab.

h. Vv. 36-40 have been adjusted, in v. 37 and especially 38b-39 which harmonise the practice of the levitical tithe with the more recent text of Nb 18:21,24f. Adjustments of this kind are usual in texts concerned with legal usage.

i. The Hebr. adds 'and our contributions'.

11 a. The preparations for the repopulation of Jerusalem have been described in 7:4-72 with the old list of immigrants taken as the basis of the *sunoikismos* (cf. 7:4+); here the operation itself is briefly described. In Jerusalem there are to remain: the most prominent men, cf. 5:17 (among priests, Levites, laity); one man in ten, chosen by lot, volunteers.

b. The name is given to Jerusalem in Is 48:2; 52:1. Cf. Ne 11:18; Dn 9:24; Tb 13:9; Mt 4:5; 27:53; Rv 11:2. But the notion itself is older, cf. 2 S 5:9+.

c. Continued in vv. 20, 25a; but the Chronicler interrupts the narrative with documents from the archives.

d. V. 3 is a heading for vv. 4-36.

e. This list, taken from the Temple archives, goes back to the time of Nehemiah. A different version of it is given in 1 Ch 9:2f. Some names have been corrected from the versions and 1 Ch.

f. 'Joiakim, son' corr.; 'Joiarib Jachin' Hebr. Joiakim is the ancestor of the Maccabees, 1 M 2:1.

g. A title of the high priest, 2 Ch 31:10,13.

Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer, •and his kinsmen, 14
adult men: one hundred and twenty-eight.

Zabdiel son of Haggadol was in charge of them.

Of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, 15
son of Bunni; •Shabbethai and Jozabad, the levitical leaders responsible for 16
12:25 2Ch20:14 the outside work of the Temple of God; •Mattaniah son of Micah, son of Zabdi, 17
son of Asaph,[h] who directed the hymns[i] and, at prayer, intoned the thanksgiving;
Bakbukiah, the second in rank among his kinsmen; Obadiah son of Shammua,
son of Galal, son of Jeduthun. •The total number of Levites in the holy city: 18
two hundred and eighty-four.

The gatekeepers: Akkub, Talmon and their kinsmen, who kept watch at the 19
gates: one hundred and seventy-two.[j]

Supplementary notes[k]

The oblates lived at Ophel; Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of the oblates. 21
2Ch20:14 —The head of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani, son of Hashabiah, 22
son of Mattaniah, son of Micah; he belonged to the sons of Asaph who were
responsible for the chanted parts of the liturgy in the Temple of God; •there 23
was a royal decree relating to the cantors, embodying regulations for their
attendance day by day.—•Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, belonging to the sons 24
of Zerah son of Judah, was the king's commissioner for all such matters as
concerned the people.

The rest of the Israelites, priests and Levites made their homes throughout 20
the towns of Judah, each man in his own inheritance, •and in the hamlets situated 25
in rural districts of their own.

The Jewish population outside Jerusalem[l]

Some of the sons of Judah made their homes in Kiriath-arba and its outlying
villages, in Dibon and its outlying villages, in Jekabzeel and its outlying hamlets,
in Jeshua, Moladah, Beth-pelet, •Hazar-shual, in Beersheba and its villages, 26 27
in Ziklag, in Meconah and its villages, •in Enrimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, •Zanoah, 28.29 30
Adullam and their hamlets, Lachish and its countryside, Azekah and its villages:
thus, they settled from Beersheba as far as the Valley of Hinnom.

Some of the sons of Benjamin made their homes in Geba,[m] Michmash, Aija, 31
in Bethel and its villages, •Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, •Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, 32 33
1Ch4:14 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, •Lod and Ono, and the Valley of the Craftsmen. 34 35

Some groups of Levites settled in Judah as well as in Benjamin.[n] 36

Priests and Levites who returned under Zerubbabel and Jeshua[a]

12 These are the priests and the Levites who came back with Zerubbabel son 1
of Shealtiel, and Jeshua:

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, •Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, •Shecaniah, Harim, 2 3
Meremoth, •Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah, •Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, •Shemaiah; 4,5 6
also: Joiarib, Jedaiah, •Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. 7a

And the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, Mattaniah— 8
this last, with his kinsmen, directed the hymns of thanksgiving •while Bakbukiah, 9
Unno and their kinsmen in their respective orders formed an alternate choir.

These were the heads of the priests and of their kinsmen in the days of Jeshua. 7b

Genealogical list of high priests[b]

Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim father of Eliashib, Eliashib father 10
of Joiada, •Joiada father of Johanan, and Johanan father of Jaddua. 11

10:3-14; 12:1+ **Priests and Levites in the time of the High Priest Joiakim[c]**

In the days of Joiakim the heads of the priestly families were: family of 12
Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; •of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, 13

14 Jehohanan; •of Malluchi, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; •of Harim, Adna;
16 17 of Meremoth, Helkai; •of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; •of
18 Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, ...; of Moadiah, Piltai; •of Bilgah, Shammua;
19 20 of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; •also: of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; •of
21 Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; •of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

22 In the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan and Jaddua, the heads of the priestly families[d] had been recorded in the Book of the Chronicles[e] up to the reign of Darius the Persian.[f]

23 The sons of Levi.

The heads of families were recorded in the Book of the Chronicles, but only up to the time of Johanan, grandson of Eliashib.

24 The heads of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel; Ezr 2:40
and their kinsmen forming an alternate choir for the hymns of praise and thanksgiving, in accordance with the ordinances of David the man of God, in
25 corresponding groups, •these were: Mattaniah, Bakbukiah and Obadiah. The 11:17
gatekeepers, Meshullam, Talmon and Akkub stood guard at the storehouses near the gates.[g]

26 These lived in the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra, priest and scribe.[h]

The dedication of the wall of Jerusalem[i]

27 At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem the Levites were sent for, wherever they lived, to come to Jerusalem: the dedication was to be celebrated joyfully
28 with songs of thanksgiving, with cymbal, lute and lyre. •Accordingly the cantors, sons of Levi,[j] assembled from the countryside round Jerusalem, from the villages
29 of the Netophathites, •from Beth-gilgal, from the districts of Geba and Azmaveth; since the cantors had built themselves villages all round Jerusalem.
30 And the priests and Levites purified themselves, then purified the people, the gates and the wall.[k]

31 I then made the leaders of Judah come on to the top of the wall, and organized two great choirs. The first made its way[l] along the top of the wall,
32 right-handed, towards the Dung Gate; •bringing up the rear were Hoshaiah
33 34 and half the leaders of Judah, •and also Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, •Judah,
35 Mijamin,[m] Shemaiah and Jeremiah, •selected from the priests and carrying

h. The cantors have already become merged with the Levites, v. 22, but so far the gatekeepers have not. The guild of Asaph was probably the only one before the Exile, cf. Ezr 2:41; others were formed later (Heman, Merari).

i. 'the hymns' certain versions; 'the beginning' Hebr.

j. V. 20 is transposed to follow v. 24.

k. The first note about the 'oblates' (*nethinim*) may be of the same date as the preceding list. The second, concerning Uzzi, and the third, concerning Pethahiah, are more recent.

l. This list, attesting Jewish expansion as far as the Negeb, is probably of a later period, though still perhaps pre-exilic.

m. 'Some of the sons' corr.; 'The sons' Hebr. 'in Geba' corr.; 'from Geba onward' Hebr.

n. 'in Judah as well as in Benjamin' Rec. Luc.; 'groups in Judah (were joined) to Benjamin' Hebr.

12 a. These names, absent from Ezr 2:36-39, are those of priestly families of the line of Joiakim, successor to Joshua, cf. vv. 12-21. By this method of presentation, appealing to antiquity, the rights of the families are established. Some of the names are corrected.

b. From 520 to 405 (Darius II).

c. Therefore after 500. The names listed are found in the later, ch. 10, with three additional families. The list is followed by a note claiming a reliable source.

d. The Hebr. inserts at the beginning 'the Levites'. 'the heads of the priestly families' one MS; 'the heads of families and the priests' Hebr.

e. Official record of the Temple. 'the Book of the Chronicles up to' added by conj.

f. Darius II, died 405.

g. The cantors and gatekeepers are grouped with the Levites, cf. 11:17+.

h. The Chronicler represents these three as contemporaries.

i. Historically, the ceremony took place after 6:16, but the Chronicler makes it match Ezr 6:13-18 (dedication of the Temple). Thus two dedications conclude two epochs, one dominated by the figure of Zerubbabel, the other—as the Chronicler sees it—by Ezra and Nehemiah. One may reconstruct the ceremony thus: after the customary purifications two processions make their way along the top of the wall from the Gate of the Valley, one going S. the other N. They meet at the Temple for the closing ceremony of the feast. Each half of the procession is headed by a choir of priests who are followed by distinguished laymen. The Chronicler has interrupted the narrative with a list of priests of the first (vv. 33-36) and of the second (vv. 40-42) choir. He has also made Ezra figure in the procession.

j. 'sons of Levi' Rec. Luc.; 'the sons of the cantors' Hebr.

k. By sprinkling either with sacrificial blood or with water.

l. 'The first made its way' corr. cf. v. 38; 'And processions' Hebr.

m. 'Mijamin' Rec. Luc.; 'Benjamin' Hebr.

trumpets; then Zechariah son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah,
son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph, •with his kinsmen, Shemaiah, 36
Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, Hanani, carrying the musical
instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe walked at their head.
At the Fountain Gate they went straight on up, near the steps of the Citadel 37
of David, along the top of the wall and along the ascent of the Palace[n] of David
as far as the Water Gate, on the east.

The second choir made its way left-handed; I followed it, with half the leaders 38
of the people, along the top of the wall, above the Tower of the Furnaces and
as far as the wall of the Square,[o] •then over the Gate of Ephraim,[p] the Fish 39
Gate, the Tower of Hananel,[q] as far as the Sheep Gate; they came to a halt at
the Watch Gate.[r]

The two choirs then took their places in the Temple of God. I had half of 40
the officials with me, •as well as the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, 41
Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, Hananiah, carrying trumpets, •also Maaseiah, 42
Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam and Ezer. The cantors
sang under the direction of Jezrahiah. •There were great sacrifices offered that 43
day and the people rejoiced, God having given them good cause for rejoicing;
the women and children rejoiced too, and the joy of Jerusalem could be heard
from far away.

A golden age[s]

13:10f 2Ch30:6 For the chambers intended for the stores, contributions, first-fruits and tithes, 44
supervisors were then appointed whose business it would be to collect in them
those portions from the town lands[t] awarded by the Law to the priests and
Levites. For Judah rejoiced in the officiating priests and Levites. •It was they 45
who performed the liturgy of their God and the duties of purification—and the
1Ch23-36 2Ch8:14 cantors and gatekeepers too—in accordance with the ordinances of David and
2Ch29:30; 35:15 his son Solomon. •For from ancient times, from the days of David and Asaph, 46
there had been guilds of cantors and canticles of praise and thanksgiving to God.
13:10f And so, in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah, the whole of 47
Israel used to give the cantors and gatekeepers their due portion for each day.
10:39 Nb18:26 They set aside for the Levites their sacred dues, and the Levites would set theirs
aside for the sons of Aaron.

Dt23:4-6 13 At that time they were reading from the Book of Moses to the people, 1
when they found this written in it, 'The Ammonite and the Moabite shall
never be admitted to the assembly of *God*, •since they did not come to meet 2
Nb 22:2 *the sons of Israel* with bread and water. They hired Balaam *against them* to curse
them,[a] but *our God* turned the curse into a blessing.' •As soon as the people 3
13:4-9, 23-27,28 had heard the Law they excluded all of foreign descent from Israel.[b]

The second mission of Nehemiah

Now before this,[c] Eliashib the priest[d] had been appointed supervisor of the 4
chambers[e] of the Temple of our God. A connection of Tobiah's, •he had 5
12:44 furnished a spacious chamber for him where the oblations, incense, utensils,
tithes of corn, wine and oil had previously been kept, that is to say the portions[f]
of the Levites, cantors and gatekeepers, and what was set aside for the priests.
While all this was going on I was away from Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second 6
year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon[g] I had gone to see the king. But after some
time I asked the king for permission to leave, •and returned to Jerusalem. It was 7
then that I heard the wicked thing that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, furnishing
Mt21:12-13p Jn2:13-17 a chamber for him inside the court of the Temple of God. •This made me very 8
angry. I threw all Tobiah's household furniture out of the chamber, •gave 9
orders for the chambers to be purified, and had the utensils of the Temple of
God, the oblations and the incense, all put back.

12:44,47 2Ch31:6 I also discovered that the portions of the Levites were not being delivered 10

and that they, the Levites and the cantors responsible for the liturgy, had all
11 gone off home to their fields. •I reprimanded the officials. 'Why is the Temple
of God deserted?' I asked. And I collected them[h] together again and sent them
12 back to their duties. •Then the whole of Judah brought the tithe of corn, wine 10:38f
13 and oil to the storehouses. •As supervisors of the storehouses I appointed[i]
Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, Pedaiah one of the Levites and, as their
assistants, Hanan son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah, since they were considered
14 reliable; their duty was to make the distributions to their kinsmen. •Remember
me for this, my God; do not blot out the pious deed I have done for the Temple
of my God and for its liturgy.

15 In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the sabbath, and 10:32 Ex20:8+
others taking sheaves of corn and loading them on donkeys with wine, grapes,
figs and every kind of load which they meant to bring into Jerusalem on the
16 sabbath day. I warned them not to sell the foodstuffs.[j] •In Jerusalem itself,
Tyrians who lived in the city were bringing in fish and every sort of merchandise
17 to sell them on the sabbath day. •I reprimanded the authorities of Judah,
18 'What a wicked way to behave, profaning the sabbath day! •Did not your ancestors
do just this, with the result that our God brought all this misery on us and on
this city? Do you want to bring fresh wrath on Israel, by profaning the
19 sabbath?' •So just before the sabbath[k] as the shadows were falling on the gates
of Jerusalem, I gave orders for the doors to be shut, and said, 'Do not open
them again until the sabbath is over'. I stationed a few of my servants at the
20 gates to see that no load was brought in on the sabbath day. •Once or twice
merchants and traders in goods of all kinds spent the night outside Jerusalem,
21 but I gave them this warning, 'Why are you spending the night by the wall?
Do it again, and I will punish you.' After that, they did not come on the
22 sabbath any more. •I ordered the Levites to purify themselves and to come and
supervise the gates, so that the sabbath day might be kept holy. For this too
remember me, my God, and as your mercy is great, so pity me.

23 At that time I again saw Jews who had married women from Ashdod, 10:31; 13:1-3+
24 Ammon and Moab. •As regards their children, half of them spoke the language Dt 23:3
of Ashdod[l] or the language of one of the other peoples, but could not speak
25 the language of Judah. •I reprimanded them and called down curses on them;
I struck several of them and tore out their hair and made them swear by God,
'You shall not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters either for
26 your sons or for yourselves. •Is this not how Solomon king of Israel sinned? 1K 11:1-13
Among all the nations there was never a king like him; he was loved by his 2K 12:25+
God; God made him king of all Israel; and yet for him, foreign women were
27 causes of sin. •Must we then hear it said that you too are committing this grave
crime: playing traitor to our God by marrying foreign women?'

n. Text corr.
o. Text corr.
p. The Hebr. adds 'and on the Old Gate'.
q. The Hebr. adds 'and the Tower of Meah'.
r. 'the Watch' corr.; 'the Prison' Hebr.
s. This idealistic picture of the community under the governorships of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah makes the abuses described at the end of the *Memoirs of Nehemiah* appear all the more disgraceful by contrast, 13:4f. The Chronicler makes this the conclusion of the book, treating 13:4f as an appendix.
t. 'from the (town) lands'. Rec. Luc.; 'according to the (town) lands' Hebr.
13 a. 'They... them... them' versions; 'He (Balak?)... him (Israel, Dt 23:5)... him' Hebr.
b. This severity, peculiar to Ezra, goes beyond the requirements of the Law, cf. Dt 23:7-9.
c. By this phrase the Chronicler leads on to the continuation of the *Memoirs of Nehemiah*, cf. 12:44+. Nehemiah lists the measures he has taken over disorders which have arisen in the community: action against an Ammonite who has taken up residence in the Temple (4-9); regular payment of levitical dues (10-14); proper observance of the sabbath (15-22); action against mixed marriages (23-29); religious regulations (30-31). Nehemiah on his second mission pursues the policy of Ezra. Cf. 10:1+.
d. Not the high priest of that name, 3:1f 20f; 12:10,22; 13:28.
e. 'over the chambers' corr., cf. 12:44; 'over the chamber' Hebr.
f. 'the portions' Vulg.; 'what was commanded' Hebr.
g. The first mission of Nehemiah had therefore lasted from 445 to 433.
h. The Levites.
i. 'I appointed' versions; 'I made treasurers' Hebr.
j. 'I warned them' corr.: 'I reproached them on the day they sold the food' Hebr.
k. The sabbath began on Friday at sunset.
l. Probably an Aramaic dialect. Aramaic was the accepted language, 8:8, but Nehemiah did not wish Hebr. to be forgotten.

13:1-3 2:10+ One of the sons of Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, was son-in-law 28
to Sanballat the Horonite, and I expelled him from my presence. •Remember 29
these, O my God, for the degradation they have brought on the priesthood and
on the covenant of the priests and Levites.

And so I purged them of everything foreign; I drew up regulations for the 30
priests and Levites defining each man's duty, •and regulations for the deliveries 31
10:36,35 of wood at stated times, and for the first-fruits.

Remember me, my God, for my happiness.

INTRODUCTION TO
TOBIT, JUDITH AND ESTHER

In the Vulgate, the three Books of Tobit, Judith and Esther are placed after the historical books. Some important manuscripts of the Greek version put them after the wisdom writings. Together they constitute a small literary group with several distinctive characteristics of its own.

1. Their text is difficult to determine. Behind Tobit is a semitic original which is no longer extant. For the Vulgate St Jerome used a 'Chaldaean' (Aramaic) text now lost. A few Hebrew and Aramaic fragments of the book have been recently discovered near the Dead Sea. The Greek, Syriac and Latin translations between them represent four different recensions of the text, of which the two most important are, first, that of the Vaticanus and Alexandrinus codices and, second, that of Codex Sinaiticus and the Old Latin. Our translation follows this second recension, though use is made of the other textual witnesses.

The Hebrew original of Judith is also lost. The Greek texts take three widely divergent forms. The Vulgate presents yet another, very different, text; apparently Jerome merely revised an existing Latin translation with the help of an Aramaic paraphrase.

The Book of Esther has two forms: one long, the Hebrew; one short, in Greek. Of the Greek text there are two principal types: that of the current Greek Bible and that of the widely variant recension of Lucian of Antioch. The Greek version contains the following passages not found in the Hebrew: the dream of Mordecai, 1:1a-r, and its explanation, 10:3a-k; two edicts of Ahasuerus, 3:13a-g and 8:12a-v; the prayer of Mordecai, 4:17a-i, the prayer of Esther, 4:17k-z; a second account of Esther's appeal to Ahasuerus, 5:1a-f and 5:2a-b; an appendix explaining the origin of the Greek version, 10:3*l*. Jerome placed his translation of these passages after the translated Hebrew text (Vulg. 10:4–16:24); in our own translation they have been left where the Greek text has them, but in italics and with their own system of references.

2. All three books were admitted to the Canon at a late date. Tobit and Judith were not accepted by the Hebrew Bible and are numbered by Protestants among the Apocrypha. They are 'deuterocanonical', that is to say, only recognised by the Church after a certain hesitancy in the patristic period. But they have been read and quoted from early days and appear in the official canonical lists in the West from the time of the Roman Synod of 382 and, in the East, from 682 (the 'in Trullo' Council of Constantinople). The Greek passages of Esther also are deuterocanonical, their history being the same as that of Tobit and Judith. The status of the Hebrew Esther was still being discussed by the rabbis in the 1st century A.D., but the book has subsequently become very popular with Jews.

3. The books all belong to the same type of literature. These stories treat history and geography with a good deal of freedom. According to the Book of Tobit, Tobit was a young man when the kingdom was divided at the death of Solomon (931), Tb 1:4; he was deported with the tribe of Naphtali (734), Tb 1:5 and 10; his son did not die until after the fall of Nineveh (612), Tb 14:5. The same book makes Shalmeneser the immediate successor of Sennacherib, Tb 1:15, saying nothing of the reign of Sargon. Similarly, Rhages is said to be in the hill country, only two days' journey from Ecbatana in the plain, Tb 5:6; in fact the altitude of Ecbatana (over 6000 feet) was much greater than that of Rhages which, moreover, was nearly two hundred miles away. The Book of Esther is somewhat closer to history: the city of Susa is correctly described and certain Persian customs are accurately observed; Ahasuerus (Hebrew transcription of Xerxes) is a well-known historical figure and the delineation of his character agrees with what Herodotus says of him. On the other hand, it is strange that one of the tolerant Achmenid dynasty should agree to sign the order for a Jewish pogrom, and still stranger that he should authorise a massacre of his own subjects and that those 75,000 Persians should offer no resistance. Moreover, at the time indicated by the narrative, the queen of Persia and consort of Xerxes was Amestris; history leaves no room for either Vashti or Esther. And if Mordecai was indeed deported under Nebuchadnezzar, Est 2:6, he would have been one hundred and fifty years old by the reign of Xerxes.

The Book of Judith in particular shows a bland indifference to history and geography. The scene is set in the time of 'Nebuchadnezzar who reigned over the Assyrians in Nineveh', Jdt 1:1; but Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylonia and Nineveh had been destroyed by Nabopolassar, his father. Despite this, the return from exile under Cyrus is regarded as having taken place already, Jdt 4:3; 5:19. And whereas Holofernes and Bagoas have Persian names, there are also obvious allusions to Greek customs, 3:7-8; 15:13. We may add that the itinerary of the army of Holofernes, 2:21-28, is a geographical impossibility. Even when Holofernes reaches Samaria where we are on more familiar ground, the place-names, though increasing in number, are largely unknown and have an unusual ring. Bethulia itself, the town round which the drama revolves, defies identification despite the apparent concern for details that should help us to locate it.

The only explanation of this surprising indifference is that the authors are not trying to write history. No doubt they build on actual events but we have no means of knowing what these were, since the superstructure conceals them. But it is precisely this superstructure that is the real work of the author and conveys his message. The important thing is to discover the exact purpose of each book and to extract the teaching contained in it.

The Book of Tobit is a domestic story. At Nineveh there lives a man named Tobit, exiled with his tribe of Naphtali, devout, law-abiding, charitable, and now blind. In Ecbatana lives his kinsman Raguel; this man's daughter Sarah has lost seven bridegrooms in succession, killed on the wedding night by the demon Asmodeus. Both Tobit and Sarah beg God to let them die; but God answers their prayers in his own way. He sends his angel Raphael who brings Tobit's son, Tobias, safely to Raguel, marries him to Sarah and gives him a cure for

his father's blindness. It is an edifying story, in which the emphasis falls on almsgiving and duties towards the dead; true family life is shown at its best; the ideal of marriage anticipates Christian teaching. The divine benevolence is at once revealed and hidden in the angel Raphael, the agent of God. That this providence is with us, day by day, is the lesson of the book.

Tobit is modelled on biblical narratives, especially on those of the patriarchs in Genesis; as a work of literature its place is between Job and Esther, between Zechariah and Daniel. There are points of contact with the Wisdom of Ahikar (cf. Tb 1:22; 2:10; 11:18; 14:10), an apocryphal work which, basically, goes back at least to the 5th century B.C. The Book of Tobit was written among the Jews of the Dispersion, possibly in Egypt, between the 4th and 5th centuries B.C.

The Book of Judith is the story of a victory won by the chosen people over its enemies, thanks to the intervention of a woman. The tiny Jewish nation faces the mighty army of Holofernes whose ambition is to lay the whole world at the feet of Nebuchadnezzar and to destroy all other religions but that of the deified Nebuchadnezzar. The Jews are besieged in Bethulia; the water supply has failed and they are on the point of surrender. At this stage Judith appears, a beautiful young widow, intelligent, devout, resolute; she first overcomes the cowardice of her own people and finally the Assyrian army itself. She rebukes the leading men of the city for their lack of faith in God; she then falls to prayer and, having duly adorned herself, leaves Bethulia and is led into the presence of Holofernes, on whom she exercises all her charm and wit. Once left alone with this drunken braggart, she cuts off his head. The Assyrians, panic-stricken, take to their heels and the Jews sack their camp. The people sing the praises of Judith and go to Jerusalem for a solemn thanksgiving.

The author seems deliberately to have defied history to distract the reader's attention from the historical context and focus it exclusively on the religious conflict and outcome. The narrative is neatly put together and has a close affinity with apocalyptic writings. Holofernes, the henchman of Nebuchadnezzar, is the incarnation of the powers of evil. Judith (her name means 'the Jewess') represents the cause of God, that is to say, of Jewry. This cause is apparently forlorn, but God makes use of the weak hands of a woman to procure his triumph and his chosen people go in triumph to Jerusalem. This book has clear points of contact with Daniel, Ezekiel and Joel; the action takes place on the plain of Esdraelon near the plain of Armageddon, where St John later places the great eschatological battle of Revelation, Rv 16:16. Judith's triumph is the reward of prayer and exact observance of the rules of legal purity; yet the horizon of the book is not narrowly nationalist: the safety of Jerusalem is assured at Bethulia, in that very Samaria so hated by all 'rightminded' Jews, and the religious significance of the struggle is expressed by Achior, who is an Ammonite, Jdt 5:5-21, and is later converted to the true God, Jdt 14:5-10.

The book was written in Palestine, in the Greek period, at the end of the 2nd, or beginning of the 1st century B.C.

The Book of Esther, like that of Judith, tells of the deliverance of the nation by the actions of a woman. The Jews settled in Persia are threatened with

extermination by Aman, a hostile and all-powerful vizir, and are saved by Esther, a young Jewess who has become queen, and who acts on the advice of her uncle, Mordecai. There is a complete reversal of situation: Aman is hanged, Mordecai assumes his position, the Jews massacre their enemies. To commemorate this triumph the feast of Purim is instituted and the Jews are instructed to celebrate it every year.

This story illustrates the hatred which the Jews experienced in ancient times, as a result of their unique way of life which brought them into conflict with their autocratic rulers (compare the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes). Their exaggerated nationalism was no more than a defensive weapon. The blood-thirstiness of the book shocks us, but we should remember that it pre-dates the Christian revelation. We must also remember literary conventions: the harem intrigues and the massacres serve to dramatise a thesis; the thesis is a religious one. The promotion of Mordecai and Esther and the rescue resulting from it recall the story of Daniel, and more particularly that of Joseph, first oppressed and later elevated for the saving of his people. In the Genesis story of Joseph, God makes no outward manifestation of his power, yet directs events. In the Hebrew book of Esther, similarly, though God's name is not mentioned his providence governs every factor in the drama. The actors know it, and trust implicitly in God to work out his saving plan even if his chosen human instruments falter, cf. Est 4:13-17, which gives the key to the book. The Greek additions are more religious in tone (they provide all the passages from Esther found in the liturgy) but they only state explicitly what the Hebrew author left to his reader's intelligence.

The Greek version was in existence in 114 B.C. when it was sent to Egypt to authenticate the feast of Purim, Est 10:3*l* and note. The Hebrew text is earlier; in 160 B.C., according to 2 M 15:36, the Palestinian Jews were celebrating a 'Day of Mordecai', which presupposes that the story, and probably the book, of Esther were well known. The book may therefore be assigned to the end of the Persian, or beginning of the hellenistic period. That it was connected with the feast of Purim originally is doubtful: Est 9:20-32 is written in a different style and reads like an addition. The origin of the feast itself is obscure, and it is possible that the book came to be connected with it later (2 M 15:36 does not use the term 'Purim' but 'Day of Mordecai') to give it an historical basis.

TOBIT[a]

1 1 The tale of Tobit[b] son of Tobiel, son of Ananiel, son of Aduel, son of Gabael,
2 of the lineage of Asiel and tribe of Naphtali. •In the days of Shalmaneser,[c]
king of Assyria, he was exiled from Thisbe, which is south of Kedesh-Naphtali
in Upper Galilee, above Hazor, some distance to the west, north of Shephat.

I. TOBIT THE EXILE

3 I, Tobit, have walked in paths of truth and in good works all the days of my
life.[d] I have given much in alms to my brothers and fellow countrymen, exiled
4 like me to Nineveh in the country of Assyria. •In my young days, when I still
was at home in the country of Israel, the whole tribe of Naphtali my ancestor
broke away from the House of David and from Jerusalem. Yet this was the city
chosen out of all the tribes of Israel for their sacrifices; in this the Temple—God's
5 dwelling place—had been built and hallowed for all generations to come. •But
all my brothers and the House of Naphtali offered sacrifice to the calf that 1 K 12:26-32
Jeroboam the king of Israel had made at Dan, on the mountains of Galilee.
6 Often I was quite alone in making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, fulfilling the Dt 16:16
law that binds all Israel perpetually. I would hurry to Jerusalem with the first
7 yield of fruits and beasts, the tithe of cattle and the sheep's first shearings. •I would Dt 14:22+
give these to the priests, the sons of Aaron, for the altar. To the Levites Dt 18:3-5
ministering at Jerusalem I would give my tithe of wine and corn, olives, pome- Nb 18:12f
granates and other fruits. Six years in succession I took the second tithe in money Dt 14:22-27
8 and went and paid it at Jerusalem. •I gave the third to orphans and widows and *Dt 14:28-29*
to the strangers who live among the Israelites; I brought it them as a gift every
three years. When we ate, we obeyed both the ordinances of the Law of Moses
and the exhortations of Deborah, the mother of our father Ananiel; for my
9 father had died and left me an orphan. •When I came to man's estate, I married
a woman from our kinsmen whose name was Anna; she bore me a son whom
I called Tobias.
10 *11* When the banishment into Assyria came, I was taken away and went to
Nineveh. All my brothers and the men of my race ate the food of the heathen,
11,12 *12,13* but for my part I would not eat the food of the heathen.[e] •And because I had

1 a. In many places the Vulg. Latin text differs considerably from the Greek which is followed by our translation (see Introduction). The verse numbering is therefore often different. The most important additions from the Vulg. will be mentioned in the notes, and the verse numbering of the Vulg. will be found in the margin whenever it differs from the Greek and when the Vulg. text is in agreement (at least in substance) with the Greek text.

b. The father's name is Tobeith or Tobeit in Greek, written Tobit in English; the son's Tobeias or Tobias. The other proper names in the book vary considerably in the MSS and versions.

c. A stylised summary of the historical setting. See Introduction.

d. Tobit's piety lies not so much in the thoughtful study of the Law, cf. Ps 119, etc. as in practising the good works the Law inculcates: almsgiving, burial of the dead, pilgrimage, tithe-paying, etc.

e. Prepared without regard for the Law's injunctions.

kept faith with my God with my whole heart, 13 •the Most High granted me the
Dn2:48-49 favour of Shalmaneser, and I became the king's purveyor. 14/16 •Until his death
I used to travel to Media, where I transacted business on his behalf; and
I deposited sacks of silver worth ten talents with Gabael, the brother of Gabrias,
at Rhages in Media.

On the death of Shalmaneser his son Sennacherib succeeded; the roads into 15/18
Media were barred, and I could no longer go there. 16 •In the days of Shalmaneser
Jb31:16-20 I had often given alms to the brothers of my race; 17/20 •I gave my bread to the hungry
and clothes to the naked; and I buried, when I saw them, the bodies of my
countrymen thrown over the walls of Nineveh.

I also buried those who were killed by Sennacherib (for when he retreated 18/21
from Judaea in disorder, after the King of heaven had punished his blasphemies,
in his anger Sennacherib killed a great number of Israelites). So I stole their
bodies to bury them; Sennacherib looked for them and could not find them.
A Ninevite went and told the king it was I who had buried them secretly. When 19/22
I knew that the king had been told about me and saw myself being hunted by
men who would put me to death, I was afraid and fled. 20 •All my goods were
seized; they were all confiscated by the treasury; nothing was left me but my wife
Anna and my son Tobias.

Less than forty days after this, the king was murdered by his two sons, who 21/24
then fled to the mountains of Ararat. His son Esarhaddon succeeded. Ahikar,[f]
the son of my brother Anael, was appointed chancellor of the exchequer for the
kingdom and given the main ordering of affairs. 22 •Ahikar then interceded for
me and I was allowed to return to Nineveh, since Ahikar had been chief cup-
bearer, keeper of the signet, administrator and treasurer under Sennacherib, king
of Assyria, and Esarhaddon had kept him in office. He was a relation of mine;
he was my nephew.

II. TOBIT BLINDED

2 In the reign of Esarhaddon, therefore, I returned home, and my wife Anna 1
Ex23:14+ was restored to me with my son Tobias. At our feast of Pentecost (the feast
of Weeks) there was a good dinner. I took my place for the meal; 2 •the table
was brought to me and various dishes were brought. Then I said to my son
Tobias, 'Go, my child, and seek out some poor, loyal-hearted man among our
brothers exiled in Nineveh, and bring him to share my meal. I will wait until
you come back, my child.' 3 •So Tobias went out to look for some poor man
among our brothers, but he came back again and said, 'Father!' I answered,
'What is it, my child?' He went on, 'Father, one of our nation has just been
murdered; he has been strangled and then thrown down in the market place;
he is there still'. 4 •I sprang up at once, left my meal untouched, took the man
from the market place and laid him in one of my rooms, waiting until sunset
to bury him. 5 •I came in again and washed myself and ate my bread in sorrow,
remembering the words of the prophet Amos concerning Bethel: 6

Am 8:10 Your feasts will be turned to mourning,
and all your songs to lamentation.

And I wept. When the sun was down, I went and dug a grave and buried him. 7
My neighbours laughed and said, 'See! He is not afraid any more.' (You must 8
remember that a price had been set on my head earlier for this very thing.)
'The time before this he had to flee, yet here he is, beginning to bury the dead
again.'

That night I took a bath; then I went into the courtyard and lay down by the 9/10
courtyard wall. Since it was hot I left my face uncovered. 10/11 •I did not know
that there were sparrows in the wall above my head; their hot droppings fell

into my eyes. White spots then formed, which I was obliged to have treated by the doctors. But the more ointments they tried me with, the more the spots blinded me, and in the end I became blind altogether. I remained without sight four years; all my brothers were distressed; and Ahikar provided for my upkeep for two years, till he left for Elymais.[a] Mk 5:26

11/19 My wife Anna then undertook woman's work; she would spin wool and take
12 cloth to weave;[b] •she used to deliver whatever had been ordered from her and then receive payment. Now on March the seventh she finished a piece of work
20 and delivered it to her customers. They paid her all that was due, and into the
13/21 bargain presented her with a kid for a meal. •When the kid came into my house, it began to bleat. I called to my wife and said, 'Where does this creature come from? Suppose it has been stolen! Quick, let the owners have it back; we have
14 no right to eat stolen goods.' •She said, 'No, it was a present given me over and above my wages'. I did not believe her, and told her to give it back to the owners
22 (I blushed at this in her presence). Then she answered, 'What about your own alms? What about your own good works? Everyone knows what return you
1 have had for them.'[c] 3 Then, sad at heart, I sighed and wept, and began this prayer of lamentation: Jb 2:9

2 'You are just, O Lord, Ps119:137 Dn3:27-32
and just are all your works.
All your ways are grace and truth, Ps 25:10
and you are the Judge of the world.

3 'Therefore, Lord,
remember me, look on me.
Do not punish me for my sins
or for my heedless faults
or for those of my fathers. Ex 34:7

'For we have sinned against you Ba 1:17-18 Dn 9:5-6
4 and broken your commandments;
and you have given us over to be plundered,
to captivity and death, Ba 2:4f;3:8
to be the talk, the laughing-stock and scorn
of all the nations among whom you have dispersed us.

5 'Whereas all your decrees are true
when you deal with me as my faults deserve,
and those of my fathers,[a]
since we have neither kept your commandments
nor walked in truth before you;
6 so now, do with me as you will; Nb 11:15
be pleased to take my life from me; 1 K 19:4
I desire to be delivered from earth 3:13
and to become earth again.
For death is better for me than life. Jb 7:15 Jon 4:3,8

f. The reference to Ahikar, Tb 1:22; 2:10; 11:18; 14:10 (cf. Jdt 5:5+) connects the story of Tobit with the *Book* (or *Wisdom*) *of Ahikar*, an ancient work known to us in various forms and languages. The story it tells provides a setting for two collections of wisdom sayings which are echoed in Tb and Si. Ahikar the sage, chancellor to Sennacherib and Esarhaddon, kings of Assyria, has educated his nephew Nadab in the hope that he will succeed him; this situation introduces the first series of maxims. The ungrateful Nadab, now chancellor, has his benefactor condemned to death. Ahikar escapes death by a subterfuge and goes into hiding. Esarhaddon, commanded by Pharaoh to produce a sage capable of solving his challenges, regrets the loss of Ahikar. The old chancellor emerges from his hiding place, successfully takes up Pharaoh's challenge, is restored to office and punishes his nephew; his rebuke of Nadab constitutes the second series of maxims.

2 a. A Vulg. addition, vv. 12-18, compares the patience of Tobit with that of Job. Tobit replies to the reproaches of his kinsfolk: 'Do not talk like that, we are sons of the holy ones and we await the life that God will grant to those who never withdraw their faith in him'.

b. 'she would spin... weave' added with Vet. Lat.

c. The Vulg. (v. 23) underlines the parallel between Anna and the wife of Job.

3 a. Om. 'and those of my ancestors'.

I have been reviled without a cause
and I am distressed beyond measure.

'Lord, I wait for the sentence you will give
to deliver me from this affliction.
Let me go away to my everlasting home;
do not turn your face from me, O Lord.
For it is better to die than still to live
in the face of trouble that knows no pity;
I am weary of hearing myself traduced.'

III. SARAH

It chanced on the same day that Sarah the daughter of Raguel, who lived in 7
Media at Ecbatana, also heard insults from one of her father's maids. •You must 8
know that she had been given in marriage seven times, and that Asmodeus,[b]
that worst of demons, had killed her bridegrooms one after another before ever
they had slept with her as man with wife. The servant-girl said, 'Yes, you kill
your bridegrooms yourself. That makes seven already to whom you have been
given, and you have not once been in luck yet.[c] •Just because your bridegrooms 9
have died, that is no reason for punishing us. Go and join them, and may we be
spared the sight of any child of yours!' •That day, she grieved, she sobbed, and 10
Mt 6:6 went up to her father's room intending to hang herself. But then she thought,
'Suppose they blamed my father! They will say, "You had an only daughter
6:15 whom you loved, and now she has hanged herself for grief". I cannot cause my
Gn37:35; 42:38; 44:29,31 father a sorrow which would bring down his old age to the dwelling of the dead.[d]
I should do better not to hang myself, but to beg the Lord to let me die and
Ps 5:7;28:2; 134:2; 138:2 Dn 6:11 not live to hear any more insults.' •And at this, by the window with outstretched 11
arms she said this prayer:

13:1 'You are blessed, O God of mercy!
May your name be blessed for ever,
and may all things you have made
bless you everlastingly.

12 14 'And now, I lift up my face
and to you I turn my eyes.
13 15 Let your word deliver me from earth;
3:6+ I can hear myself traduced no longer.

14 16 'O Lord, you know
that I have remained pure;
no man has touched me;
15 17 I have not dishonoured your name
or my father's name
in this land of exile.

'I am my father's only daughter,
he has no other child as heir;
he has no brother at his side,
nor has he any kinsman left
for whom I ought to keep myself.

'Already I have lost seven husbands;
why should I live any longer?
If it does not please you to take my life,
then look on me with pity;
I can hear myself traduced no longer.'[e]

16 This time the prayer of each of them found favour before the glory of God, 12:12
24 and Raphael[f] was sent to bring remedy to them both. He was to take the white 12:14
25 spots from the eyes of Tobit, so that he might see God's light with his own eyes;
and he was to give Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, as bride to Tobias son of
Tobit, and to rid her of Asmodeus, that worst of demons. For it was to Tobias
before all other suitors that she belonged by right. Tobit was coming back from 4:12-13; 6:12+
the courtyard into the house at the same moment as Sarah, the daughter of
Raguel, was coming down from the upper room.

IV. TOBIAS

1 4 The same day, Tobit remembered the silver that he had left with Gabael
2 at Rhages in Media •and thought, 'I have come to the point of praying for 14:3
death; I should do well to call my son Tobias and tell him about the money
3 before I die'. •He summoned his son Tobias and told him:

'When I die, give me an honourable burial. Honour your mother, and never Ex 20:12 Pr 23:22 Si 7:27 Mt 8:21
abandon her all the days of your life. Do all that she wants, and give her no reason
4 for sorrow. •Remember, my child, all the risks she ran for your sake when you
5 were in her womb. And when she dies, bury her at my side in the same grave. 14:12

5 'My child, be faithful to the Lord all your days. Never entertain the will
6 to sin or to transgress his laws. Do good works all the days of your life, never
6 follow ways that are not right; •for if you act in truthfulness,[a] you will be 13:6 Jn 3:21 Ep 4:15
successful in all your actions, as all men are if they practise what is right.

7 'Set aside part of your goods for almsgiving. Never turn your face from any 12:8-10 Jb 31:16 *Dt15:7-8,11* Pr 19:17 Si 4:1-6
8 poor man and God will never turn his from you. •Measure your alms by what
9 you have; if you have much, give more; if you have little, give less, but do not
9 10 be mean in giving alms. •By doing so, you will lay up for yourself a great treasure 1 Jn 3:17
10 11 for the day of necessity. •For almsgiving delivers from death and saves men Mt 6:20p
11 12 from passing down to darkness. •Alms is a most effective offering for all those
who give it in the presence of the Most High. Si 3:30; 29:12

12 'My child, avoid all loose conduct. Choose a wife of your father's stock.
Do not take a foreign wife outside your father's tribe, because we are the sons of Gn 24:3-4; 28:1-2 Jg 14:3 *6:12*+ Gn 11:31; 25:20; 29:15-30
the prophets. Remember Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, our ancestors from
the beginning. All of them took wives from their own kindred, and they were
13 blessed in their children, and their race will inherit the earth. •You, too, my child,
must prefer your own brothers; never presume to despise your brothers, the sons
14 and daughters of your people; choose your wife from among them. For pride
brings ruin and much worry; idleness causes need and poverty, for the mother of
famine is idleness.

14 'Do not keep back until next day the wages of those who work for you; pay Lv 19:13 Dt 24:15
15 them at once. If you serve God you will be rewarded. Be careful, my child,
15 16 in all you do, well-disciplined in all your behaviour. •Do to no one what you Mt 7:12 Lk 6:31
would not want done to you. Do not drink wine to the point of drunkenness;
do not let excess be your travelling companion.

b. 'Asmodeus' probably means 'the destroyer', cf. the destroying angel of 2 S 24:16; Ws 18:25; Rv 9:11. Asmodeus recurs in the *Testament of Solomon* (where again he is the enemy of the marriage act) and in post-biblical Judaism; some think Asmodeus is related to Aesma, a demon of the Parsees.

c. 'you have not been in luck'; var. 'you have not borne the name of'. Sarah is under an evil spell which brings death on her husbands.

d. A recurring formula in the story of Joseph.

e. The prayer ends rather differently in Vulg.: *'18* If I consented to take a husband it was not out of lust but out of awe for you. *19* So then, either I was not worthy of them or perhaps they were not worthy of me. Or else you had another husband in mind for me? *20* Your designs are beyond man's reach, *21* but all who revere you know that if they have been tested they will be crowned; if in distress, delivered; if punished, free to come to your mercy. *22* For you take no pleasure in our fall; but after the storm you bring the calm, after tears and weeping you give abounding joy...'

f. Raphael, the protecting angel sent to Tobit and Sarah, has come from God's presence where he has offered their prayers, 12:12,15. Cf. 5:4+.

4 a. Lit. 'if you do the truth'; Sin. 'those who do...' Vv. 7-19 are lacking in the Greek Codex Sinaiticus and have been restored, following Vet. Lat. Vat., and Syr.

Jb 31:16 Is 58:7 Mt 25:35-36 Dt 15:10 2 Co 9:7 Dt 26:14

'Give your bread to those who are hungry, and your clothes to those who are naked. Whatever you own in plenty, devote a proportion to almsgiving; and when you give alms, do not do it grudgingly. •Be generous with bread and wine on the graves of virtuous men, but not for the sinner.[b]

'Ask advice of every wise person; never scorn any profitable advice. •Bless the Lord God in everything; beg him to guide your ways and bring your paths and purposes to their end. For wisdom is not given to every nation; the Lord himself gives all good things. At his will he lifts up[c] or he casts down to the depths of the dwelling of the dead. So now, my child, remember these precepts and never let them fade from your heart.

Ps 119:10, 12,26f, 33f Dt 4:6 1 S 2:7

'Now, my child, I must tell you I have left ten talents of silver with Gabael son of Gabrias, at Rhages in Media. •Do not be afraid, my child, if we have grown poor. You have great wealth if you fear God, if you shun every kind of sin and if you do what is pleasing to the Lord your God.'

1 Tm 6:6-8

V. THE FELLOW TRAVELLER OF TOBIAS

5 Tobias then answered his father Tobit, 'Father, I will do everything you have told me. •But how am I to recover the money from him? He does not know me, nor I him. What token am I to give him for him to believe me and hand me over the silver? And besides, I do not know what roads to take for this journey into Media.' •Then Tobit answered his son Tobias, 'Each of us set his signature to a note which I cut in two, so that each could keep half of it. I took one piece, and put the other with the silver. To think it was twenty years ago I left this silver in his keeping! And now, my child, find some trustworthy man to travel with you—we will pay him for his time until you arrive back—and then go and collect the money from Gabael.'

Tobias went out to look for a man who knew the way to go with him to Media. Outside he found Raphael the angel[a] standing facing him (though he did not guess he was an angel of God). •He said, 'Where do you come from, friend?' The angel replied, 'I am one of your brother Israelites; I have come to these parts to look for work'. Tobias asked, 'Do you know the road to Media?' The other replied, 'Certainly I do. I have been there many times; I know all the ways by heart. I have often been to Media and stayed with Gabael, one of our kinsmen who lives at Rhages in Media. It usually takes two full days to get from Ecbatana to Rhages; Rhages lies in the mountains, and Ecbatana is in the middle of the plain.'[b] •Tobias said, 'Wait for me, friend, while I go and tell my father; I need you to come with me; I will pay you for your time'. •The other replied, 'Good; I will wait; but do not be long'.

3:17+ Dn 3:49; 6:27 Heb 1:14

Tobias went in and told his father that he had found one of their brother Israelites. And the father said, 'Fetch him in; I want to find out about his family and tribe. I must see if he is going to be a reliable companion for you, my child.' So Tobias went out and called him. 'Friend,' he said 'my father wants you.'

The angel came into the house; Tobit greeted him, and the other answered, wishing him happiness. Tobit replied, 'Can I ever be happy again? I am a blind man; I no longer see the light of heaven; I am sunk in darkness like the dead who see the light no more. I am a man buried alive; I hear men speak but cannot see them.' The angel said, 'Take comfort; before long God will heal you. Take comfort.' Tobit said, 'My son Tobias wishes to go to Media. Will you join him as his guide? Brother, I will pay you.' He replied, 'I am willing to go with him; I know all the ways; I have often been to Media, I have crossed all its plains and mountains, and I know all the roads'. •Tobit said, 'Brother, what family and what tribe do you belong to? Will you tell me, brother?' •'What does my tribe matter to you?' the angel said. Tobit said, 'I want to be quite sure whose son you are and what your name is'. •The angel said, 'I am Azarias, son

14 19 of the great Ananias, one of your kinsmen'. •'Welcome and greetings, brother!
Do not be offended at my wanting to know the name of your family; I find you
are my kinsman, of a good and honourable line. I know Ananias and Jathan,
the two sons of the great Shemaiah. They used to go to Jerusalem with me;
we have worshipped together there, and they have never strayed from the right
path. Your brothers are worthy men; you come of good stock; welcome.'
15 He went on, 'I engage you at a drachma a day, with your expenses, like my
16 own son. Complete the journey with my son, •and I will go beyond the agreed
20 wage.' The angel replied, 'I will complete the journey with him. Do not be afraid.
On the journey outward all will be well; on the journey back all will be well;
17 the road is safe.' •Tobit said, 'Blessings on you, brother!' Then he turned to his
son. 'My child,' he said 'prepare what you need for the journey, and set off with
21 your brother. May God in heaven protect you abroad and bring you both back Gn 24:7,40 Ex 23:20+
to me safe and sound! May his angel go with you and protect you, my child!'
22 Tobias left the house to set out and kissed his father and mother. Tobit said,
18 23 'A happy journey!' •His mother burst into tears and said to Tobit, 'Why must
you send my child away? Is he not the staff of our hands, with his errands to
19 24 and fro for us? •Surely money is not the only thing that matters? Surely it is not
20 25 as precious as our child?[c] •The way of life God had already given us was good
21 26 enough.' •He said, 'Do not think such thoughts. Going away and coming back,
all will be well with our child. On the day of his homecoming you will see for
yourself how all is still well with him. Do not think such thoughts; do not worry
22 27 on their account, my sister.[d] •A good angel will go with him; he will have a good
1 28 journey and come back to us well and happy. 6 And she dried her tears.

VI. THE FISH

2 1 The boy left with the angel, and the dog followed behind. The two walked on,
3 2 and when the first evening came they camped beside the Tigris. •The boy had
gone down to the river to wash his feet, when a great fish leapt out of the water
4 3,4 and all but swallowed his foot. The boy gave a shout •and the angel said, 'Catch
the fish; do not let it go'. The boy mastered the fish and pulled it on to the bank.
5 The angel said, 'Cut it open; take out the gall, the heart and the liver; set these
aside and throw the entrails away, for the gall and heart and liver have curative
6 properties'. •The boy cut the fish open and took out the gall and heart and liver.
He fried part of the fish for his meal and kept some for salting. Then they walked
on again together until they were nearly in Media.
7 Then the boy asked the angel this question, 'Brother Azarias, what can the
8 fish's heart, liver and gall cure?' •He replied, 'You burn the fish's heart and
liver, and their smoke is used in the case of a man or woman plagued by a demon
9 or evil spirit; any such affliction disappears for good, leaving no trace. •As
regards the gall, this is used as an eye ointment for anyone having white spots
on his eyes; after using it, you only have to blow on the spots to cure them.'
10 They entered Media and had nearly reached Ecbatana •when Raphael said
11

b. This injunction is taken from Ahikar, cf. 1:21+. But Tobit, apparently, advises his son not to make offerings to the dead (a practice condemned by the Law) but to give alms in memory of them.

c. 'he lifts up' Vet. Lat.

5 a. With the exception of 'the angel of Yahweh' or 'the angel of God', which in the earliest texts are phrases used to express the visible manifestation of God, cf. Gn 16:7+, the angels are creatures distinct from God, members of his heavenly court, called 'sons of God', 'holy ones', 'host of heaven'; 1 K 22:19; Ps 29:1; 148:2; Ne 9:6. The prologue of Job evokes the angelic gathering, Jb 1:6; 8:1, from which God sends his messengers (the meaning of the word 'angel') down to earth. Some are destroying angels, cf. Ex 12:23+; 2 K 19:35; Ezk 9:1; Ps 78:49, others guardian angels, either of nations or of individuals, cf. Ex 23:20+; Dn 10:13+. Raphael is sent as guide to Tobias, cf. Gn 24:7. On the mediatory function of angels in prophecy, see Ezk 40:3+. The doctrine is further developed in Judaism and in the N.T.

b. The geography is inexact, cf. Introduction. The author is not concerned with detail; he merely wishes to set his story in a distant land.

c. One of many translations of this difficult verse.

d. The same term is used of wife or bride in 8:4,7,21 and in Sg 4:9f; 5:1,2; cf. 8:1.

to the boy, 'Brother Tobias'. 'Yes?' he answered. The angel went on, 'Tonight we shall be staying with Raguel, who is a kinsman of yours. He has a daughter called Sarah, •but apart from Sarah he has no other son or daughter. Now you 12
3:17;7:13 are her next of kin;[a] she belongs to you before anyone else and you may claim her father's inheritance. She is a thoughtful, courageous and very lovely girl, and her father loves her dearly.[b] •You have the right to marry her. Listen, brother; 13 this very evening I will speak about the girl to her father and arrange for her to be betrothed to you, and when we come back from Rhages we can celebrate the marriage. I assure you, Raguel has no right whatever to refuse you or to betroth her to anyone else. That would be asking for death, as prescribed in the Book of Moses, once he was aware that kinship gives you the pre-eminent right to marry his daughter. So listen, brother. This very evening we will speak about the girl and ask for her hand in marriage. When we come back from Rhages we will fetch her and take her home with us.'

Tobias answered Raphael, 'Brother Azarias, I have been told that she has 14 already been given in marriage seven times and that each time her bridegroom has died in the bridal room. He died the same night as he entered her room; and I have heard people say it was a demon that killed them, •and this makes 15 me a little afraid. He does no harm to her, of course, because he loves her;[c] but as soon as a man tries to approach her, he kills him. I am my father's only son,
3:10+ and I have no wish to die; I shrink from causing my father and mother a grief that would bring them to the grave; they have no other son to bury them.' •The 16
4:12-13 angel said,[d] 'Are you going to forget your father's advice? After all, he urged you to choose a wife from your father's family. Listen then, brother. Do not worry about the demon; take her. This very evening, I promise, she will be given you as your wife. •Then once you are in the bridal room, take the heart and 17 liver of the fish and lay a little of it on the burning incense. The reek will rise, the demon will smell it and flee, and there is no danger that he will ever be found 18 near the girl again. Then, before you sleep together, first stand up, both of you, and pray. Ask the Lord of heaven to grant you his grace and protection. Do not
Gn24:44 be afraid; she was destined for you from the beginning, and it is you who will save her. She will follow you, and I pledge my word she will give you children who will be like brothers to you. Do not hesitate.' And when Tobias heard Raphael say this, when he understood that Sarah was his sister, a kinswoman of his father's family, he fell so deeply in love with her that he could no longer call his heart his own.

VII. RAGUEL

7 As they entered Ecbatana, Tobias said, 'Brother Azarias, take me at once 1 to our brother Raguel's'. And he showed him the way to the house of Raguel, whom they found sitting beside his courtyard door. They greeted him first, and he replied, 'Welcome and greetings, brothers'. And he took them into his house. He said to his wife Edna, 'How like my brother Tobit this young man is!' •Edna 2 3 asked them where they came from; they said, 'We are sons of Naphtali exiled
Gn 29:4-6; 43:27-30 in Nineveh'. •'Do you know our brother Tobit?' 'Yes.' 'How is he?' •'He is 4 5 still alive and he is well.' And Tobias added, 'He is my father'. •Raguel leapt 6
Gn 33:4; 45:14 Lk 15:20 to his feet and kissed him and wept. •Then finding words, he said, 'Blessings 7 on you, child! You are the son of a noble father. How sad it is that someone so virtuous and full of good deeds should have gone blind!' He fell on the neck of his kinsman Tobias and wept. •And his wife Edna wept for him, and so did 8 his daughter Sarah. •Raguel killed a sheep from the flock, and they gave them 9 a warmhearted welcome.

They washed and bathed and sat down to table. Then Tobias said to Raphael, 'Brother Azarias, will you ask Raguel to give me my sister Sarah?' •Raguel 10

overheard the words, and said to the young man, 'Eat and drink, and make the most of your evening; no one else has the right to take my daughter Sarah—no one but you, my brother. In any case I, for my own part, am not at liberty to give her to anyone else, since you are her next of kin. However, my boy, I must
11 be frank with you: •I have tried to find a husband for her seven times among our kinsmen, and all of them have died the first evening, on going to her room. But for the present, my boy, eat and drink; the Lord will grant you his grace and peace.' Tobias spoke out, 'I will not hear of eating and drinking till you Gn 24:33
have come to a decision about me'. Raguel answered,[a] 'Very well. Since, as prescribed by the Book of Moses, she is given to you, heaven itself decrees she shall be yours. I therefore entrust your sister to you. From now you are her brother and she is your sister. She is given to you from today for ever. The Lord of heaven favour you tonight, my child, and grant you his grace and peace.'
12 Raguel called for his daughter Sarah, took her by the hand and gave her to Gn 24: 50-51
Tobias with these words, 'I entrust her to you; the law and the ruling recorded in the Book of Moses assign her to you as your wife. Take her; take her home to your father's house with a good conscience. The God of heaven grant you
13 a good journey in peace.' •Then he turned to her mother and asked her to fetch
16 him writing paper. He drew up the marriage contract, how he gave his daughter 6:12+
as bride to Tobias according to the ordinance in the Law of Moses.

14.15 17,18 16 19 After this they began to eat and drink. •Raguel called his wife Edna and Gn 24:54
said, 'My sister, prepare the second room and take her there'. •She went and made the bed in this room as he had ordered, and took her daughter to it. She
20 wept over her, then wiped away her tears and said, 'Courage, daughter! May the Lord of heaven turn your grief to joy! Courage, daughter!' And she went out.

VIII. THE GRAVE

1 8 When they had finished eating and drinking and it seemed time to go to bed,
2 the young man was taken from the dining room to the bedroom. •Tobias remembered Raphael's advice; he went to his bag, took the fish's heart and liver
3 out of it and put some on the burning incense. •The reek of the fish distressed the demon, who fled through the air to Egypt.[a] Raphael pursued him there, and Lv 16:22 Mt 12: 22-30, 43-45p
bound and shackled him at once.

4 The parents meanwhile had gone out and shut the door behind them. Tobias rose from the bed, and said to Sarah, 'Get up, my sister! You and I must pray[b]

6 a. In conformity with the patriarchal custom of marriage within the clan, cf. 4:12-13 and the story of the marriage of Isaac in Gn 24. (The levirate law, Dt 25:5+, possibly derives from this custom.) For the tribes settled in Palestine this practice preserved the tribal boundaries established after the conquest of Canaan, cf. Nb 36. In the Dispersion, this survived in the notion of keeping the family goods within the family and the determination to remain true to the ancestral law of Israel.

b. 'loves her dearly'; var. 'is handsome'.

c. Om. 'because he loves her'.

d. The conclusion of the dialogue takes a different form in Vulg. *'16* Then the angel Raphael said to him, "Listen and I will show you those whom the demon has power to overcome. *17* They are those who at the time of their marriage put God out of their thoughts and so abandon themselves to their instincts that they have no more reason than horse or mule [Ps 32:9; cf. Rm 1:21-26]; the demon is stronger than these. *18* But when you take your bride, spend three days continently, in praying with her. *19* On the first night, the demon will be put to flight when you burn the liver of the fish. *20* On the second night, you will be admitted to the company of the holy patriarchs. On the third night, you will be so blessed that healthy children will be born to you both. *22* When the third night is over, and with the fear of the Lord in your heart, take the maiden for your own, moved less by passion than by the love of children, so that you may win for your children the blessing of Abraham's line" '.

7 a. The Vulg. arrangement is different: Tobias makes his request, v. 10, Raguel shakes his head, making no reply, v. 11, and yields only at Raphael's insistence, v. 12: '. . . *14* "It is my belief that God has sent you to me so that she may have a husband of her own kin, in obedience to the Law of Moses. Do not be afraid; I will give her to you." *15* And taking the right hand of his daughter he put it into the right hand of Tobias, saying, "May the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob be with you. May he himself join you together and bless you abundantly." '

8 a. 'through the air to Egypt'; var. 'to the upper parts of Egypt'.

b. The Vulg., in harmony with its 6:18f text, says explicitly that these prayers lasted for three nights.

13:1 and petition our Lord to win his grace and his protection.' •She stood up, and 5
they began praying for protection, and this was how he began: 6 7

Dn 3:26
'You are blessed, O God of our fathers;
blessed, too, is your name
for ever and ever.
Let the heavens bless you
and all things you have made
for evermore.

It was you who created Adam, 6 8
you who created Eve his wife
to be his help and support;
and from these two the human race was born.
It was you who said,
Gn 2:18 "*It is not good that the man should be alone;*
let us make him a helpmate like himself".
And so I do not take my sister 7 9
for any lustful motive;
I do it in singleness of heart.
Be kind enough to have pity on her and on me
and bring us to old age together.'

And together they said, 'Amen, Amen',[c] •and lay down for the night. 8 9

But Raguel rose and called his servants, who came and helped him to dig 11
a grave. •He had thought, 'Heaven grant he does not die! We should be over- 10 12
whelmed with ridicule and shame.' •When the grave was finished, Raguel went 11 13
back to the house, called his wife •and said, 'Will you send a maid to the room 12 14
to see if Tobias is still alive? For if he is dead, we may be able to bury him without
anyone else knowing.' •The maid was called, the lamp lit and the door opened; 13 15
the maid went in. She found the two fast asleep; •she came out again and 14 16
whispered, 'He is not dead; all is well'. •Then Raguel blessed the God of heaven 15 17
with these words:

'You are blessed, my God,
with every blessing that is pure;
may you be blessed for evermore!

'You are blessed for having made me glad. 16
What I feared has not happened;
instead you have treated us
with mercy beyond all measure.

'You are blessed for taking pity 17 19
on this only son, this only daughter.
Grant them, Master, your grace and your protection;
let them live out their lives
in happiness and in grace.'

And he made his servants fill the grave in before dawn broke. 18 20

He told his wife to make plenty of bread; he went to his flock, brought back 19
two oxen and four sheep and gave orders for them to be cooked; and preparations
began. •He called Tobias and said, 'I will not hear of your leaving here for 20 23
Gn 24:54-55 Jg 14:10-18 a fortnight. You are to stay where you are, eating and drinking, with me. You
will make my daughter happy again after all her troubles. •After that, take away 21 24
a half of all I have, and go without let or hindrance back to your father.[d] When
my wife and I are dead you will have the other half. Courage, my boy! I am your
father, and Edna is your mother. We are your parents in future, as we are your
sister's. Courage, my son!'

IX. THE WEDDING FEAST

9 Then Tobias turned to Raphael. •'Brother Azarias,' he said 'take four servants
and two camels and leave for Rhages. •Go to Gabael's house, give him the
receipt and see about the money; then invite him to come with you to my wedding
feast. •You know that my father must be counting the days and that I cannot
lose a single one without worrying him. •You see what Raguel has pledged
himself to do; I am bound by his oath.' So Raphael left for Rhages in Media
with the four servants and two camels. They stayed with Gabael, and Raphael Si 30:4
showed him the receipt. He told him about the marriage of Tobias son of Tobit
and gave him his invitation to the wedding feast. Gabael started counting out
the sacks to him—the seals were intact—and they loaded them on to the camels.
Early in the morning they set off together for the feast, and reached Raguel's
house where they found Tobias dining. He rose to greet Gabael, who burst
into tears and blessed him with the words, 'Excellent son of a father beyond
reproach, just and generous in his dealings! The Lord give heaven's blessing
to you, to your wife, to the father and mother[a] of your wife! Blessed be God for
granting me the sight of this living image of my cousin Tobit!'[b]

10 Every day, meanwhile, Tobit kept reckoning the days required for the Gn 44:8-34 Lk 15:20
journey there and the journey back. The full number went by, and still
his son had not come. •Then he thought, 'I hope he has not been delayed there!
I hope Gabael is not dead! Perhaps no one was there to give him the money.'
And he began to worry. •His wife Anna kept saying, 'My son is dead! He is no
longer among the living!' And she began to weep and mourn over her son. She
kept saying, •'Alas! I let you leave me, my child, you, the light of my eyes.'
And Tobit would reply, 'Hush, my sister! Do not think such thoughts. All is well
with him. Something has happened there to delay them. His companion is
someone we can trust, one of our kinsmen at that. Do not lose heart, my sister.
He will be here soon.' •But she only said, 'Leave me alone; do not try to deceive
me. My child is dead.' And every day she would go abruptly out to watch the Gn 45:26
road by which her son had left. She trusted no eyes but her own. Once the sun
had set she would come home again, only to weep and moan all night, unable
to sleep.

After the fourteen days of feasting that Raguel had sworn to keep for his Gn 24:54-61
daughter's marriage, Tobias came to him and said, 'Let me go now; my father
and mother must have lost all hope of seeing me again. So I beg you, father,
to let me return to my father's house; I have told you the plight he was in when
I left him.' •Raguel said to Tobias, 'Stay, my son, stay with me. I will send
messengers to your father Tobit to give him news of you.' •But Tobias pressed
him, 'No. I ask your permission to go back to my father's house.' •Without
more ado, Raguel committed Sarah his bride into his keeping. He gave Tobias
half his wealth, menservants and maidservants, oxen and sheep, donkeys and Gn 24:35; 30:43
camels, clothes and money and household things. •And so he let them leave
happily. To Tobias he said these parting words, 'Good health, my son, and
a happy journey! May the Lord of heaven be gracious to you and to your wife
Sarah! I hope to see your children before I die.' •To his daughter Sarah he said, Gn 45:28
'Go now to your father-in-law's house, since henceforward they are as much
your parents as those who gave you life. Go in peace, my daughter, I hope to

c. In the Vulg., after the prayer of Tobias, vv. 7-9, Sarah also prays, v. 10, invoking the mercy of God.

d. The account of the marriage of Sarah has many details in common with the stories of Rebekah, Gn 24; Rachel, Gn 29; Dinah, Gn 34; the wife of Samson, Jg 14; Michal, 1 S 18. Here, however, there is no *mohar* (the sum paid by the groom to the bride's father, Gn 34:12; 1 S 18:25); it is the father who dowers the bride.

9 a. 'to the father and mother'; var. 'to your father'.

b. Some authorities omit the blessing of Gabael; the Vulg., on the other hand, gives a fuller form of it, vv. 9-12.

hear nothing but good of you, as long as I live.' He said goodbye to them and let them go.

Edna in her turn said to Tobias, 'Dear son and brother, may it please the Lord to bring you back again! I hope to live long enough to see the children of you and my daughter Sarah before I die. In the sight of the Lord I give my daughter into your keeping. Never make her unhappy as long as you live. Go in peace, my son. Henceforward I am your mother and Sarah is your sister. May we all live happily all the days of our lives!' And she kissed them both and saw 12
them set out happily.

Tobias left Raguel's house with his mind at ease. In his gladness he blessed 13
Gn24:21, 40,42,56 the Lord of heaven and earth, the King of all that is, for the happy issue of his travels. He gave this blessing to Raguel and his wife Edna, 'May it be my happiness to honour you all the days of my life!'[a]

X. TOBIAS' SIGHT RESTORED

Gn46:28 11 They were nearly at Kaserin, opposite Nineveh, •when Raphael said, 'You 1 2
know the plight in which we left your father; •let us go on ahead of your 3
wife and prepare the house ourselves while she travels behind with the others'. They went on together (Raphael had warned Tobias to take the gall with him) 4
and the dog followed them.[a]

Anna was sitting, watching the road by which her son would come. •She was 5 6
sure at once it must be he and said to the father, 'Here comes your son, with his companion'.

Raphael said to Tobias before he reached his father, 'I give you my word 7
that your father's eyes will open. •You must put the fish's gall to his eyes; the 8
medicine will smart and will draw a filmy white skin off his eyes. And your father will be able to see and look on the light.'

Gn 33:4; 45:14; 46:29-30 Lk 15:20 The mother ran forward and threw her arms round her son's neck. 'Now 9
I can die,' she said 'I have seen you again.' And she wept. •Tobit rose to his 10
feet and stumbled across the courtyard through the door. Tobias came on towards him •(he had the fish's gall in his hand). He blew into his eyes and said, steadying 11 13
him, 'Take courage, father!' With this he applied the medicine, left it there
Ac 9:18 a while, •then with both hands peeled away a filmy skin from the corners of his 12 14
eyes. •Then his father fell on his neck •and wept. He exclaimed, 'I can see, 13 14
my son, the light of my eyes!' And he said:

'Blessed be God! 17
Blessed be his great name!
Blessed be all his holy angels!
Blessed be his great name
for evermore!
13:2 Dt 32:39 For he had scourged me 15
and now has had pity on me
and I see my son Tobias.'

Tobias went into the house, and with a loud voice joyfully blessed God.[b] Then he told his father everything: how his journey had been successful and he had brought the silver back; how he had married Sarah, the daughter of Raguel; how she was following him now, close behind, and could not be far from the gates of Nineveh.

Tobit set off to the gates of Nineveh to meet his daughter-in-law, giving joyful 16
praise to God as he went. When the people of Nineveh saw him walking without a guide and stepping forward as briskly as of old, they were astonished. •Tobit 17
described to them how God had taken pity on him and had opened his eyes. Then Tobit met Sarah, the bride of his son Tobias, and blessed her in these

words, 'Welcome, daughter! Blessed be your God for sending you to us, my daughter. Blessings on your father, blessings on my son Tobias, blessings on yourself, my daughter. Welcome now to your own house in joyfulness and in blessedness. Come in, my daughter.' He held a feast that day for all the Jews of
18 20 Nineveh, •and his cousins Ahikar and Nadab came to share in Tobit's happiness.[c]

XI. RAPHAEL

1 12 When the feasting was over, Tobit called his son Tobias and said, 'My son, you ought to think about paying the amount due to your fellow traveller; Gn 30:25-35
2 give him more than the figure agreed on'. •'Father,' he replied 'how much am
I to give him for his help? Even if I give him half the goods he brought back with
3 me, I shall not be the loser. •He has brought me back to you safe and sound,
he has cured my wife, he has brought the money back too, and now he has
4 cured you as well. How much am I to give him for all this?' •Tobit said, 'He has
5 richly earned half of what he brought back'. •So Tobias called his companion
and said, 'Take half of what you brought back, in payment for all you have
done, and go in peace'.

6 Then Raphael took them both aside and said, 'Bless God, utter his praise
before all the living for all the favours he has given you. Bless and extol his
name. Proclaim before all men the deeds of God as they deserve, and never tire
7 of giving him thanks. •It is right to keep the secret of a king, yet right to reveal Pr 25:2
and publish the works of God. Thank him worthily. Do what is good, and no
evil can befall you.

8 'Prayer with fasting[a] and alms with right conduct are better than riches with 4:7-11+ Pr 11:4;16:8 Si 29:8-13
9 iniquity. Better to practise almsgiving than to hoard up gold. •Almsgiving saves
from death and purges every kind of sin. Those who give alms have their fill Si 3:30 Dn 4:24
10 of days; •those who commit sin and do evil, bring harm on themselves.

11 'I am going to tell you the whole truth, hiding nothing from you. I have
already told you that it is right to keep the secret of a king, yet right too to reveal
12 in worthy fashion the works of God. •So you must know that when you and
Sarah were at prayer,[b] it was I who offered your supplications before the glory Zc 1:12
13 of the Lord and who read them; so too when you were burying the dead. •When Jb 33:23-24 Ac 10:4 Rv 8:3-4
you did not hesitate to get up and leave the table to go and bury a dead man,
14 I was sent to test your faith,[c] •and at the same time God sent me to heal you 3:17 Jb 1-2
15 and your daughter-in-law Sarah. •I am Raphael, one of the seven[d] angels who Zc 4:10b Lk 1:19 Rv 8:2
stand ever ready to enter the presence of the glory of the Lord.'

16 They were both overwhelmed with awe; they fell on their faces in terror. Jg 13:20-22
17 But the angel said, 'Do not be afraid; peace be with you. Bless God for ever.
18 As far as I was concerned, when I was with you, my presence was not by any
decision of mine, but by the will of God; it is he whom you must bless throughout
19 your days, he that you must praise. •You thought you saw me eating, but that Jg 13:16,20 Lk 24:41-43
20 was appearance and no more.[e] •Now bless the Lord on earth and give thanks to
God. I am about to return to him above who sent me. Write down all that has Jn 16:5; 20:17

10 a. Text corrected following Vet. Lat. and Vat.
11 a. 'the dog'; var. 'the Lord'. 'followed them'; var. 'ran before them'. Before Anna addresses Tobit she sees the dog on the road, according to Syr. So also Vulg., v. 9 'Then the dog, which had been with them on the way, ran in front of them and came up, like one who had news to tell, wagging his tail for joy'.
b. 'with a loud voice'; var. 'with all his might'.
c. Add. 'And the celebrations went on for seven days, and many gifts were brought him', or (Vulg.) 'And the celebrations went on for seven days and there was great rejoicing among them all'.
12 a. 'fasting'; var. 'truth'.
b. The angel, cf. 5:4+, now becomes the intercessor. Raphael presents a 'memoir' *(mnēmosunon)* of Tobit's prayers and good works to God. The term suggests an official abstract; it also has sacrificial overtones, the portion of the victim burnt on the altar as an 'appeasing fragrance' is called the 'memorial' of the sacrifice, Lv 2:2+.
c. Like Satan to Job (Jb 1-2) though with a difference.
d. Only three angels' names appear in the Bible: Gabriel, Michael, Raphael. The apocrypha fill up the list of the Seven in their own extravagant way.
e. Var. 'You observe that I have eaten nothing and that you have had a vision'. Vulg. 'But I have invisible food, and a drink that no man can see'.

happened.' And he rose in the air. •When they stood up again, he was no longer visible. They praised God with hymns; they thanked him for having performed such wonders; had not an angel of God appeared to them? 21 21,22

XII. ZION

13 And he said:[a] 1

'Blessed be God who lives for ever,
for his reign endures throughout all ages!
By turns he punishes and pardons; 2
he sends men down to the depths of the underworld
and draws them up from supreme Destruction;
no one can escape his hand.
Declare his praise before the nations, 3
you who are the sons of Israel!
For if he has scattered you among them,
there too he has shown you his greatness. 4
Extol him before all the living;
he is our Master
and he is our God
and he is our Father
and he is God for ever and ever.

'Though he punishes you for your iniquities, 5
he will take pity on you all;
he will gather you from every nation
wherever you have been scattered.
If you return to him 6
with all your heart and all your soul,
behaving honestly towards him,
then he will return to you
and hide his face from you no longer.
Consider how well he has treated you;
loudly give him thanks.
Bless the Lord of justice
and extol the King of the ages.
I for my part sing his praise 7
in the country of my exile;
I make his power and greatness known
to a nation that has sinned.
Sinners, return to him; 8
let your conduct be upright before him;
perhaps he will be gracious to you
and take pity on you.
I for my part extol God 7 9
and my soul rejoices
in the King of heaven.
Let his greatness •be in all men's mouths, 8
his praises be sung in Jerusalem.

'Jerusalem, Holy City, 9 11
God scourged you for your handiwork
yet still will take pity on the sons of the upright.
Thank the Lord as he deserves 10 12
and bless the King of the ages,

3:11;8:5,15 1Ch29:10 Ps 144:1 Dn 3:26 Lk 1:68 Ep 1:3
1 S 2:6
Dt 32:39 Ws16:13,15
Ws 14:3 Si 23:1,4 Is 63:16; 64:7 Jr 3:4 Mt 6:9+
Dt 30:3
Dt 30:2
1Tm1:17
Is 60 ↗ Rv 21
Mi 7:19

that your Temple may be rebuilt with joy within you — Is44:26,28 Am 9:11 Zc 1:16
and within you he may comfort every exile,
and within you he may love all those who are distressed,
for all generations to come.

11 13 'A bright light shall shine — Is 9:1; 49:6;60:1
over all the regions of the earth;
14 many nations shall come from far away, — Ps 22:27 Is 2:3 Mi 4:2 Zc8:20-22
from all the ends of the earth,
to dwell close to the holy name of the Lord God,
with gifts in their hands for the King of heaven.
Within you, generation after generation
shall proclaim their joy,
and the name of her who is Elect shall endure
through the generations to come.

12 16 'Cursed be any who affront you, — Ba 4:31f
cursed be any who destroy you,
who throw down your walls,
who raze your towers,
who burn your houses!
Blessed for ever be all who build you!
13 17 Then you will exult, and rejoice
over the sons of the upright,
for they will all have been gathered in
and will bless the Lord of the ages.

14 18 'Happy are those who love you, — Ps 122:6 Is 66:10
happy those who rejoice over your peace,
happy those who have mourned
over all your punishment!
For they will soon rejoice within you,
witnessing all your blessedness in days to come.
15 19 My soul blesses the Lord, the great King,
16 because Jerusalem shall be built anew
and his house for ever and ever.

20 'What bliss if one of my blood is left — Is 62:1-2 Ba 5:1 Hg 2:9
to see your glory and praise the King of heaven!
21 The gates of Jerusalem shall be built
of sapphire and of emerald,
and all your walls of precious stone;
the towers of Jerusalem shall be built of gold — Is 54:11; 60:17
and their battlements of pure gold. — ↗ Rv 21: 10-21
17 The streets of Jerusalem shall be paved
with ruby and with stones from Ophir;
the gates of Jerusalem will resound
with songs of exultation;
and all her houses will say,
23 "Alleluia! Blessed be the God of Israel."
Within you they will bless the holy name
for ever and for ever.'

1 14 The end of the hymns of Tobit.

13 a. The concluding song (cf. Ex 15; Jdt 16) forms two parts. The first, vv. 1-8, is a song of thanksgiving, borrowing themes from hymns and psalms of the kingdom. The second, vv. 9-17, apostrophises Jerusalem in the style of the prophets; it expresses the exiles hopes of an ideal Jerusalem. There are considerable divergencies among the textual authorities, and some lacunae; the restoration is at times conjectural.

XIII. NINEVEH

Tobit died in peace when he was a hundred and twelve years old and received 2
an honourable burial in Nineveh. •He was sixty-two when he went blind; and 2 3
after his cure he lived from then on in comfort, practising almsgiving and 4
continually praising God and extolling his greatness. •When he was at the 3 5
4:2-3 Gn47:29 point of death he summoned his son Tobias and gave him these instructions,
'My son, take your children •and hurry away to Media, since I believe the word 4
Na 1-3 of God pronounced over Nineveh by Nahum.[a] Everything will come true, 6
everything happen that the emissaries of God, the prophets of Israel, have
predicted against Assyria and Nineveh; not one of their words shall prove empty.
It will all take place in due time.[b] You will be safer in Media than in Assyria
or in Babylonia. Since I for my part know and believe that everything God has
said will come true; so it will be, and not a word of the prophecies shall fail.

Is 5:13 'A census will be taken of our brothers living in the land of Israel and they
Jr 9:15 Ezk12:15 Ezk 23 will be exiled far from their own fair country. The entire territory of Israel will
become a desert, and Samaria and Jerusalem will become a desert, and the
Is 64:10 Is35:8-10 Jr 31 + Ezk36:24f Ezr 3:12 Hg 2:3 Jr 31:38f house of God, for a time, will be laid waste and burnt. •Then once again God 5
will take pity on them and bring them back to the land of Israel. They will rebuild
his house, although it will be less beautiful than the first, until the time has fully
come. But after this, all will return from captivity and rebuild Jerusalem in all
her glory, and the house of God will be rebuilt within her as the prophets of
Israel have foretold. •And all the people of the whole earth will be converted 6
Ezk40-42 Hg 2:9 Is 18:7; 19:22 and will fear God with all sincerity. All will renounce their false gods who have
led them astray into error, •and will bless the God of the ages by upright conduct. 7
Jr 16:19 All the Israelites spared in those days will remember God in sincerity of heart.
Is 60:4,21 Jr 32:37 Ezk34:28; 36:12; 37:25; 39:26 They will come and gather in Jerusalem and thereafter dwell securely in the
land of Abraham, which shall be their own. And those who sincerely love God
shall rejoice. And those who commit sin and wickedness shall vanish from the
earth.

'And now, my children, I lay this duty on you: serve God sincerely, and do 8 10
what is pleasing to him. And lay on your children the obligation to behave 11
uprightly, to give alms, to keep God in mind and to bless his name always,
sincerely and with all their might.

'So then, my son, leave Nineveh; do not stay here. •As soon as you have 9,10 12
buried your mother next to me, go the same day, whenever it may be, and do 13
not linger in this country where I see wickedness and perfidy unashamedly
1:21+ triumphant. Consider, my child, all that Nadab did to his fosterfather Ahikar.
Was he not forced to go underground, though still a living man? But God made
the criminal pay for his outrage before the eyes of his victim, since Ahikar came
back to the light of day, while Nadab went down to everlasting darkness in
punishment for plotting against Ahikar's life. Because of his good works[c] Ahikar
escaped the deadly snare Nadab had laid for him, and Nadab fell into it to his
own ruin. •So, my children, you see what comes of almsgiving, and what wicked- 11
ness leads to, I mean to death. But now breath fails me.'

They laid him back on his bed; he died and was buried with honour.

4:4 Gn49:31 When his mother died, Tobias buried her beside his father. Then he left for 12 14
Media with his wife and children. He lived in Ecbatana with Raguel, his father-
in-law. •He treated the aging parents of his wife with every care and respect, 13 15
and later buried them in Ecbatana in Media. Tobias inherited the patrimony
of Raguel besides that of his father Tobit. •Much honoured, he lived to the age 14 16
of a hundred and seventeen years.[d] •Before he died he witnessed the ruin of 15
Nineveh. He saw the Ninevites taken prisoner and deported to Media by Cyaxares
king of Media. He blessed God for everything he inflicted on the Ninevites and

Assyrians. Before his death he had the opportunity of rejoicing over the fate of Nineveh, and he blessed the Lord God for ever and ever. Amen. Ps 137:8 Na 1-3

14 a. Var. 'Jonah'.

b. The author knows that these events have already taken place, but makes Tobit foretell them as one living at the apogee of the Assyrian empire; this is a characteristic device of apocalyptic literature. When we come to the author's own day, however, apocalypse becomes prophecy and he speaks of the future messianic age (when 'the time has fully come' v. 5).

c. Var. 'my good works'.

d. Var. one hundred and twenty-seven, one hundred and seven, ninety-nine (Vulg.).

JUDITH[a]

I. THE CAMPAIGN OF HOLOFERNES

Nebuchadnezzar and Arphaxad

Gn 10:22 1 It was the twelfth year of Nebuchadnezzar[b] who reigned over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh. Arphaxad[c] was then reigning over the Medes at 1
Ecbatana. •He surrounded this city with walls of dressed stones three cubits 2
thick and six cubits long, making the rampart seventy cubits high and fifty
cubits wide. •At the gates he placed towers one hundred cubits high and, at the 3
foundations, sixty cubits wide, •the gates themselves being seventy cubits high 4
and forty wide to allow his forces to march out in a body and his infantry to
parade freely.

Now at this time King Nebuchadnezzar gave battle to King Arphaxad in the 5
great plain lying in the territory of Ragae. •Supporting him were all the peoples 6
from the highlands,[d] all from the Euphrates and Tigris and Hydaspes, and
those from the plains who were subject to Arioch, king of the Elymaeans.[e]
Thus many nations had mustered to take part in the battle of the sons of
Cheleoud.[f]

Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians sent a message to all the inhabitants 7
of Persia, to all the inhabitants of the western countries, Cilicia, Damascus,
Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon, to all those along the coast, •to the peoples of Carmel, 8
Gilead, Upper Galilee, the great plain of Esdraelon, •to the men of Samaria 9
and its outlying towns, to those beyond Jordan, as far away as Jerusalem,
Bethany, Chelous, Kadesh, the river of Egypt, Tahpanhes, Rameses and the
whole territory of Goshen, •beyond Tanis, too, and Memphis, and to all the 10
inhabitants of Egypt as far as the frontiers of Ethiopia.[g] •But the inhabitants 11
of these countries ignored the summons of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians
and did not rally to him to make war. They were not afraid of him, since in their
view he appeared isolated.[h] Hence they sent his ambassadors back with nothing
achieved and in disgrace. •Nebuchadnezzar was furious with all these countries.[i] 12
He swore by his throne and kingdom to take revenge on all the territories of
Cilicia, Damascene and Syria, of the Moabites and of the Ammonites, of Judaea
and Egypt as far as the limits of the two seas,[j] and to ravage them with the sword.

The campaign against Arphaxad

In the seventeenth year he and his forces gave battle to King Arphaxad and 13
in this battle defeated him. He routed Arphaxad's entire army and all his cavalry
and chariots; •he occupied his towns and advanced on Ecbatana; he seized its 14
towers and plundered its market places, reducing its former magnificence to a
mockery. •He later captured Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragae and, thrusting 15
him through with his spears, destroyed him once and for all. 16

He then retired with his troops and all who had joined forces with him:
a vast horde of armed men. Then, carefree, he and his army gave themselves up
Est 1:3-4 to feasting for a hundred and twenty days.

The campaign in the west

1 2 In the eighteenth year,[a] on the twenty-second day of the first month, a rumour
ran through the palace that Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians was to
2 have his revenge on the whole world, as he had threatened. •Summoning his
general staff and senior officers he held a secret conference with them, and
3 with his own lips pronounced utter destruction on all these countries. •It was
then decreed that everyone should be put to death who had not answered the
king's appeal.
4 When the council was over, Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians sent for
Holofernes,[b] general-in-chief of his armies and subordinate only to himself.
5 He said to him, •'Thus speaks the Great King, lord of the whole world:[c] Est3:13b
"Be on your way; take men of proved valour, about a hundred and twenty
thousand foot soldiers and a strong contingent of horse with twelve thousand
6 cavalrymen; •then advance against the western lands, since these people have
7 disregarded my call. •Bid them have earth and water ready,[d] because in my rage I
am about to march on them; the feet of my soldiers will cover the whole face of the
8 earth, and I will plunder it. •Their wounded will fill the valleys and the torrents
9 and rivers, blocked with their dead, will overflow. •I will lead them captive
10 to the ends of the earth. •Now go! Begin by conquering this whole region for me.
If they surrender to you, hold them for me until the time comes to punish them.
11 But if they resist, look on no one with clemency. Hand them over to slaughter
12 and plunder throughout the territory entrusted to you. •For by my life and
by the living power of my kingdom, I have spoken. All this I will do indeed.
13 And you, neglect none of your master's commands, act strictly according to my
orders without further delay." '
14/7 Leaving the presence of his sovereign, Holofernes immediately summoned
15 all the marshals, generals and officers of the Assyrian army •and detailed the
picked troops as his master had ordered, about a hundred and twenty thousand
16 men and a further twelve thousand mounted bowmen. •He organised these in the
17/8 normal battle formation. •He then secured vast numbers of camels, donkeys
and mules to carry the baggage, and innumerable sheep, oxen and goats for
18/10 food supplies. •Every man received full rations and a generous sum of gold
and silver from the king's purse.
19/11 He then set out for the campaign with his whole army, in advance of King
Nebuchadnezzar, to overwhelm the whole western region with his chariots, his
20 horsemen and his picked body of foot. •A composite corps brought up the rear,
as numerous as locusts or the grains of sand on the ground; there was no Jr 7:12 Jl 2:2-7.11
counting their multitude.

The stages of Holofernes' advance[e]

21/12 Thus they set out from Nineveh and marched for three days towards the plain

1 a. The Vulg. text differs considerably from the Greek. Its most important additions will be found in the footnotes, and where its verse numbering is different from the Greek this will be noted.

b. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, was never styled 'king of Assyria', nor was Nineveh his capital. On the liberties the author takes with history, see Introduction to Judith etc. Here Nebuchadnezzar stands for the mighty and irreligious enemy of the people of God.

c. Arphaxad is unknown to historians. His name perhaps suggests Phraortes, founder of the kingdom of Media.

d. The high plateaux of W. Iran.

e. The author is probably referring to the kingdom of Elymais, cf. 1 M 6:1.

f. Probably the Chaldaeans.

g. The list mentions all the vassals or allies of Nebuchadnezzar.

h. Lit. 'one man only', i.e. left dependent on any help he can find; though possibly 'a man of straw'.

i. Lit. 'the whole earth'. The phrase, common in Jdt, either means the district referred to in the context (the whole country) or is a hyperbolic expression.

j. The phrase is, perhaps deliberately, obscure. It may be understood 'as far as their western boundaries'.

2 a. Of his reign, i.e. 587, the year he captured Jerusalem. The author presumably intends to contrast that disaster with the victory described here. This chapter preserves a memory of Canaanite confederacies against either Assyria or Babylon.

b. Holofernes and Bagoas, 12:11, are Persian names and two officers of Artaxerxes III Ochos were so named. The author may have wished to include the campaigns of this king too under the (comprehensive) name of Nebuchadnezzar.

c. Official title of the Persian kings.

d. Persian formula for all the facilities required by a conqueror for his march and his occupation.

e. On the place-names and the author's free treatment of geography, see Introduction.

of Bectileth. From Bectileth they went on to pitch camp near the mountains
that lie to the north of Upper Cilicia. •From there Holofernes advanced into 22
the highlands with his whole army, infantry, horsemen, chariots. •He cut his 23 13
Gn 10:6, 13, 22 way through Put and Lud, stripped all the sons of Rassis and sons of Ishmael
living on the verge of the desert south of Cheleon, •marched along the Euphrates, 24 14
crossed Mesopotamia, razed all the fortified towns controlling the wadi Abron
and reached the sea. •Next he attacked the territories of Cilicia, butchering 25 15
all who offered him resistance, advanced on the southern frontiers of Japheth,
facing Arabia, •completely encircled the Midianites, burned their tents and 26 16
plundered their sheep-runs, •made his way down to the Damascus plain in the 27 17
time of the wheat harvest,[f] set fire to the fields, destroyed the flocks and herds,
Ex 15: 15-16 sacked the towns, laid the countryside waste and put all the young men to the
sword. •Fear and trembling seized all the coastal peoples. The populations of 28 18
Sidon and Tyre, of Sur, Ocina, Jamnia, Azotus, Ascalon, were panic-stricken.

3 They therefore sent envoys to him to sue for peace and say, •'We are servants 1 2
of the great King Nebuchadnezzar and we lie prone before you. Treat us as
you think fit. •Our cattle farms, all our land, all our wheat fields, our flocks 3
and herds, all the sheep-runs in our encampments are at your disposal. Do with
them as you please. •Our towns and their inhabitants, too, are at your service; 4
go and advance against them if such is your good pleasure.' •These men came to 5
Holofernes and delivered the message as above.

He then made his way down to the coast with his army and stationed 6 7
garrisons in all the fortified towns, levying outstanding men there as auxiliaries. 8
The people of these cities and of all the other towns in the neighbourhood 7 9
welcomed him, wearing garlands and dancing to the sound of tambourines. 10
Ex 34:13+ 2 Ch 17:6 Notwithstanding this, he demolished their shrines[a] and cut down their sacred 8 11,12
trees, carrying out his commission to destroy all local gods and to force the nations 13
6:2 to worship Nebuchadnezzar alone and to compel men of every language and
nationality to hail him as a god.[b]

Thus he reached the edge of Esdraelon, in the neighbourhood of Dothan, 9
a village facing the great ridge of Judaea. •He pitched camp between Geba and 10
Scythopolis and stayed there a full month to replenish his supplies.

Judaea on the alert

4 When the Israelites living in Judaea heard how Holofernes, general-in-chief 1
of Nebuchadnezzar king of the Assyrians, had treated the various nations,
first plundering their temples and then destroying them, •they were thoroughly 2
alarmed at his approach and trembled for Jerusalem and the Temple of the
Lord their God. •They had returned from captivity only a short time before, 3
and the resettlement of the people in Judaea and the reconsecration of the sacred
furnishings, of the altar, and of the Temple, which had been profaned, were of
recent date.[a]

They therefore alerted the whole of Samaria, Kona, Beth-horon, Belmain, 4 3
Jericho, Choba, Aesora and the Salem valley. •They occupied the summits of 5
the highest mountains and fortified the villages on them; they laid in supplies 4
for the coming war, as the fields had just been harvested. •Joakim the high 6 5
priest, resident in Jerusalem at the time, wrote to the inhabitants of Bethulia
and of Betomesthaim,[b] two towns facing Esdraelon, towards the plain of
Dothan. •He ordered them to occupy the mountain passes, the only means of 7 6
access to Judaea, for there it would be easy for them to halt an attacking force,
the narrowness of the approach not allowing men to advance more than two
abreast. •The Israelites carried out the orders of Joakim the high priest and of 8 7
the people's Council of Elders in session at Jerusalem.[c]

A nation at prayer

All the men of Israel cried most fervently to God and humbled themselves 9 8

10/9 before him. •They, their wives, their children, their cattle, all their resident Jon 3:7-8
11 aliens, hired or slave, wrapped sackcloth round their loins. •All the Israelites in Jerusalem, including the women and children, lay prone in front of the Temple,
12 and with ashes on their heads stretched out their hands[d] before the Lord. •They draped the very altar in sackcloth and fervently joined together in begging the Est 4:1f
God of Israel not to let their little ones be massacred, their wives carried off, the towns of their heritage destroyed, the Temple profaned and desecrated for
13 the heathen to gloat over it. •The Lord heard them and looked kindly on their distress.

The people fasted for many days throughout Judaea as well as in Jerusalem Est 4:16
14 before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty.[e] •Joakim the high priest and all who stood before the Lord, the Lord's priests and ministers, wore sackcloth Jl 2:17
round their loins as they offered the perpetual holocaust and the votive and
15 voluntary offerings of the people. •With ashes on their turbans they earnestly called on the Lord to look kindly on the House of Israel.

A council of war in Holofernes' camp

1 5 Holofernes, general-in-chief of the Assyrian army, received the intelligence that the sons of Israel were preparing for war; that they had closed the mountain passes, fortified the high peaks and laid obstructions in the plains.
2 Holofernes was furious. He summoned all the princes of Moab, all the generals Nb20:23+
3 of Ammon and all the satraps of the coastal regions. •'Men of Canaan,' he said 'tell me: what people is this that occupies the highlands? What towns does it inhabit? How large is its army? What are the sources of its power and strength?
4 Who is the king who rules it and commands its army? •Why have these not condescended to wait on me, as all the western peoples have done?'[a]
5 Achior,[b] leader of all the Ammonites, replied, 'May my lord please listen 11:9-19
to what your servant is going to say. I will give you the facts about these mountain folk whose home lies close to you. You will hear no lie from the
6 mouth of your servant. •These people are descended from the Chaldaeans.
7 They once came to live in Mesopotamia, because they did not want to follow
8 the gods of their ancestors who lived in Chaldaea. •They abandoned the way of their ancestors to worship the God of heaven,[c] the God they had learnt to acknowledge. Banished from the presence of their own gods, they fled to
9 Mesopotamia where they lived for a long time. •When God told them to leave Gn11:31-12:5
their home and set out for Canaan, they settled there and accumulated gold and Gn 15:14
10/9 silver and great herds of cattle. •Next, famine having overwhelmed the land of Canaan, they went down to Egypt where they stayed as long as food could be Gn42:1-5; 46:1-7
found there. There they became a great multitude, a race beyond counting. Ex 1:7
11/10 But the king of Egypt turned against them and exploited them by forcing them
12 to make bricks; he degraded them, reducing them to slavery. •They cried to Ex1:8-14
11 their God, who struck the entire land of Egypt with incurable plagues, and the 6:6 Ex 7-12

f. The Hebrews distinguish the barley harvest, in April, cf. 2 S 21:9 from the wheat harvest, at the end of May.

3 a. Following the Syriac version; Greek 'he laid their land waste'.

b. Neither the Assyrian nor the Babylonian kings ever insisted on this. The Seleucids, following Alexander's lead, were the first to claim divine honours.

4 a. The author ignores time (cf. Introduction) to place the return from exile and the repopulation of Jerusalem (539-400), even perhaps the purification of the Temple after the persecution of Antiochus IV (165), all in the lifetime of Nebuchadnezzar.

b. The two towns are not mentioned elsewhere. Bethulia is represented here as a key position dominating the approaches to Judah, v. 7 and 8:21.

c. A 'Council of Elders' associated with the high priest is not found in pre-exilic times but appears as an established institution in the Greek period.

d. 'their hands' corr.; 'their sackcloth' Greek; Vulg. 'they made their children lie prone in front of the Temple'.

e. In the Vulg. the high priest travels through Israel urging the people to pray, by reminding them of the defeat of Amalek, Ex 17:9-13.

5 a. On Jewish refusal to conform, see Est 3:8+.

b. The figure of Achior the Ammonite seems to be modelled on Ahikar the virtuous pagan sage, cf. Tb 1:21+. Into his mouth the author puts a summary of the history of Israel, conceived of in terms of the acts of God, a favourite O.T. theme, cf. especially Ps 78, 105,106; cf. Ezk 16,20; Ws 10f, and in N.T. Ac 7. Cf. the episode of Balaam the pagan soothsayer, Nb 22-24. This prepares the way for the discourse of Judith, 11:9-19.

c. Characteristically Persian expression, cf. Ezr 5:11f; 6:9f and the Elephantine papyri.

Ex 14: 21-22 Egyptians expelled them. •God dried up the Red Sea before them •and led 13.14 / 12 them forward by way of Sinai and Kadesh-barnea. Having driven off all the Nb 21: 21-32 Jos 3 inhabitants of the desert, •they settled in the land of the Amorites and, such 15 was their strength, exterminated the inhabitants of Heshbon. Then, having crossed the Jordan, they took possession of all the highlands, •driving out the 16 / 20 Dt 7:1+ Canaanites before them and the Perizzites, Jebusites, Shechemites and all the Dt 28-30 Girgashites, and lived there for many years. •All the while they did not sin 17 / 21 Ps 106: 40-46 Is 59:2 before their God, prosperity was theirs, for they have a God who hates wickedness. •But when they turned from the path he had marked out for them, 18 / 22 2 K 25 some were exterminated in a succession of battles, others taken captive to a foreign land. The Temple of their God was razed to the ground and their towns were seized by their enemies. •Then having turned once again to their God, 19 / 23 they came back from the places to which they had been dispersed and scattered, regained possession of Jerusalem, where they have their Temple, and reoccupied the highlands which had been left deserted. •So now, master and lord, if this 20 / 24 8:18 people has committed any fault, if they have sinned against their God, let us first make sure that they have offended in this way, and then let us advance and 11:10 attack them. •But if their nation is guiltless, my lord would do better to abstain, 21 / 25 for fear that their Lord and God should protect them; we should then become the laughing-stock of the whole world.'

When Achior had ended this speech, all the people crowding round the tent 22 / 26 began protesting. Holofernes' own senior officers, as well as all the coastal peoples and the Moabites, threatened to tear him limb from limb. •'Why should 23 / 27 9:7; 16:2 we be afraid of the Israelites? They are a weak and powerless people, quite 28 unable to stand a stiff attack. •Forward! Advance! Your army, Holofernes our 24 master, will swallow them in one mouthful!'[a]

Achior handed over to the Israelites

6 When the uproar of those crowding round the council had subsided, 1 Holofernes, general-in-chief of the Assyrian army, reprimanded Achior in front of the whole crowd of foreigners and Ammonites.[a] •'Achior, who do you 2 think you are, you and the Ammonite mercenaries, playing the prophet like 9:7 this with us today, and trying to dissuade us from making war on the people of Israel? You claim their God will protect them. And who is their God if not 3:8 Dn3: 14-18 Is 36 Nebuchadnezzar? He himself will display his power and wipe them off the face of the earth, and their God will certainly not save them. •But we, his servants, 3 18-20; 37:4; 16-20 shall destroy them as easily as a single individual. They can never resist the strength of our cavalry. •We shall burn them all. Their mountains will be drunk 4 with their blood and their plains filled with their corpses. Far from being able to resist us, every one of them will die; thus says King Nebuchadnezzar, lord of the whole world. For he has spoken, and his words will not prove empty. As for you, Achior, you Ammonite mercenary, who in a rash moment said 5 these words, you shall not see my face again until the day when I have taken 5:12; 16:12 my revenge on this brood of fugitives from Egypt. •And then the swords of my 6 / 4 soldiers and the spears[b] of my officers will pierce your sides. You will fall among the wounded, the moment I turn on Israel. •My servants will now take 7 you into the highlands and leave you near one of the towns in the passes; •you 8 will not die, until you share their ruin. •No need to look so sad if you cherish 9 / 5 the secret hope that they will not be captured! I have spoken; none of my words will prove idle.'

Holofernes having commanded his tent-orderlies to seize Achior, to take him 10 / 7 to Bethulia and to hand him over to the Israelites, •the orderlies took him, 11 / 8 escorted him out of the camp and across the plain, and then, making for the highlands, reached the springs below Bethulia. •As soon as the men of the 12 town sighted them, they snatched up their weapons, left the town and made for the mountain tops, while all the slingers pelted them with stones to prevent

13 9 them from coming up. •However, they managed to take cover at the foot of
the slope, where they bound Achior and left him lying at the bottom of the
mountain and returned to their master.
14 10 The Israelites then came down from their town, stopped by him, unbound
him and took him to Bethulia, where they brought him before the chief men
15 11 of the town, •who at that time were Uzziah son of Micah of the tribe of Simeon,[c]
16 Chabris son of Gothoniel and Charmis son of Melchiel. •These summoned all
the elders of the town. The young men and the women also hurried to the
assembly. Achior was made to stand with all the people surrounding him and
17 12 Uzziah questioned him about what had happened. •He answered by telling them
what had been said at Holofernes' council, and what he himself had said in the
13 presence of the Assyrian leaders, and how Holofernes had bragged of what he
18 14 would do to the House of Israel. •At this the people fell to the ground and
19 15 worshipped God. •'Lord God of heaven,' they cried 'take notice of their
arrogance and have pity on the humiliation of our race. Look kindly today on
20 16 those who are consecrated to you.' •They then spoke reassuringly to Achior
21 19 and praised him warmly. •After the assembly Uzziah took him home and gave
a banquet for the elders; all that night they called on the God of Israel for help.

II. BETHULIA UNDER SIEGE

The campaign against Israel

1 7 The following day Holofernes issued orders to his whole army and to the
whole host of auxiliaries who had joined him to break camp and march on
Bethulia, to occupy the mountain passes and so open the campaign against the
2 Israelites. •The troops broke camp that same day. The actual fighting force
numbered one hundred and twenty thousand[a] infantry and twelve thousand
cavalry, not to mention the baggage train with the vast number of men on foot
3 concerned with that. •They penetrated the valley in the neighbourhood of
Bethulia, near the spring, and deployed on a wide front from Dothan to Balbaim
4 and, in depth, from Bethulia to Cyamon, which faces on Esdraelon. •When the
Israelites saw this horde, they were all appalled and said to each other, 'Now
they will lick the whole country clean. Not even the loftiest peaks, the gorges
5 or the hills will be able to stand the weight of them.' •Each man snatched up
his arms; they lit beacons on their towers and spent the whole night on watch. 1M 12:28-29
6 On the second day Holofernes deployed his entire cavalry in sight of the
7 6 Israelites in Bethulia. •He reconnoitred the slopes leading up to the town, located
the water-points, seized them and posted pickets over them and returned to the
8 main body. •The chiefs of the sons of Esau, the leaders of the Moabites[b] and
9 the generals of the coastal district then came to him and said, •'If our master
10 will please listen to us, his forces will not sustain a single wound. •The
Israelites do not rely so much on their spears as on the height of the mountains 1K 20:23,28 Ps 69:14,16
where they live. And admittedly it is not at all easy to scale these heights
11 of theirs.
12 'This being the case, master, do not engage them in a pitched battle, and then
9 you will not lose a single man. •Stay in camp, keep all your troops there too,
13 while your servants seize the spring which rises at the foot of the mountain,
since that is what provides the population of Bethulia with their water supply.

d. Against Achior's religious interpretation of history they urge the human argument, brute force. The entire book demonstrates Achior's contention which Judith sustains, 11:10.

c. The author of the book seems to be particularly interested in the tribe of Simeon which plays so inconspicuous a part in Israelite history. The name of Uzziah recalls that of Uzziel, 1 Ch 4:42. In 9:2-4 Judith rehabilitates the patriarch censured in Gn 34:30 and 49:5-7.

6 a. 'Ammonites' Rec. Luc.; 'Moabites' Text. Rec. In the following verse read 'Ammonite' with Vet.Lat. and Syr.; Text. Rec. 'Ephraimite'.

b. 'spears' Vet. Lat. and Syr.

7 a. '120,000' with Vulg., cf. 2:15; '170,000' Greek.

b. The Edomites ('sons of Esau') and Moabites are traditional enemies of Israel, Nb 20:23+.

Thirst will then force them to surrender their town. Meanwhile, we and our men will climb the nearest mountain tops and form advance posts there to prevent anyone from leaving the town. •Hunger will waste them with their 14
wives and children, and before the sword can reach them they will already be lying in the streets outside their houses. •And you will make them pay dearly 15
for their defiance and their refusal to meet you peaceably.'

Their words pleased Holofernes as well as all his officers and he decided to 16 (10)
do as they suggested. •Accordingly a troop of Moabites[c] moved forward with a 17 (11)
further five thousand Assyrians. They penetrated the valley and seized the Israelites' waterpoints and springs. •Meanwhile the Edomites and Ammonites 18
went and took up positions in the highlands opposite Dothan, sending some of their men to the south-east opposite Egrebel, near Chous on the wadi Mochmur. The rest of the Assyrian army took up positions in the plain, covering every inch of the earth; their tents and equipment made an immense encampment, so vast were their numbers.

The Israelites called on the Lord their God, dispirited because the enemy 19
had surrounded them and cut all line of retreat. •For thirty-four days the Assyrian 20 (11)
army, infantry, chariots, cavalrymen, had them surrounded. Every water jar the inhabitants of Bethulia had was empty, •their wells were drying up; on no day 21
could a man quench his thirst, since their water was rationed. •Their little 22
children pined away, the women and young men grew weak with thirst; they collapsed in the streets and gateways of the town; they had no strength left.

Young men, women, children, the whole people thronged clamouring round 23 (12)
Uzziah and the chief men of the town, shouting in the presence of the assembled elders, •'May God be judge between you and us! For you have done us great 24 (13)
harm, by not suing for peace with the Assyrians. •And now there is no one to 25 (14)
help us. God has delivered us into their hands to be prostrated before them in thirst and utter helplessness. •Call them in at once; hand the whole town over 26 (15)
to be sacked by Holofernes' men and all his army. •After all, we should be much 27 (16)
better off as their booty than we are now; no doubt we shall be enslaved, but at least we shall be alive and not see our little ones dying before our eyes or our wives and children perishing. •By heaven and earth and by our God, the Lord 28 (17)
of our fathers who is punishing us for our sins and the sins of our ancestors,[d] we implore you to take this course[e] now, today.' •Bitter lamentations rose from the 29 (18)
whole assembly, and they all cried loudly to the Lord God.[f]

Then Uzziah spoke to them, 'Take heart, brothers! Let us hold out five days 30 (23)
more. By then the Lord our God will take pity on us, for he will not desert us 24
altogether. •At the end of this time, if there is no help forthcoming, I will do 31 (25)
as you have said.' •With that he dismissed the people to their various quarters. 32
The men went to man the walls and towers of the town, sending the women and children home. The town was full of despondency.

III. JUDITH

A portrait of Judith

8 Judith[a] was informed at the time of what had happened. She was the daughter 1
of Merari son of Ox, son of Joseph, son of Oziel, son of Elkiah, son of Ananias, son of Gideon, son of Raphaim, son of Ahitub, son of Elijah, son of Hilkiah, son of Eliab, son of Nathanael, son of Salamiel, son of Sarasadai, son of Israel.[b]
Her husband Manasseh, of her own tribe and family, had died at the time of 2
barley harvest. •He was supervising the men as they bound up the sheaves in 3
the field when he caught sunstroke and had to take to his bed. He died in Bethulia, his home town, and was buried with his ancestors in the field that lies between Dothan and Balamon. •As a widow, Judith stayed inside her home for three 4
Jg 3:20 2 K 4:10 years and four months. •She had had an upper room built for herself on the 5

6 roof. She wore sackcloth round her waist and dressed in widow's weeds. •She Lk 2:37▲
fasted every day of her widowhood except for the sabbath eve, the sabbath itself, 10:2
the eve of New Moon, the feast of New Moon and the festival days of the House
7 of Israel. •Now, she was very beautiful, charming to see. Her husband Manasseh
had left her gold and silver, menservants and maidservants, cattle and lands;
8 and she lived among all her possessions •without anyone finding a word to say
against her, so devoutly did she fear God.

Judith and the elders

9 Hearing how the water shortage had demoralised the people and how they
had complained bitterly to the headman of the town, and being also told what
Uzziah had said to them and how he had given them his oath to surrender the
10 town to the Assyrians in five days' time, •Judith immediately sent her woman
of affairs who managed her property to summon Chabris and Charmis, two elders
11 of the town. •When these came in she said:

'Listen to me, leaders of the people of Bethulia. You were wrong to speak to
the people as you did today and to bind yourself by oath, in defiance of God, to
surrender the town to our enemies if the Lord did not come to your help within
12 *11* a set number of days. •Who are you, to put God to the test today, you, out Jb38:2;40:2f.
13 of all mankind, to set yourselves above him? •You of all people to put the Lord 7f;42:3
14 Almighty to the test! You do not understand anything, and never will. •If you Pr 14:10
cannot sound the depths of the heart of man or unravel the arguments of his 1Co2:11
mind, how can you fathom the God who made all things, or sound his mind Ps139:16-17
or unravel his purposes? No, brothers, do not provoke the anger of the Lord Rm11:33-34
15 our God. •Although it may not be his will to help us within the next five days, he
has the power to protect us for as many days as he pleases, just as he has the
16 power to destroy us before our enemies. •But you have no right to demand
15 guarantees where the designs of the Lord our God are concerned. For God is
17 not to be coerced as man is, nor is he, like mere man, to be cajoled. •Rather,
as we wait patiently for him to save, let us plead with him to help us. He will
hear our voice if such is his good pleasure.[c]

18 'And indeed of recent times and still today there never has been one tribe 5:20-21; 11:10
of ours, or family, or village, or town that has worshipped gods made with human
19 hands, as once was done, •and that was the reason why our ancestors were Ps78:56f; 106:13f
delivered over to sword and sack, and perished in misery at the hands of our Jr7:17-20; 14:7–15:9+
20 enemies. We for our part acknowledge no other God than him; and so we may Ezk16:15-58
hope he will not look on us disdainfully or desert our nation.[d]

21 'If indeed they capture us, as you expect, then all Judaea will be captured too,
and our holy places plundered, and we shall answer with our blood for their
22 profanation. •The slaughter of our brothers, the exile of our country, the
unpeopling of our heritage, will recoil on our own heads among the nations
whose slaves we will become, and our new masters will look down on us as an

c. 'Moabites' Vet. Lat. and Syr.; 'Ammonites' Text. Rec.

d. Punishment for individual faults here involves collective punishment for the nation, in accordance with Israel's ancient conviction that the guilt and punishment of one meant the guilt and punishment of all.

e. 'to take this course' Syr. and Vet. Lat.; 'not to take this course' Greek.

f. Vulg. gives this prayer thus '*19* We have sinned with our ancestors, we have acted wickedly, we have committed a grave sin. *20* Have mercy on us, since you are good, or punish our iniquities yourself; do not deliver those who trust you to a people that does not know you! *21* So that the pagans may not say: Where is their God? [cf. Ps 42:10; Jl 2:17]. *22* Then, tired of crying and weary of weeping, they fell silent.'

8 a. The name of Judith (cf. Gn 26:34) seems to have been chosen by the author for its meaning 'the Jewess'. Judith, whose action rivals that of Jael, Jg 4: 17-22, is the model of a true daughter of Israel. In her song of triumph, 16:2,4, etc., the voice is that of the whole nation personified in her.

b. This genealogy omits the name of Simeon (found in certain MSS and versions), cf. 9:2. But v. 2 presupposes some tribal name.

c. Like Job, the elders of Bethulia were wrong to question God's intentions, Jb 38:2, etc.; like him they should submit in silence. But the author of Jdt teaches a more filial trust than Jb, and his conception of the power of prayer is already Christian.

d. This conviction, already stated by Achior, will be repeated by Judith in the presence of Holofernes. Judith joins her compatriots in a national examination of conscience, which acquits them of the idolatry long since denounced by the prophets but not rooted out until the period of the second Temple.

outrage and a disgrace; •for our surrender will not reinstate us in their favour; 23
no, the Lord our God will make it a thing to be ashamed of. •So now, brothers, 24
let us set an example to our brothers, since their lives depend on us and our
most sacred possessions—Temple and altar—rest on us.

'All this being so, let us rather give thanks to the Lord our God who, as he 25 21
Gn 21:1-9; 28:5; 29:22-30; 31 tested our ancestors, is now testing us.[e] •Remember how he treated Abraham, all 26 22
the ordeals of Isaac, all that happened to Jacob in Syrian Mesopotamia while
he kept the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother. •For as these ordeals were 27
intended by him to search their hearts, so now this is not vengeance God exacts
Dt 4:7 against us, but a warning inflicted by the Lord on those who are near his heart.'

Uzziah replied, 'Everything you have said has been spoken from sincerity 28
of heart and no one will contradict a word of it. •Not that today is the first time 29
your wisdom has been displayed; from your earliest years all the people have
known how shrewd you are and of how sound a heart. •But, parched with 30
thirst, the people forced us to act as we had promised them and to bind ourselves
by an inviolable oath. •You are a devout woman; pray to the Lord, then, to 31 29
send us a downpour to fill our cisterns, so that our faintness may pass.'

Judith replied, 'Listen to me. I intend to do something, the memory of which 32
will be handed down to the children of our race from age to age. •Tonight you 33 32
must be at the gate of the town. I shall make my way out with my attendant.
Before the time fixed by you for surrendering the town to our enemies, the Lord
will make use of me to rescue Israel. •You must not ask what I intend to do; 34 33
I will not tell you until I have done it.' •Uzziah and the chief man said, 'Go in 35 34
peace. May the Lord show you a way to take revenge on our enemies.' •And 36
leaving the upper room they went back to their posts.

Judith's prayer

9 Judith threw herself face to the ground, scattered ashes on her head, uncovered 1
the sackcloth she was wearing and cried loudly to the Lord. At the same time
Ex 30:7,8 Ps 141:2 in Jerusalem the evening incense was being offered in the Temple of God.[a]
Judith said:

6:15+ Gn 34 'Lord, God of my father Simeon, 2
you armed him with a sword to take vengeance on the foreigners
who had undone a virgin's girdle[b] to her shame,
laid bare her thigh to her confusion,
violated her womb to her dishonour,
since though you said, "This must not be", they did it.
For this you handed their leaders over to slaughter, 3
their bed, defiled by their deceit, to blood.
You struck the slaves down with the chiefs
and the chiefs with their servants.[c]
You left their wives to be carried off, 4 3
their daughters to be taken captive,
and their spoils to be shared out
among the sons you loved,
who had been so zealous for you,
had loathed the stain put on their blood
and called on you for help.

'God, my God,
now hear this widow too;
Is 44:7 for you have made the past, 5 4
and what is happening now, and what will follow.
Ps 115:3; 135:6 What is, what will be, you have planned;
what has been, you designed.
Your purposes stood forward; 6

"See, we are here!" they said.
5 For all of your ways are prepared
and your judgements delivered with foreknowledge.

7 6 'See the Assyrians, boasting in their army,
glorying in their horses and their riders,
exulting in the strength of their infantry.
9 Trust as they may in shield and spear,
in bow and sling,
10 in you they have not recognised
the Lord, the shatterer of war;
8 yours alone the title of Lord.

11 'Break their violence with your might,
in your anger bring down their strength.
For they plan to profane your holy places,
to defile the tabernacle, the resting place of your glorious name,
and to throw down with iron the horn of your altar.
9 12 Observe their arrogance,
send your fury on their heads,
give the needful courage
to this widow's hand.
10 By guile of my lips
strike slave down with master,
and master with his servant.
15 Break their pride
by a woman's hand.

11 16 'Your strength does not lie in numbers,
nor your might in violent men;
since you are the God of the humble,
the help of the oppressed,
the support of the weak,
the refuge of the forsaken,
the saviour of the despairing.[d]

12 Please, please, God of my father,
God of the heritage of Israel,
17 Master of heaven and earth,
Creator of the waters,
King of your whole creation,
hear my prayer.
13 18 Give me a beguiling tongue
to wound and kill
those who have formed such cruel designs
against your covenant,
against your holy dwelling place,
against Mount Zion,
against the house belonging to your sons.
14 19 And demonstrate to every nation, every tribe,
that you are Yahweh, God[e] almighty, all-powerful,

Jb 38:35 Ba 3:35
Is46:9-13
5:23; 6:2
2 M 8:18 Ps33:16-17
16:2 Ps 46:9;76:4
1 S 14:6 Jg 7:4-7
10:4; 11:20,23; 16:6,9 Est4:17r-s

e. The lesson of patriarchal history (which the author of Jb had not detected); the suffering of the good man is not punishment but trial.

9 a. The author frequently refers to Jerusalem, the Temple, the liturgy, the high priest, 4:2,3, 6-8; 5:19; 8:21-24; 9:8,13; 15:8; 16:18.

b. 'girdle' corr.; 'womb' Greek.

c. Line corrected in accordance with 9:10; cf. Ws 18:11.

d. Note how the religion of the 'poor' (*anawim*) is recognisable here; it is characteristic of O.T. piety. cf. Zc 2:3+. Also Jr.

e. Greek reads 'God, God', an Elohistic editorial touch. So also in 13:11.

and that the race of Israel
has you for sole protector.'

IV. JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES

Judith goes to the camp of Holofernes

10 Thus Judith called on the God of Israel. When she had finished praying, 1
she rose from where she lay, summoned her attendant and went down into 2
8:6 the rooms which she used on sabbath days and feasts. •There she removed the 3
sackcloth she was wearing and, taking off her widow's dress, she washed all
over, anointed herself with costly perfumes, dressed her hair, wrapped a turban
round it and put on the dress she used to wear on joyful occasions when her
husband Manasseh was alive. •She put sandals on her feet, put on her necklaces, 4
9:13+ bracelets, rings, earrings and all her jewellery, and made herself beautiful enough
to catch the eye of every man who saw her.[a] •Then she handed her attendant 5
12:2 a skin of wine and a flask of oil, filled a bag with barley girdle cakes, cakes of
Lv 17:10-14 Est4:17x dried fruit and pure loaves,[b] and wrapping all these provisions up gave them
to her as well. •They then went out, making for the town gate of Bethulia. There 6
they found Uzziah waiting with the two elders of the town, Chabris and Charmis.
When they saw Judith, her face so changed and her clothes so different, they were 7
lost in admiration of her beauty. They said to her:

'May the God of our ancestors keep you in his favour! 8
May he grant your purposes fulfilment
to the glory of the sons of Israel,
to the greater glory of Jerusalem!'

Judith worshipped God, and then she said, 'Have the town gate opened for me 9
so that I can go out and make all your wishes come true'. They did as she asked
and gave orders to the young men to open the gate for her. •This done, Judith 10
went out accompanied by her maid, while the men of the town watched her all
the way down the mountain and across the valley, until they lost sight of her.

As the women were making straight through the valley, an advance unit of 11
Assyrians intercepted them, •and seizing Judith began questioning her. 'Which 12
side are you on? Where do you come from? Where are you going?' 'I am
a daughter of the Hebrews,' she replied 'and I am fleeing from them since they
11:5 will soon be your prey. •I am on my way to see Holofernes, the general of your 13
army, to give him trustworthy information.[c] I will show him the road to take
if he wants to capture all the highlands without losing one man or one life.'
As the men listened to what she was saying, they stared in astonishment at the 14
sight of such a beautiful woman. •'It will prove the saving of you,' they said 15
to her 'coming down to see our master of your own accord. You had better
go to his tent; some of our men will escort you and hand you over to him. •Once 16
you are in his presence do not be afraid. Tell him what you have just told us and
you will be well treated.' •They then detailed a hundred of their men as escort 17
for herself and her attendant, and these led them to the tent of Holofernes.

News of her coming had already spread through the tents, and there was a 18
general stir in the camp. She was still outside the tent of Holofernes waiting to
be announced, when a crowd began forming round her. •They were immensely 19
impressed by her beauty and impressed with the Israelites because of her. 'Who 18
could despise a people having women like this?' they kept saying. 'Better not
leave one man of them alive; let any go and they would twist the whole world
round their fingers!'

Then the bodyguard and adjutants of Holofernes came out and led Judith 20
into the tent. •Holofernes was resting on his bed under a canopy of purple and 21 19
gold studded with emeralds and precious stones. •The men announced her and 22

he came out to the open part of the tent, with silver torches carried before him.
23 20 When Judith confronted the general and his adjutant, the beauty of her face astonished them all. She fell on her face and did homage to him, but his servants raised her from the ground.

The first meeting of Judith with Holofernes

1 11 'Courage, woman,' Holofernes said 'do not be afraid. I have never hurt anyone who chose to serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of the whole world.
2 Even now, if your nation of mountain dwellers had not insulted me, I would
3 not have raised a spear against them. This was their fault, not mine. •But tell me, why have you fled from them and come to us?... Anyhow, this will prove the saving of you. Courage! You will live through this night, and many after.
4 No one shall hurt you. No, you shall be treated as well as all those are who serve my lord King Nebuchadnezzar.'

5 4 Judith said, 'Please listen favourably to what your slave has to say. Permit your servant to speak in your presence. I will speak no word of a lie in my lord's 10:13+
6 presence tonight.[a] •You have only to follow your servant's advice and God will bring your work to a successful conclusion; in what my lord undertakes he shall
7 5 not fail. •Long life to Nebuchadnezzar, king of the whole world, who has sent you to set every living soul to rights; may his power endure! Since, thanks to you, he is served not only by men, but through your compulsion the wild animals Jr 27:6 Ba3:16-17 themselves, the cattle, and the birds of the air are to live in the service of Nebu- Dn 2:38 chadnezzar and his whole House.

8 6 'We have indeed heard of your genius and adroitness of mind. It is known everywhere in the world that throughout the empire you have no rival for ability,
9 7 wealth of experience and brilliance in waging war. •We have also heard what Achior said in his speech to your council. The men of Bethulia having spared 5:5
10 him, he has told them everything that he said to you. •Now, master and lord, 5:21;8:18
8 do not disregard what he said; keep it in your mind, since it is true;[b] our nation will not be punished, the sword will indeed have no power over them, unless
11 9 they sin against their God. •But as it is, my lord need expect no repulse or setback, since death is about to fall on their heads, for sin has gained a hold over them, provoking the anger of their God each time that they commit it.
12 10.11 As they are short of food and their water is giving out, they have resolved to fall back on their cattle and decided to make use of all the things that God has,
13 12 by his laws, forbidden them to eat.[c] •Not only have they made up their minds to eat the first-fruits of corn and the tithes of wine and oil, though these have Dt 14:22+ been consecrated by them and set apart for the priests who serve in Jerusalem in the presence of our God and may not, lawfully, even be touched by the
14 people,[d] •but they have even sent men to Jerusalem—where the inhabitants are doing much the same—to bring them back authorisation from the Council of
15 Elders. •Now this will be the outcome: when the permission arrives and they act on it, that very day they shall be delivered over to you for destruction.

16 13 'When I, your servant, came to know all this, I fled from them. God has sent

10 a. Vulg. adds 'And the Lord also gave her more beauty, since all this dressing-up proceeded not from sensuality, but from virtue' (cf. Est 5:1 Greek, 15:4,5 Vulg.). The Greek, which relates Judith's bold enterprise without qualification, leaves it to be understood up to the cry of thanksgiving in 13:16 that God is with her and will keep her safe.

b. Judith seems more scrupulous about legal purity than Esther, more exacting even than the Law itself, cf. 11:17; 12:6-9.

c. The protestations of truth, cf. 11:5,10, ascribed to Judith, who is determined to deceive Holofernes, 11:12-19, are to be taken in the moral context of the patriarchal age (cf. Gn 27:1-25; 34:13-29; 37:32-34) or of the wars of Yahweh in the days of the judges (Jos 2: 1-7; Jg 4:17-22), when the story is supposed to take place.

11 a. Judith's speech is ingeniously ambiguous. The 'work' and the 'lord' mentioned in v. 6 mean one thing for her, another for Holofernes. Same ambiguity in v. 16. In v. 8 Judith praises Holofernes' perspicacity at the very moment she hoodwinks him.

b. Another ambiguity; Achior's words had been true, but Judith's prophecy of what the Jews will do is not.

c. Vulg. makes 'the drinking of blood' the fault, Lv 17:10-14.

d. Here again the author exaggerates the demands of the Law, possibly following a Pharisaic tradition.

11:5+ me to do things with you at which the world will be astonished when it hears.
Your servant is a devout woman; she honours the God of heaven day and night. 17 14
I therefore propose, my lord, to stay with you. I, your servant, will go out 15
every night into the valley and pray to God to let me know when they have
committed their sin. •I will then come and tell you, so that you can march out 18
with your whole army; and none of them will be able to resist you. •I will 19
be your guide right across Judaea until you reach Jerusalem; there I will enthrone
you in the very middle of the city. Then you shall lead them like sheep and never
a dog dare open its mouth to bark at you. Foreknowledge tells me this; this 16
has been foretold to me and I have been sent to reveal it to you.' 17

9:13 Her words pleased Holofernes and all his adjutants. Full of admiration at 20 18
her wisdom they exclaimed, •'There is no woman like her from one end of the 21 19
earth to the other, so lovely of face and so wise of speech!' •Holofernes said, 22 20
'God has done well to send you ahead of your people. Strength will be ours,
9:13 and ruin theirs who have insulted my lord. •As for you, you are as beautiful as 23 21
you are eloquent; if you do as you have promised, your god shall be my god,
and you yourself shall make your home in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar
and be famous throughout the world.'

12 With that he had her brought in to where his silver dinner service was 1
already laid, and had his own food served to her and his own wine poured
10:5 Est 4:17x Dn 1:8 out for her. •But Judith said, 'I would rather not eat this, in case I incur some 2
fault. What I have brought will be enough for me.' •'Suppose your provisions 3
run out,' Holofernes asked 'how could we get more of the same sort? We have
no one belonging to your race here.' •'Never fear, my lord,' Judith answered 4
'the Lord will have used me to accomplish his plan, before your servant has
finished these provisions.' •Then the adjutants of Holofernes took her to a tent 5
where she slept till midnight. A little before the morning watch she rose. •She 6
had already sent this request to Holofernes, 'Let my lord kindly give orders
for your servant to be allowed to go out and pray', •and Holofernes had ordered 7
his guards not to prevent her. She stayed in the camp for three days; she went 7
out each night to the valley of Bethulia and washed at the spring where the
picket had been posted. •As she came up again she prayed to the Lord God of 8
Israel to guide her in her plan to relieve the children of her people. •Having 9
purified herself, she would return and stay in her tent until her meal was brought
her in the evening.

Judith at the banquet of Holofernes

On the fourth day Holofernes gave a banquet, inviting only his own staff 10
and none of the other officers. •He said to Bagoas, the eunuch in charge of his 11
personal affairs, 'Go and persuade that Hebrew woman you are looking after
to come and join us and eat and drink in our company. •We shall be disgraced 12 11
if we let a woman like this go without knowing her better.[a] If we do not seduce
her, everyone will laugh at us!' •Bagoas then left Holofernes and went to see 13 12
Judith. 'Would this young and lovely woman condescend to come to my lord?'
he asked. 'She shall occupy the seat of honour opposite him, drink the joyful
wine with us and be treated today like one of the Assyrian ladies-in-waiting
in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. •'Who am I' Judith replied 'to resist my lord? 14 13
I will not hesitate to do whatever he wishes, and doing this will be my joy to my 14
dying day.'

At this she rose and put on her dress and all her feminine adornments. Her 15
maid preceded her, and on the floor in front of Holofernes spread the fleece
which Bagoas had given Judith for her daily use to lie on as she ate.[b]

Judith entered and took her place. The heart of Holofernes was ravished at 16
the sight; his very soul was stirred. He was seized with a violent desire to sleep
with her; and indeed since the first day he saw her, he had been waiting for an
opportunity to seduce her. •'Drink, drink!' Holofernes said 'Enjoy yourself 17

with us!' •'I am delighted to do so, Lord, for since my birth I have never felt my life more worthwhile than today.' •She took what her maid had prepared, and ate and drank facing him. •Holofernes was so enchanted with her that he drank far more wine than he had drunk on any other day in his life.

13 It grew late and his staff hurried away. Bagoas closed the tent from the outside, having shown out those who still lingered in his lord's presence. They went to their beds wearied with all their drinking, •and Judith was left alone in the tent with Holofernes who had collapsed wine-sodden on his bed. Judith then told her maid to stay just outside the bedroom and wait for her to come out, as she did every morning. She had let it be understood she would be going out to her prayers and had also spoken of her intention to Bagoas.

By now everyone had left Holofernes and no one, either important or unimportant, was left in the bedroom. Standing beside the bed, Judith murmured to herself:

'Lord God, to whom all strength belongs,
prosper what my hands are now to do
for the greater glory of Jerusalem,
now is the time to recover your heritage
and further my designs
to crush the enemies arrayed against us'.

With that she went up to the bedpost by Holofernes' head and took down his scimitar; •coming closer to the bed she caught him by the hair and said, 'Make me strong today, Lord God of Israel!' •Twice she struck at the nape of his neck Jg 4:21 with all her strength and cut off his head. •She then rolled his body off the bed and tore the canopy down from the bedposts. Soon after, she went out and gave the head of Holofernes to her attendant •who put it in her food bag. The two then left the camp together, as they always did when they went to pray. Once they were out of the camp, they skirted the ravine, climbed the slope to Bethulia and made for the gates.

Judith brings the head of Holofernes to Bethulia

From a distance, Judith shouted to the guards on the gates, 'Open the gate! Open! For the Lord our God is with us still, displaying his strength in Israel Ex 15:1-2 Ps 48:7-11;68; 98:1-3 and his might against our enemies, as he has today!' •Hearing her voice, the townsmen hurried down to the town gate and summoned the elders. •Everyone, great and small, came running down, since her arrival was unexpected. They threw the gate open, welcomed the women, lit a fire to see by and crowded round them. •Then Judith raised her voice and said, 'Praise God! Praise him! Praise the God who has not withdrawn his mercy from the House of Israel, but has shattered our enemies by my hand tonight!' •She pulled the head out 14:18 of the bag and held it for them to see. 'This is the head of Holofernes, general-in-chief of the Assyrian army; here is the canopy under which he lay drunk! The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman! •Glory to the Lord who has protected me in the course I took! My face seduced him, only to his own undoing; he committed no sin with me to shame me or disgrace me.'[a]

Overcome with emotion, the people all fell on their knees and worshipped God, exclaiming as one man, 'Blessings on you, O our God, for confounding your people's enemies today!' •Uzziah then said to Judith:[b]

12 a. Lit. 'without enjoying her company', euphemism, cf. Dn 13:54,58.
b. As in Esther, the fate of Israel is to be settled in the course of a banquet.

13 a. Corresponding to v. 16 are Vulg. vv. 20-21: '*20* Long live the Lord! for his angel has guarded me on my way [to Holofernes], during my stay and on my return. The Lord has not allowed his handmaid to be defiled, but has brought me back to you unstained by sin, rejoicing at his victory, at my escape, and at your deliverance. *21* Glorify him, all of you, since he is good, since his mercy is everlasting.' Cf. Ps 136:1.
b. Vulg. text is different but develops the same themes.

'May you be blessed, my daughter, by God Most High,
beyond all women on earth;
and may the Lord God be blessed, 24
the Creator of heaven and earth,
by whose guidance you cut off the head
of the leader of our enemies.
The trust you have shown 19 25
shall not pass from the memories of men,
but shall ever remind them
of the power of God.
God grant you to be always held in honour, 20
and rewarded with blessings,
since you did not consider your own life
when our nation was brought to its knees,
but warded off our ruin,
walking undeterred before our God.'

Jg 5:24 / Lk 1:28, 42

All the people answered, 'Amen! Amen!' 26

V. TRIUMPH

The Jews attack the Assyrian camp

14 Judith said, 'Listen to me, brothers. Take this head and hang it on your 1
battlements. •When morning comes and the sun is up, let every man take 2
his arms and every able-bodied man leave the town. Appoint a leader for these,
as if you meant to march down to the plain against the Assyrian advance post.
But you must not do this. •The Assyrians will gather up their equipment, make 3
for their camp and wake up their commanders; they in turn will rush to the 4
tent of Holofernes and not be able to find him. They will then be seized with
panic and flee at your advance. •All you and the others who live in the territory 4 5
of Israel will have to do is to give chase and slaughter them as they retreat.

'But before you do this, call me Achior the Ammonite[a] for him to see the 5
man who thought so meanly of the House of Israel and recognise this as the man
who sent him to us as a man already doomed to die.' *(13)* So they had Achior 6 27,28
brought from the house of Uzziah. No sooner had he arrived and seen the 29
head of Holofernes held by a member of the people's assembly than he fell
down on his face in a faint. •They lifted him up. He then threw himself at the 7 30
feet of Judith, and prostrate before her exclaimed:

'May you be blessed in all the tents of Judah 31
and in every nation;
at the sound of your name
men will be seized with dread.

'Now tell me exactly what you have been doing in these past few days.' And 8
surrounded by all the people Judith told him everything she had done from the
day she left Bethulia to the moment when she was speaking. •When she came 9
to the end, the people cheered at the tops of their voices until the town echoed.
(14) •Achior, recognising the mighty works of the God of Israel, believed 10 6
Dt23:4-5 ardently in him and, accepting circumcision, was incorporated in the House of
Israel forever.

At daybreak they hung the head of Holofernes on the ramparts. Every man 11 7
took his arms and they all went out in groups to the slopes of the mountain.
Seeing this, the Assyrians sent word to their leaders, who in turn reported to 12 8
the generals, the captains of thousand and all the other officers; •and these 13 9,11
in their turn reported to the tent of Holofernes. 'Rouse our master,' they said

12 to his major-domo 'these slaves[b] have dared to march down on us to attack—
14 13 and to be wiped out to a man!' •Bagoas went inside and clapped his hands in
front of the curtain dividing the tent, thinking that Holofernes was sleeping
15 14 with Judith. •But as no one seemed to hear, he drew the curtain and went into
the bedroom, to find him thrown down dead on the threshold and the head
16 gone from his body. •He gave a great shout, wept, sobbed, shrieked and rent
17 15 his clothes. •He then went into the tent which Judith had occupied and could
18 16 not find her either. Then, rushing out to the men, he shouted, •'Those slaves
have duped us! One Hebrew woman has brought shame on the House of 13:15; 16:5-9
Nebuchadnezzar. Holofernes is lying dead on the ground, with his head cut off!' Jg 9:54
19 17 When they heard this, the leaders of the Assyrian army tore their tunics in
18 consternation, and the camp rang with their wild cries and their shouting.

1 **15** When the men who were still in their tents heard the news they were
2 appalled. •They were so gripped with panic and dread that no two men
could keep together: the rout was complete. They fled along every track across
3 the plain or through the mountains. •The men who had been bivouacking in
the mountains round Bethulia were fleeing too. Then all the Israelite warriors
4 charged down on them. •Uzziah sent messengers to Betomasthaim, Bebai,
Choba, Kola and through all the highlands of Israel, to inform them of what
had happened and to urge them all to hurl themselves on the enemy and
5 annihilate them. •As soon as the Israelites heard the news, they fell on them as
one man and massacred them all the way to Choba. The men of Jerusalem and
the entire mountain country[a] also rallied to them, once they had been informed
of the events in the enemy camp. Then the men of Gilead and Galilee attacked
them on the flank and struck at them fiercely till they neared Damascus and
6 7 its territory. •The rest, who had stayed in Bethulia, fell upon the Assyrian camp
7 8 and looted it to their great profit. •The Israelites returning from the slaughter Est 9:5.16
seized what was left. The hamlets and villages of the mountain country and the Est 9:10
plain also captured a great deal of booty, since there were vast stores of it.

Israel gives thanks

8 9 Joakim the high priest and the Council of Elders of Israel, who were in
Jerusalem, came to gaze on the benefits that the Lord had lavished on Israel
9 10 and to see Judith and congratulate her. •On coming to her house they blessed
her with one accord, saying:

'You are the glory of Jerusalem!
You are the great pride of Israel!
You are the highest honour of our race!

10 11 'By doing all this with your own hand Est 9:10
you have deserved well of Israel,
and God has approved what you have done.

'May you be blessed by the Lord Almighty
in all the days to come!'[b]

12 All the people answered, 'Amen!'

11 13,14 The people looted the camp for thirty days. They gave Judith the tent of
Holofernes, all his silver plate, his divans, his drinking bowls and all his furniture.
She took this, loaded her mule, harnessed her carts and heaped the things into
12 15 them. •All the women of Israel, hurrying to see her, formed choirs of dancers Ex 15:20 Jg 11:34 1 S 18:6
in her honour. Judith distributed branches to the women who accompanied her; Jr 31:4, 13

14 a. Vulg. puts Achior's entrance before 14:1, at the end of ch. 13, and makes Judith deliver a short discourse on the presumption of Holofernes.

b. Vulg. 'The mice have come out of their holes and dared to challenge us to fight'.

15 a. The hill country of Judah.

b. In place of v. 10, Vulg. (v. *11*) reads 'since you have behaved like a man, your heart was strengthened, because you loved chastity and have known no other man since your husband. Hence the hand of the Lord gave you strength. So you will be blessed for ever.'

she and her companions put on wreaths of olive. Then she took her place at the head of the procession and led the women as they danced. All the men of Israel, armed and garlanded, followed them, singing hymns. •With all Israel round her, Judith broke into this song of thanksgiving and the whole people sang this hymn aloud:[c] 13 14 1

Ps81:1-3; 135:1-3; 149:1-3

16

'Praise[a] my God with the tambourine, 1 2
sing to the Lord with the cymbal,
let psalm and canticle mingle for him,
extol his name, invoke it!

9:7 Ex 15:3 Ps 46:9 *Ps 68:30;* 76:3

For the Lord is a God who shatters war; 2 3
he has pitched[b] his camp in the middle of his people 4
to deliver me from the hands of my enemies.

'Assyria came down from the mountains of the north, 3 5
came with tens of thousands of his army.
Their multitude blocked the wadis,
their horses covered the hills.
He promised to burn up my country, 4 6
destroy my young men with the sword,
dash my sucklings to the ground,
make prey of my little ones,
carry off my maidens;

14:18

but the Lord Almighty has thwarted them 5 7
by a woman's hand.

9:13

For their hero did not fall at the young men's hands, 6 8
it was not sons of Titans who struck him down,
no proud giants made that attack,
but Judith, the daughter of Merari,
who disarmed him with the beauty of her face.
She laid aside her widow's dress 7 9
to rally those who were oppressed in Israel;
she anointed her face with perfume, 10
bound her hair under a turban, 8
put on a linen gown to seduce him.

9:13

Her sandal ravished his eye, 9 11
her beauty took his soul prisoner...
and the scimitar cut through his neck!

'The Persians trembled at her boldness, 10 12
the Medes were daunted by her daring.
These were struck with fear when my lowly ones shouted, 11 13
these were seized with terror when my weak ones shouted louder,
and when they shouted loudest, these gave ground.

5:23 6:5

The children of mere girls ran them through, 12 14
pierced them like the offspring of deserters.
They perished in the battle of my Lord!

Ps 144:9

'I will sing a new song to my God. 13 15

Ps 86:10; 147:5

Lord, you are great, you are glorious, 16
wonderfully strong, unconquerable.

Est4:17b

May your whole creation serve you! 14 17

Ps 33:9; 148:5

For you spoke and things came into being,

Ps104:30

you sent your breath and they were put together,

Est4:17b

and no one can resist your voice.

Jg 5:5 Ps 97:5

'Should mountains topple 15 18
to mingle with the waves,

should rocks melt
like wax before your face,
19 to those who fear you, Ps 25:14; 103:13
you would still be merciful.

16 'A little thing indeed Ps 51:16+
is a sweetly smelling sacrifice,
still less the fat
burned for you in holocaust;
but whoever fears the Lord Si 34:13-17
is great for ever.

17 20 'Woe to the nations Jg 5:31
who rise against my race! Jl 4:1-4
The Lord Almighty
will punish them on judgement day.
21 He will send fire and worms in their flesh Si 7:17; Is 66:24
and they shall weep with pain for evermore.'

18 22 When they reached Jerusalem they fell on their faces before God and, once the people were purified, they offered their holocausts and voluntary offerings
19 23 and gifts. •All Holofernes' property given her by the people and the canopy she herself had stripped from his bed, Judith vowed to God as a dedicated offering. Lv 27:28-29; Nb 31:48-54; Dt 13:13-19; Jos 6:17+
20 24 For three months the people gave themselves up to rejoicings in Jerusalem before the Temple, where Judith stayed with them.

Judith lives to old age. Her death

21 25 When this was over, everyone returned home. Judith went back to Bethulia and lived on her estate; as long as she lived, she enjoyed a great reputation
22 26 throughout the country. •She had many suitors, but all her days, from the time her husband Manasseh died and was gathered to his people, she never gave
23 herself to another man. •Her fame spread more and more the older she grew
28 in her husband's house; she lived to the age of a hundred and five years.[c] She emancipated her maid, then died in Bethulia and was buried in the cave where Gn 23:19; 49:29-32
24 29 Manasseh her husband lay. •The House of Israel mourned her for seven days. Before her death she had distributed her property among her own relations and those of her husband Manasseh.

25 30 Never again during the lifetime of Judith, nor indeed for long after her death, Jg 3:11,30; 5:31; 8:28 did anyone trouble the sons of Israel.[d]

c. The poem is in the form of a hymn and in vv. 13-16 uses phrases found frequently in Ps.

16 a. 'Praise' corr.

b. 'he has pitched' versions.

c. This great age finally assimilates Judith to the heroes of the patriarchal age.

d. This ending recalls those in Jg. Vulg. adds (v. 31) 'The anniversary of this victory is celebrated by the Hebrews and ranks as one of the holy days. The Jews have observed it from that time until the present day.' We do not in fact find any trace of this feast. But cf. Est 9:27f; 1 M 7:48-49.

ESTHER

INTRODUCTORY

Mordecai's dream[a]

1 *In the second year of the reign of the great King Ahasuerus,[b] on the first day* 1a 11:2
2:5 *of Nisan, a dream[c] came to Mordecai son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish,*
of the tribe of Benjamin, •a Jew living at Susa and holding high office at the royal 1b 3
court. •He was one of the captives whom Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had 1c 4
2K 24:8.15 *deported from Jerusalem with Jeconiah, king of Judah.[a]*

This was his dream. There were cries and noise, thunder and earthquakes, and 1d 5
disorder over the whole earth. •Then two great dragons came forward, each ready 1e 6
for the fray, and set up a great roar. •At the sound of them every nation made ready 1f 7
to wage war against the nation of the just. •A day of darkness and gloom, of affliction 1g 8
and distress, oppression and great disturbance on earth! •The righteous nation was 1h 9
thrown into consternation at the fear of the evils awaiting them, and prepared for
death, crying out to God. •Then from their cry, as from a little spring, there grew 1i 10
8:16 Zp 2:3+ *a great river, a flood of water. •Light came as the sun rose, and the humble* 1k 11
were raised up and devoured the mighty.

On awakening from this dream and vision of God's designs, Mordecai thought 1l 12
deeply on the matter, trying his best all day to discover what its meaning might be.

2:21f; 6:2f A plot against the king

Lodging at court with Bigthan and Teresh,[e] two of the king's eunuchs who 1m 12:1
guarded the palace, •Mordecai got wind of their intentions and uncovered their 1n 2
plot. Learning that they were preparing to assassinate King Ahasuerus, he warned
the king against them. •The king gave orders for the two eunuchs to be tortured; 1o 3
they confessed and were executed. •The king then had these events recorded in his 1p 4
6:3 *Chronicles, while Mordecai himself also wrote an account of them. •The king then* 1q 5
appointed Mordecai to an office at court and rewarded him with presents. •But 1r 6
3:1f *Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, who enjoyed high favour with the king,*
3:5-6 *determined to injure Mordecai in revenge for the king's two eunuchs.*

I. AHASUERUS AND VASHTI

Ahasuerus' banquet

1 It was in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus whose empire stretched from 1
India to Ethiopia and comprised one hundred and twenty-seven provinces.
In those days, when King Ahasuerus was sitting on his royal throne in the 2
Jdt 1:16 citadel of Susa, •in the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet at his court 3
for all his administrators and ministers, chiefs of the army[f] of Persia and Media,
nobles and governors of provinces. •Thus he displayed the riches and splendour 4
of his empire and the pomp and glory of his majesty; the festivities went on for
a long time, a hundred and eighty days.

When this period was over, for seven days the king gave a banquet for all the people living in the citadel of Susa, to high and low alike, in the enclosure adjoining the king's palace. •There were white and violet hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple thread to silver rings on marble columns, couches of gold and silver on a pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones. •For drinking there were golden cups of various design and the royal wine in plenty according to the king's bounty. •By royal command, however, drinking was not obligatory, the king having instructed the officials of his household to treat each guest according to his own wishes.

The affair of Vashti

Queen Vashti,[g] too, had given a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Ahasuerus. •On the seventh day, when the king was merry with wine, Dn 5:1-4 he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs in attendance on the person of King Ahasuerus, to bring Queen Vashti before the king crowned with her royal diadem, in order to display her beauty to the people and the administrators, for she was very beautiful. •But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. The king was very angry at this and his rage grew hot. •He then consulted the wise men who were versed in the law,[h] since it was the practice to refer matters affecting the king to expert lawyers and jurists. •He summoned Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan, the seven administrators of Persia and Media who had privileged access to the royal presence[i] and occupied the leading positions in the kingdom. •'According to law,' he said 'what is to be done to Queen Vashti for not obeying the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?' •In presence of the king and of the administrators Memucan answered, 'Vashti has wronged not only the king, but also all the administrators and nations inhabiting the provinces of King Ahasuerus. •The queen's conduct will soon become known to all the women and encourage them in a contemptuous attitude towards their husbands, since they will say, "King Ahasuerus ordered Queen Vashti to appear before him and she did not come". •The wives of all the Persian and Median administrators will hear of the queen's answer before the day is out, and will start talking to the king's administrators in the same way; that will mean contempt and anger all round. •If it is the king's pleasure, let him issue a royal edict, to be irrevocably incorporated into the laws of the Persians and Medes,[j] to the effect that Vashti 3:12;8:5,8 Dn6:9,10, 13,16 is never to appear again before King Ahasuerus, and let the king confer her royal dignity on a worthier woman. •Let this edict issued by the king be proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of his realm, and all the women will henceforth bow to the authority of their husbands, both high and low alike.'

This speech pleased the king and the administrators and the king did as Memucan advised. •He sent letters to all the provinces of the kingdom, to each Dn 3:4; 6:26 province in its own script and to each nation in its own language, ensuring that every husband should be master in his own house.

1 a. The Church has accepted those passages in the Greek version not contained in the Hebr. text; they are printed here in italics. St Jerome put them in an appendix at the end of his Lat. version, 10:4f. We replace them in their Greek arrangement (see ch. 10 note c.) with the numbering of the Rahlfs edition of LXX.

b. Ahasuerus (Hebr. Ahashwerosh) transcribes the Persian Kshajarsha, in Greek Xerxes, cf. Ezr 4:6. Here the Greek has Artaxerxes.

c. The Greek text, alone in recording this dream, outlines the story in advance in enigmatic and apocalyptic terms (the key to it is found in 10:3a-k), thus emphasising the part played by God in subsequent events.

d. The author makes free with chronology (see Introduction); Mordecai is a courtier of Ahasuerus (about 480) though exiled in the reign of Jeconiah (about 598).

e. The name-forms vary in the texts.

f. 'chiefs of the army...' corr.

g. Vashti, like Esther, is unknown to history.

h. 'the law' corr. following Rec. Luc.; 'the times' Hebr.

i. I.e. in the king's confidence.

j. The theme of an irrevocable decree which is promptly revoked is common in those books of the Bible showing Persian influence; Jewish irony here, no doubt.

II. MORDECAI AND ESTHER

Esther becomes queen

2 Some time after this, when the king's wrath had abated, Ahasuerus remembered Vashti, how she had behaved, and the measures taken against her.[a] 1
The king's courtiers-in-waiting said, 'Let beautiful girls be selected for the king. 2
Let the king appoint commissioners throughout the provinces of his realm to 3
bring all these beautiful young virgins to the citadel of Susa, to the harem under the authority of Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. Let him provide them with what they need for their adornment, •and let the girl who 4
pleases the king take Vashti's place as queen.' This advice pleased the king and he acted on it.

Now in the citadel of Susa there lived a Jew called Mordecai son of Jair, son 5
of Shimei, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, •who had been deported from 6
1:1a-e Jerusalem among the captives taken away with Jeconiah king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. •He had brought up Hadassah, otherwise 7
called Esther,[b] his uncle's daughter, who had lost both father and mother; the girl had a good figure and a beautiful face, and on the death of her parents Mordecai had adopted her as his daughter.[c]

Following the promulgation of the king's edict, a great number of girls were 8
brought to the citadel of Susa where they were entrusted to Hegai. Esther also
Dn1:3-20 was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, the custodian of the women. •The girl pleased him and won his favour. Not only did he quickly 9
provide her with all she needed for her dressing room and her meals, but he gave her seven special maids from the king's household and transferred her and her maids to the best part of the harem. •Esther did not reveal her race or 10
kindred, since Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. •Mordecai walked up 11
and down in front of the courtyard of the harem every day, to learn how Esther was and how she was being treated.

Each girl had to appear in turn before King Ahasuerus, after a delay of 12
twelve months fixed by the regulations for the women; this preparatory period was occupied as follows: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with spices and lotions commonly used for feminine beauty treatment. •Before going 13
into the king, each girl was allowed to take with her from the harem to the king's palace whatever she chose. •She went there in the evening, and the following 14
2:19 morning returned to another harem entrusted to the care of Shaashgaz, the king's
4:11 eunuch, custodian of the concubines. She did not go to the king any more, unless he was particularly pleased with her and had her summoned by name.

But when it was the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail whose nephew 15
Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter, to go into the king's presence, she did not ask for anything beyond what had been assigned her by Hegai, the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And Esther soon won the admiration of all who saw her. •She was brought to King Ahasuerus in his royal palace in the 16
tenth month, which is called Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign; •and the 17
king liked Esther better than any of the other women; none of the other girls
4:17u-y found so much favour and approval with him. So he set the royal diadem on her head and proclaimed her queen instead of Vashti.

Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his administrators 18
and ministers, decreed a holiday for all the provinces and distributed largesse with royal prodigality.

Mordecai and Haman

2:14 When Esther, like the other girls, had been transferred to the second harem,[d] 19
she had not revealed her kindred or race, in obedience to the orders of Mordecai, 20
whose instructions she continued to follow as when she had been under his care.[e]

21 At this time Mordecai was attached to the Chancellery[f] and two malcontents, 1:1m; 6:2
Bigthan and Teresh, king's eunuchs belonging to the Guardians of the Threshold,
22 plotted to assassinate King Ahasuerus. •Mordecai came to hear of this and
informed Queen Esther, who in turn, on Mordecai's authority, told the king.
23 The matter was investigated and proved to be true. The two conspirators were
sent to the gallows, and the incident was recorded in the Book of the Chronicles
in presence of the king.

1 3 Shortly afterwards, King Ahasuerus singled out Haman son of Hammedatha, 1:1r
from the land of Agag,[a] for promotion. He raised him in rank and precedence
2 above all his colleagues, the other officers of state, •and gave orders that all the
officials employed at the Chancellery were to bow down and prostrate themselves
3 before Haman. Mordecai refused either to bow or prostrate himself.[b] •'Why do 4:17d-e
you flout the royal command?' the officials of the Chancellery asked Mordecai.
4 They asked him this day after day, but he took no notice of them. In the end
they reported the matter to Haman, wishing to see whether Mordecai would
5 persist in his attitude, since he had told them he was a Jew. •When Haman had 1:1r
seen for himself that Mordecai did not bow or prostrate himself before him, he
6 was seized with fury. •Having been told what race Mordecai belonged to, he
could not be content with murdering Mordecai but made up his mind to wipe
out all the members of Mordecai's race, the Jews, throughout the empire of
Ahasuerus.

III. THE JEWS IN PERIL

The decree of extermination against the Jews

7 In the first month, that is the month of Nisan, of the twelfth year of King
Ahasuerus, they cast the pur[c] (that is, the lot) before Haman for the day and 9:24-26
8 the month. The lot falling on the twelfth month, which is Adar, •[d]Haman said
to King Ahasuerus, 'There is a certain unassimilated nation scattered among
the other nations throughout the provinces of your realm; their laws are different 3:13d-e
from those of all the other nations and they ignore the royal edicts;[e] hence it Dn3:8-12
9 is not in the king's interests to tolerate them. •If it please the king to decree Ws2:14-15
their destruction, I am prepared to pay ten thousand talents of silver to the
king's receivers, to be credited to the royal treasury.' 7:4

2 a. The Hebr. implies that the king regrets his treatment of Vashti. The Greek and Rec. Luc. suggest that he has forgotten her.

b. The name Esther is probably of Babylonian origin (Ishtar) like Mordecai's (Marduk), though cf. also Persian *stareh*, 'star'. Hadassah is a Hebr. name ('myrtle').

c. Greek has at the end 'he had brought her up to be his wife'. Post-Christian Jewish tradition accepts this view, making Esther the wife of Mordecai.

d. Text corrected. Hebr. and Vulg. 'When the girls were reassembled the second time, Mordecai was sitting at the Gate'; Greek 'Mordecai was on duty at the palace' (omitting this in v. 21).

e. The Greek, more religious in tone than the Hebr., reads 'Esther had not disclosed what country she came from. Mordecai had bidden her fear God and keep the commandments just as she did when she was with him, and Esther had not changed her way of life.'

f. The expression (lit. 'the king's gate') sometimes means the business of administration, sometimes the buildings in which this work was carried forward.

3 a. Country not known; the name is that of an Amalekite king conquered by Saul, 1 S 15:7-9, and may have been chosen to emphasise the antagonism of Haman and Mordecai who, like Saul, is a Benjaminite and a descendant of Kish.

b. The gesture in itself could not be objectionable for a Jew; it was the act of respect customary in the oriental court and also practised in Israel, cf. 1 K 1:23; 2 K 4:37, etc. Mordecai's refusal is not therefore a protest of fidelity to God and his Law, as in Dn 1:8; 3:12; 6:14, but a reaction of racial pride; the prayer in the Greek text gives it a religious significance, 4:17d-e.

c. A Babylonian word. Haman has already decided on the pogrom; he consults the lots only to learn the most propitious day. The Greek, complementing the Hebr., adds that Haman issued a decree in the 12th year of the king, that he cast lots to extirpate the race of Mordecai and that the lot fell on the 14th of the month called Adar.

d. Rec. Luc. paraphrases 'Haman in his jealousy and shaken to the core went red, and averted his eyes from him. Then with base heart he spoke evil to the king about Israel. "There is a race" he said "scattered throughout every kingdom, a bellicose and truculent people with its own laws. But of your laws, O king, they take no account, for they are, as every nation knows, an obstinate race. They defy your orders to the ruin of your honour." '

e. Complaints of this kind against the Jews are found in several documents of the hellenistic period, cf. 3:13a-e, Dn 1:8; 3:8-12; Jdt 12:2; Ezr 4:12f; Ws 2:14f and the apocryphal 3 Maccabees.

Gn 41:42 The king then took his signet ring off his hand and gave it to Haman son of 10
Hammedatha, the Agagite, the persecutor of the Jews. •'Keep the money,' he 11
said 'and you can have the people too; do what you like with them.'

1:19 Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal scribes were summoned, 12
Dn 3:4,7 and copies were made of the orders addressed by Haman to the king's satraps,
to the governors ruling each province and to the principal officials of each
people, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language.
9:10 The edict was signed in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with his ring,
and letters were sent by runners to every province of the realm ordering the 13
destruction, slaughter and annihilation of all Jews, young and old, women and
children, on the one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar,
and the seizing of their possessions.

The text of the letter was as follows: 13a

'The great King, Ahasuerus, to the governors of the hundred and twenty-seven 13:1
provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia, and to their subordinate district commissioners.

Jdt 2:5 Dn 3:31 *'Being placed in authority over many nations and ruling the whole world, I have 13b 2*
resolved never to be carried away by the insolence of power, but always to rule with moderation and clemency, so as to assure for my subjects a life ever free from storms and, offering my kingdom the benefits of civilisation and free transit from end to end, to restore that peace which all men desire. •In consultation with our 13c 3
advisers as to how this aim is to be effected, we have been informed by one of them, eminent among us for prudence and well proved for his unfailing devotion and unshakeable trustworthiness, and in rank second only to our majesty, Haman by
3:8+ Ws 2:15 *name, •that there is, mingled among all the tribes of the earth a certain ill-disposed 13d 4*
people, opposed by its laws to every other nation and continually defying the royal ordinances, in such a way as to obstruct that form of government assured by us to the general good.

'Considering therefore that this people, unique of its kind, is in complete opposition 13e 5
to all mankind from which it differs by its outlandish system of laws, that it is hostile to our interests and that it commits the most heinous crimes, to the point of endangering the stability of the realm:

'We command that the people designated to you in the letters written by Haman, 13f 6
8:12f Gn 45:8 *appointed to watch over our interests and a second father to us, are all, including women and children, to be destroyed root and branch by the swords of their enemies, without any pity or mercy, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar, of the present year, •so that, these past and present malcontents being in one day 13g 7*
forcibly thrown down to Hades, our government may henceforward enjoy perpetual stability and peace.'

The text of this decree, to be promulgated as law in each province, was 14
published to the various peoples, so that each might be ready for the day afore-
mentioned. •At the king's command, the runners set out with all speed; the 15
decree was first promulgated in the citadel of Susa.

While the king and Haman gave themselves up to feasting and drinking,
consternation reigned in the city of Susa.[f]

Mordecai and Esther try to avert the danger

Jdt 4:12 4 When Mordecai learned what had happened, he tore his garments and put on 1
sackcloth and ashes. Then he went right through the city, wailing loud and
bitterly, •until he arrived in front of the Chancellery, which no one clothed in 2
sackcloth was allowed to enter. •And in every province, no sooner had the royal 3
edict been read than among the Jews there was great mourning, fasting, weeping
and wailing, and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.[a]

When Queen Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, she was overcome 4
with grief. She sent clothes for Mordecai to put on instead of his sackcloth,
but he refused them. •Then Esther summoned Hathach, a eunuch whom the 5

king had appointed to wait on her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai and enquire what was the matter and why he was acting in this way.

6 Hathach went out to Mordecai, who was still in the city square in front of
7 the Chancellery, •and Mordecai told him what had happened to him personally, and also about the sum of money which Haman had offered to pay into the
8 royal treasury as compensation for the destruction of the Jews. •He also gave him a copy of the edict of extermination published in Susa for him to show
15:1 Esther for her information, with the message that she was to go to the king and
8a 2 implore his favour and plead with him for her people. •'*Remember your humbler circumstances,' he said 'when you were fed by my hand. Since Haman, the second*
8b 3 *person in the realm, has petitioned the king for our deaths, •invoke the Lord, speak to the king for us and save us from death!*'[b]

9 10 Hathach came back and told Esther what Mordecai had said;[c] •and she
11 replied with the following message for Mordecai, •'All the king's servants and the people of his provinces know that for a man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned there is one penalty: death, 2:14;4:17*l*
unless, by pointing his golden sceptre towards him, the king grants him his life. And I have not been summoned to the king for the last thirty days.'

12 13 These words of Esther were reported to Mordecai, •who sent back the following reply, 'Do not suppose that, because you are in the king's palace, you
14 are going to be the one Jew to escape. •No; if you persist in remaining silent at such a time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place,[a] but both you and the House of your father will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to the throne for just such a time as this.' Gn 45:7

15 16 Whereupon Esther sent this reply to Mordecai, •'Go and assemble all the Jews now in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink day or night for three days. For my part, I and my maids will keep the same fast, after which I shall
17 go to the king in spite of the law; and if I perish, I perish.' •Mordecai went 4:17*l* Jdt 4:14
away and carried out Esther's instructions.

Mordecai's prayer[e]

17a 13:8 *Then calling to mind all the wonderful works of the Lord, he offered this prayer:*

17b 9 *'Lord, Lord, King and Master of all things,* Ex 19:5 2Ch20:6-7 Jdt 16:14
everything is subject to your power,
and there is no one who can withstand you
in your will to save Israel. Is41:10-16

17c 10 *'Yes, you have made heaven and earth,* 2K 19:15 Is40:21-26
and all the marvels that are under heaven.
11 *You are the Lord of all,*
and there is none who can resist you, Lord.

17d 12 *'You know all things;*
you know, Lord, you know,
that no insolence, arrogance, vainglory
prompted me to this,
to this refusal to bow down
before proud Haman.

f. In Vet. Lat. the Jews now pray, expressing sorrow for the sins of the nation and appealing to the faithfulness of God.

4 a. Signs of mourning and repentance.

b. Vet. Lat. here has in addition to the Greek 'Rise! Why do you sit in silence? Since you are set free, you and your House and your father's House, all your people and all your descendants. Rise! Let us see if we can fight and suffer for our own people that God may show mercy on them.'

c. Vet. Lat. thus describes Esther's distress 'As Esther read her brother's letter she tore her garments and lamented loudly. She shed many tears, her body trembled and her flesh became weak.'

d. The author of the Hebr. text avoids using the name of God.

e. The prayers of Mordecai and Esther are rich in O.T. piety, but they betray an introspective interest and a concern with self-justification that is not found in the older texts.

I would readily have kissed his feet 13
for the safety of Israel.

'*But what I did, I did* 17e 14
rather than place the glory of a man
above the glory of God;
3:2 *and I will not bow down to any*
but to you, Lord;
in so refusing I will not act in pride.

'*And now, Lord God,* 17f 15
Ex 3:6 *King, God of Abraham,*
Ps 47:9 *spare your people!*
For men are seeking our ruin
and plan to destroy your ancient heritage.
Dt 9:26; 32:9 *Do not overlook your inheritance,* 17g 16
1 K 8:51 Jr 10:16 *which you redeemed for your own out of the land of Egypt.*
Hear my supplication, 17h 17
Ps 33:12 Jl 4:2 *have mercy on your heritage,*
and turn our grief into rejoicing,
that we may live to hymn your name, Lord.
Ps 6:5; 115:17f Is38:18-20 *Do not suffer the mouths*
of those who praise you to perish.'

And all Israel cried out with all their might, for they were faced with death. 17i 18

Esther's prayer

Queen Esther also took refuge with the Lord in the mortal peril which had 17k 14:1
overtaken her. She took off her sumptuous robes and put on sorrowful mourning. 2
Instead of expensive perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung. She
humbled her body severely, and the former scenes of her happiness and elegance
were now littered with tresses torn from her hair. She besought the Lord God of 3
Israel in these words:

'*My Lord, our King, the only one,* 17l
come to my help, for I am alone
and have no helper but you
4:11.16 *and am about to take my life in my hands.* 4

'*I have been taught from my earliest years, in the bosom of my family,*[f] 17m 5
Dt 7:6+ *that you, Lord, chose*
Israel out of all the nations
and our ancestors out of all the people of old times
to be your heritage for ever;
and that you have treated them as you promised.

'*But then we sinned against you,* 17n 6
Jg 2:6+ *and you handed us over to our enemies*
for paying honour to their gods. 7
Lord, you are just.

'*But even now they are not satisfied* 17o 8
with the bitterness of our slavery:
they have put their hands in the hands of their idols[g]
to abolish the decree that your own lips have uttered, 9
to blot out your heritage,
4:17+ *to stop the mouths of those who praise you,*
to quench your altar and the glory of your House,
and instead to open the mouths of the heathen, 17p 10

to sing the praise of worthless idols
and forever to idolise a king of flesh.

17q 11 *'Do not yield your sceptre, Lord,* 9:1
to non-existent beings.
Never let men mock at our ruin.
Turn their designs against themselves,
and make an example of him who leads the attack on us.
17r 12 *Remember, Lord; reveal yourself* Jdt 9:13
in the time of our distress.

'As for me, give me courage,
King of gods and master of all power. Dt 10:17 Ps 95:3; 136:2
17s 13 *Put persuasive words into my mouth* Dn 2:47; 11:36
when I face the lion;
change his feeling into hatred for our enemy,
that the latter and all like him may be brought to their end.

17t 14 *'As for ourselves, save us by your hand,*
and come to my help, for I am alone
and have no one but you, Lord.
17u *You have knowledge of all things,*
15 *and you know that I hate honours from the godless,* 2:17
that I loathe the bed of the uncircumcised,
of any foreigner whatever.
17w 16 *You know I am under constraint,*
that I loathe the symbol of my high position
bound round my brow when I appear at court;
I loathe it as if it were a filthy rag Lv 15:19-30 Is 64:5
and do not wear it on my days of leisure.
17x 17 *Your handmaid has not eaten at Haman's table,* Jdt 10:5; 12:2
nor taken pleasure in the royal banquets,
nor drunk the wine of libations.
17y 18 *Nor has your handmaid found pleasure*
from the day of her promotion until now
except in you, Lord, God of Abraham.
17z 19 *O God, whose strength prevails over all,*
listen to the voice of the desperate,
save us from the hand of the wicked,
and free me from my fear.'

Esther presents herself at the palace

1a 15:4 5 On the third day,[a] *when she had finished praying, she took off her suppliant's*
5 *mourning attire* and dressed herself in her full spendour. *Radiant as she*
then appeared, she invoked God who watches over all men and saves them. Then
6 *she took two maids with her. With a delicate air she leaned on one, while the other*
accompanied her carrying her train. She leaned on the maid's arm as though
7 *languidly, but in fact because her body was too weak to support her; the other*
1b 8 *maid followed her mistress, lifting her robes which swept the ground. • Rosy with*
the full flush of her beauty, her face radiated joy and love; but her heart shrank
1c 9 *with fear.* •Having passed through door after door, she found herself in the

f. Rec. Luc. 'I have heard (it read) in the book of my ancestors'.

g. Gesture of taking oath, possibly of making a covenant.

5 a. The Hebr. text of vv. 1-2 is much shorter. '1 Three days later Esther put on her royal apparel and presented herself in the inner court of the palace, which was in front of the king's apartments. He was seated on the royal throne in the Royal Hall, facing the door. 2 No sooner had he seen Queen Esther standing in the court than she won his favour and he held out the golden sceptre he had in his hand to her. Esther approached and touched the end of it.' V. 3 is the same in the Greek and Hebr.

presence of the king. He was seated on the royal throne, *dressed in all his robes of state, glittering with gold and precious stones—a formidable sight.* •Raising 1d 10
his face, *afire with majesty, he looked on her, blazing with anger. The queen sank down. She grew faint and the colour drained from her face, and she leaned her head against the maid who accompanied her.* •*But God changed the king's heart,* 1e 11
inducing a milder spirit. *He sprang from his throne in alarm and took her in his arms until she recovered, comforting her with soothing words.* •'*What is the matter,* 1f 12
Esther?' he said 'I am your brother. Take heart; you will not die; our order only 13
applies to ordinary people. Come to me.' •And raising his golden sceptre he laid 2 14,15
it on her neck, *embraced her and said, 'Speak to me'.* •'*My lord,' she said 'you* 2a 16
looked to me like an angel of God, and my heart was moved with fear of your 17
majesty. For you are a figure of wonder, my lord, and your face is full of graciousness.' •*But as she spoke she fell down in a faint. The king was distressed,* 2b 18,19
and all his attendants tried their best to revive her. •'What is the matter, Queen 3
5:6; 7:2; 9:12 Esther?' the king said. 'Tell me what you desire; even if it is half my kingdom,
Mk 6:23 I grant it you.' •'Would the king be pleased' Esther replied 'to come with Haman 4
today to the banquet I have prepared for him?' •The king said, 'Tell Haman 5
to come at once, so that Esther may have her wish'.

So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. •As 6
5:3 they drank their wine, the king again said to Esther, 'Tell me what you request;
I grant it to you. Tell me what you desire; even if it is half my kingdom, it is yours
for the asking.' •'What do I desire, what do I request?' Esther replied. •'If I have 7 8
found favour in the king's eyes, and if it is his pleasure to grant what I ask and
to agree to my request, let the king and Haman come to the other banquet I
intend to give them tomorrow, and then I will do as the king says.'

Haman left full of joy and high spirits that day; but when he saw Mordecai 9
at the Chancellery, neither standing up nor stirring at his approach, he felt
a gust of anger. •He restrained himself, however. Returning home, he sent for 10
his friends and Zeresh his wife •and held forth to them about his dazzling wealth, 11
his many children, how the king had raised him to a position of honour and
promoted him over the heads of the king's administrators and ministers. •'What 12
is more,' he added 'Queen Esther just invited me and the king—no one else
except me—to a banquet she was giving, and better still she has invited me and
the king again tomorrow. •But what do I care about all this when all the while 13
I see Mordecai the Jew sitting there at the Chancellery?' •'Have a fifty-cubit 14
gallows run up,' Zeresh his wife and all his friends said 'and in the morning
ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then accompany the king to the
feast without a care in the world!' Delighted with this advice, Haman had the
gallows erected.

IV. THE JEWS' REVENGE

The discomfiture of Haman

1:1p 6 [a]That night, the king could not sleep; he called for the Record Book, the 1
Chronicles, to be brought and read to him. •They contained an account of 2
1:1m 2:21-23 how Mordecai had denounced Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs
serving as Guardians of the Threshold, who had plotted to assassinate king
1:19 Qo 9:13-16 Ahasuerus. •'And what honour and dignity' the king asked 'was conferred on 3
Mordecai for this?' 'Nothing has been done for him' the courtiers in attendance
replied. •Then the king said, 'Who is on duty in the antechamber?' Haman had 4
at that moment entered the outer antechamber of the king's palace to ask the
king to have Mordecai hanged on the gallows which he had just put up for the
purpose. •So the king's courtiers replied, 'Haman is waiting in the antechamber'. 5
'Bring him in' the king said, •and went on to ask as soon as Haman had entered, 6
'What is the right way to treat a man whom the king wishes to honour?' 'Whom'

7 thought Haman 'would the king wish to honour, if not me?' •So he replied, 'If
8 the king wishes to honour someone, •have royal robes brought, which the
king has worn, and a horse which the king has ridden, with a royal diadem on
9 its head. •The robes and horse should be handed to one of the noblest of the
king's officers, and he should array the man whom the king wishes to honour Gn 41:42f
and lead him on horseback through the city square, proclaiming before him: 1 K 1:33 Dn 5:29
10 "This is the way to treat a man whom the king wishes to honour".' •'Hurry,' the
king said to Haman 'take the robes and the horse, and do everything you have
just said to Mordecai the Jew, who works at the Chancellery. On no account
leave anything out that you have mentioned.'
11 So taking the robes and the horse, Haman arrayed Mordecai and led him on
horseback through the city square, proclaiming before him: 'This is the way to
12 treat a man whom the king wishes to honour'. •After this Mordecai returned
to the Chancellery, while Haman went hurrying home dejected, covering his
13 face. •He told his wife Zeresh and all his friends what had just happened. His
wife Zeresh and his friends said, 'Thanks to Mordecai, you have just had a fall;
if he happens to belong to the Jewish race, you will never recover the upper
hand again. Far from it; once having begun, thanks to him you will fall and
fall again.'[b]

Haman at Esther's banquet

14 While they were still talking, the king's eunuchs arrived in a hurry to escort
1 Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared. 7 When the king and Haman
2 were seated at the banquet with Queen Esther •this second day, the king again
said to Esther as they drank their wine, 'Tell me what you request, Queen Esther? 5:3
I grant it to you. Tell me what you desire; even if it is half my kingdom, it is yours
3 for the asking.' •'If I have found favour in your eyes, O king,' Queen Esther
replied 'and if it please your majesty, grant me my life—that is what I request;
4 and the lives of my people—that is what I desire. •For we are doomed, I and
my people, to destruction, slaughter and annihilation; if we had merely been
condemned to become slaves and servant-girls, I would have said nothing; but
as things are, it will be beyond the means of the persecutor to make good the
5 loss that the king is about to sustain.' •King Ahasuerus interrupted Queen 3:8-9
Esther, 'Who is this man?' he exclaimed. 'Where is he, the schemer of such an
6 outrage?' •Esther replied, 'The persecutor, the enemy? Why, this wretch Haman!'
7 Haman quaked with terror in the presence of the king and queen. •In a rage
the king rose and left the banquet to go into the palace garden; while Haman,
realising that the king was determined on his ruin, stayed behind to beg Queen
Esther for his life.
8 When the king returned from the palace garden into the banqueting hall,
he found Haman huddled across the couch where Esther was reclining. 'What!'
the king exclaimed. 'Is he going to rape the queen before my eyes in my own
palace?' The words were scarcely out of his mouth than a veil was thrown over
9 Haman's face.[a] •Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, was present.
He said, 'How convenient! There is that fifty-cubit gallows which Haman ran
up for Mordecai, whose report saved the king's life. It is all ready at his house.'
10 'Hang him on it' said the king. •So Haman was hanged on the gallows which
he had erected for Mordecai, and the king's wrath subsided.

The royal favour passes to the Jews

1 8 That same day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the 9:1 Pr 11:8; 26:27 Mt 7:2
persecutor of the Jews. Mordecai was presented to the king, Esther having

6 a. In ch. 6 and 7, Rec. Luc. generously paraphrases all the passages that flatter Mordecai or belittle Haman.
b. The Hebr. text hints at the outcome without explicitly mentioning God's help, which the Greek makes clear by adding 'for the living God is with him'.
7 a. Those condemned to death had their heads covered.

revealed their mutual relationship. •The king, who had recovered his signet ring 2
Pr 13:22 Dn2:48-49 from Haman, took it off and gave it to Mordecai, while Esther gave Mordecai charge of Haman's house.

Esther again went to speak to the king. She fell at his feet, weeping and 3
imploring his favour, to frustrate the wicked scheme devised by Haman the Agagite and his plot against the Jews. •The king held out the golden sceptre 4
1:19 to her, whereupon Esther rose and stood face to face with him. •'If such is the 5
king's good pleasure,' she said 'and if I have found favour before him, if my petition seems proper to him and if I myself am pleasing to his eyes, may he be pleased to issue a written revocation of the letters which Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, contrived to have written to procure the destruction of the Jews in every province of the realm. •For how can I look on, while my people 6
suffer what is in store for them? How can I bear to witness the extermination of my race?'

King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, 'I for my 7
part have given Esther Haman's house, and have had him hanged on the gallows
1:19 for planning to destroy the Jews. •You are free now to write to them as you 8
judge best, in the king's name, and seal what you write with the king's signet; for an order written in the king's name and sealed with his signet is irrevocable.'[a] The royal scribes were summoned at once—it was the third month, the month 9
of Sivan, on the twenty-third day[b]—and at Mordecai's dictation an order was written to the Jews, the satraps, governors and administrators of the provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to each province in its own script, and to each people in its own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language. •These letters, written in the name 10
of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet, were carried by couriers mounted on horses from the king's own stud-farms. •In them the king granted 11
the Jews, in whatever city they lived, the right to assemble in self-defence, with permission to destroy, slaughter and annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, together with their women and children, and to plunder their possessions, •with effect from the same day throughout the 12
provinces of King Ahasuerus—the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar.

The decree of rehabilitation

The text of the letter was as follows: 12a
16:1

'The great King, Ahasuerus, to the satraps of the hundred and twenty-seven 12b
provinces which stretch from India to Ethiopia, to the provincial governors and to all our loyal subjects, greeting.

'Many men, repeatedly honoured by the extreme bounty of their benefactors, 12c
2
only grow the more arrogant. It is not enough for them to seek our subjects' *3*
injury, but unable as they are to support the weight of their own surfeit they turn to scheming against their benefactors themselves. •Not content with banishing 12d
4
gratitude from the human heart, but elated by the plaudits of men unacquainted with goodness, notwithstanding that all is for ever under the eye of God, they vainly expect to escape his justice, so hostile to the wicked. •Thus it has often 12e
5
happened to those placed in authority that, having entrusted friends with the conduct of affairs and allowed themselves to be influenced by them, they find themselves sharing with these the guilt of innocent blood and involved in irremediable misfortunes, •the upright intentions of rulers having been misled by false arguments of 12f
6
the evilly disposed. •This may be seen without recourse to the history of earlier times 12g
7
to which we have referred; you have only to look at what is before you, at the crimes perpetrated by a plague of unworthy officials. •For the future we will exert our 12h
8
efforts to assure the tranquillity and peace of the realm for all, •by adopting new 12i
9
policies and by always judging matters that are brought to our notice in the most equitable spirit.

12k 10 *'Thus Haman son of Hammedatha, a Macedonian,[c] without a drop of Persian*
12l 11 *blood and far removed from our goodness, enjoyed our hospitality •and was treated*
by us with the benevolence which we show to every nation, even to the extent of
being proclaimed our 'father' and being accorded universally the prostration of 3:13f
12m 12 *respect as second in dignity to the royal throne. •But he, unable to keep within his*
12n 13 *own high rank, schemed to deprive us of our realm and of our life. •Furthermore, by*
tortuous wiles and arguments, he would have had us destroy Mordecai, our saviour
and constant benefactor, with Esther the blameless partner of our majesty, and
12o 14 *their whole nation besides. •He thought by these means to leave us without support*
and so to transfer the Persian empire to the Macedonians.
12p 15 *'But we find that the Jews, marked out for annihilation by this arch-scoundrel,*
12q 16 *are not criminals; they are in fact governed by the most just of laws. •They are sons*
of the Most High, the great and living God to whom we and our ancestors owe
12r 17.18 *the continuing prosperity of our realm. •You will therefore do well not to act on*
the letters sent by Haman son of Hammedatha, since their author has been hanged
at the gates of Susa with his whole household: a well-earned punishment which
12s 19 *God, the ruler of all things, has speedily inflicted on him. •Put up copies of this letter*
20 *everywhere, allow the Jews freedom to observe their own customs, and come to* Ezr 7:25-26
their help against anyone who attacks them on the day originally chosen for their
12t 21 *maltreatment, that is the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar. •For*
the all-powerful God has made this day a day of joy and not of ruin for his chosen
12u 22 *people. •Jews, for your part, among your solemn festivals celebrate this as a special* 9:27
day with every kind of feasting, so that now and in the future, for you and for
23 *Persians of good will it may commemorate your rescue, and for your enemies[d] may*
stand as a reminder of their ruin.
12v 24 *'Every city and, more generally, every country, which does not follow these*
instructions, will be mercilessly devastated with fire and sword, and made not only Dn 3:29
inaccessible to men but hateful to wild animals and even birds for ever.'

13 The text of this edict, to be promulgated as law in each province, was published
to the various peoples, so that the Jews could be ready on the day stated to
14 avenge themselves on their enemies. •The couriers, mounted on the king's horses,
set out in great haste and urgency at the king's command. The edict was also
15 published in the citadel of Susa. •Mordecai left the royal presence in a princely Dn 5:7
gown of violet and white, with a great golden crown and a cloak of fine linen
16 and purple. The city of Susa shouted for joy. •For the Jews there was light and 1:1k
17 gladness, joy and honour. •In every province and in every city, wherever the
king's command and decree arrived, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, 9:27
with feasting and holiday-making. Of the country's population many became
Jews, since now the Jews were feared.

The great day of Purim

1 9 The king's command and decree came into force on the thirteenth day of the
twelfth month, Adar, and the day on which the enemies of the Jews had
hoped to crush them produced the very opposite effect: the Jews it was who 4:17q; 8:1+
2 crushed their enemies. •In their towns throughout the provinces of King
Ahasuerus, the Jews assembled to strike at those who had planned to injure Gn22:17
them. No one resisted them, since the various peoples were now all afraid of
3 them. •Provincial administrators, satraps, governors and officers of the king, all
4 supported the Jews for fear of Mordecai. •And indeed Mordecai was a power
in the palace, and his fame was spreading through all the provinces; Mordecai
was steadily growing more powerful.

8 a. In 8:12 c-o, the Greek text explains, by Mordecai's writing in the king's name, how the king's trust had been abused when the 'irrevocable' decree was issued. Rec. Luc. dwells on Esther's part in the massacre.

b. Greek 'the third month of that year, that of Nisan, on the twenty-third day'.

c. With Greek. We might expect 'a Mede', alluding to the struggle for mastery between Persians and Medes.

d. Var. 'for us', 'our deliverance', 'enemies'.

Jdt 15:6 So the Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, with resulting 5
slaughter and destruction, and worked their will on their opponents.[a] •In the 6
citadel of Susa alone the Jews put five hundred men to death, •notably Parshan- 7
datha, Dalphon, Aspatha, •Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, •Parmashta, Arisai, 8
Aridai and Jezatha, •the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the persecutor 9
3:13;9:15 Jdt 15:7,11 of the Jews. But they took no plunder. 10

The number of those killed in the citadel of Susa was reported the same day 11
to the king, •who said to Queen Esther, 'In the citadel of Susa the Jews have killed 12
five hundred men and also the ten sons of Haman. What must they have done
5:3 in the other provinces of the realm? Tell me what you request; I grant it to you.
Tell me what else you desire; it is yours for the asking.' •'If such is the king's 13
pleasure,' Esther replied 'let the Jews of Susa be allowed to enforce today's
decree tomorrow as well. And as for the ten sons of Haman, let their bodies
be hanged on the gallows.' •Whereupon the king ordered this to be done; the 14
edict was issued in Susa and the ten sons of Haman were hanged. •Thus the 15
Jews of Susa reassembled on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed
9:10 three hundred men in the city. But they took no plunder.

The other Jews who lived in the king's provinces also assembled to defend 16
Jdt 15:6 their lives and rid themselves of their enemies. They slaughtered seventy-five
thousand[b] of their opponents. But they took no plunder. •This was on the 17
thirteenth day of the month of Adar. On the fourteenth day they rested and
made it a day of feasting and gladness. •But for the Jews of Susa, who had 18
assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth days, the fifteenth was the day they
rested, making that a day of feasting and gladness.[c] •This is why Jewish country 19
people, those who live in undefended villages, keep the fourteenth day of the
Ne8:10-12 Rv 11:10 month of Adar as a day of gladness, feasting and holiday-making, and exchange
portions with one another, •*whereas for those who live in cities the day of rejoicing* 19a
and exchanging portions with their neighbours is the fifteenth day of Adar.

V. THE FEAST OF PURIM

The official institution of the feast of Purim

Mordecai committed these events to writing. Then he sent letters to all the 20
Jews throughout the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, •enjoining 21
them to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar every
year, •as the days on which the Jews had rid themselves of their enemies, and 22
the month in which their sorrow had been turned into gladness, and mourning
into a holiday. He therefore told them to keep these as days of festivity and
gladness when they were to exchange portions and make gifts to the poor.

9:29 Once having begun to observe them, the Jews undertook to continue these 23
practices about which Mordecai had written these words to them, •'Haman son 24
of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the persecutor of all the Jews, had plotted their
3:7 destruction and had cast the pur, that is, the lot, for their overthrow and ruin.
But when he went again to the king[d] to ask him to order the hanging of Mordecai, 25
6:5-13 the wicked scheme which he had devised against the Jews recoiled on his own
head, and both he and his sons were hanged on the gallows. •That is why these 26
days were called Purim, from the word pur.' And so, because of what was written
in this letter, because of what they had seen for themselves and because of what
8:12u,17 had happened to them, •the Jews vowed and took on themselves and their 27
descendants and on all who should join them,[e] to celebrate these two days
without fail, in the manner prescribed and at the time appointed, year after year.
Thus commemorated and celebrated from generation to generation, in each 28
family, each province and each city, these days of Purim shall never be abrogated
among the Jews, nor shall their memory die out among their race.

[f]Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, wrote with full authority to ratify 29

30 this second letter, •and sent letters to all the Jews of the hundred and twenty- 9:23-26
seven provinces of the realm of Ahasuerus in terms of kindness and friendship
31 enjoining them to observe these days of Purim at the appointed time, as Mordecai
the Jew had recommended, and in the manner prescribed for themselves and
32 their descendants, with additional ordinances for fasts and lamentations.[g] •The
ordinance of Esther fixed this observance of Purim and it was recorded in writing.

Praise of Mordecai

1 10 King Ahasuerus levied tribute from the continent and the islands of the
2 sea. •All his mighty acts of power and the account of the high honour
to which he raised Mordecai, is not all this recorded in the Book of the Annals 1:1p
3 of the Kings of Media and Persia?[a] •How 'Mordecai the Jew was next in rank
to King Ahasuerus. He was a man held in respect among the Jews, esteemed
by thousands of his brothers, a man who sought the good of his people and 2M15:14
cared for the welfare of his entire race.'[b]

3a *And Mordecai said, 'All this is God's doing. •I remember the dream I had about*
10:4,5 3c *these matters, nothing of which has failed to come true: •the little spring that*
6 *became a river, the light that shone, the sun, the flood of water. Esther is*
3d 7 *the river—she whom the king married and made queen. •The two dragons are*
3e 8 *Haman and myself. •The nations are those that banded together to blot out the*
3f 9 *name of Jew. •The single nation, mine, is Israel, those who cried out to God and*
were saved. Yes, the Lord has saved his people, the Lord has delivered us from
all these evils, God has worked such signs and great wonders as have never happened
among the nations.

3g 10 *'Two destinies he appointed, one for his own people, one for the nations at*
3h 11 *large. •And these two destinies were worked out at the hour and time and day laid*
3i 12 *down by God involving all the nations. •In this way God has remembered his people*
3k 13 *and vindicated his heritage; •and for them these days, the fourteenth and fifteenth*
of the month of Adar, are to be days of assembly, of joy and of gladness before
God, through all generations and for ever among his people Israel.'

Note on the Greek translation of the book

3l 11:1 In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who affirmed that he was a priest and Levite, and Ptolemy his son brought the foregoing letter concerning the Purim. They maintained it as being authentic, the translation having been made by Lysimachus son of Ptolemy, a member of the Jerusalem community.[c]

9 a. The account of these massacres is unhistorical (see Introduction), nor must it be taken for a eulogy of, or recommendation to, revenge. The very extravagance of the situations, the wildly exaggerated numbers and the rhetoric of the account betray the author's purpose. His dominant intention is to illustrate a very familiar biblical theme, the reversal of a situation to the advantage of the oppressed; to do this he assumes the outlook of those who recorded the wars of Israel, the 'eye for eye' mentality.

b. Greek 'fifteen thousand'.

c. Banquets, which occupy much of Est, later become features of the Day of Purim, a feast more civil than religious. Rec. Luc. alone mentions a short thanksgiving, 'And all the people cried aloud and shouted, "Be blessed, O Lord, for you are mindful of the covenants made with our ancestors! Amen." '

d. Following Greek. Hebr. 'But when she (Esther) went in to the king, he said...' (following word unintelligible).

e. Evidently the nationalistic character of the book does not exclude a wider outlook; proselytes share in the celebrations.

f. Conj. reading; vv. 30-32 necessitate adjustment of this verse.

g. These two unexpected injunctions doubtless have reference to 4:16; fasting has earned deliverance. From 9:20 onwards, the text appears to be a compound of documents of varying origin.

10 a. The Greek ascribes this entry to the king.

b. The last verse in the Hebr. and the concluding passage of the Greek tend to make this book more than ever 'the Book of Mordecai' rather than 'the Book of Esther', cf. 9:4. He, the man enlightened by God, has managed the whole affair. He is typically 'the Jew', just as Judith will become 'the Jewess'. This commemorative festival was first known as 'the Day of Mordecai', 2 M 15:36.

c. What follows in Vulg. has been adjusted to the order of the Greek text (ch. 1 note a.). The reader will find Vulg. *11:2–12:6* at the beginning of the book; Vulg. *13:1-7* after 3:13; Vulg. *13:8–14:19* after 4:17; Vulg. *15:1-3* after 4:8; Vulg. *15:4-19* in the note on 5:1; Vulg. *16:1-24* after 8:12.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF MACCABEES

The two books of Maccabees were not in the Jewish Canon of scripture, but their inspiration has been recognised by the Church (they are 'deutero-canonical' books). They treat of the Jewish struggle for religious and political independence against the Seleucid kings. The title of the books is derived from the name Maccabaeus, conferred on the central figure of the story, 1 M 2:4, and later passed on to his brothers.

The First Book of Maccabees places before us at the outset (Introduction, ch. 1-2) two irreconcilable enemies: a triumphant hellenism with some admiring Jewish supporters; and, opposed to it, the main body of the Jewish nation, faithful to the Law and the Temple. On the one hand, Antiochus Epiphanes desecrator of the Temple and persecutor; on the other, Mattathias, initiator of the crusade for religious freedom. The body of the book is divided into three parts, one for each of Mattathias' three sons who succeeded each other as leaders of the resistance movement. Judas Maccabaeus (166-160 B.C.), 3:1–9:22, wins a series of victories over Antiochus' generals, reconsecrates the Temple and secures religious freedom for his people. Under Demetrius I he is hampered at home by the intrigue of Alcimus the high priest, but he is still successful in the field and Nicanor, whose objective is to destroy the Temple, is defeated and killed. To consolidate his position Judas seeks alliance with Rome. He dies in battle. Jonathan, his brother, succeeds him (160-142), 9:23–12:53. Military gives way to political activity and Jonathan cleverly plays off one competitor for the Syrian throne against the other: his appointment as high priest by Alexander Balas is recognised by Demetrius II and confirmed by Antiochus VI. He seeks alliance with the Romans and Spartans. More and more territory comes under his control and peace at home seems assured; at this stage Jonathan is treacherously murdered by Trypho, already a traitor to his king, Antiochus VI. Simon, Jonathan's brother (142-134), 13:1–16:24, lends his support to Demetrius II, who wins back the throne and (like his successor, Antiochus VII) recognises Simon as high priest, military governor and ethnarch of the Jews. Political independence is thus achieved, and the nation decrees that Simon's titles be approved. The treaty with Rome is then renewed; it is an era of prosperity and peace. But Antiochus VII turns against the Jews, and his son-in-law, currying favour, assassinates Simon and his two sons.

The narrative covers forty years, from the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes in 175 B.C. to the death of Simon in 134 B.C. It was written in Hebrew but has come down to us only in a Greek translation. Its author is a Palestinian Jew writing after 134 but before the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 B.C.,

probably in about 100 B.C. The book is invaluable as a history of the times, though allowances must always be made in such types of literature for the influence of the ancient chronicles of Israel on which they are modelled, and also for the intentions of the author.

For despite the space he devotes to battle and political intrigue, the author means to write a religious history. For him the nation's distress is a punishment for sin, and the successes of his leading figures are won by the help of God. He is a Jew, jealous for the faith which he perceives to be at stake in the struggle between pagan infiltration and ancestral custom. He is therefore an uncompromising foe of hellenisation and an ardent admirer of the heroes who fought for Law and Temple, winning first religious liberty and, next, national independence. His story tells how Judaism, the trustee of revelation, was preserved to the world.

The Second Book of Maccabees is not the continuation of the first. It is in part parallel to it: its starting-point is a little earlier (end of the reign of Seleucus IV, father of Antiochus Epiphanes), but it ends with the defeat of Nicanor by Judas Maccabaeus. It therefore covers only about fifteen years, corresponding to the first seven chapters of First Maccabees.

Its literary form is very different. Originally written in Greek, it claims to be a summary of the work of one Jason of Cyrene, 2:19-32, and is preceded by two letters from the Jews of Jerusalem, 1:1–2:18. The style is that of hellenistic writers, though not of the best: at times it is turgid, frequently pompous; more a sermon than a history.

And in fact the author's intention is to attract and edify, 2:25; 15:39: Judas Maccabaeus's campaign of liberation is supported by apparitions from heaven and triumphantly concluded by divine intervention, 2:19-22; the persecution itself is a manifestation of God's lovingkindness, bringing his people to their senses before accumulating sin works final ruin, 6:12-17. The author is writing for the Jews of Alexandria, to awaken their feeling of solidarity with their Palestinian brothers. He is particularly anxious to stir their interest in the fortunes of the Temple, round which the life of Law-abiding Jewry must revolve and against which the fury of the pagans is unleashed. This preoccupation shows itself in the way the book is arranged.

After the Heliodorus episode, 3:1-40, bringing out the inviolable sanctity of the Temple, the first part, 4:1–10:8, ends with the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, the persecutor who had defiled the Temple, and with the institution of the feast of Dedication. The second part, 10:9–15:36, also ends with the death of a persecutor (Nicanor) who had threatened the Temple, and with the institution of a commemorative feast. The two letters with which the Book opens spring from the same theme, 1:1–2:18, being invitations from the Jews in Jerusalem to their co-religionists in Egypt to celebrate the feast of Dedication with them.

The author is concerned more with his religious intention than with historical precision. There is the same difference of approach between the First and Second Books of Maccabees as there is between the Books of Samuel or Kings and the Books of Chronicles. The author of Second Maccabees uses for his purpose documents and narratives the veracity of which he does not necessarily guarantee. Thus there are two different accounts of the death of Antiochus

Epiphanes, 1:13-16; 9:1-29, the latter closer to 1 M 6:1-13. In 2 M 9 the death occurs before the purification of the Temple, after it in 1 M 6; probably the author of Second Maccabees thought that the undated letter of Antiochus V, 11:22-26, belonged to the same period as the other letters in the same chapter, i.e. before the purification. In consequence, the other events of ch. 8-10 are also out of place. It may be that we owe the insertion of the documents in ch. 11 and the resultant changes not to the author but to a later editor. The same editor may have added the two letters in ch. 1. This notwithstanding, there is material exclusive to Second Maccabees that has a historical basis, while the fact that the two books are independent of each other lends weight to the many points on which they are agreed. The second book was completed after 124 B.C., the date of the first letter, 1:9; how long afterwards it is hard to tell.

The book is important for its affirmation of the resurrection of the dead, see note to 7:9; 14:46; sanctions in the afterlife, 6:26; prayer for the dead, 12:41-46f and note; the spiritual fruits of martyrdom, 6:18–7:41; the intercession of the saints, 15:12-16 and note. Other Old Testament writings had left these teachings vague: but the latter justify the authority accorded to Second Maccabees by the Church.

THE FIRST BOOK OF MACCABEES

I. INTRODUCTION

Alexander and the Diadochoi

1 1 Alexander of Macedon, son of Philip, had come from the land of Kittim[a]
and defeated Darius, king of the Persians and Medes, whom he succeeded
2 as ruler, at first of Hellas.[b] •He undertook many campaigns, gained possession
3 of many fortresses, and put the local kings to death. •So he advanced to the
ends of the earth, plundering nation after nation; the earth grew silent before
4 5 him, and his ambitious heart swelled with pride. •He assembled very powerful
forces and subdued provinces, nations and princes, and they became his
5 6 tributaries. •But the time came when Alexander took to his bed, in the knowledge
6 7 that he was dying. •He summoned his comrades, noblemen who had been
brought up with him from his youth, and divided his kingdom among them
7 8 while he was still alive. •Alexander had reigned twelve years when he died.[c]
8.9 9.10 Each of his comrades established himself in his own region. •All assumed crowns
after his death, they and their heirs after them for many years, bringing increasing
evils on the world.

Antiochus Epiphanes: Israel infected with hellenism

10 11 From these there grew a sinful offshoot, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King 2 M 4:7
Antiochus; once a hostage in Rome,[d] he became king in the one hundred and
11 12 thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.[e] •It was then that there emerged ||2 M 4:9-17
from Israel a set of renegades who led many people astray. 'Come,' they said
'let us reach an understanding with the pagans surrounding us, for since we
12 13 separated ourselves from them many misfortunes have overtaken us.' •This
13 14 proposal proved acceptable, •and a number of the people eagerly approached
14 15 the king, who authorised them to practise the pagan observances. •So they
15 16 built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, such as the pagans have, •disguised their 1 Co 7:18
circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant, submitting to the heathen rule
as willing slaves of impiety.[f]

Antiochus Epiphanes despoils the Temple, and persecutes Jews remaining faithful to the Law

16 17 Once Antiochus had seen his authority established, he determined to make

1 a. 'Kittim' means Cyprus but is used also to include more distant countries like Macedonia.

b. Not restricted to Greece proper. The Hebr. Javan, Is 66:19; Ezk 27:13, which corresponds to it, applies particularly to Ionia in Asia Minor.

c. June 324 B.C. The empire was not finally divided until after the battle of Ipsus (301).

d. Antiochus IV had been among the hostages handed over to the Romans by his father in 189, after his defeat at Magnesia in Sipyle.

e. 175 B.C. The 'kingdom of the Greeks' is the Seleucid era which dated from 312.

f. Religion, the Law and ancestral custom isolated the Jews as a foreign community inside the oriental world which had been unified and hellenised since Alexander's conquest. Assimilation by the new culture offered material benefits, but could not be achieved without breaking down the barriers which safeguarded the integrity of the Jewish faith: the antagonism of these two ideals pervades the Books of Maccabees. This movement among the hellenising Jews was sure of support from Antiochus Epiphanes, a devotee of Greek culture cf. vv. 41-51.

2 M 5:1 Dn 11:25-28 himself king of Egypt, and the ruler of both kingdoms. 17 •He invaded Egypt 18
in massive strength, with chariots and elephants and a great fleet. 19 •He engaged
Ptolemy, king of Egypt, in battle, and Ptolemy turned back and fled before his
advance, leaving many casualties. 20 •The fortified cities of the land of Egypt
‖2 M 5: 11-16 were captured, and Antiochus plundered the country. 21 •After his conquest of
Egypt, in the year one hundred and forty-three, Antiochus turned about and 22
advanced on Israel and Jerusalem in massive strength. 23 •Insolently breaking into
the sanctuary,[e] he removed the golden altar and the lamp-stand for the light
with all its fittings, 22 •together with the table for the loaves of offering, the libation
vessels, the cups, the golden censers, the veil, the crowns, and the golden decora-
tion on the front of the Temple, which he stripped of everything. 24 •He made
2 M 5:21 off with the silver and gold and precious vessels, he discovered the secret treasures
and seized them, 25 •and removing all of these, he went back to his own country,
leaving the place a shambles and uttering words of extreme arrogance.

Then there was deep mourning for Israel throughout the country: 26

Rulers and elders groaned; 27
girls and young men wasted away;
the women's beauty suffered a change;
every bridegroom took up a dirge, 28
the bride sat grief-stricken on her marriage-bed.
The very land quaked for its inhabitants 29
and the whole House of Jacob was clothed with shame.

‖2 M 5: 24-26 The days passed, and after two years the king sent the mysarch[h] through 30
the cities of Judah. He came to Jerusalem with an impressive force, 31 •and
addressing them with what appeared to be peaceful words, he gained their
confidence; 32 •then suddenly he fell on the city dealing it a terrible blow, and
destroying many of the people of Israel. 33 •He pillaged the city and set it on fire,
tore down its houses and encircling wall, 34 •took the women and children captive
6:18 and commandeered the cattle. 35 •Then they fortified the City of David with a great
strong wall and strong towers, and made this their Citadel.[i] 36 •There they installed
an army of sinful men, renegades, who fortified themselves inside it, 37 •storing
arms and provisions, and depositing there the loot they had collected from
Jerusalem; they were to prove a great trouble.

It became an ambush for the sanctuary, 38
an evil adversary for Israel at all times.
They shed innocent blood all round the sanctuary 39
and defiled the sanctuary itself.
The citizens of Jerusalem fled because of them, 40
she became a dwelling place of strangers;
estranged from her own offspring,
her children forsook her.
Her sanctuary became as deserted as a wilderness, 41
her feasts were turned into mourning,
her sabbaths into a mockery,
her honour into reproach.
Her dishonour now fully matched her former glory, 42
her greatness was turned into grief.

Then the king issued a proclamation to his whole kingdom that all were 43
to become a single people, each renouncing his particular customs. 44 •All the pagans
conformed to the king's decree, 45 •and many Israelites chose to accept his
religion, sacrificing to idols and profaning the sabbath. 46 •The king also sent
instructions[j] by messenger to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah directing them
2 M 6:1 Dn 9:27 to adopt customs foreign to the country, 47 •banning holocausts, sacrifices and
libations from the sanctuary, profaning sabbaths and feasts, 48,49 •defiling the

47 50 sanctuary and the sacred ministers, 48 51 •building altars, precincts and shrines for idols, sacrificing pigs and unclean beasts, 49 •leaving their sons uncircumcised, and prostituting themselves to all kinds of impurity and abomination, 50 52 •so that they should forget the Law and revoke all observance of it. 51 53 •Anyone not obeying the king's command was to be put to death. •Writing in such terms to every part of his kingdom, the king appointed inspectors for the whole people, 54 and directed all the towns of Judah to offer sacrifice one after another.

52 55 Many of the people—that is, every apostate from the Law—rallied to them, 53 56 and so committed evil in the country, 54 57 •forcing Israel into hiding in all their places of refuge. •On the fifteenth day of Chislev in the year one hundred and forty-five[k] the king erected the abomination of desolation[l] above the altar; and 55 58 altars were built in the surrounding towns of Judah •and incense offered at 56 59 the doors of houses and in the streets. •Any books of the Law that came to 57 60 light were torn up and burned. •Whenever anyone was discovered possessing a copy of the covenant or practising the Law, the king's decree sentenced him 58 61 to death. •Having might on their side they took action month after month 59 62 against any offenders they discovered in the towns of Israel. •On the twenty-fifth day of the month sacrifice was offered on the altar erected over the altar 60 63 of holocaust. •Women who had had their children circumcised were put to 61 64 death according to the edict •with their babies hung round their necks, and the members of their household and those who had performed the circumcision were executed with them.

6:7 Dn 9:27; 11:31

‖2 M 6:10

62 65 Yet there were many in Israel who stood firm and found the courage to 63 66 refuse unclean food. •They chose death rather than contamination by such fare 64 67 or profanation of the holy covenant, and they were executed. •It was a dreadful wrath that visited Israel.

II. MATTATHIAS UNLEASHES THE HOLY WAR[a]

Mattathias and his sons

1 2 In those days Mattathias son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the line 2 of Joarib, left Jerusalem and settled in Modein. •He had five sons, John 3 4,5 known as Gaddi, •Simon called Thassi, •Judas called Maccabaeus, •Eleazar, 6 called Avaran, and Jonathan called Apphus.[b] 7 •When he saw the blasphemies being committed in Judah and Jerusalem, •he said, 'Alas that I should have been born to witness the overthrow of my people, and the overthrow of the Holy City, and to sit by while she is delivered over to her enemies, and the sanctuary into the hand of foreigners.

1 Ch 24:7

g. Beginning of autumn 169.

h. I.e. commander of the Mysians, correction in accordance with 2 M 5:24 which names him as Apollonius. He was in command of the mercenaries from Mysia and went to Jerusalem in 167. He reappears in 3:10.

i. The district called at that time the City of David occupied Jerusalem's western hill. When it was turned into the Citadel, the Akra in Greek, it housed the Syro-Macedonian garrison and the hellenised Jews. It was to prove a threat to the Temple which stood lower down to the E. on what was called Mount Zion. Place-names of this period differ from those of the time of David, cf. 2 S 5:9+.

j. Antiochus Epiphanes, in his efforts to unify his empire, abrogated the privilege conceded by Antiochus III in 198 by which the Mosaic Law was recognised as Jewish civil law (also recognised as such by the Persian kings when the Jews returned from exile). Loyalty to the Law thus became political rebellion; hence the persecution. Religious freedom returned with the edict of Antiochus V, 6:57-61; 2 M 11:22-26.

k. December 8th 167.

l. 'The abomination of desolation', Dn 9:27; 11:31, was the altar of Baal Shamem or the Olympian Zeus erected on the Jewish altar of holocausts.

2 a. Persecution produces a revival of religious awareness. Jewish opposition to hellenism takes the form of physical violence, 2:15-28, passive resistance, 2:29-38, and ultimately a war of religion under the leadership of Mattathias, 2:39-48, but particularly under Judas Maccabaeus, ch. 3-5. Judas had realised that religious and political independence were interconnected; for this reason the struggle continued even after religious freedom had been won, 6:57-62. But the shift from the religious to a political ground led to the compromises and party squabbles occupying the last part of the Book. These in the end were to oust religious zeal and discredit the Maccabees' successors, the Hasmonaeans, in the estimation of their devout contemporaries.

b. The names Gaddi, Avaran, Apphus can mean 'Fortunate', 'Alert', 'Favoured'; Maccabaeus may mean 'hammer-headed', or is perhaps a shortened form of Makkabiah,' Yahweh's Designate', cf. Is 62:2. 'Thassi' is *uncertain*.

'Her Temple has become like a man of no repute, 8
the vessels that were her glory have been carried off as booty, 9
her babies have been slaughtered in her streets,
her young men by the enemy's sword.
Is there a nation that has not claimed a share of her royal prerogatives, 10
that has not taken some of her spoils?
All her ornaments have been snatched from her, 11
her former freedom has become slavery.
See how our Holy Place, our beauty, our glory, is now laid waste, 12
profaned by the pagans.
What have we left to live for?' 13

Mattathias and his sons tore their garments, put on sackcloth, and observed deep mourning. 14

The ordeal of the sacrifice at Modein

The king's commissioners who were enforcing the apostasy came to the town of Modein to make them sacrifice. 15 •Many Israelites gathered round them, 16 but Mattathias and his sons drew apart. 17 •The king's commissioners then addressed Mattathias as follows, 'You are a respected leader, a great man in this town; you have sons and brothers to support you. 18 •Be the first to step forward and conform to the king's decree, as all the nations have done, and the leaders of Judah and the survivors in Jerusalem; you and your sons shall
2 M 14:11 be reckoned among the Friends of the King,[e] you and your sons shall be honoured with gold and silver and many presents.' 19 •Raising his voice, Mattathias retorted, 'Even if every nation living in the king's dominions obeys him, each forsaking its ancestral religion to conform to his decrees, 20 •I, my sons and my brothers
3:18 will still follow the covenant of our ancestors. 21 •Heaven[d] preserve us from forsaking the Law and its observances. 22 •As for the king's orders, we will not follow them: we will not swerve from our own religion either to right or to left.' 23 •As he finished speaking, a Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the altar in Modein as the royal edict required. 24 •When Mattathias saw this, he was fired with zeal; stirred to the depth of his being, he gave vent to his legitimate anger, threw himself on the man and slaughtered him on the altar. 25 •At the same time he killed the king's commissioner who was there to enforce the sacrifice,
Nb 25:6-15 and tore down the altar. 26 •In his zeal for the Law he acted as Phinehas did against Zimri son of Salu. 27 •Then Mattathias went through the town, shouting at the top of his voice, 'Let everyone who has a fervour for the Law and takes his stand on the covenant come out and follow me'. 28 •Then he fled with his sons into the
2 M 5:27 hills, leaving all their possessions behind in the town.

The ordeal of the sabbath in the desert

At this many who were concerned for virtue and justice went down to the desert and stayed there, 29 •taking with them their sons, their wives and their cattle, for the burden of their wrongs had become unendurable. 30 •But word was brought to the king's men and the garrison in Jerusalem, in the City of David, 31 that the men who had repudiated the king's edict had gone down to hiding
‖2 M 6:11 places in the desert. 32 •A strong detachment went after them, and when it came up with them ranged itself against them in battle formation, preparing to attack them on the sabbath day. 33 •But first they challenged them, 'Enough of this! Come out and do as the king orders and you shall be spared'. 34 •But they answered, 'We refuse to come out, and we are not going to obey the king's orders and so profane the sabbath day'. 35 •The others at once went into action, 36 •but they offered no opposition; not a stone was thrown, there was no barricading of the hiding places. 37 •They only said, 'Let us all die innocent; let heaven and earth bear witness that you are massacring us with no pretence of justice'. 38 •The attack

was pressed home on the sabbath itself, and they were slaughtered, with their wives and children and cattle, to the number of one thousand persons.

The activity of Mattathias and his associates

39 When the news reached Mattathias and his friends, they mourned bitterly
40 for the victims, •and said to one another, 'If we all do as our brothers have done, and refuse to fight the pagans for our lives and institutions, they
41 will only destroy us the sooner from the earth'. •So then and there they came to this decision, 'If anyone attacks us on the sabbath day, whoever he may be, we will resist him; we must not all be killed, as our brothers were in the hiding places'.

42 Soon they were joined by a community of Hasidaeans,[e] stout fighting men
43 of Israel, each one a volunteer on the side of the Law. •All the refugees from
44 the persecution rallied to them, giving them added support. •They organised themselves into an armed force, striking down the sinners in their anger, and the renegades in their fury, and those who escaped them fled to the pagans
45 for safety. •Mattathias and his friends made a tour, overthrowing the altars
46 and forcibly circumcising all the boys they found uncircumcised in the territories
47 of Israel. •They hunted down the upstarts, and managed their campaign to good
48 effect. •They wrested the Law out of the control of the pagans and the kings, and robbed sinful men of their advantage.

The testament and death of Mattathias

49 As the days of Mattathias were drawing to a close, he said to his sons, 'Arrogance and outrage are now in the ascendant; it is a period of turmoil
50 and bitter hatred. •This is the time, my children, for you to have a burning fervour for the Law and to give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors.

51 'Remember the deeds performed by our ancestors, each
in his generation,
and you shall win great honour and everlasting renown.
52 Was not Abraham tried and found faithful, — Gn 15:6+
was that not counted as making him just?
53 Joseph in the time of his distress maintained the Law, — Gn 37; 39-41
and so became lord of Egypt.
54 Phinehas, our father, in return for his burning fervour — Nb 25:6-13
received a covenant of everlasting priesthood.
55 Joshua, for carrying out his task,
became judge of Israel.
56 Caleb, for his testimony before the assembled people, — Nb 13:30; 14:24+
received an inheritance in the land.
57 David for his generous heart — 2 S 7
inherited the throne of an everlasting kingdom.
58 Elijah for his consuming fervour for the Law — 1 K 19:10, 14; 2 K 2:11-12
was caught up to heaven itself.
59 Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael, for their fidelity, — Dn 3
were saved from the flame.
60 Daniel for his singleness of heart — Dn 6
was rescued from the lion's jaw.

c. Title of honour, a survival from the court of Persia; there were various grades. The 'Friends of the King' had free access to the sovereign who from time to time assigned them certain tasks, cf. 3:38; 7:8; 10:16, 20,60,65; 11:27,57; 14:39; 15:28; 2 M 8:8.

d. 'Heaven' is often used in 1 M for 'God of heaven', a phrase current in the Persian period, cf. 3:18,19,50,60; 4:10,40; 9:46; 12:15. The editor of 1 M systematically avoids using the divine name.

e. I.e. the 'Devout', the Jewish party, devoted to the Law, who opposed pagan influences even before the Maccabaean period. They supported the revolt of the Maccabees, cf. 2 M 14:6, while reserving their freedom of action, 1 M 7:13. They were later to reject the policy of the Hasmonaeans and subsequently split into two groups, Pharisees and Essenes. The Essenes have become more familiar to us recently since the discovery of the manuscripts of Qumran.

Consider, then, how in generation after generation 61
all who hope in him will not be found to falter.
Do not fear the threats of the sinner, 62
all his brave show must come to the dunghill and the worms.
Exalted today, tomorrow he is nowhere to be found, 63
for he has returned to the dust he came from
and his scheming is brought to nothing.
My children, play the man and be courageous for the Law, 64
for it will bring you glory.

'Here is your brother Simeon, I know he is a man of sound judgement. Listen 65
to him all your lives; let him take your father's place. •Judas Maccabaeus, 66
strong and brave from his youth, let him be your general and conduct the war
against the pagans. •The rest of you are to enrol in your ranks all those who 67
keep the Law, and to exact vengeance for your people. •Pay back the pagans 68
to the full, and hold fast to the ordinance of the Law.' •Then he blessed them 69
and was laid with his ancestors. •He died in the year one hundred and forty-six[f] 70
and was buried in his ancestral tomb at Modein, and all Israel mourned him
deeply.

III. JUDAS MACCABAEUS, LEADER OF THE JEWS (166-160 B.C.)

The eulogy of Judas Maccabaeus

3 Then his son Judas, called Maccabaeus, took over his command. •All his ½
brothers, and all who had attached themselves to his father, supported him,
and they fought for Israel with a will.

2 M 14:3 8:5 He extended the fame of his people. 3
He put on the breastplate like a giant
and girded on his war harness;
he engaged in battle after battle,
protecting the ranks with his sword.
He was like a lion in his exploits, 4
like a lion's whelp roaring over its prey.
He pursued and tracked down the renegades, 5
he consigned those who troubled his people to the flames.
Renegades were abashed for terror of him, 6
all evil-doers were utterly confounded,
and deliverance went forward under his leadership.
He brought bitterness to many a king 7
and rejoicing to Jacob by his deeds,
his memory is blessed for ever and ever.
He went through the towns of Judah 8
and utterly destroyed the infidels in them,
turning wrath away from Israel.
His name resounded to the ends of the earth 9
and he rallied those who were on the point of perishing.

The first successes of Judas

||2 M 8:1-7 But Apollonius[a] mustered the pagans and a large force from Samaria to fight 10
against Israel. •When Judas learned of it, he went out to meet him and routed 11
and killed him. Many fell wounded, and the survivors took to flight. •Their 12
spoils were seized and the sword of Apollonius was taken by Judas, who used
it to fight with throughout his life. •On hearing that Judas had raised a mixed force 13
of believers and seasoned fighters, •Seron, commander of the Syrian troops, 14

said, 'I will make a name for myself and gain honour in the kingdom if I fight
Judas and those supporters of his who are so contemptuous of the king's orders'.
15 He therefore launched another expedition, with a strong army of infidels to
16 support him in taking revenge on the Israelites. •He had nearly reached the
descent of Beth-horon when Judas went out to confront him with a handful
17 of men. •But as soon as these saw the force advancing to meet them they said
to Judas, 'How can we, few as we are, engage such overwhelming numbers?
18 We are exhausted as it is, not having had anything to eat today.' •'It is easy'
Judas answered 'for a great number to be routed by a few; indeed in the sight
19 of heaven deliverance, whether by many or by few, is all one; •for victory in 2:21+
war does not depend on the size of the fighting force; it is from heaven that 1 S 14:6
20 strength comes. •They are coming against us in full-blown insolence and law-
21 lessness to destroy us, our wives and our children, and to plunder us; •but we
22 are fighting for our lives and our laws,[b] •and he will crush them before our
23 eyes; do not be afraid of them.' •When he had finished speaking, he made a sudden
24 sally against Seron and his force and overwhelmed them. •Judas pursued him
down from Beth-horon as far as the plain. About eight hundred of their men Jos 10:10
25 fell, and the rest took refuge in the country of the Philistines. •Judas and his
26 brothers began to be feared, and alarm seized the surrounding peoples. •His
name even reached the king's ears, and in every nation there was talk of Judas
and his battles.

Preparations for expeditions in Persia and Judaea. The regency of Lysias

27 The news of these events infuriated Antiochus, and he ordered mobilisation
28 of all the forces in his kingdom, a very powerful army. •Opening his treasury,
he distributed a year's pay to his troops, telling them to be prepared for any
29 eventuality. •He then found that the money in his coffers had run short and that
the tribute of the province had decreased, as a result of the dissension and
disaster brought upon the country by his own abrogation of laws that had
30 been in force from antiquity. •He began to fear that, as had happened more than
once, he would not have enough to cover the expenses and the lavish bounties
he had previously been accustomed to make on a larger scale than his predecessors
31 on the throne. •In this grave quandary he resolved to visit Persia, in order to
32 levy tribute on the provinces and so accumulate substantial funds. •Lysias,
a nobleman belonging to the royal family, was left in charge of the king's affairs
33 from the river Euphrates to the Egyptian frontier, •and was to be responsible
34 for the education of his son Antiochus until his return. •Antiochus made over
to him half his forces, with the elephants, and gave him instructions about all
35 his policies, particularly about the inhabitants of Judaea and Jerusalem, •against
whom he was to send a force, to crush and destroy the power of Israel and the
36 remnant of Jerusalem, to wipe out their very memory from the place, •to settle
the sons of foreigners in all parts of their territory and to distribute their land
37 by lot. •The king took with him the remaining half of his forces and set out
from Antioch, the capital of his kingdom, in the year one hundred and forty-
seven;[c] he crossed the river Euphrates and made his way along the upper
provinces.[d]

Gorgias and Nicanor lead the Syrian army into Judaea ||2 M 8:8-15

38 Lysias chose Ptolemy son of Dorymenes, with Nicanor and Gorgias, 2:18+; 7:26
39 influential men from among the Friends of the King, •and despatched under their 2 M 4:45; 8:8f; 10:14
command forty thousand foot and seven thousand horse to invade the land
40 of Judah and devastate it, as the king had ordered. •The entire force set out

f. 166 B.C.

3 a. This Apollonius is identical with the 'mysarch' in 1:29; according to Josephus he was governor of Samaria. Seron, v. 13, commanded the Seleucid army from the river Eleutherus to the Egyptian frontier.

b. This was the motive force behind the earlier Maccabaean wars, cf. 2:1+.

c. Spring 165.

d. Continued in 6:1.

and reached the neighbourhood of Emmaus in the Lowlands, where they pitched camp. •When the merchants of the province heard who they were, they came 41
to the camp, bringing with them a large amount of gold and silver, and fetters as well, proposing to buy the Israelites as slaves; they were accompanied by a contingent from Idumaea and the Philistine country.[e] •Judas and his brothers 42
saw that the situation was going from bad to worse and that armies were camping in their territory; they were also well aware that the king had ordered the people's total destruction. •So they said to each other, 'Let us restore the ruins of our 43
people and fight for our people and our sanctuary.' •They mustered their people 44
to prepare for war, and to offer prayer and implore compassion and mercy.

Jerusalem was left uninhabited like a desert, 45
there was none left to go in or out, of all her children.
The sanctuary was trodden underfoot,
with men of an alien race in the Citadel,
now a lodging place for pagans.
There was no more rejoicing for Jacob,
flute and zither were mute.

‖2M 8:16-23 **The Jews muster at Mizpah**

Jg 20:1-3 1 S 7:5-6+ After mustering, they made their way to Mizpah, opposite Jerusalem, since 46
Mizpah was traditionally a place of prayer for Israel. •That day they fasted 47
and put on sackcloth, covering their heads with ashes and tearing their garments.
For the guidance that the heathen would have sought from the images of their 48
2 M 8:23 false gods,[f] they opened the Book of the Law. •They also brought out the priestly 49
Nb 6:1+ vestments, with first-fruits and tithes, and marshalled the nazirites who had
2:21+ completed the period of their vow. •Then, raising their voices to heaven, they 50
cried, 'What shall we do with these people, and where are we to take them?[g]
Your sacred precincts have been trampled underfoot and defiled, your priests 51
mourn in their humiliation, •and now the pagans are allied together to destroy 52
us: you know what they have in mind for us. •How can we stand up and face them 53
if you do not come to our aid?' •Then they sounded the trumpets and made a 54
great outcry.

Next Judas appointed leaders for the people, to command a thousand, a 55
hundred, fifty or ten men. •He told those who were building houses, or about 56
Jg 7:3 to be married, or planting vineyards, or who were simply afraid, to go home
Dt 20:5-9 every one of them, as the Law allowed. •Then the formation marched off and 57
took up a position south of Emmaus. •'Stand to your arms,' Judas told them 58
'acquit yourselves bravely, be ready to fight in the morning against these pagans
massed against us to destroy us and our sanctuary. •Better for us to die in battle 59
than to watch the ruin of our nation and our holy place. •Whatever be the 60
2:21+ will of heaven, he will perform it.'

‖2M 8:23-29 **The battle of Emmaus**

4 Gorgias took with him five thousand foot and a thousand picked cavalry, 1
and the force moved off by night •with the object of attacking the Jewish 2
1:33 position and dealing them an unexpected blow; the men from the Citadel were
there to guide him. •Judas got wind of it and himself moved off with his fighters 3
to strike at the king's forces in Emmaus, •while their fighting troops had been 4
moved away from the encampment. •And so, when Gorgias reached the camp of 5
Judas, he found nobody and he began to search for the Jews in the mountains,
exclaiming. 'They are running away from us'. •First light found Judas in the 6
plain with three thousand men, although these lacked the armour and swords
they could have wished. •They could now see the heathen encampment with 7
its strong fortifications and cavalry surrounding it, clearly people who understood warfare.

8 Judas said to his men, 'Do not be afraid of their numbers, and do not flinch at
9 their attack. •Remember how our ancestors were delivered at the Red Sea when
10 Pharaoh was pursuing them in force. •And now let us implore heaven to be kind 2:21+
to us and to remember his covenant with our ancestors and to destroy this army
11 confronting us today; •then all the nations will know for certain that there is one
who saves and delivers Israel.'
12 The foreigners looked up and, seeing the Jews advancing against them,
13 14 came out of the camp to join battle. Judas' men sounded the trumpet •and
15 engaged them. The pagans were routed and fled towards the plain •and all the
stragglers fell by the sword. The pursuit continued as far as Gezer and the plains
of Idumaea, Azotus and Jamnia, and the enemy lost about three thousand men.
16 17 Breaking off the pursuit, Judas returned with his men •and said to the people,
18 'Never mind the booty, for we have another battle ahead of us. •Gorgias and
his forces are still in the mountains not far from us. First stand up to our enemies
19 and fight them, and then you can collect as much booty as you like.' •The words
were hardly out of Judas' mouth when an enemy patrol appeared on the mount-
20 ainside. •This patrol, observing that their own troops had been routed and that
the camp had been fired, for the smoke, which was clearly visible, told them
21 what had happened, •were panic-stricken at the sight; and when they also saw
22 the forces of Judas drawn up on the plain in battle formation, •they all fled
23 into Philistine territory. •Judas now turned back to plunder the camp, and
they carried off a large sum in gold and silver, with violet and sea-purple stuffs,
24 and many other valuables. •On their return, the Jews chanted praises to heaven,
25 'For he is good, and his mercy is everlasting'. •That day had seen a remarkable Ps 118:1-3+
deliverance in Israel.

The first campaign of Lysias ||2 M 11:1-2

26 Those of the foreigners who had escaped came and gave Lysias an account
27 of all that had happened. •The news shocked and dismayed him, for affairs
in Israel had not gone as he intended, and the results were very different from
28 the instructions given him by the king. •The next year he mobilised sixty thousand
picked troops and five thousand cavalry with the intention of putting the Jews out
29 of action. •They advanced into Idumaea and made their base at Bethzur,[a]
30 where Judas met them with ten thousand men. •When he saw their military
strength he offered this prayer, 'Blessed are you, saviour of Israel, who shattered
the might of the Philistine champion by the hand of your servant David, and 1 S 17
delivered their camp into the hands of Jonathan son of Saul, and his armour- 1 S 14:1-23
31 bearer. •Crush this expedition in the same way at the hands of your people
32 Israel; make them ashamed of their forces and their cavalry. •Make cowards of
them, undermine their confidence in their own strength, and may they reel at their
33 defeat. •Overthrow them by the sword of those who love you, and all who acknow-
34 ledge your name will sing your praises.' •The two forces engaged, and five
35 thousand men of Lysias' troops fell in hand-to-hand fighting. •Seeing the
rout of his army and the courage of Judas' troops and their readiness to live
or die as soldiers should, Lysias withdrew to Antioch, where he recruited
mercenaries for a further invasion of Judaea in even greater strength.

The purification of the Temple and its dedication[b] ||2 M 10:1-8 Ps 30

36 Then Judas and his brothers said, 'Now that our enemies have been defeated,
37 let us go up to purify the sanctuary and dedicate it'. •So they marshalled the whole

e. 'fetters'; var.: 'slaves'. 'Idumaea' corr.: 'Syria' Greek.

f. 2 M 8:23 throws light on this passage. Since there were no more prophets, the Book of the Law was opened at random to ask divine guidance on the advisability of joining battle and the probable result. The pagans consulted their false gods in the same way. The Jews consulted the word of the true God.

g. On expiry of their vow the nazirites had to offer sacrifice in the Temple, Nb 6:13. But the Temple was now desecrated.

4 a. About 18 m. south of Jerusalem, on the road to Hebron.

b. The Temple is one of the principal objectives of the rebels, cf. 2:7; 3:43; 2 M 13:11, as the centre of

Ps 74:2-7 army, and went up to Mount Zion.[c] •There they found the sanctuary a wild- 38
erness, the altar desecrated, the gates burnt down, and vegetation growing in
the courts as it might in a wood or on some mountain, while the storerooms
were in ruins. •They tore their garments and mourned bitterly, putting dust 39
on their heads. •They prostrated themselves on the ground, and when the 40
2:21+ trumpets gave the signal they cried aloud to heaven.
Then Judas ordered his men to engage the garrison in the Citadel until he 41
had purified the sanctuary. •Next, he selected priests who were blameless in 42
observance of the Law •to purify the sanctuary and remove the stones of the 43
abomination to an unclean place.
1 K 8:64+ They discussed what should be done about the altar of holocausts which had 44
6:7 been profaned, •and very properly decided to pull it down, that it might never 45
become a reproach to them, from its defilement by the pagans. They therefore
demolished it •and deposited the stones in a suitable place on the Temple hill 46
to await the appearance of a prophet who should give a ruling about them.[d]
Ex 20:25 They took unhewn stones, as the Law prescribed, and built a new altar on the 47
lines of the old one. •They restored the Holy Place and the interior of the house, 48
Ex.25:23-30, 31-39; 30: 1-10 and purified the courts. •They made new sacred vessels, and brought the lamp- 49
stand, the altar of incense, and the table into the Temple. •They burned incense 50
on the altar and lit the lamps on the lamp-stand, and these shone inside the
Temple. •They set out the loaves on the table and hung the curtains and completed 51
all the tasks they had undertaken.
Ezk 43:18 On the twenty-fifth of the ninth month, Chislev, in the year one hundred and 52
forty-eight,[e] they rose at dawn •and offered a lawful sacrifice on the new altar 53
of holocausts which they had made. •The altar was dedicated, to the sound of 54
zithers, harps and cymbals, at the same time of year and on the same day on which
the pagans had originally profaned it. •The whole people fell prostrate in 55
adoration, praising to the skies him who had made them so successful. •For eight 56
days they celebrated the dedication of the altar, joyfully offering holocausts,
communion sacrifices and thanksgivings. •They ornamented the front of the 57
Temple with crowns and bosses of gold, repaired the gates and the storerooms
and fitted them with doors. •There was no end to the rejoicing among the people, 58
and the reproach of the pagans was lifted from them. •Judas, with his brothers 59
and the whole assembly of Israel, made it a law that the days of the dedication
of the altar should be celebrated yearly at the proper season, for eight days
beginning on the twenty-fifth of the month Chislev, with rejoicing and gladness.[f]
They then proceeded to build high walls with strong towers round Mount 60
Zion, to prevent the pagans from coming and riding roughshod over it as in the
past. •Judas stationed a garrison there to guard the mount; he also fortified 61
Bethzur,[g] to give the people a fortress against Idumaea.

The expedition against the Idumaeans and Ammonites

5 When the surrounding nations heard that the altar had been rebuilt and the 1
13:6 sanctuary restored to what it had been before, they became very angry, •and 2
determined to destroy the whole race of Jacob living among them; they began
murdering and evicting Jewish citizens.
||2M10:15-23 Judas made war on the sons of Esau in Idumaea,[a] in the region of Akrabattene 3
where they held the Israelites under siege. He inflicted a crushing defeat on
them, and plundered them. •He also remembered the wickedness of the sons 4
of Baean[b] who were a menace and a trap for the people with their ambushes
on the roads. •Having blockaded them in their towers and besieged them, he 5
Jos 6:17+ vowed them to the ban; then he set fire to their towers and burned them down
Nb 20:23+ with everyone inside. •Next, he crossed over to the Ammonites where he found 6
a strong fighting force and a numerous people with Timotheus for their leader.
He engaged them in many encounters, routed them and cut them to pieces. 7
After capturing Jazer and its outlying villages, he retired to Judaea. 8

The opening of campaigns in Galilee and Gilead

9 The pagans in Gilead now banded together against the Israelites living on
their territory, to destroy them. But they took refuge in the fortress of Dathema,
10 and sent the following letter to Judas and his brothers, 'The pagans round us
11 have banded themselves together against us to wipe us out, •and they are prepar-
ing to storm the fortress in which we have taken refuge; Timotheus is in command
12 of their forces. •Come at once and rescue us from their clutches, for we have
13 already suffered great losses. •All our countrymen living among the Tubians
have been put to death, their women and children have been taken into captivity, 2 M 12:17
their property has been seized, and a force about a thousand strong has been
14 wiped out there.' •While the letter was being read, other messengers arrived
15 from Galilee with their garments torn bearing similar news, •'The people of
Ptolemais,[c] Tyre and Sidon have joined forces with the whole of heathen Galilee
16 to destroy us!' •When Judas and the people heard this, a great assembly was
held to decide what should be done for their oppressed countrymen who were
17 under attack from their enemies. •Judas said to his brother Simon, 'Pick your
men and go and relieve your countrymen in Galilee, while my brother Jonathan
18 and I make our way into Gilead'. •He left Joseph son of Zechariah and the
people's leader Azariah with the remainder of the army in Judaea to guard it,
19 and gave them these orders: 'Take charge of this people, and do not engage the
20 pagans until we return'. •Simon was allotted three thousand men for the exped-
ition into Galilee, Judas eight thousand for Gilead.

The expeditions in Galilee and Gilead

21 Simon advanced into Galilee, engaged the pagans in several battles and
22 drove them off in disorder; •he pursued them to the gate of Ptolemais, and they
23 lost about three thousand men, whose spoils he collected. •He took away with
him the Jews of Galilee and Arbatta,[d] with their wives and children and all
their possessions, and brought them into Judaea with great rejoicing.
24 Meanwhile Judas Maccabaeus and his brother Jonathan crossed the Jordan ||2 M 12:10-31
25 and made a three days' march through the desert, •where they encountered
the Nabataeans,[e] who came to an understanding with them and gave them
26 an account of all that had happened to their brothers in Gilead. •Many of
them, they said, were shut up in Bozrah and Bosor, Alema, Chaspho, Maked
27 and Carnaim, all large fortified towns.[f] •Others were blockaded in the other
towns of Gilead, and the enemy planned to attack and capture these strongholds
the very next day, and wipe out all the people inside them in a single day.
28 Judas and his army at once turned off by the desert road to Bozrah; having
captured the town, he put the entire male population to the sword, plundered

Jewish religious life, without which the Law could not be observed in its fulness. The gentiles had sacked and profaned it, 1:21f; 1:54; now, as soon as the first victories are won, it is purified and reconsecrated. The concept of the holiness of the Temple will be a dominant theme in the second Book, 2 M 3:12+; 5:15; 13:11; 15:18; 15:37+.

c. 'Mount Zion' eventually came to mean the Temple itself which stood on it.

d. The author recurs more than once to this suspension of prophecy, cf. 9:27; 14:41.

e. December 164, third anniversary of the first sacrifice offered to Zeus.

f. The feast of Dedication, Hanuccah in Hebr., is one of the most recent in the Jewish calendar, cf. Ex 23:14+. The Hallel was sung (Ps 113-118), leafy branches and palms were carried. These similarities to the feast of Tabernacles are stressed in 2 M 1:9+; 10:6; the feast of Tabernacles itself commemorated the inauguration of the Temple of Solomon, 1 K 8:2,62-66. The lamps lit at Dedication soon gave it its other name, 'feast of Lights'. The fact that these lamps, symbolising the Law, were placed not only in the Temple but in private houses assured the survival and popularity of the feast after the desecration of the Temple. It is given great prominence in 2 M, cf. the two introductory letters and 2 M 10:1-8. It is mentioned in Jn 10:22.

g. 'He fortified Beth-zur' corr.

5 a. In the Greek period 'Idumaea' was the region S. of Palestine from Bethzur onwards, 4:29. The name derives from the Edomites, 'the sons of Esau', cf. Nb 20:23+, who occupied it after the collapse of the kingdom of Judah. Akrabattene mentioned here lay to the S.W. of the Dead Sea.

b. Allusion obscure. The 'sons of Baean' were possibly a semi-nomadic clan between Jerusalem and Jericho.

c. Ptolemais was the name given to Acre by Ptolemy II in 261 B.C.

d. Arbatta was situated near the region of the future Caesarea Palestinae on the coast.

e. A caravan people, Aramaean in origin but assimilated to Arabs at a very early stage, and successors to the kingdoms of Edom and Moab in Transjordania, cf. Nb 10:23+, spreading westwards to the S. of Palestine.

f. All these towns were in N. Transjordania.

the town and set it on fire. •When night came, he left the place, and they 29
continued their march until they reached the fortress.[g] •In the light of dawn 30
they saw an innumerable horde, setting up ladders and engines to capture the
fortress; the assault was just beginning. •When Judas saw that the attack had 31
begun and that the war cry was rising to heaven, mingled with trumpet calls
and a great clamour, •he said to the men of his army, 'You must fight today, 32
fight for your countrymen'. •Dividing them into three commands, he advanced 33
on the enemy's rear, with trumpets sounding and prayers shouted aloud. •The 34
troops of Timotheus, recognising that this was Maccabaeus, fled before his
advance; Maccabaeus dealt them a crushing defeat; about eight thousand of their
men fell that day. •Then, wheeling on Alema, he attacked and captured it, put its 35
male population to death, plundered it and burned the place down. •From 36
there he moved on and took Chaspho, Maked, Bosor and the remaining towns
of Gilead. •After these events, Timotheus mustered another force and pitched 37
camp opposite Raphon, on the far side of the wadi. •Judas sent men to recon- 38
noitre the camp, and these reported back as follows, 'With him are massed
all the pagans surrounding us, making a very numerous army, •with Arab 39
mercenaries as auxiliaries; they are encamped on the far side of the wadi, and
ready to launch an attack on you.' Judas then advanced to engage them, •and 40
was approaching the watercourse with his troops when Timotheus told the
1 S 14:9-10 commanders of his army, 'If he crosses first we shall not be able to resist him,
because he will have the advantage of us. •But if he is afraid and camps on the 41
other side of the stream we will cross over to him and the advantage will then
be ours.'

As soon as he reached the watercourse Judas posted the scribes of the people[h] 42
along the wadi, giving them this order: 'Do not let anyone pitch his tent; all
are to go into battle!' •He was himself the first across to the enemy side, with 43
all the people following. Driven before them, the pagans all tore off their armour
2 M 12:21 and ran for refuge in the sacred precinct of Carnaim.[i] •The Jews first captured 44
the town, and then burned down the precinct with everyone inside. And so
Carnaim was overthrown, and the enemy could offer no further resistance to
Judas.

Next, Judas assembled all the Israelites living in Gilead, from the least to the 45
greatest, with their wives, children and belongings, an enormous muster, to
take them into the land of Judah. •They reached Ephron,[j] a large town straddling 46
the road and strongly fortified. As it was impossible to by-pass it on the right or
the left, there was nothing for it but to march straight through. •But the 47
Nb 20:14f; 21:21f people of the town denied them passage and barricaded the gates with stones.
Judas sent them a conciliatory message in these terms, 'Let us go through your 48
territory to reach our own; no one will do you any harm, we only want to march
through'. But they would not open up for him. •So Judas sent an order down 49
the column for everyone to halt where he stood. •The fighting men took up 50
their positions; Judas attacked the town all day and night, and it was delivered
Jos 6:17+ into his hands. •He put all the male inhabitants to the sword, razed it to the 51
ground, plundered it and marched through the town over the bodies of the
dead. •The Jews now crossed the Jordan into the great plain, opposite Bethshan, 52
Judas all the time rallying the stragglers and encouraging the people the whole 53
way until they reached the land of Judah. •They climbed Mount Zion in joy and 54
gladness, and offered holocausts because they had returned safe and sound
without having lost a single man.

A setback at Jamnia

While Judas and Jonathan were in the land of Gilead and Simon his brother 55
in Galilee before Ptolemais, •Joseph son of Zechariah, and Azariah, who were 56
in command of the army, heard of their exploits and how well they had done in
battle, •and said, 'Let us make a name for ourselves too and go and fight the 57

58 nations around us'. •So they issued orders to the men of the forces under them
59 and marched on Jamnia.[k] •But Gorgias came out from the town with his men
60 to engage them. •Joseph and Azariah were routed and pursued as far as the
frontiers of Judaea. That day about two thousand Israelites lost their lives.
61 And so the people met with a great reverse, because they had not listened
62 to Judas and his brothers, but had relied on their own prowess. •These were
not of the same mould as those to whom the deliverance of Israel had been
entrusted.

Successes in Idumaea and Philistia

63 But that hero Judas and his brothers were held in high honour throughout
64 Israel and among all the nations wherever their name was heard, •and men
65 gathered round them to acclaim them. •Judas marched out with his brothers
to fight the Edomites in the country towards the south; he stormed Hebron and
its outlying villages, threw down its fortifications and burned its circle of towers.
66 Leaving there, he made for the country of the Philistines and passed through
67 Marisa.[l] •Among the fallen in that day's fighting were some priests who sought
68 to prove their courage there by joining in the battle, a foolhardy venture. •Judas
next turned towards Azotus, a Philistine district; he overthrew their altars,
burned down the carved images of their gods, and withdrew to the land of Judah,
leaving their towns utterly despoiled.

The last days of Antiochus Epiphanes 2 M 1:11-17 ‖2 M 9

1 6 Meanwhile King Antiochus was making his way across the upper provinces;
he had heard that in Persia there was a city called Elymais,[a] renowned for
2 its riches, its silver and gold, •and its very wealthy temple containing golden
armour, breastplates and weapons, left there by Alexander son of Philip, the
3 king of Macedon, the first to reign over the Greeks. •He therefore went and
attempted to take the city and pillage it, but without success, since the citizens
4 learnt of his intention, •and offered him a stiff resistance, whereupon he
5 turned about and retreated, disconsolate, in the direction of Babylon. •But
while he was still in Persia news reached him that the armies that had invaded
6 the land of Judah had been defeated, •and that Lysias in particular had advanced
in massive strength, only to be forced to turn and flee before the Jews; these
had been strengthened by the acquisition of arms, supplies and abundant spoils
7 from the armies they had cut to pieces; •they had overthrown the abomination 1:54; 4:45
he had erected over the altar in Jerusalem, and had encircled the sanctuary
8 with high walls as in the past, and had fortified Bethzur, one of his cities. •When
the king heard this news he was amazed and profoundly shaken; he threw
himself on his bed and fell into a lethargy from acute disappointment, because
9 things had not turned out for him as he had planned. •And there he remained
for many days, subject to deep and recurrent fits of melancholy, until he under-
10 stood that he was dying. •Then summoning all his Friends, he said to them,
11 'Sleep evades my eyes, and my heart is cowed by anxiety. •I have been asking
myself how I could have come to such a pitch of distress, so great a flood as that
which now engulfs me—I who was so generous and well-loved in my heyday.
12 But now I remember the wrong I did in Jerusalem when I seized all the vessels of
silver and gold there, and ordered the extermination of the inhabitants of Judah
13 for no reason at all. •This, I am convinced, is why these misfortunes have over-
taken me, and why I am dying of melancholy in a foreign land.'

g. The fortress of Dathema, v. 9.
h. Administrative officers of the army, cf. Dt 20: 5,8f; Jos 1:10; 3:2.
i. Carnion of 2 M 12:21,26.
j. On a road leading to the Jordan opposite the plain of Bethshan, v. 52.
k. Greek form of Jamneh or Jabneel, Jos 15:11 S. of Jaffa.
l. 'Marisa' Vet. Lat., Josephus, and 2 M 12:35, rather than 'Samaria' Greek and Vulg. Marisa is on the road from Hebron to Philistia.
6 a. Elymais is a satrapy of Susiana. The narrative is resumed from 3:37.

The accession of Antiochus V

He summoned Philip,[b] one of his Friends, and made him regent of his whole 14
kingdom. •He entrusted him with his diadem, his robe and his signet, on the 15
understanding that he was to educate his son Antiochus and train him for the
throne. •Then King Antiochus died, in the year one hundred and forty-nine.[c] 16
2 M 10:10 Lysias, learning that the king was dead, established his son Antiochus on the 17
throne in succession to him, having brought him up from childhood—and
styled him Eupator.

The siege of the Citadel of Jerusalem by Judas Maccabaeus

1:33-35 The men from the Citadel were a threat to Israel in the neighbourhood 18
of the sanctuary, seeking every opportunity of harming them, and proving a
strong support to the pagans. •Judas decided that they must be destroyed, 19
and he mobilised the whole people to besiege them. •They assembled, and 20
laid siege to the Citadel in the year one hundred and fifty,[d] building firing plat-
forms and siege-engines. •But some of the besieged broke through the blockade, 21
and to these a number of renegades from Israel attached themselves. •They 22
made their way to the king and said, 'How much longer are you going to wait
before you see justice done and avenge our fellows? •We were content to 23
serve your father, to comply with his orders, and to obey his edicts. •'As a 24
result our own people will have nothing to do with us; what is more, they have
killed all those of us they could catch, and have plundered our heritages. •Nor 25
is it on us alone that their blows have fallen, but on all your dominions. •At this 26
moment they are laying siege to the Citadel of Jerusalem, to capture it, and they have
fortified the sanctuary and Bethzur. •Unless you forestall them at once, they will 27
go on to even bigger things, and then you will never be able to control them.'

The expedition of Antiochus V and Lysias. The battle of Bethzechariah

2 M 13:2 The king was furious when he heard this, and summoned all his Friends, 28
the generals of his forces and the cavalry commanders. •He recruited mer- 29
cenaries from other kingdoms and the islands of the seas. •His forces numbered 30
a hundred thousand foot soldiers, twenty thousand cavalry and thirty-two
elephants with experience of battle conditions. •They advanced through Idumaea 31
and besieged Bethzur, pressing the attack for days on end; they also constructed
siege-engines, but the defenders made a sortie and set these on fire, putting
up a brave resistance.

At this Judas raised the siege of the Citadel and pitched camp at Beth- 32
zechariah[e] opposite the royal encampment. •The king rose at daybreak and 33
marched his army at top speed down the road to Bethzechariah, where his
forces took up their battle formations and sounded the trumpets. •The elephants 34
were shown a syrup of grapes and mulberries to prepare them for the battle.
They distributed these animals among the phalanxes, allocating to each elephant 35
a thousand men dressed in coats of mail with bronze helmets on their heads;
five hundred picked horsemen were also assigned to each beast. •The horsemen 36
anticipated every move their elephant made; wherever it went they went with
it, and never separated from it. •On each elephant, to protect it, was a stout 37
wooden tower, kept in position by girths, each with its team fighting from their
mounted position,[f] as well as its driver. •The remainder of the cavalry was 38
stationed on one or other of the two flanks of the army, to harass the enemy
and cover the phalanxes.

When the sun glinted on the bronze and golden shields the mountains caught 39
the glint and gleamed like fiery torches. •One part of the king's army was deployed 40
high up in the mountains and others on the valley floor, all advancing con-
fidently and in good order. •Everyone trembled at the noise made by this vast 41
multitude, the thunder of the troops on the march and the clanking of their
armour, for it was an immense and mighty army. •Judas and his army advanced 42

43 to give battle, and six hundred of the king's army were killed. •Eleazar, called 2 M 13:15
Avaran, noticing that one of the elephants was royally caparisoned and was also
taller than all the others, and supposing that the king was mounted on it,
44 45 sacrificed himself to save his people and win an imperishable name. •Boldly
charging towards the creature through the thick of the phalanx, dealing death to
46 right and left, so that the enemy scattered on either side at his onslaught, •he
darted in under the elephant, ran his sword into it and killed it. The beast
47 collapsed on top of him, and he died on the spot. •The Jews saw how strong the
king was, and the ferocity fo the royal troops, and retired before them.

The capture of Bethzur and siege of Mount Zion by the Syrians

48 The royal army moved up to encounter them before Jerusalem, and the 2 M 13:18f
49 king began to blockade Judaea and Mount Zion. •He granted peace terms
to the people of Bethzur, who evacuated the town; it lacked store of provisions
50 to withstand a siege, since the land was enjoying a sabbatical year. •Having Lv 25:1+
51 occupied Bethzur, the king stationed a garrison there to hold it. •He besieged
the sanctuary for a long time, erecting firing platforms and siege-engines, fire-
52 throwers and ballistas, scorpions to discharge arrows, and catapults. •The
defenders countered these by constructing their own engines, and were thus
53 able to prolong their resistance. •But they had no stocks of provisions, because
it was the seventh year, and those who had taken refuge in Judaea from the
54 pagans had eaten up the last of their reserves. •Only a few men were left in
the Holy Place, owing to the severity of the famine; the rest had dispersed
and gone home.

The king grants the Jews religious freedom

55 Meanwhile Philip, whom King Antiochus before his death had appointed
56 to train his son Antiochus for the throne, •had returned from Persia and Media
with the forces that had accompanied the king, and was planning to seize
57 control of affairs. •On hearing this, Lysias at once decided to leave, and said ‖2 M 11:13-33
to the king, the generals of the army and the men, 'We are growing weaker
every day, we are short of food, and the place we are besieging is well fortified;
58 moreover the affairs of the kingdom demand our attention. •Let us offer the
hand of friendship to these men and make peace with them and with their whole
59 nation. •Let us grant them permission to follow their own customs as before,
since it is our abolition of these customs that provoked them into acting like
60 this.'[h] •The king and his commanders approved this argument, and he sent
61 the Jews an offer of peace, which they accepted. •The king and the generals
62 ratified the treaty by oath, and the besieged accordingly left the fortress. •The
king then entered Mount Zion, but on seeing how impregnable the place was,
he broke the oath he had sworn and gave orders for the encircling wall to be
63 demolished. •He then hurriedly struck camp and retired to Antioch, where
he found Philip already master of the city. Antiochus fought him and took
the city by storm.

Demetrius I becomes king, and sends Bacchides and Alcimus to Judaea ‖2 M 14:1-10

1 7 In the year one hundred and fifty Demetrius, son of Seleucus, escaped from
Rome[a] and arrived with a few men at a town on the coast, where he began

b. This Philip, who reappears in 6:55 and 2 M 9:29, is not the Philip of 2 M 5:22; 8:8.
c. 163 B.C.
d. 162. There had been no sowing in the autumn, 163, the opening of the sabbatical year, cf. Lv 25:2+; hence the shortage mentioned in v. 53.
e. At the beginning of the verse the text adds this gloss 'and they laid siege to', repetition from v. 20.
f. About m. north of Bethzur.
g. Instead of the impossible 'thirty-two warriors' of the Greek, read the Greek equivalent of the Hebr. word for the crew of a war chariot, lit. 'a trio of warriors'. The elephants, like the chariots, were manned by three soldiers.
h. The change of policy is explained by the death of the hellenising tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanes, by the exhaustion of both sides through lack of food, v. 57, and by the intrigues of Philip, v. 56.
7 a. Demetrius I, who had taken Antiochus Epiphanes' place as a hostage in Rome, 176, had escaped in 161.

to hold court. •As he was entering the crown lands of his ancestors his army 2
arrested Antiochus and Lysias, intending to bring them before him. •But when 3
he heard of this he said, 'Keep them out of my sight'. •So the army killed 4
them and Demetrius ascended the throne of his kingdom. •Then there came to 5
him all the renegades and godless men in Israel, led by Alcimus, whose ambition
it was to become high priest. •They denounced the people before the king. 6
'Judas and his brothers' they said 'have killed all your friends, and he has driven
us out of our country. •Send someone now whom you can trust; let him go and 7
see the wholesale ruin Judas has brought on us and on the king's dominions,
and let him punish the wretches and all who assist them.'

2:18+ The king chose Bacchides, one of the Friends of the King, governor of the 8
country beyond the river,[b] a great man in the kingdom and loyal to the king.
He sent him with the godless Alcimus, whom he established as high priest,[c] 9
with orders to exact retribution from the Israelites. •So they set out with a 10
large force, and on reaching the land of Judah they sent messengers to Judas and
his brothers with treacherous proposals of peace. •But these did not trust them, 11
seeing that they had come with a large force. •Nevertheless a commission of 12
scribes presented themselves before Alcimus and Bacchides, to sue for just
terms. •The first among the Israelites to ask them for peace-terms were the 13
2:42+ Hasidaeans, •who reasoned like this, 'This is a priest of Aaron's line who has 14
come with the armed forces; he will not wrong us'. •He did in fact discuss 15
peace-terms with them and gave them his oath, 'We will not attempt to injure
you or your friends'. •They believed him, but he arrested sixty of them and 16
put them to death in one day, fulfilling the words of scripture: •*They have scattered* 17
Ps 79:2-3 *the flesh of your devout, and shed their blood all round Jerusalem, and no one
to dig a grave!* •At this, fear and dread gripped the whole people. 'There is 18
no truth or virtue in them;' they said 'they have broken their agreement and
their sworn oath.'

Bacchides then left Jerusalem and encamped at Bethzaith,[d] and from there 19
sent and arrested many of the men who had deserted him, and some of the people,
and killed them, throwing them into the great cistern. •Then he put Alcimus 20
in charge of the province, leaving an army with him to support him; Bacchides
himself returned to the king. •Alcimus continued his struggle to become high 21
priest, •and all who were disturbing the peace of their own people rallied to 22
him; gaining control of the land of Judah, they worked great havoc in Israel.
Seeing that all the wrongs done to the Israelites by Alcimus and his supporters 23
exceeded what the pagans had done, •Judas went right round the whole territory 24
of Judaea to take vengeance on those who had deserted him and prevent their
free movement about the country.

When Alcimus saw how strong Judas and his supporters had grown, he 25
realised that he had not the strength to resist them, and returned to the king
where he laid criminal charges against them.

Nicanor in Judaea. The battle of Capharsalama

3:38 2 M 8:9, 34-36; 15:3 ||2 M 14: 12-14, 15-24 The king sent Nicanor, one of his generals ranking as Illustrious and a bitter 26
enemy of Israel, with orders to exterminate the people. •Reaching Jerusalem 27
with a large force, Nicanor sent envoys to Judas and his brothers with treacherous
proposals of peace: •'Let us have no fighting' he said 'between me and you; 28
I will come with a small escort and meet you face to face in peace.' •And he 29
came to Judas and they greeted each other peaceably enough; however,
||2 M 14:30 the enemy had made preparations to abduct Judas. •When Judas became aware 30
of Nicanor's treacherous purpose in coming to see him, he took fright and
refused any further meeting. •Nicanor then realised that his plan had been 31
discovered, and went out to meet Judas in battle near Capharsalama.[e]
About five hundred of Nicanor's men fell; the rest took refuge in the City of 32
David.

Threats against the Temple 2 M 14:31-36

33 After these events Nicanor went up to Mount Zion. Some of the priests
came out from the Holy Place with some elders, to welcome him peacefully
34 and to show him the holocaust that was being offered for the king. •But he
mocked them and laughed in their faces, defiled them[f] and used insolent language,
35 swearing in his rage, 'Unless Judas is handed over to me this time with his army,
as soon as I am safely back, I promise you, I will burn this building down!'
36 Then he went off in a fury. •At this the priests went in again, and stood in tears Jl 2:17
37 before the altar and the sanctuary, saying, •'You chose this house to be called
38 by your name, to be a house of prayer and petition for your people. •Take
vengeance on this man and on his army, and let them fall by the sword; remember
their blasphemies and give them no respite.'

The 'Day of Nicanor' at Adasa

39 Nicanor left Jerusalem and encamped at Beth-horon, where he was joined
40 by an army from Syria. •Meanwhile Judas camped at Adasa[g] with three thousand
41 men, and offered this prayer, •'When the Assyrian king's envoys blasphemed, 2 K 18:17–19:37
your angel went out and struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand ||2 M 15:22-24
42 of his men. •In the same way let us see you crush this army today, so that the Is 36-37
rest may know that this man has spoken blasphemously against your sanctuary:
judge him according to his wickedness.'
43 The armies met in battle on the thirteenth of the month Adar, and Nicanor's ||2 M 15:25-36
44 army was crushed, he himself being the first to fall in the battle. •When his troops
45 saw that Nicanor had fallen, they threw down their arms and fled. •The Jews
pursued them a day's journey, from Adasa to the approaches of Gezer; they
46 sounded their trumpets in warning as they followed them, •and people came
out from all the surrounding villages of Judaea and blocked their flight, so
that they turned back on their own men, and all fell by the sword, not one being
47 left alive. •Collecting the spoils and booty, they cut off Nicanor's head and
the right hand he had stretched out in a display of insolence; these were taken
48 and displayed within sight of Jerusalem. •The people were overjoyed, and
49 kept that day as a great holiday: •indeed they decided to celebrate it annually
50 on the thirteenth of Adar.[h] •The land of Judah was at peace for a short time.

A eulogy of the Romans[a]

1 8 Now, Judas had heard of the reputation of the Romans, their military strength
and their benevolence towards all who made common cause with them; they
2 wanted to establish friendly relations with anyone who approached them, •be-
cause of their military strength. He was told of their wars and of their prowess
3 among the Gauls,[b] whom they had conquered and put under tribute; •and of all
they had done in the province of Spain to gain possession of the silver and gold
4 mines there, •making themselves masters of the whole country by their deter-
mination and perseverance, despite its great distance from their own; of the
kings who came from the ends of the earth to attack them, only to be crushed
by them and overwhelmed with disaster, and of others who paid them annual
5 tribute; •Philip, Perseus king of the Kittim, and others who had dared to make

b. The 'country beyond the river' is the territory from the Euphrates to the Egyptian border. See 3:32.

c. Alcimus is described as godless because he flirted with the Greeks and was an obstacle to Hasmonaean ambitions; but his membership of the House of Aaron made his appointment legitimate besides winning him the support of the Hasidaeans, cf. vv. 12f.

d. Nearly m. north of Bethzur.

e. Probably near Gibeon.

f. According to a Jewish tradition, this was by spitting towards the Temple.

g. Between Beth-horon and Jerusalem.

h. Adar 13th 151 of the Seleucid era is either 17th or 27th of March, 160 B.C. Adar 13th became, in the festal calendar, the 'Day of Nicanor', cf. 2 M 15:36. The Jews observed it for only a short period.

8 a. The eulogy of the Romans introduces the treaty made between Judas and Rome, vv. 17f. Orthodox Jews so hated the Greeks that they were ready to credit Rome with all the virtues. They thought that the decline of the Seleucids would lead to the independence of Judaea. They were mistaken: the Roman occupation succeeded Greek rule in 63 B.C.

b. In Cisalpine Gaul between 200 and 189 B.C.

war on them, had been defeated and reduced to subjection, •while Antiochus the 6
Great, king of Asia, who had advanced to attack them with a hundred and
twenty elephants, cavalry, chariots and a very large army, had also suffered
defeat at their hands; •they had taken him alive and imposed on him and his 7
successors the payment of an enormous tribute, the surrender of hostages, and
the cession •of the Indian territory, with Media, Lydia, and some of their best 8
provinces, which they took from him and gave to King Eumenes. •Judas was 9
also told how, when the Greeks planned an expedition to destroy them, •the 10
Romans got wind of it and sent against them a single general, fought a campaign
in which they inflicted heavy casualties, carried off their women and children
into captivity, pillaged their goods, subdued their country, tore down their
fortresses and reduced them to a slavery lasting to this very day; •and how all 11
other kingdoms and islands that had ever resisted them were also destroyed
and enslaved.

But where their friends and those who relied on them were concerned, they 12
had always stood by their friendship. They had subdued kings far and near,
and all who heard their name went in terror of them. •One man, if they deter- 13
mined to help him and advance him to a throne, would certainly occupy it,
while another, if they so determined, would find himself deposed; their influence
was paramount. •In spite of all this not one of them had assumed a crown or 14
put on the purple for his own aggrandisement. •They had set up a senate, where 15
three hundred and twenty councillors deliberated daily, constantly debating how
best to regulate public affairs. •They entrusted their government to one man 16
for a year at a time, with absolute power over their whole empire, and this
man was obeyed by all without any envy or jealousy.

12:1f; 15:15 **The alliance between the Jews and Romans**

2 M 4:11 Having chosen Eupolemus son of John, of the family of Accos, and Jason 17
son of Eleazar, Judas sent them to Rome to make a treaty of friendship and
alliance with these people, •who would surely lift the yoke from their shoulders 18
once they understood that the kingdom of the Greeks was reducing Israel to
slavery. •The envoys made the lengthy journey to Rome and presented themselves 19
before the Senate with their formal proposal, •'Judas Maccabaeus and his 20
brothers, with the Jewish people, have sent us to you to conclude a treaty of
alliance and peace with you, and to enrol ourselves as your allies and friends'.
The proposal met with the approval of the senators, •and this is a copy of the 21 22
14:18 rescript which they engraved on bronze tablets and sent to Jerusalem to be
kept there by the Jews as a record of peace and alliance:

'Good fortune attend the Romans and the Jewish nation by sea and land 23
for ever; may sword or enemy be far from them! •If war comes first to Rome or 24
any of her allies throughout her dominions, •the Jewish nation is to take action 25
as her ally, as occasion may require, and do it wholeheartedly. •They are not 26
to give or supply to the aggressor any grain, arms, money or ships; this is the
Roman decision, and they are to honour their obligations without recompense.
In the same way, if war comes first to the Jewish nation the Romans are to support 27
them energetically as occasion may offer, •and the aggressor shall not be furnished 28
with grain, arms, money or ships; this is the Roman decision, and they will
honour these obligations unreservedly. •These are the terms laid down by the 29
Romans for the Jewish people. •If when they have come into force either party 30
should wish to make any addition or deletion, they shall be free to do so, and any
such addition or deletion shall be binding.[c]

'As regards the wrongs done to them by King Demetrius, we have written 31
to him in these terms: Why have you made your yoke lie heavy on our friends
and allies the Jews? •If they appeal against you again we will uphold their rights 32
and make war on you by sea and land.'

The battle of Beerzeth and death of Judas Maccabaeus[a]

9 1 Demetrius heard that Nicanor and his army had fallen in battle,
and he sent Bacchides and Alcimus a second time into the land of Judah, and
2 with them the right wing of his army. •They took the road to Galilee[b] and
besieged Mesaloth in Arbela,[c] and captured it, putting many people to death.
3 In the first month of the year one hundred and fifty-two[d] they set up camp
4 before Jerusalem; •they then moved on, making their way to Beerzeth[e] with
5 twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse. •Judas lay in camp at Elasa,
6 with three thousand picked men. •When they saw the huge size of the enemy
forces they were terrified, and many slipped out of the camp, until no more
7 than eight hundred of the force were left. •When Judas saw that his army had
melted away and that attack was imminent, he was aghast, for he had no time
8 to rally them. •Yet, dismayed as he was, he said to those who were left, 'Up!
9 Let us face the enemy; we may yet have the strength to fight them.' •His men
tried to dissuade him, declaring, 'We have no strength for anything but to escape
with our lives this time; then we can come back with our brothers to fight them;
10 by ourselves we are too few'. •'God forbid' Judas retorted 'that I should do
such a thing as run away from them! If our time has come, at least let us die
like men for our countrymen, and leave nothing to tarnish our reputation.'
11 The enemy forces then marched out of the camp, and the Jews took up their
position in readiness to engage them. The cavalry was ordered into two squadrons;
the slingers and archers marched in the van of the army with the shock-troops,
12 all stout fighters; •Bacchides was on the right wing. The phalanx advanced
from between the two squadrons, sounding the trumpets; the men on Judas'
13 side blew their trumpets also, •and the earth shook with the noise of the armies.
The engagement lasted from morning until evening.
14 Judas saw that Bacchides and the main strength of his army lay on the right;
15 all the stout-hearted rallied to him, •and they broke the right wing and pursued
16 them to the furthest foothills of the range.[f] •But when the Syrians on the left
wing saw that the right had been broken, they turned and followed hot on the
17 heels of Judas and his men to take them in the rear. •The fight became desperate,
18 and there were many casualties on both sides. •Judas himself fell, and the remnant
fled.

The funeral of Judas Maccabaeus

19 Jonathan and Simon took up their brother Judas and buried him in his
20 ancestral tomb at Modein. •All Israel wept and mourned him deeply and for
21 many days they repeated this dirge, •'What a downfall for the strong man, 2 S 1:27
22 the man who saved Israel single-handed!' •The other deeds of Judas, the battles
he fought, the exploits he performed, and all his titles to greatness have not been
recorded; but they were very many.

IV. JONATHAN, LEADER OF THE JEWS AND HIGH PRIEST (160-142 B.C.)

The triumph of the Greek party. Jonathan leads the resistance

23 After the death of Judas the renegades came out of hiding throughout Israel
24 and all the evil-doers reappeared. •At that time there was a severe famine, and

c. The text of the treaty ends here. The following paragraph summarises a reply made to the envoys by word of mouth. This treaty, though not mentioned by Roman historians, is in harmony with the policy of the Senate at that time: it encourages rebellion in the East whilst abstaining from armed intervention. The treaty did not in fact help the Jews in any way.

9 a. The narrative is resumed from 7:50.
b. 'Galilee' corr.
c. 'Mesaloth', i.e. the fortified caves of Arbela to the W. of Lake Tiberias.
d. Spring 160.
e. 'Beerzeth 'corr. This place is about 12 m. north of Jerusalem.
f. 'to the furthest foothills of the range' corr.

the country went over to their side. •Bacchides deliberately chose the enemies 25
of religion and set them up as governors of the country. •These traced and 26
searched out the friends of Judas and brought them before Bacchides, who
took revenge on them and humiliated them. •A terrible oppression began in Israel; 27
4:46+ there had been nothing like it since the disappearance of prophecy among them.

Then all the friends of Judas came together and said to Jonathan, •'Since 28 29
your brother Judas died, there has been no one like him to head the resistance
to the enemy, Bacchides and those who hate our nation. •Accordingly, we have 30
today chosen you to take his place as our ruler and leader and to fight our
campaigns.' •From that day Jonathan accepted the leadership and took over 31
the command from his brother Judas.

Jonathan in the desert of Tekoa. Bloody encounters round Medeba

Bacchides, when he heard the news, made plans to kill Jonathan. •But this 32 33
became known to Jonathan, his brother Simon and all his supporters, and they
took refuge in the desert of Tekoa,[e] camping by the water of the cistern at
Asphar. •(Bacchides came to know of this on the sabbath day, and he too crossed 34
the Jordan with his entire army.)[h]

5:25+ Jonathan sent his brother, who was in charge of the convoy, to request his 35
friends the Nabataeans to store their considerable baggage for them. •But 36
the sons of Jambri from Medeba[i] raided them, captured John and everything
he had and made off with their prize. •After this had happened it was reported 37
to Jonathan and his brother Simon that the sons of Jambri were celebrating a
great wedding, and were escorting the bride, a daughter of one of the great
notables of Canaan, from Nadabath with a large retinue. •Remembering the 38
bloody end of their brother John, they went up and hid under cover of the
mountain. •As they were keeping watch, there came into sight a noisy procession 39
with a great deal of baggage, and the bridegroom, with his groomsmen and
his family, came out to meet it with tambourines and a band, and military display.
The Jews rushed down on them from their ambush and killed them, inflicting 40
heavy casualties; the survivors escaped to the mountain, leaving their entire
baggage train to be captured. •And so the wedding was turned into mourning 41
and the music of their band into a dirge. •Having in this way avenged in full the 42
blood of their brother they returned to the marshes of the Jordan.

Crossing the Jordan[j]

As soon as Bacchides heard this, he came on the sabbath day with a 43
considerable force to the steep banks of the Jordan. •Jonathan said to his men, 44
'Up! Let us fight for our lives, for today is not like yesterday and the day before.
You can see, we shall have to fight on our front and to our rear, we have the 45
waters of the Jordan on one side, the marsh and scrub on the other, and we
have no line of withdrawal. •This is the moment to call on heaven for your 46
deliverance from the hand of our enemies.' •The engagement was begun by 47
Jonathan, who aimed a blow at Bacchides, but the Syrian disengaged himself
and withdrew, •whereupon Jonathan and his men leapt into the Jordan and swam 48
to the other bank, but the enemy did not cross the Jordan in pursuit. •That 49
day Bacchides lost about a thousand men.

Bacchides builds fortifications. The death of Alcimus

Bacchides returned to Jerusalem and built strongholds in Judaea, the fortress 50
in Jericho, Emmaus, Beth-horon, Bethel, Timnath, Pharathon and Tephon,
with high walls and barred gates, •and stationed a garrison in each of them to 51
harass Israel. •He also fortified the town of Bethzur, Gezer and the Citadel, 52
and placed troops in them with supplies of provisions. •He took the sons of 53
the leading men of the country as hostages, and had them placed under guard
in the Citadel of Jerusalem.

54 In the year one hundred and fifty-three,[k] in the second month, Alcimus
ordered the demolition of the wall of the inner court of the sanctuary, destroying
55 the work of the prophets.[l] Alcimus had just begun the demolition •when he
suffered a stroke, and his work was interrupted. His mouth became obstructed,
and his paralysis made him incapable of speaking at all or giving directions
56 57 to his household; •it was not long before he died in great agony. •When Bacchides
saw that Alcimus was dead he returned to the king; and the land of Judah was
left in peace for two years.

The siege of Bethbasi

58 All the renegades then agreed on a plan. 'Now is the time,' they said 'while
Jonathan and his supporters are living in peace and are full of confidence, for
59 us to bring back Bacchides; he can arrest them all in one night.' •So they went
60 to him and reached an understanding. •Bacchides at once set out with a large
force, and sent secret instructions to all his allies in Judaea to seize Jonathan
and his supporters. But they were unable to do this because their plan became
61 known, •and Jonathan and his men arrested some fifty of the men of the country
who were ringleaders in the plot, and put them to death.
62 Jonathan and Simon then retired with their partisans into the wilderness
63 to Bethbasi;[m] they rebuilt the ruinous parts of the place and fortified it. •When
Bacchides heard this, he mustered his whole force and notified his adherents
64 in Judaea. •He then proceeded to lay siege to Bethbasi, attacking it for many
65 days and constructing siege-engines. •But Jonathan, leaving his brother Simon
66 in the town, broke out into the countryside with a handful of men. •He attacked
Odomera and his brothers, and the sons of Phasiron in their tents; and these
67 went over to the attack, joining forces with him. •Meanwhile Simon and his
68 people made a sortie from the town and set fire to the siege-engines. •Taking
the offensive against Bacchides, they routed him. He was greatly disconcerted
69 to find that his plan and his assault had come to nothing, •and vented his anger
on those renegades who had induced him to enter the country, putting many
70 of them to death; then he decided to return to his own country. •Discovering
this, Jonathan sent envoys to negotiate peace-terms and the release of prisoners
71 with him. •Bacchides agreed to this, accepting his proposals and swearing
72 never to seek occasion to harm him all the days of his life. •After surrendering
to Jonathan the prisoners he had earlier taken in the land of Judah, he turned
about and withdrew to his own country, and never again came near their frontiers.
73 The sword no longer hung over Israel, and Jonathan settled in Michmash,
where he began to judge the people and to rid Israel of the godless.[n] Dt 19:19; 22:22

Alexander Balas competes for Jonathan's support, and appoints him high priest

1 **10** In the year one hundred and sixty Alexander styled Epiphanes, son of
Antiochus, landed at Ptolemais[a] and occupied it. He was well received,
2 and held court there. •On hearing this, King Demetrius assembled a very large
3 army and marched out to meet him in battle. •Demetrius furthermore sent
4 Jonathan a conciliatory letter designed to enhance his dignity, •for, as he said,
'We had better move first to come to terms with these people before he makes
5 common cause with Alexander against us; •he will not have forgotten all the

g. S.E. of Bethlehem.
h. This verse anticipates v. 43.
i. In Transjordania, S.W. of Amman.
j. Bacchides leaves Judaea to block the way of the Hasmonaeans in the winding Valley of the Jordan on their way back from Medeba.

k. May 159.
l. Referring to the wall that divided the Court of the Gentiles from the space reserved for the Jews in the Temple for which Haggai and Zechariah had laboured and Ezekiel provided the model.
m. S.E. of Bethlehem.
n. From Michmash, nearly 8 m. south of Bethel, in times past the signal was given for Saul's war against the Philistines, 1 S 14. The Maccabaean Jonathan is portrayed as one of the ancient judges. If the siege of Bethbasi took place in 157, the country had enjoyed five years of peace.
10 a. The defection of Ptolemais to Alexander Balas, who claimed to be son of Antiochus Epiphanes, took place in 152.

wrongs we inflicted on him and his brothers, and on his nation'. •He therefore 6
authorised him to raise an army and manufacture arms, and to describe himself
as his ally, and ordered the hostages in the Citadel to be surrendered to him.

Jonathan went straight to Jerusalem and read the letter in the hearing of 7
the whole people and of the men in the Citadel. •Everyone was awestruck when 8
they heard that the king had given him authority to raise an army. •The men 9
in the Citadel surrendered the hostages to Jonathan, who handed them back to
their parents. •Jonathan then took up residence in Jerusalem[b] and began the 10
rebuilding and restoration of the city. •He ordered those responsible for the 11
work to build the walls and the defences round Mount Zion in square hewn stones
to make them stronger, and this was done. •The foreigners in the fortresses 12
built by Bacchides abandoned them, •one after another leaving his post to go 13
back to his own country. •Only at Bethzur were a few left of those who had 14
forsaken the Law and the commandments, since this served them as a place
of refuge.

King Alexander heard of all the promises Demetrius had sent to Jonathan, 15
and he was also given an account of the battles and exploits of this man and
his brothers and the trials they had endured. •'Shall we ever find another man 16
like him?' he exclaimed. 'Let us be quick to make a friend and ally of him!' •He 17
therefore wrote him a letter, addressing him in these terms, •'King Alexander 18
to his brother Jonathan, greetings. •You have been brought to our notice as 19
a strong man of action, and one disposed to be our friend. •Accordingly we 20
2:18+ have today appointed you high priest of your nation,[c] with the title of Friend
of the King'—he also sent him a purple robe and a golden crown—'and you
are to study our interests and maintain friendly relations with us.'

Jonathan put on the sacred vestments in the seventh month of the year one 21
hundred and sixty, on the feast of Tabernacles;[d] he then set about raising troops
and manufacturing arms in quantity.

A letter from Demetrius I to Jonathan

Demetrius was displeased when he heard what had happened. •'What have 22 23
we done' he said 'that Alexander should have forestalled us in gaining the
friendship of the Jews to strengthen his position? •I will address an appeal to 24
them too offering them advancement and riches as an inducement to support
me.' •And he wrote to them as follows: 25

'King Demetrius to the Jewish nation, greetings. •We have heard how you 26
have kept your agreement with us and have maintained friendly relations with
us and have not gone over to our enemies, and it has given us great satisfaction.
If you now continue to keep faith with us, we will make you a handsome return 27
for what you do on our behalf. •We will accord you many exemptions and 28
11:35 grant you privileges. •Henceforth I release you and exempt all the Jews from 29
the tribute, the salt dues and the crown levies,[e] •and whereas I am entitled to 30
levy the equivalent of one third of the sowing and one half of the fruit of the
11:28, 34 trees,[f] I release from this levy, from today and for the future, the land of Judah
and the three districts annexed to it from Samaria-Galilee, from this day in per-
petuity. •Jerusalem shall be sacred and exempt, with its territory, tithes and 31
dues. •I relinquish control of the Citadel in Jerusalem and make it over to the 32
high priest, so that he may man it with a garrison of his own choosing. •Every 33
Jewish person taken from the land of Judah into captivity in any part of my
kingdom I set free without ransom, and decree that all shall be exempt from
taxes, even on their livestock. •All festivals, sabbaths, new moons and days 34
of special observance, and the three days before and three days after a festival,
shall all be days of exemption and quittance for all the Jews in my kingdom,
and no one shall have the right to pursue or molest any of them for any matter 35
whatsoever. •Jews shall be enrolled in the king's forces to the number of thirty 36
thousand men, and receive maintenance on the same scale as the rest of the

37 king's forces. •Some of them shall be stationed in the king's major fortresses,
and from among others appointments shall be made to positions of trust
in the kingdom. Their officers and commanders shall be appointed from their
own number, and shall live under their own laws, as the king has prescribed for
38 the land of Judah. •As regards the three districts annexed to Judaea from the
province of Samaria, they shall be integrated into Judaea and considered as
coming under one governor, obeying the high priest's authority and no other.
39 I have made over Ptolemais and its environs as a free gift to the sanctuary in
40 Jerusalem, to meet the necessary expenses of public worship. •And I make a
personal grant of fifteen thousand silver shekels annually chargeable to the
41 royal revenue from appropriate places. •And the entire surplus, which has
not been paid in by the officials as in previous years, shall henceforth be paid
42 over by them for work on the Temple. •In addition, the sum of five thousand
silver shekels, levied annually on the profits of the sanctuary, as shown in the
annual accounts, is also relinquished as the perquisite of the priests who perform
43 the liturgy. •Anyone who takes refuge in the Temple in Jerusalem or any of its
precincts, when in debt to the royal exchequer or otherwise, shall be discharged
44 in full possession of all the goods he owns in my kingdom. •As regards the
building and restoration of the sanctuary, the expense of the work shall be
45 met from the royal exchequer.[g] •The reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem
and the fortification of the perimeter shall also be a charge on the royal exchequer,
and so also the reconstruction of other city walls in Judaea.'

Jonathan rejects Demetrius' offers

46 When Jonathan and the people heard these proposals they put no faith
in them and refused to accept them, because they remembered the great wrongs
47 Demetrius had done in Israel and how cruelly he had oppressed them. •They
decided in favour of Alexander, since they regarded him as their outstanding
48 benefactor, and they became his constant allies. • King Alexander now mustered
49 large forces and took up a position confronting Demetrius, •and the two kings
met in battle. Alexander's army was routed, and Demetrius pursued him and
50 defeated his troops. •He continued the battle with vigour until sunset, but
Demetrius himself was killed that day.

Alexander's marriage with Cleopatra. Jonathan as military commissioner and governor-general

51 Alexander sent ambassadors to Ptolemy king of Egypt, with this message,
52 'Now that I have returned to my kingdom and ascended the throne of my
ancestors, and have established my authority by crushing Demetrius, so gaining
53 control of our country—•for I fought him and we destroyed both him and his
54 army and now occupy the throne of his kingdom—•now, therefore, let us make
a treaty of mutual friendship. Give me your daughter in marriage, and I will
become your son-in-law and give you, and her, presents which are worthy of you.'

10 b. Jonathan takes advantage of the situation to establish himself in Jerusalem and to turn the Temple into the stronghold of Jewish resistance.

c. By uniting in himself the functions of high priest and of civil and military leader, v. 65, Jonathan seems to have achieved the aim of the early Maccabees, struggling 'for people and sanctuary', 3:43. But his position depends on the favour of the sovereign, and Jonathan finds that he has to please successive overlords, 10:47,59f; 11:24f,57f. In that troubled period political opportunism is the complement of armed resistance, as guaranteeing to the Jewish people the freedom required for the exercise of their religion. The religious motive was to die out with Simon, with whose death the book ends. The Hasmonaeans, successors of the Maccabees, were to fight and scheme for their own aggrandisement.

d. October 152. The death of Alcimus had left the office vacant.

e. Lit. 'crowns'; by 'crowns', 'palms', 'olive branches', 13:37; 2 M 14:4, are meant gifts made to the sovereign, though in fact these took the form of hard cash.

f. The exorbitance of this tax is explained by the Seleucids' claim (like that of the Egyptian Ptolemies) to be universal landowners, their subjects being lessees only.

g. The Seleucids, like the kings of Persia, Ezr 6:3, subscribed freely to the sanctuaries of their subject peoples. For the Temple of Jerusalem, cf. the charter of Antiochus III quoted by Josephus, the generous gifts of Seleucus IV, 2 M 3:3, and the promises made by the dying Antiochus Epiphanes, 2 M 9:16.

King Ptolemy replied as follows, 'Happy the day when you returned to 55
the land of your ancestors and ascended their royal throne! •I will do at once for 56
you what your letter proposes; but meet me at Ptolemais, so that we can see
one another, and I will become your father-in-law, as you have asked.'

Ptolemy[h] left Egypt with his daughter Cleopatra, and reached Ptolemais 57
in the year one hundred and sixty-two.[i] •King Alexander went to meet him, and 58
Ptolemy gave him the hand of his daughter Cleopatra and celebrated her wedding
in Ptolemais with great magnificence, as kings do. •King Alexander then wrote 59
to Jonathan to come and meet him. •Jonathan made his way in state to Ptolemais, 60
2:18+ and met the two kings; he gave them and their friends silver and gold, and
many gifts, and made a favourable impression on them. •A number of scoundrels 61
from Israel[j] combined to denounce him, but the king paid no attention to
them. •In fact the king commanded that Jonathan should be divested of his 62
own garments and clothed in the purple, which was done. •The king then seated 63
him by his side and said to his officers, 'Escort him into the centre of the city
and proclaim that no one is to bring charges against him on any count; no one is
to molest him for any reason.' •And so, when his accusers saw the honour 64
done him by this proclamation, and Jonathan himself invested in the purple,
2:18+;11:27 they all fled. •The king did him the honour of enrolling him among the First 65
Friends,[k] and appointed him military commissioner and governor-general.[l]
Jonathan then returned to Jerusalem in peace and gladness. 66

Demetrius II. Apollonius, governor of Coele-Syria, defeated by Jonathan

In the year one hundred and sixty-five,[m] Demetrius son of Demetrius came 67
from Crete to the land of his ancestors. •When King Alexander heard of it he was 68
plunged in gloom and retired to Antioch. •Demetrius appointed Apollonius 69
as governor[n] of Coele-Syria; the latter assembled a large force, and from his
camp at Jamnia sent the following message to Jonathan the high priest:

'You are entirely alone in rising against us, and now I find myself ridiculed 70
and reproached on your account. Why do you use your authority to our dis-
advantage in the mountains? •If you are so confident in your forces, come down 71
now to meet us on the plain and let us take each other's measure there; on
my side I have the strength of the towns. •Ask and learn who I am and who are 72
the others supporting us. Men will tell you that you cannot stand up to us,
because your ancestors were twice routed on their own ground,[o] •nor will you 73
now be able to withstand the cavalry or so great an army on the plain, where
there is neither stone nor outcrop nor cover of any kind.'

When Jonathan heard the message of Apollonius his spirit was roused; 74
he picked ten thousand men and left Jerusalem, and his brother Simon joined
him with reinforcements. •He drew up his forces before Joppa; the citizens had 75
shut him out as Apollonius had a garrison in Joppa. When they began the
attack, •the citizens took fright and opened the gates, and Jonathan occupied 76
Joppa. •Hearing this, Apollonius marshalled three thousand cavalry and a large 77
army and made his way to Azotus as though intending to march through, while in
fact pressing on into the plain, since he had a great number of cavalry on
which he was relying. •Jonathan pursued him as far as Azotus, where the armies 78
joined battle. •Now Apollonius had left a thousand horsemen in concealment 79
behind them. •Jonathan knew of this ambush behind him; the horsemen 80
surrounded his army and shot their arrows into the people from morning till
evening. •But the people stood firm, as Jonathan had ordered, while the enemy's 81
horses tired. •So Simon was able to throw in his force and close with the 82
phalanx, which he cut to pieces and routed. •The cavalry scattered over the 83
plain and fled to Azotus, where they entered Beth-dagon, the temple of their idol,
to take shelter there. •But Jonathan set fire to Azotus and the surrounding 84
1 S 11:4 5:1f towns, plundered them, and burned down the temple of Dagon, with all the
fugitives who had crowded into it. •The enemy losses, counting those who 85

fell by the sword and those burnt to death, totalled about eight thousand men.
86 Then Jonathan left there and encamped opposite Askalon, whose citizens came
87 out to meet him with great ceremony. •Jonathan then returned to Jerusalem
88 with his followers, laden with booty. •In the event, when King Alexander heard
89 what had happened, he awarded Jonathan fresh honours: •he sent him a golden brooch, of the kind customarily presented to the Cousins[p] of the King, and gave him proprietary rights over Ekron with all its lands.

Ptolemy VI supports Demetrius II but dies at the same time as Alexander Balas

1 11 The king of Egypt then assembled an army as numerous as the sands of the seashore, with many ships, and attempted to take possession of
2 Alexander's kingdom by a ruse and add it to his own kingdom. •He set off for Syria with protestations of peace, and the people of the towns opened their gates to him and came out to meet him, since King Alexander's orders were to
3 welcome him, Ptolemy being his father-in-law. •On entering the towns, however,
4 Ptolemy quartered troops as a garrison in each one. •When he reached Azotus he was shown the burnt-out temple of Dagon, with Azotus and its suburbs 10:84
in ruins, corpses scattered here and there, and the charred remains of those whom Jonathan had burnt to death in the battle, piled into heaps along his
5 route. •They explained to the king what Jonathan had done, hoping for his
6 disapproval; but the king said nothing. •Jonathan then went to receive the king in state at Joppa, where they greeted each other and spent the night.
7 Jonathan accompanied the king as far as the river called Eleutherus,[a] and then
8 returned to Jerusalem. •King Ptolemy for his part occupied the coastal towns as far as the maritime quarter of Seleucia,[b] all the while maturing his wicked
9 designs against Alexander. •He sent envoys to King Demetrius, saying, 'Come, let us make a treaty with each other; I will give you my daughter, whom Alexander
10 now has, and you shall rule your father's kingdom. •I regret having given my
11 daughter to that man, who has attempted to kill me.' •He made this accusation
12 because he coveted his kingdom. •Having carried off his daughter and bestowed her on Demetrius, he broke with Alexander, and their enmity became open.
13 Ptolemy next entered Antioch and assumed the crown of Asia; he now wore on
14 his head the two crowns of Egypt and Asia. •Meanwhile, King Alexander was
15 in Cilicia, since the people of those parts had risen in revolt, •but when he heard the news, he advanced on his rival to give battle, while Ptolemy for his part also
16 took the field, met him with a strong force and routed him.[c] •Alexander fled to
17 Arabia for refuge, and King Ptolemy held victory celebrations. •Zabdiel the Arab
18 cut off Alexander's head and sent it to Ptolemy. •Three days later King Ptolemy died, and the Egyptian garrisons in the strongholds were killed by the local
19 inhabitants. •So Demetrius became king in the year one hundred and sixty-seven.[d]

Early relations between Demetrius and Jonathan

20 At the same time Jonathan mustered the men of Judaea for an assault on the Citadel in Jerusalem,[e] and they constructed many siege-engines for use against it.

h. Ptolemy VI Philometor.

i. 150 B.C.

j. The hellenising Jews not unreasonably considered that their loyalty to the hellenist cause had been ill-rewarded. Some were offended by the rejection of the claims of other priestly families.

k. Jonathan was promoted to the highest grade of the distinguished order of which he had already been made a member, v. 20, cf. 2:18+.

l. Jonathan is thus officially recognised as civil and military governor of Judaea.

m. 147-146 B.C.

n. 'Governor' corr.

o. Alluding to the two victories of the Philistines over the Israelites, 1 S 4:1-11; 31:1-7; Jamnia, where Apollonius is encamped, is in Philistia, 5:58.

p. The 'Cousins of the King' constitute an order of greater distinction than the 'Friends of the King', v. 65. Jonathan has attained the highest dignity of the court.

11 a. As much to pay his court to Ptolemy as to show the Jews and pagans how much he enjoyed Ptolemy's favour. The river Eleutherus is to the N. of Tripoli.

b. Seleucia, the port of Antioch.

c. At this battle, near the Lake of Antioch, Ptolemy VI was mortally wounded; he died 3 days later.

d. 145 B.C.

e. The clause of 10:32, therefore, never became effective.

But some renegades who hated their nation made their way to the king and told 21
him that Jonathan was besieging the Citadel. •The king was angered by the news. 22
No sooner had he been informed than he set out and came to Ptolemais. He
wrote to Jonathan, telling him to raise the siege and to meet him for a conference
in Ptolemais as soon as possible. •When Jonathan heard this he gave orders for 23
the siege to continue; then he selected a deputation from the elders of Israel
and the priests, and took the deliberate risk •of taking silver and gold, clothing 24
and numerous other presents, and going to Ptolemais to face the king, whose
favour he succeeded in winning; •and although one or two renegades of his 25
nation brought charges against him, •the king treated him as his predecessors 26
had treated him, and promoted him in the presence of all his friends. •He con- 27
firmed him in the high-priesthood and whatever other distinctions he already
2:18+; 10:65 held, and had him ranked among the First Friends. •Jonathan claimed that the 28
10:30; 11:34 king should exempt Judaea from tribute, with the three Samaritan provinces,
promising him three hundred talents in return. •The king consented, and wrote 29
Jonathan a rescript covering the whole matter, in these terms:

10:26-45 **A new charter favouring the Jews**

'King Demetrius to Jonathan his brother, and to the Jewish nation, greeting. 30
We have written to Lasthenes our cousin concerning you, and now send you 31
this copy of our rescript for your own information: •King Demetrius to his 32
father Lasthenes, greeting. •The nation of the Jews are our friends and fulfil 33
their obligations to us, and in view of their goodwill towards us we have decided
to show them our bounty. •We confirm them in their possession of the territory 34
10:30; 11:28 of Judaea and the three districts of Aphairema, Lydda and Ramathaim;[f] these
were annexed to Judaea from Samaritan territory, with all their dependencies,
in favour of all who offer sacrifice in Jerusalem, instead of the royal dues which
the king formerly received from them every year, from the yield of the soil and
10:29 the fruit crops. •As regards our other rights over the tithes and taxes due to us, 35
over the salt marshes, and the crown taxes due to us, as from today we release
them from them all. •No single one of these grants shall be set aside, from 36
today in perpetuity.[g] •It shall be your responsibility to have a copy of this 37
made, to be given to Jonathan and displayed on the holy mountain in a conspic-
uous place.'

Demetrius II rescued by Jonathan's troops at Antioch

When King Demetrius saw that the country was at peace under his rule and 38
that no resistance was offered him, he dismissed his forces, and sent all the men
home, except for the foreign troops that he had recruited in the islands of the
nations, thus incurring the enmity of the veterans who had served his ancestors.[h]
12:39 Now Trypho, one of Alexander's former supporters, seeing that all the troops 39
were muttering against Demetrius, approached Iamleku' the Arab, who was
bringing up Antiochus, Alexander's young son, •and repeatedly urged him 40
to let him have the boy, so that he might succeed his father as king; he told him
of Demetrius' decision and the resentment it had aroused among his troops.
He spent a long time there. •Meanwhile Jonathan sent to ask King Demetrius 41
to withdraw the troops in the Citadel from Jerusalem and to remove the garrisons
from the strongholds, since they were constantly fighting Israel. •Demetrius 42
sent back word to Jonathan, 'Not only will I do this for you and for your nation,
but I will heap honours on you and your nation if I find a favourable opportunity.
For the present, you would do well to send me reinforcements, for all my troops 43
have deserted.' •Jonathan sent off three thousand experienced soldiers to him 44
in Antioch; when they reached the king, he was delighted at their arrival. •The 45
citizens crowded together in the centre of the city, to the number of some hundred
and twenty thousand, intending to kill the king. •The king took refuge in the 46
palace, while the citizens occupied the thoroughfares of the city and began to

47 attack. •The king then called on the Jews for help; and these all rallied round
him in a body,[j] then spread out through the city, and that day killed about a
48 hundred thousand of its inhabitants. •They fired the city, seizing a great deal
49 of plunder at the same time, and secured the king's safety. •When the citizens
saw that the Jews had the city at their mercy their courage failed them, and
50 they made an abject appeal to the king, •'Give us the right hand of peace, and
51 let the Jews stop their fight against us and the city'. •They threw down their
arms and made peace. The Jews were covered in glory, in the eyes of the king and
of everyone else in his kingdom. Having won renown in his kingdom they returned
52 to Jerusalem laden with booty. •King Demetrius continued to occupy the throne
53 of his kingdom, and the country was quiet under his government. •But he gave
the lie to all the promises he had made, and fell out with Jonathan, giving
nothing in return for the services Jonathan had rendered him, but thwarting
him at every turn.

Jonathan opposes Demetrius II. Simon retakes Bethzur. The Hazor affair

54 After this Trypho came back with the little boy Antiochus,[k] who became 12:39
55 king and was crowned. •All the troops that Demetrius had summarily dismissed
rallied to Antiochus, and made war on Demetrius, and he turned tail and fled.
56 Trypho captured the elephants and seized Antioch.
57 Young Antiochus then wrote Jonathan the following letter, 'I confirm you
in the high-priesthood and set you over the four districts[l] and appoint you one
58 of the Friends of the King'. •He sent him a service of gold plate, and granted 2:18+
him the right to drink from gold vessels, and to wear the purple and the golden
59 brooch. •He appointed his brother Simon as military commissioner of the
60 region from the Ladder of Tyre to the frontiers of Egypt. •Jonathan then set out
and made a progress through Transeuphrates and its towns, and the entire Syrian
army rallied to his support. He came to Askalon and was received in state by
61 the inhabitants. •From there he proceeded to Gaza, but the people of Gaza
shut him out, so he laid siege to it, burning down its suburbs and plundering them.
62 The people of Gaza then pleaded with Jonathan, and he made peace with them;
but he took the sons of their chief men as hostages and sent them away to
Jerusalem. He then travelled through the country as far as Damascus.
63 Jonathan now learned that Demetrius' generals had arrived at Kadesh in
64 Galilee with a great army, with the object of diverting him from his mission, •and
65 he went to meet them,[m] leaving his brother Simon inside the country. •Simon
laid siege to Bethzur, attacking it day after day, and blockading the inhabitants
66 till they sued for peace, which he granted them, though he expelled them from
67 the town and occupied it, stationing a garrison there. •Meanwhile Jonathan
and his army, having pitched camp by the Lake of Gennesaret, rose early, and by
68 morning were already in the plain of Hazor.[n] •The foreigners' army advanced
to fight them on the plain, after laying first an ambush for him in the mountains.
69 While the main body was advancing directly towards the Jews, •the troops in
70 ambush broke cover and attacked first. •All the men with Jonathan fled; no
one was left, except Mattathias son of Absalom and Judas son of Chalphi, the
71 generals of his army. •At this Jonathan tore his garments, put dust on his head,
72 73 and prayed. •Then he returned to the fight and routed the enemy, who fled. •When

11 f. By the annexation of these three districts the boundaries of Judaea to N. and W. were extended by about 12 m. This was the most important of the results of these successful negotiations.

g. Several important concessions mentioned in the decree of 10:28-45 were not renewed by Demetrius II who was negotiating from strength.

h. Mercenaries of Macedonian or of Greek origin domiciled in Seleucid Syria.

i. 'Iamleku' corr.

j. The Jews had many foreign mercenaries according to Diodorus, who says nothing of the part played by the Jews themselves.

k. Antiochus VI Dionysos.

l. The fourth district, cf. 10:30; 11:34, is that of Akrabatta; its annexation stabilised the N. frontier of Judaea.

m. By a complete reversal of the situation, the functions of Simon and Jonathan are precisely those once carried out by the pagan enemies of their brother Judas Maccabaeus, cf. Seron, 3:13, Bacchides, 7:8, Gorgias, 2 M 10:14.

n. Near Lake Huleh.

the fugitives from his own forces saw this they came back to him and joined in the pursuit as far as Kadesh where the enemy encampment was, and there they themselves pitched camp. •About three thousand of the foreign troops fell 74
that day. Jonathan then returned to Jerusalem.

Jonathan's relations with the Spartans

12 When Jonathan saw that circumstances were working in his favour he sent 1
8:17-32 a select mission to Rome to confirm and renew his treaty of friendship
with the Romans.[a] •He also sent letters to the same effect to the Spartans and 2
to other places.[b] •The envoys made their way to Rome and entered the Senate, 3
where they made this announcement: 'Jonathan the high priest and the Jewish
14:19 nation have sent us to renew your treaty of friendship and alliance with them
as before'. •The Romans gave them letters to the authorities of each place, to 4
procure their safe conduct to the land of Judah.

The following is the copy of the letter Jonathan wrote to the Spartans: 5

'Jonathan the high priest, the senate of the nation, the priests and the rest 6
of the Jewish people to the Spartans their brothers, greetings. •In the past, 7
12:20-23 a letter was sent to Onias, the high priest, from Areios, one of your kings, stating
2 M 5:9 that you are indeed our brothers, as the copy subjoined attests. •Onias received 8
the envoy with honour, and accepted the letter, in which a clear reference was
made to friendship and alliance. •For our part, though we have no need of 9
Rm 15:4 these, having the consolation of the holy books in our possession,[c] •we venture 10
to send to renew our fraternal friendship with you, so that we may not become
strangers to you, for a long time has elapsed since you sent us the letter.[d] •We 11
may say that constantly on every occasion, at our festivals and on other appointed
days, we make a remembrance of you in the sacrifices we offer and in our prayers,
as it is right and fitting to remember brothers. •We rejoice in your renown. 12
As for ourselves, we have been involved in many trials, many battles, and the 13
surrounding kings have fought against us. •We were unwilling to trouble you 14
or our other allies and friends during these wars. •But now, having the support 15
of heaven to help us, we have been delivered from our enemies, and it is they
14:22; 15:15 who have been brought low, •and so we have chosen Numenius son of Antiochus, 16
and Antipater son of Jason, and sent them to the Romans to renew our former
treaty of friendship and alliance, •and we have ordered them to make their way to 17
you also, to greet you, and deliver to you this letter of ours concerning the
renewal of our brotherhood; •we shall be grateful for an answer to it.' 18

The following is the copy of the letter sent to Onias: 19

12:7 'Areios[e] king of the Spartans, to Onias the high priest, greetings. •It has 20 21
been discovered in a document concerning the Spartans and Jews that they
are brothers, and of the race of Abraham. •Now that this has come to our 22
knowledge, we shall be obliged if you will send us news of your welfare. •Our 23
own message to you is this: your flocks and your possessions are ours, and
ours are yours,[f] and we are instructing our envoys to give you a message to
this effect.'

Jonathan in Coele-Syria. Simon in Philistia

Jonathan learned that Demetrius' generals had returned with a larger army 24
than before to make war on him. •For that reason he left Jerusalem and went 25
to face them in the region of Hamath, giving them no respite in which to mount
an invasion of his own country.[g] •He sent spies into their camp, who told him 26
on their return that the enemy were taking up positions for a night attack on
the Jews. •At sunset Jonathan ordered his men to keep watch with their weapons 27
at hand, in readiness to fight at any time during the night, and posted advance
guards all round the camp. •When they knew that Jonathan and his men were 28
Jdt 7:5 ready to fight, the enemy became afraid, and with quaking hearts they kindled
fires in their camp. •Jonathan and his men, watching the glow of the fires, were 29

30 unaware of their withdrawal until morning, •and although Jonathan pursued
them, he failed to overtake them, for they had already crossed the river Eleu-
31 therus. •So Jonathan wheeled round on the Arabs called Zabadaeans,[h] defeated
32 them and plundered them; •then, breaking camp, he went to Damascus, and
33 travelled through the whole province. •Meanwhile Simon had also set out and
had penetrated as far as Askalon and the neighbouring strongholds. He then
34 turned on Joppa and moved quickly to occupy it, •for he had heard of their
intention to hand over this strong point to the supporters of Demetrius; he
stationed a garrison there to hold it.

Building work in Jerusalem

35 On Jonathan's return he called a meeting of the elders of the people and
36 decided with them to build fortresses in Judaea •and to heighten the walls of
Jerusalem and erect a high barrier between the Citadel and the city, to separate
it from the city and isolate it, to prevent the occupants from buying or selling.
37 They gathered together to rebuild the city. Part of the wall over the eastern
38 ravine had fallen, and he restored the quarter called Chaphenatha.[i] •Meanwhile
Simon rebuilt Adida in the Lowlands, fortifying it, and erecting gates with
bolts.

Jonathan falls into the hands of his enemies

39 Trypho's ambition was to become king of Asia, assume the crown, and 11:39f, 54f
40 overpower King Antiochus. •He was apprehensive that Jonathan might not allow
him to do so, and might even make war on him, so he set out and came to Beth-
shan, in the hopes of finding some pretext for his arrest and execution.
41 Jonathan went out to intercept him, with forty thousand picked men in
42 battle order, and arrived at Bethshan. •When Trypho saw him there with
43 a large force, he hesitated to make any move against him. •He even received
him with honour, commended him to all his friends and presented gifts to him,
44 and told his friends and his troops to obey him as they would himself. •He said
to Jonathan, 'Why have you made all these people so tired, when there is no
45 threat of war between us? •Send them back home; pick yourself a few men
as your bodyguard, and come with me to Ptolemais. I will hand it over to you,
with the other fortresses and the remaining troops and all the officials; then
I will take the road for home, for that was my purpose in coming here.'
46 Jonathan trusted him and did as he said; he dismissed his forces, who returned
47 to the land of Judah. •With him he retained three thousand men, of whom
48 he left two thousand in Galilee, while a thousand accompanied him. •But as
soon as Jonathan had entered Ptolemais the people of Ptolemais closed the
gates, seized him, and put all those who had entered with him to the sword.
49 Trypho sent troops and cavalry into Galilee and the Great Plain to wipe out all
50 Jonathan's supporters. •These, concluding that he had been taken, and had

12 a. The Romans had done nothing to help Judas Maccabaeus. This second mission was to prove as useless as the first.

b. Listed in 15:22f.

c. Cf. Ps 1, 19, 119, devoted to the praise of the Law, and the encouragement offered by the Law and prophets, 2 M 15:9, the same Law (the Pentateuch) for which the Maccabees are fighting, 1:56. The 'sacred books' constitute a larger group, namely, all the books recognised as having divine authority. The O.T. Canon is in process of formation: one of the Psalms is quoted as 'scripture', 7:17, and soon afterwards the prologue of Ecclesiasticus speaks of the division into Law, prophets, and 'other books', which was to remain the classification of the Hebr. Bible.

d. Since the letter was from Arius I (309-265), the recipient can only have been Onias I (high priest from 323 to 300). The letter was not acknowledged until 150 years later.

e. 'to Onias, Areios' corr.; 'to Oniares' Greek.

f. There is a perceptibly Jewish flavour about the letter. The author of the book reports these documents without guaranteeing the truth of their contents.

g. Jonathan, cf. 11:59-60, was responsible for Coele-Syria which had Sadad, Riblah and the river Eleutherus for its N. boundary. Consequently, he is entitled to conduct operations in the Hamath area. But by halting the enemy at this point he is at the same time defending the N. frontier secretly claimed by Israel and described in Nb 34:7-9 and Ezk 47:15-17. Cf. Jg 20:1+.

h. From the Zebedani district of Anti-Lebanon.

i. The new quarter outside the first N. wall of Jerusalem, see 2 S 5:9+.

perished with his companions, encouraged one another, marching with closed ranks and ready to give battle, •and when their pursuers saw that they would 51
fight for their lives, they turned back. •They all reached the land of Judah safe 52
and sound, but lamenting Jonathan and his companions, and in a state of alarm;
13:6 all Israel was plunged into mourning. •All the surrounding pagans were now 53
looking for ways of destroying them: 'They have no leader,' they said 'no ally;
we have only to attack them now, and we shall blot out their very memory from
mankind'.

V. SIMON, HIGH PRIEST AND ETHNARCH OF THE JEWS (142-134 B.C.)

Simon takes command

13 Simon heard that Trypho had collected a large army to invade and devastate 1
the land of Judah, •and when he saw how the people were quaking with 2
fear, he went up to Jerusalem, called the people together, •and exhorted them 3
thus, 'You know yourselves how much I and my brothers and my father's family
have done for the laws and the sanctuary; you know what wars and hardships
we have experienced. •That is why my brothers are all dead, for Israel's sake, 4
and I am the only one left.[a] •Far be it from me, then, to be sparing of my own 5
life in any time of oppression, for I am not worth more than my brothers.
Rather will I avenge my nation and the sanctuary and your wives and children, 6
5:2; 12:53 now that all the pagans have united in their malice to destroy us.' •The spirit 7
of the people rekindled as they listened to his words, •and they shouted back at 8
him, 'You are our leader in place of Judas and your brother Jonathan. •Fight 9
our battles for us, and we will do whatever you tell us.'•So he assembled all 10
the fighting men and hurried on the completion of the walls of Jerusalem, forti-
fying the whole perimeter. •He sent a considerable force to Joppa under Jonathan, 11
son of Absalom, who drove out the inhabitants and remained there in occupation.

Simon repels Trypho from Judaea

Trypho now left Ptolemais with a large army to invade the land of Judah, 12
taking Jonathan with him under guard. •Simon pitched camp in Adida, facing 13
the plain. •When Trypho learned that Simon had stepped into the place of his 14
brother Jonathan, and that he intended to join battle with him, he sent envoys
to him with this message, •'Your brother Jonathan was in debt to the royal 15
exchequer for the offices he held; that is why we are detaining him. •If you 16
send a hundred talents of silver and two of his sons as hostages, to make sure
that on his release he does not revolt against us, we will release him.' •Although 17
Simon was aware that the message was a ruse, he sent for the money and the
boys for fear of incurring great hostility from the people, •who would have 18
said that Jonathan died because Simon did not send Trypho the money and
the boys. •He therefore sent both the boys and the hundred talents, but Trypho 19
broke his word and did not release Jonathan. •Next, Trypho set about the invasion 20
and devastation of the country; he made a detour along the Adora[b] road, but
Simon and his army confronted him wherever he attempted to go. •The men 21
in the Citadel kept sending messengers to Trypho, urging him to get through
to them by way of the wilderness and send them supplies. •Trypho organised 22
his entire cavalry to go, but that night it snowed so heavily that he could not
get through for the snow, so he struck camp and moved off into Gilead. •As 23
he approached Baskama[c] he killed Jonathan, and he was buried there. •Trypho 24
turned back and regained his own country.

Jonathan is buried in the mausoleum built by Simon at Modein

Simon sent and recovered the bones of his brother Jonathan, and buried 25

him in Modein, the town of his ancestors. •All Israel kept solemn mourning for him, bewailing him for many days. •Over the tomb of his father and brothers Simon raised a monument high enough to catch the eye, using dressed stone back and front. •He erected seven pyramids facing each other, for his father and mother and his four brothers, •raising them on plinths[d] and surrounding them with tall columns on which he had trophies of arms carved to their everlasting memory and, beside the armour, sculptured ships to be seen by all who sailed the sea. •Such was the monument he constructed at Modein, and it is still there today.

The favours of Demetrius II to Simon

Trypho treated the young King Antiochus treacherously and put him to death. •He usurped his throne, assuming the crown of Asia, and brought great havoc on the country. •Simon built up the fortresses of Judaea, surrounding them with high towers, great walls and gates with bolts, and stocked these fortresses with food. •He also sent a delegation to King Demetrius to induce him to grant relief to the province, because all that Trypho did was to confiscate. •King Demetrius replied to his request in a letter framed as follows:
'King Demetrius to Simon, high priest and Friend of Kings, and to the elders and nation of the Jews, greetings. •It has pleased us to accept the golden crown and the palm you have sent us, and we are disposed to make a general peace with you, and to write to the officials to grant you remissions. •Everything that we have decreed concerning you remains in force, and the fortresses you have built are to remain in your hands. •We pardon all offences, unwitting or intentional, committed up to this day, as well as the crown tax which you owe, and any other duty that used to be paid in Jerusalem shall no longer be payable. If any of you are suitable for enrolment in our bodyguard, let them be enrolled, and let there be peace between us.' •It was in the year one hundred and seventy,[e] that the rule of the pagans was lifted from Israel, •and the people began to engross their documents and contracts, 'In the year one of Simon, great high priest, military commissioner, and leader of the Jews.'

The capture of Gezer by Simon

||2 M 10: 32-38

At that time Simon went to lay siege to Gezer[f] and surrounded it with his troops. He constructed a mobile tower, brought it up to the city, opened a breach in one of the bastions and took it. •The men in the mobile tower sprang out into the city, where great confusion ensued. •The citizens, accompanied by their wives and children, mounted the ramparts with their garments torn and loudly implored Simon to make peace with them: •'Treat us' they said 'not as our wickedness deserves, but as your mercy prompts you'. •Simon came to terms with them and stopped the fighting; but he expelled them from the city, purified the houses which contained idols, and then made his entry with songs of praise. •He banished all uncleanness from it, settled men in it who observed[g] the Law, and having fortified it, built a residence there for himself.

Simon occupies the Citadel in Jerusalem

The men in the Citadel in Jerusalem, prevented as they were from going out into the country and back to buy and sell, were in desperate want of food, and numbers of them were carried off by starvation. •They begged Simon to make peace with them, and he granted this, though he expelled them and purified the Citadel from its pollutions.[h] •The Jews made their entry on the twenty-third

13 a. Simon and the people thought Jonathan was dead; he was in fact a prisoner, v. 16.
b. 5 m. south-west of Hebron.
c. N.E. of Lake Tiberias.
d. 'plinths' corr.; 'machines' Greek.
e. 142 B.C.
f. 'Gazara' (Josephus), not 'Gaza'. The place at Gezer, cf. 14:7; 15:28,35; 16:21.
g. 'observed' corr.; 'would observe' Greek.
h. In the refortified Citadel Simon will station a Jewish garrison.

day of the second month in the year one hundred and seventy-one,[f] with acclamations and carrying palms, to the sound of harps, cymbals and zithers, chanting hymns and canticles, since a great enemy had been crushed and thrown out of Israel. •Simon made it a day of annual rejoicing. He strengthened the fortifi- 52
cations of the Temple hill by the side of the Citadel, and took up residence there with his men. •Seeing that his son John had come to manhood, Simon appointed 53
him commander of all the forces, with his residence in Gezer.

A eulogy of Simon

14 In the year one hundred and seventy-two[a] King Demetrius assembled his 1
forces and marched into Media to muster help, in order to fight Trypho. When Arsaces king of Persia and Media heard that Demetrius had entered his 2
territory, he sent one of his generals to capture him alive. •The general went 3
and defeated the army of Demetrius, seized him and brought him to Arsaces,[b] who put him in prison. •The country was at peace throughout the days of 4
Simon.[c]

3:3-9 He sought the good of his nation
and they were well pleased with his authority,
and his magnificence throughout his life.
And to crown all his magnificence 5
he took Joppa and made it his harbour,
gaining access to the islands of the sea.
Ex 34:24 He enlarged the frontiers of his nation, 6
keeping his mastery over the homeland,
and resettled a host of the captives. 7
He conquered Gezer, Bethzur, and the Citadel
and cast out the unclean things from it;
and no one could resist him.
They farmed their land in peace, 8
Zc 8:12 the land gave its produce,
the trees of the plain their fruit.
Zc 8:4-5 The elders sat at ease in the streets, 9
all their talk was of their prosperity;
the young men wore finery and armour.
He kept the towns supplied with provisions 10
and furnished with fortifications;
until his fame resounded to the ends of the earth.
He established peace in the land, 11
and Israel knew great joy.
1 K 5:5 Mi 4:4 Zc 3:10 Each man sat under his own vine and his own fig tree, 12
and there was no one to make them afraid.
No enemy was left in the land to fight them, 13
and the kings in those days were crushed.
He gave strength to all the humble folk among his people 14
and cleared away every renegade and wicked man.
He strove to observe the Law,
and gave new splendour to the Temple, 15
replenishing it with sacred vessels.

Renewal of the alliances with Sparta and with Rome

When it became known in Rome and later in Sparta that Jonathan was 16
dead, people were deeply grieved. •But as soon as they heard that his brother 17
Simon had succeeded him as high priest and was master of the country and
8:22 the cities in it, •they wrote to him on bronze tablets to renew the treaty of 18
8:17f; 12:3 friendship and alliance which they had made with his brothers, Judas and Jonathan, •and the document was read out before the assembly in Jerusalem. 19

20 This is the copy of the letter sent by the Spartans:

'The rulers and the city of Sparta to Simon the high priest and to the elders
21 and priests and the rest of the people of the Jews, greetings. •The ambassadors
whom you sent to our people informed us of your glory and honour, and we
22 were delighted by their visit. •We recorded their declarations in the minutes
of our public assemblies, as follows, "Numenius son of Antiochus, and Antipater 12:16; 15:15
son of Jason, ambassadors of the Jews, came to us to renew their friendship with
23 us. •And it was the people's pleasure to receive these personages with honours
and to deposit a copy of their statements in the public archives, so that the
people of Sparta may preserve a record of them; they also made a copy for
Simon the high priest." '

24 After this Simon sent Numenius to Rome as the bearer of a large gold shield 15:15
weighing a thousand minas, to confirm the alliance with them.

Official honours decreed for Simon

25 When these events were reported to the people they said, 'What mark of
26 appreciation shall we give to Simon and his sons? •He stood firm, he and
his brothers and his father's House; he fought off the enemies of Israel and
secured its freedom.' So they recorded an inscription on bronze tablets and
27 set it up on pillars on Mount Zion. •This is a copy of the text:

'On the eighteenth of Elul in the year one hundred and seventy-two,[d] which
28 is the third year of Simon the great high priest, in Asaramel,[e] •in the grand
assembly of priests and people, leaders of the nation and elders of the country,
we were notified as follows:

29 'When there was frequent fighting in the country, Simon, son of Mattathias,
a scion of the line of Joarib, and his brothers courted danger and withstood
the enemies of their nation to safeguard the integrity of their sanctuary and
30 the Law, and so brought their nation great glory. •Jonathan rallied his nation
31 and became their high priest, and was then gathered to his people. •Their
enemies planned to invade their country in order to devastate their territory
32 and lay hands on their sanctuary. •Simon then arose to fight for his nation.
He spent much of his own wealth on arming the nation's fighting men and
33 providing their pay; •he fortified the cities of Judaea and Bethzur on the frontier
of Judaea, where the enemy arsenal had formerly been, and stationed there
34 a garrison of Jewish soldiers. •He also fortified Joppa on the coast and Gezer
on the borders of Azotus, a place formerly inhabited by the enemy; he founded
a Jewish settlement there, providing everything they needed to set them on
35 their feet. •The people saw Simon's faith and the glory he had resolved to win
for his nation; they made him their leader and high priest because of all these
achievements of his and the justice and faithfulness he had maintained towards
his own nation, and because he sought every means to enhance the honour
36 of his people. •In his day and under his guidance they succeeded in rooting
out the pagans from their country, including those in the City of David in
Jerusalem, who had converted it into a citadel for their own use from which
they would sally out to defile the surroundings of the sanctuary and violate
37 its sacred character. •He settled Jewish soldiers in it and fortified it as a protection
38 for the country and city, and heightened the walls of Jerusalem. •In consequence
39 of this, King Demetrius confirmed him in the high-priestly office, •made him one
40 of his Friends and advanced him to high honours; •he had heard that the Romans 2:18+
named the Jews friends, allies and brothers, and that they had given Simon's
41 ambassadors an honourable reception; •and further, that the Jews and the priests

i. Beginning of June 141.

14 a. 140-139 B.C.

b. Mithridates I bore the dynastic name Arsaces VI; he took Upper Asia from the Seleucids.

c. The rhythmical eulogy that follows is a tissue of biblical phrases.

d. August-September 140.

e. 'Asaramel' (transliteration of *hasar 'am-el*, 'the enclosure of the people of God') with Sin., Codex Venetus, Lat. versions, instead of the mutilated 'Saramel'.

4:46+ had agreed that Simon should be their perpetual leader and high priest until a trustworthy prophet should arise; •he was also to be their commissioner and 42
to be responsible for the sanctuary and for the appointment of officials to supervise the fabric, to administer the country, and to control the arsenal and fortresses; he was to take charge of the sanctuary, and everyone had to obey him; all official 43
documents in the country were to be drawn up in his name; he was to assume the purple and wear golden ornaments. •No member of the public or the 44
priesthood was to be allowed to set aside any one of these articles or contest his decisions, or convene a meeting anywhere in the country without his leave, or assume the purple or wear the golden brooch. •Anyone contravening or 45
rejecting any of these articles was to be liable at law. •All the people consented 46
to grant Simon the right to act on these decisions. •And Simon accepted and 47
consented to assume the high-priestly office and to act as military commissioner and ethnarch[f] of the Jews and their priests, and to preside over all.'

They ordered that this decree should be inscribed on bronze tablets and 48
set up in the Temple precinct in a prominent place, •and that copies should 49
be deposited in the treasury, and made available to Simon and his sons.

Antiochus VII recognises Simon's titles, and besieges Trypho in Dor

15 Antiochus,[a] son of King Demetrius, addressed a letter from the islands 1
of the sea to Simon, priest and ethnarch of the Jews, and to the whole nation; •this was how it read: 2

'King Antiochus to Simon, high priest and ethnarch, and to the Jewish nation, greetings. •Whereas certain scoundrels have seized control of the kingdom 3
of our fathers, and I propose to claim back the kingdom so that I may re-establish it as it was before, and whereas I have accordingly recruited very large forces and fitted out warships, •intending to make a landing in the country 4
and deal with the men who have ruined it and laid waste many towns in my kingdom, •now therefore I confirm in your favour all the remissions of tribute 5
that my royal predecessors granted you, with any other concessions that they granted to you. •I hereby authorise you to mint your own coinage as legal tender 6
for your own country. •I declare Jerusalem and the sanctuary exempt; all the arms 7
you have manufactured and the fortresses you have built and now occupy are to remain yours. •All debts to the royal treasury, present or future, shall be 8
cancelled from henceforth in perpetuity. •When we have gained possession of 9
our kingdom we will bestow such great honour on yourself, your nation and the Temple as shall exhibit your glory to the whole world.'

In the year one hundred and seventy-four[b] Antiochus mounted his expedition 10
against the land of his ancestors, and all the troops rallied to him, so that few remained with Trypho. •Antiochus pursued the usurper, who took refuge 11
in Dor[c] on the coast, •knowing that misfortunes were piling up on him and 12
that his troops had deserted him. •Antiochus pitched camp before Dor with 13
a hundred and twenty thousand fighting men and eight thousand cavalry. •He 14
laid siege to the city while the ships closed in from the sea, so that he had the city under attack from land and sea, and allowed no one to go in or come out.

The ambassadors return from Rome to Judaea; the alliance with Rome proclaimed

8:17;12:16; 14:22, 24 Meanwhile Numenius and his companions arrived from Rome carrying 15
letters addressed to various kings and states, in the following terms:

'Lucius,[d] consul of the Romans, to King Ptolemy, greetings. •The Jewish 16 17
ambassadors have come to us as our friends and allies to renew our original friendship and alliance in the name of the high priest Simon and the Jewish people. •They have brought a gold shield worth a thousand minas. •Accordingly 18 19
we have decided to write to various kings and states, warning them not to molest them nor to attack them or their towns or their country, nor ally themselves with any such aggressors. •We have decided to accept the shield from them. 20

21 If then any scoundrels have fled their country to take refuge with you, hand them
over to Simon the high priest to be punished by him according to their law.'
22 The consul sent the same letter to King Demetrius, to Attalus, Ariarathes
23 and Arsaces, •and to all states, including Sampsames, the Spartans, Delos,
Myndos, Sicyon, Caria, Samos, Pamphylia, Lycia, Halicarnassus, Rhodes,
24 Phaselis, Cos, Side, Aradus, Gortyna, Cnidus, Cyprus and Cyrene. •They
also drew up a copy for Simon the high priest.

Antiochus VII, besieging Dor, becomes hostile to Simon and sends him a reprimand

25 Meanwhile Antiochus, from his positions on the outskirts[e] of Dor, was
continually throwing detachments against the town. He constructed siege-
26 engines, and blockaded Trypho, preventing movement in or out. •Simon sent
him two thousand picked men to support him in the fight, with silver and gold
27 and plenty of equipment. •But Antiochus would not accept them; instead,
he repudiated all his previous agreements with Simon, and completely changed
28 his attitude to him. •He sent him Athenobius, one of his friends, for an interview 2:18+
at which he was to say, 'You are now occupying Joppa and Gezer and the
29 Citadel in Jerusalem, which are towns in my kingdom. •You have laid waste
their territory and done immense harm to the country; and you have seized
30 many localities belonging to my kingdom. •Now either surrender the towns
you have taken, with the revenue from the localities you have seized beyond
31 the limits of Judaea, •or else pay me five hundred talents of silver in compensation
for them and for the destruction you have done, and another five hundred
talents for the revenues of the towns; otherwise we shall come and make war
32 on you.' •When Athenobius, one of the Friends of the King, reached Jerusalem
and saw Simon's magnificence, his cabinet of gold and silver plate, and his
33 large retinue, he was dumbfounded. He delivered the king's message, •but Simon
gave him this answer, 'It is not any foreign land that we have taken, nor any
foreign property that we have seized, but the inheritance of our ancestors,
34 for some time unjustly wrested from us by our enemies; •now that we have a
favourable opportunity, we are merely recovering the inheritance of our
35 ancestors. •As for Joppa and Gezer, which you claim, these were towns that did
great harm to the people and laid waste the countryside;[f] we are prepared to
36 give a hundred talents for them.' Without so much as a word in answer, •the
envoy went back to the king in a rage and reported on Simon's answer and
his magnificence, and on everything he had seen, at which the king fell into a fury.

Cendebaeus, governor of the Littoral, harasses Judaea

37 Trypho now boarded a ship and escaped to Orthosia.[g] •The king appointed
38 Cendebaeus commander-in-chief of the coastal region and allotted him a force
39 of infantry and cavalry. •He ordered him to deploy his men facing Judaea,
and instructed him to strengthen Kedron and fortify its gates, and to make war
40 on the people, while the king himself went in pursuit of Trypho. •Cendebaeus
arrived at Jamnia and began to harry the people forthwith, invading Judaea,
41 imprisoning the people and massacring them. •He strengthened Kedron[h] and
stationed cavalry and troops there to make sorties and patrol the roads of Judaea,
as the king had instructed him.

f. Cf. Simon's title, 13:42. The ethnarch is head of a racial unit within the empire: though something more than a *strategos* (a military leader with civil authority) he is not a king. This is a considerable step towards self-government, but the title had to be recognised by higher authority, as it later was by Antiochus VII, 15:2.

15 a. Antiochus VII Sidetes considered himself to be the heir of his elder brother Demetrius II, taken prisoner by the Parthians.

b. 138 B.C.

c. A fortified town on the sea coast facing the S. side of Carmel.

d. Probably Lucius Calpurnius Piso, consul in 139. The king is Ptolemy VII (146-130).

e. Lit. 'in the second (quarter of the town)'.

f. 'and laid waste the countryside' corr.; 'and our country' Greek.

g. From Orthosia, a town to the N. of Tripoli, Trypho reached Apamea where he was put to death.

h. S.E. of Jamnia, v. 40, cf. 5:58, and W. of Gezer, 16:1.

The victory of Simon's sons over Cendebaeus

16 John then went up from Gezer and reported to his father Simon what 1
Cendebaeus was busy doing. •At this, Simon summoned his two elder 2
sons, Judas and John,[a] and said to them, 'I and my brothers and my father's
House have fought the enemies of Israel from our youth until today; the enter-
prises we directed have been successful, and many a time have we brought Israel
deliverance. •But now I am an old man, while you, mercifully, are old enough; 3
take my place and my brother's, go out and fight for our nation, and may the
support of heaven be with you.' •Then he selected from the country twenty 4
thousand fighting men and cavalry, and these marched against Cendebaeus,
spending the night at Modein. •Making an early start, they marched into the 5
plain, to find a large army opposing them, both infantry and cavalry; there was,
however, a wadi in between. •John drew up facing them, he and his people, 6
and seeing that the men were afraid to cross the wadi he crossed over first
himself. When his men saw this, they too crossed after him. •He divided his 7
army into two bodies of foot, with the horse in the centre, the enemy's cavalry
being very numerous. •The trumpets rang out, and Cendebaeus was routed 8
with his army; many of them fell mortally wounded, and the remainder took
refuge in the fortress. •It was then that Judas, John's brother, was wounded, 9
but John pursued them until Cendebaeus reached Kedron, which he had
strengthened. •Their flight took them as far as the towers in the countryside 10
of Azotus, and John burnt these down. The enemy losses amounted to ten
thousand men; John returned safely to Judaea.

Simon's tragic death at Dok. His son John succeeds him

Ptolemy son of Abubus had been appointed military commissioner for the 11
plain of Jericho; he owned much silver and gold, •and was the high priest's 12
son-in-law. •His ambition was fired; he hoped to make himself master of the 13
whole country, and began to plot the ruin of Simon and his sons. •Simon, 14
who was inspecting the towns up and down the country and attending to their
administration, had come down to Jericho with his sons Mattathias and Judas,
in the year one hundred and seventy-seven, in the eleventh month, the month
of Shebat.[b] •The son of Abubus lured them into a small fortress called Dok,[c] 15
which he had built, where he offered them a great banquet, having men concealed
about the place. •When Simon and his sons were drunk, Ptolemy leapt to his 16
feet with his men, and, grasping their weapons, they rushed on Simon in the
banqueting hall and killed him with his two sons and some of his servants.
So he committed a great act of treachery, and rendered evil for good. 17
Ptolemy wrote a report of the affair and sent it to the king, in the expectation 18
of being sent reinforcements and having the cities and the province made over to
him. •He sent other men to Gezer to murder John, and sent written orders 19
to the military commanders to come to him so that he could present them
with silver and gold and gifts; •he also sent others to take possession of Jerusalem 20
and the Temple hill. •But someone had been too quick for him and had already 21
informed John in Gezer that his father and brothers had perished, adding, 'He
is also sending people to kill you too!' •Overcome as he was by the news, John 22
arrested the men who had come to kill him and put them to death, since he
already knew their murderous design. •The rest of John's acts, the battles he 23
fought and the exploits he performed, the city walls he built, and all his other
achievements, •are to be found recorded in the Annals of his pontificate from 24
the day he succeeded his father as high priest.[d]

16 a. Simon had three sons: John, v.1, who succeeded him, vv. 21-24; Judas and Mattathias, v. 14, who were killed with Simon, v. 16.

b. January-February 134.

c. On the top of the cliff that rises more than 1000 feet above the plain of Jericho.

d. Formula imitated from the Books of Kings which thus concludes its account of each reign. This Book of Maccabees, however, ends at the beginning of the pontificate of John, i.e. John Hyrcanus, first of the Hasmonaeans (134-104).

THE SECOND BOOK OF MACCABEES

I. LETTERS TO THE JEWS OF EGYPT[a]

FIRST LETTER

1 1 Greetings to their brothers, the Jews in Egypt,[b] from their brothers, the
Jews in Jerusalem and in the country of Judaea, and prosperity and peace.
2 May God prosper you, remembering his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and
3 Jacob, his faithful servants. •May he give you all a heart to worship him and
4 to do his will with a generous mind and a willing spirit. •May he open your
5 hearts to his Law and his precepts, and give you peace. •May he hear your
6 prayers and be reconciled with you, and not abandon you in time of evil. •Here
7 we are now praying for you. •When Demetrius was king, in the year one hundred
and sixty-nine, we Jews wrote to you as follows,[c] 'In the desperate affliction
that has come on us in these years since Jason and his associates betrayed the 4:7f
8 Holy Land and the kingdom, •they burned the Temple gateway and shed innocent 8:33
blood. Then we prayed to the Lord and were heard; we offered a sacrifice with
9 wheat-flour, kindled the lamps and set out the loaves'. •And we now recommend
you to keep the feast of Tabernacles of the month of Chislev. In the year one
hundred and eighty-eight.[d]

SECOND LETTER[e]

Address

10 The people of Jerusalem and of Judaea, the senate and Judas,[f] to Aristobulus,[g]
tutor to King Ptolemy and one of the family of the anointed priests, and to the
Jews in Egypt, greetings and good health.

Thanksgiving for the punishment of Antiochus

11 Since we have been rescued by God from great dangers, we give him great

1 a. These two letters are invitations to celebrate the feast of Dedication, cf. 1 M 4:59+. The first part of 2 M, up to 10:8, justifies the historical basis for this feast.

b. There had long been Jewish colonies in Egypt (the best known being the one of Elephantine). Other contingents emigrated there during the Greek period; they were profoundly Jewish in spirit but not always entirely orthodox. About the year 170 B.C. the priest Onias IV, son of the Onias III killed at Daphne, 4:33f, founded a temple in Leontopolis, a smaller model of the Temple in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Jews were anxious to secure community of worship with their Egyptian brothers, which is also the aim of the author of 2 M.

c. Reference to an earlier letter, written by the Egyptian Jews in 168 of the Seleucid era (143 B.C.), about the misfortunes of their compatriots in Judaea subsequent to the apostasy of Jason. When the Temple and its loyal supporters were rededicated to the Lord these misfortunes ceased. Hence the instruction to celebrate this new dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem.

d. 124 B.C. This 'feast of Tabernacles' (cf. also v. 18) of the month Chislev (December) is the feast of Dedication, cf. 1 M 4:59+; it resembles the feast of Tabernacles of the month Tishri (October), cf. 2 M 10:6, hence this alternative name.

e. The second letter is an invitation, v. 18, to celebrate the actual dedication of the Temple, which took place on the 25th of Chislev, 148 Sel. (164 B.C.); the document is therefore on the face of it 40 years older than the first letter. It reports the rumours connected with the death of Antiochus Epiphanes together with traditions relating to Nehemiah and Jeremiah. In short, it is the 'Lesson' for the feast of Dedication. The author, while making it the prelude to his book, offers no guarantee of its historical accuracy.

f. Judas Maccabaeus.

g. An Alexandrian Jew known for his allegorical expositions of the Pentateuch. He dedicated his work to Philometor (181-145).

thanks for championing our cause against the king, •for it was He who drove out 12
those who had taken up arms against the Holy City. •For when their leader 13
1 M 9:1-29 6:1-13 reached Persia with his seemingly irresistible army, he was cut to pieces in the
temple of Nanaea,[h] as the result of a ruse employed by the priests who served that
goddess. •On the pretext of making a marriage with Nanaea, Antiochus came 14
to the place with his friends, intending to take its many treasures as a dowry.
The priests of Nanaea had put these on display, and he entered the sacred 15
precincts with a small retinue. As soon as Antiochus was inside they closed the
temple, •opened the secret door in the ceiling and struck down the leader and 16
his party by hurling stones like thunderbolts. They then dismembered them,
cut off their heads and flung them to those outside. •Blessed in all things be our 17
God, who has given the godless their deserts!

The miraculous preservation of the sacred fire[i]

As we shall be celebrating the purification of the Temple on the twenty-fifth 18
of Chislev, we consider it proper to notify you, so that you may celebrate
the feast of Tabernacles and of the fire that appeared when Nehemiah, the
builder of the Temple and the altar, offered sacrifice. •For when our ancestors 19
were being deported to Persia the devout priests of the time took some of the
fire from the altar and hid it secretly in the hollow of a dry well, where they
concealed it in such a way that the place was unknown to anyone. •When some 20
years had elapsed, in God's good time, Nehemiah, commissioned by the king of
Persia, sent the descendants of the priests who had hidden the fire to recover it;
but they notified us that they had found not fire but a thick liquid. Nehemiah
ordered them to draw some out and bring it back. •When the materials for the 21
sacrifice had been set out, Nehemiah ordered the priests to pour the liquid over
the wood and what lay on it. •When this had been done, and when in due course 22
the sun, which had previously been clouded over, shone out, a great fire flared
up, to the astonishment of all. •While the sacrifice was being burned, the 23
priests and all those present with the priests offered prayer, Jonathan intoning
and the rest responding with Nehemiah. •The prayer took this form: 'Lord, 24
Lord God, creator of all things, dreadful, strong, just, merciful, the only king
and benefactor, •the only provider, who alone are just, almighty and everlasting, 25
the deliverer of Israel from every evil, who made our fathers your chosen ones
and sanctified them, •accept this sacrifice on behalf of all your people Israel, and 26
protect your heritage and consecrate it. •Bring together those of us who are 27
dispersed, set free those in slavery among the heathen, look favourably on
those held in contempt or abhorrence, and let the heathen know that you are
our God. •Punish those who oppress us and affront us by their insolence, •and 28 29
Dt 30:3-5 plant your people firmly in your Holy Place, as Moses promised.'

The priests then chanted hymns. •When the sacrifice was all burned, Nehemiah 30 31
ordered the remaining liquid to be poured over large stones, •and when this 32
was done a flame flared up, to be absorbed in the corresponding blaze of light
from the altar. •When the matter became known and the king of the Persians 33
heard that in the place where the exiled priests had hidden the fire a liquid had
appeared, with which Nehemiah and his people had purified the materials of the
sacrifice,[j] •the king, after verifying the facts, had the place enclosed and 34
pronounced sacred. •The king exchanged many valuable presents with those 35
who enjoyed his favour. •Nehemiah and his people termed this stuff 'nephtar', 36
which means 'purification', but it is generally called 'naphtha'.[k]

Jeremiah conceals the tabernacle, ark and altar

2 We find in the archives that the prophet Jeremiah,[a] when he had given the 1
deportees the order to take the fire, as we have described, •in giving them 2
Ba 6. Vulg. the Law warned the deportees never to forget the Lord's precepts, nor to let
their thoughts be tempted by the sight of gold and silver statues or the finery

3 adorning them. •Among other similar admonitions he urged them not to
4 let the Law depart from their hearts. •The document also described how the
prophet, warned by an oracle, gave orders for the tabernacle and the ark to go
with him when he set out for the mountain which Moses had climbed to survey
5 God's heritage. •On his arrival Jeremiah found a cave-dwelling, into which he
brought the tabernacle, the ark and the altar of incense, afterwards blocking Rv 11:19
6 up the entrance. •Some of his companions came up to mark out the way, but
7 were unable to find it. •When Jeremiah learned this, he reproached them: 'The
place is to remain unknown' he said 'until God gathers his people together
8 again and shows them his mercy. •Then the Lord will bring these things once
more to light, and the glory of the Lord will be seen, and so will the cloud, as it
was revealed in the time of Moses and when Solomon prayed that the Holy Place Ex 24:16 1 K 8:10-11
9 might be gloriously hallowed.' •It was also recorded how Solomon in his wisdom
10 offered the sacrifice of the dedication and completion of the sanctuary. •As
Moses had prayed to the Lord and fire had come down from heaven and Lv 9:24 2 Ch 7:1
burned up the sacrifice, so Solomon also prayed, and the fire from above
11 burned up the holocausts. •Moses had said, 'It is because it had not been eaten Lv 10:16-17
12 that the sin-offering was burned up'. •Solomon kept the feast in the same way 1 K 8:65
for eight days.

Nehemiah's library

13 In addition to the above, it was also recorded, both in the archives and in the
Memoirs of Nehemiah,[b] how he founded a library and made a collection of the
books dealing with the kings and the prophets, the writings of David and the
14 letters of the kings on the subject of offerings.[c] •In the same way Judas made a
complete collection of the books dispersed in the late war, and these we still 1 M 1:56 57
15 have. •If you need any of them, send someone to fetch copies for you.

An invitation to the dedication

16 To conclude, since we are now about to celebrate the purification of the 1 M 4:59+
17 Temple, we are writing to you requesting you to observe the same days. •God,
who has saved his whole people, conferring on all the heritage, kingdom,
18 priesthood and sanctification •as he promised through the Law, will surely, as
our hope is in him, be swift to show us mercy and gather us together from
everywhere under heaven to the Holy Place, since he has rescued us from great Dt 30:3-5
evils and has purified the Temple.

II. COMPILER'S PREFACE

19 The story of Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, the purification of the great
20 Temple, the dedication of the altar, •together with the wars against Antiochus
21 Epiphanes and his son Eupator, •and the manifestations from heaven that
came to hearten the brave champions of Judaism, so that, few though they

h. A goddess assimilated to the Ephesian Artemis. The temple which Antiochus IV proposed to plunder was that of Artemis in Elymais.

i. The object of this anecdote is to show that the sanctuary at Jerusalem has lost none of its privileges, since it has even preserved the original sacred fire, cf. Lv 6:5-6.

j. This was what the king was told; the preceding account is different.

k. The story combines recollections of Persian fire worship, v. 34, with some knowledge of the properties of naphtha —crude petroleum—which so impressed the Greek and Roman geographers and naturalists.

2 a. Jeremiah is one of the great figures revered in Judaism, cf. 15:13-15. Lm was attributed to him, as also the 'Letter against the Idols' of Ba 6 (Vulg.), and several apocrypha. One of these apocrypha, now lost, recounted the events described in this passage. This description is not historical: the tabernacle did not exist after the building of Solomon's Temple, the ark disappeared when the Temple was destroyed, and the historical Jeremiah did not regret it, Jr 3:16. The purpose of the narrative, however, is to assert the continuity of orthodox worship, cf. 2 M 1:18+, and to associate this ceremony of dedication with the dedication of the first Temple by Solomon and of the tabernacle by Moses, cf. vv. 8-12.

b. Uncanonical book not mentioned elsewhere.

c. A collection of writings considered not as canonical but as useful to the Jewish community. This project is paralleled by that of Judas Maccabaeus, v. 14.

were, they despoiled the whole country, routed the barbarian hordes, •recovered 22
the sanctuary renowned the whole world over, liberated the city and re-
established the laws which were all but abolished, the Lord showing his favour
by all his gracious help to them—•all this, already related in five books by Jason of 23
Cyrene, we shall attempt to condense into a single digest. •Considering the spate of 24
figures and the difficulty encountered, because of the mass of material, by those
who wish to immerse themselves in historical records, •we have aimed at providing
diversion for those who merely want something to read, a saving of labour for 25
those who enjoy committing things to memory, and profit for each and all.
For us who have undertaken the drudgery of this abridgement, this has been
no easy task but a matter of sweat and midnight oil, •comparable to the exacting 26
task of a man organising a banquet, whose aim is to satisfy a variety of tastes; 27
nevertheless, for the sake of rendering a general service we remain glad to
endure this drudgery, •leaving accuracy of detail to the historian and concen-
trating our effort on tracing the outlines in this condensed version. •Just as the 28
architect of a new house is responsible for the construction as a whole, while 29
the man undertaking the ceramic painting is responsible for estimating the
decorative requirements, so, I think, it is with us. •To make the subject his own,
to explore its by-ways, to be meticulous about details, is the business of the 30
original historian, •but the man making the adaptation must be allowed to aim
at conciseness of expression and to forgo any exhaustive treatment of his 31
subject.

So now let us begin our narrative, without adding any more to what has been 32
said above; there would be no sense in expanding the preface to the history and
curtailing the history itself.

III. THE STORY OF HELIODORUS[a]

The arrival of Heliodorus in Jerusalem

5:19 3 While the Holy City was inhabited in all peace and the laws were observed 1
15:12 as perfectly as possible, through the piety of Onias[b] the high priest and his
hatred of wickedness, •it came about that the kings themselves honoured the 2
Holy Place and enhanced the glory of the Temple with the most splendid
offerings, •even to the extent that Seleucus[c] king of Asia defrayed from his own 3
revenues all the expenses arising out of the sacrificial services. •But a certain 4
4:23 Simon, of the tribe of Bilgah,[d] on being appointed administrator of the Temple,
came into conflict with the high priest over the regulation of the city markets.
Unable to get the better of Onias, he went off to Apollonius of Tarsus,[e] 5
who at that time was military commissioner for Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, •and 6
made out to him that the Treasury in Jerusalem was groaning with untold
wealth, that the amount contributed was incalculable and out of all proportion
to expenditure on the sacrifice, but that it could all be brought under the control
of the king. •Apollonius met the king and told him about the wealth that had 7
been disclosed to him; whereupon the king selected Heliodorus, his chancellor,
and sent him with instructions to effect the removal of the reported wealth.
Heliodorus lost no time in setting out, ostensibly to inspect the towns of Coele- 8
Syria and Phoenicia, but in fact to accomplish the king's purpose. •On his arrival 9
in Jerusalem, and after a hospitable reception from the high priest and the city,
he announced what had been disclosed, thus revealing the reason for his presence,
and asked if this was indeed the true situation. •The high priest explained that 10
there were funds set aside for widows and orphans, •with some belonging to 11
Hyrcanus son of Tobias, a man occupying a very exalted position, and that the
whole sum, in contrast to what the evil Simon had alleged, amounted to four
hundred talents of silver and two hundred of gold. •He added also that it was 12
entirely out of the question that an injustice should be done to those who had put

their trust in the sanctity of the place and the inviolable majesty of a Temple venerated throughout the entire world.

Consternation in Jerusalem

13 But Heliodorus, because of his instructions from the king, peremptorily insisted
14 that the funds must be confiscated for the royal exchequer. •Fixing a day for the purpose, he went in to draw up an inventory of the funds. There was
15 consternation throughout the city; •the priests in their sacred vestments prostrated themselves before the altar and called upon heaven, the author of the law
16 governing deposits, to preserve these funds intact for the depositors. •The appearance of the high priest was enough to pierce the heart of the beholder,
17 his expression and his altered colour betraying the anguish of his soul; •the man was so overwhelmed by fear and bodily trembling that those who saw him
18 could not possibly mistake the distress he was suffering. •People rushed headlong from the houses intent on making public supplication because of the
19 indignity threatening the Holy Place. •Women thronged the streets swathed in sackcloth below their breasts; girls secluded indoors ran together, some to the
20 doorways, some to the city walls, while others leaned out of the windows, •all
21 stretching out their hands to heaven in entreaty. •It was pitiful to see the people crowding together to prostrate themselves and the foreboding of the high
22 priest in his deep anguish. •While they were calling on the all-powerful Lord to
23 preserve the deposits intact for the depositors, in full security, •Heliodorus carried on with his appointed task.

The punishment of Heliodorus

24 He had already arrived with his bodyguard near the Treasury, when the Sovereign of spirits and of every power caused so great an apparition that all who had dared to accompany Heliodorus were dumbfounded at the power of
25 God, and were reduced to abject terror. •Before their eyes appeared a horse 5:4+ richly caparisoned and carrying a fearsome rider. Rearing violently, it struck at Heliodorus with its forefeet. The rider was seen to be accoutred entirely in gold.
26 Two other young men of outstanding strength and radiant beauty, magnificently apparelled, appeared to him at the same time, and taking their stand on either
27 side of him flogged him unremittingly, inflicting stroke after stroke. •Suddenly Heliodorus fell to the ground, enveloped in thick darkness. His men came to
28 his rescue and placed him in a litter, •this man who but a moment before had made his way into the Treasury, as we said above, with a great retinue and his whole bodyguard; and as they carried him away, powerless to help himself, they openly acknowledged the sovereign power of God.
29 While Heliodorus lay prostrate under the divine visitation, speechless and
30 bereft of all hope of deliverance, •the Jews blessed the Lord who had miraculously glorified his own Holy Place. And the Temple, which a little while before had been filled with terror and commotion, now overflowed with joy and gladness
31 at the manifestation of the almighty Lord. •Some of Heliodorus' companions quickly begged Onias to call upon the Most High, to bestow life on a man lying at the very point of death.
32 The high priest, afraid that the king might suspect the Jews of some foul play concerning Heliodorus, did indeed offer a sacrifice for the man's recovery.
33 And while the high priest was performing the rite of atonement, the same young men again appeared to Heliodorus wearing the same apparel, and standing

3 **a.** The object of the narrative is to emphasise the inviolable holiness of the Temple of Jerusalem, miraculously preserved from the intrigues of the renegade Jews and the expeditions of the pagans. If the Temple is profaned, it is because the nation has sinned, 5:17-18.

b. Onias III, son of Simon II whose praises are sung in Si 50:1 f; Onias also has his eulogy, in 2 M 4:5-6; 15:12.

c. Seleucus IV, elder brother of Antiochus Epiphanes, ruled from 186-175 B.C. The episode occurs at the very end of his reign.

d. 'Bilgah' following Vet. Lat., a priestly line, cf. Ne 12:5,18. The administrator was responsible for the finances of the Temple.

e. 'of Tarsus' corr.

beside him said, 'Be very grateful to Onias the high priest, since it is for his sake that the Lord has granted you your life. •As for you, who have been 34
scourged from heaven, you must proclaim to all men the grandeur of God's power.' So saying, they vanished.

The conversion of Heliodorus

Heliodorus offered sacrifice to the Lord and made most solemn vows to the 35
preserver of his life, and then took courteous leave of Onias and marched his forces back to the king. •He openly testified to all men of the works of the supreme God 36
which he had seen with his own eyes. •When the king asked Heliodorus what 37
sort of man would be the right person to send to Jerusalem on a second occasion, he replied, •'If you have some enemy or a rebel against the government, send 38
him there, and you will get him back well flogged, if he survives at all, for there is certainly some peculiar power of God about that place. •He who has his 39
dwelling in heaven watches over the place and defends it, and he strikes down and destroys those who come to harm it.' •This was the outcome of the affair of 40
Heliodorus and the preservation of the Treasury.

IV. HELLENISTIC PROPAGANDA AND PERSECUTION UNDER ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES

The misdeeds of Simon, administrator of the Temple

4 The Simon mentioned above as the informer against the funds and his own 1
country began to slander Onias, insinuating that it was the high priest who had treated Heliodorus so harshly and had himself contrived these startling events.[a] •Simon now had the effrontery to name this benefactor of the city, 2
this protector of his compatriots, this zealot for the laws, as an enemy of the public good. •This hostility reached such proportions that murders were actually 3
committed by some of Simon's agents, •and at this point Onias, recognising 4
how mischievous this rivalry was, and aware that Apollonius son of Menestheus, military commissioner for Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, was encouraging Simon in his malice, •went to see the king, not to play the accuser of his fellow 5
citizens, but having the public and private welfare of the entire people at heart. He saw that without some intervention by the king an orderly administration 6
would no longer be possible, nor would Simon be forced to put a stop to his folly.

Jason, the high priest, introduces hellenism

1 M 1:10 When Seleucus had departed this life and Antiochus styled Epiphanes had 7
1:7 succeeded to the kingdom, Jason, brother of Onias,[b] usurped the high-priesthood by underhand methods; •he approached the king with a promise of three 8
hundred and sixty talents of silver, with eighty talents to come from some other
4:19
1 M 1:11-15 source of revenue. •He further committed himself to guarantee another hundred 9
and fifty if he was allowed to use his authority to establish a gymnasium and a youth centre,[c] and to enrol men in Jerusalem as Antiochists.[d] •When the king 10
gave his assent, Jason set about introducing his fellow countrymen to the Greek way of life as soon as he was in power. •He suppressed the existing royal 11
1 M 8:17 concessions to the Jews, granted at the instance of John, father of that Eupolemus who was later to be sent on the embassy of friendship and alliance with the Romans, and, overthrowing the lawful institutions, introduced new usages contrary to the Law. •He went so far as to plant a gymnasium at the very foot of 12
the Citadel,[e] and to fit out the noblest of his cadets in the petasos.[f] •Godless wretch 13
that he was and no true high priest, Jason set no bounds to his impiety; indeed the hellenising process reached such a pitch •that the priests ceased to show any 14
interest in the services of the altar; scorning the Temple and neglecting the sacrifices, they would hurry to take part in the unlawful exercises on the training

15 ground as soon as the signal was given for the discus. •They disdained all that
16 their ancestors had esteemed, and set the highest value on hellenic honours. •But
all this brought its own retribution; the very people whose way of life they envied,
whom they sought to resemble in everything, proved to be their enemies and
17 executioners. •It is no small thing to violate the divine laws, as the period that
followed will demonstrate.

18 On the occasion of the quinquennial games at Tyre in the presence of the
19 king, •the vile Jason sent some Antiochists from Jerusalem as official spectators;[g] 4:9
these brought with them three hundred silver drachmae for the sacrifice to
Hercules. But even those who brought the money thought it should not be spent
on the sacrifice—this would not be right—and decided to reserve it for some other
20 item of expenditure; •and so what the sender had intended for the sacrifice to
Hercules was in fact applied, at the suggestion of those who brought it, to the
construction of triremes.

Antiochus Epiphanes is acclaimed in Jerusalem

21 Apollonius son of Menestheus had been sent to Egypt to attend the
enthronement of King Philometor.[h] Learning that the king had become hostile
to his policies, Antiochus began to think of his own safety; and so he left Joppa
22 and moved to Jerusalem. •He was given a magnificent welcome by Jason and the
city, and was received with torches and acclamations; following this, he withdrew
his army to Phoenicia.

Menelaus becomes high priest

23 When three years had passed, Jason sent Menelaus, brother of the Simon 3:4
mentioned above, to convey the money to the king and get his decisions on
24 various essential matters made effective. •But Menelaus, on being presented to
the king, flattered him by his own appearance of authority, and so secured the
high-priesthood for himself, outbidding Jason by three hundred talents of silver.
25 He returned with the royal mandate, bringing nothing worthy of the high-
priesthood and supported only by the fury of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a
26 savage beast. •Thus Jason, who had supplanted his own brother, was in turn
27 supplanted by a third, and obliged to take refuge in Ammonite territory. •As for
Menelaus, he retained his high office, but he defaulted altogether on the sums
28 promised to the king, •although Sostratus, the commandant of the Citadel,
whose business it was to collect the revenue, kept demanding payment. The pair
29 of them in consequence were summoned before the king, •Menelaus leaving his
brother Lysimachus as deputy high priest, while Sostratus left Crates, the
commander of the Cypriots, to act for him.

The murder of Onias

30 While all this was going on, it happened that the people of Tarsus and Mallus
revolted, because their towns had been given as a present to Antiochis, the
31 king's concubine. •The king therefore hurried off to settle the affair, leaving
32 Andronicus, one of his dignitaries, to act as his deputy. •Thinking he had found
a favourable opportunity, Menelaus abstracted a number of golden vessels
from the Temple and presented them to Andronicus, and managed to sell others

4 **a.** By plotting the discomfiture of Heliodorus.

b. The death of Seleucus, engineered by Heliodorus in 175, defeated the aspirations of Onias. Joshua, brother of Onias, showed his approval of the hellenising policy by changing his name to Jason.

c. Lit. *ephebia:* an organisation of youths between 18 and 20 years of age for military, physical and, to some extent, cultural training.

d. The 'Antiochists' were to be a company, established in Jerusalem under the patronage of Antiochus, for organising athletic interests and festivites.

e. The acropolis, or citadel, of the period overlooked the N.W. corner of the Temple court. The sports ground was therefore adjacent to the sanctuary.

f. Lit. 'brought... under the petasos': to introduce to gymnastic training; the athletes wore a broad-brimmed hat *(petasos)*, the conventional head-dress of Hermes, patron of athletes.

g. *theorol:* technical term for the delegates sent by cities to the great hellenic games.

h. Ptolemy VI Philometor.

to Tyre and the surrounding cities. •On receiving clear evidence to this effect, 33
Onias retired to a place of sanctuary at Daphne near Antioch and then taxed him
with it. •Thereupon Menelaus, taking Andronicus aside, urged him to murder 34
Dn 9:26 Onias. Andronicus sought out Onias and, after deceitfully reassuring him by
offering him his right hand on oath, succeeded in persuading him, in spite of
his lingering suspicions, to leave the sanctuary; whereupon he immediately put
him to death, in defiance of all justice. •The result was that not only the Jews 35
but many of the other nations were appalled and indignant at this impious murder.

On the king's return from the region of Cilicia, the Jews of the capital, and 36
those Greeks who shared their hatred of the crime, appealed to him about the
insensate murder of Onias. •Antiochus was profoundly grieved and filled with 37
pity, and he wept for the prudence and great moderation of the dead man. •His 38
indignation was roused, and he immediately stripped Andronicus of the purple,
tore his garments off him, and, parading him through the length of the city, rid the
world of the assassin on the very spot where he had laid impious hands on Onias,
the Lord dealing out to him the punishment he deserved.

Lysimachus killed in an insurrection

Now Lysimachus, with the connivance of Menelaus, had committed many 39
sacrilegious thefts in the city, and when the facts had become widely known,
the populace rose against Lysimachus, who had already disposed of many
pieces of gold plate. •The infuriated mob was becoming menacing, and 40
Lysimachus armed nearly three thousand men and took aggressive action; the
troops were led by a certain Auranus, a man advanced in years and no less in
folly. •Recognising this act of aggression as the work of Lysimachus, some 41
snatched up stones, others cudgels, while others scooped up handfuls of ashes lying
at hand,[i] and all hurled everything indiscriminately at Lysimachus' men, •to such 42
effect that they wounded many of them, even killing a few, and routed them all;
the Temple robber himself they killed outside the treasury.

Menelaus buys his acquittal

As a result of this, legal proceedings were taken against Menelaus. •When 43 44
the king came down to Tyre, the three men sent by the elders maintained the
justice of their case in his presence. •Menelaus, seeing he was already defeated, 45
8:8; 10:12 1 M 3:38 promised a substantial sum to Ptolemy son of Dorymenes if he would
influence the king in his favour. •Ptolemy then took the king aside into a 46
colonnade for some fresh air, and persuaded him to change his mind; •the king 47
actually dismissed the charges against Menelaus, the cause of all this evil, while
he condemned to death the other poor wretches who, had they pleaded before
even Scythians, would have been let off scot-free. •No time was lost in carrying out 48
this unjust punishment on those who had championed the cause of the city, the
rural communities and the sacred vessels. •Some Tyrians even were so outraged 49
by the crime that they provided sumptuously for their funeral, •while as a result of 50
the greed of those in high places Menelaus retained his high office, growing
in wickedness and establishing himself as the chief enemy of his fellow citizens.

Menelaus and Jason

1 M 1:17 5 About this time Antiochus undertook his second expedition[a] against Egypt. 1
It then happened that all over the city for nearly forty days there were 2
apparitions of horsemen galloping through the air, in cloth of gold, troops of
lancers fully armed, •squadrons of cavalry in order of battle, attacks and charges 3
this way and that, a flourish of shields, a forest of pikes, brandishing of swords,
hurling of missiles, a glitter of golden accoutrements and armour of all kinds.
3:25; 10:29; 11:8 So everyone prayed that this manifestation might prove a good omen.[b] 4

Then on the strength of a false report that Antiochus was dead, Jason took 5
at least a thousand men and launched an unexpected attack on the city. The

troops manning the wall were forced back, and Menelaus, with the city all but
6 captured, took refuge in the Citadel. •Jason, however, was still making a pitiless
slaughter of his own fellow citizens, not stopping to consider that success against
his own countrymen was the greatest of disasters, but rather picturing himself
as setting up trophies won from some enemy, not from his own flesh and blood.
7 Even so, he did not succeed in seizing power; in the end his conspiracy brought
him nothing but disgrace, and once again he took refuge in Ammonite territory.
8 His career of wickedness was thus brought to a halt. Kept under restraint by
Aretas the Arab despot,[c] fleeing from town to town, the quarry of all men, hated
as a rebel against the laws, abhorred as the butcher of his country and his
9 countrymen, he drifted to Egypt, •and at last this man, who had exiled so many
from their fatherland, himself perished on foreign soil, having travelled to Sparta
10 in the hope that for kinship's sake they might harbour him. •So many carcases 1 M 12:7
he had thrust out to lie unburied; now he himself had none to mourn him, no
funeral rites, no place in the tomb of his ancestors.

Antiochus Epiphanes plunders the Temple ‖1 M 1:20-24

11 When the king came to hear of what had happened, he concluded that Judaea
was in revolt. He therefore marched from Egypt, raging like a wild beast, and
12 began by storming the city. •He then ordered his soldiers to cut down without
mercy everyone they encountered, and to butcher all who took refuge in their
13 houses. •It was a massacre of young and old, a slaughter of women and children,
14 a butchery of virgins and infants. •There were eighty thousand victims in the
course of those three days, forty thousand dying by violence and as many again
15 being sold into slavery. •Not satisfied with this, he had the audacity to enter the
holiest Temple in the entire world, Menelaus, that traitor to the laws and to his
16 country, acting as his guide; •with his unclean hands he seized the sacred vessels;
and his impious hands swept away what other kings had presented for the
17 advancement, the glory and the honour of the place. •Antiochus, so much above
himself, did not realise that the Lord was angry for the moment at the sins of the 6:12-16; 7:16-19, 32-38
18 inhabitants of the city, hence his unconcern for the Holy Place. •Had it not
happened that they were entangled in many sins, Antiochus too, like Heliodorus
when King Seleucus sent him to inspect the Treasury, would have been flogged
19 the moment he arrived and checked in his presumption. •However, the Lord 3:1+ 1 Ch 17:9 Mk 2:27
had not chosen the people for the sake of the place, but the place for the sake
20 of the people;[d] •and so the place itself, having shared the disasters that befell the
people, in due course also shared their good fortune; forsaken by the Almighty
in the time of his anger, it was reinstated in all its glory, once the great Sovereign
had been reconciled.

High commissioners in Judaea

21 Antiochus went off with eighteen hundred talents he had stolen from the 1 M 1:23
Temple, and hurried back to Antioch; in his arrogance he would have undertaken
to make the dry land navigable and the sea passable on foot, so high his ambition
22 soared. •But he left high commissioners to plague the nation: in Jerusalem,
Philip, a Phrygian by race,[e] and by nature more barbarous than the man who
23 appointed him; •on Mount Gerizim,[f] Andronicus;[g] and besides these Menelaus,

1. The ashes of sacrifice; the riot took place in the Temple court.

5 a. The author, accepting the Seleucid account according to which the violent intervention of Antiochus IV was provoked by a revolt in Jerusalem, dates the event in 168, during the second Egyptian expedition. The order of 1 M is preferable: sack of the Temple after the first expedition in 169, 1:20-24; rebellion in the summer of 168, put down in 167 by Apollonius, commander of the mercenaries' regiment, 1:29-35; cf. 2 M 5:24-26.

b. Heavenly apparitions are a favourite literary device of the author, 3:25; 10:29-30; 11:8; he promises them in his preface, 2:21.

c. Aretas I, king of the Nabataeans, cf. 1 M 5:25+.

d. The choice of God falls first on his people, only second on religious institutions: a remarkable anticipation of the gospel, in circles so devoted to the Law.

e. Philip the Phrygian (not the Philip of 1 M 6:14), reappears in 6:11 and 8:8.

f. 'Mount Gerizim' (the Samaritan sanctuary), Vet. Lat.; so, also in 6:2.

g. Andronicus, not the one of 4:31f, was, like Philip, an *epistates*, representative of the royal authority in a city.

who lorded it over his countrymen worse than all the others. In his rooted
‖1 M 1:29-37 hostility to the Jews, •the king also sent the mysarch Apollonius at the head of 24
an army twenty-two thousand strong, with orders to put to death all men in their
prime and to sell the women and children. •Arriving in Jerusalem and posing as 25
a man of peace, this man waited until the holy day of the sabbath and then,
taking advantage of the Jews as they rested from work, ordered his men to
parade fully armed; •all those who came out to watch he put to the sword; 26
then, running through the city with his armed troops, he cut down an immense
number of people.

8:1 Judas called Maccabaeus, however, with about nine others, withdrew into 27
1 M 2:28 the wilderness, and lived like wild animals in the hills with his companions,
eating nothing but wild plants to avoid contracting defilement.[h]

‖1 M 1:45-51 **Pagan cults imposed**

6 Shortly afterwards, the king sent an old man from Athens to compel the 1
Jews to abandon their ancestral customs and live no longer by the laws of
God; •and to profane the Temple in Jerusalem and dedicate it to Olympian Zeus, 2
and that on Mount Gerizim to Zeus, patron of strangers, as the inhabitants had
requested.[a] •The imposition of this evil was oppressive and altogether intolerable. 3
The Temple was filled with revelling and debauchery by the pagans, who took 4
their pleasure with prostitutes and had intercourse with women in the sacred
precincts, introducing other indecencies besides. •The altar of sacrifice was loaded 5
with victims proscribed by the laws as unclean. •A man might neither keep the 6
sabbath nor observe the traditional feasts, nor so much as admit to being a
Jew. •People were driven by harsh compulsion to eat the sacrificial entrails at 7
the monthly celebration of the king's birthday; and when a feast of Dionysus
occurred they were forced to wear ivy wreaths and walk in the Dionysiac
procession. •A decree was issued at the instance of the people of Ptolemais[b] for 8
the neighbouring Greek cities, enforcing the same conduct on the Jews there,
obliging them to share in the sacrificial meals, •and ordering the execution 9
of those who would not voluntarily conform to Greek customs. So it became
clear that disaster was imminent.

‖1 M 1:60-61 For example, there were two women charged with having circumcised their 10
children. They were paraded publicly round the town, with their babies hung at
‖1 M 2:32-38 their breasts, and then hurled over the city wall. •Other people who had 11
assembled in the caves to keep the seventh day without attracting attention
were denounced to Philip and all burned together, since their consciences would
not allow them to defend themselves, out of respect for the holiness of the day.

5:17-20; 7:6-19, 32-38 **Providential interpretation of the persecution**

Now I urge anyone who may read this book not to be dismayed at these 12
calamities, but to reflect that such visitations are not intended to destroy our
race but to discipline it. •Indeed when evil-doers are not left for long to their 13
Ws 11:9-10; 12:2, 22 1 Th 2:16 own devices but incur swift retribution, it is a sign of great benevolence. •In the 14
case of the other nations the Master waits patiently for them to attain the full
measure of their sins before he punishes them, but with us he has decided
to deal differently, •rather than have to punish us later, when our sins come to 15
a head. •And so he never entirely withdraws his mercy from us; he may discipline 16
us by some disaster, but he does not desert his own people. •Let this be said 17
simply by way of reminder; we must return to our story without more ado.

The martyrdom of Eleazar

Eleazar, one of the foremost teachers of the Law, a man already advanced 18
in years and of most noble appearance, was being forced to open his mouth
Lv 11:7-8 Heb 11:35 wide to swallow pig's flesh. •But he, resolving to die with honour rather than 19
to live disgraced, went to the block of his own accord, •spitting the stuff out, the 20

plain duty of anyone with the courage to reject what it is not lawful to taste,
21 even from a natural tenderness for his own life. •Those in charge of the impious
banquet, because of their long-standing friendship with him, took him aside
and privately urged him to have meat brought of a kind he could properly use,
prepared by himself, and only pretend to eat the portions of sacrificial meat as
22 prescribed by the king; •this action would enable him to escape death, by availing
23 himself of an act of kindness prompted by their long friendship. •But having
taken a noble decision worthy of his years and the dignity of his great age and
the well earned distinction of his grey hairs, worthy too of his impeccable conduct
from boyhood, and above all of the holy legislation established by God himself,
he publicly stated his convictions, telling them to send him at once to Hades.
24 'Such pretence' he said 'does not square with our time of life; many young
people would suppose that Eleazar at the age of ninety had conformed to the
25 foreigners' way of life, •and because I had played this part for the sake of a
paltry brief spell of life might themselves be led astray on my account; I should
26 only bring defilement and disgrace on my old age. •Even though for the moment
I avoid execution by man, I can never, living or dead, elude the grasp of the
27 Almighty. •Therefore if I am man enough to quit this life here and now I shall
28 prove myself worthy of my old age, •and I shall have left the young a noble
example of how to make a good death, eagerly and generously, for the venerable
and holy laws.'

29 With these words he went straight to the block. •His escorts, so recently well
disposed towards him, turned against him after this declaration, which they
30 regarded as sheer madness. •Just before he died under the blows, he groaned
aloud and said, 'The Lord whose knowledge is holy sees clearly that, though I
might have escaped death, whatever agonies of body I now endure under this
bludgeoning, in my soul I am glad to suffer, because of the awe which he inspires
in me'.

31 This was how he died, leaving his death as an example of nobility and a
record of virtue not only for the young but for the great majority of the nation.[c]

The martyrdom of the seven brothers

↗ Heb 11:35

1 7 There were also seven brothers who were arrested with their mother. The Jr 15:9
king tried to force them to taste pig's flesh, which the Law forbids, by
2 torturing them with whips and scourges. •One of them, acting as spokesman for
the others, said, 'What are you trying to find out from us? We are prepared to
3 die rather than break the laws of our ancestors.' •The king, in a fury,
4 ordered pans and cauldrons to be heated over a fire. •As soon as they were
red-hot he commanded that this spokesman of theirs should have his tongue cut
out, his head scalped and his extremities cut off, while the other brothers and
5 his mother looked on. •When he had been rendered completely helpless, the
king gave orders for him to be brought, still breathing, to the fire and fried alive
in a pan. As the smoke from the pan drifted about, his mother and the rest
6 encouraged one another to die nobly, with such words as these, •'The Lord
God is watching, and surely he takes pity on us, as in the song in which Moses
bore witness against the people to their face, proclaiming that "he will certainly Dt 32:36
take pity on his servants" '.

7 When the first had left the world in this way, they led on the second for their
brutal amusement. After stripping the skin from his head, hair and all, they asked
8 him, 'Will you eat, before your body is tortured limb by limb?' •But he retorted
in the language of his ancestors, 'Never!' And so he too was put to the torture in

b. Cf. Dn 11:30-33, but v. 34 mentions a 'little help', that given by the Maccabees.

6 a. 'as the inhabitants had requested' corr. The Samaritans, fearful of being treated in the same way as the Jews, were anticipating the king's wishes

b. 'people of Ptolemais' Lat. and Greek MSS.

c. Origen and some of the Fathers, notably Ambrose, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyprian, praise Eleazar as a pre-Christian martyr. This narrative, like the next, is of the same literary type as many of the *Acta* of the martyrs.

his turn. •With his last breath he exclaimed, 'Inhuman fiend, you may discharge 9
12:44;14:46 us from this present life, but the King of the world will raise us up, since it is for his laws that we die, to live again for ever'.[a]

After him, they amused themselves with the third, who on being asked for 10
his tongue promptly thrust it out and boldly held out his hands, •with these 11
honourable words, 'It was heaven that gave me these limbs; for the sake of his
12:38-46+ laws I disdain them; from him I hope to receive them again'. •The king and his 12
attendants were astounded at the young man's courage and his utter indifference to suffering.

When this one was dead they subjected the fourth to the same savage torture. 13
When he neared his end he cried, 'Ours is the better choice, to meet death at 14
men's hands, yet relying on God's promise that we shall be raised up by him; whereas for you there can be no resurrection, no new life'.

Next they brought forward the fifth and began torturing him. •But he looked 15 16
at the king and said, 'You have power over men, mortal as you are, and can act as you please. But do not think that our race has been deserted by God. Only wait, and you shall see in your turn how his mighty power will torment 17
you and your race.'

5:17-20; 6:12-16 After him they led out the sixth, and his dying words were these, 'Do not 18
delude yourself: we are suffering like this through our own fault, having sinned
Ac 5:39 against our own God; the result has been terrible, •but do not think you yourself 19
will go unpunished for attempting to make war on God'.

But the mother was especially admirable and worthy of honourable remem- 20
brance, for she watched the death of seven sons in the course of a single day, and endured it resolutely because of her hopes in the Lord. •Indeed she 21
encouraged each of them in the language of their ancestors; filled with noble conviction, she reinforced her womanly argument with manly courage, saying
Jb 10:8-12 Ps 139:13-15 Qo 11:5 to them, •'I do not know how you appeared in my womb; it was not I who 22
endowed you with breath and life, I had not the shaping of your every part.
Ac 17:25 It is the creator of the world, ordaining the process of man's birth and presiding 23
over the origin of all things, who in his mercy will most surely give[b] you back both breath and life, seeing that you now despise your own existence for the sake of his laws.'

Antiochus thought he was being ridiculed, suspecting insult in the tone of 24
her voice;[c] and as the youngest was still alive he appealed to him not with mere words but with promises on oath to make him both rich and happy if he would abandon the traditions of his ancestors; he would make him his Friend and entrust him with public office. •The young man took no notice at all, and so the king 25
then appealed to the mother, urging her to advise the youth to save his life. After a great deal of urging on his part she agreed to try persuasion on her son. 26
Bending over him, she fooled the cruel tyrant with these words, uttered in the 27
language of their ancestors, 'My son, have pity on me; I carried you nine months in my womb and suckled you three years, fed you and reared you to the age you are now (and cherished you). •I implore you, my child, observe heaven and 28
earth, consider all that is in them, and acknowledge that God made them out of what did not exist, and that mankind comes into being in the same way. •Do 29
not fear this executioner, but prove yourself worthy of your brothers, and make death welcome, so that in the day of mercy I may receive you back in your brothers' company.'

She had scarcely ended when the young man said, 'What are you all waiting 30
for? I will not comply with the king's ordinance; I obey the ordinance of the Law given to our ancestors through Moses. •As for you, sir, who have contrived 31
every kind of evil against the Hebrews, you will certainly not escape the hands
5:17-20; 6:12-16 of God. •We are suffering for our own sins; •and if, to punish and discipline us, 32 33
our living Lord vents his wrath upon us, he will yet be reconciled with his own servants. •But you, unholy wretch, bloodiest villain of all mankind, do not be 34

carried away with senseless elation, crowing with false confidence as you raise
35 your hand against his servants, •for you have not yet escaped the judgement of
36 God the almighty, the all-seeing. •Our brothers already, after enduring their brief pain, now drink[a] of ever-flowing life, by virtue of God's covenant, while you, by God's judgement, will have to pay the just penalty for your arrogance.
37 I too, like my brothers, surrender my body and life for the laws of my ancestors, calling on God to show his kindness to our nation and that soon, and by trials and
38 afflictions to bring you to confess that he alone is God, •so that with my brothers and myself there may be an end to the wrath of the Almighty, rightly let loose on our whole nation.'
39 The king fell into a rage and treated this one more cruelly than the others,
40 for he was himself smarting from the young man's scorn. •And so the last brother
41 met his end undefiled and with perfect trust in the Lord. •The mother was the last to die, after her sons.[e]
42 But let this be sufficient account of the ritual meals and excessive torments.

V. THE VICTORY OF JUDAISM

THE DEATH OF THE PERSECUTOR AND PURIFICATION OF THE TEMPLE

Judas Maccabaeus and the resistance

1 8 Judas Maccabaeus and his companions made their way secretly among the villages, rallying their kinsfolk; they recruited those who remained loyal
2 to Judaism, and assembled about six thousand. •They called upon the Lord to have regard for the people oppressed on all sides, to take pity on the Temple
3 profaned by the godless, •to have mercy on the city falling into ruin and nearly levelled to the ground, to hear the blood of the victims that cried aloud to him,
4 to remember the criminal slaughter of innocent babies and to avenge the
5 blasphemies perpetrated against his name. •As soon as Maccabaeus had an organised force he at once proved invincible to the pagans, the Lord's anger
6 having turned into compassion. •Making surprise attacks on towns and villages, he fired them; he captured favourable positions and inflicted a number of reverses
7 on the enemy, •generally availing himself of the cover of night for such enterprises. The fame of his valour spread far and wide.

5:27 ‖1 M 3:10-26

1 M 3:3-9

Early exploits

‖1 M 3:38–4:25

8 When Philip[a] saw Judas was making steady progress and winning more and more frequent successes, he wrote to Ptolemy, the military commissioner for Coele-Syria and Phoenicia, asking for reinforcements in the royal interest.
9 Ptolemy appointed Nicanor son of Patroclus, one of the king's First Friends, and sent him without delay at the head of an international force of at least twenty thousand men, to exterminate the entire Jewish race. As his associate he
10 appointed Gorgias, a professional general of wide military experience. •Nicanor

4:45; 10:12

1 M 3:38

1 M 2:18+; 7:26

7 a. Belief in the resurrection of the body, not clearly expressed in Is 26:19 and Jb 19:26-27 (see notes) is here asserted for the first time, vv. 9,11,14,23,29,36, and in Dn 12:2-3 (again in the context of Antiochus Epiphanes' persecution, Dn 11). Cf. also 2 M 12:38-45+; 14:46. By the power of the creator the martyrs will rise again, v. 23, to a life, v. 14, cf. Jn 5:29, which is eternal, vv. 9,36. At this point we encounter the doctrine of immortality which will be developed, in the atmosphere of Greek thought and without reference to the resurrection of the body, by Ws 3:1–5:16. For Hebr. thought however, which makes no distinction between soul and body, the notion of survival implied a physical resurrection, as we see here. The text does not explicitly teach universal resurrection, and is only concerned with the case of the virtuous, cf. v. 14. Dn 12:2-3 is clearer.

b. 'will give' Vet. Lat.; 'gives' Greek.

c. She had spoken (as in v. 27f) in Aramaic, which the king did not understand.

d. 'now drink' corr.; 'have fallen' Greek.

e. Christian tradition honours these martyrs under the title 'the seven Maccabees'. Churches in Antioch, Rome, Lyons, and Vienna were dedicated to them.

8 a. Philip is the *epistates* (cf. 5:23+) of Jerusalem, subordinate to Ptolemy, military commissioner *(strategos)* for Coele-Syria and Phoenicia.

determined to raise the two thousand talents of tribute money owed by the king to the Romans, by the sale of Jewish prisoners of war. •He lost no time in 11
sending the seaboard towns an invitation to come and buy Jewish manpower, promising delivery of ninety head for one talent; but he did not reckon on the judgement from the Almighty that was soon to overtake him.

When news reached Judas of Nicanor's advance, he warned his men of the 12
enemy's approach, •whereupon the fainthearted and those who lacked confidence 13
in the justice of God took to their heels and ran away. •The rest sold all their 14
remaining possessions, at the same time praying the Lord to deliver them from the godless Nicanor, who had sold them even in advance of any encounter—•if 15
not for their own sakes, then at least out of consideration for the covenants made with their ancestors, and because they themselves bore his sacred and majestic name.

‖1 M 3:46f Maccabaeus marshalled his men, who numbered about six thousand, and 16
exhorted them not to be dismayed at the enemy or discouraged at the vast horde of pagans wickedly advancing against them, but to fight bravely, •keeping 17
before their eyes the criminal outrage inflicted by these men on the Holy Place, and the agony of the humiliated city, not to mention the destruction of their traditional way of life. •'They may put their trust in their weapons and their 18
Ps 20:7 exploits,' he said 'but our confidence is in almighty God, who is able with a nod to overthrow both those marching on us and the whole world with them.' •He 19
reminded them of the occasions on which their forbears had received help:
2 K 15:22 19:35 Is 37:36 that time when, under Sennacherib, a hundred and eighty-five thousand men had perished; •that time in Babylonia when in the battle with the Galatians 20
the Jewish combatants numbered only eight thousand[b] and four thousand Macedonians, yet when the Macedonians were hard pressed, the eight thousand wiped out a hundred and twenty thousand because of the help they received from heaven, and won incalculable gains.

Having so roused their courage by these words that they were ready to die 21
for the laws and their country, he then divided his army roughly into four, putting his brothers, Simon, Joseph and Jonathan in command of one division 22
10:16 1 M 3:48+ each, and assigning them fifteen hundred men apiece. •Next, he ordered Esdrias[c] 23
13:5 to read the sacred book aloud, and gave them their watchword 'Help from
8:35 God'; then he put himself at the head of the first division and joined battle with Nicanor. •With the Almighty for their ally, they slaughtered over nine thousand 24
of the enemy, wounded and crippled the greater part of Nicanor's army and put them all to flight. •The money of their prospective purchasers fell into their 25
hands. After pursuing them for a good while, they turned back, since time was pressing: •it was the eve of the sabbath, and for that reason they did not prolong 26
their pursuit. •They collected the enemy's weapons and stripped them of their 27
spoils, and then celebrated the sabbath with heartfelt praise and thanks to the Lord, who had reserved that day for distilling on them the first dew of his mercy.[d] When the sabbath was over they distributed some of the booty among the victims 28
of the persecution and the widows and orphans; the rest they divided among themselves and their children. •They then joined in public supplication, imploring 29
the merciful Lord to be fully reconciled with his servants.

The defeat of Timotheus and Bacchides[e]

They also challenged the forces of Timotheus and Bacchides and wiped out 30
over twenty thousand of them, gaining possession of several high fortresses. They divided their enormous booty into two equal shares, one for themselves, the other for the victims of the persecution and the orphans and widows, not forgetting the aged. •They carefully collected the enemy's weapons and stored 31
them in convenient places. The rest of the spoils they took to Jerusalem. •They 32
killed the officer commanding Timotheus' bodyguard, an extremely wicked man who had done great harm to the Jews. •In the course of their victory celebrations 33

in Jerusalem they burned the men that had fired the holy gates, who with Callisthenes had taken refuge in one small house; so these received a fitting reward for the sacrilege. 1:8

The flight and testimony of Nicanor

34 The triple-dyed scoundrel Nicanor, who had brought the thousand merchants 1 M 7:26
35 to buy the Jews, •finding himself humbled, with the Lord's help, by men he had 8:23-24
himself reckoned as of very little account, stripped off his robes of state, and made his way across country unaccompanied, like a runaway slave, reaching Antioch by a singular stroke of fortune, considering that his army was destroyed.
36 Thus the man who had promised the Romans to make good their tribute money by selling the prisoners from Jerusalem testified that the Jews had a defender, and that on this account the Jews were invulnerable, because they followed the laws which that defender had ordained.

The last days of Antiochus Epiphanes[a]

1:11-17
‖1 M 6:1-16

1 9 About that time, as it happened, Antiochus had retreated in disorder from
2 the country of Persia. •He had entered the city called Persepolis, planning to rob the temple and occupy the city; but the population at once sprang to arms to defend themselves, with the result that Antiochus was routed by the inhabitants
3 and forced to beat a humiliating retreat. •On his arrival in Ecbatana he learned
4 what had happened to Nicanor and to Timotheus' forces. •Flying into a passion, he resolved to make the Jews pay for the disgrace inflicted by those who had routed him, and with this in mind he ordered his charioteer to drive without stopping and get the journey over. But the condemnation of heaven travelled with him. He had said in his pride, 'When I reach Jerusalem I will turn it into
5 a mass grave for the Jews'. •But the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck Ac 12:20-23
him with an incurable and unseen complaint. The words were hardly out of his mouth when he was seized with an incurable pain in his bowels and with
6 excruciating internal torture; •and this was only right, since he had inflicted many
7 barbaric tortures on the bowels of others. •Even so he in no way diminished his arrogance; still bursting with pride, breathing fire in his wrath against the Jews, he was in the act of ordering an even keener pace when he suddenly hurtled from his chariot, and the violence of his headlong fall racked every bone
8 in his body. •He who only a little while before had thought in his superhuman Jb 38:8-11 Ps 65:6-7 Is 40:12; 51:15
boastfulness to command the waves of the sea, he who imagined he could weigh mountain peaks in a balance, found himself flat on the ground, borne in a
9 litter, a visible demonstration to all of the power of God, •in that the very Si 7:17 Ac 12:23
eyes of this godless man teemed with worms and his flesh rotted away while he lingered on in agonising pain, and the stench of his decay sickened the whole
10 army. •A short while beforehand he had thought to grasp the stars of heaven; now no one could bring himself to act as his bearer, for the stench was unbearable.
11 In consequence he began there and then, in his shattered state, to shed his excessive pride and to come to his senses under the divine lash, for he was tor-
12 mented with pain all the time. •His stench became unendurable even to himself, and he exclaimed, 'It is right to submit to God; no mortal should aspire to
13 equality with the godhead'. •The wretch began to pray to the Master, who would

b. These 8000 are possibly Jews who had fought against Galatian mercenaries in the pay of Molon, the rebellious satrap of Media.

c. 'Esdrias' corr.; cf. 12:36, identical with Azariah of 1 M 5:18,56.

d. Lit. 'reserved that day for the first drops of the dew of his mercy' following Lat.

e. The author, summarising the *Books of Jason* cf. 2:23, has put this fragment here to collate the punishments overtaking the persecutors. The interrupted narrative is resumed in v. 34.

9 a. After the defeats of Nicanor, Timotheus and Bacchides, and the temporary neutralisation of Nicanor, the summarist next describes the death of Antiochus. He thus demonstrates his thesis that persecutors are punished on earth. The various punishments are shown in crescendo, culminating in the tortures of the dying Antiochus, which counterbalance those he had inflicted on the seven brothers, ch. 7.

never take pity on him now, declaring •that the Holy City, towards which he had 14
been speeding to raze it to the ground and turn it into a mass grave, should be
declared free; •as for the Jews, whom he had considered as not even worth 15
burying, so much carrion to be thrown out with their children for birds and
beasts to prey on, he would make them all the equals of the citizens of Athens;
the holy Temple which he had once plundered he would now adorn with the 16
finest offerings; he would restore all the sacred vessels many times over; he
would defray from his personal revenue the expenses incurred for the sacrifices;
and to crown it all he would himself turn Jew and visit every place where men 17
lived, proclaiming the power of God.

Antiochus writes to the Jews

Finding no respite at all from his suffering, because God had punished him 18
with his righteous sentence, he abandoned all hope for himself and wrote the
Jews the letter transcribed below, which takes the form of an appeal in these
terms:[b]

'To the excellent Jews his citizens, Antiochus, king and commander-in-chief, 19
sends hearty greetings, wishing them all health and prosperity. •If you and your 20
children are well and your affairs are as you would wish, then I am profoundly
thankful. •For my part, though prostrate with sickness, I cherish tender memories 21
of you. On my return from the country of Persia I fell seriously ill, and thought
it necessary to make provision for the common security of all. •Not that I despair 22
of my condition, for I have great hope of shaking off the malady, •but considering 23
how my father, whenever he was making an expedition into the uplands, would
designate his successor, •so that in case of any unforeseen event or disquieting 24
rumour the people of the provinces might know to whom he had left the conduct
of affairs and thus remain undisturbed: •furthermore, being well aware that the 25
princes on our frontiers and neighbours of our realm are watching for oppor-
tunities and waiting to see what will happen, I have designated as king my son
Antiochus, whom I have more than once entrusted and commended to most of
you when I was setting out for the upland satrapies; a transcript of my letter to
him is appended hereto. •I therefore urge and require you to remember past 26
favours both public and personal, and to persist, each one of you, in your existing
goodwill towards myself and my son. •I am confident that he will pursue my 27
own policy with benevolence and humanity, and will prove accommodating to
your interests.'

And so this murderer and blasphemer, having endured the same terrible 28
suffering as he had made others endure, met his pitiable fate, and ended his life
among the remote and inhospitable mountains. •His comrade Philip brought back 29
his body, and then, fearing Antiochus's son, withdrew to Egypt, to the court of
Ptolemy Philometor.

‖1 M 4:36-61 **The purification of the Temple**[a]

10 Maccabaeus and his companions, under the Lord's guidance, restored 1
the Temple and the city, •and pulled down the altars erected by the 2
foreigners in the market place, as well as the sacred enclosures. •They purified 3
the sanctuary and built another altar; then striking fire from flints and using
this fire, they offered the first sacrifice for two years, burning incense, lighting the
lamps and setting out the loaves. •When they had done this they threw themselves 4
flat on the ground, and implored the Lord never again to let them fall into such
adversity, but if they should ever sin, to correct them with moderation and not to
deliver them over to blasphemous and barbarous nations. •This day of the 5
purification of the Temple fell on the very day on which the Temple had been
profaned by the foreigners, the twenty-fifth of the same month, Chislev. •They 6
kept eight festal days with rejoicing, in the manner of the feast of Tabernacles,
remembering how, not long before at the time of the feast of Tabernacles, they

had been living in the mountains and caverns like wild beasts. •Then, carrying branches, leafy boughs and palms, they offered hymns to him who had brought the cleansing of his own Holy Place to a happy outcome. •They also decreed by public edict, ratified by vote, that the whole Jewish nation should celebrate those same days every year.[b]

VI. THE STRUGGLE OF JUDAS AGAINST THE NEIGHBOURING PEOPLES, AND AGAINST LYSIAS, EUPATOR'S HIGH COMMISSIONER

The disgrace of Ptolemy Macron

Such were the circumstances attending the death of Antiochus styled Epiphanes. •Our task now is to unfold the history of Antiochus Eupator, son of that godless man, and relate briefly the evil effects of the wars.[c] •On coming to the throne, this prince put at the head of affairs a certain Lysias, high commissioner for Coele-Syria and Phoenicia. •Now Ptolemy, Macron as he was styled, the first governor to treat the Jews with any justice, had done his best to govern them peacefully to make up for the wrongs inflicted on them in the past. Denounced to Eupator by the Friends of the King, he heard himself called traitor at every turn for having abandoned Cyprus, which had been entrusted to him by Philometor,[d] and for going over to Antiochus Epiphanes; having shed no lustre on his illustrious office, he committed suicide by poisoning himself.

1 M 6:17

4:45; 8:8

Gorgias and the Idumaean fortresses

Gorgias now became military commissioner for that region; he maintained a force of mercenaries and a continual state of war with the Jews. •At the same time the Idumaeans, who controlled important fortresses, were exerting pressure on the Jews, welcoming outlaws from Jerusalem and endeavouring to maintain a state of war. •Maccabaeus and his men, after making public supplication to God, entreating him to support them, hurled themselves against the Idumaean fortresses. •Vigorously pressing home their attack, they seized possession of these vantage points, beating off all who fought on the ramparts; they slaughtered all who fell into their hands, accounting for not less than twenty thousand. •Nine thousand at least took refuge in two exceptionally strong castles with everything they needed to withstand a siege, •whereupon Maccabaeus left Simon and Joseph, with Zacchaeus and his forces, in sufficient numbers to besiege them, and himself went off to other places demanding his attention. •But Simon's men were greedy for money and allowed themselves to be bribed by some of the men in the castles; accepting seventy thousand drachmae, they let a number of them escape. When Maccabaeus was told what had happened, he summoned the people's commanders and accused the offenders of having sold their brothers for money by setting free men who were at war with them. •Having executed them as traitors, he at once proceeded to capture both castles. •Successful in all that he undertook by force of arms, in these two fortresses he slaughtered more than twenty thousand men.

||1 M 5:1-8

8:23-24

Judas defeats Timotheus and captures Gezer

Timotheus, who had been beaten by the Jews once before, now assembled

b. The letter is, in these circumstances, surprisingly mild; it may originally have been a document written on another occasion and addressed to other people besides the Jews of Jerusalem.

10 a. This incident (December, 164) took place before the death of Antiochus (Spring, 163).

b. For this feast, the Hanuccah, see 1 M 4:59+. This is the end of the first section of the book, of which one of the principal aims is to make this feast obligatory for all Jews, cf. the two preliminary letters, 2 M 1-2. The second section ends similarly, with an invitation to celebrate the day of Nicanor, 15:36.

c. 'of the wars' corr.

d. Ptolemy VI Philometor, king of Egypt.

an enormous force of mercenaries, mustering cavalry from Asia in considerable numbers, and appeared in Judaea, expecting to conquer it by force of arms. At his approach Maccabaeus and his men made their supplications to God, 25
sprinkling earth on their heads and putting sackcloth round their waists. •Pros- 26
trating themselves on the terrace before the altar, they begged him to support them
Ex 23:22 and to show himself the enemy of their enemies, the adversary of their adversaries, as the Law clearly states.

After these prayers they armed themselves and advanced a fair distance 27
from the city, halting when they were close to the enemy. •As the first light of 28
dawn began to spread, the two sides joined battle, the one having as their pledge of success and victory not only their own valour but their recourse to the Lord,
5:4+ the other making their own ardour their mainstay in the fight. •When the battle 29
was at its height the enemy saw five magnificent men appear from heaven on horses with golden bridles and put themselves at the head of the Jews; •sur- 30
rounding Maccabaeus and screening him with their own armour, they kept him unscathed, while they rained arrows and thunderbolts on the enemy until, blinded and confused, they scattered[e] in complete disorder. •Twenty thousand five 31
hundred infantry and six hundred cavalry were slaughtered. •Timotheus himself 32
||1 M 13:43-48 fled to a strongly guarded citadel called Gezer,[f] where Chaereas was in command. For four days[g] Maccabaeus and his men eagerly besieged the fortress, •while 33 34
the defenders, confident in the security of the place, hurled fearful blasphemies and godless insults at them. •At daybreak on the fifth day, twenty young men 35
of Maccabaeus' forces, fired with indignation at the blasphemies, bravely stormed the wall, and cut down with brutal fury everyone they encountered. Others, in a similar scaling operation, took the defenders in the rear, and set 36
fire to the towers, lighting pyres on which they burned the blasphemers alive. Others broke down the gates and let in the rest of the army, and were the first to occupy the town. •Timotheus had hidden in a cistern, but they killed him, 37
with his brother Chaereas, and Apollophanes. •When all this was over, they 38
blessed with hymns and thanksgiving the Lord, who had shown such great kindness to Israel and given them the victory.

||1 M 4:26-35 **The first campaign of Lysias**

11 Almost immediately afterwards, Lysias, the king's tutor and cousin and 1
his vizir, much disturbed at the turn of events, •mustered about eighty 2
thousand foot soldiers and his entire cavalry and advanced against the Jews, intending to make the Holy City a place for Greeks to live in, •to levy a tax on 3
the Temple as was done with other national shrines, and to put the office of high priest up for sale every year; •he took no account at all of the power of 4
God, being sublimely confident in his tens of thousands of infantrymen, his thousands of cavalry, and his eighty elephants.

Invading Judaea, he approached Bethzur, a fortified position about twenty 5
miles[a] from Jerusalem, and began to subject it to strong pressure. •When 6
Maccabaeus and his men learned that Lysias was besieging the fortresses, they and the populace with them begged the Lord with lamentation and tears to
Ex 23:20+ send a good angel to save Israel. •Maccabaeus himself was the first to take up 7
his weapons, and he urged the rest to risk their lives with him in support of their brothers; so they sallied out resolutely, as one man. •They were still near 8
5:4+ Jerusalem when a rider attired in white appeared at their head brandishing golden accoutrements. •With one accord they all blessed the God of mercy, and 9
found themselves filled with such courage that they were ready to lay low not men only but the fiercest beasts and walls of iron. •They advanced in battle order 10
with the aid of their celestial ally, the Lord having had mercy on them. •Charging 11
like lions on the enemy, they laid low eleven thousand of the infantry and 12
sixteen hundred horsemen, and routed all the rest. •Of those, the majority got away, wounded and weaponless. Lysias himself escaped only by ignominious flight.

Lysias makes peace with the Jews. Four letters concerning the treaty ‖1 M 6:57-61

13 Now Lysias was not lacking in intelligence, and as he reflected on the reverse
he had suffered he realised that the Hebrews were invincible because the mighty
14 God fought for them. He therefore sent to them •suggesting a reconciliation on
just terms all round, and promising to induce even the king to become their
15 friend. •Maccabaeus, thinking only of the common good, agreed to all that Lysias
proposed, and whatever Maccabaeus submitted to Lysias in writing concerning
the Jews was granted by the king.

16 Here is the text of the letter Lysias wrote to the Jews, 'From Lysias to the
17 Jewish people, greetings. •John and Absalom, your envoys, have delivered to
me the communication transcribed below, requesting me to approve its provisions.
18 Anything requiring the king's attention I have put before him; anything coming
19 within my own competence I have granted. •Provided you maintain your good
will towards the administration I will do my best in the future to promote
20 your advantage. •As for the details, I have given orders for your envoys and my
21 own officials to discuss these with you. •May you prosper. The year one hundred
and forty-eight, the twenty-fourth day of the month of Dioscoros.'[b]

22 The king's letter was as follows,[c] 'King Antiochus to his brother Lysias,
23 greetings. •Now that our father has taken his place among the gods[d] our will
is that the subjects of the realm be left undisturbed to attend to their own affairs.
24 We understand that the Jews do not approve our father's policy, the adoption
of Greek customs, but prefer their own way of life and ask to be allowed to
25 observe their own laws. •Accordingly, since we intend this people to be free from
vexation like any other, our ruling is that the Temple be restored to them and
26 that they conduct their affairs according to the customs of their ancestors. •It
will therefore be your concern to send them a mission of friendship, so that on
learning our policy they may have confidence and proceed happily about their own
affairs.'

27 The king's letter to the Jewish nation was in these terms, 'King Antiochus
28 to the Jewish senate and the rest of the Jews, greetings. •If you are well, that is
29 as we would wish; we ourselves are in good health. •Menelaus informs us that
30 you wish to return home and attend to your own affairs. •Accordingly, all those
who return before the thirtieth day of Xanthicus may rest assured that they have
31 nothing to fear. •The Jews may make use of their own kind of food and their
own laws as formerly, and none of them is to be molested in any way for any
32 unwitting offences. •I am in fact sending Menelaus to set your minds at rest.
33 Farewell. In the hundred and forty-eighth year, the fifteenth of Xanthicus.'[e]

34 The Romans also sent the Jews a letter, which read as follows,[f] 'Quintus
Memmius, Titus Manius, ambassadors of the Romans, to the people of the Jews,
35 greetings. •Whatever Lysias, the king's cousin, has granted you we also approve.
36 As for the matters he decided to refer to the king, consider them carefully and
send someone without delay, if we are to interpret them to your advantage,
37 because we are leaving for Antioch. •Lose no time, therefore, in sending us
38 those who can tell us what your intentions are. •Farewell. In the hundred and
forty-eighth year, the fifteenth of Xanthicus.'

e. According to a variant reading: 'were cut to pieces' Text. Rec.

f. Concentrating exclusively on the exploits of Judas, 2 M credits him with the famous capture of Gezer (1 M 13:43-48) the fame of which lingered in popular tradition.

g. 'four days' Lat.; 'forty' or 'twenty-four' Greek.

11 a. Lit. 'five *schoinoi*'; the *schoinos* is 30 *stadia* (approx. furlongs); the distance is about 20 miles.

b. Spring, 164 B.C. 'Dioscoros' Lat.; 'Dioscorinthios' Greek.

c. Chronologically the letter of Antiochus V should have been placed last in the collection. It is closely associated with the peace of 149 Sel. (163 B.C.).

d. Deification and worship of the dynasty were practised in Syria under the Seleucids as in Egypt under the Lagids.

e. April, 164.

f. The letter from the Romans should have been placed immediately after that of Lysias to which it refers; nor should it bear the same date as the letter from Antiochus. Negotiations between Jews and Romans begin a little earlier in 2 M than in 1 M 8:17-32 (under Demetrius I).

Incidents at Joppa and Jamnia

12 After these agreements had been concluded Lysias returned to the king 1
while the Jews went back to their farming. •Among the local military 2
commissioners, Timotheus and Apollonius son of Gennaeus, as also Hieronymus
and Demophon, and Nicanor the Cypriarch[a] as well, would not allow the Jews to
live in peace and quiet.

[b]The people of Joppa went so far as to perpetrate the following outrage: they 3
invited the Jews living among them to go aboard some boats they had lying
ready, taking their wives and children. There was no hint of any intention to
harm them; •there had been a public vote by the citizens, and the Jews accepted, 4
as well they might, being peaceable people with no reason to suspect anything.
But once out in the open sea they were all sent to the bottom, a company of at
least two hundred.

When Judas heard of the cruel fate of his countrymen, he issued his orders 5
to his men •and after invoking God, the just judge, he attacked his brothers' 6
murderers. Under cover of dark he set fire to the harbour, burned the boats and
put to the sword everyone who had taken refuge there. •As the town gates were 7
closed, he withdrew, intending to come back and wipe out the whole community
of Joppa. •But hearing that the people of Jamnia were planning to treat their 8
resident Jews in the same way, •he made a night attack on the Jamnites and 9
fired the harbour with its fleet; the glow of the flames was seen as far off as
Jerusalem, thirty miles away.

‖1M 5:24-54 **The expedition in Gilead**[c]

When they had left the town over a mile behind them in their advance on 10
Timotheus, Judas was attacked by an Arab force of at least five thousand foot
soldiers, with five hundred cavalry. •A fierce engagement followed, and with 11
God's help Judas' men won the day; the defeated nomads begged Judas to offer
them the right hand of friendship, and promised to surrender their herds and
make themselves generally useful to him. •Realising that they might indeed 12
prove valuable in many ways, Judas consented to make peace with them and
after an exchange of pledges the Arabs withdrew to their tents.

Judas also attacked a certain fortified town, enclosed by ramparts and 13
inhabited by a medley of races; its name was Caspin. •Confident in the strength 14
of their walls and their stock of provisions, the besieged adopted an insolent
attitude to Judas and his men, reinforcing their insults with blasphemies and
profanity. •But Judas and his men invoked the great Sovereign of the world 15
Jos 6 who without battering-ram or siege-engine overthrew Jericho in the days of
Joshua; they then made a furious assault on the wall. •Capturing the city by the 16
will of God, they made such indescribable slaughter that the nearby lake, two
furlongs across, seemed filled to overflowing with blood.

‖1 M 5:37-44 **The battle of Carnaim**

Ninety-five miles further on from there, they reached the Charax, in the 17
1 M 5:13 country of Jews known as Tubians. •They did not find Timotheus himself in 18
that neighbourhood; he had already left the district, having achieved nothing
apart from leaving a very strong garrison at one point. •Dositheus and Sosipater, 19
two of the Maccabaean generals, marched out and destroyed the force Timotheus
had left behind in the fortress, amounting to more than ten thousand men.
Maccabaeus himself divided his army into cohorts to which he assigned com- 20
manders, and then hurried in pursuit of Timotheus, whose troops numbered
one hundred and twenty thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred
cavalry. •Timotheus's first move on learning of Judas' advance was to send 21
away the women and children and the rest of the baggage train to the place called
1 M 5:43+ Carnaim, since it was an impregnable position, difficult of access owing to the
narrowness of all the approaches. •When the first of Judas' cohorts came into 22

sight, the enemy were seized with fright; panic-stricken at this manifestation of the All-seeing, they fled headlong in all directions, so that they were often wounded by their own men, running on the points of one another's swords.
23 Judas pursued them with a will, cutting the sinners to pieces and killing something
24 like thirty thousand men. •Timotheus himself, having fallen into the hands of Dositheus and Sosipater and their men, very craftily pleaded with them to let him go with his life, on the grounds that he had the parents of most and the brothers of some in his power, and that these could otherwise expect short shrift.
25 When at long last he convinced them that he would honour his promise and return these people safe and sound, they let him go for the sake of saving their brothers.
26 Reaching Carnaim and the Atargateion,[d] Judas slaughtered twenty-five thousand men.

The return by way of Ephron and Scythopolis

27 After the rout of these enemies he led his army against Ephron, a fortified town, where Lysias was living. Stalwart young men drawn up outside the walls offered vigorous resistance, while inside there were quantities of war-engines
28 and missiles in reserve. •But the Jews, invoking the Sovereign who by his power shatters enemies' defences, gained control of the city, and cut down nearly
29 twenty-five thousand of the people inside. •Moving off from there, they pressed
30 on to Scythopolis,[e] seventy-five miles from Jerusalem. •But as the Jews who had settled there assured Judas that the people of Scythopolis had always treated them well and had been particularly kind to them when times had been at their
31 worst, •he and his men thanked them and urged them to extend the same friendship to his race in the future.

They reached Jerusalem shortly before the feast of Weeks.

The campaign against Gorgias

32 After Pentecost, as it is called, they marched against Gorgias, the military Ex 23:14+
33 commissioner for Idumaea. •He came out at the head of three thousand infantry
34 and four hundred cavalry; •in the course of the ensuing battle a few Jews lost their lives.
35 A man called Dositheus, one of the Tubians,[f] who was on horseback and a powerful man, grasped Gorgias, taking him by the cloak, and was forcibly dragging him along, intending to take the accursed man alive, but one of the Thracian cavalry, hurling himself on Dositheus, slashed his shoulder, and
36 Gorgias escaped to Marisa. •Meanwhile since Esdrias and his men had been fighting for a long time and were exhausted, Judas called on the Lord to show them he was their ally and leader in battle.
37 Then, chanting the battle cry and other hymns at the top of his voice in the language of his ancestors, he routed Gorgias' troops.

The sacrifice for the fallen[g]

38 Judas then rallied his army and moved on to the town of Adullam, and since 7:12
the seventh day of the week had arrived they purified themselves according to
39 custom and kept the sabbath in that place. •The next day they came to Judas (since the necessity was by now urgent)[h] to have the bodies of the fallen taken up

12 a. With the exception of Timotheus, 1 M 5:11-13, all these generals are new on the scene.

b. Vv. 3-9 are related to the Gezer episode, 10:24-38, having to do with the same region if not with the same time.

c. A new episode, unconnected with what precedes and parallel to 1 M 5:24-54.

d. Temple of Atargatis, a Syrian goddess. Carnaim appears to be another temple, 1 M 5:43-44, that of the horned Astarte.

e. Greek name for Beth-shan, 1 M 5:52.

f. 'one of the Tubians' corr., cf. v. 17.

g. Judas is thinking of the resurrection of his fallen soldiers, cf. 7:9+, which, however, is dependent on atonement in the other world. Expiation for their sins is to be won by prayer, v. 42, and the offering of sacrifice, v. 43. After their resurrection the soldiers will receive their reward, v. 45. This is the only O.T. text mentioning an intermediate state where the souls of the dead are purified, and assisted in the process by the prayers of the living; i.e. purgatory.

h. Insertion missing in a few textual authorities.

and laid to rest among their relatives in their ancestral tombs. •But when they 40
found on each of the dead men, under their tunics, amulets of the idols taken
Dt 7:25 from Jamnia, which the Law prohibits to Jews, it became clear to everyone that
this was why these men had lost their lives. •All then blessed the ways of the 41
Lord, the just judge who brings hidden things to light, •and gave themselves to 42
prayer, begging that the sin committed might be fully blotted out. Next, the
valiant Judas urged the people to keep themselves free from all sin, having
seen with their own eyes the effects of the sin of those who had fallen; •after 43
this he took a collection from them individually, amounting to nearly two
thousand drachmae, and sent it to Jerusalem to have a sacrifice for sin offered,
an altogether fine and noble action, in which he took full account of the resur-
7:9+ rection. •For if he had not expected the fallen to rise again it would have been 44
superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead, •whereas if he had in view the 45
splendid recompense reserved for those who make a pious end, the thought was
holy and devout. This was why he had this atonement sacrifice offered for the
dead, so that they might be released from their sin.

Antiochus V and Lysias. The fate of Menelaus

13 In the year one hundred and forty-nine[a] Judas and his men discovered 1
that Antiochus Eupator was advancing in force against Judaea, •and 2
1 M 6:30 with him Lysias his tutor and vizir; he had moreover a Greek force of one
hundred and ten thousand infantry, five thousand three hundred cavalry, twenty-
two elephants, and three hundred chariots fitted with scythes.

Menelaus sided with them, and with great duplicity kept encouraging 3
Antiochus, not for the welfare of his own country but in the hope of being
1 Tm 6:15 Rv 17:14; 19:16 confirmed in office. •But the King of kings stirred up the anger of Antiochus 4
against the guilty wretch, and when Lysias made it clear to the king that
Menelaus was the cause of all the troubles, Antiochus gave orders for him to be
taken to Beroea and there put to death by the local method of execution. •In that 5
place there is a tower fifty cubits high, filled with ash, with a circular construction
sloping steeply down from all sides towards the ashes. •If anyone is convicted of 6
sacrilegious theft or notoriously guilty of certain other crimes, they take him up[b]
to the top and thrust him down to perish. •In such a manner was the renegade 7
fated to die; Menelaus had not even the privilege of burial. •Deserved justice, 8
this; since he had committed many sins against the altar whose fire, whose very
ashes were holy, it was in ashes that he met his death.

The prayers and success of the Jews near Modein

The king, then, was advancing, his mind filled with barbarous designs, to 9
give the Jews a demonstration of far worse things than anything that had
happened under his father. •When Judas heard of this he ordered the people to 10
call day and night upon the Lord, now if ever, for this once at least, to come to
the help •of those who were in peril of being deprived of the Law, their 11
1 M 4:36+ fatherland and the holy Temple, and not to allow the people, just when they
were beginning to breathe again, to fall into the power of the blaspheming
pagans. •When they had all, as one man, obeyed his instructions and had made 12
their petitions to the merciful Lord, weeping, fasting and prostrating themselves
for three days continuously, Judas spoke words of encouragement and told them to
keep close to him. •After separate consultation with the elders he resolved not 13
to wait for the king's army to invade Judaea and take possession of the city, but
to march out and bring the whole matter to a decision with the help of God.

Leaving the outcome to the creator of the world, and exhorting his soldiers 14
to fight bravely to the death for the laws, the Temple, the city, their country
and their way of life, he halted his army near Modein. •Leaving his men with 15
8:23 the watchword 'Victory from God', he made a night attack on the king's
pavilion with a picked band of the bravest young men. Inside the camp he destroyed

about two thousand, and his men cut down the largest of the elephants with its 1 M 6:43
16 driver; •in the end they filled the whole camp with terror and confusion before
17 withdrawing in triumph. •Dawn was just breaking as this was brought to an end,
through the protection of the Lord watching over Judas.

Antiochus in treaty with the Jews ||1 M 6:48-53

18 The king, having had a taste of Jewish daring, now tried to attack their
19 positions strategically. •He advanced on Bethzur, a strong fortress of the Jews,
but was repulsed, and so checked and worsted.
20 Judas sent in to the garrison what they needed, •but Rhodocus, of the Jewish
21 army, supplied the enemy with secret information; the man was identified,
22 arrested, and dealt with. •For the second time the king parleyed with the garrison
of Bethzur; he offered and accepted pledges of amity, retired, then attacked Judas
23 and his men, but came off worst. •He was then told that Philip, left in charge of
affairs at Antioch, had made a desperate move. He was stunned by this, opened
negotiations with the Jews, capitulated, and swore to abide by all reasonable
conditions. He reached an agreement, offered sacrifice, honoured the Temple,
and made generous gifts to the Holy Place.
24 He received Maccabaeus kindly, then left Hegemonides behind as military com-
25 missioner from Ptolemais to the territory of the Gerrenians, •and went to
Ptolemais. The inhabitants of the place disapproved of the treaty; they voiced
26 their resentment and wanted to annul its articles.[c] •Lysias mounted the rostrum
and made a persuasive defence of the articles which convinced and calmed them,
and so won their good will. He then withdrew to Antioch.

So much for the episode of the king's offensive and retreat.

VII. THE CONFLICT WITH NICANOR, GENERAL OF DEMETRIUS I. THE DAY OF NICANOR

Alcimus the high priest intervenes ||1 M 7:1-21

1 14 Three years after this, Judas and his men learned that Demetrius son
of Seleucus had landed at the port of Tripolis with a strong army and
2 a fleet, •and that he had occupied the country and had killed Antiochus and
3 his tutor Lysias. •A certain Alcimus, a former high priest, had wilfully incurred
defilement at the time of the insurrection; realising that whichever way he turned
4 there was no security for him, nor any further access to the holy altar, •he went
to King Demetrius in about the year one hundred and fifty-one[a] and presented 1 M 10:29+
him with a golden crown and a palm, together with the traditional olive branches
from the Temple; there, for that day, he let the matter rest.
5 Presently he found an opportunity that suited his perverse purpose. When
Demetrius called him into his council and questioned him about the dispositions
6 and intentions of the Jews, he replied, •'Those Jews called Hasidaeans, who
are led by Judas Maccabaeus, are warmongers and rebels who are preventing
7 the kingdom from finding stability. •That is why, after being deprived of my
8 hereditary dignity, I mean the high-priesthood, I have come here now, •first,
out of genuine concern for the king's interests, and secondly, out of a regard for
our own fellow citizens, because the irresponsible behaviour of those I have
9 mentioned has brought great degradation on our entire race. •When your
majesty has taken note of all these points, may it please you to make provision
for the welfare of our country and our oppressed nation, as befits the gracious

13 a. Summer, 162 B.C.
b. 'take up' conj.
c. On the hostility of the people of Ptolemais to the Jews, cf. 6:8.
14 a. 162-161 B.C.

benevolence you extend to all; •for as long as Judas remains alive the state will never enjoy peace.' 10

1 M 2:18+; ||7:26 When Alcimus had finished this speech, the rest of the Friends of the King, who hated Judas, seized the occasion to arouse Demetrius' anger against him. He at once selected Nicanor, who had been commander of the elephants, promoted him military commissioner for Judaea and despatched him •with instructions to dispose of Judas, disperse his followers and instal Alcimus as high priest of the greatest of temples. •The pagans in Judaea, who had fled before Judas, flocked to join Nicanor, thinking that the misfortunes and troubles of the Jews would be to their own advantage. 11 12 13 14

||1 M 7:27-28 Nicanor comes to terms with Judas

When the Jews heard that Nicanor was coming and that the pagans were about to attack, they sprinkled dust over themselves and made supplication to him who had established his people for ever and had never failed to support his own heritage by his direct intervention. •On their leader's orders they at once left the place where they were and came upon the enemy at the village of 1 M 7:31 Dessau.[b] •Simon, brother of Judas, had engaged Nicanor, but because of the unexpected arrival[c] of his adversaries had suffered a slight check. •However, Nicanor had heard how brave Judas and his men were and how resolutely they always fought for their country, and he did not dare allow bloodshed to decide the issue. •And so he sent Posidonius, Theodotus and Mattathias to offer the Jews pledges of friendship and to accept theirs. 15 16 17 18 19

After careful consideration of his terms, the leader communicated them to his troops, and since they were all clearly of one mind they agreed to the treaty. A day was fixed on which the respective leaders were to meet privately on neutral ground: a litter came out from either side and seats were set up. •Judas had posted armed men on the alert in advantageous positions in case of a sudden treacherous move by the enemy. The leaders held their conference and reached agreement. •Nicanor took up residence in Jerusalem and did nothing out of place there; he even sent away the crowds that had flocked to join him. •He kept Judas constantly with him, becoming deeply attached to him •and he encouraged him to marry and have children. Judas married, settled down and led a normal life.[d] 20 21 22 23 24 25

Alcimus renews hostilities, and Nicanor threatens the Temple

When Alcimus saw how friendly the two men had become, he went to Demetrius with a copy of the treaty they had signed and told him that Nicanor was holding ideas against the interests of the state, and was planning that Judas, an enemy of the realm, should fill the next vacancy among the Friends of the King. 26

The king flew into a rage; roused by the calumnies of this arch-villain, he wrote to Nicanor, telling him of his strong displeasure at the treaty and ordering him to send Maccabaeus to Antioch in chains immediately. 27

When the letter reached Nicanor he was very much upset, for it went against the grain with him to break his agreement with a man who had done nothing wrong. •However, there was no question of opposing the king, so he waited ||1 M 7:29-30 for an opportunity to carry out the order by a stratagem. •Maccabaeus began to notice that Nicanor was treating him more sharply and that his manner of speaking to him was more abrupt than it had been, and he concluded that such severity could have no very good motive. He therefore collected a consider- ||1 M 7:33-38 able number of his followers and withdrew from Nicanor. •The latter, realising that the man had well and truly outmanoeuvred him, went to the great and holy Temple at a time when the priests were offering the customary sacrifices, and ordered them to surrender Judas. •When they protested on oath that they did not know where the wanted man could be, •he stretched out his right 28 29 30 31 32 33

hand towards the Temple and swore this oath, 'If you do not hand Judas over
to me as prisoner, I will raze this sanctuary of God to the ground, I will demolish
the altar, and on this very spot I will erect a splendid temple to Dionysus'.
34 With these words he left them. The priests stretched out their hands to heaven,
calling on him who has at all times done battle for our nation; this was their Ac 17:25
35 prayer: •'O Lord, you who stand in need of nothing at all, it has pleased you that
36 there should be in our midst a Temple for your dwelling place. •Now therefore,
holy Lord of all holiness, preserve for ever from all profanation this house, so
newly purified.'

The death of Razis

37 Now, a certain Razis, one of the elders of Jerusalem, was denounced to
Nicanor. He was a man who loved his countrymen and stood high in their
esteem, and he was known as the father of the Jews because of his kindness.
38 In the earlier days of the insurrection he had been convicted of Judaism, and he
39 had risked both body and life for Judaism with the utmost zeal. •By way of
demonstrating the enmity he had for the Jews, Nicanor sent over five hundred
40 soldiers to arrest him, •reckoning that if he eliminated this man he would be
41 dealing them a severe blow. •When the troops were on the point of capturing the
tower and were forcing the courtyard gate and calling for fire to set the doors
alight, Razis, finding himself completely surrounded, fell on his own sword, 1 S 31:4+
42 nobly resolving to die rather than fall into the clutches of these villains and suffer
43 outrages unworthy of his noble birth. •But in the heat of conflict he missed his
thrust, and while the troops swarmed in through the doorways, he ran up with
44 alacrity on to the wall and bravely threw himself down among the troops. •But
as they instantly drew back some distance, he fell into the middle of the empty
45 space. •Still breathing, and blazing with anger, he struggled to his feet, blood
spurting in all directions, and despite his terrible wounds ran right through the
46 crowd; then, taking his stand on a steep rock, •although he had now lost every
drop of blood, he tore out his entrails and taking them in both hands flung them
among the troops, calling on the Master of his life and spirit to give them back to 7:9+
him one day. Such was the manner of his passing.

Nicanor's blasphemies

1 15 Nicanor heard that Judas and his men were in the neighbourhood of
Samaria, so he decided to attack them, at no risk to himself, on the day of
2 rest. •Those Jews who had been compelled to follow him said, 'You must not
massacre them in such a savage, barbarous way, but give its proper honour to the
3 day on which the All-seeing has conferred a special holiness'. •At this the triple- 1 M 7:26
dyed scoundrel asked if there was in heaven a sovereign who had ordered the
4 keeping of the sabbath day. •When they answered, 'It is the living Lord himself,
the heavenly sovereign, who has ordered the observance of the seventh day',
5 he retorted, 'And it is I myself as sovereign on earth who order you to take up
arms and carry through this business of the king'. For all that, he never
managed to carry through his savage plan.

Judas harangues his men. His dream

6 While Nicanor, in his unlimited boastfulness and pride, was planning to erect
7 a public trophy[a] with the spoils taken from Judas and his men, •Maccabaeus
8 remained firm in his confident conviction that the Lord would stand by him. •He
urged his men not to be dismayed by the attacks of the pagans but, keeping

b. The incident at Dessau (Adasa, cf. 1 M 7:40) is presumably the same as the one at Capharsalama, situated nearby, 1 M 7:31.
c. 'arrival' corr.
d. This ending is at variance with the account in 1 M 7:27 f where a sharp clash between Judas and Nicanor frustrates the development of friendly relations.

15 a. 'public trophy': a cairn stacked round with the arms of enemies fallen in battle.

in mind the help that had come to them from heaven in the past, to be confident that this time also victory would be theirs with the help of the Almighty. •He put fresh heart into them, citing the Law and the Prophets,[b] and by stirring up memories of the battles they had already won he filled them with new enthusiasm. •Having thoroughly roused their courage, he ended his speech by detailing the treachery of the heathen and their violation of their oaths. 9 10

Having armed each one of them not so much with the safety given by shield and lance as with that confidence that springs from noble language, he encouraged them all by describing to them a convincing dream—a vision, as it were.[c] •What he had seen was this: Onias, the former high priest, that paragon of men, modest of bearing and gentle of manners, suitably eloquent and trained from boyhood in the practice of every virtue—Onias was stretching out his hands and praying for the whole nation of the Jews. •Next there appeared a man equally remarkable for his great age and dignity and invested with a marvellous and impressive air of majesty. •Onias began to speak: 'This is a man' he said 'who loves his brothers and prays much for the people and the Holy City—Jeremiah,[d] the prophet of God'. •Jeremiah then stretched out his right hand and presented Judas with a golden sword, saying as he gave it, •'Take this holy sword as a gift from God; with it you shall strike down enemies'. 11 12 3:1+ 13 14 15 16

The disposition of the combatants

Encouraged by the noble words of Judas, which had the power to inspire valour and give the young the spirit of grown men, they decided not to pitch camp but to make a spirited attack and settle the matter fighting hand to hand with all their courage, since the city, their holy religion and the Temple were in danger. •Their concern for their wives and children, their brothers and relatives, had shrunk to minute importance; their chief and greatest fear was for the consecrated Temple. •Those left behind in the city felt a similar anxiety, alarmed as they were about the forthcoming encounter in the open country. •Everyone now awaited the coming issue. The enemy had already concentrated their forces and stood formed up in order of battle, with the elephants drawn up in a strategic position and the cavalry disposed on the wings. Maccabaeus took note of these masses confronting him, the glittering array of armour and the fierce aspect of the elephants; then, raising his hands to heaven, he called on the Lord who works miracles, in the knowledge that it is not by force of arms, but as he sees fit to decide, that victory is granted by him to such as deserve it. •His prayer was worded thus: 'You, Master, sent your angel in the days of Hezekiah king of Judaea, and destroyed no less than one hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib's army; •now once again, Sovereign of heaven, send a good angel before us to spread terror and dismay. •May these men be struck down by the might of your arm, since they have come with blasphemy on their lips to attack your holy people.'[e] With this, he brought his prayer to an end. 17 18 1 M 4:36+ 19 20 21 8:19 ||1 M 7:40-42 2 K 19:35 Is 37:36 22 23 24

The defeat and death of Nicanor ||1 M 7:43-50

Nicanor and his men advanced to the sound of trumpets and war songs, but the men of Judas closed with the enemy uttering invocations and prayers. Fighting with their hands and praying to God in their hearts, they cut down at least thirty-five thousand men and were greatly cheered by this divine manifestation. •When the engagement was ended and they were withdrawing in triumph they recognised Nicanor, lying dead in full armour. 25 26 27 28

With shouting and confusion all around, they blessed the sovereign Master in the language of their ancestors. •The man who had devoted himself entirely,[f] body and soul, to the service of his countrymen, and had always preserved the love he had felt even in youth for those of his own race, gave orders for Nicanor's head to be cut off, together with his arm and shoulder, and taken to Jerusalem. When he arrived there himself, he called together his countrymen and the priests; 29 30 31

32 then standing in front of the altar he sent for the people from the Citadel. •He showed them the head of the infamous Nicanor, and the hand which the blasphemer had stretched out so insolently against the holy house of the
33 Almighty. •Then, cutting out the tongue of the godless Nicanor, he gave orders for it to be fed piecemeal to the birds, and for the reward of his folly to be hung
34 up in sight of the Temple. •At this everyone sent blessings heavenward to the glorious Lord, saying, 'Blessings on him who has preserved his own dwelling from pollution!'

35 He hung Nicanor's head from the Citadel,[g] a clear and evident sign to all 1 S 31:9-10
36 of the help of the Lord. •They all passed a decree by unanimous vote never to let that day go by unobserved, but to celebrate the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, called Adar in Aramaic,[h] the eve of the day of Mordecai.[i] 1 M 7:49+

Compiler's epilogue

37 So ends the episode of Nicanor, and as, since then, the city has remained in the possession of the Hebrews, I shall bring my own work to an end here too.[j]
38 If it is well composed and to the point, that is just what I wanted. If it is trashy
39 and mediocre, that is all I could manage. •Just as it is injurious to drink wine by itself, or again water, whereas wine mixed with water is pleasant and produces a delightful sense of well-being, so skill in presenting the incidents is what delights the understanding of those who read the story. On that note I will close.

15 b. Cf. the 'consolation of the holy books', 1 M 12:9.
c. 'a vision, as it were' corr.
d. On the prestige of Jeremiah at this time, see 2:1+. Like Moses, Ex 32:11+, he is a powerful intercessor, a departed saint intervening with God on behalf of the living.
e. 'people' corr.; 'temple' Greek.
f. Or 'was the protagonist', he who fights in the front line, cf. 1 M 9:11, the actor who plays the leading and most difficult part.
g. Anachronism (analogous to 1 S 17:54): the Citadel was still in the hands of the Syrians.
h. 'in Aramaic' corr.
i. The second half of the book ends with the institution of a feast, as does the first part. 10:8+. The 'day of Mordecai' is the day of Purim, Est 9:20-22.
j. Judas' victory over Nicanor has saved the Temple, never to be threatened again by the Syrians: the author has reached his self-appointed goal. On concern for the Temple, cf. 1 M 4:36+.

THE WISDOM BOOKS

INTRODUCTION TO THE WISDOM BOOKS

Five books of the Old Testament are called 'wisdom' books: Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom. With these is grouped, somewhat unaptly, the Song of Songs. The school of thought they represent is also that of a certain number of Psalms and, in part, of the books of Tobit and Baruch.

Wisdom literature flourished throughout the ancient East. Egypt produced wisdom writings in every period of its history. From Mesopotamia come proverbs, fables and poems on human suffering reminiscent of Job. From Aramaic-speaking areas we have the *Wisdom of Ahikar*, Assyrian in origin and translated into several ancient languages. This 'wisdom' ignores national boundaries. It gives little attention to religious thought, being concerned rather with human solutions. It treats of the meaning of life, not philosophically in the Greek manner but by appeal to experience. It offers a recipe for successful living and is itself regarded as a cultural accomplishment.

The Israelites were acquainted with this wisdom. The highest praise the Bible can give to Solomon is that his wisdom excelled the wisdom of the sons of the East and the wisdom of Egypt, 1 K 5:10. Arab and Edomite sages were well known, Jr 49:7; Ba 3:22-23; Ob 8. Job and the three sages who were his friends lived in Edom. The author of Tobit knew the *Wisdom of Ahikar*, and Pr 22:17–23:11 very faithfully follows the Egyptian maxims of Amenemophis. Several Psalms are attributed to Heman and Ethan, Canaanite sages according to 1 K 5:11. Proverbs includes the Words of Agur, Pr 30:1-14, and the Words of Lemuel, Pr 31:1-9, both from Massa, a tribe in northern Arabia, Gn 25:14.

It is not surprising that the earliest wisdom works of Israel closely resemble those of neighbouring races; they are plants of the same soil. In the older sections of Proverbs we find little else than maxims born of human wisdom. With the exception of the latest books, Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom, this group of biblical literature does not touch on the great themes of the Old Testament: Law, Covenant, Election, Salvation. The sages of Israel show no concern for the past and future fortunes of their nation: like their pagan counterparts they are absorbed in the individual and his destiny. This, however, they view in a clearer light, that of the religion of Yahweh. Though the wisdom of Israel springs from the same root as, and thus resembles, the common wisdom of the East, it has an essential superiority, the effects of which become more marked as revelation progresses. The contrast once drawn between wisdom and folly now becomes an opposition between virtue and vice, between true religion and false. Real wisdom is found in the fear of God which is the very foundation of true religion. The wisdom of the East may be called humanistic; the wisdom of Israel is humanism spiritualised.

In particular, the wisdom of man is set in perspective with the wisdom of God. All wisdom comes from God since he alone is wise (Pr 21:30, an early text), with an excelling wisdom which man may read in the works of creation but never understand, Jb 28; 38-39; Si 1:1-10; 16:24f; 39:12f; 42:15–43:33. In the impressive prologue to Proverbs, Pr 1-9, divine Wisdom speaks as if she were a person, at once present in God from eternity, and acting with him in the work of creation, cf. especially Pr 8:22-31. In Jb 28, Wisdom is presented as distinct from God who alone knows where she lies hidden. In Si 24 Wisdom says of herself that she has come from the mouth of the Most High, that her home is in heaven whence God sends her to Israel. In Ws 7:22–8:1, she is an outpouring of the glory of the Almighty, an image of his perfection. Thus Wisdom as a divine attribute detaches herself from him, to assume a personality of her own. Striking though these expressions may be, it still does not seem that the personification is more than a poetic device: the monotheism of the Old Testament forbids it. On the other hand, the expressions provoke scrutiny and prepare the mind for a revelation of a plurality of Persons in God. St John's Logos, the Word, is at once in God and outside him, like divine Wisdom, and all these impressive texts find their deepest fulfilment in the ncarnate Word.

Since the question of the individual and his destiny was the chief preoccui pation of the sages, the problem of retribution was of primary importance for them. It was in their circles and by dint of their hard thinking that this doctrine developed. In the older sections of Proverbs, wisdom (which is to say, virtue) is sure to bring happiness, and folly (or vice) ruin. Thus God rewards the good and punishes the wicked. And such is still the position in the prologue of Proverbs, 3:33-35; 9:6 and 18. This is the doctrine, therefore, on which the teaching of wisdom is based, maintaining, as it does, that the world is ruled by a God who is just and wise. In its support it claims experience, despite the fact that experience often contradicts it. This contradiction is dramatically demonstrated in the Book of Job where the three friends defend the traditional thesis. But to the questionings of the good man in affliction there is no intellectually satisfactory answer as long as we hold the theory of adequate retribution on earth; to have unquestioning faith in God is all there is to do. The Book of Ecclesiastes, however differing in its approach, reaches the same conclusion; it, too, rejects the traditional thesis, maintaining that man has no right to call God to account or demand happiness as a due. Ecclesiasticus is of the same mind; true, he writes enthusiastically of the wise man's happiness, 14:20–15:10, but he is haunted by the thought of death and he knows that everything depends on that final hour: 'Yet it is a trifle for the Lord on the day a man dies to repay him as his conduct deserves', 11:26, cf. 1:13; 7:36; 28:6; 41:9. He has a presentiment of 'the four last things' but does not express it clearly. Shortly after him, Dn 12:2 makes a clear act of faith in retribution after death, which is here coupled with faith in the resurrection of the body, since the Hebrew mentality could not conceive the survival of a spirit separated from the flesh. Among the Jews of Alexandria greater progress was to be achieved by another, parallel course; once Platonic philosophy, with its doctrine of an immortal soul, has broken through the limitations of Hebrew thought, the Book of Wisdom can declare that 'God made man imperishable', 2:23, and that after death the faithful soul will enjoy unending happiness with

God while the wicked will receive their punishment, 3:1-12. The sages of Israel at last have the answer to their great problem.

The oldest and simplest form of wisdom literature is the *mashal*. And this is (in the plural) the title of the book we call 'Proverbs', though, strictly speaking, the *mashal* is a striking sentence that catches the imagination, a popular saying, or a maxim. The older collections in Proverbs consist only of short sentences. Later, the *mashal* develops into more elaborate forms, becoming parable, allegory, discourse, argument. This development, already perceptible in the short appended sections of Proverbs and still more so in the prologue, Pr 1-9, crystallises in the subsequent books; with Job or Wisdom the *mashal* becomes a great literary composition.

These short, easily memorised sentences were intended for oral instruction. Parents taught them to their sons, Pr 1:8; 4:1; 31:1; Si 3:1, and the name 'son' is retained when master teaches pupil, since the sages ran schools, Si 51:23,26; cf. Pr 7:1f; 9:1f. 'Wisdom' became a privilege of the educated and therefore lettered classes; sages and scribes appear side by side in Jr 8:8-9, and Si 38:24–39:11 puts the scribe above the manual worker because his profession enables him to acquire wisdom. Scribes were needed for secretarial duties at court and it was at court that the doctrines of wisdom first began to develop. All these characteristics find their precise parallel in the other centres of Oriental wisdom, whether in Egypt or in Mesopotamia. One of the Solomonic collections in Proverbs was made by 'the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah', Pr 25:1. But the sages were not merely collectors of old sayings, they were also authors. They ended by becoming a class apart, a kind of Academy of Moral Science, in which the learned wrote for the learned.

The school of sages is therefore very different from the circles that produced the priestly and the prophetic writings, and Jr 18:18 carefully distinguishes three classes: priests, sages, prophets. The sages had their own preoccupations: they were not particularly interested in the liturgy, nor do they seem to have been stirred by the misfortunes of their people or stimulated by the great hope that held the nation together; Jeremiah evidently had a poor opinion of them, Jr 8:9. But from the Exile onwards, these three separate streams begin to merge. The prologue of Proverbs assumes the manner of a preaching prophet; Ecclesiasticus, ch. 44-49, and Wisdom, 10-19, dwell at some length on the history of salvation; Ecclesiasticus shows his veneration for the priesthood, he is a devout worshipper, and finally he identifies wisdom with the Law, Si 24:23-24: here we have the alliance of scribe (or sage) with doctor of the Law that we find in gospel times.

At the beginning of this long search for wisdom stands the figure of Solomon. Here again we find oriental parallels: two Egyptian wisdom writings were thought to be the teachings given by a pharaoh to his son. From 1 K 5:9-14, cf. 3:9-12 and 28; 10:1-9, to Si 47:12-17, Solomon is held up to admiration as the greatest sage of Israel, and the two oldest and most important collections in Proverbs, ch. 10-22 and 25-28, are attributed to him (hence the title of the book, Pr 1:1). Ecclesiastes, Wisdom and the Song were similarly attributed to him. All this teaching, gradually dispensed to the chosen people, was preparing the revelation of Wisdom incarnate: 'here is someone greater than Solomon', Mt 12:42.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOB

The Book of Job is the literary masterpiece of the wisdom movement. It opens with a prose narrative. There was once a faithful servant of God whose name was Job, a rich and happy man. God allows Satan to test him to see if he will remain faithful despite misfortune. Job loses his possessions and his children, but is resigned to God's taking back what he had given. Next, his own person is attacked; his sickness is revolting and painful, but still he is resigned; his wife advises him to curse God but he rebukes her. At this point, three of his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, come to offer sympathy, ch. 1-2. After this introduction the long dialogue poem begins which constitutes the body of the book. It opens with a four-cornered conversation. In three series of speeches, ch. 3-14, 15-21, 22-27, Job and his friends oppose their different conceptions of divine justice; there is no very steady development of ideas, but rather an elaboration of principles laid down at the beginning. Eliphaz speaks with the moderation of advanced age but also with the severity learned of long experience of men; Zophar has the excitability of youth; Bildad is a prosy person of measured discourse. All three, however, defend the traditional thesis of retribution on earth: if Job suffers, it is because he has sinned; his own opinion may acquit him, but not God's. When Job protests his innocence they grow still more obstinate. Job confronts this theorising with his own sad experience and with the universal experience of injustice. He comes back to this repeatedly, and as repeatedly is brought up against the mystery of a God of justice who makes the good man suffer. Thus groping in the dark he makes no progress towards a solution. His tortured soul matches his suffering body: the body has its paroxysms and its times of ease, the soul its revolts and its surrenders. This alternating motion has two climaxes: its first in the act of faith of ch. 18, its second in the final protestation of innocence in ch. 31. A new character, Elihu, now appears: both Job and his friends are mistaken, he says, and then in a spate of words attempts to vindicate God's ways, ch. 32-37. Yahweh himself cuts him short and 'from the heart of the tempest' (the traditional setting of theophanies) gives Job his answer. Or rather there is no answer, since man is no judge of a God whose wisdom and power are infinite. Thereupon Job realises the folly of his words, 38:1–42:6. The book ends with an epilogue in prose: Yahweh rebukes the three friends, rewards Job with sons and daughters and doubles his possessions, 42:7-17.

The main character, Job, is a famous figure in ancient history, Ezk 14:14,20, believed to have lived in the patriarchal age on the borders of Arabia and Edom, a region which is well-known for its wise men, Jr 49:7; Ba 3:22-23, Ob 8, and from which his three friends also come. Job was traditionally regarded

as a model of virtue, cf. Ezk 14, whose loyalty to God remained unshaken despite grievous trials. Our author has used this old story as the framework of his book and, though the dialogue poem is in style and tone so different from the prose prologue and epilogue, it can at no time have existed without them.

The authenticity of certain passages in the dialogue has been questioned. The poem on wisdom, ch. 28, sounds odd on Job's lips since it anticipates God's answer to Job's questions, ch. 38-39. Nevertheless, it is a product, if not of the same author, at least of the author's school of thought, and is closely associated with the theme of the book; but why it has been inserted just here, where it is alien to the context, is difficult to say. It has been argued, too, that the speeches of Yahweh, ch. 38-41, did not belong to the original poem. The argument is, however, based on a misunderstanding of the book's meaning. It is true that ch. 38-41 ignore all the preceding debate as well as Job's own plight, by transferring the discussion from the human plane to the divine; but it is for this very reason that these speeches of Yahweh provide what, in the author's eyes, is the only solution to the problem, namely the mysterious nature of the ways of God. Other scholars believe that two passages of this section at least are not authentic: the description of the ostrich, 39:13-18, and the long descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan, 40:15–41:26; but the arguments are not decisive, nor is the matter of great importance. Finally, the arrangement of ch. 27-28 is not entirely satisfactory; the carelessness of copyists, or editorial readjustments, may be the explanation here.

The arguments against the authenticity of the speeches of Elihu, ch. 32-37, are weightier. Elihu appears abruptly and unannounced and Yahweh, who speaks next, ignores him completely. This is all the more strange in that Elihu anticipates the words of Yahweh, even giving the impression that his purpose is to supplement them. Moreover, he repeats to no purpose what the three friends have already said. Add to this that the vocabulary and style are different, and it begins to look as if these chapters have been added to the book and are from a different hand. But these chapters too are inspired and have their own contribution to make to the religious message of the book.

The author of Job is known to us only from his work: the book shows that he was without doubt an Israelite, brought up on the works of the prophets and the teachings of the sages. His home was most probably in Palestine but he must have visited other countries, particularly Egypt, or lived in them for a time. His date is conjectural. The prose narrative smacks of patriarchal times and made early writers think that the book was, like Genesis, the work of Moses. But this argument applies only to the prose framework of the book and, even here, traditional sources or literary imitation may explain the style. The book is later than Jeremiah and Ezekiel (with which it has certain expressions and ideas in common) and its language has a strong Aramaic flavour. We are therefore in post-exilic times when absorption in the destiny of the nation as a whole was giving way to an interest in the individual. The most likely, though still uncertain, date is the beginning of the 5th century, B.C.

The writer puts the case of the good man who suffers. This is a paradox for the conservative view then prevalent that a man's actions are rewarded or punished here on earth. This iron rule is plainly enunciated, so far as a nation as a whole is concerned, by the classic texts of Dt 28 and Lv 26; its working-out

in history is demonstrated by the Books of Judges and Kings, and the same idea underlies the preaching of the prophets. With Ezekiel (ch. 18) the conception of individual responsibility finds clear expression, though it was already latent and occasionally expressed, Dt 24:16; Jr 31:29-30; 2 K 14:6. But even Ezekiel has only earthly retribution in mind and is therefore brought sharply up against harsh reality. Where a community is concerned, it may well be that the faults of the society as a society prevail, and that good men are therefore punished with the wicked. But if it is the rule that the individual is to be recompensed for his own actions, how is it that the good man suffers? Yet this is the fact, and Job is an example. The reader is indeed informed in the prologue that Job's distress is not God's doing but Satan's and that it is a test of his fidelity. But Job does not know this, nor do his friends. These offer the old solutions: the happiness of the wicked is short-lived, cf. Ps 37 and 73; the sufferings of the good man test his fortitude, cf. Gn 22:12, or possibly punish faults committed unwittingly or out of weakness, cf. Ps 19:12; 25:7. The three friends propose these explanations while they still think Job more or less innocent. But the cries that pain wrings from him and his impatience with God persuade them that his guilt goes deep: only grave sin can explain distress like this. The speeches of Elihu take up and develop these solutions: the suffering of those whom men judge virtuous is an atonement for sins of omission or of thoughtlessness, or possibly (the most original contribution of this section) a safeguard against still more serious faults and a cure for pride. But like the three friends, though not as harshly, Elihu holds that sin and suffering are connected, one with the other.

Job protests against this rigorous theory of cause and effect with the vigour of conscious innocence. He does not deny the principle of earthly recompense, indeed he lives in hope of it, and God gives it in the end (cf. the epilogue). But the recompense is, here and now, withheld; this is Job's problem and he seeks in vain for the meaning of it all. In his anguish he reaches out for God; God eludes him, but Job still trusts to his goodness. When God does appear it is to tell how inscrutable are his person and his designs, and Job falls to silence. This is the book's lesson: faith must remain even when understanding fails. At this stage of divine revelation, the author could go no further. More light cannot be thrown on the mystery of suffering innocence until God opens up the prospect of a future life in which recompense is made, and until man learns the worth of suffering when it is united with the sufferings of Christ. Two texts of St Paul give Job his answer: 'The sufferings of this present time cannot be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us', Rm 8:18, and: 'In my flesh I make up what is lacking in Christ's trials, for the sake of his Body, which is the Church', Col 1:24.

THE BOOK OF JOB

I. PROLOGUE[a]

Satan tests Job

Tb 12:13

1 There was once a man in the land of Uz[b] called Job: a sound and honest
2 man who feared God and shunned evil. •Seven sons and three daughters
3 were born to him. •And he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-donkeys, and many servants besides. This man was indeed a man of mark among all the people of the East.[c]
4 It was the custom of his sons to hold banquets in each other's houses, one after the other, and to send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.
5 Once each series of banquets was over, Job would send for them to come and be purified,[d] and at dawn on the following day he would offer a holocaust for each of them. 'Perhaps' Job would say 'my sons have sinned and in their hearts affronted[e] God.' So that was what he used to do after each series.

Ezk 14:14+ 1 Th 5:22

Gn 12:16; 13:2; 26:14

1 S 16:5

6 One day the Sons of God[f] came to attend on Yahweh, and among them was
7 Satan.[g] •So Yahweh said to Satan, 'Where have you been?' 'Round the earth,'
8 he answered 'roaming about.' •So Yahweh asked him, 'Did you notice my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth: a sound and honest man
9 who fears God and shuns evil.' •'Yes,' Satan said 'but Job is not God-fearing
10 for nothing, is he? •Have you not put a wall round him and his house and all his domain? You have blessed all he undertakes, and his flocks throng the
11 countryside. •But stretch out your hand and lay a finger on his possessions:
12 I warrant you, he will curse you to your face.' •'Very well,' Yahweh said to Satan 'all he has is in your power. But keep your hands off his person.' So Satan left the presence of Yahweh.

Gn 6:1+ 1 K 22:19-23

Gn 3:1+ Zc 3:1-2

1 Th 5:22

29:4

13 On the day when Job's sons and daughters were at their meal and drinking
14 wine at their eldest brother's house, •a messenger came to Job. 'Your oxen'
15 he said 'were at the plough, with the donkeys grazing at their side, •when the Sabaeans[h] swept down on them and carried them off. Your servants they put
16 to the sword: I alone escaped to tell you.' •He had not finished speaking when another messenger arrived. 'The fire of God'[i] he said 'has fallen from the heavens and burnt up all your sheep, and your shepherds too: I alone escaped

1 K 10:1+

20:26

1 a. In this prose narrative the author has preserved the flavour of a folk tale.

b. Probably in the S. of Edom. Cf. Gn 36:28; Lm 4:21.

c. The phrase is used of all who lived E. of Palestine, more particularly in Edomite or Arab territory, cf. Nb 24:21+.

d. Lit. 'sanctified'. The reference is to the ritual removal of impediments to sacred functions, cf. Lv 11: 1+.

e. Hebr. 'blessed'. So also in 1:11 and 2:5,9. The original word 'curse, blaspheme' has been replaced in Hebr. from motives of reverence.

f. Cf. 38:7; Gn 6:1-4; Ps 29:1; 82:1; 89:6. These are superhuman creatures who make up God's court and council. They are identified with the angels (LXX translates 'the angels of God').

g. I.e. 'the Adversary'. A legal term, apparently, cf. Ps 109:6, but becoming increasingly common for an evil being, Zc 3:1-2, and eventually a proper name, 1 Ch 21:1, of the power of evil, cf. Lk 10:18. In Rv 12:9; 20:2 it is synonymous with the Dragon, the Devil, the Serpent, cf. Gn 3:1+, alternative names or personifications of the evil spirit. Here Satan, like the serpent of Gn 3, tempts man to sin.

h. Sabaeans and Chaldaeans (v. 17) here mean predatory nomads.

i. Lightning. Cf. 2 K 1:10,12,14.

to tell you.' •He had not finished speaking when another messenger arrived. 17
'The Chaldaeans,' he said 'three bands of them, have raided your camels and
made off with them. Your servants they put to the sword: I alone escaped to
tell you.' •He had not finished speaking when another messenger arrived. 18
'Your sons and daughters' he said 'were at their meal and drinking wine at
their eldest brother's house, •when suddenly from the wilderness a gale sprang 19
up, and it battered all four corners of the house which fell in on the young
people. They are dead: I alone escaped to tell you.'

Job rose and tore his gown and shaved his head.[j] Then falling to the ground 20
he worshipped •and said: 21

Gn 2:7; 3:19
Rt 1:21
1 S 3:18
Ps 139:15
Qo 5:14,18
Si 11:14; 40:1
1 Tm 6:7

'Naked I came from my mother's womb,
naked I shall return.[k]
Yahweh gave, Yahweh has taken back.
Blessed be the name of Yahweh!'

In all this misfortune Job committed no sin nor offered any insult to God. 22

1:6+
1 K 22:19

2 Once again the Sons of God came to attend on Yahweh, and among them was 1
Satan. •So Yahweh said to Satan, 'Where have you been?' 'Round the earth,' 2
he answered 'roaming about.' •So Yahweh asked him, 'Did you notice my 3
1 Th 5:22 servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth: a sound and honest man who
fears God and shuns evil. His life continues blameless as ever; in vain you
provoked me to ruin him.' •'Skin for skin!'[a] Satan replied. 'A man will give 4
away all he has to save his life. •But stretch out your hand and lay a finger on 5
his bone and flesh; I warrant you, he will curse you to your face.' •'Very well,' 6
Yahweh said to Satan 'he is in your power. But spare his life.' •So Satan left 7
the presence of Yahweh.

He struck Job down with malignant ulcers from the sole of his foot to the
top of his head. •Job took a piece of pot to scrape himself, and went and sat 8
in the ashpit. •Then his wife said to him, 'Do you now still mean to persist 9
2 K 6:33
Tb 2:14+ in your blamelessness? Curse God, and die.' •'That is how foolish women 10
talk' Job replied. 'If we take happiness from God's hand, must we not take
sorrow too?' And in all this misfortune Job uttered no sinful word.

The news of all the disasters that had fallen on Job came to the ears of three of 11
Ba 3:23 his friends. Each of them set out from home—Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah
and Zophar of Naamath[b]—and by common consent they decided to go and offer
Is 52:14 him sympathy and consolation. •Looking at him from a distance, they could 12
not recognise him;[c] they wept aloud and tore their garments and threw dust over
their heads.[d] •They sat there on the ground beside him for seven days and seven 13
nights. To Job they spoke never a word, so sad a sight he made.

II. THE DIALOGUE

A. FIRST SERIES OF SPEECHES

Jr 20:14-18 **Job curses the day of his birth**

3 In the end it was Job who broke the silence and cursed the day of his birth. 1
This is what he said: 2

Si 23:14
Mt 26:24

May the day perish when I was born, 3
and the night that told of a boy conceived.[a]
May that day be darkness, 4
may God on high have no thought for it,
may no light shine on it.
May murk and deep shadow[b] claim it for their own, 5
clouds hang over it,
eclipse swoop down on it.

6 Yes,[c] let the dark lay hold of it,
to the days of the year let it not be joined,[c]
into the reckoning of months not find its way.
7 May that night be dismal,
no shout of joy come near it.
8 Let them curse it who curse the day,[d]
who are prepared to rouse Leviathan.[e]
9 Dark be the stars of its morning,
let it wait in vain for light
and never see the opening eyes of dawn.
10 Since it would not shut the doors of the womb on me
to hide sorrow from my eyes.

11 Why did I not die new-born, 10:18-19 Qo 4:2; 6:3
not perish as I left the womb?
12 Why were there two knees to receive me,
two breasts for me to suck?
13 Had there not been, I should now be lying in peace,
wrapped in a restful slumber,
14 with the kings and high viziers of earth Is 14:9-11 Ezk 32:18-32
who build themselves vast vaults,[f]
15 or with princes who have gold and to spare
and houses crammed with silver.[g]
16 Or put away like a still-born child that never came to be,[h] Ps 58:8 Qo 6:3
like unborn babes that never see the light.
17 Down there,[i] bad men bustle no more,
there the weary rest.
18 Prisoners, all left in peace,
hear no more the shouts of the gaoler.
19 Down there, high and low are all one,
and the slave is free of his master.

20 Why give light to a man of grief? Sl 41:2
Why give life to those bitter of heart,
21 who long for a death that never comes, ✗ Rv 9:6
and hunt for it more than for a buried treasure?
22 They would be glad to see the grave-mound[j]
and shout with joy if they reached the tomb.

j. Mourning ritual.

k. Apparently likening mother earth to the womb.

2 a. Probably a proverb drawn from customs of barter. It could be expanded as 'a skin is fair exchange for a skin', i.e. a man only gives himself away when his own person is affected.

b. The three towns are situated in Idumaean and Arab territory. Edom and 'the East', cf. 1:3+, were regarded by the Israelites as the homeland of the sages 1 K 5:10-11; 10:1-3; Pr 30:1; 31:1; Jr 49:7; Ob 8; Ba 3:22-23.

c. He was so disfigured (like the suffering servant in Is 52:14).

d. Penitential gesture and common sign of mourning. The three friends consider Job as good as dead. The text adds 'towards heaven', possibly a gloss, which turns the act into a gesture of indignation, cf. Ac 22:23, either calling down divine vengeance or sheltering oneself from it.

3 a. Two parallel curses: one of the day of birth, the other of the night of conception.

b. Hebr. 'shadow of death'. 'eclipse' corr.; 'like the bitterness of the day' Hebr.

c. 'Yes' (lit. 'behold') taken from v. 7; 'that night' Hebr. 'be joined' versions; 'rejoice' Hebr.

d. Either the enemies of light, those who work in the dark, cf. 24:13f; 38:15; or those who, like Job, curse the day they were born; or, more probably, sorcerers or magicians whose curses and spells were believed capable of making lucky days unlucky or even of producing eclipses, when 'Leviathan' temporarily swallowed the sun.

e. Leviathan (also called the Dragon or Fleeing Serpent), cf. 40:25+; Is 27:1; 51:9; Am 9:3; Ps 74:14; 104:26, was a monster of primeval chaos, cf. 7:12+; there was a common superstitious fear that a powerful curse against the present order might stir him to action. The Dragon of Rv 12:3, who embodies Evil's hostility to God, has certain characteristics in common with this serpent of chaos.

f. The Hebr. word means ruins, deserted spots, but the context suggests tombs (often built in deserted places); a possible translation 'who build (houses) in solitary places'.

g. Apparently in their tombs, like the kings of Ur or the pharaohs.

h. 'that never came to be' corr.

i. In Sheol, cf. Nb 16:33+.

j. 'grave-mound' corr.

Pr 4:18-19 Is 26:7 Lm 3:7
Why make this gift of light to a man who does not see his way, whom God baulks on every side? 23

Ps 42:4
My only food is sighs, and my groans pour out like water. 24

Pr 10:24
Whatever I fear comes true, whatever I dread befalls me. 25

For me, there is no calm, no peace; my torments banish rest. 26

Confidence in God[a]

4 Eliphaz of Teman spoke next. He said: 1

If one should address a word to you,[b] will you endure it? Yet who can keep silent? 2

Many another, once, you schooled, giving strength to feeble hands; 3

your words set right whoever wavered, and strengthened every failing knee. 4

Pr 24:10
And now your turn has come, and you lose patience too; now it touches you, and you are overwhelmed. 5

Does not your piety give you confidence, your blameless life not give you hope? 6

Ps 37:25 Pr 12:21 Si 2:10 2 P 2:9
Can you recall a guiltless man that perished, or have you ever seen good men brought to nothing? 7

Ps 7:16 Pr 22:8 Si 7:3 Ho 8:7
I speak of what I know: those who plough iniquity and sow the seeds of grief reap a harvest of the same kind. 8

Ws 11:20
A breath from God will bring them to destruction, a blast of his anger will wipe them out. 9

Ps 17:12; 22: 14,22 Pr 28:15
The lion's roar, his savage growls, like the fangs of lion cubs are broken off. 10

For lack of prey the lion dies at last, and the whelps of his lioness are scattered. 11

32:13; 33:15
Now, I have had a secret revelation,[c] a whisper has come to my ears. 12

Ws 18:17
At the hour when dreams master the mind, and slumber lies heavy on man, 13

Ps 119:120
a shiver of horror ran through me, and my bones quaked[d] with fear. 14

A breath slid over my face, the hairs of my body bristled. 15

Someone stood there—I could not see his face, but the form remained before me. 16

1 K 19:12-13 Ps 143:2
Silence—and then I heard a Voice,

Pr 20:9
'Was ever any man found blameless in the presence of God, 17

14:4+; 15:14; 25: 4-6
or faultless in the presence of his Maker?

In his own servants, God puts no trust, and even with his angels he has fault to find.[e] 18

15:15-16 Ws 9:15
What then of those who live in houses of clay, who are founded on dust? 19

They are crushed as easily as a moth,

Is 38:12
one day is enough to grind them to powder. 20

They vanish for ever, and no one remembers them.[f]

Their tent-peg[g] is snatched from them, and they die for lack of wisdom.'[h] 21

Ps 89:5
5 Make your appeal then. Will you find an answer? 1

To which of the Holy Ones[a] will you turn?

2 Resentment kills the senseless,
and anger brings death to the fool.
3 I myself have seen how such a one took root,
until a swift curse fell on his House.[b]
4 His sons at a single blow lose their prop and stay,
ruined at the gate[c] with no one to defend them; 29:7 Ps 109:10; 127:5
5 their harvest goes to feed the hungry,
God snatches it from their mouths,[d]
and thirsty men hanker after their goods.
6 Grief does not grow out of the earth,
nor sorrow spring from the ground.
7 It is man who breeds trouble for himself 15:35
as surely as eagles fly to the height.[e] Gn 3:17-19

8 If I were as you are, I should appeal to God,
and lay my case before him.
9 His works are great, past all reckoning, =9:10;37:5 Ps 147:8 Si 43:32
marvels, beyond all counting.
10 He sends down rain to the earth,
pours down water on the fields.
11 If his will is to rescue the downcast, 1 S 2:7-8 Ps 75:7-8 Lk 1:52
or raise the afflicted to the heights of joy,
12 he wrecks the plans of the artful, 12:23-25
and brings to naught their intrigues.
13 He traps the crafty in the snare of their own shrewdness, ✗1 Co 3:19
turns subtle counsellors to idiots.
14 In daylight they come against darkness, Jn 12:35
and grope their way as if noon were night.
15 He rescues the bankrupt[f] from their jaws,
and the poor man from the hands of the violent.
16 Thus the wretched can hope again Ps 107:41-42
and wickedness must shut its mouth.

17 Happy indeed the man whom God corrects! 17:12;22:1 Gn 17-1+ Ps 94:12 Pr 3:11-12+
Then do not refuse this lesson[g] from Shaddai.[h]
18 For he who wounds is he who soothes the sore, Dt 32:39 Ps 147:3 Ho 6:1
and the hand that hurts is the hand that heals.
19 Six times he will deliver you from sorrow, Pr 3:26 Si 33:1
and the seventh,[i] evil shall not touch you.
20 In time of famine, he will save you from death, Jr 39:18
and in wartime from the stroke of the sword. Ps 33:19

4 a. Eliphaz expounds the traditional doctrine of retribution in a most rigid form, a doctrine which is true within its limits. The author, however, suspects that it does not cover all cases and seems to have allowed his own opinions to influence the exposition.

b. 'address' corr.; 'venture' Hebr.

c. A message from heaven in sleep, possibly communicated by an angel; cf. Gn 2:21; 15:12. The teaching of the Sages, therefore, is not merely human knowledge handed down; divine revelation plays its part, giving the doctrine a 'charismatic' quality.

d. 'quaked' corr.

e. 'angels' and 'servants of God' are the same. If these, so close to God, are essentially imperfect, how much more so carnal, mortal man.

f. 'no one remembers them' corr.; 'without any regarding it' Hebr.

g. 'tent-peg' corr.; 'their cord' Hebr.

h. Either premature death which man's folly brings on himself, or else death as the common fate of human nature, which man with his limited knowledge cannot ward off.

5 a. The angels, cf. 15:15 (in the light of 4:18); Zc 14:5; Dn 4:10,14,20; 8:13. Their intercession is mentioned again in 33:23-24, cf. Zc 1:12; Tb 12:12.

b. The text of vv. 3-4 is uncertain and the translation conj.

c. The main gate of the town, common meeting place where justice was dispensed.

d. 'from their mouths' corr., lit. 'from their teeth'.

e. 'breeds' corr.; 'is born' Hebr. 'eagles' following versions; Hebr. 'the sons of Resheph' (god of thunder and lightning).

f. Lit. 'the despoiled' corr.

g. Job's misfortunes are therefore disciplinary, a painful but salutary lesson. Elihu says the same, 33:19f.

h. Name for God in the patriarchal period, cf. Gn 17:1+; a deliberate archaism in Jb.

i. Eliphaz uses the style of the 'numerical proverbs', cf. Pr 6:16-19; 30:15f.

Ps 12:2-4
Ps 31:21; 91
You shall be safe from the lash of the tongue, 21
and see the approach of the brigand[j] without fear.
You shall laugh at drought and frost,[k] 22
and have no fear of the beasts of the earth.
You shall have a pact with the stones of the field,[l] 23
2 K 3:19,25
Is 5:2; 11:6-8
Ho 2:20
and live in amity with wild beasts.
You shall find your tent secure, 24
and your sheepfold untouched when you come.
Dt 28:4,11
You shall see your descendants multiply, 25
your offspring grow like the grass in the fields.
Ps 91:16
In ripe age you shall go to the grave, 26
like a wheatsheaf stacked in due season.
All this, we have observed: it is true. 27
Heed it, and do so to your profit.

Only the sufferer knows his own grief

6 Job spoke next. He said: 1

If only my misery could be weighed, 2
and all my ills be put on the scales!
21:4
But they outweigh the sands of the seas: 3
what wonder then if my words are wild?
7:20; 16:13
Ps 38:3
The arrows of Shaddai stick fast in me, 4
my spirit absorbs their poison,
Ps 88:16
God's terrors stand against me in array.
Does a wild donkey bray when it finds soft grass, 5
or an ox ever low when its fodder is in reach?
Ps 107:18
Can tasteless food be taken without salt, 6
or is there flavour in the white of an egg?[a]
The very dishes which I cannot stomach, 7
these are my diet in my sickness.[b]
Oh may my prayer find fulfilment, 8
may God grant me my hope!
7:15
Nb 11:15
1 K 19:4
May it please God to crush me, 9
to give his hand free play and do away with me!
This thought, at least, would give me comfort 10
(a thrill of joy in unrelenting pain),
Lv 17:1+
Is 6:3+
that I had not denied the Holy One's decrees.[c]
But have I the strength to go on waiting? 11
What use is life to me, when doomed to certain death?
Is mine the strength of stone, 12
or is my flesh bronze?
Can any power be found within myself, 13
has not all help deserted me?
29:12-13;
31:16-20
Ps 69:20b
1 Jn 3:17
Grudge[d] pity to a neighbour, 14
and you forsake the fear of Shaddai.[e]

My brothers have been fickle as a torrent, 15
Jr 15:18
as the course of a seasonal stream.
Ps 147:17
Ice is the food of their dark waters, 16
they swell with the thawing of the snow;[f]
but in the hot season they dry up, 17
with summer's heat they vanish.
Caravans leave the trail to find them, 18
go deep into desert, and are lost.
Is 21:14+
The caravans of Tema look to them, 19
1 K 10:1+
and on them Sheba's convoys build their hopes.

20 Their trust[g] proves vain,
they reach them only to be thwarted.

21 So, at this time, do you behave to me:[h]
one sight of me, and then you flee in fright.
22 Have I said to you, 'Give me this or that, Jr 15:10
bribe someone for me at your own cost,
23 snatch me from the clutches of an enemy,
or ransom me from a tyrant's hand'?
24 Put me right, and I will say no more;
show me where I have been at fault.[i]
25 Fair comment can be borne without resentment,
but what is the basis for your strictures?
26 Do you think mere words deserve censure, 21:4
desperate speech that the wind blows away?
27 Soon you will be casting lots for an orphan,
and selling your friend at bargain prices!
28 Come, I beg you, look at me:
as man to man, I will not lie.
29 Relent, and grant me justice;
relent, my case is not yet tried.
30 Is falsehood to be found on my lips?
Cannot my palate tell the taste of misfortune?

1 7 Is not man's life on earth nothing more than pressed service,[a] 14:14
his time no better than hired drudgery?[b]
2 Like the slave, sighing for the shade, Si 40:1f
or the workman with no thought but his wages, Qo 2:23
3 months of delusion I have assigned to me, Si 30:17
nothing for my own but nights of grief.
4 Lying in bed I wonder, 'When will it be day?' Dt 28:61
Risen I think, 'How slowly evening comes!'[c] Si 40:5
Restlessly I fret till twilight falls.
5 Vermin cover my flesh, and loathsome scabs;
my skin is cracked and oozes pus.[d]
6 Swifter than a weaver's shuttle my days have passed, Ps 39:5
and vanished, leaving no hope behind. Is 38:12
7 Remember[e] that my life is but a breath, 10:20
and that my eyes will never again see joy. Ps 78:39; 89:47
8 The eye that once saw me will look on me no more,
your eyes will turn my way, and I shall not be there.
9 As a cloud dissolves and is gone, Ws 2:1,4
so he who goes down to Sheol never ascends again.[f]

j. 'brigand' corr.
k. 'drought and frost' corr.
l. In Palestine the soil must be cleared of these. Cf. Is 5:2; 2 K 3:19,25.

6 a. 'white of an egg' following Targ.
b. Line corr. Job's repugnance for his wretched food (both real and symbolic) signifies his disgust with life itself. To his well-nourished friends this is incomprehensible.
c. By rebellion against Providence. 'The Holy One' here means Yahweh, cf. Is 6:3+; Hg 3:3.
d. 'Grudge' corr.
e. Kindness to others is the sign of sound religion.
f. 'waters' and 'they swell', corr.

g. 'Their trust' Syr., Targ. 'them' corr.
h. 'So' and 'me', corr.
i. Sinning either inadvertently or through ignorance, cf. Lv 4; Nb 15:22-29; Ps 19:12.

7 a. Referring to military service, cf. 14:14, which involves both fighting and forced labour. Greek translates 'trial'; Vulg. *militia*, warfare or war service.
b. The hired labourer, paid by the day, Dt 24:15; Mt 20:8, works for another from morning to night, as the slave does, Lv 25:39-40.
c. 'When will it be day?' Greek; 'When shall I arise?' Hebr. 'Risen' following Greek. 'How slowly evening comes!' corr.
d. Lit. 'melts' corr.
e. Accepting the human lot of suffering and death, Job breaks momentarily into prayer asking for a few moments of peace before he dies.
f. The author seems to accept the common view here and in 10:21; 14:7-22; 16:22, cf. 2 S 12:23; Ps 88:10, etc., that return from Sheol is impossible. Cf. Nb 16:33+.

Ps 103:16 He never comes home again, 10
and his house knows him no more.
10:1 No wonder then if I cannot keep silence; 11
in the anguish of my spirit I must speak,
lament in the bitterness of my soul.

3:8+; 9:13; 38:11 Si 43:23 Am 9:3 Rv 21:1 Am I the Sea, or the Wild Sea Beast,[g] 12
that you should keep me under watch and guard?
If I say, 'My bed will comfort me, 13
my couch will soothe my pain',
you frighten me with dreams 14
and terrify me with visions.
6:9 Tb 3:6 Strangling[h] I would welcome rather, 15
and death itself, than these my sufferings.[i]
Ps 39:5; 144:4 I waste away, my life is not unending; 16
leave me then, for my days are but a breath.
Ps 8:5; 144:3 What is man[j] that you should make so much of him, 17
subjecting him to your scrutiny,
Ps 17:3; 73: 14; 139 that morning after morning you should examine him 18
and at every instant test him?
9:18 Ps 39:13 Will you never take your eyes off me 19
long enough for me to swallow my spittle?
6:4; 35:3 Suppose I have sinned, what have I done to you,[k] 20
you tireless watcher of mankind?
Why do you choose me as your target?
Why should I be a burden to you?[l]
Can you not tolerate my sin, 21
nor overlook my fault?
It will not be long before I lie in earth;
then you will look for me, but I shall be no more.[m]

The unswerving course of God's justice

8 Bildad of Shuah spoke next. He said: 1

Is there no end to these words of yours, 2
to your long-winded blustering?
34:10-12 Dt 32:4 Can God deflect the course of right 3
or Shaddai falsify justice?
If your sons sinned against him, 4
1:19 they have paid for their sins;
so you too, if so pure and honest, 6a
must now seek God, plead with Shaddai.[a] 5
Without delay he will restore his favour to you,[b] 6b
will see that the good man's house is rebuilt.
Your former state will seem to you as nothing 7
beside your new prosperity.

15:18 Dt 4:32; 32:7 Ps 78:4 Si 8:9 Question the generation that has passed, 8
meditate on the experience of its fathers.
We sons of yesterday know nothing; 9
Qo 6:12 Ws 2:5 our life on earth passes like a shadow.
But they will teach you, they will tell you, 10
and these are the words they will speak from the heart,[c]
Si 40:16 'Does papyrus flourish, except in marshes? 11
Without water, can the rushes grow?
Pluck them even at their freshest: 12
fastest of all plants they wither.

13 Such is the fate of all who forget God; Ps 37:1-2 Pr 10:28
so perishes the hope of the godless man.
14 His trust is only a thread, 27:18
his assurance a spider's web.
15 Let him lean on his house; it will not stand firm; Mt 7:26-27
cling to it, it will not hold.
16 Like some lush plant in the sunlight,
he sprouted his early shoots over the garden;
17 but his roots were twined in a heap of stones,
he drew his life[d] among the rocks.
18 Snatch him from his bed,
and it denies it ever saw him.
19 Now he rots[e] on the roadside,
and from that soil spring others.
20 Believe me, God neither spurns a stainless man,
nor lends his aid to the evil.
21 Once again[f] your cheeks will fill with laughter,
from your lips will break a cry of joy.
22 Your enemies shall be covered with shame, Ps 6:11 Pr 14:11
and the tent of the wicked folk shall vanish.'

God's justice is above all law

1 9 Job spoke next. He said:
2 Indeed, I know it is as you say: 38-42 Ps 143:1-2
how can man be in the right against God?
3 If any were so rash as to challenge him for reasons,
one in a thousand would be more than they could answer.
4 His heart is wise, and his strength is great:
who then can successfully defy him?
5 He moves the mountains, though they do not know it; Ps 46:2 Is 13:10,13
he throws them down when he is angry. Jl 2:10; 4: 15-16
6 He shakes the earth, and moves it from its place,
making all its pillars tremble.[a]
7 The sun, at his command, forbears to rise, Ps 19:5-7
and on the stars he sets a seal.[b] Ba 3:34-35
8 He and no other stretched out the skies,[c] Ps 104:2 Is 40:22; 42:5
and trampled the Sea's tall waves.
9 The Bear, Orion too, are of his making, 36:31-32
the Pleiades and the Mansions of the South.[d] Am 5:8

g. In the Babylonian cosmogonies Tiamat (the Sea) co-operated in the birth of the gods and was then conquered and subdued by one of their number. The imagination of the people, or of poets, seized on this story: Yahweh became the conqueror who then set Chaos in order and ever after held the Sea and its monsters in control. Cf. 3:8+; 9:13; 26:12; 40:25f; Ps 65:7; 74:13-14; 77:16; 89:9-10; 93:3-4; 104:7,26; 107:29; 148:7; Is 27:1; 51:9.

h. Unlike the Egyptian when 'tired of life', Job does not contemplate suicide. Apart from the case of soldiers preferring death to dishonour, Jg 9:54; 1 S 31:4, the O.T. has only one suicide, that of Ahithophel, 2 S 17:23+.

i. 'Sufferings' corr.

j. Bitterly ironical, the author seems to echo phrases from Ps 8. God's 'care' for man here becomes relentless scrutiny. The author of Ps 139 finds in this a cause for trust, but Job sees hostility in it. Reacting against a legalistic view of religion and of sin, he gropes for a God of mercy, v. 21.

k. Sin cannot harm God.

l. 'to you' Greek; 'to myself' Hebr.

m. These last unexpected words reintroduce the idea of God inscrutably observing man.

8 a. Corr.; Hebr. 'If you seek God and plead with Shaddai'.

b. Corr.; Hebr. 'he will rouse himself for you'.

c. Ancestral tradition is the foundation of the wisdom teaching, and maintains that the punishment of the wicked is as certain and observable as the laws of nature, vv. 11f.

d. 'he drew his life' Greek.

e. Translation conj.

f. 'Once again' corr.

9 a. The earth rests on 'pillars' which God 'shakes' in time of earthquake, 38:6; Ps 75:3; 104:5; 1 S 2:8. Vv. 5-7 recall current eschatological imagery, cf. Am 8:9+.

b. Hiding them and preventing their shining. Ba 3:34 speaks of the opposite process.

c. The author goes back from present phenomena to the days of creation when God 'trampled the waves of the sea', i.e. (cf. Am 4:13; Mi 1:3) established his control over it, cf. 7:12+.

d. Greek 'he who made the Pleiades and Venus and Arcturus and the Mansions of the South'; Vulg.

=5:9 His works are great, beyond all reckoning, 10
his marvels, past all counting.
23:8-9 Were he to pass me, I should not see him, 11
nor detect his stealthy movement.
Ws 12:12 Dn 4:32 Were he to snatch a prize, who could prevent him, 12
or dare to say, 'What are you doing?'
26:12 God never goes back on his anger, 13
Ps 89:10 Rahab's minions still lie at his feet.[e]
9:32; 13:13f, 18f; 23:1-7 How dare I plead my cause,[f] then, 14
or choose arguments against him?[g]
34:6 Suppose I am in the right, what use is my defence? 15
For he whom I must sue is judge as well.
Rm 9:20-21 If he deigned to answer my citation, 16
could I be sure that he would listen to my voice?
He, who for one hair[h] crushes me, 17
who, for no reason, wounds and wounds again,
7:19 leaving me not a moment to draw breath, 18
with so much bitterness he fills me.
Ws 12:12 Jr 49:19 Shall I try force? Look how strong he is! 19
Or go to court? But who will summon him?[i]
Though I think myself right, his[j] mouth may condemn me; 20
though I count myself innocent, it may declare me a hypocrite.
But am I innocent after all? Not even I know that, 21
and, as for my life, I find it hateful.
It is all one, and this I dare to say: 22
Qo 9:2-3 innocent and guilty, he destroys all alike.
When a sudden deadly scourge descends, 23
he laughs at the plight of the innocent.
When a country falls into a tyrant's hand, 24
it is he who blindfolds the judges.
12:9 Or if not he, who else?[k]
Ws 5:9 My days run hurrying by, 25
seeing no happiness in their flight,
skimming along like a reed canoe, 26
or the flight of an eagle after its prey.
If I resolve to stifle my moans, 27
change countenance, and wear a smiling face,
fear comes over me, at the thought of all I suffer, 28
for such, I know, is not your treatment of the innocent.[l]
And if I am guilty, 29
why should I put myself to useless trouble?
14:4,17 Is 1:18 No use to wash myself with snow, 30
Ps 51:9 Jr 2:22 or bleach my hands pure white;[m]
for you will plunge me in dung[n] 31
until my very clothes recoil from me.
9:14 Nb 23:19 Qo 6:10 Yes, I am man, and he is not; and so no argument, 32
no suit between the two of us is possible.
There is no arbiter between us, 33
to lay his hand on both,
to stay his rod from me, 34
13:21 or keep away his daunting terrors.
Nonetheless, I shall speak, not fearing him: 35
7:11,15; 13:13 I do not see myself like that at all.[o]

10 Since I have lost all taste for life, 1
I will give free rein to my complaints;

I shall let my embittered soul speak out.
2 I shall say to God, 'Do not condemn me,
but tell me the reason for your assault.
3 Is it right for you to injure me,
cheapening the work of your own hands
and abetting the schemes of the wicked?
4 Have you got human eyes, 1 S 16:7 Jr 11:20+
do you see as mankind sees?
5 Is your life mortal like man's,
do your years pass as men's days pass?
6 You, who inquire into my faults 14:16 Lm 3:10
and investigate my sins,
7 you know very well that I am innocent, 33:9
and that no one can rescue me from your hand.[a]
8 Your own hands shaped me, modelled me; 33:6 Gn 2:7
and would you now have second thoughts,[b] and destroy me? Dt 32:39 Ws 16:15
9 You modelled me, remember, as clay is modelled, 33:6
and would you reduce me now to dust?
10 Did you not pour me out like milk, Ps 139:13,15 Ws 7:2
and curdle me then like cheese;[c]
11 clothe me with skin and flesh,
and weave me of bone and sinew?
12 And then you endowed me with life, Gn 2:7
watched each breath of mine with tender care.
13 Yet, after all, you were dissembling;[d]
biding your time, I know,
14 to mark if I should sin
and to let no fault of mine go uncensured.
15 Woe to me, if I am guilty;
if I am innocent, I dare not lift my head,
so wholly abject, so drunk with pain[e] am I.
16 And if I make a stand,[f] like a lion you hunt me down, Is 38:13
adding to the tale of your triumphs.
17 You attack, and attack me again,
with stroke on stroke of your fury,
relentlessly your fresh troops assail me.[g]
18 'Why did you bring me out of the womb? 3:11-16 Qo 4:2

'Arcturus and Orion and the Hyades and the Mansions of the South'. That these are the constellations referred to is not certain.

e. Rahab here is apparently another name for primeval Chaos or else one of its monsters, cf. 7:12+.

f. Lit. 'answer him'. The verb frequently has a forensic sense.

g. God being at once judge and interested party, Job cannot conduct the case by human rules of procedure. (The longing for self-justification by form of law recurs in other passages of the dialogue.) Job ends by doubting his own innocence, vv. 20-21. He fastens on the apparent caprice, v. 24, rather than the infinite wisdom (defended by Zophar, ch. 11) of the judgements of God.

h. 'for one hair' Syr., Targ.; 'in a tempest' Hebr.

i. Lit 'Behold him' corr. 'him' versions; 'me' Hebr.

j. 'his' corr.; 'my' Hebr.

k. With implicit faith in an all-embracing Providence, Job does not hesitate to credit God with responsibility for all these scandals.

l. Eliphaz and Bildad have counselled meekness, 5:17; 8:5-6, but Job knows that to play this part will not change either his real self or God's attitude towards him.

m. Lit. 'with *bor*', a plant containing sodium. Only God can wash sin away, the sinner himself, though powerless, finds relief in an appeal to God's mercy, as in Ps 51. Job, with no sin on his conscience, feels powerless too but cannot share the relief.

n. 'in dung' versions; 'in the pit' Hebr.

o. Job will not acknowledge guilt which he does not feel.

10 a. God knows the heart and does not need to sound Job's innocence by torture, v. 4, cf. vv. 6-7a. God, the master of time, has no need of immediate vengeance and can afford to be patient, v. 5, cf. v. 7b.

b. Lit. 'turn round and' Greek.

c. Primitive medicine imagined the formation of the embryo as a congealing of the mother's blood under the influence of the male element.

d. Behind all this solicitude stood a severe judge. Man is responsible to God for all he does. Job's lament is that of fallen man feeling his dependence on an inscrutable will and unable freely to fulfil his own nature.

e. 'drunk with pain' corr.

f. Lit. 'I lift myself' Syr.

g. 'You attack ... again' lit. 'You renew your attack' ('enmity') corr.; 'You renew your witnesses' Hebr. 'relentlessly...me' Syr.; 'your relays' Hebr.

I should have perished then, unseen by any eye,
a being that had never been, 19
to be carried from womb to grave.
7:7; 14:1 The days of my life are few enough: 20
turn your eyes away, leave me a little joy,[h]
16:22; 38:17 Ps 23:4; 39: 13; 49:19 before I go to the place of no return, 21
the land of murk and deep shadow,[i]
where dimness[j] and disorder hold sway, 22
Nb 16:33+ and light itself is like the dead of night.'[k]

Job must acknowledge God's wisdom

11 Zophar of Naamath spoke next. He said: 1

Is babbling to go without an answer? 2
Is wordiness in man a proof of right?
Do you think your talking strikes men dumb, 3
will you jeer with no one to refute you?
These were your words, 'My way of life[a] is faultless, 4
and in your eyes I am free from blame'.
But if God had a mind to speak, 5
32:13 Si 4:18 to open his lips and give you answer,
Rm 11:33 were he to show you the secrets of wisdom 6
which put all cleverness to shame —
you would know it is for sin he calls you to account.[b]
Ps 139:17 Can you claim to grasp the mystery of God, 7
to understand the perfection of Shaddai?
Ps 139:7 Ep 3:18 It is higher than the heavens:[c] what can you do? 8
It is deeper than Sheol: what can you know?
Its length is longer than the earth, 9
its breadth is broader than the sea.
If he passes, who can stop him, 10
or make him yield once he has seized?[d]
For he detects the worthlessness in man, 11
he sees iniquity and marks it[e] well.
And so the idiot grows wise, 12
39:5-8 Gn 16:12 thus a young wild donkey grows tame.[f]

Come, you must set your heart right, 13
stretch out your hands to him.[g]
Renounce the iniquity that stains your hands, 14
let no injustice live within your tents.
Then you may face the world in innocence, 15
unwavering and free from fear.
Ps 58:7 You will forget your sufferings, 16
remember them as waters that have passed away.
17:12 Your life, more radiant than the noonday, 17
Jn 8:12+ will make a dawn of darkness.
Full of hope, you will live secure, 18
dwelling well and safely guarded.[h]
No one will dare disturb you, 19
and many a man will seek your favour.
But the wicked will look round with weary eyes, 20
and finding no escape,
the only hope they have is life's last breath.[i]

God's wisdom is best seen in the dreadful works of his omnipotence

12 Job spoke next. He said:

Doubtless, you are the voice of the people,[a]
and when you die, wisdom will die with you!
I can reflect as deeply as ever you can,
I am no way inferior to you. 13:2
And who, for that matter, has not observed as much?
A man becomes[b] a laughing-stock to his friends Ps 38:11
if he cries to God and expects an answer.
The blameless innocent incurs only mockery.
'Add insult to injury,' think the prosperous Ps 123:4
'strike the man now that he is staggering!'
And yet, the tents of brigands are left in peace,
and those who challenge God live in safety,
and make a god of their two fists!
If you would learn more, ask the cattle, 18:3 Gn 1:20
seek information from the birds of the air.
The creeping things of earth will give you lessons,
and the fishes of the sea will tell you all.
There is not one such creature but will know 9:24
this state of things is all of God's[c] own making.
He holds in his power the soul of every living thing, Nb 16:22 Ws 7:16
and the breath of each man's body.[d] Dn 5:23

The ear is a judge of speeches, is it not, =34:3
just as the palate can tell one food from another?
Wisdom is found in the old, 32:7-9
and discretion comes with great age.[e]
But in him there is wisdom, and power, too, Pr 8:14 Is 11:2 Dn 2:20
and decision no less than discretion.
What he destroys, none can rebuild; Ps 127:1 Is 22:22
whom he imprisons, none can release.
Is there a drought? He has checked the waters.
Do these play havoc with the earth? He has let them loose.
In him is strength, in him resourcefulness,
beguiler and beguiled are both alike his slave.
He robs the country's counsellors of their wits,[f]
turns judges into fools.
His hands untie the belt of kings,
and bind a rope about their loins.[g]
He makes priests walk barefoot,
and overthrows the powers that are established. Lk 1:52

h. 'The days of my life' corr.; 'my days and let him refrain' Hebr. 'turn...away' lit. 'look away from me' corr.; 'let me alone' Hebr.
i. Sheol. cf. Nb 16:33+.
j. Hebr. 'as dead of night, deep shadow'.
k. 'dead of night': the sense of the same Hebr. word in Ps 91:6.

11 a. 'My way of life' corr.; 'My teaching' Hebr.
b. 'he calls you to account' corr.; 'God makes you forget' Hebr.
c. 'higher than the heavens' Vulg.
d. Text corr.; Hebr. 'If he passes and imprisons and calls an assembly, who can turn him back?'
e. 'it' corr.; Hebr. 'not'.
f. Lit. 'a colt of a wild-donkey man'. 'grows tame' corr.; 'is born' Hebr.
g. Attitude of supplication, cf. Ex 9:29,33; 1 K 8:38; Is 1:15.
h. Lit. 'well guarded (corr.) you will dwell in safety'.
i. As it is with Job whose only hope is death. 3:21; 6:9; 10:21.

12 a. Lit. 'Truly you are the people'.
b. 'becomes' versions (lit. 'he is'); 'I am' Hebr.
c. 'God' seven Hebr. MSS; 'Yahweh' Text. Rec.
d. If, as all creation witnesses, God is the cause of all things, vv. 7-10, his is the ultimate responsibility for the prevalence of injustice, vv. 4-6.
e. Human wisdom, cut and dried with reassuring maxims, cannot compare with God's wisdom which is demonstrated by mighty works, vv. 14-16, and baffles the wisest of men, vv. 16-25.
f. Omitting the first word, cf. v. 19. 'He robs of their wits' corr. 'the country's ' Greek.
g. 'belt' and 'rope' corr.

He strikes the cleverest speakers dumb, 20
and robs old men of their discretion.
Ps 107:40 He pours contempt on the nobly born, 21
and unties the girdle of the strong.
Ps 139:12 Dn 2:22 He robs the depths of their darkness, 22
brings deep shadow to the light.
5:12 Ac 17:26 He builds a nation up, then strikes it down, 23
or makes a people grow, and then destroys[h] it.
He strips a country's leaders of their judgement, 24
Ps 107:40 and leaves them to wander in a trackless waste,
to grope about in unlit darkness, 25
and totter like a man in liquor.

13 I have seen all this with my own eyes, 1
heard with my own ears, and understood.
12:3 Whatever you know, I know too; 2
I am no way inferior to you.
9:14+ But my words are intended for Shaddai; 3
I mean to remonstrate with God.
As for you, you are only charlatans, 4
physicians in your own estimation.
I wish someone would teach you to be quiet 5
Pr 17:28 —the only wisdom that becomes you!
Kindly listen to my accusation, 6
pay attention to the pleading of my lips.[a]
Will you plead God's defence with prevarication, 7
his case in terms that ring false?
Will you be partial in his favour, 8
and act as his advocates?
For you to meet his scrutiny, would this be well? 9
Ga 6:7 Can he be duped as men are duped?
Harsh rebuke you would receive from him 10
for your covert partiality.
Is 6:1-5 Does his majesty not affright you, 11
dread of him not fall on you?
Your old maxims are proverbs of ash, 12
your retorts, retorts of clay.
9:14; 10:1 Silence! Now I will do the talking, 13
whatever may befall me.
I put my flesh between my teeth, 14
I take my life in my hands.[b]
Let him kill me if he will; I have no other hope 15
than to justify my conduct in his eyes.[c]
Ph 1:19 This very boldness gives promise of my release, 16
Gn 3:8 since no godless man would dare appear before him.

Listen carefully to my words, 17
and lend your ears to what I have to say.
9:14+ You shall see, I will proceed by due form of law,[d] 18
persuaded, as I am, that I am guiltless.
Who comes against me with an accusation?[e] 19
Let him come! I am ready to be silenced and to die.
But grant me these two favours:[f] 20
if not, I shall not dare to confront you.
9:34; 23:6 Take your hand away, which lies so heavy on me, 21
no longer make me cower from your terror.
Then arraign me, and I will reply; 22

or rather, I will speak and you shall answer me.
23 How many faults and crimes have I committed?
What law have I transgressed, or in what have I offended?
24 Why do you hide your face[g] 33:10 Ps 4:6+; 44:25; 88:15
and look on me as your enemy?
25 Will you intimidate a wind-blown leaf, Ps 83:14
will you chase the dried-up chaff;
26 you list bitter accusations against me,
taxing me with the faults of my youth, Ps 25:7
27 after putting my feet in the stocks, 33:11
watching my every step,
and measuring my footprints;
28 while my life[h] is crumbling like rotten wood, Ps 39:12; 102:27 Is 50:9; 51:8
or a moth-eaten garment.

14 1 Man,[a] born of woman, 10:20 Ps 8:5; 37:2+; 39:5; 90:5; 144:3 Qo 6:12 Ws 2:1 Si 40:1-10; 41:1-4 Is 40:6-8
has a short life yet has his fill of sorrow.
2 He blossoms, and he withers, like a flower;
fleeting as a shadow, transient.
3 And is this what you deign to turn your gaze on,
him[b] that you would bring before you to be judged?
4 Who can bring the clean out of the unclean? 4:17; 9:30; 15:14; 25:4 Ps 51:7 Rm 7:14
No man alive![c]
5 Since man's days are measured out,
since his tale of months depends on you,
since you assign him bounds he cannot pass, Ps 39:5; 139:16
6 turn your eyes from him, leave him alone,[d] Ps 39:13
like a hired drudge, to finish his day.
7 There is always hope for a tree: 19:10 2 S 14:14 Is 6:13
when felled, it can start its life again;
its shoots continue to sprout.
8 Its roots may be decayed in the earth,
its stump withering in the soil,
9 but let it scent the water, and it buds,
and puts out branches like a plant new set.
10 But man? He dies, and lifeless he remains;
man breathes his last, and then where is he? Ps 102:26 Qo 3:21 Is 19:5; 51:6
11 The waters of the seas may disappear,
all the rivers may run dry or drain away;
12 but man, once in his resting place, will never rise again.

h. 'destroys' corr.; 'leads' Hebr.

13 a. Job returns to legal procedure. cf. v. 18 and 9:14+. He himself elects to cross-examine God, spurning the so-called sages who presume to plead his cause.

b. Omitting the first two words. Proverbial expressions meaning to gamble for life, to stake all. cf. Jg 12:3; 1 S 19:5; 28:21.

c. Job is not out to win back his happiness but to vindicate his innocence before man and, in particular, before God.

d. Job sees this as a legal action between himself and God. On this occasion he forgets that there is no independent judge, 9:32-33; he no longer sees God as a judge but only as an opponent.

e. Job turns against God the legal accusation which Yahweh, Is 1:18; Ho 2:4; Mi 6:1-2, and his servant, Is 50:8, have already hurled at his people. The second line, lit. 'for now I shall be silent and die', may be another legal formula. The man who challenges his refutations is already prepared to be proved wrong and take the consequences. Sure of his case, Job accepts this.

f. The first: to face God as an equal and to be left free; the second: to speak first in the debate.

g. God 'hides his face' when he withholds signs of his benevolent presence.

h. 'my life' corr.; 'he' Hebr.

14 a. This elegy on human misery is linked with the preceding passage by v. 28: Job, cf. 7:1f, sees his own suffering as the state of every man and thence draws his argument: why God should use his strength against such a mean creature is incomprehensible.

b. 'him' corr.; 'me' Hebr.

c. Lit. 'Not one'. Targ. adds 'but God'; Vulg. 'Is it not you, the only one?' Job acknowledges man's essential vileness but pleads it as an excuse. The emphasis is laid on the physical (and therefore ritual) uncleanness which man contracts from the moment of his conception, cf. Lv 15:19f, and birth, cf. Lv 12:2f, since he is born of woman, Jb 14:1, cf. Ps 51:5. But this ritual uncleanness involves a corresponding moral weakness, a tendency to sin, and Christian interpretation has seen is this passage at least an allusion to what was later recognised as 'original sin' passed on from parent to child. Cf. Rm 5:12+.

d. 'leave him alone' one Hebr. MS; 'let him rest' Text. Rec.

The heavens will wear away[e] before he wakes,
before he rises from his sleep.[f]

Ps 30:5 Is 26:20 Am 9:2
If only you would hide me in Sheol, 13
and shelter me there until your anger is past,[g]
fixing a certain day for calling me to mind—
for once a man is dead can he come back to life?— 14
7:1 day after day of my service I would wait
for my relief to come.
Then you would call, and I should answer, 15
you would want to see the work of your hands once more.
Now you count every step I take, 16
10:6 but then you would cease to spy on my sins;
you would seal up my crime in a bag, 17
9:30 and whiten my fault over.

But no! Soon or late the mountain falls,[h] 18
the rock moves from its place,
water wears away the stones, 19
the cloudburst[i] erodes the soil;
just so do you destroy man's hope.
You crush him once for all, and he is gone; 20
you mar him, and then you bid him go.
21:21 Let his sons achieve honour, he does not know of it, 21
humiliation, he gives it not a thought.
He feels no pain for anything but his own body, 22
makes no lament, save for his own life.[j]

B. SECOND SERIES OF SPEECHES

Job's own words condemn him

15 Eliphaz of Teman spoke next. He said: 1

Does a wise man answer with airy reasonings, 2
or feed himself on an east wind?
Does he defend himself with empty talk 3
and ineffectual wordiness?
25:6 You do worse: you flout piety, 4
you repudiate meditation in God's presence.
A guilty conscience prompts your words, 5
you adopt the language of the cunning.
Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; 6
your own lips bear witness against you.[a]

Si 49:16 Are you the first-born of the human race, 7
Pr 8:25 brought into the world before the hills?[b]
Is 40:13 Jr 23:18 Rm 11:34 Have you been a listener at God's council, 8
or established a monopoly of wisdom?
What knowledge have you that we have not, 9
what understanding that is not ours too?
32:7 A grey-haired man, and an ancient, are of our number; 10
these have seen more summers than your father.
Do you scorn the comfort that God gives, 11
and the moderation we have used in speaking?
See how passion carries you away! 12
How evil you look,

when you thus loose your anger on God
and utter speeches such as these!
How can any man be clean? 4:17-18; 14:4+
Born of woman, can he ever be good?[e] Si 17:31-32
In his own Holy Ones God puts no trust,
and the heavens themselves are not, in his eyes, clean.
Then how much less this hateful, corrupt thing,
mankind, that drinks iniquity like water! 34:7

Listen to me, I have a lesson for you:
I will tell you of my own experience,
and of the teaching of the sages,
those faithful guardians of the tradition of their fathers, 8:8-10 Dt 32:7-8
to whom alone the land was given,
with never a foreigner to mix with them.
The life of the wicked is unceasing torment, Ws 17:3f
the years allotted to the tyrant are numbered.
The danger signal ever echoes in his ear, 18:11; 20:25
in the midst of peace the marauder swoops on him.
He has no hope of fleeing from the darkness,
but knows that he is destined for the sword,
marked down as meat for the vulture.
He knows that his ruin is at hand.[d]
The hour of darkness makes him terrified;
distress and anguish close in on him,
as though some king were mounting an attack.
He raised his hand against God, Ps 75:5
he ventured to defy Shaddai.
Blindly he bore down on him
from behind his massive shield.
His face had grown full and fat, Ps 73:7
and his thighs too heavy with flesh.
He had taken possession of ruined towns
and made his dwelling in deserted houses.
But all his careful building[e] will go once more to ruin;
not for him increase of wealth, his riches will not last,
no longer will he cast his shadow over the land.[f]
A flame will wither up his tender buds;
the wind will carry off his blossom.[g]

e. 'will wear away' corr. with Syr. and Vulg.

f. The eschatological imagery, by indefinitely postponing the possibility of awakening, is here used to stress man's disappearance without hope of return. The expectation of a resurrection at the end of time is apparently not yet within the scope of the author, cf. 19:25+.

g. This is not a reference to a return from Sheol after death, cf. 7:9+, though the hypothetical situation suggests the possibility. It is simply that Job is reduced to imagining the one place of refuge that is not this earth, heaven being reserved to God, cf. Ps 115:16. If Job could hide somewhere until God's fury is exhausted, he might once more look on a God of mercy. The idea is developed in vv. 14-17: we see Job awaiting his 'relief' while God, no longer angry, longs to see Job again; every possible fault has been forgiven and therefore all question of sin is forgotten.

h. Lit. 'The mountain falling falls' versions.

i. 'cloudburst' corr.

j. 'life' corr. (lit. 'it', feminine); 'him' Hebr. In Sheol, therefore, there is a certain consciousness of the self; cf. Nb 16:33+. The author wishes to say either that the shade has no thought and no concern except for itself, or else that it looks back with longing to the days of its earthly life.

15 a. Job's tongue betrays him: his protestations of innocence reveal anxiety to conceal guilt.

b. The first question contrasts Job with the first member of the human race, a being who might have been able to claim great wisdom. The second goes so far as to contrast him with Wisdom herself, brought forth before the hills were made, Pr 8:25, and ever afterwards a member of God's council, Pr 8:22-31; cf. Jb 28:23-27; Ws 8:3-4.

c. Eliphaz resumes his earlier theme, 4:17, and that of Job, 14:4, but gives it another direction. Man's intrinsic uncleanness is not now considered as the reason for his frailty, 4:17-19, or as an excuse for unavoidable transgression, 14:1-4, but as the root from which great sins grow ('iniquity' in the vocabulary of Eliphaz).

d. 'destined', 'marked down' corr. 'vulture', 'ruin', Greek.

e. Corr.; lit. 'what he has prepared for himself'; 'which are destined to' Hebr.

f. 'shadow' Greek.

g. At the beginning the text has 'he will not escape

20:6-7 But he should not trust in his great stature,[h] 31
if he would not trust in vain.
His boughs will wither before their time,[i] 32
and his branches never again be green.
Like a vine he will let his unripe clusters fall, 33
like an olive shed his blossom.
Ah yes, the sinner's brood is barren, 34
20:26 and fire consumes the tents of the venal.
5:6-7 Ps 7:15 Pr 22:8 Is 59:4 Ga 6:8 Conceive mischief, and you breed disaster, 35
and carry in yourself deceitfulness.'

The injustice of man and the justice of God

16 Job spoke next. He said: 1

How often have I heard all this before! 2
What sorry comforters you are!
Is there never to be an end of airy words? 3
What a plague your need to have the last word is!
21:4 I too could talk like you, 4
were your soul in the plight of mine.
I too could overwhelm[a] you with sermons,
I could shake my head[b] over you,
and speak words of encouragement, 5
until my lips grew tired.[c]
But, while I am speaking, my suffering remains; 6
and when I am not, do I suffer any the less?[d]
And now ill-will drives me to distraction, 7
30:12+ and a whole host molests me,[e] 8
rising, like some witness for the prosecution,
to utter slander[f] to my very face.
18:4 In tearing fury it pursues me, 9
with gnashing teeth.
My enemies whet their eyes on me,
and open gaping jaws. 10
Their insults strike like slaps in the face,
and all set on me together.
Yes, God has handed me over to the godless,[g] 11
and cast me into the hands of the wicked.

30:16 Lm 3:11 I lived at peace, until he shattered me, 12
taking me by the neck to dash me to pieces.
He has made me a target for his archery,
6:4 shooting his arrows at me from every side. 13
Pitiless, through the loins he pierces me,
and scatters my gall on the ground.
Breach after breach he drives through me, 14
bearing down on me like a warrior.
I have sewn sackcloth over my skin 15
and rubbed my brow in the dust.
My face is red with tears, 16
and a veil of shadow hangs on my eyelids.
33:9 This notwithstanding, my hands are free of violence, 17
and my prayer is undefiled.
Ps 9:12 Si 35:17 Heb 11:4 Rv6:10;8:3-4 Cover not my blood, O earth,[h] 18
afford my cry no place to rest.
Henceforth I have a witness in heaven, 19
19:25+ my defender is there in the height.

20 My own lament is my advocate with God,[i]
while my tears flow before him.
21 Let this plead for me as I stand before God,
as a man will plead for his fellows.
22 For the years of my life are numbered,
and I shall soon take the road of no return.[j] 10:2

1 17 My breath grows weak, Ps 143:4
and the gravediggers are gathering for me.[a] Qo 12:1-7
2 I am the butt of mockers,
and all my waking hours I brood on their spitefulness.
3 You yourself must take my own guarantee,
since no one cares to clap his hand on mine.[b]
4 For you have shut their hearts to reason,
and not a hand is lifted.[c]
5 Like a man who invites his friends to share his property Lm 3:18
while the eyes of his own sons languish,
6 I have become a byword[d] among the people, 30:9
and a creature on whose face to spit.
7 My eyes grow dim with grief,
and my limbs wear away like a shadow.[e] Is 52:15
8 At this, honest men are shocked,[f]
and the guiltless man rails against the godless;
9 just men grow more settled in their ways,
those whose hands are clean add strength to strength.
10 Come, then, all of you: set on me once more!
I shall not find a single sage among you.

11 My days have passed, far otherwise than I had planned,[g]
and every fibre of my heart is broken.
12 Night, they say, makes room for day, 5:17-26; 11:17 Jn 8:12+
and light is near at hand to chase[h] the darkness.
13 All I look forward to is dwelling in Sheol, Ps 88:18
and making my bed in the dark.
14 I tell the tomb, 'You are my father',
and call the worm my mother and my sister. Si 10:11
15 Where then is my hope? 19:10
Who can see any happiness for me?[i]

from darkness', cf. v. 22a. 'will carry off' corr. 'his blossom' Greek.

h. 'stature' corr.

i. 'His boughs' taken from preceding verse and translated then in accordance with Greek. 'wither' versions.

16 a. 'overwhelm' corr.

b. The gesture can mean sympathy or else contempt or mockery.

c. Lit. 'and cease (corr.) to move my lips'.

d. Job, unlike his comforters whose interest in his case is confined to words, continues to suffer whether he speaks or is silent. This is his excuse for what he says, cf. 6:26, against Eliphaz, cf. 15:5-6.

e. Text corr.

f. 'slander' corr.; 'my leanness'Hebr.

g. 'unjust' corr.; 'child' Hebr.

h. Blood, if not covered with earth, cries to heaven for vengeance, Gn 4:10; 37:26; Is 26:21; Ezk 24:8. Job, mortally wounded (v. 12f), wishes to leave behind a lasting appeal for vindication: on earth, his blood; with God, the sound of his prayer. This last, personified, cf. Ps 79:11; 88:2; 102:1; Lm 3:44, will be his witness and advocate with God. In 19:25f, Job's champion is God himself.

i. 'My own ... advocate' corr.; 'My friends scorn me' Hebr.; 'Let my prayer go up to God' Greek. 'before him' Greek.

j. Possibly Job hopes for vindication before his death and wants God to hear him because time is running out. Or possibly he gives up hope of this and simply awaits death.

17 a. V. corr. Hebr. 'my breath is exhausted, my days are extinguished, the grave is (ready) for me'.

b. Gesture of legal procedure, cf. Pr 6:1; 17:18; 22:26; Si 29:14-20, by which the guarantor went surety for the debtor to defer distraint and offered bail. His friends being unhelpful, Job, apparently, asks God himself to be his guarantor.

c. I.e. 'to help me'. Line corr.

d. 'a byword' versions.

e. 'wear away' corr.; Hebr. 'all'.

f. Biblical expression for the emotion of those who witness divine punishment inflicted on the guilty. So it is with Job's friends: seeing his sufferings they expatiate in conventional terms on the justice of God. Job derides this ready-made wisdom and formal piety.

g. Lit. 'from my plans' corr., cf. Greek.

h. 'to chase' corr.

i. 'my happiness' Greek; 'my hope' Hebr.

Will these come down with me to Sheol, 16
or sink with me into the dust?[j]

Anger is powerless against the course of justice

18 Bildad of Shuah spoke next. He said: 1

Will you never learn to check such words? 2
Do you think we shall be slow to speak?[a]
12:7-8 Why do you regard us as beasts, 3
look on us as dumb animals?[b]
16:9-10 Tear yourself to pieces if you will, 4
but the world, for all your rage, will not turn to desert,
the rocks will not shift from their places.
21:17 Jn 8:12+ The wicked man's light must certainly be put out, 5
his brilliant flame cease to shine.
Jr 25:10
Am 2:9 In his tent the light is dimmed, 6
the lamp that shone on him is snuffed.
Ps 18:36 Pr 29:6 His vigorous stride grows cramped, 7
his own cunning brings him down.
Pr 4:12
22:10 Ps 35:7-8; 140:5 For into the net his own feet carry him, 8
he walks among the snares.
A spring grips him by the heel, 9
a trap snaps shut, and he is caught.
Hidden in the earth is a noose to snare him, 10
pitfalls lie across his path.
15:21 Ws 17:10-14 Terrors attack him on every side, 11
and follow behind him step for step.
Hunger becomes his companion,[c] 12
by his side Disaster stands.
Disease devours his flesh,[d] 13
Death's First-Born[e] gnaws his limbs.
20:25 Ps 52:5 He is torn from the shelter of his tent, 14
and dragged before the King of Terrors.
Dt 29:22 Ps 11:6 Is 34:9,14 The Lilith[f] makes her home under his roof, 15
while people scatter brimstone on his holding.
His roots grow withered below, 16
and his branches are blasted above.
Ps 9:5; 34:16 Pr 10:7 Ws 2:4 His memory fades from the land, 17
his name is forgotten in his homeland.
Driven from light into darkness, 18
he is an exile from the earth,
Ps 21:10; 37:28; 109:13 without issue or posterity among his own people, 19
none to live on where he has lived.
His tragic end appalls the West, 20
and fills the East with terror.
A fate like his awaits every sinful house, 21
the home of every man who knows not God.

Faith at its height in desertion by God and man

19 Job spoke next. He said: 1

Will you never stop tormenting me, 2
and shattering me with speeches?
Ten times, no less, you have insulted me, 3
ill-treating me without a trace of shame.
Suppose that I have gone astray, 4
suppose I am even yet in error:[a]

it is still true, though you think you have the upper hand of me
and feel that you have proved my guilt,
that God, you must know, is my oppressor,
and his is the net that closes round me.[b]
If I protest against such violence, there is no reply; — Lm 3:7-9 Hab 1:2
if I appeal against it, judgement is never given.
He has built a wall across my path which I cannot pass, — Lm 3:7
and covered my way with darkness.
He has stolen my honour away, — 29:14
and taken the crown from my head.
On every side he breaks through my defences, and I succumb. — 14:7f; 17:15
As a man a shrub, so he uproots my hope.
His anger flares against me, — 33:10
and he counts me as his enemy.
His troops have come in force,
they have mounted their attack against me,
laid siege to my tent.

My brothers stand aloof from me,[c] — Ps 31:11; 38:11; 69:8; 88:8.18
and my relations take care to avoid me.
My kindred and my friends have all gone away,
and the guests in my house[d] have forgotten me.
The serving maids look on me as a foreigner,
a stranger, never seen before.
My servant does not answer when I call him,
I am reduced to entreating him.
To my wife my breath is unbearable,
for my own brothers[e] I am a thing corrupt.
Even the children look down on me,
ever ready with a jibe when I appear.
All my dearest friends recoil from me in horror: — Ps 41:9 Si 6:8 Jn 13:18
those I loved best have turned against me.
Beneath my skin, my flesh begins to rot, — 33:21
and my bones stick out like teeth.[f]
Pity me, pity me, you, my friends,
for the hand of God has struck me.
Why do you hound me down like God, — Pr 30:14
will you never have enough of my flesh? — Ps 27:2

Ah, would that these words of mine were written down, — 16:18-21+
inscribed on some monument
with iron chisel and engraving tool,[g]
cut into the rock for ever.

j. 'with me' corr. following Greek. 'sink' Greek; 'rest' Hebr.

18 a. (Will) 'you' (singular) Greek; Hebr. has plural. Second line corr.; Hebr. 'Consider, and then we shall speak'.

b. With three Hebr. MSS; Text. Rec.: 'as unclean'.

c. Line corr. ; Hebr. 'his strength is famished'.

d. Line corr.; Hebr. 'it consumes parts of his skin'.

e. I.e. the worst disease of all, probably the plague.

f. 'Lilith' corr.; Hebr. '(you will dwell in his tent) which is his no longer'. The 'King of Terrors', a figure from oriental and Greek mythology (Nergal, Pluto, etc.), seems here to have infernal spirits (Furies) at command to plague the wicked man even during his lifetime, cf. 15:20. Lilith, another figure of popular legend, is a female demon, cf. Is 34:14. Brimstone produces, or is symbolic of, sterility and is possibly (in this passage) a precaution against infection.

19 a. A fault excused by suffering, cf. 6:24+. Greek adds 'by speaking words that are unbefitting, words erroneous and untimely'.

b. God, not Job's sins, casts the net, cf. 18:8.

c. 'stand aloof from me' corr.; 'he has kept my brothers at a distance' Hebr.

d. 'the guests in my house' taken from beginning of v. 15.

e. Lit. 'the sons of my (i.e. own mother's) womb'.

f. V. corr. Hebr. 'my bones cling to my skin and to my flesh, and I escape by the skin of my teeth'.

g. Line corr.

16:19 [h]This I know: that my Avenger[i] lives, 25
and he, the Last, will take his stand[j] on earth.
After my awaking, he will set me close to him, 26
and from my flesh I shall look on God.
He whom I shall see will take my part: 27
these eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof.
My heart within me sinks...
You, then, that mutter, 'How shall we track him down, 28
what pretext shall we find against him?'
may well fear the sword on your own account. 29
Ps 58:11 There is an anger stirred to flame by evil deeds;
you will learn that there is indeed a judgement.

27:13-23 **The course of justice admits of no exception**

20 Zophar of Naamath spoke next. He said: 1

To this my thoughts are eager to reply: 2
no wonder if I am possessed by impatience.
I found these admonitions little to my taste, 3
but my spirit whispers to me how to answer them.
24:4 Ps 37; 73 Do you not know, that since time began 4
and man was set on the earth,
the triumph of the wicked has always been brief, 5
and the sinner's gladness has never lasted long?
15:31 Ps 37:35 Towering to the sky he may have been, 6
with head touching the clouds;[a]
but he vanishes, like a phantom, once for all, 7
while those who saw him now ask, 'Where is he?'
Ps 73:20 Like a dream that leaves no trace he takes his flight, 8
Ws 5:14 Is 29:8 like a vision in the night he flies away.
The eye that looked on him will never see him more, 9
his house nevermore sets eyes on him.
27:16-17 His sons must recoup his victims, 10
and his children[b] pay back his riches.
With the vigour of youth his bones were filled, 11
now it lies in the dust with him.
Pr 20:17 Si 40:30 Evil was sweet to his mouth, 12
he hid it beneath his tongue;
unwilling to let it go, 13
he let it linger on his palate.
27:17 Such food goes bad in his belly, 14
working inside him like the poison of a viper.
Now he must bring up all the wealth that he has swallowed, 15
God makes him disgorge it.
He sucked 'poison of vipers': 16
Dt 32:32-33 and the tongue of the adder kills him.
Qo 4:3 He will know no more of streams that run with oil,[c] 17
29:6 or the torrents of honey and cream.
Ps 109:11 Gone that glad face at the sight of his gains,[d] 18
those comfortable looks when business was thriving.
Ps 109:16 Since he once destroyed the huts[e] of poor men, 19
and stole other's houses when he should have built his own,
[f]since his avarice could never be satisfied, 20
now his hoarding will not save him;
since there was nothing ever escaped his greed, 21
now his prosperity will not last.

22 His abundance at its full, want seizes him,
misery descends on him in all its force.
23 On him God looses all his burning wrath,
hurling against his flesh a hail of arrows.[g]
24 No use to run away from the iron armoury,
for the bow of bronze will shoot him through.
25 Out through his back an arrow sticks,
from his gall a shining point.
An arsenal of terrors falls on him,[h]
26 and all that is dark[i] lies in ambush for him.
A fire[j] unlit by man devours him,
and consumes what is left in his tent.
27 The heavens lay bare his iniquity,
the earth takes its stand against him.
28 A flood sweeps his house away,[k]
and carries it off in the Day of Wrath.
29 Such is the fate God allots to the wicked,
such his inheritance assigned by God.

21:17
Dt 32:41-42
Ws 5:17-23
27:20
15:21; 18:14
Ps 88:15-16
1:16; 15:34; 21:17
Is 24:18
=27:13
Rv 21:8

Facts give the lie

1 21 Job spoke next. He said:
2 Listen, only listen to my words;
this is the consolation you can offer me.
3 Let me have my say;
you may jeer when I have spoken.
4 Do you think I bear a grudge against man?
Have I no reason to be out of patience?
5 Hear what I have to say, and you will be dumbfounded,
will place your hands over your mouths.[a]
6 I myself am appalled at the very thought,
and my flesh begins to shudder.
7 Why do the wicked still live on,
their power increasing with their age?

Jr 12:1-5
6:3,26; 16: 4-6
29:9; 40:4
Ps 37
Jr 12:1-2

h. Vv. 25-27 follow Hebr., correcting v. 26 (Hebr. corrupt). The versions disagree. Greek 'I know that he who will deliver me is eternal, (is) on earth (in order to) restore (*anastesai*) my skin that suffers this. It is the Lord who has performed for me what I myself know, what my own eye has seen and no other.' Syr. 'I know that my redeemer is living and that in the end he will appear on earth. And these things encompass both my skin and my flesh. If my eyes see God they will see the light.' Vulg. 'I know that my redeemer lives and that at the last day I shall rise from the earth and be clothed in my skin again; and in my flesh I shall see my God; I myself shall see him and no other'.

i. The word *goel*, approximately translated 'avenger', is a technical term of Israelite law, cf. Nb 35:19+. It is often used of God, the saviour of his people and avenger of the oppressed. The early Jewish rabbis applied the term to the Messiah, and this probably induced Jerome to translate here 'my Redeemer'. Job, slandered and condemned by his friends, awaits a Defender who this time (cf. 16:18-21+) is God himself. Job still believes his happiness to be lost for ever and his death to be at hand: when God undertakes to avenge his cause, it will be after his death. Nonetheless Job hopes to witness this and to 'see' his vindication. In 14:10-14 he had envisaged the possibility of a temporary shelter in Sheol, and here it would seem that he is counting on a brief return to earthly life to see his vindication accomplished; in this he is prompted by his faith in a God who can bring men back from Sheol, cf. 1 S 2:6; 1 K 17:17-24; Ezk 37. Job's faith thus momentarily defies mortal horizons in his desperate need for justice; it prepares us for the explicit revelation of bodily resurrection, cf. 2 M 7:9+.

j. 'will take his stand': legal phrase, used often of witness or of judge, 31:14; Dt 19:16; Is 2:19,21; Ps 12:5. 'the Last' recalls Is 44:6; 48:12.

20 a. The Bible often alludes to the monstrous pride of early man, cf. Ezk 28:2,17; Is 14:13-14; Gn 11:4. This tradition, which has a mythological colouring, is in line with the Gn 3 tradition which makes pride the cause of man's fall.

b. 'his children' corr.; 'his hands' Hebr.

c. Lit. '(streams) of oil' corr.

d. 'glad face', 'his gains': corr.

e. 'huts' corr.; 'he has abandoned' Hebr.

f. The text of vv. 20-21 is apparently disordered; the order differs in Greek. 'his hoarding will not save him' corr.

g. The Hebr. has at the beginning 'While he filled his belly', omitted by Greek. 'arrows' corr. The same metaphors are used to describe the collective punishment of Israel or of the pagans.

h. 'Out through his back' Syr. 'an arrow' following Greek. 'arsenal' lit. 'store', taken from v. 26a.

i. The darkness of Sheol, one of the plagues of Egypt, Ex 10:21-22.

j. Lightning.

k. As in the Deluge. Text corr.

21 a. Since to speak would be useless or unwise.

Ml 3:15. 18-19
They see their posterity ensured, 8
and their offspring grow[b] before their eyes.
The peace of their houses has nothing to fear, 9
the rod that God wields is not for them.
No mishap with their bulls at breeding-time, 10
nor miscarriage with their cows at calving.
They let their infants frisk like lambs, 11
their children dance like deer.[c]
Is 5:12
They sing to the tambourine and the lyre, 12
Am 6:5
and rejoice to the sound of the flute.
Ps 73:3
They end their lives in happiness 13
and go down[d] in peace to Sheol.

22:17 Ps 95:10; 139:20 Jr 2:31 Ml 3:14-15
Yet these were the ones who said to God, 'Go away! 14
We do not choose to learn your ways.
What is the point of our serving Shaddai? 15
What profit should we get from praying to him?'
Is it not true, they held their fortune in their own two hands, 16
and in their counsels, left no room for God?[e]
18:5; 20:22. 26-28
Do we often see a wicked man's light put out, 17
or disaster overtaking him,
or all his goods destroyed[f] by the wrath of God?
Ps 58:9
How often do we see him harassed like a straw before the wind, 18
Ps 1:4
or swept off like chaff before a gale?
God, you say, reserves the man's punishment for his children.[g] 19
No! Let him bear the penalty himself, and suffer under it!
Ps 75:8
Let him see his ruin[h] with his own eyes, 20
and himself drink the anger of Shaddai.
14:21-22
When he has gone, how can the fortunes of his House affect him, 21
Qo 9:5-6
when the number of his months is cut off?
Is 40:13
But who can give lessons in wisdom to God, 22
to him who is judge of those on high?
And again:[i] one man dies in the fulness of his strength, 23
in all possible happiness and ease,
with his thighs all heavy with fat,[j] 24
and the marrow of his bones undried.
Another dies with bitterness in his heart, 25
never having tasted happiness.
Qo 9:2-3
Together now they lie in the dust 26
with worms for covering.

I know well what is in your mind, 27
the spiteful thoughts you entertain about me.
'What has become of the great lord's house,' you say 28
'where is the tent where the wicked lived?'
Have you never asked those that have travelled, 29
or have you misunderstood the tale they told,
Pr 11:4
'The wicked man is spared for the day of disaster, 30
Am 5:18+ Rm 2:3-6
and carried off in the day of wrath'?
But who is there then to accuse him to his face for his deeds, 31
and pay him back for what he has done,
when he is on his way to his burial, 32
when men are watching at his grave.
The clods of the valley are laid gently on him, 33
and a whole procession walks behind him.[k]
So what sense is there in your empty consolation? 34
What nonsense are your answers!

C. THIRD SERIES OF SPEECHES

God punishes only to vindicate justice

22 Eliphaz of Teman spoke next. He said:

Can a man be of any use to God,
when even the wise man's wisdom is of use only to himself?
Does Shaddai derive any benefit from your integrity, — 35:7
or profit from your blameless conduct? — Lk 17:7-10
Would he punish you for your piety,
and hale you off to judgement?
No, rather for your manifold wickednesses, — 29:11-17,31
for your unending iniquities!
You have exacted[a] needless pledges from your brothers, — 29:11 Ex 22:25-26 Dt 24:12-13
and men go naked now through your despoiling;
you have grudged water to the thirsty man,
and refused bread to the hungry; — Is 58:7 Ezk 18:7
you have narrowed the lands of the poor man down to nothing[b] — Mt 25:42f
to set your crony in his place,
sent widows away empty-handed — 31:16-20 Ex 22:21
and crushed the arms of orphans.
No wonder, then, if snares are all around you, — 18:8-11; 19:6
or sudden terrors make you afraid.
Light has turned to darkness[c] and it blinds you, — Is 58:10-11
and a flood of water overwhelms you. — Ps 69:1-2
Does not God live at the height of heaven, — Is 40:26-27
and see[d] the zenith of the stars?
Because he is far above, you said, 'What does God know? — 35:13 Ps 10:3,12; 73:11 Is 29:15
Can he peer through the shadowed darkness?'[e]
The clouds, to him, are an impenetrable veil, — 26:10 Si 24:5 Jr 23:23-24
and he prowls on the rim of the heavens.
And will you still follow the ancient trail
trodden by the wicked?
Those men who were borne off before their time,
with rivers swamping their foundations,
because they said to God, 'Go away![f] — 21:14
What can Shaddai do to us?'
Yet he himself had filled their houses with good things,
while these wicked men shut him out of their counsels.
At the sight of their ruin, good men rejoice, — Ps 58:10; 107:42
and the innocent deride them:
'See how their greatness[g] is brought to nothing!
See how their wealth has perished in the flames!'

b. 'grow' corr.
c. 'like deer' conj. addition.
d. 'go down' corr.
e. Lit. 'and the counsel of the wicked is far from me'; 'me' here corrected to 'him' i.e. God.
f. Lit. 'his goods destroyed' corr.; Hebr. 'does he destroy the wicked?'; or 'does he distribute portions?'
g. An old and respectable theory, Ex 34:7; Dt 5:9, later qualified, Dt 24:16; Jr 31:29; Ezk 18. Cf. Jn 9:1-3. Job demonstrates its inadequacy: the sinner will neither know nor feel the punishment, cf. 14:21-22.
h. 'his ruin' corr.
i. Another shocking consideration: death strikes indiscriminately.
j. 'thighs', 'fat'; versions.
k. The text adds 'and in front of him countless numbers', probably a gloss.

22 a. The list of faults with which Eliphaz falsely taxes Job is notable for its insistence on sins against justice and charity towards others, even by omission. This recalls the teaching of the prophets, cf. Job's apologia, 29:11-17,31.
b. Corr. following Greek.
c. Corr. following Greek.
d. 'and see' corr.; 'See!' Heb.
e. Job has not said this, but Eliphaz is drawing conclusions from his words, among them this blasphemous conclusion: if God is not concerned, it is because he does not know.
f. Lit. 'depart from us'; 'us' versions.
g. 'greatness' versions.

5:17f Well then! Make peace with him, be reconciled, 21
and all your happiness will be restored to you.[h]
Welcome the teaching from his lips, 22
and keep his words close to your heart.
If you return, humbled,[i] to Shaddai 23
and drive all injustice from your tents,
Mt 6:19 if you reckon gold as dust 24
and Ophir as the pebbles of the torrent,[j]
Ps 4:7; 16: 5-6; 84:10 Is 58:14 then you will find Shaddai worth bars of gold 25
or silver piled in heaps.
27:10 Then Shaddai will be all your delight, 26
and you will lift your face to God.
You will pray, and he will hear; 27
you will have good reason to fulfil your vows.
Whatever you undertake will go well, 28
and light will shine on your path;
Ps 18:27 Is 2:11-17 Lk 1:52-53 1 P 5:5 for he that casts down the boasting of the braggart[k] 29
is he that saves the man of downcast eyes.
If a man is innocent, he will bring him freedom, 30
and freedom for you if your hands are kept unstained.

God is far off, and evil is victorious

23 Job spoke next. He said: 1

My lament is still rebellious, 2
that heavy hand of his[a] drags groans from me.
If only I knew how to reach him, 3
or how to travel to his dwelling!
9:14+ I should set out my case to him, 4
my mouth would not want for arguments.
Then I could learn his defence, every word of it, 5
taking note of everything he said to me.
13:21 Would he use all his strength in this debate with me? 6
No, he would have to give me a hearing.[b]
He would see he was contending with an honest man, 7
and I should surely win my case.[c]

9:11 Ps 139:7-10 If I go eastward, he is not there; 8
or westward—still I cannot see him.
If I seek him in the north, he is not to be found, 9
invisible still when I turn to the south.[d]
33:9 Ps 17:3; 139:1-6 Ws 3:6 Jr 11:20+ And yet he knows of every step I take![e] 10
Let him test me in the crucible: I shall come out pure gold.
My footsteps have followed close in his, 11
Ps 17:5 I have walked in his way without swerving;
I have kept every commandment of his lips, 12
cherishing the words from his mouth[f] in my breast.[g]
Is 55:10-11 But once he has decided,[h] who can change his mind? 13
Whatever he plans, he carries out.
No doubt, then, but he will carry out my sentence, 14
like so many other decrees that he has made.
That is why I am full of fear before him, 15
Ps 119:120 and the more I think, the greater grows my dread of him.
God has made my heart sink, 16
Shaddai has filled me with fear.
For darkness hides me from him, 17
and the gloom veils his presence from me.[i]

1 **24** Why has not Shaddai his own store of times,
and why do his faithful never see his Days?[a]
2 The wicked move boundary-marks away, Dt 27:17
they carry off flock and shepherd.[b]
3 Some drive away the orphan's donkey,
and take the widow's ox for a security. Dt 24:17
4 Beggars, now, avoid the roads, 20:2-8; 30:2
and all the poor of the land must go into hiding. Dt 15:11
5 Like wild donkeys in the desert, they go out,
driven by the hunger of their children,
to seek food on the barren steppes.[c]
6 They must do the harvesting in the scoundrel's field,
they must do the picking in the vineyards of the wicked.[d]
10 They go about naked, lacking clothes, Dt 24:12-13
and starving while they carry the sheaves.
11 They have no stones for pressing oil,[e]
they tread the winepresses, yet they are parched with thirst.
7 They spend the night naked, lacking clothes,
with no covering against the cold.
8 Mountain rainstorms cut them through,
shelterless, they hug the rocks.
9 Fatherless children are robbed of their lands, Pr 23:10
and poor men have their cloaks seized as security.[f] Ex 22:25-26
12 From the towns come the groans of the dying[g]
and the gasp of wounded men crying for help.
Yet God remains deaf to their appeal![h] Rv 6:10-11

13 Others of them[i] hate the light, 38:15; Jn 3:20; Ep 5:8-14; 1 Th 5:4-8
know nothing of its ways,
avoid its paths.
14 When all is dark the murderer leaves his bed
to kill the poor and needy. Ps 10:8-9; 37:32
All night long prowls the thief,[j]
16a breaking into houses while the darkness lasts.
15 The eye of the adulterer watches for twilight, Pr 7:9-10
'No one will see me' he mutters
as he masks his face.
16b In the daytime they go into hiding,
these folk who have no love for the light.
17 For all of them, morning is their darkest hour,
because they know its terrors.[k]

h. 'will be restored to you' corr.
i. 'humbled' corr.
j. Text corr.
k. Text corr.

23 a. 'his' versions; 'mine' Hebr.
b. 'give hearing' corr.
c. 'my case' versions.
d. 'If I seek him' corr.; 'If he works' Hebr.
'I turn' versions; 'he turns' Hebr.
e. Lit. 'my going and stopping' Syr.; 'the way with me' Hebr.
f. The Law.
g. 'in my breast' versions.
h. 'decided' corr.
i. 'from him', 'veils his presence from me' corr.

24 a. A store of 'times' from which to lengthen a man's life and so provide opportunity for punishing him; 'Days' i.e. for the punishment of wicked individuals, analogous to the 'day of Yahweh' which is the day of universal retribution, *cf.* Am 5:18+.
b. 'wicked', 'and shepherd': Greek. With wicked tyrants, vv. 2-4, Job contrasts the oppressed poor, vv. 5-12, whose wretchedness cries to heaven.
c. Text corr.
d. 'scoundrel' corr. For vv. 7-9 see after 11.
e. Text corr.
f. 'lands' (lit. 'field') corr.; 'breast' Hebr. 'cloaks' corr.
g. 'the dying' Syr.; 'men' Hebr.
h. Text corr. Hebr. 'does not put (his attention to) folly'.
i. This attack on the enemies of light (possibly an independent poem inserted here by the author) brings us back to the oppressors: God allows them to work in the dark. 'light' has here a moral sense also, *cf.* Jn 8:12+.
j. 'When all is dark' corr.; 'When it is light' Hebr. 'prowls' corr.; 'and he is like' Hebr.
k. Line corr. Hebr. 'because he is familiar with the terrors of deep darkness'. Vv. 18-24 are placed after 27:23.

Is this not so? Who can prove me a liar 25
or show that my words have no substance?

A hymn to God's omnipotence[a]

25 Bildad of Shuah spoke next. He said: 1

What sovereignty, what awe, is his 2
who keeps the peace in his heights![b]
Can anyone number his armies, 3
or boast of having escaped his ambushes?[c]
4:17+; 15:14+ Could any man ever think himself innocent, when confronted by God? 4
Born of woman, how could he ever be clean?
The very moon lacks brightness,[d] 5
and the stars are unclean as he sees them.
What, then, of man, maggot that he is, 6
the son of man, a worm?

26 [a]The Shades[b] tremble beneath the earth; 5a
the waters[c] and their denizens are afraid.
28:22; 31:12 Ps 139:8,11-12 Pr 15:11 Before his eyes, Sheol is bare, 6
Perdition[d] itself is uncovered.
Am 9:2 He it was who spread the North[e] above the void, 7
Jb 38:6 and poised the earth on nothingness.[f]
He fastens up the waters in his clouds— 8
the mists do not tear apart under their weight.
He covers the face of the moon at the full, 9
his mist he spreads over it.[g]
22:14 He has traced a ring[h] on the surface of the waters, 10
Gn 1:7,14 at the boundary between light and dark.
The pillars of the heavens tremble, 11
they are struck with wonder when he threatens them.[i]
7:12+ With his power he calmed the Sea, 12
9:13+ Is 51:9-10 with his wisdom struck Rahab down.
His breath made the heavens luminous, 13
3:8+ Is 27:1 his hand transfixed the Fleeing Serpent.[j]
Si 43:32 All this but skirts the ways he treads, 14
a whispered echo is all that we hear of him.
But who could comprehend the thunder of his power?

Bildad's words are empty

Job spoke next. He said:[k] 1

To one so weak, what a help you are, 2
for the arm that is powerless, what a rescuer!
What excellent advice you give the unlearned, 3
never at a loss for a helpful suggestion!
But who are they aimed at, these speeches of yours, 4
1 K 22:24 and what spirit is this that comes out of you?

Job reaffirms his innocence while acknowledging God's power

27 And Job continued his solemn discourse. He said: 1

34:5,6 I swear by the living God who denies me justice, 2
by Shaddai who has turned my life sour,
that as long as a shred of life is left in me, 3
33:4 Gn 2:7 and the breath of God breathes in my nostrils,
my lips shall never speak untruth, 4
nor any lie be found on my tongue.
33:9 Far from ever admitting you to be in the right: 5

I will maintain my innocence to my dying day.
6 I take my stand on my integrity, I will not stir:
my conscience gives me no cause to blush[a] for my life.
7 May my enemy meet a criminal's end,
and my opponent suffer with the guilty.
8 For what hope, after all, has the godless when he prays,
and raises his soul to God?[b]
9 Is God likely to hear his cries
when disaster descends on him?
10 Did he make Shaddai all his delight, 22:26
calling on him at every turn?[c]
11 No: I am showing you how God's power works,
making no secret of Shaddai's designs.[d]
12 And if you all had understood them for yourselves, Ps 62:10
you would not have wasted your breath in empty words.

The speech of Zophar:[e] the accursed

13 Here is the fate that God has in store[f] for the wicked, =20:29
and the inheritance with which Shaddai endows the man of violence.
14 A sword awaits his sons, however many they may be,
and their children after them[g] will go unfed.
15 Plague[h] will bury those he leaves behind him, Ps 78:64
and their widows will have no chance to mourn them.
16 He may collect silver like dust, Pr 13:22 Qo 2:26 Si 11:18; 14:4
and gather fine clothes like clay. *20:10,14*
17 Let him gather! Some good man will wear them,
while his silver is shared among the innocent.
18 He has built himself a spider's web,[i] 8:14
made himself a watchman's shack.[j]
19 He goes to bed a rich man, but never again:[k]
he wakes to find not a penny left.
20 Terrors attack him in broad daylight,[l] 20:25
and at night a whirlwind sweeps him off.
21 An east wind picks him up and drags him away, Ps 58:9
snatching him up from his homestead.

25 a. This speech (possibly not intact) anticipates the speech of Yahweh. Some connection with the dialogue is not, however, impossible: it may be taken as Bildad's reply to Job's insinuation that God is helpless.
b. *Peace between the angels*, cf. Is 24:21; Rv 12:7-12, and the stars, cf. Is 40:26; Si 43:10.
c. 'his ambushes' Greek; 'his light' Hebr.
d. 'lacks brightness' versions.
26 a. For 26:1-4 see after 26:14. Apparently vv. 5-14 (rather than the continuance of Job's speech beginning *at 26:1) complete the fragmentary speech of* Bildad.
b. Lit. 'the Rephaim', cf. Dt 2:10+: either the dead, cf. Ps 88:10, or the weak and powerless.
c. The waters of the abyss, peopled in popular imagination by the monsters subdued at the creation, cf. 7:12+. 'are afraid' corr.
d. *In Hebr. 'Abaddon', cf. Rv 9:11, synonym for* 'Sheol'; originally the word perhaps indicated a deity of the underworld.
e. The N. quarter of the firmament, on which the latter was thought to revolve.
f. The earth rests on pillars, 9:6, but what these stand on *is beyond man's knowledge, 38:6. The only* verse in the Bible that hints at infinite space.
g. At times of eclipse. 'the moon at the full' corr.; 'throne' Hebr. 'spreads' corr.
h. 'traced a ring' corr.
i. The high mountains, which support the vault of heaven, *are rocked by thunder, the voice of God, Ps 29,* or by earthquake, Ps 18:7.
j. Leviathan, cf. 3:8+ and 7:12+.
k. Job's ironical rejoinder to Bildad who seems to have missed the point of the discussion.
27 a. 'no cause to blush' corr.; 'does not reproach' Hebr.
b. 'prays' corr.; Hebr. 'cuts off' or 'draws out his profits'. 'and raises to God' corr.; 'and God takes back' Hebr.
c. Job repeats what Eliphaz has said about the punishment of the wicked but refuses to apply it to himself.
d. Job is apparently saying that he has given a true and factual account of God's disconcerting and mysterious attitude. His friends have shut their eyes to the plain facts.
e. The fragmentary speech in 27:13-23 can hardly belong to Job; it repeats the argument of one of his friends, most probably that of Zophar.
f. 'that God has in store' corr. (lit. 'from God'); 'with God' Hebr.
g. Lit. 'their offspring' corr.; 'his offspring' Hebr.
h. Lit. 'Death', but this word sometimes means the worst of diseases; here it is personified. Cf. 18:13; Jr 15:2; 43:11; Rv 6:8.
i. Lit. 'He built his house as the spider' versions. '... as the moth' Hebr.
j. Two symbols of impermanence.
k. Lit. 'he will not begin again', with versions.
l. 'in broad daylight' corr.; 'like waters' Hebr.

Pitilessly he is turned into a target, 22
and forced to flee from the hands that menace him.
His downfall is greeted with applause, 23
and hissing meets him on every side.
24 Headlong[i] he flees from the daylight, 18acb
he shrinks from the road which runs on the heights.
The lands of his home are under a curse,
for heat and drought dry up the waters 19
and scorch what is left of his corn.[m]
The womb that shaped him forgets him 20
and his name[n] is recalled no longer.
Thus wickedness is blasted as a tree is struck.
He used to be harsh to the barren, childless woman, 21
and show no kindness to the widow.
Ps 139:12 But he who lays mighty hold on tyrants 22
rises up to take away that life which seemed secure.
He let him build his hopes on false security, 23
but kept his eyes on every step he took.
The man had his time of glory, now he vanishes, 24
30:4 drooping like a mallow plucked[o] from its bed,
and withering like an ear of corn.

D. A HYMN IN PRAISE OF WISDOM

Wisdom is beyond man's reach[a]

Dt 30:11 1 S 2:8 Ws 6:22 Si 24 28 Silver has its mines, 1
and gold a place for refining.
Iron is extracted from the earth, 2
the smelted[b] rocks yield copper.
Man makes an end of darkness 3
when he pierces to the uttermost depths
the black and lightless rock.
Mines the lamp-folk dig 4
in places where there is no foothold,
and hang suspended far from mankind.[c]
That earth from which bread comes 5
is ravaged underground by fire.[d]
Down there, the rocks are set with sapphires, 6
full of spangles of gold.
Down there is a path unknown to birds of prey, 7
unseen by the eye of any vulture;
a path not trodden by the lordly beasts,[e] 8
where no lion ever walked.
Man attacks its flinty sides, 9
upturning mountains by their roots,
driving tunnels[f] through the rocks, 10
on the watch for anything precious.
He explores the sources of rivers,[g] 11
and brings to daylight secrets that were hidden.
Qo 1:24 Si 1:6 Ba 3:15 But tell me, where does wisdom come from?[h] 12
Where is understanding to be found?
Ba 3:29-31 The road to it is still unknown to man,[i] 13
not to be found in the land of the living.
'It is not in me' says the Abyss; 14
'Nor here' replies the Sea.

15 It cannot be bought with solid gold,
not paid for with any weight of silver, Pr 18:11
16 nor be priced by the standard of the gold of Ophir,
or of precious onyx or sapphire.
17 No gold, no glass can match it in value, Ws 7:9
nor for a fine gold vase can it be bartered.
18 Nor is there need to mention coral, nor crystal;
beside wisdom pearls are not worth the fishing.
19 Topaz from Cush is worthless in comparison,
and gold, even refined, is valueless.
20 But tell me, where does wisdom come from?
Where is understanding to be found?

21 It is outside the knowledge of every living thing,
hidden from the birds in the sky.
22 Perdition and Death can only say, 26:6+
'We have heard reports of it'.
23 God alone has traced its path
and found out where it lives. Pr 2:6; 8:27-30
24 (For he sees to the ends of the earth, Ba 3:32
and observes all that lies under heaven.)
25 When he willed to give weight to the wind 36:27-33
and measured out the waters with a gauge, Ws 11:20 Is 40:12-14
26 when he made the laws and rules for the rain Ps 135:7
and mapped a route for thunderclaps to follow,
27 then he had it in sight, and cast its worth, Si 1:8-9,19
assessed it, fathomed it.[j]
28 And he said to man,
'Wisdom? It is fear of the Lord. Dt 4:6
Understanding?—avoidance of evil.' Pr 1:7+; 8:13

E. CONCLUSION OF THE DIALOGUE

Job's lament and final defence

a. His former happiness[a]

1 29 And Job continued his solemn discourse. He said:

2 Who will bring back to me the months that have gone,
and the days when God was my guardian,
3 when his lamp shone over my head, Ps 18:28
and his light was my guide in the darkness?
4 Shall I ever see my autumn days again
when God hedged round my tent;[b] 1:10

24 l. This section, 24:18-24, is placed here only conjecturally. The text is in a bad state and requires many corrections. 'from the daylight'; Hebr. 'on the face of the waters'.
m. Text corr.
n. 'his name' corr.
o. Text corr. The saltwort or mallow, lit. 'the salty plant', is an edible green plant found on the shores of the Dead Sea. V. 25 is after 24:17.
28 a. The original position and significance of this poem in the context of the dialogue are obscure. Its thesis is a preparation for that of the speech of Yahweh: Wisdom is inaccessible to man (cf. Ba 3:9–4:6, though here God reveals it exclusively to Israel) who must be content with 'the fear of God', v. 28, the only 'wisdom' suitable to him. Wisdom is sublime, not subject to cosmic law, but its mistress. Wisdom is an attribute of God, but this literary personification paves the way for the theology of the Word, cf. Pr 8:22-31+.
b. 'smelted' corr.; 'hard' Hebr.
c. 'Mines', lit. 'ravines', 'lamp-folk' corr. (ancient name for miners?). 'bang' corr.
d. 'by fire' Vulg.; 'as if by fire' Hebr.
e. Lit. 'the sons of pride', cf. 41:26.
f. Lit. 'Nile canals'.
g. That have their source in the abyss under the earth. 'explores' corr. 'sources' following Greek.
h. 'where does it come from?' With one Hebr. MS; Text, Rec. 'where is it found?'
i. 'road to' Greek; 'price of' Hebr.
j. 'reckoned its worth' corr. 'assessed' five Hebr. MSS.
29 a. Portrait of the successful life; a valuable record of the ancient Israelite view.
b. Translated according to versions.

Ps 127:3-5; 128:3 when Shaddai dwelt with me, 5
and my children were around me;
20:17 when my feet were plunged in cream, 6
and streams of oil poured from the rocks?[c]

5:4+ When I went out to the gate of the city, 7
when I took my seat in the square,
as soon as I appeared, the young men stepped aside, 8
Lv 19:32 while the older men rose to their feet.
21:5 Ws 8:10-12 Men of note interrupted their speeches, 9
and put their fingers on their lips;
the voices of rulers were silenced, 10
and their tongues stayed still in their mouths.
[d]They waited anxiously to hear me, 21
and listened in silence to what I had to say.
When I paused, there was no rejoinder, 22
and my words dropped on them, one by one.
Dt 32:2 They waited for me, as men wait for rain, 23
open-mouthed, as if to catch the year's last showers.
Pr 16:15 If I smiled at them, it was too good to be true, 24
they watched my face for the least sign of favour.
In a lordly style, I told them which course to take, 25
and like a king amid his armies,
I led them where I chose.[e]

22:6-9 My praises echoed in every ear, 11
and never an eye but smiled on me;
6:14 Ps 72:12f Is 11:4-5 because I freed the poor man when he called, 12
and the orphan who had no one to help him.
When men were dying, I it was who had their blessing; 13
if widows' hearts rejoiced, that was my doing.
19:9 I had dressed myself in righteousness like a garment; 14
Ps 132:9 Is 59:17 Si 4:9 justice, for me, was cloak and turban.
I was eyes for the blind, 15
and feet for the lame.
Pr 29:7 Who but I was father of the poor? 16
The stranger's case had a hearing from me.
I used to break the fangs of wicked men, 17
Pr 30:14 and snatch their prey from between their jaws.

So I thought to myself, 'I shall die in honour, 18
Ps 1:1-3 my days like a palm tree's for number.[f]
My roots thrust out to the water, 19
my leaves freshened by the falling dew at night.
My reputation will never fade, 20
30:11 and the bow[g] in my hands will gain new strength.'

b. His present misery

30 And now I am the laughing-stock 1
of my juniors, the young people,
whose fathers I did not consider fit
to put with the dogs that looked after my flock.[a]
24:4f The strength of their hands would have been useless to me, 2
enfeebled as they were,[b]
worn out by want and hunger. 3
They used to gnaw the roots of desert plants,
and brambles from abandoned ruins;[c]

4 and plucked mallow, and brushwood leaves, 24:24
making their meals off roots of broom.
5 Outlawed from the society of men,
who, as against thieves, raised hue and cry against them,
6 they made their dwellings on ravines' steep sides,
in caves or clefts in the rock.
7 You could hear them wailing from the bushes,
as they huddled together in the thistles.
8 Their children are as worthless a brood as they were,
nameless people, outcasts of society.[d]
9 And these are the ones that now sing ballads about me,
and make me the talk of the town! Ps 69:12 Lm 3:1,14
10 To them I am loathsome, they stand aloof from me,
do not scruple to spit in my face.
11 Because he has unbent my bow and chastened me 29:20+
they cast the bridle from their mouth.[e]
12 That brood of theirs rises to right of me, 16:7 Ps 109:6 Zc 3:1
stone are their weapons,[f]
and they take threatening strides towards me.
13 They have cut me off from all escape,
there is no one to check their attack.[g]
14 They move in, as though through a wide breach,
and I am crushed[h] beneath the rubble.
15 Terrors turn to meet me,
my confidence is blown away[i] as if by the wind;
my hope of safety passes like a cloud.

16 And now the life in me trickles away, 16:12-17
days of grief have gripped me.
17 At night-time, sickness[j] saps my bones,
I am gnawed by wounds that never sleep.
18 With immense power it has caught me[k] by the clothes,
clutching at the collar of my coat.
19 It has thrown me into the mud
where I am no better than dust and ashes.

20 I cry to you, and you give me no answer;
I stand before you, but you take no notice.[l]
21 You have grown cruel in your dealings with me, 34:6
your hand lies on me, heavy and hostile.
22 You carry me up to ride the wind, Ps 109:23
tossing me about in a tempest.
23 I know it is to death that you are taking me,
the common meeting place of all that lives.

24 Yet have I ever laid a hand on the poor
when they cried out for justice in calamity?[m]

c. Hebr. adds 'with me'.
d. Vv. 21-25 are placed before v. 11.
e. Text corr.; Hebr. 'like one who comforts the afflicted'.
f. 'in honour' (lit. 'with my horn') corr. 'like a palm tree's' versions; 'like sand' Hebr.
g. The bow symbolises strength, cf. Gn 49:24.

30 a. Beggars, social outcasts, cf. 24:4f. Job has sunk below their level.
b. Lit. 'their strength had perished, all of it'. Line corr.
c. 'roots' an addition. 'brambles' conjectural translation.
d. Text corr.
e. 'my bow' *qere*, Syr. and Targ. (lit. 'my string'); 'his string' *ketib*. 'from their mouth' corr.
f. Lit. 'they stone me with weapons'; corr.
g. Lit. 'they attack and no one repels them'. Line corr.
h. Lit. 'I am rolled', following Greek.
i. Lit. 'is driven off', following Greek.
j. 'sickness' corr.
k. 'caught me' Greek; 'is disfigured' Hebr.
l. 'you take no notice' corr. with Vulg.
m. Text corr.

Have I not wept for all whose life is hard, 25
felt pity for the penniless?
I hoped for happiness, but sorrow came; 26
I looked for light, but there was darkness.
My stomach seethes, is never still, 27
for every day brings further suffering.
Sombre I go, yet no one comforts[n] me, 28
and if I rise in the council, I rise to weep.
I have become the jackal's brother 29
and the ostrich's companion
Ps 119:83 Lm 3:4 My skin has turned black on me, 30
my bones are burnt with fever.
My harp is tuned to funeral wails, 31
my flute to the voice of mourners.

Ps 26 **Job's apologia**[a]

31 I made a pact with my eyes, 1
Ex 20:14,17 Dt 5:18,21 Si 9:5 Mt 5:27-29 not to linger on any virgin.[b]
Now, what shares does God deal out on high, 2
what lots does Shaddai assign from heaven,
if not disaster for the wicked, 3
and calamities for the iniquitous?
Ps 139:2 But surely he sees how I behave, 4
does he not count all my steps?
Have I been a fellow traveller with falsehood, 5
or hastened my steps towards deceit?[c]
Pr 11:1; 20:10 If he weighs me on honest scales, 6
being God, he cannot fail to see my innocence.
If my feet have wandered from the rightful path, 7
or if my eyes have led my heart astray,
or if my hands are smirched with any stain,[d]
let another eat what I have sown, 8
and let my young shoots all be rooted out.
Pr 7 If I ever lost my heart to any woman, 9
or lurked at my neighbour's door,[e]
let my wife grind corn that is not mine, 10
let her sleep between others' sheets.
Dt 22:22-24 Pr 6:32-35 Jn 8:4-5 For I should have committed a sin of lust, 11
a crime punishable by the law,[f]
26:6+ and should have lit a fire burning till Perdition, 12
which would have devoured[g] all my harvesting.
Ex 21:2f Lv 25:39f Dt 5:14-15 Jr 34:8f If ever I have infringed the rights of slave 13
or maidservant in legal actions against me[h]—
what shall I do, when God stands up? 14
What shall I say, when he holds his assize?
Pr 17:5; 22:22 Ws 16:7 Ep 6:9 Col 4:1 They, no less than I, were created in the womb 15
by the one same God who shaped us all within our mothers.
If my land calls down vengeance on my head[i] 38
and every furrow runs with tears,
if without payment I have eaten fruit grown on it 39
or given those who toiled there cause to groan,[j]
let brambles grow where once was wheat, 40a
and foul weeds where barley thrived.[k]

6:14; 22:9 Tb 4:7-11,16 Is 58:7 Mt 25:35-36 Have I been insensible to poor men's needs,[l] 16
or let a widow's eyes grow dim?

17 Or taken my share of bread alone,
not giving a share to the orphan?
18 I, whom God has fostered father-like, from childhood,
and guided[m] since I left my mother's womb.
19 Have I ever seen a wretch in need of clothing,
or a beggar going naked,
20 without his having cause to bless me from his heart,
as he felt the warmth of the fleece from my lambs?
21 Have I raised my hand against the guiltless,[n]
presuming on my credit at the gate?
22 If so, then let my shoulder fall from its socket,
my arm be shattered at the joint.
23 God's terror would indeed descend on me;[o]
how could I hold my ground before his majesty?
24 Have I put all my trust in gold,[p] Ps 49:6; 52:7 Pr 11:28 Si 31:5-10 Mt 6:24
from finest gold sought my security?
25 Have I ever gloated over my great wealth,
or the riches that my hands have won?
26 Or has the sight of the sun in its glory, Dt 4:19 Ws 13:2 Jr 8:2 Ezk 8:16
or the glow of the moon as it walked the sky,
27 stolen my heart, so that my hand
blew them a secret kiss?[q]
28 That too would be a criminal offence,
to have denied the supreme God.
29 Have I taken pleasure in my enemies' misfortunes,[r] Pr 24:17-18 Mt 5:43-48p
or made merry when disaster overtook them,
30 I who allowed my tongue to do no wrong,
by cursing them or vowing them to death?
31 The people of my tent, did they not say,
'Is there a man he has not filled with meat?'[s]
32 No stranger ever had to sleep outside,
my door was always open to the traveller.[t]
33 Have I ever hidden my sins from men,[u] Ps 32:5
keeping my iniquity secret in my breast?
34 Have I ever stood so in fear of common gossip,

n. 'no one comforts' corr.; 'without the sun' Hebr.

31 a. O.T. morality at its best, approaching the morality of gospel times. The form of this protestation of innocence is that of a conditional imprecation against oneself, required by law of the accused, Ex 22:9-10; Nb 5:20-22; 1 K 8:31-32.

b. Job begins with the most hidden sins, lust pandered to by the eyes, cf. v. 7.

c. Fraud in barter or in the market. Job, appealing to the law of retaliation, asks that he himself be justly weighed.

d. More sins Job has not coveted or stolen.

e. The sin of adultery.

f. 'punishable by the law' Targ. and Vulg.

g. 'devoured' corr.; 'uprooted' Hebr.

h. Relations between master and servant have always been humanely regulated by the Law. V. 15 bases the rights of servants on the fact that all men are God's creatures. St Paul observes that servant and master have the one Lord.

i. Another kind of injustice: by robbing owners of land of their rights and labourers of their wages. We place vv. 38-40 here; the text puts them after Job's apologia.

j. 'who toiled there' corr.; 'its owners' Hebr.

k. Approximate translation.

l. From justice to kindness, with gratitude to God as its motive.

m. 'guided (me)' corr.; Hebr. 'I guided her' (my mother).

n. Threatening him with corrupt legal proceedings. 'guiltless' corr.; 'orphan' Hebr.

o. Line corr. Hebr. 'for I feared calamity from God'.

p. Greed and arrogance of the rich who think they can do without God.

q. Lit. 'has my heart been secretly seduced, and my hand kissed my mouth?' From the worship of mammon to the worship of the stars. In ancient times the kiss was a sign of adoration.

r. Job is not speaking of retaliation, commonly practised and regarded as common law (though cf. Ex 23:4-5; Lv 19:8; Pr 20:22; 25:21-22); he is refusing even to rejoice over an enemy's misfortune or to call down curses on him.

s. Hospitality was the prince of virtues in the ancient East. Vulg. translates very freely 'Who will give us of his flesh that we may be satisfied?'

t. 'to the traveller' corr.; 'to the way' Hebr.

u. 'from men' corr.; Hebr. 'like men', which would mean 'as ordinary men do' or 'as Adam did'.

or so dreaded any family's contempt,
that I have been reduced to silence, not venturing out of doors?[v]

Who can get me a hearing from God?[w] 35
I have had my say, from A to Z;[x] now let Shaddai answer me.
When my adversary has drafted his writ[y] against me
I shall wear it on my shoulder, 36
and bind it round my head like a royal turban.
I will give him an account of every step of my life, 37
and go as boldly as a prince to meet him.
End of the words of Job.[z] 40b

III. THE SPEECHES OF ELIHU[a]

Elihu joins the discussion

32 These three men said no more to Job, because he was convinced of his 1
innocence.[b] •But another man was infuriated—Elihu son of Barachel the 2
Gn 22:21 Jr 25:23 Buzite, of the clan of Ram. He fumed with rage against Job for thinking that
he was right and God was wrong; •and he was equally angry with the three 3
friends for giving up the argument and thus admitting that God could be unjust.[c]
While they were speaking,[d] Elihu had held himself back, because they were older 4
than he was; •but when he saw that the three men had not another word to say 5
in answer, his anger burst out. •Thus Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite spoke 6
next. He said:

Prologue

Ps 119:100 I am still young,
and you are old,
so I was shy, afraid,
to tell you what I know.
12:12; 15:10 Si 25:4-6 I told myself, 'Old age should speak, 7
advancing years will utter wisdom'.
Pr 2:6 But now I know that it is a breath in man, 8
the inspiration of Shaddai, that gives discernment.[e]
Ws 4:8 Great age does not give wisdom, 9
nor longevity sound judgement.
And so I ask you for a hearing;[f] 10
now it is my turn to tell what I know.
There was a time when I hoped for much from your speeches: 11
I gave your reasonings a ready hearing,
and watched you choose your words.
I gave you all my attention, 12
and I can say that no one gave Job the lie,
not one of you disproved his statements.
4:12f; 11:6 So do not dare to say that you have found wisdom, 13
or that your teaching is from God not man.[g]
I am not going to follow the same line of argument;[h] 14
my reply to Job will be couched in different terms.

They have been nonplussed, baffled for an answer, 15
words have failed them.
I have been waiting. Since they are silent, 16
and have abandoned all efforts to reply,
now I will have my say, 17
my turn has come to say what I know.
For I am filled with words, 18
choked by the rush of them within me.

19 I have a feeling in my heart like new wine seeking a vent, Jr 20:9 Mt 9:17p
and bursting a brand-new wineskin.[f]
20 Nothing will bring relief but speech,
I will open my mouth and give my answer.
21 I shall not show any partiality towards anyone,
nor heap on any fulsome flatteries.
22 I have no skill in flattery,
my creator would soon silence me otherwise.

Job's presumption

1 33 Now, Job, be kind enough to listen to my words,
and attend to all I have to say.
2 Now as I open my mouth,
and my tongue shapes words against my palate,
3 my heart shall utter sayings full of wisdom,[a]
and my lips speak the honest truth.
5 Refute me, if you can.
Prepare your ground to oppose me.
6 See, I am your fellow man, not a god;[b]
like you, I was fashioned out of clay. 10:8
4 God's breath it was that made me, 27:3 Gn 2:7
the breathing of Shaddai that gave me life.
7 Thus, no fear of me need disturb you, 13:21
my hand will not lie heavy over you.[c]
8 How could you say in my hearing—
for the sound of your words did not escape me—
9 'I am clean, and sinless, 10:7; 16:17
I am pure, free of all fault.[d] 23:10; 27:5
10 Yet he is inventing grievances[e] against me,[f]
and imagining me his enemy. 13:24; 19:11
11 He puts me in the stocks, 13:27
he watches my every step'?
12 In saying so, I tell you, you are wrong:
God does not fit man's measure.
13 Why do you rail at him
for not replying to you, word for word?
14 God speaks first in one way,
and then in another, but no one notices.
15 He speaks by dreams, and visions that come in the night, 4:12-16 Gn 20:3; 41:1f Dn 4:2f

v. Vv. 33-34 refer not to any specific sin but to an attitude that presupposes guilt. Job has never had to hide from men; he is prepared even to be seen by God, vv. 35-37.

w. Lit. 'Oh that I had one ('God' corr.) to hear me!'

x. Lit. 'Here is my *tau*' (last letter of the alphabet).

y. The scroll with the accusation written on it. Job, confident of refuting the charge, would wear it as a badge of honour.

z. Editorial note. Vv. 38-40 will be found before v. 16.

32 a. Elihu's intervention comes unexpectedly, nor is it referred to in the epilogue. Elihu's argument, style and vocabulary are very different from those of the dialogue, and certain passages anticipate the speech of Yahweh. The speech of Elihu, therefore, seems to have been added to Jb by another author.

b. Nothing can shake Job's conviction; further words are useless.

c. The text reads '(declaring) Job (in the wrong)', a scribal correction.

d. 'While they were speaking' corr.

e. Elihu contrasts 'charismatic' wisdom, revealed by the spirit, with the wisdom of experience. The traditional wisdom of the East, brought into Israel by the sages, insisted on the primacy of divine wisdom, cf. Pr 21:30, the connection between wisdom and righteousness, cf. Pr 1:7; 10:31; 15:33; Ps 119:99-100, and the conviction that God is the giver of wisdom, Pr 2:6; 16:33. Inspired wisdom was also known outside the schools of the sages, cf. Is 11:2; Gn 41:38-39. In Dn 5:11,12,14, Wisdom is the sphere of operation of the spirit. This is developed in Ws (1:5-7; 7:22-23; 9:17) in preparation for the new revelation of the Spirit in the N.T., cf. 1 Co 2:6-16.

f. Lit. 'Hear you me' versions; 'Hear thou me' Hebr.

g. 'your teaching' corr. Elihu exaggerates the claims of those he criticises.

h. Lit. 'It is not thus ('thus' corr.) I shall argue'.

i. Text corr.

33 a. Text corr.

b. 'not a god' corr.; 'for God' Hebr.

c. Text corr.; cf. Greek.

d. Summary of several of Job's protestations.

e. 'grievances' Syr.; 'enmities' Hebr.

f. Interpreting all Job's complaints that God persecutes him without cause.

when slumber comes on mankind,
and men are all asleep in bed.
Then it is he whispers in the ear of man, 16
or may frighten him with fearful sights,[g]
to turn him away from evil-doing,[h] 17
and make an end of his pride;
to save his soul from the pit 18
and his life from the pathway to Sheol.
Dt 8:5+ Pr 3:12 With suffering, too, he corrects man on his sick-bed,[i] 19
when his bones keep trembling with palsy;
Ps 107:18 when his whole self is revolted by food, 20
and his appetite spurns dainties;
19:20 when his flesh rots as you watch it, 21
and his bare[j] bones begin to show;
when his soul is drawing near to the pit, 22
and his life to the dwelling of the dead.[k]
36:10 Then there is an Angel by his side, 23
a Mediator,[l] chosen out of thousands,
to remind a man where his duty lies,
to take pity on him and to say, 24
'Release him from descent into the pit,
for I have found a ransom for his life';[m]
Ps 103:5 his flesh recovers the bloom[n] of its youth, 25
he lives again as he did when he was young.
He prays to God who has restored him to favour, 26
and comes, in happiness, to see his face.
He publishes[o] far and wide the news of his vindication,
singing before his fellow men this hymn of praise, 27
'I sinned and left the path of right,
but God has not punished me as my sin deserved.[p]
He has spared my soul from going down into the pit, 28
and is allowing my life to continue in the light.'
All this God does 29
again and yet again for man,
Ps 56:13 rescuing his soul from the pit, 30
and letting the light of life shine bright on him.

Job, give me your attention, listen well; 31
keep silence: I have more to say.
If you have anything to say, refute me, 32
speak out, for I would gladly recognise your innocence.
If you have not, then listen: 33
keep silence, while I teach you wisdom.

The three Sages have failed to justify God

34 Elihu continued his speech. He said: 1

You men of wisdom, listen to my words: 2
lend me your ears, you learned men.
=12:11 The ear is a judge of speeches, 3
just as the palate can tell one food from another.
Let us discover together where justice lies, 4
and settle among us what is best.
27:2 Now Job has said, 'I am in the right, 5
and God refuses to grant me justice.
9:15; 30:21 The judge who judges me is ill-disposed, 6
and though I have not sinned, my wounds are past all cure.'[a]

7 Are there many men like Job,
who drink scurrility[b] like water, 34:7
8 who keep company with evil-doers,
and march in step with the wicked?
9 Did he not say it was useless
for man to try to please God?
10 Listen then to me, like intelligent men. 8:3-7
So far is God removed from wickedness,
and Shaddai from injustice,
11 that he requites a man for what he does,[c] Ps 62:12 Pr 24:12 Si 16:14
treating each one as his way of life deserves. ↗ Mt 16:27 ↗ Rm 2:6
12 God never does wrong, do not doubt that!
Shaddai does not deflect the course of right. Rm 3:5
13 It is not as if someone else had given him the earth in trust,[d]
or confided the whole universe to his care.
14 Were he to recall his breath, Gn 2:7
to draw his breathing back into himself,[e] Ps 104:29-30
15 things of flesh would perish all together, Qo 3:20
and man would return to dust. Gn 3:19; 6:3
16 If you have any intelligence, listen to this,
and lend your ear to what I have to say.
17 *Could an enemy of justice ever govern?* Ws 6:7 Rm 3:5
Would you dare condemn the Just One, the Almighty,
18 who can tell[f] kings that they are good for nothing, Is 40:23-24
and treat noblemen like criminals,
19 who shows no partiality to princes Si 35:12
and makes no distinction between the rich and the poor,
all alike being made by his own hands?
20 They die, they are gone in an instant,
great though they are, they perish in the dead of night: Ex 12:29 Ws 18:14-16
it costs him no effort to remove a tyrant.[g]
21 His eyes, you see, keep watch on all men's ways, Ps 33:14-15 Jr 32:19 Heb 4:13
and he observes their every step.
22 Not darkness, nor the deepest shadow,
can hide the wrong-doer.
23 He serves no writ[h] on men
summoning them to appear before God's court:
24 he smashes great men's power without enquiry Dn 2:21
and sets up others in their places.
25 He knows well enough what they are about,
and one fine night he throws them down for men to trample on.

g. Text corr.

b. Lit. 'from his deeds' Vulg. and Targ.; 'from the deed' Hebr. 'make an end' corr.; 'hide', 'cover' Hebr.

i. God's message comes to man in revelation (vv. 15-18) or (v. 14) by ordeal such as Job's.

j. 'bare' corr.

k. 'dwelling of the dead' corr.

l. Lit. 'an interpreter'. The Angel 'interprets' the meaning of suffering to the sick man, makes him *realise his sinfulness*, v. 27, and *intercedes for him* with God, v. 24. Cf. 5:1+. This idea has roots in the O.T.: the just man's intercession, cf. 42:8+, and his atonement for others, Is 53:10; the angels as intermediaries of prophetic revelation (Ezekiel and Zechariah) and as man's protectors, Ps 91:11-13, conveying his prayers to God, Tb 12:12; cf. Rv 8:3f. Later, Jewish apocryphal literature exemplifies this doctrine. There is an easy *transition from this to the* 'guardian angel', or mediating angel, of Christian revelation, cf. Tb 5:4+; Mt 18:10; Ac 12:15.

m. 'release him' Syr., Vulg. 'for his life' added.

n. 'bloom' (lit. 'freshness') corr.

o. 'publishes' corr.

p. Text corr. following Greek.

34 a. Text corr.

b. Misreading Job's attitude, Elihu classifies him as one of the 'scornful men' attacked in wisdom literature, cf. Pr 21:24.

c. Classical formulation of the doctrine of retribution. In the N.T. this is usually referred to the Last Day.

d. The argument seems to be this: God is not the vicegerent of the universe; he does not administer the laws of someone else: they are the creation of his own omnipotence. Neither self-interest, therefore, nor force, can make him violate justice. Cf. Ws 11:20-26; 12:11-18.

e. 'draw back' versions; 'set' Hebr. *qere*. 'his heart' is omitted and 'his breath' transposed.

f. Reading present participle with versions.

g. Lit. 'he removes'; text corr.

h. Lit. 'a stated time' (corr.), i.e. to appear for judgement.

'He strikes them down for their wickedness, 26
and makes them prisoners for all to see.

You may say,[j] 'They have so turned from him, 27
and so ignored his ways,
that the poor have cried out to him against them 28
and the wailing of the humble has assailed his ears,
yet he is unmoved, and nothing can touch him; 29
he hides his face and nobody can see him'.
Ws 11:23; 12:2 But nonetheless he does take pity on nations and on men,
freeing the godless man from the meshes of distress. 30
If such a man says to God, 31
'I was led astray, I will sin no more.
If I did wrong, tell me about it, 32
if I have been unjust, I will be so no more'—
in such a case, do you think he ought to punish him,[k] 33
you who reject his decisions?
Since it is you who make this choice, not I,
let us all share your knowledge!
But this is what all sensible folk will say, 34
and any wise man among my hearers,
'There is no wisdom in Job's speech, 35
his words lack sense.
Put him unsparingly to the proof 36
since his retorts are the same as those that the wicked make.[l]
For to sin he adds rebellion, 37
calling justice into question in our midst[m]
and heaping abuse on God.'

God is not indifferent to what happens on earth

35 Elihu continued his speech. He said: 1

Do you presume to maintain that you are in the right, 2
to insist on your innocence before God,
7:20 even to ask him, 'How does it affect you, 3
what harm has it done you if I have sinned?'[a]
Well then, this is how I will answer you, 4
and your friends as well.

Look up at the skies, look at them well, 5
and see how high the clouds are above you.[b]
If you sin, what do you achieve against him? 6
If you heap up crimes, what is the injury you do him?
22:3; Lk 17:10 If you are just, what do you give him, 7
what benefit does he receive at your hands?
Your fellow men are the ones to suffer from your crimes, 8
humanity is the gainer if you are good.
When people groan[c] under the weight of oppression, 9
or cry out under the tyranny of the mighty,
no one thinks to ask, 'Where is God, my maker, 10
who makes glad songs ring out at dead of night,
who makes us cleverer than the earth's wild beasts, 11
wiser than the birds in the sky?'
Then they cry aloud, but he does not answer 12
because of man's base pride.
22:13 How idle to maintain that God is deaf, 13
that Shaddai notices nothing!

14 You even claim, 'He does not see me:
my cause is exposed before him, and yet I wait and wait'.[d]
15 Or even, 'His anger never punishes, 21
he does not seem to know of men's rebellion'.[e]
16 Hence when Job opens his mouth, it is for idle talk:
his spate of words comes out of ignorance.

The real meaning of Job's sufferings[a] 5:17; 22:23-30

1 **36** Elihu went on speaking. He said:
2 Be patient with me a little longer while I explain,
for I have more to say on God's behalf.
3 I will range far afield for my arguments
to prove my Maker just.
4 What I say contains no fallacies, I assure you,
you see before you an enlightened man.
5 [b]God does not spurn the blameless man
6 or let the sinner live on in all his power.
He accords justice to the poor,
7 and upholds the good man's rights.
When he raises kings to thrones, 2 Ch 33:11-13
if they grow proud of their unending sway, Dn 4:14
8 then he fetters them with chains, Ps 107:10
binding them in the bondage of distress.
9 He shows them all that they have done,
and all the sins of pride they have committed.
10 He whispers a message in their ears, 33:23
urging them to amend themselves.
11 If they listen and do as he says,
their days end in happiness,
and their closing years are full of ease.
12 If not, then a thunderbolt destroys them,
and death comes on them unawares.
13 Yes the stubborn who cherish[c] anger,
and when he shackles them, do not ask for help:
14 they die in their youth,
or lead a life despised by all.[d]
15 The wretched, however, he saves by their very wretchedness,
and uses distress to open their eyes.[e]
16 [f]For you, no less, he plans relief from sorrow.
Once you lived in luxury unbounded,
with rich food piled high on your table.
17 But you did not execute justice on the wicked,
you cheated orphaned children of their rights.

l. The very corrupt text of vv. 26-33 is corrected.
j. Objection from experience: notorious sinners are allowed to go unpunished. Elihu replies that this is mercy tempering judgement. Cf. Ws 11:23; 12:2.
k. Job's criticism of God's methods is based on too rigid an idea of distributive justice which, if it were accurate, would admit of no exception and would forbid God ever to pardon. It would follow that Job should not apply this rigid idea to his own case; he should rather believe that God is testing him from a different motive. Elihu's own conclusion, however, is that Job adds contumacy to sin, v. 37.
l. Text corr.
m. Line corr.

35 a. Line corr. following Greek and Vulg.: 'what good does it do me (to be) without sin?' Hebr.
b. Implying that God is still further beyond man's reach.
c. Elihu apparently thinks of those who are victims of the malice of others, v. 8. If God does not help them it is because they have no trust in him; pride has hardened their hearts.
d. Text corr.
e. 'man's rebellion' Vulg.

36 a. Eliphaz has already stated, 5:17, and elaborated, 22:23-30, the theme of this speech. The text is obscure, and it is hard to decide what precisely is Elihu's own contribution.
b. The text of vv. 5-8 is corrected.
c. 'cherish' corr.
d. Corr. (lit. 'like that of temple prostitutes').
e. Lit. 'open their ear': make them understand. Cf. Ps 40:6; Is 50:5.
f. The very corrupt text of vv. 16-20 is corrected.

In future beware of being led astray by riches, 18
or corrupted by fat bribes.
Prosecute the rich, not merely the penniless; 19
strong-armed men as well as those who are powerless.
Do not trample on those you do not know 20
to install your relations in their place.
Avoid any tendency to wrong-doing, 21
for such has been the true cause of your trials.

Si 42:15-43:33 **A hymn to God's wisdom and omnipotence**[g]

Ps 95:3 Look, by reason of his power God is supreme, 22
what teacher can be compared with him?
Is 40:13 Rm 11:33-34 Who has ever told him which course to take, 23
or dared to say to him, 'You have done wrong'?
Turn your mind rather to praising his works, 24
a theme that many men have sung:
a sight that everyone can see, 25
that man may gaze on from afar.
Ps 145:3 Yes, the greatness of God exceeds our knowledge, 26
the number of his years is past computing.
28:25 He it is who keeps the raindrops back, 27
dissolving the showers into mist,
which otherwise the clouds would spill 28
in floods over all mankind.
Ps 104:13f Thanks to them[h] he nourishes the nations 31
with generous gifts of food.
Ps 18:9-14 And who[i] can fathom how he spreads the clouds,[j] 29
or why such crashes thunder from his tent?
He spreads out the mist, wrapping it about him, 30
and covers the tops of the mountains.[k]
He gathers up[l] the lightning in his hands, 32
choosing the mark it is to reach;
his thunder gives warning of its coming: 33
wrath overtakes iniquity.[m]

Si 16:19 37 At this my own heart quakes, 1
and leaps from its place.
Ps 18:13,28 Listen, oh listen, to the blast of his voice 2
and the sound that blares from his mouth.
He hurls his lightning below the span of heaven, 3
it strikes to the very ends of the earth.
Ps 29:3-4 After it comes the roar of his voice, 4
the peal of God's majestic thunder.
He does not check his thunderbolts[a]
until his voice resounds no more.
5:9 No doubt of it, but God reveals wonders,[b] 5
and does great deeds that we cannot understand.
When he says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth' 6
or tells the rain to pour down in torrents,[c]
Ps 104:19-23 he brings all men's strivings to a standstill 7
so that each must acknowledge his hand at work.
All the beasts go back to their dens, 8
taking shelter in their lairs.
The storm wind comes from the Mansion of the South, 9
9:9 and the north winds usher in the cold.[d]
God breathes, and the ice is there, 10
the surface of the waters freezes over.

11 He weighs the clouds down with moisture,
and the storm clouds radiate his lightning.
12 He himself guides their wheeling motion
directing all their seasonal changes:[e]
they carry out his orders to the letter
all over his inhabited world.
13 Whether for punishing earth's peoples
or for a work of mercy, he despatches them.[f]
14 Listen to all this Job: no backsliding now!
Meditate on God's wonders.
15 Can you tell how God controls them
or how his clouds make the lightning flash?
16 Can you tell how he holds the clouds in balance: Pr 8:28
a miracle of consummate skill?
17 When your clothes are hot to your body
and the earth lies still under the south wind,
18 can you help him to spread the vault of heaven, Gn 1:6
or temper that mirror of cast metal?[g]
19 Tell me what to say to him:[h]
. . . . . .
20 Can my words carry weight with him?
Do man's commands reach his ears?
21 There are times when the light vanishes
behind darkening clouds;
then comes the wind, sweeping them away,
22 and brightness[i] spreads from the north.
God is clothed in fearful splendour: Ex 24:16+
23 he, Shaddai, is far beyond our reach.
Supreme in power, in equity,
excelling in justice, yet no oppressor—
24 no wonder that men fear him,
and thoughtful men hold him in awe.[j]

IV. THE SPEECHES OF YAHWEH

FIRST SPEECH

Job must bow to the creator's wisdom 9:2 Gn 1:1 Jr 10:12

1 38 Then from the heart of the tempest[a] Yahweh gave Job his answer.
He said:

g. After his explanation of the ways of God, Elihu proceeds to a eulogy on his power and wisdom. Same procedure in Rm 11:33.
h. The clouds. 'nourishes' corr.; 'judges' Hebr.
i. 'And who' Syr.
j. The storm. The clouds, God's 'tent', gather as the thunder, 'the voice' of Yahweh, roars; they descend and God shoots the 'arrow' of his lightning. Cf. Ps 18:9-14; 29; Ex 13:22+; 19:16+.
k. 'the mist' Targ. (lit. 'his smoke'); 'his light' Hebr. 'the tops of the mountains' corr.; 'the roots of the sea' Hebr.
l. 'he gathers up' corr.; 'he covers' Hebr.
m. Text corr.

37 a. 'his thunderbolts' corr.; 'he does not check them' Hebr.
b. Line corr. Hebr. 'God thunders wondrously with his voice'.
c. 'pour down in torrents' corr. (lit. 'be strong'); 'his strength' Hebr.
d. The 'Mansion of the South', cf. 9:9: lit. the 'mansion', or storehouse (cf. 38:22; Ps 135:7) of the hurricane, which is a southerly wind. The 'north winds': lit. 'the scatterers'.
e. Text corr. (lit. 'his guidance makes them change'); Hebr. 'and it (the lightning) turns round and round under his guidance'. The rest of the verse is also corrected.
f. 'earth's peoples', 'he despatches them': corr.
g. The firmament, the brazen summer sky.
h. The second line, obscure in this context, reads 'we shall hold no discussion by reason of darkness'.
i. 'brightness' corr.
j. Lit. 'to him (is owed) the reverence' Greek, Syr.; 'he does not see' Hebr.

38 a. The familiar description of theophany, evoking the overwhelming power of God, cf. Ps 18:7-15; 50:3; Na 1:3; Ezk 1:4, cf. Ex 13:22+; 19:16+.

42:3 Jdt 8:12 Is 40:13
Who is this obscuring my designs 2
with his empty-headed words?
Brace yourself like a fighter;[b] 3
now it is my turn to ask questions and yours to inform me.
Is 40:12 Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? 4
Tell me, since you are so well-informed!
Zc 1:16 Who decided the dimensions of it, do you know? 5
Or who stretched the measuring line across it?
26:7+ Ps 65:6; 118:22 What supports its pillars at their bases? 6
Who laid its cornerstone
Ezr 3:10 Ps 19:1f; 148:2-3 Ba 3:34 Zc 4:7 when all the stars of the morning were singing with joy, 7
and the Sons of God in chorus were chanting praise?
2 M 9:8 Ps 33:7 Who[c] pent up the sea behind closed doors 8
when it leapt tumultuous out of the womb,
when I wrapped it in a robe of mist 9
and made black clouds its swaddling bands;
when I marked the bounds it was not to cross 10
and made it fast with a bolted gate?
7:12+ Ps 65:7; 104:6-9 Pr 8:29 Come thus far, I said, and no farther: 11
here your proud waves shall break.[d]
Ps 57:8 Have you ever in your life given orders to the morning 12
or sent the dawn to its post,
telling it to grasp the earth by its edges 13
and shake the wicked out of it,
when it changes the earth[e] to sealing clay 14
and dyes it as a man dyes clothes;
24:13-17 stealing the light from wicked men[f] 15
and breaking the arm raised to strike?
Have you journeyed all the way to the sources of the sea,[g] 16
or walked where the Abyss is deepest?
Have you been shown the gates of Death 17
10:21-22 or met the janitors of Shadowland?[h]
Have you an inkling of the extent of the earth? 18
Tell me all about it if you have!
Which is the way to the home of the light,[i] 19
and where does darkness live?
You could then show them the way to their proper places, 20
or put them on the path[j] to where they live!
If you know all this, you must have been born with them, 21
you must be very old by now!
Ps 147:17 Si 43:13 Have you ever visited the place where the snow is kept, 22
or seen where the hail is stored up,
Ex 9:18-26 Jos 10:11 which I keep for times of stress, 23
for days of battle and war?
Is 28:17; 30:30 From which direction does the lightning fork 24
when it scatters sparks[k] over the earth?
Who carves a channel for the downpour, 25
and hacks a way for the rolling thunder,
so that rain may fall on lands where no one lives, 26
and the deserts void of human dwelling,
giving drink to the lonely wastes 27
and making grass spring where everything was dry?[l]
Has the rain a father? 28
Who begets the dewdrops?
What womb brings forth the ice, 29

and gives birth to the frost of heaven,
30 when the waters grow hard[m] as stone
and the surface of the deep congeals?

31 Can you fasten the harness of the Pleiades, 9:9+ Ps 19:1f Am 5:8
or untie Orion's bands?
32 Can you guide the morning star season by season
and show the Bear and its cubs which way to go?[n]
33 Have you grasped the celestial laws?
Could you make their writ run on the earth?
34 Can your voice carry as far as the clouds
and make the pent-up waters do your bidding?[o]
35 Will lightning flashes come at your command Jdt 9:6
and answer, 'Here we are'? Ba 3:35
36 Who gave the ibis wisdom
and endowed the cock with foreknowledge?[p]
37 Whose skill details every cloud
and tilts the flasks of heaven
38 until the soil cakes into a solid mass
and clods of earth cohere together?

39 Do you find a prey for the lioness[q] Ps 104:20-22
and satisfy the hunger of her whelps
40 when they crouch in their dens
and lurk in their lairs?
41 Who makes provision for the raven
when his squabs cry out to God Ps 147:9
and crane their necks in hunger?[r]

1 **39** Do you know how mountain goats give birth,[a]
or have you ever watched the hinds in labour?
2 How many months do they carry their young?
At what time do they give birth?
3 They crouch to drop their young,
and let their burdens fall in the open desert;[b]
4 and when the calves have grown and gathered strength
they leave them, never to return.

5 Who gave the wild donkey his freedom, 11:12
and untied the rope from his proud neck?[c]
6 I have given him the desert as a home,
the salt plains as his own habitat.

b. 'like a fighter' Syr., Targ.; 'like a man' Hebr. So also in 40:7. The situation is reversed: Yahweh now attacks, and challenges Job.

c. A question (with Vulg.).

d. 'shall break' Greek, Vulg.

e. Lit. 'It (the earth) is changed'. The 'clay' is red in colour. 'dyes it' corr.

f. Not the light of day: night is their 'light', cf. 24:13f.

g. The springs from which, it was thought, the seas were supplied.

h. 'the janitors' Greek; 'the gates' Hebr. 'Shadowland' is Sheol, Nb 16:33+. On 'the gates of Death', cf. Is 38:10; Ps 9:13; 107:18; Ws 16:13.

i. Thought of as a substance distinct from sun or moon, cf. Gn 1:3.

j. 'put them on the path' corr. (lit. 'take them back by the paths'); 'that you may discern the paths' Hebr.

k. 'sparks' corr.; 'east wind' Hebr.

l. Lit. 'out of the dry ground' corr. Vv. 26-27 emphasise the abundant generosity of God, or possibly his care for creatures other than man.

m. 'hard' corr.

n. 'the morning star', translation conj. (Vulg. 'Lucifer'). Those constellations mentioned are thought to affect the seasons, v. 33, and to produce the storm rains, vv. 34-35.

o. 'do your bidding' corr.; 'cover you' Hebr.

p. Two creatures credited with foresight: the ibis heralds the flooding of the Nile, the cock proclaims the dawn.

q. From inanimate nature to the animal kingdom. The fiercest and wildest species, and also the most bizarre, are selected. God provides for them all.

r. Lit. 'raise themselves up (corr. 'wander' Hebr.) for want of food'.

39 a. Line corr. The wild goats and the hinds are selected because their breeding goes unobserved and uncared for except by God; so too though the ostrich, v. 14, carelessly abandons its eggs, God sees to it that the breed does not become extinct.

b. 'to drop (their young)' corr. 'in the open desert' transposed from v. 4a.

c. Lit. 'loosed the bonds of the brayer'.

He scorns the turmoil of the town: 7
there are no shouts from a driver for him to listen for.
The mountains are the pastures that he ranges 8
in quest of any type of green blade or leaf.

Is the wild ox willing to serve you 9
or spend a night beside your manger?
If you tie a rope round his neck 10
will he harrow the furrows for you?[a]
Can you rely on his massive strength 11
and leave him to do your heavy work?
Can you depend on him to come home 12
carrying your grain to your threshing-floor?[a]

[f]Can the wing of the ostrich[g] be compared 13
with the plumage of the stork or falcon?
She leaves her eggs on the ground 14
with only earth to warm them;
forgetting that a foot may tread on them 15
or a wild beast may crush them.
Lm 4:3 Cruel to her chicks as if they were not hers, 16
little she cares if her labour goes for nothing.
God, you see, has made her unwise, 17
and given her no share of common sense.
Yet, if she bestirs herself to use her height, 18
she can make fools of horse and rider too.

Are you the one who makes the horse[h] so brave 19
and covers his neck with flowing hair?
Do you make him leap like a grasshopper? 20
His proud neighing spreads terror far and wide.
Exultantly he paws the soil of the valley, 21
and prances eagerly to meet the clash of arms.
He laughs at fear; he is afraid of nothing, 22
he recoils before no sword.
On his back the quiver rattles, 23
the flashing spear and javelin.
Quivering with impatience, he eats up the miles; 24
when the trumpet sounds, there is no holding him.
At each trumpet blast he shouts 'Hurrah!' 25
He scents the battle from afar,
hearing the thundering of chiefs, the shouting.

Jr 8:7 Does the hawk take flight on your advice 26
when he spreads his wings to travel south?[i]
Does the eagle soar at your command 27
to make her eyrie in the heights?
She spends her nights among the crags 28
with an unclimbed peak as her redoubt
from which she watches for prey, 29
fixing it with her far-ranging eye.
Mt 24:28p She feeds[j] her young on blood: 30
wherever men fall dying, there she is.

40 Then Yahweh turned to Job, and he said:[a] 1 31

Jdt 8:12 Is Shaddai's opponent willing to give in?[b] 2 32
Has God's critic thought up an answer?

3/33 Job replied to Yahweh:

4/34 My words have been frivolous: what can I reply?
I had better lay my finger on my lips.
5/35 I have spoken once... I will not speak again;[c] Ps 62:11
more than once... I will add nothing.

SECOND SPEECH

God is master of the forces of evil

6/1 Yahweh gave Job his answer from the heart of the tempest. He said:

7/2 Brace yourself like a fighter, Jdt 8:12
now it is my turn to ask questions and yours to inform me.
8/3 Do you really want to reverse my judgement,
and put me in the wrong to put yourself in the right?
9/4 Has your arm the strength of God's,
can your voice thunder as loud?
10/5 If so, assume your dignity, your state,
robe yourself in majesty and splendour.
11/6 Let the spate of your anger flow free;
humiliate the haughty at a glance!
12/7 Cast one look at the proud and bring them low,
strike down the wicked where they stand.
13/8 Bury the lot of them in the ground, Nb 16:31-34
shut them, silent-faced, in the dungeon.[d]
14/9 I myself will be the first to acknowledge
that your own right hand can assure your triumph.

Behemoth[e]

15/10 Now think of Behemoth;
he eats greenstuff like the ox.
16/11 But what strength he has in his loins,
what power in his stomach muscles!
17/12 His tail is as stiff as a cedar,
the sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.
18/13 His vertebrae are bronze tubing,
his bones as hard as hammered iron.
19/14 [f]He is the masterpiece[g] of all God's work,
but his Maker threatened him with the sword, Gn 3:24
20/15 forbidding him the mountain regions
where all the wild beasts have their playground.
21/16 So he lies beneath the lotus,
and hides among the reeds in the swamps.
22/17 The leaves of the lotus give him shade,
the willows by the stream shelter him.

d. Conj. translation in accordance with Greek.
e. 'to your threshing-floor' corr.
f. The whole section on the ostrich, vv. 13-18, is absent from Greek.
g. 'wing' corr. Remainder of verse follows Vulg.
h. Here the war horse.
i. Migration, proof of the instinctive wisdom infused by the Creator.
j. 'She feeds' corr.

40 a. This introductory verse is absent from Greek. Job had wanted debate with God. God confronts him with the mystery of his wisdom, manifest in his works.
b. 'opponent' corr. (lit. 'he who disputes'). 'give in' Vulg.; 'criticise (?) him' Hebr.
c. 'speak again' corr.; 'answer' Hebr.
d. Lit. 'make dumb (corr.; 'bind' Hebr.) their faces in the hidden place'. The 'hidden place' is Sheol, Nb 16:33+, where the Shades are dumb.
e. In Hebr., apparently, the typical 'beast' or 'brute'; but the name may come from the Egyptian (*pehemu*, the ox of the waters). A description of the hippopotamus, typifying untameable brute force; only its creator can master it.
f. Vv. 19-20 are corrected and their translation is conj.
g. Lit. 'the first-fruits' i.e. 'first' in the order of admiration (somewhat ironical).

Should the river overflow on him, why should he worry? 23 18
A Jordan could pour down his throat without his caring.
So who is going to catch him by the eyes 24 19
or drive a peg through his nostrils?[h]

Leviathan[i]

Is 27:1 Ezk 32:2 Leviathan, too! Can you catch him with a fish-hook 25 20
or run a line round his tongue?
Ezk 19:4,9; 29:4 Can you put a ring through his nose 26 21
or pierce his jaw with a hook?
Will he plead and plead with you, 27 22
will he coax you with smooth words?
Will he strike a bargain with you 28 23
to become your slave for life?
Will you make a pet of him, like a bird, 29 24
keep him on a lead to amuse your maids?
Is he to be sold by the fishing guild[j] 30 25
and then retailed by merchants?
Riddle his hide with darts? 31 26
Prod his head with a harpoon?
You have only to lay a finger on him 32 27
never to forget the struggle or risk it again!

41 [a]Any hopes you might have would prove vain, 1 28
for the mere sight of him would stagger you.
When roused, he grows ferocious, 2 1
no one can face him in a fight.
Rm 11:35 Who can attack him with impunity? 3 2
No one beneath all heaven.

Next I will talk of his limbs[b] 4 3
and describe his matchless strength.
Who can unloose the front of his coat 5 4
or pierce the double armour of his breastplate?[c]
Who dare open the gates of his mouth? 6 5
Terror dwells in those rows of teeth!
His back is like rows of shields, 7 6
sealed with a seal of stone,[d]
touching each other so close 8 7
that not a breath could pass between;
sticking to one another 9 8
to make an indivisible whole.
When he sneezes, light leaps forth,[e] 10 9
his eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn.
From his mouth come fiery torches, 11 10
sparks of fire fly out of it.
Rv 9:17 His nostrils belch smoke 12 11
like a cauldron boiling on the fire.[f]
His breath could kindle coals, 13 12
so hot a flame issues from his mouth.
Strength has made a home in his neck, 14 13
fear leaps before him as he goes.
When he stands up, the waves themselves take fright, 17 16
the billows of the sea retreat.[g]
The folds of his flesh stick together, 15 14
firmly set in it, immovable.
His heart is as hard as rock 16 15
unyielding as a millstone.

18/17 Sword may strike him, but cannot pierce him;
no more can spear, javelin or lance.
19/18 Iron means no more to him than straw,
nor bronze than rotten wood.
20/19 The arrow does not make him run,
sling stones he treats as wisps of hay.
21/20 A club strikes him like a reed,
he laughs at the whirring javelin.
22/21 He has sharp potsherds underneath,
and moves across the slime like a harrow.
23/22 He churns the depths into a seething cauldron,
he makes the sea fume like a scent burner.
24/23 Behind him he leaves a glittering wake—
a white fleece seems to float on the deeps.[h]
25/24 He has no equal on earth,
being created without fear.
26/25 He looks the haughtiest in the eye;
of all the sons of pride[i] he is the king.

Job's final answer

1 42 This was the answer Job gave to Yahweh:

2 I know that you are all-powerful:
what you conceive, you can perform.
3 I am the man who obscured your designs 38:2
with my empty-headed words.[a]
I have been holding forth on matters I cannot understand, Jdt 8:12
on marvels beyond me and my knowledge.
4 (Listen, I have more to say,
now it is my turn to ask questions and yours to inform me.)[b]
5 I knew you then only by hearsay;
but now, having seen you with my own eyes,[c]
6 I retract all I have said,
and in dust and ashes I repent.[d]

V. EPILOGUE

Yahweh rebukes the three Sages

7 When Yahweh had said all this to Job, he turned to Eliphaz of Teman. 'I burn with anger against you and your two friends' he said 'for not speaking

h. 'Who is' added. 'a peg' translation conj.

i. The name, in its strict sense, indicates a monster of primeval Chaos, 3:8+, believed still to be living in the ocean. Here it is used of the crocodile, though the description still bears traces of the primeval monster which Yahweh subdued, cf. 7:12+, and which symbolised all powers hostile to God. The crocodile is itself a symbol of Egypt in Ezk 29:3f; 32:2f.

j. Lit. 'partners' i.e. teams of fishermen. The sale would indeed be premature. 'merchants', lit. 'Canaanites', the merchants of the East.

41 a. The text of vv. 1-3 is corrected.

b. 'Next, I will talk of his limbs'; line corr.

c. 'breastplate' Greek; 'bridle' Hebr.

d. 'His back' Greek, Vulg.; 'pride' Hebr. 'sealed with a seal of stone' corr. following Greek.

e. A shower of water drops, shining in the sun.

f. Lit. 'like a heated and boiling cauldron'; 'boiling' Syr., Vulg.

g. Verse transposed here for the sake of the context. 'waves' corr.; 'gods' Hebr. 'the billows' of the sea corr.; 'because of the crashing' Hebr.

h. When he dives the air bubbles rise; as he swims he leaves a gleaming furrow.

i. The 'sons of pride' are the wild beasts, cf. 28:8, type of the powerful creatures of the earth which God alone can control, 40:7-14.

42 a. 'I am the man who', lit. 'Who is, this who' as in 38:2. 'with words' added with Greek, Syr., and cf. 38:2.

b. Probably a gloss, cf. 33:31; 38:3.

c. Not, strictly speaking, a vision, cf. Ex 33:20+, but a fresh appreciation of the true nature of God. Previously Job's conception of God had been conventional and secondhand, but now he experiences the mystery for himself and bows down before the Almighty. His questions have not been answered but he has come to understand that God cannot be called to account, and that his wisdom may give an unsuspected meaning to such realities as suffering and death.

d. The common gesture of sorrow and repentance cf. 2:8.

truthfully about me as my servant Job has done. •So now find seven bullocks 8
and seven rams, and take them back with you to my servant Job and offer a
holocaust for yourselves, while Job, my servant, offers prayers for you. I will
listen to him with favour[e] and excuse your folly in not speaking of me properly
as my servant Job has done.' •Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah and Zophar 9
of Naamath went away to do as Yahweh had ordered, and Yahweh listened to
Job with favour.

Yahweh restores Job's fortunes

Ps 103:4 Jm 5:11 Yahweh restored Job's fortunes, because he had prayed for his friends. 10
More than that, Yahweh gave him double what he had before. •And all his 11
brothers and all his sisters and all his friends of former times came to see him
and sat down at table with him. They showed him every sympathy, and
comforted him for all the evils Yahweh had inflicted on him. Each of them gave
him a silver coin,[f] and each a gold ring. •Yahweh blessed Job's new fortune 12
even more than his first one. He came to own fourteen thousand sheep, six
thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand she-donkeys. •He had 13
Ps 144:12 seven sons[g] and three daughters; •his first daughter he called 'Turtledove', the 14
second 'Cassia' and the third 'Mascara'. •Throughout the land there were no 15
women as beautiful as the daughters of Job. And their father gave them
inheritance rights like their brothers.[h]

After his trials, Job lived on until he was a hundred and forty years old, and 16
Ps 128:6 saw his children and his children's children up to the fourth generation. •Then 17
Gn 25:8; 35:29 Job died, an old man and full of days.[i]

42 e. Text corr. Job acts as intercessor like Abraham, Gn 18:22-32; 20:7; Moses, Ex 32:11+; Samuel, 1 S 7:5; 12:19; Amos, Am 7:2-6; Jeremiah, Jr 11:14; 37:3; 2 M 15:14. Cf. Ezk 14:14,20. His painful ordeal has apparently given power to his prayers. The outline of the servant (cf. Is 53:12) is in the background, the suffering of the latter explicitly atoning for others.

f. Hebr. *qesitah*, ancient monetary unit of unknown value. The versions render 'sheep'.

g. Targ. reads 'fourteen sons'.

h. Normally daughters inherit only if there are no sons, cf. Nb 27:1-11; Job must therefore be exceptionally rich.

i. The Greek has two additions. The first shows that from a very early period Jb was thought to contain the idea of resurrection 'It is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord will raise up'. The second tells us that Job lived 'in the land of Ausitis on the borders of Idumaea and Arabia'; it identifies Ausitis with Jobab, Gn 36:33.

INTRODUCTION TO
THE PSALMS

Lyric poetry in all its forms was popular in Israel from the earliest times, as it was among her neighbours in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan. Some samples are to be found in the historical books: the Song of Moses, Ex 15, the Song of the Well, Nb 21:17-18, the victory song of Deborah, Jg 5, David's elegy on Saul and Jonathan, 2 S 1 etc., and many years later the panegyric of Judas Maccabaeus, 1 M 3:3-9, and of his brother Simon, 1 M 14:4-15; in the New Testament, the Magnificat, Benedictus and Nunc Dimittis. In the prophetic books many passages belong to the same type of literature. Ancient collections once existed of which only the name or a few scraps survive: the Book of the Wars of Yahweh, Nb 21:14, and the Book of the Just, Jos 10:13; 2 S 1:18. But the bulk of the religious poetry of Israel is preserved in the Psalter.

Designation

The Psalter (Greek, *Psalterion*, the string-instrument used for the accompaniment of these songs or psalms) is a collection of one hundred and fifty psalms. From Ps 10 to Ps 148 the numbering of the Hebrew Bible (adopted here) is one figure ahead of the Greek and the Vulgate which join 9 and 10 and also 114 and 115, but divide both 116 and 147 into two.

The Hebrew name for the Psalter is *Tehillim*, 'Hymns', but this designation fits only a certain number of psalms. In the 'inscriptions' at the head of most of the psalms the word 'hymn' is in fact used only once (Ps 145). The usual inscription is *mizmor*, which implies musical accompaniment; our word 'psalm' is therefore apt. Some of these 'psalms' are also entitled 'songs', and this term, standing alone, is found in the inscription of every psalm in the collection known as the 'Songs of Ascents', 120-134. Other designations are less frequent and sometimes difficult to explain.

Literary forms

A more satisfying classification is obtained by study of the various literary types of which there are, broadly speaking, three: hymn, entreaty, thanksgiving. The classification is not exhaustive since there are secondary forms which are exceptional or composite; nor does it always correspond to a grouping of the psalms by subject-matter or purpose.

1. *Hymns* (Ps 8, 19, 29, 33, 46-48, 76, 84, 87, 93, 96-100, 103-106, 113, 114, 117, 122, 135, 136, 145-150). Their structure is fairly uniform. Each opens with an invitation to praise God. The body of the hymn indicates motives for praise, the wonders of God as shown in nature, particularly in his work of creation,

and as shown in human history, particularly in his saving work for his people. The conclusion either repeats the introductory formula or expresses a prayer.

Within this group two subdivisions may be identified according to subject-matter. The 'Songs of Zion', 46, 48, 76, 87, in markedly eschatological terms, hymn the glories of the Holy City, which is both dwelling place of the Most High and goal of pilgrimage, cf. 84 and 122. The 'Psalms of the Kingship of God', particularly 47, 93, 96-98, in a style reminiscent of the prophets, celebrate the universal sovereignty of Yahweh. Since they make use of the vocabulary and metaphors of human coronation ceremonies, the theory has been advanced that these were associated with a feast of the Enthroning of Yahweh possibly celebrated annually in Israel as the Enthroning of Marduk was in Babylon. But there is little evidence of the existence of such a feast in Israel.

2. *Entreaty.* These supplicatory psalms (or psalms of suffering, laments), unlike the hymns, do not celebrate the glories of God but are addressed directly to him. They usually begin by invoking God, adding either an appeal for help, a prayer, or an expression of confidence. In the body of the psalm an effort is made to win God's sympathy by a description of the psalmist's misfortunes. Here conventional figures of speech are used, so that it is rarely possible to define the historical or personal background of the prayer: waters of the abyss, snares of death or of Sheol, savage beasts (lions, bulls, dogs) symbolising the psalmist's enemies, bones that grow dry or break, heart wildly beating and overcome with fear; all these conventional images recur. In these psalms there are protestations of innocence, 7, 12, 26, and acknowledgment of sin as in the Miserere, 51, and the other penitential psalms. God is reminded of his former kindnesses or reproached for his seeming absence or forgetfulness, 9-10,22,44. But expressions of persistent confidence are also common, 3, 5, 42-43, 55-57, 63, 130, etc. and at times the psalm of entreaty is one long confident appeal, 4, 11, 16, 23, 62, 121, 125, 131. Not infrequently the entreaty ends, abruptly on occasion, with a sense of assurance that the prayer is heard, and with an act of thanksgiving, 6, 22, 69, 140.

These entreaties may be collective or individual.

a. *Collective entreaties* (Ps 12, 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 106, 123, 129, 137). Some national catastrophe is the occasion: defeat, the destruction of Jerusalem, a national emergency; on these occasions God is entreated to save and restore his people. Two psalms at least, 74 and 137, as also the collection of lamentations attributed to Jeremiah, reflect the situation after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587, and 85 expresses the emotions of those who came back from exile. Ps 106 is a general confession of the sins of the nation.

b. *Individual entreaties* (Ps 3, 5-7, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31, 35, 38, 42-43, 51, 54-57, 59, 63, 64, 69-71, 77, 86, 102, 120, 130, 140-143). This type is especially common and the content widely varied: besides the perils of death, persecution, exile and senility, these individual prayers beg for deliverance in particular from sickness, slander and sin. The enemies complained of, or denounced, 'those who do evil', are barely defined; but whoever they may be, they are certainly not sorcerers, as some have thought, whose spells these psalms are intended to repel. It was at one time thought that the 'I' of these psalms was collective; this is not the case. Nor is it always the king speaking in the name of the people, as has been recently suggested. The accent is too individual and

the absence of allusion to the king's person or office too marked to make these theories tenable. It is doubtless true that several of these psalms have been adapted to serve as national laments, thus 22, 28, 59, 69, 71, 102; it is also true that some, which we shall discuss later, are 'royal' psalms; and lastly, it is true that all of these psalms did ultimately come into collective use (which is why they are found in the Psalter). Nonetheless, these prayers were composed for, or by, individuals to meet individual needs; the faith they express is entirely personal, and their entreaty comes straight from the heart.

3. *Thanksgiving.* The psalms of entreaty may end, as we have seen, with gratitude to God for granting the request. In the thanksgiving psalms this gratitude becomes the main theme. These are relatively few in number: 18, 21, 30, 33, 34, 40, 65-68, 92, 116, 118, 124, 129, 138, 144. Some are collective, others individual. The people as a whole thanks God for danger averted, a successful harvest, divine favour shown to the king. The individual, having recalled past distress and God's answer to his prayer, expresses his gratitude and exhorts all good men to join him in praising God. This last is often the occasion for a doctrinal development. The literary structure of the thanksgiving psalms resembles that of the hymns.

4. *Exceptional and composite forms.* The three forms we have just described are not in watertight compartments: there is very often a mutual infiltration. Lamentation may be preceded by confident prayer, 27, 31, or followed by thanksgiving, 28, 57. Ps 89 begins as a hymn, passes into a long prophetic oracle and ends with a lament. Ps 119 throughout is a hymn to the Law but it is also an individual lament and it develops a theme of the wisdom literature. This last characteristic, already noticed in certain thanksgiving psalms, shows that not a few topics are found in the Psalter which in themselves are unnatural to lyric poetry. Wisdom themes may take such a prominent place that we speak, somewhat inaccurately, of 'Didactic Psalms'. Ps 1, 112, 127, are wisdom literature pure and simple. Other psalms, however, preserve something of their lyrical quality: 25 is akin to the lamentations, 32, 37, 73, to the thanksgiving psalms, etc.

Certain other psalms have incorporated prophetic oracles, or are simply expanded oracles, 2, 50, 75, 81, 82, 85, 95, 110. These have recently been explained as actual oracles delivered in the course of Temple ceremonies by priest or prophet. But it is still often maintained that they had no direct connection with the Temple worship and merely adopted the prophetic style. It is an open question; but there is no doubt that on the one hand the relationship between Psalms and prophetic literature extends beyond the oracles themselves to many other themes (theophanies, metaphors of fire, chalice, crucible, etc.) and, on the other hand, that some connection must be recognised between Psalms and Temple worship. We shall return to this point.

Royal psalms and messianic psalms

We have already drawn attention to the prophetic element in the Psalter by mentioning the eschatological character of the Songs of Zion and of the Psalms of the Kingship of God. The universal renewal foretold by these poems is the messianic age; other psalms, more specifically, speak of the Messiah in person.

Scattered throughout the Psalter, and of varying literary form, is a group of royal psalms. These are divine oracles addressed to the king, 2, 110, prayers for the king, 20, 61, 72, 84, a thanksgiving for the king, 21, prayers of the king himself, 18, 28, 63, 101, a royal procession song, 132, a hymn of the king, 144, even a bridal ode for a royal marriage, 45. They are ancient poems dating from the time of the monarchy and reflecting the idiom and ceremonial of the court. As originally composed they referred to the king as a contemporary, and had a royal successor to David in mind, or even (45 according to one theory) a monarch of the Northern Kingdom.

But the king of the chosen people is divinely anointed (in Hebrew a 'messiah', an anointed one); he is the recipient of God's blessing, and this blessing ensures the prosperity of his people. But this is not all. The divine promises to the dynasty of David made it possible to glimpse, beyond this king, another and privileged descendant of David, in whom God would take particular delight and whom he would designate to do his saving work. This king is the Anointed without equal, the Messiah. The prophecy of Nathan, 2 S 7, is the first in this series of prophecies relating to the Messiah, son of David. This promise was essentially a promise of stability for the House of David, and this is the sense in which Ps 89:29-38 and 132:11-12 quote it; but it was not long before it was interpreted as referring to an individual, and thus in Ac 2:30 comes to be applied to Christ.

It was natural, therefore, for some of these ancient royal songs, remaining in use after the fall of the monarchy, and included with minor adjustments and additions in the Psalter, to become messianic psalms in the strictest sense of the word. The messianic character of 2, 72, 110 is plain; and 110 is more frequently quoted in the New Testament than any other psalm. Even the wedding song of 45, interpreted in the light of the marriage allegory beloved of the prophets, came to express the union of the Messiah with his new Israel, and Heb 1:8 applies it to Christ. Following the same trend, the New Testament and early Christian tradition apply other psalms to Christ which, although not royal psalms, anticipated the situation and mind of the Messiah, the essentially Good Man, thus 16 and 22 and selected passages from many psalms, particularly 8, 35, 40, 41, 68, 69, 97, 102, 118, 119. Similarly, the Kingship Psalms have been applied to the kingship of Christ. Even if these applications go beyond the immediate literal sense of the text applied, they are legitimate in that the hopes inspiring the Psalter could not be fully realised until the coming of the Son of God to earth.

The psalms and public worship

The Psalter is Israel's hymn-book. The Temple, as we know, had its cantors from the beginning, though they are not mentioned until after the Exile. The festivals of Yahweh were celebrated with song and dance, Jg 21:19-21; 2 S 6:5,16. According to Am 5:23, sacrifice was offered to the accompaniment of song, and since the court had its cantors in David's day, 2 S 19:36, and (according to the Annals of Sennacherib) in the time of Hezekiah, the Temple of Solomon like all the great sanctuaries of the East must have had its cantors also. Psalms are in fact attributed to Asaph, to the sons of Korah, to Heman and to Ethan (or Jeduthun) who, according to Chronicles, were all cantors in the pre-exilic Temple. Tradition attributes many psalms to David and also

credits him with organising public worship, including the cantors, 1 Ch 25; and this harmonises with those ancient texts representing him as dancing and singing in the presence of Yahweh, 2 S 6:5,16.

Many of the psalms carry musical or liturgical directions. The text of some refers to a public liturgy, 20, 26, 27, 66, 81, 107, 116, 134, 135. These last, and others, 48, 65, 95, 96, 118, were evidently recited in the Temple court. The Songs of Ascents, 120-134, like 84, were songs used on the Temple pilgrimage. These are some of the clearest examples, but are enough to show that many psalms, even individual psalms, were composed for Temple worship. Others, if not composed primarily for this purpose, have at least been adapted for it by the addition of benedictions, 125, 128, 129.

It is therefore certain that the psalms were related to public worship and that the Psalter, taken as a whole, is liturgical in character. But there is rarely enough evidence to identify the ceremony or feast for which any given psalm was used. The Hebrew title of 92 assigns it to the sabbath day, and the Greek titles of 24, 48, 93, 94 apportion them severally to other days of the week. Ps 30 was used, according to the Hebrew, for the feast of Dedication, and 29, according to the Greek, for the feast of Tabernacles. These instructions are perhaps later additions, but, like the detailed allocations made in the Jewish period, prove that the Psalter was the hymn-book of Temple and synagogue before it was adopted by the Christian Church.

Authors and dates

The inscriptions attribute seventy-three psalms to David, twelve to Asaph, eleven to the sons of Korah, one each to Heman, Ethan (or Jeduthun), Moses and Solomon. The inscriptions in the Greek version do not always correspond with the Hebrew text and credit David with eighty-two psalms. The Syriac version shows still greater divergence.

It is possible that the original purpose of these inscriptions was not to name the actual author. The Hebrew formula used merely establishes some kind of relationship between the psalm and the person named, either because of an aptness of theme or because the psalm belonged to a collection named after him. The psalms 'for (or 'of') the sons of Korah' were part of the repertoire of this family of cantors, just as the numerous psalms 'for the choirmaster', 4, 5, 6, 8, etc., were pieces performed under his direction. Similarly there was Asaph's collection and a Davidic collection. But it was not long before these notices of origin were taken to be indications of authorship, and to the inscription 'of David' at the head of some psalms were added details of the exact circumstances in the life of the king at the time when these psalms were composed, 3, 7, 18, 34, 51, 52, 54, etc. Finally tradition made David the author not only of the psalms that bear his name but of the whole Psalter.

Notwithstanding mistaken deductions of this kind, it would be wrong to neglect the ancient and valuable information embodied in the inscriptions. It is reasonable to admit that the collections of Asaph and the sons of Korah were composed by poets attached to the Temple. It is equally reasonable to hold that there must be some connection between the Davidic collection and David himself. Taking into account what the historical books have to say of his musical talent, 1 S 16:16-18; cf. Am 6:5, his poetic gifts, 2 S 1:19-27; 3:33-34, and his love of the liturgy, 2 S 6:5,15-16, it would seem inevitable that the

Psalter should contain some of David's compositions. Indeed, Ps 18 is simply a different edition of a poem attributed to David in 2 S 22. Not all the psalms of the Davidic collection are by him, no doubt, but the collection must have had a few of these for nucleus. It is difficult, however, to be more definite than this. The Hebrew inscriptions are not decisive, as we have seen, and when the New Testament writers quote a psalm as being by David, they are speaking as their contemporaries spoke. Even so, this evidence should not be rejected without good reason, and David, who 'sang the songs of Israel', 2 S 23:1, must be conceded an essential part in the formation of the religious poetry of the Chosen People.

The original impulse given by David continued to have effects and the Psalter covers several centuries of poetic activity. After an erroneous assessment, assigning a very late date to the majority of the psalms, more moderate views now prevail. Apart from those psalms which may have been composed by David, many go back to the monarchical period, in particular all the royal psalms, but their content is too general for more than conjectural dating. The Psalms of the Kingship of God, on the other hand, with their many echoes of earlier psalms and of the second part of Isaiah, must have been written during the Exile, as also those, such as 137, which speak of the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation. Ps 126 celebrates the return from exile. The period that followed seems to have been fertile in psalmody. The restored Temple saw a reflorescence of public worship, the status of the cantors was so raised that they became assimilated with the Levites, while sages like Ben Sira adopted psalm form to popularise their teaching. Are any psalms of later date than the end of the Persian period? Are there any Maccabaean psalms? The question arises in particular connection with 44, 74, 79, 83, but the arguments advanced are not strong enough to prove so late a date of composition.

Formation of the Psalter

The Psalter as we have it is the result of lengthy activity. At first there were partial collections. Ps 72 (though its title assigns it to Solomon) is followed by the note: 'End of the prayers of David', although there are non-Davidic psalms before it and Davidic psalms after it. In fact there are two Davidic groups, 3-41 and 51-72, in which every psalm (except 72 and four anonymous psalms) is attributed to David. Originally there must have been other separate collections of the same sort: the psalters of Asaph, 50 and 73-83, of the sons of Korah, 42-49 and 84, 85, 87, 88, of Ascents, 120-134, of the Hallel, 105-107, 113-118, 135, 136, 146-150. That there were several collections existing side by side is proved by the way certain psalms duplicate each other almost word for word, thus 14 and 53; 40:13-17 and 70; 108 with 57:7-11 and 60:5-12.

Furthermore, the activities of the collectors can be detected in the use of the divine names: 'Yahweh' is almost exclusively used in 1-41 (first Davidic group), 'Elohim' in 42-83 (covering the second Davidic group; part of the psalter of the sons of Korah; psalter of Asaph), all the remainder are 'Yahwistic' with the exception of 108 (combination of the two 'Elohistic' psalms 57 and 60). This second 'Yahwistic' group, in which many of the psalms are anonymous and in which there is considerable quotation of, or borrowing from, earlier literature, must be the most recent group of all; though this does not prejudice the dating of individual psalms within the group.

The Psalter was ultimately divided into five books, doubtless on the model of the Pentateuch; the books were divided from each other by short doxologies: 41:13; 72:18-20; 89:51; 106:48. Ps 150 is a protracted final doxology while 1 serves as an introduction to the whole Psalter.

Spiritual value

The spiritual riches of the Psalter need no commendation. The psalms were the prayers of the Old Testament in which God inspired the feeling that his children ought to have towards him and the words they ought to use when speaking to him. They were recited by Jesus himself, by the Virgin Mary, the apostles and the early martyrs. The Christian Church has adopted them unchanged for her official prayer. Unchanged: the cries of praise, entreaty and thanksgiving, wrung from the psalmists by events of their own times and by their personal experiences, have a universal note, expressing as they do the attitude that every man should have towards God. Unchanged as regards the words, but with a great enrichment of the sense: in the New Covenant, the faithful man praises and thanks God for unveiling the secret of His inmost nature, for redeeming him by the blood of his Son, for filling him with his Spirit; hence each psalm ends with the trinitarian doxology: *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Stoly Spirit.* The ancient entreaties have become more ardent since the last supper, the cross and the resurrection have taught mankind the infinite quality of the love of God, the universality and gravity of sin, the glory promised to the faithful. The hopes sung by the psalmists have been fulfilled, the Messiah has come, he reigns and all nations are summoned to praise him.

THE PSALMS

PSALM 1[a]

The two ways

Dt 30:15-20
Pr 4:18-19; 11:30
Si 33:1
Jr 21:8
✗ Mt 7:13-14

26:5; 40:4; 112:1; 119:1
Pr 1:10

Happy the man 1
who never follows the advice of the wicked,
or loiters on the way that sinners take,
or sits about with scoffers,

119
Jos 1:8
Si 6:37; 39:1

but finds his pleasure in the Law of Yahweh, 2
and murmurs[b] his law day and night.

52:8; 92:12
Jb 29:18
Pr 11:28
Si 39.13
Jr 17:8
Ezk 19:10-11
Rv 22:2

He is like a tree that is planted 3
by water streams,
yielding its fruit in season,
its leaves never fading;
success attends all he does.
It is nothing like this with the wicked, nothing like this! 4

35:5
Jb 21:18
Ws 5:14
Dn 2:35

No, these are like chaff
blown away by the wind.
The wicked will not stand firm when Judgement comes,[c] 5
nor sinners when the virtuous assemble.
For Yahweh takes care of the way the virtuous go, 6

112:10

but the way of the wicked is doomed.

PSALM 2

18:51; 110
1 S 2:1-10

The messianic drama[a]

Is 30:18
✗ Ac 4:25-28
Rv 11:18

Why this uproar among the nations? 1
Why this impotent muttering of pagans—

83:5; 132-10
Is 40:23
✗ Rv 19:19

kings on earth rising in revolt, 2
princes plotting against Yahweh and his Anointed,

149:8

'Now let us break their fetters! 3
Now let us throw off their yoke!'

59:8
Is 22-24; 40:15-17

The One whose throne is in heaven sits laughing, 4
Yahweh derides them.
Then angrily he addresses them, 5
in a rage he strikes them with panic,
'This is my king, installed by me 6

110:3

on Zion, my holy mountain'.

89:26
2 S 7:14+

Let me[b] proclaim Yahweh's decree; 7

he has told me, 'You are my son,
today I have become your father.
8 Ask and I will give you the nations for your heritage,
the ends of the earth for your domain.
9 With iron sceptre you will break them,
shatter them like potter's ware.'[c]

10 So now, you kings, learn wisdom,
earthly rulers, be warned:
11 serve Yahweh, fear him,
12 tremble and kiss his feet,[d]
or he will be angry and you will perish,
for his anger is very quick to blaze.

Happy all who take shelter in him.

Is 49:1 ▲ Ac 2:36+; ▲ ↗13:33 ▲ ↗Heb 1:5; ▲ 5:5 ▲ *18:43; 47:4* Is 53:12
110:5-6 Gn 12:7+ Is 49:6 Dn 7:14 Rv 2:26-27; 12:5; ↗19:15 ↗*Ws 6:1f*
Jg 5:3
=34:8; 146:5 Pr 16:20

PSALM 3

Morning prayer of the virtuous man under persecution

Psalm Of David When he was escaping from his son Absalom 2 S 15:13f

1 Yahweh, more and more are turning against me,
more and more rebelling against me,
2 more and more saying about me,
'There is no help for him in his God'. *Pause* 71:11

3 But, Yahweh, my encircling shield,
my glory, you help me hold up my head.
4 Loudly I cry to Yahweh,
and he answers me from his holy mountain. *Pause*

7:10; 18:2; 62:7 Dt 33:29 *27:6; 110:7* Si 11:13

5 Now I can lie down and go to sleep
and then awake, for Yahweh has hold of me:[a]
6 no fear now of those tens of thousands
posted against me wherever I turn.

4:8 Pr 3:24

7 Rise, Yahweh!
Save me, my God!
You hack all my enemies to the cheekbone,
you break the teeth of the wicked.
8 From Yahweh, rescue.
On your people, blessing! *Pause* 28:9

58:6 ‖Jon 2:10

1 a. Ps 1 and 2 serve as preface to the Psalter; they summarise its moral teaching and messianic ideas. Ps 1 contrasts 'the two ways' to the advantage of the Law, man's true way to happiness. Cf. 19:7-14 and 119.

b. Reading in an undertone, a meditative prayer (63:6;77:12;143:5) as opposed to the loud cry of the sufferer (3:4;5:2;etc.).

c. The great Judgement to come, according to the Massoretic text ('the' Judgement); any divine judgement in this life, according to Greek ('a' judgement).

2 a. Jewish and Christian tradition regard this psalm as messianic in the same way as 110 on which it possibly depends. Its horizon is the future messianic age. In the liturgy it is used for feasts of the incarnate Word.

b. The rebels speak, v. 3, then Yahweh himself, v. 6, finally the Messiah, v. 7f. By consecrating him king of Israel, v. 6, God pronounces him 'his son'; the phrase in this context is familiar in the ancient East, but in conjunction with the messianic promise of 2 S 7 it will be given a deeper meaning; Heb 1:5, followed by Christian tradition and liturgy, applies v. 7 to the eternal generation of the Word.

c. The messianic King is here portrayed as a warrior, a traditional representation.

d. Corr. Hebr. 'and shake with trembling; kiss the Son'.

3 a. The Fathers apply this passage to the death and resurrection of Christ.

PSALM 4

Evening prayer[a]

For the choirmaster For strings Psalm Of David

118:5 God, guardian of my rights, you answer[b] when I call, 1
when I am in trouble, you come to my relief;
now be good to me and hear my prayer.

You men, why shut your hearts[c] so long, 2
62:4 loving delusions, chasing after lies. *Pause*

Know this, Yahweh works wonders for those he loves, 3
Yahweh hears me when I call to him.

Ep 4:26 Tremble: give up sinning, 4
spend your night in quiet meditation.[d] *Pause*
51:19 Offer sacrifice in a right spirit, and trust Yahweh. 5

31:16; 44:3; 67:1; 80:3 Nb 6:25 Pr 16:15 Dn 9:17 'Who will give us sight of happiness?' many say. 6
Show us the light of your face, turned towards us![e]

17:15 Jb 13:24; 22:25 Pr 3:10 Yahweh, •you have given more joy to my heart 7
than others ever knew, for all their corn and wine.

3:5 In peace I lie down, and fall asleep at once, 8
since you alone, Yahweh, make me rest secure.

PSALM 5

Morning Prayer

For the choirmaster For flutes Psalm Of David

86:6; 130:1-2 Yahweh, let my words come to your ears, 1
spare a thought for my sighs.
Listen to my cry for help, 2
84:3 my King and my God!

I say this prayer to you, •Yahweh, 3
Ws 16:28 for at daybreak you listen for my voice;[a]
and at dawn I hold myself in readiness[b] for you,
I watch for you.

You are not a God who is pleased with wickedness, 4
you have no room for the wicked;
101:7 Hab 1:13 boasters collapse 5
under your scrutiny.

Pr 6:17-19 Mt 7:23 Rv 21:8 You hate all evil men,
liars you destroy; 6
murderers and frauds
Yahweh detests.

But I, so great is your love, 7
28:2; =138:2 1 K 8:44,48 Tb 3:11 Dn 6:11 Jon 2:5 may come to your house,
and before your holy Temple bow down
in reverence to you.

23:3; 139:24 Yahweh, lead me in the path of your righteousness, 8
for there are men lying in wait for me;[c]
Is 26:7 make your way plain before me.

9 Not a word from their lips can be trusted,
deep within them lies ruin,
their throats are yawning graves; ↗ Rm 3:13
they make their tongues so smooth!

10 Pronounce them guilty,[d] God, Jr 17:18; 18:21
nake their intrigues their own downfall!
Hound them for their countless crimes,
since they have rebelled against you.

11 But joy for all who take shelter in you, 64:10 Is 61:11 Rv 7:15-16
endless shouts of joy!
Since you protect them, they exult in you,
those who love your name.

12 It is you who bless the virtuous man, Yahweh; 69:36; 119:132
your favour is like a shield covering him.

PSALM 6

Prayer in ordeal[a]

For the choirmaster For strings, for the octachord Psalm Of David

1 Yahweh, do not punish me in your rage, =38:1 ||Jr 10:24
or reprove me in the heat of anger.
2 Pity me, Yahweh, I have no strength left, 51:8
heal me, my bones are in torment, Jr 17:14-15
3 my soul is in utter torment.
Yahweh, how long will you be? 13:1; 74:9

4 Come back, Yahweh, rescue my soul,[b] 7:5; 42:5-6; 57:8
save me, if you love me;
5 for in death there is no remembrance of you: 30:9; 88:10-12; 115:17
who can sing your praises in Sheol?[c] Est 4:17h Si 17:27 Is 38:18

6 I am worn out with groaning,
every night I drench my pillow
and soak my bed with tears;

4 a. Trust and thanks: God is the one source of happiness. Vv. 4 and 8 show that it is an evening prayer.

b. Versions; 'answer me!' Hebr.

c. Lit. 'why be dull-hearted' Greek; 'my honour is shamed' Hebr.

d. We should shrink from offending God and pray to him in the calm silence of adoration. 'spend...meditation' lit. 'speak in your hearts on your beds and be silent'.

e. Biblical phrase, common in the Psalter, for royal or divine favour. Lit. 'Lift up the light of your face on us'. The Greek and Vulg. translation 'The light of your face is sealed (or: signed) on us' has been applied in the baptismal liturgy to the signing with the baptismal 'character' which makes the Christian a 'child of the light', Lk 16:8; Jn 8:12+; 1 Th 5:5; Ep 5:8.

5 a. The morning is regarded as the time of God's favour, 17:15+.

b. Translations vary: I present my request; I offer my prayer; I prepare my sacrifice...

c. Lit 'because of my enemies'.

d. Such appeals for vengeance on the enemies of God or the psalmist are very frequent, cf. for example 10:15; 31:17; 54:5; 58:6f; 59:11f; 69:22-28; 79:12; 83:9-18; 104:35; 109:6-20; 125:5; 137:7-9; 139:19-22; 140:9-11. Under the Old Covenant retribution in this life was still the rule, and against this background these appeals betray simply a hunger for justice. Personal experience and growing revelation will show the inadequacy of this outlook: the way of God's justice must remain a mystery to man (cf. Jb). The N.T. refines the outlook still further: justice must give way to love, Mt 5:43-48. Thus purged of personal resentment, the psalms of revenge remain, for the Church and the individual Christian, an expression of that same hunger for justice in the face of forces which are ever-present in the world.

6 a. First of the seven 'Penitential Psalms' (32,38, 51,102,130,143). A sick man speaks to God.

b. The Hebr. word means life-giving breath (and by extension 'throat') which is the source of life and which disappears at death. 'My soul' is often used for the reflexive pronoun 'myself', as are also 'my life', 'my glory', 'my face'.

c. In Sheol, cf. Nb 16:33+, the dead are silent shadows of their former selves and can no longer speak with God, Is 38:18; Ps 30:9; 88:5,10-12.

38:10; 40:12 my eye is wasted with grief, 7
I have grown old with enemies all round me.[d]

=119:115 Away from me, all you evil men! 8
↗ Mt 7:23 For Yahweh has heard the sound of my weeping;
Yahweh has heard my petition, 9
Yahweh will accept my prayer.
Let all my enemies, discredited, in utter torment, 10
fall back in sudden confusion.

26

PSALM 7

Prayer of the virtuous under persecution[a]

Lamentation *Of David, who sang it to Yahweh about Cush[b] the Benjaminite*

Yahweh my God, I take shelter in you; 1
from all who hound me, save me, rescue me,
22:21 or, like a lion, he will carry me off 2
and tear me to pieces where no one can save me.

Yahweh my God, if I ever 3
soiled my hands with fraud,
repaid a friend evil for good, 4
spared a man who wronged me,[c]
6:4+ then let the enemy hound me down and catch me,[d] 5
44:25; 143:3 let him stamp my life into the ground,
and leave my entrails[e] lying in the dust! *Pause*

9:19 Rise, Yahweh, in anger, 6
awake, my God![f]
Confront the raging of my enemies,
you who demand that justice shall be done.
Let the nations muster round you in a body, 7
and then return, high over them.
(Yahweh is arbiter of nations.)[g] 8

9:4 Give judgement for me, Yahweh: as my virtue
1 S 26:23 and my integrity[h] deserve.
Bring the maliciousness of evil men to an end, 9
set the virtuous on his feet,
26:2 you righteous God,
Pr 15:3 assessor of mind and heart.
Jr 11:20+

3:3 God is the shield that protects me, 10
Ws 5:16 he preserves upright hearts,
9:4 God the righteous judge 11
Ex 34:6-7+ is slow to show his anger,[i]
but he is a God who is always enraged
by those who refuse to repent. 12

11:2; 64:7 The enemy[j] may sharpen his sword,
Ws 5:21 he may bend his bow and take aim,
but the weapons he prepares will kill himself 13
Is 50:11 and his arrows turn into firebrands.
Jb 15:35 Look at him, pregnant with wickedness, 14
Is 59:4 conceiving Spite, he gives birth to Mishap.

15 He dug a pit, hollowed it out,
only to fall into his own trap!
16 His spite recoils on his own head,
his brutality falls back on his own skull.

9:15; 35:8; 57:6
Pr 26:27
Qo 10:8
Jb 4:8
Si 27:25-27

17 I give thanks to Yahweh for his righteousness,
I sing praise[k] to the name of the Most High.

9:11; 18:49; 30:4; 71: 23; 104: 34; 135:3; 146:2

PSALM 8

92:5
Gn 1:1

The munificence of the creator

81; 84:inscr.

For the choirmaster On the ...of Gath[a] Psalm Of David

19:1-6; 104
Hab 3:2

1 Yahweh, our Lord,
how great your name throughout the earth!

Above the heavens is your majesty chanted[b]
2 by the mouths of children, babes in arms.[c]
You set your stronghold[d] firm against your foes
to subdue enemies and rebels.

Ws 10:20-21
Mt 11:25p;
↗ 21:16

3 I look up at your heavens, made by your fingers,
at the moon and stars you set in place—

Si 43:1

4 ah, what is man that you should spare a thought for him,
the son of man that you should care for him?

=144:3
Jb 7:17-18
Si 18:8
↗ Heb 2:6-9

5 Yet you have made him little less than a god,[e]
you have crowned him with glory and splendour,
6 made him lord over the work of your hands,
set all things under his feet,

Gn 1:26,28
Ws 2:23
Si 17:1-4
↗ 1 Co 15:27
↗ Ep 1:22

7 sheep and oxen, all these,
yes, wild animals too,
8 birds in the air, fish in the sea
travelling the paths of the ocean.[f]

9 Yahweh, our Lord,
how great your name throughout the earth!

Hab 3:2

d. 'I have grown old' Greek. The psalmist's 'foes' regard the sick man's misfortune as a punishment for some hidden sin (cf. Job's friends). The theme is elaborated in other places (31; 35; 38; 69).

7 a. Two protestations of innocence have been combined in this psalm. The first, vv. 1-5,12b-16, in the wisdom style, demands strict retaliation; the second, vv. 6-12a, modelled on Jeremiah, appeals for the intervention of God the Judge. V. 17 is a liturgical conclusion.

b. The versions read 'Cushite', cf. 2 S 18:21, the messenger who informed David of the death of Absalom. But 'the Benjaminite' suggests one of David's enemies: Saul, Sheba or Shimei.

c. The law of *talio*, cf. Ex 21:25+, required that good be rendered for good, evil for evil. The text must not be watered down as in the versions 'if I requited with evil the man who wronged me', or, 'robbed (my persecutor)'; the morality of gospel times has yet to come, Mt 5:38f.

d. 'me'; lit. 'my soul', cf. 6:6+.

e. Lit. 'my glory', but the word also means 'liver', for the Semites the seat of thought and emotion. 'Glory' also means 'soul'. The 'dust' is that of the tomb.

f. 'awake, my God' (Greek) comes after 'enemies' in the text.

g. This gloss indicates that the peoples are gathered for judgement.

h. The text adds 'that is on me'.

i. 'slow' to (show his) anger' Greek; absent from Hebr.

j. These lines should follow v. 5; 'enemy' has had, therefore, to be supplied.

k. The Hebr. verb *zamar*, Greek *psallein*, strictly means to play on a string instrument, or to sing with musical accompaniment.

8 a. Possibly the harp, or a Philistine melody.

b. Corr. 'may you (sing.) give' Hebr.

c. Christ quoted this text when the children had acclaimed his solemn entry into Jerusalem. In the liturgy it is used for the feast of the Holy Innocents (Mt 2:16).

d. I.e., the firmament or heavenly vault (Gn 1:6) on which stands the impregnable citadel from which God routs his foes (Mi 1:2; Ps 2:4; 150:1).

e. The author is thinking of man in comparison with the mysterious beings that constitute the court of Yahweh, Ps 29:1+, the 'angels' of Greek and Vulg. Cf. Ps 45:6+.

f. Man, frail yet made in the likeness of God, on the border between the spiritual and material worlds, rules the natural creation.

PSALM 9-10

God crushes the wicked and saves the humble[a]

For the choirmaster For oboe and harp[b] *Psalm Of David*

138:1 *Aleph*
I thank you, Yahweh, with all my heart; 1
I recite your marvels one by one,
I rejoice and exult in you, 2
I sing praise to your name, Most High.

Beth
My enemies are in retreat, 3
stumbling, perishing as you confront them:
7:8,11;89:14 you have upheld the justice of my cause 4
from the throne where you sit as righteous judge.[c]

Ghimel
You have checked the nations, you have crushed the wicked, 5
Jb 18:17 blotted out their name for ever and ever;
the enemy is finished, in everlasting ruin, 6
Gn 19:23-25 you have overthrown cities, their memory has perished.

He
See,[d] •Yahweh is enthroned for ever, 7
he sets up his throne for judgement;
he is going to judge the world with justice, 8
96:13; 98:9 and pronounce a true verdict on the nations.

=37:39 Is 25:4 *Waw*
May Yahweh be a stronghold for the oppressed, 9
a stronghold when times are hard.
36:10; 86:4; 91:14 Those who acknowledge your name can rely on you, 10
you never desert those who seek you, Yahweh.

7:17+; 57:9 *Zain*
To Yahweh with his home in Zion, sing praise, 11
tell the nations of his mighty actions;
Jb 16:18+ he, the avenger of blood, remembers them, 12
he does not ignore the cry of the wretched.

Heth
Take pity on me, Yahweh, look on my suffering,[e] 13
71:20 Ws 16:13 you who lift me back from the gates of death,
that in the gates of the daughter of Zion 14
I may recite your praises one by one, rejoicing that you have saved me.

Teth
The nations have sunk into a pit of their own making, 15
7:15+ Si 27:27 they are caught by the feet in the snare they set themselves.
Yahweh has made himself known, has given judgement, 16
he has trapped the wicked in the work of their own hands.
Muted music

May the wicked return to Sheol, *Pause* 17
50:22 all the nations forgetful of God.

Kaph
For the needy is not always forgotten, 18
Pr 23:18 the hope of the poor is never brought to nothing.

7:6
Rise, Yahweh, let not man have the upper hand, 19
let the nations stand trial before you!
Strike terror into them, Yahweh, 20
10:18 let the nations know they are only men! *Pause* 10

22; 74:1; 143:7 *Lamed*
Yahweh, why do you stand aside, 1
why hide from us now the times are hard?

2 The poor man is devoured by the pride of the wicked,[a] Is 32:7
he is caught in the wiles that the other has devised.

3 *(Mem)* The evil man boasts of his soul's desires,
the grasping man blasphemes, the wicked spurns Yahweh. 10:13
4 *(Nun)* 'His anger is up there,[b] he will not make me pay! 14:1; 36:1
There is no God!' This is the way his mind works.[c] Jb 22:13 Is 29:15 Zp 1:12

5 At every moment his course is assured,
your rulings are too lofty for his notice;
his rivals? He sneers at them all.

6 'Nothing can shake me' he assures himself.
7 Himself untouched by disaster, •he curses others.

(Samek) Fraud and oppression fill his mouth, Is 32:7 ↗ Rm 3:14
Pe spite and iniquity are under his tongue;
8 there in the reeds[d] he lies in ambush 11:2; 17:12 Jb 24:14 Pr 1:11 Jr 5:26 Ho 6:9 Hab 3:14
to kill the innocent where no one can see.

Ain Peering and prying for the out-of-luck,
9 lurking unseen like a lion in his hide, 17:12
lurking to capture the poor man,
the poor man seized, he drags him away in his net.

10 *(Sade)* Questing of eye, he stoops, he crouches,
and the luckless wretch falls into his power[e]
11 as he thinks to himself, 'God forgets,
he hides his face, he does not see at all'. 44:25; 64:5; 73:11; 74:19; 94:7

12 *Qoph* Rise, Yahweh, God raise your hand,[f] Jb 22:13 Ezk 9:9
do not forget the poor!
13 Why does the wicked man spurn God,
assuring himself, 'He will not make me pay'? 10:4

14 *Resh* [g]You yourself have seen the distress and the grief, 31:7; 56:8
you watch and then take them into your hands;
the luckless man commits himself to you,
you, the orphan's certain help. Ex 22:21-22

15 *Shin* Break the power of the wicked, of the evil man,
seek out his wickedness till there is none to be found!
16 Yahweh is king for ever and ever, 145:13 Jr 10:10 Na 2:1
the pagans are doomed to vanish from his country.

17 *Tau* Yahweh, you listen to the wants of the humble,
you bring strength to their hearts, you grant them a hearing,
18 judging in favour of the orphaned and exploited, Dt 10:18
so that earthborn man may strike fear no longer. 9:20

9 a. Ps 9 and 10 were originally one poem (as they are in Greek and Vulg.). The spokesman of the 'poor', cf. Zp 2:3+, describes in a hymn and invokes in a prayer the execution of God's judgement on the wicked. The psalm is 'alphabetical' (cf. Pr 31:10+) but in our present text, which is in a poor state, several letters have no corresponding strophe.

b. Translation uncertain.

c. The divine judgement is regarded as already given; the 'day of Yahweh' will reveal its content. This eschatological theme is common in Ps.

d. 'See' conj. Text uncertain.

e. Hebr. adds 'because of those who hate me'.

10 a. Others translate 'In his pride the wicked persecutes the poor'.

b. Lit. 'The grasping man blesses and spurns Yahweh, ✓ the wicked, his anger on high...' We follow the Greek punctuation. Cf. v. 13. 'blesses' is a euphemism as in 1 K 21:10,13 and Jb 1:5,11; 2:5,9.

c. Denying the action of Providence, he speaks and acts as if there were no God at all.

d. 'reeds' cf. Is 35:7; Hebr., wrongly vocalised, 'settlements'.

e. 'questing of eye' absent from Hebr. 'stoops' Greek. 'into his power': meaning uncertain.

f. To save, 138:7, and to strike, Mi 5:8; Is 11:15; Ezk 36:7.

g. Text uncertain.

PSALM 11 V 10

The confidence of the virtuous

For the choirmaster Of David

In Yahweh I take shelter. 1
How can you say to me,
55:6; 91:3 'Bird, fly back to your mountain:[a]
7:12; 10:8; 37:14; 57: 4; 64:3 'see how the wicked are bending their bows 2
and fitting their arrows to the string,
ready to shoot the upright from the shadows.
When foundations fall to ruin, what can the virtuous do?' 3
‖Hab 2:20 Yahweh is in his holy Temple, 4
14:2; 102:19 Dt 26:15 Is 66:1 Mt 5:34 Yahweh whose throne is in heaven;
his eyes look down at the world,[b]
his searching gaze scans all mankind.

The virtuous and the wicked are under Yahweh's scrutiny, 5
and his soul hates anyone who loves brutality.
120:4; 140:10 Gn 19:24 Jb 18:16 Ezk 38:22; 10:2 Rv 8:5; 20:10 He rains coals of fire[c] and brimstone on the wicked, 6
he serves them a scorching wind to swallow down.[d]
Yahweh is righteous, he loves virtue, 7
upright men will contemplate his face.[e]

PSALM 12 V 11

Against a deceitful world[a]

For the choirmaster For the octachord Psalm Of David

14:3 Is 59:15 Jr 9:2 Mi 7:2 Save us, Yahweh! There are no devout men left, 1
fidelity has vanished from mankind.
28:3; 55:21; 116:11 Jb 5:21 Is 59:3-4 Jr 9:7 All they do is lie to one another, 2
flattering lips, talk from a double heart.

May Yahweh slice off every flattering lip, 3
each tongue so glib with boasts,
Sl 5:3 those who say, 'In our tongue lies our strength, 4
our lips have the advantage; who can master us?'

'For the plundered poor, for the needy who groan, 5
Is 33:10 now will I act' says Yahweh.
' I will grant them the safety they sigh for.'

18:30; 19:7 Pr 30:5 The words of Yahweh are without alloy, 6
nature's silver[b] coming from the earth seven times refined.
And you, Yahweh, hold us in your keeping, 7
against that breed protect us always.
The wicked prowl on every side, 8
baseness stands high[c] among the sons of men.

PSALM 13 V 12

A confident appeal

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

6:3; 77:7f; 89:46; 94:3 Lm 5:20 How much longer will you forget me, Yahweh? For ever? 1
How much longer will you hide your face from me?

2 How much longer must I endure grief in my soul,
and sorrow in my heart by day and by night?
How much longer must my enemy have the upper hand of me?
3 Look and answer me, Yahweh my God!

Give my eyes light, or I shall sleep in death,
4 and my enemy will say, 'I have beaten him', 38:16
and my oppressors have the joy of seeing me stumble.
5 But I for my part rely on your love, Yahweh;
let my heart rejoice in your saving help.
Let me sing to Yahweh for the goodness he has shown me.[a] 116:7

PSALM 14

V 13 =53

The godless men[a]

For the choirmaster Of David

1 The fool says in his heart, 10:4; 36:1 Is 32:6 Jr 5:1,12 Mi 7:2 Zp 1:12
'There is no God!'
Their deeds are corrupt and vile,
there is not one good man left.
2 Yahweh is looking down from heaven 11:4 Gn 6:5
at the sons of men,
to see if a single one is wise,
if a single one is seeking God.

3 All have turned aside, ↗ Rm3:11-12
all alike are tainted;
there is not one good man left, 12:1
not a single one.[b]

4 Are they so ignorant, all these evil men
who swallow my people[c] 27:2 Is 9:11+
as though they were eating bread,
and never invoke Yahweh? 79:6

5 They will be struck with fear, Dt 28:67
fear without reason,[d]
since God takes the side of the virtuous:
6 deride as you may the poor man's hopes,
Yahweh is his shelter.

7 Who will bring Israel salvation from Zion? 85:1; 126:1

11 a. The faithful man is hunted like a bird, 55:6; 91:3; 124:7. The hill country is the place of refuge, Gn 19:17; Ezk 7:16; Ps 121:1; Mt 24:16.
b. 'the world' versions.
c. 'coals' Symmachus; 'snares' Hebr.
d. Lit. 'a scorching wind will be their cup-portion'. This is a metaphor for destiny (the cup may have been used to contain lots), either happy (16:5; 23:5) or more frequently unhappy (75:8; Mt 20:22; Rv 14:10; 16:19); the cup of divine anger is one of the prophetic themes, Jr 25:15; Hg 2:16; Ezk 23:31f; Is 51:17+; Lm 4:21.
e. Corr.; the Hebr. reading 'his face will look on the upright' is perhaps the result of a theological scruple, since man cannot see God, cf. Ex 33:20+. Nevertheless, the expression 'to contemplate God's face' is common in Ps in the sense of standing in the presence of God like servants before a kindly master (15:1), cf. 16:11; 17:15; 24:6; 27:8+; 105:4; Is 38:11; Gn 33:10; Jb 33:26.
12 a. Prayer in the manner of the prophets. Human deceit is contrasted with God's reliability in word and promise.
b. Lit. 'smelted at the going into the earth', i.e. already refined when found. God's word is pure of any deceit.
c. Lit. 'like a mound'.
13 a. Greek and Vulg. add 'Let me sing to the name of Yahweh the Most High'. Cf. 7:17.
14 a. The 'godless' man, cf. 10:4+, is a fool. His hour will come. Cf. Jr 5:12f.
b. Certain Greek MSS and Vulg. insert 3 verses here, quoted in Rm 3:10-18; they are to be found in 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Pr 1:16; Is 59:7-8; Ps 36:1.
c. Figure of speech derived from the prophets.
d. Lit. 'where there was no dread' (Greek and 53) absent from Hebr. Either such fear as has never been known before, or mysterious fear without apparent cause, cf. Lv 26:36; Dt 28:67; 1 S 14:15; 2 Ch 14:13; Jb 3:25.

When Yahweh brings his people home,[e]
what joy for Jacob, what happiness for Israel!

24:3-6
Is 33:15-16
Mi 5:6-8

PSALM 15

V 14

The guest of Yahweh[a]

Psalm Of David

Yahweh, who has the right to enter your tent, 1
Is 56:7 or to live on your holy mountain?[a]

119:1
Ezk 18:5

The man whose way of life is blameless, 2
who always does what is right,
who speaks the truth from his heart,
whose tongue is not used for slander, 3

who does no wrong to his fellow,
casts no discredit on his neighbour,
looks with contempt on the reprobate, 4
but honours those who fear Yahweh;[b]

who stands by his pledge at any cost,
Ezk 22:24+; 23:8+ does not ask interest on loans, 5
and cannot be bribed to victimise the innocent.
—If a man does all this, nothing can ever shake him.

PSALM 16

V 15

Yahweh, my heritage

Miktam[a] *Of David*

25:20

Look after me, God, I take shelter in you. 1

To Yahweh you[b] say, 'My Lord, 2
you are my fortune, nothing else but you',
yet to those pagan deities in the land, 3
'My princes, all my pleasure is in you'.

Their idols teem, after these they run:[c] 4
shall I pour their blood-libations?[a]—not I!
Take their names on my lips?[a]—never!

23:5; 73:26
Nb 18:20
Dt 10:9
Jb 22:25
Ws 3:14
Si 43:22; 45:20
Lm 3:24

Yahweh, my heritage, my cup, 5
you, and you only, hold my lot secure;
the measuring line marks out delightful places for me, 6
for me the heritage is superb indeed.[d]
I bless Yahweh, who is my counsellor, 7
and in the night my inmost self[e] instructs me;
I keep Yahweh before me always, 8
121:5 for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me.

So my heart exults, my very soul[f] rejoices, 9
↗ Ac 2:25-28; my body, too, will rest securely,
↗ 13:35 for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, 10
49:15; 73:24
Nb 16:33+
Jon 2:7 nor allow the one you love to see the Pit;[g]
36:9; 140:13 you will reveal the path of life to me, 11
give me unbounded joy in your presence,
and at your right hand everlasting pleasures.

PSALM 17

V 16 [26]

The innocent man pleads his cause

Prayer *Of David*

Yahweh, hear the plea of virtue,
listen to my appeal,
lend an ear to my prayer,
my lips free from dishonesty.
From your presence will my sentence come,
your eyes are fixed on what is right.

You probe my heart, examine me at night, — 26:2; 139:23 Jb 7:18; 23:10 Ws 3:6
you test me yet find nothing, no murmuring from me:
my mouth has never sinned •as most men's do. —

No, I have treasured the words from your lips; — Jb 23:11-12
in the path prescribed •walking deliberately
in your footsteps, so that my feet do not slip. — 18:36

I invoke you, God, and you answer me;
turn your ear to me, hear what I say,
display your marvellous kindness, saviour of fugitives!

From those who revolt against you
guard me like the pupil of your eye; — 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4
hide me in the shadow of your wings
from the onslaughts of the wicked. — Dt 32:10-11+ Rt 2:12 Zc 2:12 Mt 23:37

My enemies cluster round me, breathing hostility;
entrenched in their fat, their mouths utter — 73:6; 119:70
arrogant claims; •[a]now they are closing in,
they have eyes for nothing but to see me overthrown.
They look like a lion eager to tear to pieces, — 10:9; 22:13, 14; 35:17; 57:4 Jb 4:10 Hab 3:14
like a young lion crouching in its hide.

Rise, Yahweh, subdue him face to face, — Jr 15:15-16
rescue my soul from the wicked with your sword,
with your hand, Yahweh, rescue me from men,
from the sort of men whose lot is here and now.[b]

Cram their bellies from your stores,[c] — 73:12
give them all the sons that they could wish for,

e. The Hebr. verb (85:1; 126:1; Am 9:14; Ho 6:11; Jr 29:14, etc.; Ezk 16:53; Dt 30:3; Jb 42:10) means primarily the return from exile but frequently has the wider sense of re-establishing, restoring, changing the fortune.

15 a. Summary of moral conduct, cf. the moral precepts of the Decalogue, Ex 20:1+.

b. God's loyal subjects. The phrase, common in Ps, is synonymous with 'faithful', 'pious', 'devout'. Later it is used for all in sympathy with Judaism, cf. Ac 2:11+; 10:2+.

16 a. Meaning uncertain.

b. Vv. 2-3 are addressed to the psalmist's contemporaries who thought they could combine the worship of Yahweh as supreme god, v. 2, with that of local deities (lit. 'holy ones', cf. 1 S 2:2), v. 3; such syncretism was Israel's great and persistent temptation. The translation changes (supported by the versions) only two vowels of the Hebr. text, keeping all the consonants.

c. Line corr. 'idols', lit. 'weaknesses' (euphemism).

d. Alluding to the levitical state. Their portion (the traditional 'cup', cf. 11:6+, or 'measuring line', Mi 2:4-5) is Yahweh. The name Hilkiah, 'Yahweh-is-my-portion', is common.

e. Lit. 'loins', like the heart, the seat of intimate thought and sentiment, cf. Jr 11:20; Pr 23:16; Ps 7:9.

f. Lit. 'my glory', but cf. 7:5+.

g. The psalmist has set his heart on Yahweh. His lively faith and total commitment to God call for a union that defies dissolution, hence he must pray to escape death which would break that union, 6:5, cf. 49:15+. The hope, though vague as yet, is leading towards a belief in resurrection, Dn 12:2; 2 M 7:9+. The versions translate 'pit' by 'corruption'. The text, which was applied to the Messiah in pre-Christian Judaism, finds its full sense in the resurrection of Christ.

17 a. The text reads 'our steps' at the beginning.

b. Text uncertain.

c. Lit. 'from that which you hide'. Scarcely a question of punishment here, as many think, but of passing pleasures to which the psalmist prefers God's friendship. 'have all the sons they wish for' Greek.

let them have a surplus to leave their children!
4:7; 59:16; 73:25-26 Nb 12:8+ ↗ Rv 22:4 For me the reward of virtue is to see your face, 15
and, on waking, to gaze my fill on your likeness.[d]

||2 S 22

PSALM 18

V 17

Song of triumph for the king[a]

For the choirmaster. Of David, the servant of Yahweh, who addressed the words of this song to Yahweh at the time when Yahweh delivered him from the power of his enemies and of Saul. He said:

I love you, Yahweh, my strength 1
(my saviour, you rescue me from violence.)[b]
3:3; 27:5; 31:2; 42:9 Dt 32:4 Yahweh is my rock and my bastion, 2
my deliverer is my God.

I take shelter in him, my rock,[c]
Gn 49:24 my shield, my horn of salvation,[d]
Dt 32:15,18, 37; 33:17 my stronghold and my refuge.
From violence you rescue me.
75:4 2 S 22:3f Lk 1:68 He is to be praised; on Yahweh I call 3
and am saved from my enemies.

40:2; 116:3-4; 130:1 The waves[e] of death encircled me, 4
the torrents of Belial burst on me;
Dt 13:14+ *88:7; 93:3* Nb 16:33+ Na 1:11 the cords of Sheol girdled me, 5
the snares of death were before me.

In my distress I called to Yahweh 6
and to my God I cried;
from his Temple he heard my voice,
my cry came to his ears.

99:1 Ex 19:16,18 Jg 5:4-5 Si 16:19 Is 64:1 Hab 3:3-6; 8-13 *97:3* Then the earth[f] quivered and quaked, 7
the foundations of the mountains trembled
(they quivered because he was angry);
from his nostrils a smoke ascended, 8
and from his mouth a fire that consumed
(live embers were kindled at it).

68:4; 144:5 He bent the heavens and came down, 9
a dark cloud under his feet;
99:1; 104:3 he mounted a cherub[g] and flew, 10
and soared on the wings of the wind.

Ex 13:21+; 19:16 Dt 4:11 1 K 8:12 Darkness he made a veil to surround him, 11
his tent a watery darkness, dense cloud;
before him a flash enkindled 12
hail and fiery embers.

29; 77:17-18 Ex 19:19 Jg 5:20 Jb 37:2 Yahweh thundered from heaven, 13
the Most High made his voice heard;
144:6 Ws 5:21 he let his arrows fly and scattered them, 14
launched the lightnings and routed them.

77:16; 140:13 Jb 36:29-30 Zc 9:14 The bed of the seas was revealed, 15
the foundations of the world were laid bare,
at your muttered threat, Yahweh,
Ex 15:8 at the blast of your nostrils' breath.

16 He sends from on high and takes me, 144:7
he draws me from deep waters,
17 he delivers me from my powerful enemy,
from a foe too strong for me.

18 They assailed me on my day of disaster,
but Yahweh was my support;
19 he freed me, set me at large,
he rescued me, since he loves me.

20 Yahweh requites me as I act justly, 26
as my hands are pure so he repays me, 1 S 26:23
21 since I have kept the ways of Yahweh,
nor fallen away from my God.

22 His judgements are all before me,
his statutes I have not put from me;
23 I am blameless in his presence, Dt 18:13
I keep sin at arm's length.

24 And Yahweh repays me as I act justly,
as my purity is in his sight.
25 Faithful you are with the faithful, 125:4
blameless with the blameless, 1 S 2:30
26 pure with the one who is pure,
but crafty with the devious,
27 you save a people that is humble Jb 22:29
and humiliate eyes that are haughty. Pr 3:34

28 Yahweh, you yourself are my lamp,[h] 27:1; 119:105
my God lights up my darkness; Jb 29:3
29 with you I storm the barbican,
with my God I leap the rampart.

30 This God, his way is blameless; 12:6; 77:13
the word of Yahweh is without dross. Dt 32:4
He it is who is the shield ‖Pr 30:5
of all who take shelter in him.

31 Who else is God but Yahweh, Is 44:8;
who else a rock save our God? 45:21
32 This God who girds me with strength *Dt 32:4*
and makes my way without blame,

33 who makes my feet like the hinds' Hab 3:19
and holds me from falling on the heights, Dt 32:13
Is 58:14

d. The morning awakening is God's chosen hour for granting favours, 5:3; 30:5; 46:5; 49:14; 57:8; 73:20; 90:14; 130:6; 143:8. It is also the time when justice is done, 101:8+. Dawn and light are symbols of deliverance, Is 8:20; 9:1; 33:2; 58:10; Zp 3:5; Lm 3:23, cf. Jn 8:12+; evening and darkness symbolise trial and sorrow, Ps 17:3; Is 17:14; 50:10; Ps 30:5; 59:6; 88:18; 107:10. The word 'awakening' has sometimes been taken as a subtle reference to the resurrection, cf. 2 K 4:31; Is 26:19; Dn 12:2; cf. Ps 16:10+.

18 a. A triumphal ode combining a thanksgiving prayer, vv. 4-27, with a royal victory song, vv. 31-50, ending on a messianic note. Several textual corrections have been made in accordance with the parallel version in 2 S 22.

b. Line absent from Hebr.; 2 S 22 places it after v. 3.

c. In Ps God is often called the Rock of Israel, i.e. the bulwark of his people and especially of the Davidic dynasty. Cf. Mt 16:18+.

d. My strong defence. The 'horn' is the symbol of strength.

e. 'waves' 2 S; 'cords, nets' Hebr. The waters symbolise deadly peril, 32:6; 40:2; 42:7; 66:12; 69:1f, 14f; 88:17; 130:1; Is 8:7; 30:28; Jb 22:11; 27:20; Jon 2:6.

f. God's triumphant intervention on behalf of the psalmist; the description of this theophany, vv. 7-17, now begins. Cf. Ex 13:22+; 19:16+.

g. The cherubs above the ark, Ex 25:18+, inspiring Ezekiel's vision of the Chariot of God, Ezk 1:3+; they form a throne for Yahweh, 1 S 4:4; 2 S 6:2; 2 K 19:15. From the destruction of the Temple onwards they symbolise heavenly beings.

h. Following 2 S. The Hebr. softens the utilitarian metaphor 'you light my lamp'.

144:1 who trains my hands for battle, 34
my arms to bend a bow of bronze.

You give me your saving shield 35
(your right hand upholds me), with care you train me,[t]
17:5 Jb 18:7 wide room you make for my steps under me, 36
my feet have never faltered.

21:7 I pursue my enemies and overtake them, 37
nor turn back till an end is made of them;
I strike them down, and they cannot rise, 38
they fall, they are under my feet.

You have girt me with strength for the fight, 39
bent down my assailants beneath me,
21:12 made my enemies turn their backs to me; 40
and those who hate me I destroy.

Hab 1:2 They cry out, there is no one to save, 41
to Yahweh, but there is no reply;
I crush them fine as dust before the wind, 42
trample them like the mud of the streets.

2:8-9 Rv 2:26-28 You deliver me from a people in revolt, 43
you place me at the head of the nations,
a people I did not know are now my servants,

66:3 foreigners come wooing my favour, 44
no sooner do they hear than they obey me,
Mi 7:17 foreigners grow faint of heart, 45
they come trembling out of their fastnesses.

144:1 Life to Yahweh! Blessed be my rock! 46
Exalted be the God of my salvation,
the God who gives me vengeance 47
144:2 and subjects the peoples to me,

who rescues me from my raging enemies. 48
You lift me high above those who attack me,
you deliver me from the man of violence.

7:18+; 20:1; 105:1-3 ↗ Rm 15:9 For this I will praise you, Yahweh, among the heathen 49
and sing praise to your name.

2; 20:6; 57; 9; 89:28-37; 144:10 1 S 2:10 His king he saves and saves again, 50
displays his love for his anointed,
for David and his heirs for ever.

PSALM 19

V 18

Yahweh, the sun of righteousness[a]

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

8:1f; 50:6; 93; 147:4-5, 15-20 Gn 1:1-8, 14-19 Jb 38:7, 31-33 Pr 8:22-31 The heavens declare the glory of God, 1
the vault of heaven proclaims his handiwork;
day discourses of it to day, 2
night to night hands on the knowledge.

3 No utterance at all, no speech,
no sound that anyone can hear;[b]
4 yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their message to the ends of the world.

Si 43▲ *104*

High above, he pitched a tent for the sun,
5 who comes out of his pavilion like a bridegroom,
exulting like a hero to run his race.[c]

Jb 9:7

6 He has his rising on the edge of heaven,
the end of his course is its furthest edge,
and nothing can escape his heat.

65:8

7 The Law of Yahweh is perfect,
new life for the soul;
the decree of Yahweh is trustworthy,
wisdom for the simple.

12:6; 119

Dt 4:6

8 The precepts of Yahweh are upright,
joy for the heart;
the commandment of Yahweh is clear,
light for the eyes.

9 The fear of Yahweh is pure,
lasting for ever;
the judgements of Yahweh are true,
righteous, every one,

119:89

10 more desirable than gold,
even than the finest gold;
his words[d] are sweeter than honey,
even than honey that drips from the comb.

119:127

119:103
Si 24:20

11 Thus your servant is formed by them,
observance brings great reward.

119:33

12 But who can detect his own failings?
Wash out my hidden faults.

13 And from pride[e] preserve your servant,
never let it dominate me.
So shall I be above reproach,
free from grave sin.

14 May the words of my mouth always[f] find favour,
and the whispering of my heart,
in your presence, Yahweh,
my Rock, my Redeemer![g]

i. Lit. 'your gentle care fosters me', cf. 71:21; Ezk 19:2.

19 a. This hymn celebrates Yahweh as creator of the heavens, and particularly of the sun (vv. 4b-6), and the author of the Law; Nature and Law both manifest the perfection of God. In the ancient East the sun symbolised justice, cf. Ml 3:20; Ws 5:6; hence the conjunction of the psalm's two sections. The Christmas liturgy applies the psalm to the Word of God, the Sun of Righteousness, Ml 3:20; Jn 1:9; Lk 1:78. V. 4 is applied to the apostles, cf. Rm 10:18.

b. The versions interpret '(theirs is not a language) whose sound cannot be heard'; but in what follows there is allusion to the Assyro-Babylonian idea that the stars are the silent 'writing of the heavens'.

c. The psalmist, speaking of the sun as a creature of God, uses expressions found also in Babylonian mythology.

d. 'his words' corr.; 'plentiful and' Hebr.

e. 'from pride', lit. 'from proud men' (or 'proud things'); Greek 'alien (gods)', cf. Jr 3:13 (false gods). Ps 119 persistently contrasts pride with obedience to the Law.

f. 'always' Greek.

g. In Hebr. *goel*. Originally meaning the avenger of blood, cf. Nb 35:19+, the word is used of Yahweh as avenger, saviour and rescuer of his servants and his people from death, in Is (41:14; 44:6), and in the psalms, 9:12; 49:7,15; 69:18; 72:14; 74:2; 77:15; 103:4; 107:2.

PSALM 20 V 19

Prayer for the king[a]

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

18:49; 44:5 1 K 8:30 Pr 18:10
May Yahweh answer you in time of trouble, 1
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you!

128:5a
May he send you help from the sanctuary, 2
give you support from Zion,
remember all your oblations 3
and find your holocaust acceptable; *Pause*
may he grant you your heart's desire, 4
and crown all your plans with success;
may we shout with joy for your victory, 5
and plant our banners in the name of our God!

May Yahweh grant all your petitions!

18:50
Now I know that Yahweh 6
saves his anointed,[b]
and answers him from his holy heaven
with mighty victories from his own right hand.

33:16-17; 147:10-11 2 Ch 14:10 Pr 21:31 Is 2:7; 40: 30-31
Some boast of chariots, some of horses, 7
but we boast about the name of Yahweh our God;
theirs to crumple and fall, 8
but we shall stand, and stand firm!

21
Yahweh, save the king, 9
answer us[c] when we call.

20; 61:5-7

PSALM 21 V 20

Thanksgiving for the king[a]

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

63:11
Yahweh, the king rejoices in your power; 1
what great joy your saving help gives him!
You have granted him his heart's desire, 2
not denied him what his lips entreated. *Pause*

For you have met him with choicest blessings, 3
put a crown of pure gold on his head;
he asked for life, and you gave it him, 4
length of days for ever and ever.

61:6 1 K 3:14 2 K 20:1-7 Is 38:1-20

Great his glory through your saving help, 5
you have loaded him with splendour and majesty;

45:3; 72:17 Gn 12:2; 48:20
yes, you confer on him everlasting blessings, 6
you gladden him with the joy of your presence.

16:11 1 Ch 17:27
Yes, the king puts his trust in Yahweh, 7
by grace of the Most High he reigns unshaken.

18:37
Your hand will unmask all your enemies, 8
your right hand all who hate you;
you will make them like a blazing furnace, 9
the day that you appear,[b]

Yahweh will engulf them in his anger,
and fire will devour them;
10 you will wipe their children from the earth, 109:13 Jb 18:19
their descendants from among the sons of men.

11 Plot though they do to harm you
and weave their plan as they may, they cannot win;
12 since you will make them turn tail, 18:40
by shooting your arrows in their faces.

13 Rise, Yahweh, in your power!
We will sing and play in honour of your strength.

PSALM 22

V 21 10:1f

The sufferings and hope of the virtuous man[a]

Is 52:13–53:12

For the choirmaster To the 'Doe of the Dawn'[b] Psalm Of David

1 My God, my God, why have you deserted me? Is 49:14; 54:7 ↗ Mt 27:46p
How far from saving me, the words I groan!
2 I call all day, my God, but you never answer, Si 2:10
all night long I call and cannot rest.
3 Yet, Holy One, you 71:6 Lv 17:1+ Is 6:3+
who make your home in the praises of Israel,[c]
4 in you our fathers put their trust,
they trusted and you rescued them;
5 they called to you for help and they were saved, 25:3 Jg 2:6+
they never trusted you in vain.

6 Yet here am I, now more worm than man, Is 53:3
scorn of mankind, jest of the people,
7 all who see me jeer at me, 109:25 Mt 27:39p
they toss their heads and sneer, *71:11* Ws 2:18-20
8 'He relied on[d] Yahweh, let Yahweh save him! ↗ Mt 27:43
If Yahweh is his friend, let Him rescue him!'

9 Yet you drew me out of the womb, Is 44:2,24
you entrusted me to my mother's breasts;
10 placed on your lap from my birth, Gn 50:23 Is 46:3
from my mother's womb you have been my God.
11 Do not stand aside: trouble is near, 35:22; 38:21; 40:13; 71:12
I have no one to help me!

12 A herd of bulls surrounds me,
strong bulls of Bashan close in on me;

20 a. Prayer for the king as he sets out to war, cf. 1 K 8:44; 2 Ch 20:18f. Each of the two sections is followed by a choral antiphon.

b. 'his anointed' (Greek *christos*), cf. Ex 30:22+; 1 S 9:26+: the king of Israel.

c. 'answer us' versions; 'he answers us' Hebr.

21 a. This psalm of two sections followed by choral antiphons, vv. 7 and 13, strikes a messianic and eschatological note, and for this reason is applied to Christ the King.

b. Lit. 'in the day of your face', i.e., when you come to judge. Vv. 8-12 are addressed to the king, but the expression 'the day of your face' and the mention of fire suggest a more distant, eschatological perspective. It is possible that in the original text this passage was addressed to Yahweh (cf. Greek MSS).

22 a. This lament and entreaty of an innocent man under persecution ends in thanksgiving for his rescue, vv. 22-26, and deserves its place in the national liturgy by virtue of v. 23 and its conclusion, vv. 27-31, where the coming of the kingdom of God throughout the world seems to result from the ordeal of the faithful servant. Reminiscent of the poem of the suffering servant in Is 52:13-53:12, this psalm, the opening line of which was spoken by Christ on the cross, and into which the evangelists read an anticipatory description of several episodes in the Passion, is messianic at least in the typical sense.

b. Possibly the first words of a familiar song. Versions 'For morning solace'.

c. Or 'You who dwell in the sanctuary, the praise of Israel', cf. Greek.

d. 'He relied on' versions; 'Rely on' Hebr.

17:12
Jb 4:10

their jaws are agape for me, 13
like lions tearing and roaring.

I am like water draining away, 14
my bones are all disjointed,
my heart is like wax,
melting inside me;
my palate[e] is drier than a potsherd 15a
and my tongue is stuck to my jaw. 15b

A pack of dogs surrounds me, 16
a gang of villains closes me in;
they tie me[f] hand and foot
and leave me[g] lying in the dust of death. 15

I can count[h] every one of my bones, 17
and there they glare at me, gloating;
✗ Mt 27: 35p ✗ Jn 19:24 they divide my garments among them 18
and cast lots for my clothes.

71:9

Do not stand aside, Yahweh. 19
O my strength, come quickly to my help;
rescue my soul from the sword, 20
7:2; 17:12; 35:17; 57:5 2 Tm 4:17 my dear life from the paw of the dog,
save me from the lion's mouth, 21
my poor soul[i] from the wild bulls' horns!

26:12; 35:18; 40:9 2 S 22:50 Jb 4:10 ✗ Heb 2:12

Then I shall proclaim your name to my brothers, 22
praise you in full assembly:
you who fear Yahweh, praise him! 23
Entire race of Jacob, glorify him!
Entire race of Israel, revere him!

For he has not despised 24
or disdained the poor man in his poverty,
has not hidden his face from him,
but has answered him when he called.

69:30; 109:30 Jon 2:10

You are the theme of my praise in the Great Assembly, 25
I perform my vows in the presence of those who fear him.

23:5; 69:32

The poor will receive as much as they want to eat.[j] 26
Those who seek Yahweh will praise him.
Long life to their hearts![k]

86:9 Tb 13:11 Is 45:22; 52:10

The whole earth, from end to end, will remember and come back to Yahweh; 27
all the families of the nations will bow down before him.[l]

103:19 ||Ob21 Zc 14:9

For Yahweh reigns, the ruler of nations! 28
Before him[m] all the prosperous of the earth will bow down, 29
before him will bow all who go down to the dust.

48:13; 71: 18; 78:6; 102:18 Is 53:10 Ep 2:7

And my soul will live for him, •my children will serve him; 30
men will proclaim the Lord to generations •still to come,[n] 31
his righteousness to a people yet unborn. All this he has done.[o]

PSALM 23

V 22

The Good Shepherd[a]

Psalm Of David

95:7 Gn 48:15 Sg 1:7 Ezk 34:1+

Yahweh is my shepherd, 1
I lack nothing.

2 In meadows of green grass he lets me lie.
To the waters of repose he leads me;
3 there he revives my soul.

He guides me by paths of virtue
for the sake of his name.

4 Though I pass through a gloomy valley,
I fear no harm;
beside me[b] your rod and your staff
are there, to hearten me.

5 You prepare a table before me
under the eyes of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil,[c]
my cup brims over.

6 Ah, how goodness and kindness pursue me,
every day of my life;
my home,[d] the house of Yahweh,
as long as I live!

Mi 7:14▲ Jn 10:10-11▲ *Is 40:31* Jr 31:25 Jn 4:1+

5:8; 48:14; 115:1 Pr 4:11

Jb 10:21-22 Is 50:10

22:26+; 78:19; 92:10; 138:7 Ex 16:1+

16:5+; 63:5

27:4

PSALM 24

V 23

Antiphonal psalm for solemn entry into the sanctuary[a]

Psalm *Of David*

1 To Yahweh belong earth and all it holds,
the world and all who live in it;
2 he himself founded it on the ocean,
based it firmly on the nether sea.[b]

3 Who has the right to climb the mountain of Yahweh,
who the right to stand in his holy place?
4 He whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure,
whose soul does not pay homage to worthless things
and who never swears to a lie.

5 The blessing of Yahweh is his,
and vindication from God his saviour.
6 Such are the people who seek him,
who seek your presence, God of Jacob![c] *Pause*

50:12; 89:11; 95:5 Ex 9:9 Dt 10:14 ✗1 Co 10:26 *75:3; 136:6* Is 42:5

15 Ezk 18:5

27:8-9

e. 'palate' corr.; 'strength' Hebr.
f. 'tie' Symmachus and Jerome. Hebr. uncertain 'like a lion'; Greek 'have dug into'; Syr. 'have wounded'; Vulg. 'have pierced'. The passage recalls Is 53:5 but the evangelists have not made use of it in the Passion narratives.
g. '(they) leave me' corr.; 'you leave me' Hebr.
h. Versions 'They count'.
i. 'my poor (soul)' conj. following versions; 'you have answered me' Hebr.
j. Allusion to the messianic banquet, Is 55:1f, etc., rather than to the ritual meal following the communion sacrifice, Lv 3:1+.
k. 'their' Greek; 'your' Hebr.
l. 'him' versions; 'thee' Hebr.
m. 'Before him' corr.; 'they will eat' Hebr. 'my soul will live for him, my ...' versions; 'who does not keep his soul alive, a ...' Hebr.
n. 'still to come' Greek; 'they will come' Hebr.
o. A common phrase in the second part of Is (41:20; 42:16) etc.

23 a. The care of God for the righteous, illustrated by two images: the shepherd, vv. 1-4, and the host of the messianic banquet, vv. 5-6. The psalm is traditionally applied to the sacramental life, particularly to baptism and the Eucharist.
b. Hebr. inserts 'you are' before 'beside me'.
c. Gesture of hospitality in the East, Am 6:6; Ps 92:10; 133:2; Qo 9:8; Lk 7:46.
d. 'my home' versions; 'I shall return to' Hebr.

24 a. Possibly vv. 7-10 refer to the translation of the ark in the days of David, 2 S 6:12-16, cf. Ps 68:24f; 132. The first part, vv. 1-6, seems to be of later date, cf. Ps 15: the creator of the universe is also the befriender of the upright.
b. The earth is represented as resting on the waters of the nether ocean (cf. Ex 20:4).
c. 'God of Jacob' Syr.; 'of the God of Jacob' Greek; 'Jacob' Hebr.

47:5f; 118: 19-20 2 S 6:12-16 Ezk 44:2 Mi 3:1
Gates, raise your arches, 7
rise, you ancient doors,
let the king of glory in!

1 Co 2:8
Who is this king of glory? 8
Yahweh the strong, the valiant,
Yahweh valiant in battle!

Gates, raise your arches, 9
rise, you ancient doors,
let the king of glory in!

Who is this king of glory? 10
Ex 24:16+ 1 S 1:3+ He is Yahweh Sabaoth,
King of glory, he! *Pause*

PSALM 25 V 24

Prayer in danger

Of David

=86:4; 143:8 *Aleph*
To you, Yahweh, I lift up my soul, 1
O my God. 2

55:23; 71:1 *Beth*
I rely on you, do not let me be shamed,
do not let my enemies gloat over me!

22:5; 40:15f Is 49:23; 50:7 Dn 3:40 *Ghimel*
No, those who hope in you are never shamed, 3
shame awaits disappointed traitors.

27:11; 86: 11; 119: 12,35; 143:8,10 *Daleth*
Yahweh, make your ways known to me, 4
teach me your paths.

Jn 16:13 *Si 51:15* *He*
Set me in the way of your truth, and teach me, 5
for you are the God who saves me.

Waw
All day long I hope in you
because of your goodness, Yahweh. 7c

Si 51:8 *Zain*
Remember your kindness, Yahweh, 6
your love, that you showed long ago.

106:4+ Jb 13:26 Is 64:8 *Heth*
Do not remember the sins of my youth; 7a
but rather, with your love remember me. 7b

Teth
Yahweh is so good, so upright, 8
he teaches the way to sinners;

Yod
in all that is right he guides the humble, 9
and instructs the poor in his way.

85:9-10 Tb 3:2 *Kaph*
All Yahweh's paths are love and truth 10
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Ba 2:14 *Lamed*
For the sake of your name, Yahweh, 11
forgive my guilt, for it is great.

Pr 19:23 *Mem*
everyone who fears Yahweh 12
will be taught the course a man should choose;

Nun
his soul will live in prosperity, 13
37:9,29 Is 57:13 his children have the land for their own.[a]

Jdt 16:15 *Samek*
The close secret of Yahweh[b] belongs to them who fear him, 14
his covenant also, to bring them knowledge.

26:11; 123: 1,2; 141: 8-9 *Ain*
My eyes are always on Yahweh, 15
for he releases my feet from the net.

16 *Pe* Turn to me, take pity on me, 86:16; 119:132
alone and wretched as I am!

17 *Sade* Relieve[c] the distress of my heart,
free me from my sufferings.

18 *Qoph* See my misery and pain,
forgive all my sins!

19 *Resh* See how my enemies multiply,
and how violent their hatred has grown.

20 *Shin* Watch over my soul, rescue me; 16:1
let me not be shamed: I take shelter in you.

21 *Tau* Let innocence and integrity be my protection,
since my hope is in you, Yahweh.

Redeem Israel, God,
from all his troubles.

PSALM 26

V 25 7; 17; 18:20-27; 59:3 Jb 31

Prayer of the blameless[a]

Of David

1 Yahweh, be my judge!
I go my way in my innocence,
My trust in Yahweh never wavers.

2 Test me, Yahweh, and probe me, 7:9; 17:3; 139:23 Ws 3:6
put me to the trial, loins and heart;

3 for your love is before my eyes,
and I live my life in loyalty to you. 86:11; 119:30 Si 51:15

4 No sitting with wastrels for me,
no associating with hypocrites;

5 I hate the society of evil men, 1:1
I refuse to sit down with the wicked.

6 I wash my hands in innocence =73:13 Dt 21:6-7 Mt 27:4
and join the procession round your altar,[b]

7 singing a hymn of thanksgiving,
proclaiming all your wonders.

8 I love the house where you live,[c] 29:9; 63:2; 122:9 Ex 24:16+; 25:8+
the place where your glory makes its home.

9 Do not let my soul share the fate of sinners, 28:3
or my life the doom of men of blood,

10 men with guilt on their hands,
whose right hands are heavy with bribes. Ez 3:8+

11 But I live my life in innocence, 101:2,6
redeem me, Yahweh,[d] take pity on me; 25:16

12 my foot is set on the right path,
I bless you, Yahweh, at the Assemblies.[e] 22:22; 40:10; 52:9

25 a. The sages of Israel had taught that the righteous man would receive reward on earth; to this is now added the hope, nursed by those back from exile, of the unconditional enjoyment of the land of their ancestors.
b. Not so much the mystery of God himself, Ws 2:22, as an intimacy with God, 73:28; Pr 3:32; Jb 29:5; Ex 33:20+, together with an understanding of the ways of God, Jr 16:21; 31:34; Ho 6:6.
c. 'relieve' corr.; 'they have relieved' Hebr.; 'are multiplied' Greek.

26 a. As in 7 and 17 the believer protests his innocence.
b. Hebr. adds 'Yahweh'.
c. Hebr. adds 'Yahweh' at the beginning. Hebr. 'the beauty of your house'; 'beauty' Greek.
d. 'Yahweh' Greek; omitted by Hebr.
e. 'you' Greek; omitted by Hebr.

PSALM 27

V 26

In God's company there is no fear

Of David

18:28; 35:3; 36:9; 43: 3; 118:6 Is 10:17 Mi 7:8
Yahweh is my light and my salvation, 1
whom need I fear?
Yahweh is the fortress of my life,
of whom should I be afraid?

14:4 Jb 19:22
When evil men advance against me 2
to devour my flesh,
they, my opponents, my enemies,
are the ones who stumble and fall.

Though an army pitched camp against me, 3
my heart would not fear;
though war were waged against me,
my trust would still be firm.

61:2
One thing I ask of Yahweh, 4
one thing I seek:
=23:6; 42:2
to live in the house of Yahweh
all the days of my life,
to enjoy the sweetness of Yahweh
and to consult him in his Temple.

Rv 7:15-16
For he shelters me under his awning 5
in times of trouble;
18:2; 31:20
he hides me deep in his tent,[a]
sets me high on a rock.

And now my head is held high 6
over the enemies who surround me,
3:3-4
in his tent I will offer
exultant sacrifice.

I will sing, I will play for Yahweh!

Yahweh, hear my voice as I cry! 7
Pity me! Answer me!
24:6; 105:4 Si 43:16-17 Ho 5:15
My heart has said of you, 8
'Seek his face'.[b]
Yahweh, I do seek your face;
do not hide your face from me. 9

Do not repulse your servant in anger;
you are my help.
Never leave me, never desert me,
God, my saviour!
Is 49:15 Jr 31:20 Ho 11:8
If my father and mother desert me, 10
Yahweh will care for me still.

25:4; =86:11
Yahweh, teach me your way, 11
lead me in the path of integrity
because of my enemies;

12 do not abandon me to the will of my foes—
false witnesses have risen against me, 35:11
and breathe out violence.

13 This I believe: I shall see[c] the goodness of Yahweh,
in the land of the living. 56:13; 116: 9; 142:5
14 Put your hope in Yahweh, be strong, let your heart be bold, Is 38:11
put your hope in Yahweh.

PSALM 28 V 27

Petition and thanksgiving

Of David

1 I cry to you, Yahweh,
my Rock! Do not be deaf to me, 18:2+
for if you are silent, I shall go
down to the Pit like the rest. 143:7

2 Hear my voice, raised in petition,
as I cry to you for help,
as I raise my hands, Yahweh,[a] 5:7; 134:2
toward your Holy of Holies. 1 K 8:48 Tb 3:11 Dn 6:11

3 Do not drag me away with the wicked, 26:9
away with the evil men
who talk of peace to their neighbours 12:2; 55:21; 62:4
while malice is in their hearts. Pr 26:24-28

4 Repay them for their actions, Yahweh, 62:12 2S3:39
for the evil they commit,
for their handiwork repay them, Jr 50:29
let them have what they deserve!

5 How blind they are to the works of Yahweh, Is 5:12
to his own handiwork!
May he pull them down and not rebuild them! 52:5

6 Blessed be Yahweh, for he hears
the sound of my petition!

7 Yahweh is my strength, my shield,
my heart puts its trust in him;
I have been helped, my flesh has bloomed again,[b]
I thank him with all my heart.

8 Yahweh is the strength of his people, 68:35
a saving fortress for his anointed.[c]
9 Save your people! Bless your heritage! 3:8; 29:11 Dt 32:11+
Shepherd them; carry them for ever!

27 a. 'awning' and 'tent': the Temple in Jerusalem.
b. 'seek (sing.) his face' corr.; 'seek (plur.) my face' Hebr. This expression, cf. Am 5:4+, originally signifying 'to consult Yahweh' in his sanctuary, 2 S 21:1, took on a wider sense: to seek to know God to live in his presence. To 'seek God', Dt 4:29; Ps 40:16; 69:6; 105:3, etc., is to serve him faithfully. Cf. Am 5:4+.
c. Or 'Oh, if I were sure of seeing!'
28 a. 'Yahweh' here and in v. 4 is absent from Hebr.
b. 'my flesh has bloomed again' Greek.
c. The parallelism suggests that the 'anointed' is here the people of God consecrated to his service cf. Ex 19:6+; Hab 3:13; Ps 105:15, and not the king, 20:6, or the high priest, 84:9.

PSALM 29

V 28

Hymn to the lord of the storm[a]

Psalm *Of David*

89:5-6; =96:7-9 Is 30:30
Pay tribute to Yahweh, you sons of God,[b] 1
tribute to Yahweh of glory and power,
tribute to Yahweh of the glory of his name, 2
worship Yahweh in his sacred court.[c]

77:18; 104-7; 147:15 Jb 37:4-5 Is 30:30 Ezk 10:5
The voice of Yahweh over the waters! 3a
Yahweh over the multitudinous waters! 3c
The voice of Yahweh in power! 4
The voice of Yahweh in splendour!

The voice of Yahweh shatters the cedars, 5
Yahweh shatters the cedars of Lebanon,
114:4 making Lebanon leap like a calf, 6
Sirion[d] like a young wild bull.

Hab 3:11
The voice of Yahweh sharpens lightning shafts![e] 7

The voice of Yahweh sets the wilderness shaking. 8
Yahweh shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of Yahweh sets the terebinths[f] shuddering, 9a
stripping the forests bare. 9b

The God of glory thunders. 3b
26:8; 55:19
In his palace[g] everything cries, 'Glory!' 9c
Gn 6-9 Is 54:9 Ba 3:3
Yahweh sat enthroned for the Flood, 10
Yahweh sits enthroned as a king for ever.[h]

28:9; 68:35; 144:15 Dn 7:27
Yahweh gives strength to his people, 11
Yahweh blesses his people with peace.

PSALM 30

V 29

Thanksgiving after mortal danger

Ezr 6:16 1 M 4:36f *Psalm* *Canticle for the Dedication of the House* *Of David*

High praise, Yahweh, I give you, for you have helped me up, 1
and not let my enemies gloat over me.
Yahweh, my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. 2

Jon 2:7
Yahweh, you have brought my soul up from Sheol, 3
of all those who go down to the Pit you have revived me.

7:17+
Play music in Yahweh's honour, you devout, 4
=97:12
remember his holiness, and praise him.
Jb 14:13 Is 54:7-8
His anger lasts a moment, his favour a lifetime; 5
Ps 17:15+
in the evening, a spell of tears,[a] in the morning, shouts of joy.

In my prosperity, I used to say, 6
'Nothing can ever shake me!'
Your favour, Yahweh, stood me on a peak impregnable;[b] 7
104:29
but then you hid your face and I was terrified.

Yahweh, I call to you, 8
I beg my God[c] to pity me,

9 'What do you gain by my blood[d] if I go down to the Pit? 51:14
Can the dust praise you or proclaim your faithfulness? 6:5; 88:10-12 Is 38:18+

10 'Hear, Yahweh, take pity on me;
Yahweh, help me!'
11 You have turned my mourning into dancing, 126 Est 9:22
you have stripped off my sackcloth and wrapped me in gladness; Is 61:3 Jr 31:13
12 and now my heart, silent no longer, will play you music;
Yahweh, my God, I will praise you for ever.

PSALM 31 V 30

Prayer in time of ordeal

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

1 In you, Yahweh, I take shelter; =71:1-2
never let me be disgraced.
In your righteousness deliver me, rescue me,[a]
2 turn your ear to me, make haste!

Be a sheltering rock for me, 18:2; 71:3
a walled fortress to save me!
3 For you are my rock, my fortress;
for the sake of your name, guide me, lead me!

4 Pull me out of the net they have spread for me,
for you are my refuge;
5 into your hands I commit my spirit, ↗Lk 23:46 ↗Ac 7:59
you have redeemed me, Yahweh.

6 God of truth, •you hate[b]
those who serve worthless idols;
but I put my trust in Yahweh:
7 I will exult, and rejoice in your love!

You, who have seen my wretchedness, 10:14
and known the miseries of my soul,
8 have not handed me over to the enemy,
you have given my feet space and to spare.

9 Take pity on me, Yahweh, 35; 38; 69; 71
I am in trouble now.
Grief wastes away my eye,
my throat, my inmost parts.

29 a. The tempest, cf. Ex 13:22+ and Ex 19:16+, evokes the glory and power of God, subduing the enemies of Israel and assuring peace to the Chosen People.

b. Lit. 'sons of the gods', cf. 82:1; 89:6; Jb 1:6+, i.e. the angels who constitute the heavenly court. The passage is sometimes applied to Israel, the 'son of God', Ex 4:22; Dt 14:1; Ho 11:1. After this line Greek and Vulg. add 'Bring sons of rams to Yahweh'.

c. 'court' versions; 'adornments' Hebr. The 'sacred court' is heaven, invisible counterpart of the Temple of Jerusalem, 11:4; 78:69.

d. Sidonian name for Lebanon, Dt 3:9.

e. God sharpens arrows to transfix his enemies, cf. 18:14; Dt 32:23,42; Hab 3:11; Zc 9:14.

f. 'the terebinths' corr.; '(makes) the hinds (calve)' Hebr. The tall trees, here and in v. 5, perhaps symbolise the proud enemies of God and of his people, cf. Is 2:13; 10:18,33; 32:19; Jr 21:14; 46:23; Ezk 21:2; Zc 11:2.

g. Either in heaven, v. 2, or in the Temple where the liturgy echoes the praise of the heavenly court, or else in the Holy Land, consecrated to Yahweh, 114:2, and his dwelling place, Jr 12:7; Zc 9:8.

h. The Flood was the first great act of God's triumphant justice which will be always exercised on behalf of his people.

30 a. Lit. 'in the evening, tears pass the night'.

b. Text corr.; 'on my mountain you have set up a fortress' Hebr. Allusion to Zion, or a metaphor of safety.

c. 'my God' Greek; 'Lord' Hebr.

d. I.e. my death; life resides in the blood, Gn 9:6+; Lv 1:5+; Ps 72:14 and 116:15.

31 a. 'rescue' Greek; it is put after 'make haste' in Hebr.

b. 'you hate' versions; 'I hate' Hebr.

38:10 For my life is worn out with sorrow, 10
my years with sighs;
my strength yields under misery,[c]
6:2; 32:3 my bones are wasting away.

To every one of my oppressors 11
71:7 I am contemptible,
38:11 loathsome[d] to my neighbours,
Jb 19:13-19 to my friends a thing of fear.

Those who see me in the street
hurry past me;
I am forgotten, as good as dead in their hearts, 12
something discarded.

41:5 I hear their endless slanders, 13
||Jr 20:10 threats from every quarter,
as they combine against me,
plotting to take my life.

But I put my trust in you, Yahweh, 14
I say, 'You are my God'.
140:6
Is 25:1
139:16 My days are in your hand, rescue me 15
Ws 7:16 from the hands of my enemies and persecutors;
4:6+; 67:1 let your face smile on your servant, 16
Nb 6:24 save me in your love.

I invoke you, Yahweh; do not let me be disgraced, 17
let the disgrace fall on the wicked!
May they go speechless to Sheol,
12:4 their lying lips struck dumb 18
for those insolent slurs on the virtuous,
for that arrogance and contempt.

Yahweh,[e] how great your goodness, 19
reserved for those who fear you,
bestowed on those who take shelter in you,
for all mankind to see!

27:5 Safe in your presence you hide them 20
Rv 7:15-16 far from the wiles of men;
Si 28:19 inside your tent you shelter them
109:3 far from the war of tongues.[f]
Jb 5:21

Blessed be Yahweh, who performs 21
marvels of love for me
60:9 (in a fortress-city)!
Is 26:1 In my alarm I exclaimed, 22
Jon 2:5 'I have been snatched[g] out of your sight!'
Yet you heard my petition
when I called to you for help.

37:34f; 62:12 Love Yahweh, all you devout: 23
Yahweh, protector of the faithful,
will repay the arrogant
with interest.
Be strong, let your heart be bold, 24
all you who hope in Yahweh!

PSALM 32

V 31 Pr 28:13 Is 1:18 Ho 14:3 Jm 5:16 1 Jn 1:9

Candid admission of sin[a]

Of David *Poem*

1 Happy the man whose fault is forgiven,
whose sin is blotted out;[b] 65:3 ↗ Rm 4:7-8
2 happy the man whom Yahweh
accuses of no guilt,
whose spirit is incapable of deceit!
3 All the time I kept silent, my bones were wasting away 31:10
with groans, day in, day out;
4 day and night your hand
lay heavy on me;
my heart grew parched as stubble[c]
in summer drought. *Pause*
5 At last I admitted to you I had sinned; 38:18; 51:3 Jb 31:33
no longer concealing my guilt,
I said, 'I will go to Yahweh 2 S 12:13
and confess my fault'.
And you, you have forgiven the wrong I did, 51:1-2
have pardoned[d] my sin. *Pause*
6 That is why each of your servants prays to you 69:13
in time of trouble;[e]
even if floods come rushing down, 18:4+; 42:7; 66:12
they will never reach him.
7 You are a hiding place for me,
you guard me when in trouble,
you surround me with songs[f] of deliverance. *Pause*
8 I will instruct you, and teach you the way to go;
I will watch over you and be your adviser. 33:18
9 Do not be like senseless horse or mule
that need bit and bridle to curb their spirit[g]
(to let you get near them).
10 Many torments await the wicked,
but grace enfolds the man who trusts in Yahweh. Is 33:2
11 Rejoice in Yahweh, 33:1
exult, you virtuous,
shout for joy, all upright hearts.

PSALM 33

V 32

Hymn to Providence

1 Shout for joy to Yahweh, all virtuous men, 32:11
praise comes well from upright hearts; 92:1; 147:1

c. 'misery' versions; 'iniquity' Hebr.
d. 'loathsome' corr.; 'exceedingly' Hebr.
e. 'Yahweh' versions; absent from Hebr.
f. Scorn, slander, perjury; Jr 18:18; Is 54:17; 1 K 21:10,13; Jb 5:21; Ps 55:9; 109:3; 120:2f.
g. 'snatched' corr.

32 a. A didactic poem; its two parts, vv. 1-7 and 8-11, balance each other but the rhythm is different. One of the Penitential Psalms.
b. Lit. 'his sin is covered', cf. 65:3+; 85:2; Jb 31:33.
c. 'my heart' one MS; absent from Text. Rec. 'stubble' corr.
d. 'have pardoned' corr.; 'Selah' (i.e. Pause) Hebr.
e. 'of trouble' corr.
f. 'songs' doubtful word.
g. Word translated from corresponding Arabic.

give thanks to Yahweh on the lyre, 2
92:3; 144:9 play to him on the ten-string harp;
sing a new song in his honour, 3
play with all your skill as you acclaim[a] him!
89:14 Dt 32:4 The word of Yahweh is integrity itself, 4
all he does is done faithfully;
he loves virtue and justice, 5
=119:64 Yahweh's love fills the earth.

Gn 2:1 Jn 1:1+ By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, 6
their whole array by the breath of his mouth;
78:13 Gn 1:9-10 Jb 38:8-11,22 Ex 15:8 he collects the ocean waters as though in a wineskin,[b] 7
he stores the deeps in cellars.

Let the whole world fear Yahweh, 8
let all who live on earth revere him!
147:15; 148:5 Gn 1:3f Jdt 16:14 Si 39:16 Is 48:13 Lm 3:37 Jn 1:3 He spoke, and it was created; 9
he commanded, and there it stood.

Yahweh thwarts the plans of nations, 10
frustrates the intentions of peoples;
Pr 19:21 Qo 3:14 Is 40:8; 46:10 but Yahweh's plans hold good for ever, 11
the intentions of his heart from age to age.
135:4; =144:15 Ex 19:6+ Dt 7:6+ Est 4:17h *2 Ch 16:9* Happy the nation whose God is Yahweh, 12
the people he has chosen for his heritage.

Jb 34:21 Si 15:18-19 Jr 16:17 Dn 13:42 Yahweh looks down from heaven, 13
he sees the whole human race;
Jr 32:19 from where he sits he watches 14
all who live on the earth,
94:9-11; 139:1-16 Zc 12:1 he who moulds every heart 15
and takes note of all men do.

147:10-11 1 S 14:6; 17:47 Jdt 9:7 A large army will not keep a king safe, 16
nor does the hero escape by his great strength;
Ho 1:7+ it is delusion to rely on the horse for safety, 17
for all its power, it cannot save.

32:8; 34:15 Si 34:16 But see how the eye of Yahweh is on those who fear him, 18
on those who rely on his love,
to rescue their souls from death 19
and keep them alive in famine.

Our soul awaits Yahweh, 20
=115:9f he is our help and shield;
our hearts rejoice in him, 21
we trust in his holy name.
90:17 Is 33:2 Yahweh, let your love rest on us 22
as our hope has rested in you.

PSALM 34 V 33

In praise of God's justice[a]

1 S 21:11-16 *Of David. When, after pretending to be mad in front of Abimelech, he was dismissed by him and made his escape*

145:2 *Aleph* I will bless Yahweh at all times, 1
his praise shall be on my lips continually;

2 *Beth* my soul glories in Yahweh,
let the humble hear and rejoice.

3 *Ghimel* Proclaim with me the greatness of Yahweh,
together let us extol his name.

4 *Daleth* I seek Yahweh, and he answers me
and frees me from all my fears.

5 *He* Every face turned to him grows brighter
and is never ashamed.

6 *Zain* A cry goes up from the poor man, and Yahweh hears,
and helps him in all his troubles.

7 *Heth* The angel of Yahweh pitches camp
round those who fear him; and he keeps them safe.

35:5
Ex 14:19+

8 *Teth* How good Yahweh is—only taste and see!
Happy the man who takes shelter in him.

Pr 3:7; 10:3
↗ 1 P 2:3
=2:12

9 *Yod* Fear Yahweh, you his holy ones:
those who fear him want for nothing.

10 *Kaph* The young lion[b] may go empty and hungry,
but those who seek Yahweh lack nothing good.

11 *Lamed* Come, my sons, listen to me,
I will teach you the fear of Yahweh.

Pr 1:8; 4:1

12 *Mem* Which of you wants to live to the full,
who loves long life and enjoyment of prosperity?

Am 5:14
↗ 1 P 3:10-12

13 *Nun* Malice must be banished from your tongue,
deceitful conversation from your lips;

14 *Samek* never yield to evil, practise good,
seek peace, pursue it.

=37:27;
119:83
Pr 3:7
Si 17:26
Mt 5:9
Heb 12:14

16 *Pe* The face of Yahweh frowns on evil men,
to wipe their memory from the earth;

15 *Ain* the eyes of Yahweh are turned towards the virtuous,
his ears to their cry.

33:18
Si 15:19

17 *Sade* They cry for help and Yahweh hears
and rescues them from all their troubles;

18 *Qoph* Yahweh is near to the broken-hearted,
he helps those whose spirit is crushed.

51:17
Mt 11:29-30

19 *Resh* Hardships in plenty beset the virtuous man,
but Yahweh rescues him from them all;

20 *Shin* taking care of every bone,
Yahweh will not let one be broken.

↗ Jn 19:36

21 *Tau* Evil will bring death to the wicked,[c]
those who hate the virtuous will have to pay;

22 *(Waw)* while Yahweh himself ransoms the souls of his servants,
and those who take shelter in him have nothing to pay.

33 a. This word originally indicated the war cry that preluded attack, Ex 32:17; Jos 6:5; Jg 7:20-21; 1 S 17: 20,52; Am 1:14; 2:2; Ho 5:8; Jr 4:19; 49:2; it hailed Yahweh as king and leader, Nb 23:21; Zp 1:16; cf. 1 S 10:24, and his palladium, the ark, 1 S 4:5; 2 S 6:15. After the Exile this ritual war cry assumes a ceremonial and liturgical character: it acclaims Yahweh as king of Israel and of the nations, 47:1,5; 89:15; 95:1; 98:4,6, as saviour, Is 44:23, and as judge, Jl 2:1; it hails his Messiah also, Zc 9:9. It is shouted on feast days, Ezr 3:11, cf. Jb 38:7, at thanksgiving sacrifices, 27:6; 65:13; 100:1; and in religious processions, 95:1; 100:1f.

b. 'wineskin' versions; 'heap' Hebr.

34 a. Wisdom and 'alphabetical' psalm, cf. Pr 31: 10+ (though the sequence of strophes is upset): a thanksgiving, vv. 1-10, and an instruction (in the style of Pr) on the fates of the upright and the wicked, vv. 11-22.

b. 'The young lion'; Hebr. reads plural; Greek 'The rich'.

c. Versions 'The death of the wicked is an evil one'.

PSALM 35

V 34

Prayer of a virtuous man under oppression[a]

Of David

Accuse my accusers, Yahweh, 1
attack my attackers;
grip shield and buckler, 2
up, and help me;
brandish lance and pike[b] 3
in the faces of my pursuers.
27:1 Tell my soul, 'I am your salvation'.

=71:13; 40:15 Si 51:3 Shame and dishonour on those 4
who are out to kill me!
Back with them! Cover with confusion
those who plot my downfall!
1:4; 83:13 May they be like chaff before the wind, 5
34:7 Jr 23:12 with the angel of Yahweh to chase them!
May their way be dark and slippery, 6
with the angel of Yahweh to hound them!

Jb 18:8 Jr 18:20 Unprovoked they spread their net for me, 7
they dug a pit[c] for me;
7:15+ Is 47:11 1 Th 5:3 but Ruin creeps on them unawares, 8
the net they have spread will catch them instead,
and into their own pit will they fall.

Then my soul will rejoice in Yahweh, 9
exult that he has saved me.
40:5; 51:8; 86:8+ All my bones will exclaim, 'Yahweh, 10
who can compare with you
in rescuing the poor man from the stronger,
the needy from the man who exploits him?'

27:12 Mt 26:59f Lying witnesses take the stand, 11
questioning me on things I know nothing about;
38:20; 109:5 Jr 18:20 they repay my kindness with evil, 12
there is desolation in my soul.

Yet, when they were sick, I put sackcloth on, 13
I humbled my soul with fasting,
109:4 murmuring prayers to my own breast
119:83 as though for a friend or brother; 14
and, like a person mourning his mother,
went about dejected and sorrowing.

Now I have fallen, they crowd round delighted, 15
flocking to jeer at me;
strangers[d] I never even knew
with loud cries tear me to pieces,
riddling me with gibe after gibe,[e] 16
grinding their teeth at me.

How much longer, Lord, will you look on? 17
Rescue my soul from their onslaughts,[f]
17:12; 22:20f; 58:6 my dear life from these lions.

18 I will give thanks in the Great Assembly, 22:22; 40:9
praise you where the people throng.

19 Do not let my lying enemies 38:16
gloat over me,
do not let those who hate me for no reason 69:4
exchange sly glances. Si 27:22
Lm 3:52
↗Jn 15:25

20 Peace is not what they discuss 120:6-7
with the[g] peaceloving people of the land;
they think out false accusations, 38:12
21 their mouths wide to accuse me,
'Aha! Aha!' they say 40:15
'With our own eyes we saw it!'[h] Lm 2:16

22 Now break your silence, Yahweh, you were looking too, 109:1
Lord, do not stand aside, Hab 1:13
23 up, wake up, come to my defence, 22:11;
Lord my God side with me! =38:21
24 Yahweh my God, you are righteous, so give verdict for me,
and do not let them gloat over me.

25 Do not let them think, 'Just as we hoped!' 40:15
Do not let them say, 'Now we have got him down!' Ezk 25:3;
26:2
26 Shame and dishonour on all
who gloat over my misfortune;
shame and discredit cover all Dn 3:44
who profit at my expense!

27 But shouts of joy and gladness for all
who take pleasure in my virtue;
give them constant cause to say,
'Great is Yahweh, 40:16
who likes to see his servant at peace!'

28 Then my tongue will shout your goodness, 71:15
and sing your praises all day long.

PSALM 36 V 35

The wickedness of the sinner, the goodness of God[a]

For the choirmaster Of the servant of Yahweh, David

1 The wicked man's oracle is Sin
in the depths of his heart;[b]
there is no fear of God 14:1
before his eyes. ↗Rm 3:18

2 He sees himself with too flattering an eye Mt 7:3-5
to detect and detest his guilt;[c]
3 all he says tends to mischief and deceit,
he has turned his back on wisdom.

35 a. A long lament and imprecation; akin to 22,55. 59,69,70,109.
b. 'pike' conj.; 'halt (them)' Hebr.
c. Text corrected following Syr.
d. 'strangers' conj.; 'smitten ones' (or 'cripples') Hebr.
e. Following Greek. Hebr. corrupt.
f. Word uncertain.
g. 'with the', lit. 'even against the'; 'and in anger' Greek.
h. Falsely accusing him of some crime.
36 a. The two parts of this psalm, vv. 1-4; 5-12, may have existed separately.
b. For the wicked, the voice of Sin here personified, takes the place of the word of God.
c. Text uncertain.

Mi 2:1

How best to work •mischief he plots, 4
even when he is in bed;
he persists in his evil course,
he never rejects what is bad.

=57:10; 71: 19

Your love, Yahweh, reaches to the heavens, 5
your faithfulness to the clouds;
your righteousness is like the mountains of God,[d] 6
your judgements like the mighty deep.

Yahweh, protector of man and beast,
how precious, God, your love! 7
Hence the sons of men
17:8+; 63:1f Is 31:5 take shelter in the shadow of your wings.[e]

They feast on the bounty of your house, 8
46:4 you give them drink from your river of pleasure;
16:11; 27:1; 42:2; 46: 4; 97:11 Is 55:1 Jr 2:13+ Jn 4:14 *9:10* yes, with you is the fountain of life,[f] 9
by your light we see the light.[g]

Do not stop loving those who know you, 10
or being righteous to upright hearts.
Do not let arrogant feet crush me 11
or wicked hands expel me.

The evil men have fallen, there they lie, 12
beaten down, never to stand again!

73 Jb 21:7-26

PSALM 37 V 36

The fate of the virtuous and the wicked[a]

Of David

39:2 Jb 8:13 Pr3:31; 23: 17; 24:1,19 Ml 2:17; 3: 14 58:7; 90:6; 103:15 Is 40:7 *128:1* *Aleph*

Do not worry about the wicked, 1
do not envy those who do wrong.
Quick as the grass they wither, 2
fading like the green in the field.

Beth

Trust in Yahweh and do what is good, 3
make your home in the land[b] and live in peace;
Pr 10:24 make Yahweh your only joy 4
and he will give you what your heart desires.

55:22 Pr3:5; 16:3 *Ghimel*

Commit your fate to Yahweh, 5
trust in him and he will act:
112:4 Ws 5:6 Is 58:10 making your virtue clear as the light, 6
your integrity as bright as noon.

Daleth

Be quiet before Yahweh, and wait patiently for him, 7
not worrying about men who make their fortunes,
about men who scheme
to bring the poor and needy down. 14c

He

Enough of anger, leave rage aside, 8
do not worry, nothing but evil can come of it:
for the wicked will be expelled, 9
25:13 Pr 2:21 Is 57:13 while those who hope in Yahweh shall have the land for their own.

Waw

A little longer, and the wicked will be no more, 10
search his place well, he will not be there;

11 but the humble shall have the land for their own
to enjoy untroubled peace.

Mt 5:4
119:165

12 *Zain* The wicked man plots against the virtuous,
and grinds his teeth at him;
13 but the Lord only laughs at the man,
knowing his end is in sight.

59:8
Ws 4:18

14a *Heth* Though the wicked draw the sword,
14b and bend their bow, to kill the upright,
15 their swords will only pierce their own hearts
and their bows will be smashed.

11:2

16 *Teth* The little the virtuous possesses
outweighs all the wealth of the wicked,[c]
17 since the arms of the wicked are doomed to break,
and Yahweh will uphold the virtuous.

Pr 15:16;
16:8

18 *Yod* Yahweh takes care of good men's lives,
and their heritage will last for ever;
19 they will not be at a loss when bad times come,
in time of famine they will have more than they need.

20 *Kaph* As for the wicked—they will perish,
these enemies of Yahweh;
they will vanish like the beauty of the meadows,
they will vanish in smoke.

Ws 5:14

21 *Lamed* The wicked man borrows without meaning to repay,
but a virtuous man is generous and open-handed;
22 those he blesses will have the land for their own,
those he curses[d] will be expelled.

23 *Mem* Yahweh guides a man's steps,
they are sure, and he takes pleasure in his progress;
24 he may fall, but never fatally,
since Yahweh supports him by the hand.

||Pr 20:24

25 *Nun* Now I am old, but ever since my youth
I never saw a virtuous man deserted,
or his descendants forced to beg their bread;
26 he is always compassionate, always lending:
his children will be blessed.

Jb 4:7
Si 2:10

27 *Samek* Never yield to evil, practise good
and you will have an everlasting home,
28 for Yahweh loves what is right,
and never deserts the devout.

=34:14
Am 5:14

Ain Those who do wrong[e] will perish once and for all,
and the children of the wicked shall be expelled;

Jb 18:19

d. I.e. the high mountains, cf. 68:15; 80:10.

e. Rhythm disturbed, text doubtful.

f. 'life' means prosperity, peace, happiness, cf. 133:3. The 'fountain of life' in Pr is wisdom, Pr 13:14; 16:22; 18:4, and the fear of God, 14:27. This passage is applied to Christ, the life and light of men, cf. Jn *passim*.

g. The 'light of the face' of God. 27:1; 89:15; Jb 29:3, is his benevolence, cf. 4:6+; in it man finds the 'light' of happiness.

37 a. This 'alphabetical' psalm, 'A mirror of Providence' (Tertullian) counters the indignation of those outraged by the prosperity of the ungodly with the teachings of the sages on earthly rewards and punishments for the upright and the wicked respectively. The debate is continued in Qo (8:11-14) and Jb.

b. The Holy Land, cf. 25:13; Dt 16:20. 'live in peace', lit. 'feed securely', cf. Is 14:30. The Beatitudes give these promises a spiritual sense, Mt 5:3-4, cf. Rm 4:13.

c. With versions; 'the wealth of many wicked' Hebr.

d. Greek 'those who bless him...those who curse him'; Syr. adds 'Yahweh'.

e. Greek; absent from Hebr. 'perish' Greek; 'be preserved' Hebr

25:13 Pr 2:21 — the virtuous will have the land for their own, and make it their home for ever. 29

Pr 10:31 *Pe*

The mouth of the virtuous man murmurs wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is right; 30
40:8 Dt 6:3,6 Jr 31:33 — with the Law of his God in his heart his steps can never falter. 31

Sade

The wicked man spies on the virtuous, seeking to kill him; 32
Yahweh will never leave him in those clutches, or let him be condemned under trial. 33

31:23 *Qoph*

Put your hope in Yahweh, keep his way, 34a
and he will save you from the wicked, 40b
raising you until you make the land your own 34b
and see the wicked expelled.

92:7 Jb 20:6-7 Is 2:13; 14:13 Ezk 31:10 *Resh*

I have seen the wicked in his triumph 35
towering like a cedar of Lebanon,[f]
but when next I passed,[g] he was not there, 36
I looked for him and he was nowhere to be found.

Shin

Observe the innocent man, consider the upright: 37
Pr 23:18; 24:14 — for the man of peace there are descendants,
but sinners shall be destroyed altogether, 38
the descendants of the wicked shall be wiped out.

Tau

The salvation of the virtuous comes from Yahweh, 39
=9:9 Dn 3:17 — he is their shelter when trouble comes;
Yahweh helps and rescues them, 40a
he saves them because they take shelter in him.

31:9

PSALM 38 V 37

Prayer in distress[a]

70:inscr. *Psalm Of David In commemoration*

=6:1 — Yahweh, do not punish me in your rage, 1
or reprove me in the heat of anger.
Jb 6:4 Jr 10:24 Lm 3:12 — Your arrows have pierced deep, 2
your hand has pressed down[b] on me;
64:7 Is 1:5-6 — no soundness in my flesh now you are angry, 3
no health in my bones, because of my sin.

40:12 Gn 4:13 Ezr 9:6 — My guilt is overwhelming me, 4
it is too heavy a burden;
my wounds stink and are festering, 5
the result of my folly;
bowed down, bent double, overcome, 6
I go mourning all the day.

My loins are burnt up with fever, 7
there is no soundness in my flesh:
102:3-5 — numbed and crushed and overcome, 8
my heart groans, I moan aloud.

Lord, all that I long for is known to you, 9
my sighing is no secret from you;

10 my heart is throbbing, my strength deserting me, 6:7; 31:10; 40:12; 88:6
the light of my eyes itself has left me.

11 My friends and my companions shrink from my wounds,
even the dearest of them keep their distance;
12 men intent on killing me lay snares,
others, hoping to hurt me, threaten my ruin,
hatching treacherous plots all day. 35:20

13 But I am like the deaf, I do not hear, Is 53:7
like the dumb man who does not open his mouth;
14 I am like the man who, hearing nothing,
gives no sharp answer in return.

15 For I put my trust in you, Yahweh,
and leave you to answer for me, Lord my God.
16 I have already said, 'Stop them gloating over me, 13:4; 35:19
do not let them take advantage of me if my foot should slip'.

17 And now my fall is upon me,
there is no relief from my pains 51:3
18 yes, I admit my guilt, 32:5
I am sorry for having sinned.

19 There are more and more to hurt me for no reason,[e]
There are more to hate me unprovoked,
20 repaying my kindness with evil, 32:5; 109:3-5
arraigning me for trying to do right.[d]

21 Yahweh, do not desert me, 22:11; =35:22
do not stand aside, my God!
22 Come quickly to my help,
Lord, my saviour!

PSALM 39

V 38 88

The insignificance of man before God[a]

For the choirmaster For Jeduthun Psalm Of David

1 I said, 'I will watch how I behave,
and not let my tongue lead me into sin;
I will keep a muzzle on my mouth
as long as the wicked man is near me'.
2 I stayed dumb, silent, speechless,
though the sight of him thriving[b] made torment increase. 37:1+

3 My heart had been smouldering inside me,
but it flared up at the thought of this
and the words burst out, Jr 20:9
4 'Tell me, Yahweh, when my end will be,

f. Corr. according to Greek.
g. 'I' versions; 'he' Hebr.

38 a. Complaint of a devout man who is sick and therefore assumed to be sinful, cf. vv. 3-4,5b,18. Penitential Psalm. Some passages are reminiscent of Jb and the poem of the suffering servant, Is 53.
b. 'pressed down' Syr.; 'fallen' Hebr.

c. 'for no reason' corr.; 'living' Hebr.
d. Some Greek MSS and versions add 'They have rejected me, the loved one, like a hideous corpse' (cf. Is 14:19), an allusion to the crucified Christ; the Coptic version, still more explicitly 'They have nailed my flesh'.

39 a. Cf. 88. The psalmist expresses his dismay at the prosperity of the godless and the shortness of life, vv. 1-6; he commends himself to God and begs for his favour.
b. Corr. (lit. 'because of his good').

102:24a-23b Ws 2:1 37:1+ how many days are allowed me,
show me how frail I am.

73:20; 90:9-10; 144:4 Jb 7:6,16; 14:1,5 'Look, you have given me an inch or two of life, 5
my life-span is nothing to you;
each man that stands on earth is only a puff of wind, *Pause*
62:9 every man that walks, only a shadow, 6
94:11 Qo 2:22; 6:2,12 Ws 2:5 Is 40:7 and the wealth[c] he amasses is only a puff of wind—
he does not know who will take it next.'

So tell me, Lord, what can I expect? 7
My hope is in you.
Free me from all my sins, 8
do not make me the butt of idiots.
I am dumb, I speak no more, 9
since you yourself have been at work.

Lay your scourge aside, 10
I am worn out with the blows you deal me.
You punish man with the penalties of sin, 11
like a moth you eat away all that gives him pleasure—
man is indeed only a puff of wind! *Pause*

Yahweh, hear my prayer, 12
listen to my cry for help,
do not stay deaf to my crying.
119:19 Ex 12:48+ Lv 25:23 ↗ 1P 2:11 I am your guest, and only for a time,
a nomad like all my ancestors.
Jb 7:19; 10:21; 14:6 Look away, let me draw breath,[d] 13
before I go away and am no more!

PSALM 40 V 39

Song of praise and prayer for help[a]

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

I waited and waited for Yahweh, 1
now at last he has stooped to me
Lm 3:25 and heard my cry for help.

18:4; 69:1-2, 14-15; 71:20 Jr 38:6 He has pulled me out of the horrible pit, 2
out of the slough of the marsh,
has settled my feet on a rock
and steadied my steps.

He has put a new song in my mouth, 3
a song of praise to our God;
=52:6;64:9 Is 41:5 dread will seize many at the sight,
and they will put their trust in Yahweh.

1:1 Pr 16:20 ‖Jr 17:7 Happy the man who puts 4
his trust in Yahweh,
and does not side with rebels
who stray after false gods.

139:17-18 Dt 4:34 How many wonders you have done for us, 5
Yahweh, my God!
How many plans you have made for us;
35:10 you have no equal!

I want to proclaim them, again and again,
but they are more than I can count.

6 You, who wanted no sacrifice or oblation, ↗ Heb 10:5-7
opened[b] my ear, Is 50:5
you asked no holocaust or sacrifice for sin; 50:7-15; 51: 16-17; 69: 30-31
7 then I said, 'Here I am! I am coming!' Am 5:21+

In the scroll of the book am I not commanded
8 to obey your will?[c]
My God, I have always loved your Law 37:31
from the depths of my being. Jn 4:34; 8: 29

9 I have always proclaimed the righteousness of Yahweh 22:22; 35: 18; 149:1
in the Great Assembly;
nor do I mean to stop proclaiming,
as you know well.

10 I have never kept your righteousness to myself,
but have spoken of your faithfulness and saving help;
I have made no secret of your love and faithfulness
in the Great Assembly.

11 For your part, Yahweh, do not withhold
your kindness from me!
May your love and faithfulness 26:12; 61:7; 89:33
constantly preserve me.

12 More misfortunes beset me
than I can count,
my sins close in on me 38:4
until I can hardly see, 6:7; 38:10
they outnumber the hairs on my head;
my courage is running out. 69:4

13 Oh come and rescue me, Yahweh, 22:11; 38:22; =70:1f
Yahweh come quickly and help me!
14 Shame and dishonour on all =71:13
who are out to kill, to destroy me! Dn 3:44

Down with them! Disgrace on those
who enjoy my misfortune!
15 May they be aghast with shame, 35:4,21,25
those who say to me, 'Aha! Aha!'

16 But joy and gladness
for all who seek you!
To all who love your saving power 35:27; 69:6; 104:1
give constant cause to say, 'God is great!'

17 To me, poor wretch,
come quickly, Lord![d] Dn 9:19

c. 'wealth' corr.; 'they are in turmoil' Hebr.

d. Lit. 'that I may look cheerful', cf. Jb 9:27; 10:20.

40 a. The hymn of thanksgiving, vv. 1-11, is followed by a cry of distress, vv. 13-17, identical with Ps 70. In the present arrangement the first part seems to be a review of past happiness as contrasted with present misery, leading up to the appeal to Yahweh.

b. Lit. 'dug out'. God sees to it that his servant knows his will, cf. Is 50:5. A Greek variant, 'you have fashioned a body for me', was interpreted messianically and applied to Christ, Heb 10:5f.

c. Obedience is better than sacrifice, 1 S 15:22. The 'book' is the Law. 'am I not commanded' lit. 'it is laid down for me'; the Jewish textual tradition punctuates differently, so also Greek which translates 'it is written of me', suggesting a messianic meaning.

d. Cf. Ps 70; or read with Text 'the Lord will think of me'.

My helper, my saviour, my God,
come and do not delay!

103:3

PSALM 41

V 40

Prayer of a sick and lonely man

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

Pr 14:21
Si 4:10
Happy the man who cares for the poor[a] and the weak: 1
Tb 4:7-11
if disaster strikes, Yahweh will come to his help.
Yahweh will guard him, give him life and happiness[b] in the land; 2
ah, do not let his enemies treat him as they please!
Yahweh will be his comfort on his bed of sickness; 3
most carefully you make his bed[c] when he is sick.

I for my part said, 'Yahweh, take pity on me! 4
Cure me, for I have sinned against you.'
31:11-13; 38:11-12; 88:8
Jr 20:10
My enemies say of me with malice, 5
'How long before he dies and his name perishes?'
Jb 19:13-19
They visit me, their hearts full of spite, 6
they offer hollow comfort, and go out to spread the news.

All who hate me whisper to each other about me, 7
reckoning I deserve the misery I suffer,[d]
'This sickness is fatal[e] that has overtaken him, 8
he is down at last, he will never get up again'.
55:13
Even my closest and most trusted friend, 9
Ob 7
✗ Jn 13:18
who shared my table, rebels[f] against me.

But Yahweh, take pity on me! 10
Raise me up, and I will pay them back;
and by this I shall know that I enjoy your favour, 11
if my enemy fails to triumph over me;
and I, whom you uphold, go unscathed, 12
set by you in your presence for ever.

Ne 9:5
Dn 2:20
Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, 13
from all eternity and for ever!
Amen. Amen![g]

PSALM 42-43

V 41-42

Lament of a Levite in exile[a]

For the choirmaster Poem Of the sons of Korah

As a doe[b] longs 1
Jn 4:1+
for running streams,
63:1; 84:2
Is 26:9
so longs my soul
for you, my God.

My soul thirsts for God, 2
36:9
the God of life;
when shall I go to see
27:4
the face of God?[c]

80:5; 102:9
I have no food but tears, 3
day and night;

and all day long men say to me,
'Where is your God?' 79:10 Jl 2:17

4 I remember, and my soul Lm 3:20
melts within me: Jb 3:24
I am on my way to the wonderful Tent,[d] 122:1
to the house of God, 27:4
among cries of joy and praise
and an exultant throng.

5 Why so downcast, my soul,
why do you sigh within me?
Put your hope in God: I shall praise him yet, 62:5
6 my saviour,[e] •my God. 6:4+

When my soul is downcast within me,
I think of you;
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
of you, humble mountain![f] 43:3; 68:16; 122:1

7 Deep is calling to deep
as your cataracts roar;
all your waves, your breakers, 32:6; 69:2; 88:7
have rolled over me. ‖Jon 2:4

8 In the daytime may Yahweh
command his love to come,
and by night may his song be on my lips,
a prayer to the God of my life!

9 Let me say to God my Rock, 18:2+
'Why do you forget me?
Why must I walk
so mournfully, oppressed by the enemy?'

10 Nearly breaking my bones[g]
my oppressors insult me,
as all day long they ask me,
'Where is your God?' Jl 2:17 Mi 7:10

11 Why so downcast, my soul,
why do you sigh within me?
Put your hope in God: I shall praise him yet, 62:5
my saviour, my God.

43

1 Defend me,[a] take up my cause 119:154
against people who have no pity;

41 a. 'the poor' Greek.
b. 'give him happiness' versions.
c. Text uncertain.
d. Sickness is regarded as a punishment for sin, cf. Jb; Ps 38:3; 107:17.
e. Lit. 'thing of Belial', cf. Dt 13:14+.
f. Lit. 'lifts the heel against me'. Jesus applied this text to Judas.
g. This doxology closes the first book of the Psalter.

42 a. Exile, a symbol of the troubles of the devout, 'exiled far from the Lord', 2 Co 5:6-8, here means absence from the Temple which is God's dwelling place, and from the festivals uniting his people there.
b. 'doe' Greek; 'hart' Hebr., but the verb is feminine.
c. 'to see' versions. 'To see the face of God' (cf. Hebr. 'appear before') here means to visit his sanctuary, the Temple in Jerusalem, cf. Dt 31:11; Ps 27:8+. For the primary meaning of the phrase, cf. Ex 33:20+.
d. 'wonderful' Greek and Syr.; Hebr. uncertain (corr. 'in stately procession'). The 'Tent' was the desert sanctuary of ancient times; its memory was recalled annually by the 'feast of Tents', or 'of Tabernacles', Ex 23:14+; here the word is used for its successor, the Temple, God's dwelling place, the object of yearly pilgrimage for every devout Israelite, Ex 23:14.
e. Lit. 'salvation of my face' corr., cf. v. 11.
f. 'you, humble mountain' corr. referring to Mount Zion. Hebr. 'from the lowly mountain' or 'from Mount Misar', alluding to Zaorah not far from the sources of Jordan; the 'you' would then refer to God.
g. Corr. (lit. 'with a rending cry in my bones').

43 a. Hebr. here adds 'God'. In the Roman rite, Ps 43 was formerly said at the beginning of the Mass.

from the treacherous and cunning man
rescue me, God.

It is you, God, who are my shelter: 2
why do you abandon me?
Why must I walk
so mournfully, oppressed by the enemy?[a]

27:1; 57:3 Send out your light and your truth, 3
let these be my guide,
61:2; 122:1 to lead me to your holy mountain
and to the place where you live.

Then I shall go to the altar of God, 4
to the God of my joy,[b]
63:5; 81:2; 108:2 I shall rejoice, I shall praise you on the harp,
Yahweh, my God.

Why so downcast, my soul, 5
why do you sigh within me?
62:5 Put your hope in God: I shall praise him yet,
my saviour, my God.

74; 79; 80 Is 63:7-64:11 PSALM 44 V 43

National lament[a]

For the choirmaster Of the sons of Korah Psalm

Dt 4:9 2 S 7:22-23 78:3 God, we have heard with our own ears, 1
our ancestors have told us
of the deeds you performed in their days,
in days long ago, •by your hand.[b] 2

78:55 To put them in the land you dispossessed the nations,
you harried the peoples to make room for them;
Dt 8:17-18 Jos 24:12 Ho 1:7+ it was not by their swords they won the land, 3
it was not by their arms they gained the victory:
it was your right hand, your arm
4:6+ and the light of your face—because you loved them.

145:1 You it was, my King, my God, 4
who won those victories for Jacob;
through you we trampled down our enemies, 5
20:1; 60:12 Ex 17:11 through your name we subdued our aggressors.

My trust was not in my bow, 6
my sword did not gain me victory:
we conquered our enemies through you, 7
you, who defeated all who hated us—
our boast was always of God, 8
we praised your name without ceasing. *Pause*

68:7; =60:10 Jg 5:4 Yet now you abandon and scorn us, 9
you no longer march with our armies,
Lv 26:17 Dt 28:25 you allow the enemy to push us back, 10
and let those who hate us raid us when it suits them.

You let us go to the slaughterhouse like sheep, 11
Lv 26:33 Dt 28:64 you scatter us among the nations;

12 you sell your people for next to nothing,
and make no profit from the bargain. Dt 32:30 Is 52:3

13 Thanks to you, our neighbours insult us, =79:4; 123: 3f
all those around us make us their butt and laughing-stock; Dn 9:16
14 you make us a byword to pagans,
a thing to make them toss their heathen heads.[c] 64:8

15 All day long I brood on this disgrace,
my face covered in shame,
16 under a shower of insult and blasphemy,
a display of hatred and revenge.

17 All this happened to us though we had not forgotten you,
though we had not been disloyal to your covenant;
18 though our hearts had not turned away,
though our steps had not left your path:
19 yet you crushed us in the place where the jackals live,[d] Is 34:13 Jr 9:10
and threw the shadow of death over us.

20 Had we forgotten the name of our own God
and stretched out our hands[e] to a foreign one,
21 would not God have found this out, 139:1-3
he who knows the secrets of the heart?
22 No, it is for your sake we are being massacred daily, Jr 11:20 ↗ Ba 3:3 ↗ Rm 8:36
and counted as sheep for the slaughter.

23 Wake up, Lord! Why are you asleep? 74:1; 79:5; 80:4; 83:1; 89:46
Awake! Do not abandon us for good.
24 Why do you hide your face, 10:11-12
and forget we are wretched and exploited?[a]

25 For we are bowed in the dust, 7:5; =119:25
our bodies crushed to the ground. Jb 13:24
26 Rise! Come to our help!
Redeem us for the sake of your love.

PSALM 45 V 44

Royal wedding song[a]

For the choirmaster *Tune: 'Lilies...'*[b] *Of the sons of Korah* 60; 69; 80: inscr.
Poem *Love song*

1 My heart is stirred by a noble theme: 60:1; 69:1; 80:1
I address my poem to the king;
my tongue as ready as the pen of a busy scribe.

b. 'my joy' one MS; 'the joy (of my delight)'. Text. Rec. Greek interprets 'God who makes joyful my youth'.

44 a. This psalm contrasting past victories with present humiliations may, like 74,79,80, refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587. Vv. 17-22 have perhaps been added later to adapt the psalm to the persecutions of the Maccabaean period.

b. 'by' corr.

c. Lit. 'a shaking of the head for the peoples'.

d. Either the devastated country, Is 34:13; Jr 9:10, or the desert, a refuge for persecuted Jews, 1 M 2:29; 9:33.

e. Attitude of prayer. 28:2; 141:2; Is 1:15.

45 a. According to some scholars, this psalm may be a secular song to celebrate the marriage of an Israelite king, Solomon, Jeroboam II, or Ahab (whose bride was a Tyrian princess, 1 K 16:31). But Jewish and Christian tradition understand it as celebrating the marriage of the messianic King with Israel (prefiguring the Church), cf. Ezk 16:8-13; Is 62:5; Sg 3:11, etc., and the liturgy develops the allegory still further by applying it to our Lady and to the Virgin Saints. The poet first addresses the messianic King, vv. 2-9, crediting him with attributes of Yahweh (145:4-7,12-13, etc.) and of Immanuel (Is 9:5-6); he then addresses the queen, vv. 10-16.

b. Possibly 'On the six-stringed lute'.

Sg 5:10-16

Of all men you are the most handsome, 2
your lips are moist with grace,
for God has blessed you for ever.

Hero, strap your sword at your side, 3
21:5 in majesty and splendour; •on, ride on, 4
in the cause of truth, religion and virtue!

Stretch the bowstring tight,[c]
lending terror to your right hand.
Your arrows are sharp; nations lie at your mercy, 5
the king's enemies are losing heart.

↗ Heb:1 8-9

Your throne, God,[d] shall last for ever and ever, 6
your royal sceptre is a sceptre of integrity:
virtue you love as much as you hate wickedness. 7

This is why God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness, above all your rivals;
myrrh and aloes waft from[e] your robes. 8

From palaces of ivory harps entertain you,
daughters of kings are among your maids of honour;[f] 9
on your right stands the queen, in gold from Ophir.

Listen, daughter, pay careful attention: 10
Gn 12:1 Jos 24:2 Ezk 16:3 forget your nation and your ancestral home,[g]
then the king will fall in love with your beauty. 11
He is your master now, bow down to him.

72:10-11 Is 60:5f

The daughter of Tyre will solicit your favour with gifts, 12
the wealthiest nations, •with jewels set in gold.[h] 13

Ezk 16:10-13

Dressed[i] •in brocades, the king's daughter 14
is led in to the king, with bridesmaids in her train.

Her[j] ladies-in-waiting follow
and enter the king's palace to general rejoicing. 15

Your ancestors will be replaced by sons 16
Gn 17:6; 35:11 whom you will make lords of the whole world.

Is 60:15,21; 61:9; 62:2,7

I shall immortalise your name, 17
nations will sing your praises for ever and ever.

Is 33:20-21; 66:12

PSALM 46 V 45

God is on our side[a]

For the choirmaster Of the sons of Korah For oboe Song

61:3 Is 33:2

God is our shelter, our strength, 1
ever ready to help in time of trouble,

75:3 Jb 9:5-6 Is 24:18-23; 54:10

so we shall not be afraid when the earth gives way, 2
when mountains tumble into the depths of the sea,
and its waters roar and seethe, 3
the mountains tottering as it heaves.[b]

(Yahweh Sabaoth is on our side,
our citadel, the God of Jacob!)[c] *Pause*

36:8 Gn 2:10

There is a river whose streams refresh the city of God, 4
and it sanctifies the dwelling[d] of the Most High.

God is inside the city, she can never fall,
at crack of dawn[e] God helps her;
to the roaring of nations and tottering of kingdoms,
when he shouts, the world disintegrates.

Yahweh Sabaoth is on our side,
our citadel, the God of Jacob! *Pause*

Come, think of Yahweh's marvels,
the astounding things he has done in the world;
all over the world he puts an end to wars,
he breaks the bow, he snaps the spear,
he gives shields[f] to the flames.
'Pause a while and know that I am God,
exalted among the nations, exalted over the earth!'

Yahweh Sabaoth is on our side,
our citadel, the God of Jacob! *Pause*

87
2 K 19:35
Is 17:14
Is 33:4
29
Is 7:14; 8:10
59:13; 76:3
Is 2:4
Ezk 39:9-10
83:18
Dt 32:39
Ezk 12:16

PSALM 47

V 46 93; 96; 97; 98; 99

Yahweh, king of Israel, lord of the world[a]

For the choirmaster Of the sons of Korah Psalm

Clap your hands, all you peoples,
acclaim God with shouts of joy;
for Yahweh, the Most High, is to be dreaded,
the Great King of the whole world.

He brings the peoples under our dominion,
he puts the nations under our feet;
for us he chooses our heritage—
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.

God rises to shouts of acclamation,
Yahweh rises to a blast of trumpets,
let the music sound for our[b] God, let it sound,
let the music sound for our King, let it sound!

God is king of the whole world:
play your best in his honour!

89:15
Is 24:23
Zp 3:14-15
95:3
Ex 15:18
Is 52:7
2:8
Is 58:14
24:7.10; 68:18; 89:15; 98:6
Nb 23:21

c. 'Stretch tight' versions; 'and your majesty' Hebr. (which has this at the beginning of the verse). 'bowstring' corr.; 'and teach you' Hebr.

d. In the Bible the title 'God' is given to the angels, 8:5+, to leaders and judges, 58:1+, to Moses, Ex 4:16; 7:1, to the ghost of Samuel, 1 S 28:13+, to the House of David, Zc 12:8, to the Messiah, Is 9:5.

e. 'waft from' corr.

f. In the interpretation of this psalm as the marriage of the messianic king, this is a reference to the pagan nations converted to the true God, Is 60:3f; 61:5; Sg 1:3; 6:8, and following Israel into his service, vv. 14-15.

g. In the messianic interpretation: Israel, like the ancestral figure Abraham, must sever all links with the surrounding pagan world, thus leaving the 'ancestral home' in order to receive 'sons', v. 16.

h. In the messianic interpretation: the homage of the pagan peoples is prophesied for the messianic age.

i. 'Dressed' versions; 'her dress' Hebr. Before 'set' Hebr. has 'the king's daughter within'.

j. 'Her' corr.; 'your' Hebr.

46 a. Canticle of Zion. God's presence in the Temple safeguards the Holy City, while symbolic waters purify and fertilise it, making it a second Eden.

b. Images of a return of chaos. The earth rests on the waters of the nether ocean, 24:2, being supported by pillars, cf. Jb 9:6; Ps 75:3; 104:5; Pr 8:27; when these are shaken the waters are released and dash against the mountains.

c. The refrain, here missing from the text, is restored from vv. 7 and 11.

d. 'sanctifies' Greek; 'the (most) holy (of dwellings)' Hebr.

e. Hour of God's favour, 17:15+. Probable allusion to the withdrawal of Sennacherib's forces in 701, 2 K 19:35; Is 17:14.

f. 'shields' Greek; 'chariots' Hebr.

47 a. Eschatological hymn; first of the 'Psalms of Kingship', cf. 93f; it elaborates the acclamation, 'Yahweh is King!' The King of Israel goes up to the Temple in triumphal procession to the sound of ritual acclamation, 33:3+. His empire extends to all nations who will one day join the Chosen People.

b. 'our' Greek.

72:11; 93:1 Jr 10:7
God is king of the nations, 8
he reigns on his holy throne.

Ex 3:6 Ezr 6:21 Est 4:17f Is 2:2-4+ 89:18
The leaders of the nations rally 9
to the people of the God of Abraham.[c]
Every shield in the world belongs to God.
He reigns supreme.

87

PSALM 48 V 47

Zion, the mountain of God[a]

Song Psalm Of the sons of Korah

=96:4; 99:2; 145:3
Yahweh is great and supremely to be praised 1
in the city of our God,

50:2; 78:69 Is 14:13 Lm 2:15
the holy mountain, •beautiful where it rises, 2
joy of the whole world;

Mount of Zion, deep heart of the North,[b]
city of the Great King;
here among her palaces, 3
76:3 God proved to be her fortress.

Jg 5:19
There was a rallying, once, of kings, 4
Is 33:4 advancing together along a common front;
they looked, they were amazed, 5
they panicked, they ran!

Ex 15:14 Jr 4:31+
There they shuddered and writhed 6
like women in labour,
it was the east wind, that wrecker 7
Is 2:16; 60:9 of ships of Tarshish![c]

What we had heard we saw for ourselves 8
in the city of our God,
the city of Yahweh Sabaoth,
Jdt 13:11 God-protected for ever. *Pause*

87:5
God, in your Temple 9
we reflect on your love:

113:3 Ml 1:11
God, your praise, like your name, 10
reaches to the ends of the world.

Your right hand holds the victory;
Mount Zion rejoices, 11
=97:8 the daughters of Judah[d] exult
to have your rulings.

122:3,7 Is 26:1; 33:20f
Go through Zion, walk round her, 12
counting her towers,
admiring her walls,[e] 13
reviewing her palaces;

22:30; 71:18; 147:13-14
then tell the next generation
that God is here, 14
23:3+; 90:2; 102:27 our God and leader,[f]
for ever and ever.

PSALM 49

Jr 12:1-5

The futility of riches[a]

V 48

For the choirmaster Of the sons of Korah Psalm

1 Hear this, all nations, Pr 8:4f
pay attention all who live on earth,
2 important people, ordinary people,
rich and poor alike!

3 My lips have wisdom to utter,
my heart whispers sound sense;
4 I turn my attention to a proverb, 78:2
and set my solution to the harp.

5 Why should I be afraid in evil times,
when malice dogs my steps and[b] hems me in,
6 of men who trust in their wealth Jb 31:24 Pr 10:15; 11:4
and boast of the profusion of their riches? Jr 9:22

7 But man could never redeem himself Pr 11:4 Ezk 7:19
or pay his ransom to God:
8 it costs so much to redeem his life, Mt 16:26 Rm 3:24+
9 it is beyond him; •how then could he live on for ever
and never see the Pit—

10 when all the time he sees that wise men die, 39:6 Qo 2:16 Si 11:18-19+
that foolish and stupid perish both alike,
and leave their fortunes to others.

11 Their tombs[c] are their eternal home, Qo 12:5
their lasting residence,
though they owned estates that bore their names.

12 Man when he prospers forfeits intelligence:[d]
he is one with the cattle doomed to slaughter. Qo 3:18-21
13 So on they go with their self-assurance,
with men to run after them when they raise their voice.[e] *Pause*

14 Like sheep to be penned in Sheol, 55:15
Death[f] will herd them to pasture
and the upright will have the better of them.

Dawn will come[g] and then the show they made will disappear, 73:20
Sheol the home for them!

c. 'to' versions; absent from Hebr. The covenant with Abraham is extended to the whole human race. The 'shields' are the kings, defenders of their peoples.

48 a. A hymn extolling Mount Zion, the nucleus of ancient Jerusalem, site of the royal palace and the Temple, cf. 2 S 5:9+. It may contain an allusion, vv. 4 and 5, to the defeat of the Syro-Ephraimitic alliance against Ahaz in 735 and the hasty retreat of Sennacherib in 701.

b. In Phoenician poetry 'the mountain of the North' is the home of the gods; the psalmist adopts the expression, applying it to Mount Zion.

c. Sea-going vessels capable of sailing to 'Tarshish', cf. Is 23:1+.

d. The neighbouring towns.

e. The psalm may date from the rebuilding of the walls by Nehemiah, Ne 6:15; 12:27.

f. Hebr. adds 'to death', a corrupt rubric belonging to the following psalm.

49 a. Like 37 and 73, this psalm deals with the problem of retribution and the apparent prosperity of the godless, resolving it in the traditional fashion of the sages. An ironical dictum provides the theme, vv. 12 and 20.

b. 'dogs my steps and' (lit. 'of those who dog my steps'), cf. Hexapla.

c. 'tombs' versions; 'inside' Hebr.

d. 'forfeits intelligence' versions, cf. v. 20; 'does not endure' Hebr.

e. Translation uncertain.

f. Here personified, cf. Ho 13:14; Jr 9:20; Jb 18:13; 28:22.

g. The hour for eschatological judgements and the triumph of the upright, cf. 17:15+. Text of v. 14 uncertain.

But God will redeem my life 15
16:10; 73:24 from the grasp of Sheol, and will receive me.[h] *Pause*

Si 11:18-19 Do not be afraid when a man grows rich, 16
when the glory of his House increases;
1 Tm 6:7 when he dies he can take nothing with him, 17
his glory cannot follow him down.[i]

The soul he made so happy while he lived 18
— 'look after yourself and men will praise you' —
Gn 15:15 Jb 10:21-22 will join the company of his ancestors 19
who will never see the light of day again.

Qo 3:19 Man in his prosperity forfeits intelligence: 20
he is one with the cattle doomed to slaughter.

PSALM 50 V 49

Worship in spirit and truth[a]

Psalm Of Asaph

Dt 10:17 Jos 22:22 Yahweh, God of gods, 1
speaks, he summons the earth.
From east to west,
48:2 from Zion, perfection of beauty, he shines. 2

Is 63:19 Let our God come, and be silent no more! 3

97:3; 101:2 Is 64:1 Dn 7:10 Preceding him, a devouring fire,
round him, a raging storm;
he summons the heavens above 4
and the earth, to his people's trial:

'Assemble my faithful before me 5
Ex 24:4-8 who sealed my covenant by sacrifice!'
19:1; 97:6 Let the heavens proclaim his righteousness 6
when God himself is judge! *Pause*

40:6 'Listen, my people, I am speaking; 7a
Israel, I am giving evidence against you! 7b
I charge, I indict you to your face, 21c
I, God, your God. 7c

51:16; 69:31 Am 5:21+ 'I am not finding fault with your sacrifices, 8
those holocausts constantly before me;
I do not claim one extra bull from your homes, 9
nor one extra goat from your pens,

'since all the forest animals are already mine, 10
and the cattle on my mountains[b] in their thousands;
I know all the birds of the air,[c] 11
nothing moves in the field that does not belong to me.

'If I were hungry, I should not tell you, 12
24:1 since the world and all it holds is mine.
Do I eat the flesh of bulls, 13
or drink goats' blood?

69:31; 119: 108 Nb 30:3 Ho 14:3 Heb 13:15+ 'No, let thanksgiving be your sacrifice to God, 14
fulfil the vows you make to the Most High;

15 then you can invoke me in your troubles
and I will rescue you, and you shall honour me.' 77:2

16 But to the wicked man God says:[a]

'What business have you reciting my statutes, Rm 2:17-24
standing there mouthing my covenant,
17 since you detest my discipline
and thrust my words behind you?

18 'You make friends with a thief as soon as you see one,
you feel at home with adulterers,
19 your mouth is given freely to evil
and your tongue to inventing lies.

20 'You sit there, slandering your own brother, 9:17
you malign your own mother's son. Dt 32:39+
21 You do this, and expect me to say nothing? 119:108
21b Do you really think I am like you? =91:16

22 'You are leaving God out of account; take care!
Or I will tear you to pieces where no one can rescue you!
23 Whoever makes thanksgiving his sacrifice honours me;
to the upright man[c] I will show how God can save.'

PSALM 51

V 50 Pr 20:9

Miserere[a]

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David When the prophet Nathan came to him because he had been with Bathsheba 2 S 11-12

1 Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness, Ezk 18:23+
in your great tenderness wipe away my faults;
2 wash me clean of my guilt,
purify me from my sin.

3 For I am well aware of my faults, 32:5; 38:17
I have my sin constantly in mind, Is 59:12
Ezk 6:9
4 having sinned against none other than you, Is 59:2
having done what you regard as wrong.

You are just when you pass sentence on me, ✗ Rm 3:4
blameless when you give judgement.[b]
5 You know I was born guilty, 32:5
a sinner from the moment of conception.[c] Jb 14:4+

h. The psalmist trusts God to keep him beyond the reach of Sheol. It cannot be asserted that here he glimpses the possibility of being 'taken up' to heaven like Enoch and Elijah, cf. 16:10+; 73:24; but he does think that the ultimate fate of the upright must differ from that of the godless and that the friendship of God can have no end. This implicit faith in a retribution to come prepares for the later revelation of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life, 2 M 7:9+.

i. In contrast, God will glorify the upright, 73:24; 91:15.

50 a. God comes to judge Israel, vv. 1-7; he arraigns the formalism of sacrifice, vv. 8-15, accompanied by contempt for the commandments, vv. 16-23.

b. 'my mountains' corr.; 'mountains (in thousands)' Hebr.

c. Lit. 'heavens' versions; 'mountains' Hebr.

d. So far God has addressed all Israel indiscrimin ately; this line may have been added to exclude the virtuous from what follows.

e. 'upright man' corr.

51 a. Penitential Psalm (cf. 6:1+) with close affinity to prophetic literature, especially Is and Ezk.

b. Sin, though God does not prevent it, calls down divine judgement. Some translate 'that you may be found just ...'

c. Man is born in a state of impurity, Jb 14:4+, cf. Pr 20:9, which is an implicit recognition of his tendency to evil, Gn 8:21. This basic impurity is here pleaded as a mitigating circumstance, cf. 1 K 8:46, which God should take into account. The doctrine of original sin will be proposed explicitly, Rm 5:12-21, in connection with the revelation of redemption by Jesus Christ.

Yet, since you love sincerity of heart, 6
teach me the secrets of wisdom.[d]
Jb 9:30 Is 1:18 Ezk 36:25 Heb 9:13-14 Purify me with hyssop[e] until I am clean; 7
wash me until I am whiter than snow.

Instil some joy and gladness into me, 8
6:2; 35:10 let the bones you have crushed rejoice again.
Hide your face from my sins, 9
wipe out all my guilt.

Ezk 11:19+ God, create[f] a clean heart in me, 10
put into me a new and constant spirit,
Ws 1:5; 9:17 do not banish me from your presence, 11
Rm 8:9,14-16 do not deprive me of your holy spirit.[g]

Is 57:15f Be my saviour again, renew my joy, 12
keep my spirit steady and willing;
and I shall teach transgressors the way to you, 13
and to you the sinners will return.

30:9 Save me from death,[h] God my saviour, 14
and my tongue will acclaim your righteousness;
Lord, open my lips, 15
and my mouth will speak out your praise.

40:6; 50:8+; 69:31 Jdt 16:16 Sacrifice gives you no pleasure, 16
were I to offer holocaust, you would not have it.
Is 57:15; 66:2 My sacrifice[i] is this broken spirit, 17
34:18 Dn 3:39 you will not scorn this crushed and broken heart.

Show your favour graciously to Zion, 18
Jr 30:18; 31:4 rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.[j]
Is 58:12 Ezk 36:33 Then there will be proper sacrifice to please you 19
—holocaust and whole oblation—[k]
4:5 Lv 1:3 and young bulls to be offered on your altar.

PSALM 52 V 51

The fate of cynics

1 S 21:8; 22:6f *For the choirmaster Poem Of David When Doeg the Edomite went and warned Saul, 'David has gone to Ahimelech's house'*

Why make a boast of your wickedness, 1
you champion in villainy,[a]
all day •plotting destruction? 2
59:7; 120:2-3 Your tongue is razor-sharp,
you artist in perfidy!

Jr 4:22; 9:4 Jn 3:19-20 You prefer evil to good, 3
lying to honest speech; *Pause*
120:2-3 you love the destructive word, 4
perfidious tongue!

That is why God will crush you, 5
28:5; 116:9 snatch you away for good,
Jb 18:14 Pr 2:22 tear you out of your tent,
uproot you from the land of the living. *Pause*

6 Dread will seize the virtuous at the sight, =40:3; 58: 10; 64:9
they will laugh at his fate:
7 'So much for the man who refused Jb 31:24
to make God his fortress, Pr 11:28
but relied on his own great wealth
and drew his strength from crime!'
8 I, for my part, like an olive tree 1:3; 92:12-14
growing in the house of God, Jr 11:16
put my trust in God's love Zc 4:14
for ever and ever.
9 I mean to thank you constantly 54:6
for doing what you did,
and put my hope in your name, that is so full of kindness, 26:12
in the presence of those who love you.

PSALM 53

V 52 =14

The godless man[a]

For the choirmaster In sickness Poem Of David

1 The fool says in his heart,
'There is no God!'
They are false, corrupt, vile,
there is not one good man left.
2 God is looking down from heaven
at the sons of men,
to see if a single one is wise,
if a single one is seeking God.
3 All have turned aside,
all alike are tainted
There is not one good man left,
not a single one.
4 Are they so ignorant, these evil men
who swallow my people
as though they were eating bread,
and never invoke God?
5 They will be struck with fear,
fear without reason,

d. Translation following versions; Hebr. 'in the secret (place) teach me wisdom'. This wisdom will enable man to discover the hidden faults of which he is unaware. 19:12; Jb 11:6.

e. Plant used for sprinkling in purifications, Lv 14:4; Nb 19:18.

f. This verb always has God for its subject; it designates the act by which he brings something new and wonderful into being, Gn 1:1; Is 48:7; 65:17; Jr 31:21-22; Ex 34:10. The justification of the sinner is the most wonderful of all the works of God, and is analogous to the act of creation, cf. Ezk 36:25f. Cf. also Jr 31:33; 32:39-40.

g. Here considered as the principle (within man but given by God) of moral and religious activity, whether of the individual, 143:10; Ws 1:5; 9:17, or of the nation as a whole, Is 63:11; Hg 2:5; Ne 9:20.

h. Lit. 'blood spilt'. The reference here is to premature death, which according to traditional teaching was the punishment for sin, rather than to the murder of Uriah (2 S 12:9,13), or to future crimes in which the psalmist might be involved whether as agent or as victim. Hebr. adds 'O 'God' before 'God my saviour'.

i. 'My sacrifice' corr.; 'God's sacrifices' Hebr. The Hebr. adds 'O God' to the following line.

j. After the return from exile the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was eagerly looked forward to as a sign of divine forgiveness, Jr 30:15-18; Ezk 36:33.

k. Liturgical annotation; inserted later. In the restored Jerusalem sacrifice will recover its value because it will be offered with devotion. (lit. 'righteous sacrifice').

52 a. The translation follows the Greek. Hebr. 'Tyrant, the kindness of God (lasts) the whole day long'.

53 a. 'Elohistic' edition of 14, where see notes.

since God scatters the bones of the apostate,[b]
they are disgraced, for God rejects them.

Who will bring Israel salvation from Zion? 6
When God brings his people home,
what joy for Jacob, what happiness for Israel!

1 S 23:19

PSALM 54 V 53

An appeal to the God of justice

For the choirmaster On stringed instruments Poem Of David When the Ziphites went to Saul and said, 'Is not David hiding with us?'

God, save me by your name,[a] 1
by your power see justice done to me;
God, hear my prayer, 2
listen to what I am saying!

=86:14

Arrogant men[b] are attacking me, 3
brutes who are hounding me to death,
people to whom God means nothing. *Pause*

118:7; 143:12

But now God himself comes to help me, 4
the Lord, supporter of my life.
May their wickedness recoil on themselves, 5
Yahweh, ever faithful, destroy my enemies!

How gladly will I offer sacrifice to you 6
52:9 and praise your name, that is so full of kindness.
He has rescued me from all my troubles, 7
58:10; 59:10; 91:8; 92:11 and let me see my enemies defeated.

Jr 9:1-8

PSALM 55 V 54

Prayer in persecution

For the choirmaster For strings Poem Of David

130:1-2

God, hear my prayer, 1
do not hide from my petition,
give me a hearing, answer me, 2
I cannot rest for complaining.

I shudder •at the enemy's shouts, 3
at the howling[a] of the wicked;
they bring misery crashing down on me,
and vent their fury on me.

My heart aches in my breast, 4
Death's terrors assail me,
fear and trembling descend on me, 5
horror overwhelms me.

And I say, 6
11:1 'Oh for the wings of a dove
to fly away and find rest'.
Jr 9:1 How far I would take my flight, 7
✗ Rv 12:6 and make a new home in the desert! *Pause*

8 There I should soon find shelter
from the raging wind,
9 and from the tempest, •Lord, that destroys,
and from their malicious tongues.[b]

I can see how Violence — Jr 5:1; 6:6; Ezk 22:2; Hab 1:3; Zp 3:1
and Discord fill the city;
10 day and night they stalk together
along the city walls. — 59:6

Sorrow and Misery live inside,
11 Ruin is an inmate;
Tyranny and Treachery are never absent
from its central square.

12 Were it[c] an enemy who insulted me,
I could put up with that;
had a rival got the better of me,
I could hide from him.

13 But you, a man of my own rank, — 41:9; Jr 9:3,7; Mt 26:21-24p
a colleague and a friend,
14 to whom sweet conversation bound me
in the house of God!

May they recoil[d] in disorder,
15 may Death descend on them,[e] — 49:14
may they go down, still living, to Sheol— — Nb 16:33+; Pr 1:12; Is 5:14
since Evil shares their homes.

16 I, for myself, appeal to God
and Yahweh saves me;
17 evening, morning, noon,[f] — Dn 6:11
I complain, I groan;
he will hear me calling.

18 His peace can ransom me
from the war being waged on me.
How many are ranged against me!
19 But God will hear me.

Sovereign from the first, he will humble them; *Pause* — 29:10; 93:2
no change of heart for them,
since they do not fear God.

20 He[g] has attacked his friends,
he has gone back on his word;
21 though his mouth is smoother than butter, — 28:3+
he has war in his heart;
his words may soothe more than oil,
but they are naked swords. — 12:2; 17:4; 57:4; 62:4; 64:3

22 Unload your burden on to Yahweh, — 37:5; ✗ 1 P 5:7
and he will support you;

b. 'the apostate' versions; 'him who besieges you' Hebr. The text of this verse seems less corrupt than in 14.

54 a. The name as substitute for the person, cf. Ex 3:14+.
b. 'Arrogant men'; var. 'strangers'.

55 a. Meaning uncertain.
b. Text corr.
c. 'Were it' Greek; 'It is not' Hebr.
d. 'May they recoil' corr.; 'we went' Hebr.
e. Sudden, premature death is the punishment of the wicked, 73:19; 102:24; Is 38:10; Jr 17:11; Jb 15:32.
f. The hours of prayer, Dn 6:11.
g. I.e. the 'friend' of v. 13.

he will never permit
the virtuous to falter.[h]

140:11 As for these murderous, these treacherous men, 23
you, God, will push them
down to the deepest Pit
before half their days are out.

25:2; 56:4 For my part, I put my trust in you.

PSALM 56 V 55

Reliance on God

1 S 21:11f *For the choirmaster Tune: 'Dove of the distant gods'[a] Of David Miktam When the Philistines held him in Gath*

Take pity on me, God, as they harry me, 1
pressing their attacks home all day.
All day my opponents harry me, 2
hordes coming in to the attack.

Raise me up[b] •when I am most afraid, 3
I put my trust in you;
in God, whose word[c] I praise, 4
130:5 in God I put my trust, fearing nothing;
what can men do to me?

All day long they twist what I say, 5
all they think of is how to harm me,
140:5-6 they conspire, lurk, spy on my movements, 6
determined to take my life.

Are they to go unpunished[d] for such a crime? 7
God, in fury bring the nations down![e]
You have noted my agitation, 8
10:14 now collect my tears in your wineskin![f]
2 K 20:5
Is 25:8
Rv 7:17 Then my enemies will have to fall back 9
as soon as I call for help.

118:7; 124:1f This I know: that God is on my side.
In God whose word I praise, 10
in Yahweh, whose word I praise,
=118:6 in God I put my trust, fearing nothing; 11
✗ Heb 13:6 what can man do to me?

Nb 30:3 I must fulfil the vows I made you, God; 12
I shall pay you my thank-offerings,
Lv 7:11f for you have rescued me from Death[g] 13
to walk in the presence of God
27:13; 116:9 in the light of the living.
Jb 33:30
Qo 11:7

PSALM 57 V 56

Among ferocious enemies

142:inscr. 1 S 24:4f *For the choirmaster Tune: 'Do not destroy' Of David Miktam When he escaped from Saul, in the cave*

Take pity on me, God, take pity on me, 1
in you my soul takes shelter;

I take shelter in the shadow of your wings
until the destroying storm is over. 17:8+

2 I call on God the Most High,
on God who has done everything for me: 138:8
3 to send from heaven and save me,
to check the people harrying me, *Pause*
may God send his faithfulness and love. 43:3

4 I lie surrounded by lions 17:12; 22:21; 58:6
greedy for human prey,
their teeth are spears and arrows, 11:2; 55:21; 59:7; 64:3
their tongue a sharp sword.

5 Rise high above the heavens, God, 72:19; 102:5 Nb 14:21+ Is 33:5
let your glory be over the earth![a]
6 They laid a net where I was walking
when I was bowed with care;
they dug a pitfall for me 140:5-6
but fell into it themselves! *Pause* 7:15+

7 My heart is ready, God, =108:1
my heart is ready;
I mean to sing and play for you,
8 awake, my muse, 6:4+
awake, lyre and harp,
I mean to wake the Dawn![b] Jb 38:12

9 Lord, I mean to thank you among the peoples, 9:11; 18:49
to play music to you among the nations;
10 your love is high as heaven, =36:5
your faithfulness as the clouds.
11 Rise high above the heavens, God,
let your glory be over the earth!

PSALM 58

V 57 82

The Judge of earthly judges[a]

For the choirmaster *Tune: 'Do not destroy'* *Of David* *Miktam*

1 Gods[b] you may be, but do you give the sentences you should,
and dispense impartial justice to mankind?
2 On the contrary, in your hearts you meditate oppression, 82:2 Dt 16:19 Mi 2:1
with your hands you dole out tyranny on earth.

h. This verse may be understood as the ironical remarks of the false friend, or as self-encouragement uttered by the sufferer.

56 a. 'of the gods' cf. Greek and 58:1.

b. 'Raise me up' corr.

c. Here, as in v. 10, the 'word' of God is his promise on which his servant relies, cf. 106:12; 119:42, 65; 130:5.

d. 'are they to go unpunished?' lit. 'deliverance for them'; the versions interpret 'for nothing you will deliver them'.

e. This line, possibly an addition, brings the idea of a general judgement of all nations (cf. 79; 9:5, etc.) into the psalmist's narrower perspective of a judgement on his particular enemies.

f. The text adds a tentative gloss 'Should this not be: "in your book"?', cf. Jb 19:23; Ml 3:16; Ps 139:16.

g. Lit. 'my soul from Death'; Hebr. adds 'Should this not be: "my feet from death"?'; some Greek MSS 'my eyes from tears', cf. v. 8 and 116:8.

57 a. The psalmist wants God to manifest his sovereignty by rescuing the oppressed and destroying the godless.

b. Personified as in Jb 3:9; 38:12; 41:10. Dawn is the hour of rescue, 17:15+.

58 a. Like the prophets of old the poet apostrophises unjust judges, and calls divine judgement down on them.

b. 'Gods' corr.; 'in silence' Hebr. The expression here embraces judges and rulers. Cf. Ex 21:6; 22:7; Dt 19:17; 2 S 14:17; Ps 45:6; 82.

Right from the womb these wicked men have gone astray, 3
these double talkers have been in error since their birth;
140:3 Dt 32:33 their poison is the poison of the snake, 4
they are deaf as the adder that blocks its ears
so as not to hear the magician's music 5
and the clever snake-charmer's spells.

3:7; 35:17; 57:4 God, break their teeth in their mouths, 6
Yahweh, wrench out the fangs of these savage lions!
Jb 11:16 Ws 16:29 May they drain away like water running to waste, 7
37:2+ may they wither like trodden grass,
like a slug that melts as it moves, 8
Jb 3:16 Qo 6:3f like an abortion,[c] denied the light of day!

Jb 21:18; 27:21 Ho 13:3 Na 1:10 Before they sprout thorns[d] like the bramble, 9
green or scorched, may the wrath whirl them away!
52:6; 54:7; 64:10; 68:24 Jb 19:29 What joy for the virtuous, seeing this vengeance, 10
bathing their feet in the blood of the wicked!
Ml 2:17; 3:18 'So' people will say 'the virtuous do have their harvest; 11
so there is a God who dispenses justice on earth!'

PSALM 59 V 58

Against the wicked[a]

1 S 19:11f *For the choirmaster Tune: 'Do not destroy' Of David Miktam When Saul sent spies to his house to have him killed*

Rescue me from my enemies, my God, 1
protect me from those attacking me,
rescue me from these evil men, 2
save me from these murderers!

26 Look at them lurking to ambush me, 3
they are strong and united against me;
for no fault, no sin,• no offence of mine, 4
Yahweh, how they hurry into position!

Wake up, stand by me and look,
Yahweh, God of Sabaoth, God of Israel, 5
up, now, and punish these pagans,[b]
Is 26:10 show no mercy to these villains and traitors! *Pause*

Back they come at nightfall, 6
snarling like curs,
55:10 prowling through the town.[c]

See how they slaver at the mouth, 7
52:2; 55:21; 57:4; 64:3 with swords between their teeth,
'There is no one listening'.[d]

2:4; 37:13 Ws 4:18 Yahweh, you laugh at them, 8
you make fun of these pagans.
My Strength, I look to you. 9

My citadel is God himself,
the God who loves me[e] is coming, 10
54:7 God will show me my enemies defeated.

11 Slaughter them,[f] God, before my people forget!
Harry them with your power and strike them down,
Lord, our shield!

12 Sin is in their mouths, sin on their lips, Pr 12:13; 18:7
so let them be caught in their pride!
For the curses and lies they utter,

13 destroy them in anger, destroy, until they are finished, 46:9-10; 83:18
until God is acknowledged as ruler in Jacob Ezk 5:13; 6:12; 13:13
to the remotest parts of the earth! *Pause*

14 Back they come at nightfall,
snarling like curs,
prowling through the town;
15 scavenging for food,
growling[g] till they are full.

16 I, for my part, celebrate your strength,
I sing of your love morning by morning; 17:15+
you have always been my citadel,
a shelter when I am in trouble.

17 My Strength, I play for you,
my citadel is God himself,
the God who loves me.

PSALM 60 V 59

National prayer after defeat[a]

For the choirmaster Tune: 'The decree is a lily' Miktam Of David For instruction When he was at war with Aram-naharaim and Aram-zobah, and Joab marched back to destroy twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt 45:inscr. 2 S 8:2,3,13 1 Ch 18:2,3, 12

1 God, you have rejected us, broken us;
you have been angry, come back to us!

2 You have made the earth tremble, torn it apart; 75:3 Is 24:20
now mend the rifts, it is tottering still![b]
3 You have allowed your people to suffer,
to drink a wine that makes us reel. 75:8 Is 51:17,21-22 Jr 25:15f

4 Hoist the standard[c] to rally those who fear you,
to put them out of range of bow and arrow. *Pause*
5 To bring rescue to those you love, =108:6-13
save with your right hand and answer us!

c. Lit. 'untimely birth of a woman'; 'of a woman' Greek, Syr.; other readings 'fire', 'and the mole'.

d. Corr. following Symmachus and Jerome.

59 a. This psalm with its mixture of praise and imprecation has two refrains: vv. 6 and 14; 9 and 17. The author may have been a Jew of the Dispersion, surrounded by hostile pagans, or a devout man living in a half-paganised Jerusalem.

b. Eschatological style, cf. Is 26:21.

c. The image suggests, cf. vv. 14-15, the packs of stray dogs found in the villages of the East.

d. A form of blasphemy, cf. 10:4; 14:1; 64:5; 94:7.

e. 'My Strength': MSS and versions, cf. v. 17; 'his strength'; 'who loves me', lit. 'of my love': MSS and versions, 'his love': Text. Rec.

f. 'Slaughter them' corr., cf. v. 13a; 'do not slaughter them' Hebr., cf. Ezk 12:16.

g. 'growling' versions; 'spending the night' Hebr.

60 a. This psalm implies the same historical situation as 44 and 80. V. 5 introduces an oracle of hope, repeated in 108:6-13, foretelling the restoration of an enlarged and unified kingdom, as in the early days of the monarchy, with control over Edom, Ephraim, Gilead, cf. Ob; Is 11:13-14.

b. The defeat is described in apocalyptic terms.

c. The banner, or rallying signal, is a common feature (Ex 17:15; Is 5:26; 11:10; 49:22; 62:10; Sg 2:4); here however it is the signal for retreat, cf. v. 10.

God promised us once from his sanctuary,[a] 6
Si 50:26 Is 42:13 'I the Victor will parcel out Shechem,
and share out the Valley of Succoth.

Is 11:13 Ob 19-20 'Gilead is mine, Manasseh mine, 7
Ephraim is my helmet,
Gn 49:10 Judah, my marshal's baton.

Nb 20:23+ 'Moab a bowl for me to wash in! 8
37:7 I throw my sandal[e] over Edom.
Is 11:14 Now shout "Victory", Philistia![f]

31:21 Who is there now to take me into the fortified city, 9
to lead me into Edom?
44:9; 68:7 God, can you really have rejected us? 10
You no longer march with our armies.[g]

Help us in this hour of crisis, 11
33:16-17 the help that man can give is worthless.
2 Ch 14:10 Ho 1:7+ With God among us we shall fight like heroes, 12
44:5 he will trample on our enemies.

PSALM 61 V 60

Prayer of an exile[a]

For the choirmaster For strings Of David

God, hear my cry for help, 1
listen to my prayer!
27:4-5 From the end of the earth I call to you, 2
with sinking heart.

43:3 To the rock too high for me,[b]
lead me!
18:9; 46:1 For you are my refuge, 3
a strong tower against the enemy.

Let me stay in your tent for ever, 4
17:8+ taking refuge in the shelter of your wings. *Pause*
You, God, accept my vows, 5
you grant me the heritage of those who fear your name.

21:4+; 72:15 Let the king live on and on, 6
prolong his years, generation on generation.
72:5; 89:5, 30,34,37 May he sit enthroned in God's presence for ever! 7
40:11; 85: 10f; 89:14, 24 Pr 20:28 Assign your Love and Faithfulness to guard him![c]
So I shall always sing of your name, 8
fulfilling the vows I have taken, day after day.

PSALM 62 V 61

Hope in God alone[a]

For the choirmaster... Jeduthun Psalm Of David

In God alone there is rest for my soul, 1
from him comes my safety;
with him alone for my rock, my safety, 2
my fortress, I can never fall.

3 How many times will you come rushing at a man,
all of you, to bring him down
like a wall already leaning over,
like a rampart undermined?

4 Deceit[b] their sole intention, 4:2
their delight is to mislead;
with lies on their lips they bless aloud, 28:3+; 55:21
while cursing inwardly. *Pause*

5 Rest in God alone, my soul! 42:5,11; 43:5; 118:8
He is the source of my hope; Mi 7:7
6 with him alone for my rock, my safety,
my fortress, I can never fall;
7 rest in God, my safety, my glory, 3:3
the rock of my strength. Is 45:17; 60:19
Jr 3:23

8 In God, I find shelter; •rely on him Is 26:4
people, at all times;
unburden your hearts to him,
God is a shelter for us. *Pause*

9 Ordinary men are only a puff of wind, 39:5-6; 116:11
important men[c] delusion; Qo 1:2
put both in the scales and up they go, Is 39:6-7; 40:17
lighter than a puff of wind. *Is 40:15*
10 Put no reliance on extortion, Is 30:12
no empty hopes in robbery; Ezk 22:29
though riches may increase, Jb 27:13f; 31:25
keep your heart detached. Qo 5:9f
Jr 17:11
Mt 6:19f,24
11 God has spoken once, Jb 40:5
twice I have heard this:[d]
it is for God to be strong,
12 for you, Lord, to be loving; 28:4; 31:23
and you yourself repay Jb 34:11
man as his works deserve.[e] Jr 17:10
↗ *Rm 2:6*
↗ 2 Tm 4:14

PSALM 63 V 62

Desire for God

Psalm Of David When he was in the wilderness of Judah 1 S 22-24

1 God, you are my God, I am seeking you,[a] 36:7-9
my soul is thirsting for you, 42:1

d. Or 'by his holiness', i.e., guaranteeing his promises.

e. An ancient custom, Dt 25:9; in Rt 4:7+, it signifies appropriation.

f. Ironical; 108:9 'and shout, "Victory!" over Philistia'.

g. Hebr. repeats 'God'.

61 a. Lament of a Levite in exile from Mt. Zion, vv. 1-5, followed by a prayer for the king, vv. 6-7.

b. Others translate 'that is higher than I'.

c. These personified divine attributes will accompany the messianic King, 85:10f; 89:14,24, as they protect the king, Pr 20:28, or the faithful Levite, Ps 40:11. Vv. 6-7 may be an ancient prayer for the king, but their emphasis on a reign indefinitely prolonged recalls the prophecy of Nathan, 2 S 7:16; 1 Ch 17:14, and their close resemblance to the messianic passages of Ps 72 and 89 makes them applicable to the royal Messiah.

62 a. Didactic psalm: human malice, hollowness of things created, vanity of riches, impartiality of the divine judge. The theme of the refrain, vv. 1-2, 5-6, is that of the following psalm.

b. 'Deceit' corr.; 'from his eminence' Hebr.

c. Lit. 'sons of Adam', 'sons of men', ordinary people and men of rank respectively, as in 49:2.

d. The literary device of 'numerical proverbs' is found in Am 1:3f; Pr 6:16; 30:15; Jb 40:5.

e. Doctrine of individual retribution taught by the prophets (especially Ezekiel, 14:12+), the wisdom writers and the psalmists, 37:1+.

63 a. Versions 'from early morning I am with you'.

my flesh is longing for you,
143:6 a land parched, weary and waterless;
26:8 I long to gaze on you in the Sanctuary, 2
and to see your power and glory.

Jb 22:25 Your love is better than life itself, 3
my lips will recite your praise;
all my life I will bless you, 4
in your name lift up my hands;
23:5; 36:8 my soul will feast most richly, 5
43:4 on my lips a song of joy and, in my mouth, praise.

119:148 On my bed I think of you, 6
I meditate on you all night long,
for you have always helped me. 7
17:8+ I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings;
my soul clings close to you, 8
your right hand supports me.

5:10+ But may those now hounding me to death 9
go down to the earth below,
consigned to the edge of the sword, 10
and left as food for jackals.
21:1; 64:10; 94:23; 107:42 Then will the king rejoice in God, 11
and all who swear by him[b] be able to boast
once these lying mouths are silenced.

PSALM 64 V 63

The punishment for slanderers[a]

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

God, hear me as I make my plea, 1
protect me from this frightening enemy,
hide me from the wicked and their schemes, 2
from this mob of evil men,

55:21; 57:4; 59:7; 140:3 Jr 9:2 sharpening their tongues like swords, 3
shooting bitter words like arrows,
11:2 shooting them at the innocent from cover, 4
shooting suddenly, without warning.

Pr 1:11f; 6:14 Urging each other on to their wicked purpose, 5
they discuss where to hide their snares.
10:11; 94:7 'Who is going to see us?' they say
'Who can probe our secrets?' 6
Qo 7:24 Jr 11:20+ Who? He who probes the inmost mind
and the depths of the heart.[b]

7:12f; 38:2 Dt 32:42 God will shoot them with his own arrow, 7
wound them without warning.
He will destroy them[c] for that tongue of theirs, 8
44:14+ and all who see them fall will shake their heads.

40:3; 52:6 Then all will feel afraid, 9
will tell others what God has done;
109:27 they will understand why he has done it.

10 The virtuous will rejoice in Yahweh,
will make him their refuge;
and upright hearts will be able to boast. 5:11; 58:10; 63:11

PSALM 65 V 64

Thanksgiving hymn[a]

For the choirmaster Of David Song

1 Praise is rightfully yours,[b]
God, in Zion.
Vows to you must be fulfilled,
2 for you answer prayer.

Is 66:23

3 All flesh must come to you
with all its sins;
though our faults overpower us,
you blot them out.[c] 32:1+; 78:38

4 Happy the man you choose, whom you invite
to live in your courts.
Fill us with the good things of your house,
of your holy Temple.

5 Your righteousness repays us with marvels,
God our saviour,
hope of all the ends of the earth
and the distant islands.[d] Is 66:19

6 Your strength holds the mountains up, Jb 38:6f
such is the power that wraps you;
7 you calm the clamour of the ocean, 89:9; 107:29 Jb 38:11 Mt 8:26
the clamour of its waves.

8 The nations are in uproar,[e] •in panic Is 17:12
those who live at the ends of the world,
as your miracles bring shouts of joy
to the portals[f] of morning and evening. 19:6

9 You visit the earth and water it,[g] Lv 26:3f Is 30:23,25 Jl 2:22f
you load it with riches;
God's rivers brim with water[h]
to provide their grain.

10 This is how you provide it:
by drenching its furrows, by levelling its ridges,
by softening it with showers, by blessing the first-fruits.

b. By Yahweh, cf. Jr 12:16; Dt 6:13; or by the king: the text is ambiguous.

64 a. By the law of retaliation, the arrow of God, v. 7, avenges the arrow of the wicked word, v. 3.

b. Text corr. Hebr. 'they search out (contrive) wicked deeds; we are ready (MSS: they hide), a plot they hatch; and the depths'.

c. Lit. 'make them stumble' corr.

65 a. After a good year with plentiful rain the people thank the creator. The first part, vv. 1-8, with its worldwide outlook, is reminiscent of Is. The second, vv. 9-13, with a change of rhythm in v. 10, is an enthusiastic description of spring in Judah.

b. Lit. 'is due to you' versions; 'silence (is praise)' Hebr.

c. 'blot out' lit. 'cover the sin': expression in the 'Priestly' vocabulary for divine pardon, granted especially on the Day of Atonement, Lv 16+; cf. Ps 78: 38; 79:9.

d. 'islands' Targum; 'sea' Hebr.

e. 'are in uproar' Greek; 'and the uproar (of the nations)' Hebr.

f. These gates through which the sun was thought to pass each day represent the most distant countries.

g. 'water it' versions; 'make it overflow' Hebr.

h. Others translate 'A channel, God, is filled with water'. The poet is thinking of the storehouses above the firmament where the waters are kept, Gn 1:7; Ps 104:3; Jb 38:25, not the symbolic river of Zion, 46:4+.

Am 9:13 You crown the year with your bounty, 11
abundance flows wherever you pass;[f]
the desert pastures overflow, 12
the hillsides are wrapped in joy,
the meadows are dressed in flocks, 13
the valleys are clothed in wheat,
66:1 Is 44:23 what shouts of joy, what singing![g]

PSALM 66

V 65

Corporate act of thanksgiving[a]

For the choirmaster Song Psalm

65:13 Acclaim God, all the earth, 1
play music to the glory of his name, 2
Ep 1:12,14 glorify him with your praises,
say to God, 'What dread you inspire!' 3

Your achievements are the measure of your power.
18:44; 81:15 Your enemies cringe in your presence;
all the earth bows down to you, 4
playing music for you, playing in honour of your name. *Pause*

Come and see what marvels God has done, 5
so much to be feared for his deeds among mankind:
114:3 Is 44:27; 50:2 he turned the sea into dry land, 6
they crossed the river on foot![b]

So let us rejoice in him,
who rules for ever by his power: 7
his eyes keep watch on the nations,
let no rebel raise his head! *Pause*

You nations, bless our God 8
and make his praise resound,
who brings our soul to life[c] 9
121:3 and keeps our feet from faltering.

You tested us, God, 10
Is 48:10 you refined us like silver,
you let us fall into the net, 11
you laid heavy burdens on our backs,
Is 51:23 you let people drive over our heads; 12
32:6; 81:7 Is 43:2 but now the ordeal by fire and water is over,
and you allow us once more to draw breath.[d]

I bring holocausts to your house, 13
I bring them to fulfil those vows
that rose to my lips, 14
those vows I spoke when in trouble.

I offer you fat holocausts 15
and the smoke of burning rams,
I offer you bullocks and he-goats. *Pause*

Come and listen, all you who fear God, 16
while I tell you what he has done for me:
when I uttered my cry to him 17
and high praise was on my tongue,

18 had I been guilty in my heart,
the Lord would never have heard me.
19 But God not only heard me,
he listened to my prayer.

20 Blessed be God,
who neither ignored my prayer
nor deprived me of his love.

PSALM 67 V 66

Harvest song[a]

For the choirmaster For strings Psalm Song

1 May God show kindness and bless us, Nb 6:24-25
and make his face smile on us! *Pause* 4:6+; 31:16
2 For then the earth will acknowledge your ways
and all the nations will know of your power to save. Jr 33:9

3 Let the nations praise you, O God,
let all the nations praise you![b]

4 Let the nations shout and sing for joy,
since you dispense true justice to the world;
you dispense strict justice[c] to the peoples, =98:9
on earth you rule the nations. *Pause* 82:8

5 Let the nations praise you, God,
let all the nations praise you!

6 The soil has given its harvest, =85:12 Lv 26:4 Ezk 34:27 Ho 2:23-24
God, our God, has blessed us.
7 May God bless us, and let him be feared
to the very ends of the earth.

PSALM 68 V 67

National song of triumph[a]

For the choirmaster Of David Psalm Song

1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered, 132:8 ||Nb 10:35 Is 33:3
let those who hate him flee before him!

i. The chariot of God, 68:4,17; Is 66:5, traverses the earth dispensing fertility.

j. Lit. 'they acclaim, yes they sing'.

66 a. This liturgical thanksgiving on behalf of the community, the leader of which speaks from v. 13 onwards, recalls in style and worldwide outlook the second half of Is.

b. The crossing of the Red Sea, Ex 14-15, and of the Jordan, Jos 3: two great 'typical' events of Israel's history, also found together in 74:13-15; 114.

c. Hence the title 'Resurrection Psalm' given to this psalm by some Greek MSS and Vulg. The Easter liturgy uses this verse.

d. 'To draw breath' versions; 'to abundance' Hebr.

67 a. Probably recited at the harvest-home festival, cf. Ex 23:14+.

b. This refrain is in the spirit of the second part of Is: by the example of the Chosen People and the lessons of its history the pagan nations also are summoned to serve the one God.

c. Lit. 'you judge the world with justice, you judge'; 'the world ... judge' Sinaiticus; omitted by Hebr.

68 a. This hymn of thanksgiving covers the chief stages in the history of the people of God, like those of a triumphal progress by Yahweh: the Exodus from Egypt, the journey through the desert, the victories of the period of the Judges (Deborah, Gideon), the installation of the ark on Zion, the story of Elijah and Elisha, the tragic fate of the family of Ahab, the solemn Passover of Hezekiah, and finally the worldwide perspectives of the closing chapters of Is. Between Prelude (vv. 1-6) and Conclusion (vv. 32-35) are six groups of two strophes, the strophes being paired off on the basis of subject-matter. A copyist's error has upset the order of strophes 6 and 7.

Ws 5:14
97:5
92:9
As smoke disperses, they disperse;[b] 2
as wax melts when near the fire,
so the wicked perish when God approaches.

But at God's approach, the virtuous rejoice, 3
exulting and singing for joy.

18:9-10
Dt 33:26
Is 19:1; 66:15
Is 57:14
Sing to Yahweh, play music to his name, 4
build a road for the Rider of the Clouds,
rejoice[c] in Yahweh, exult at his coming!

146:9
Ex 22:21-22+
Ba 6:37
Father of orphans, defender of widows, 5
such is God in his holy dwelling;

146:7
God gives the lonely a permanent home, 6
makes prisoners happy by setting them free,

Nb 16:35
but rebels must live in an arid land.

44:9; 60:10
‖Jg 5:4-5
Dt 33:2
Hab 3:3f
Heb 12:26
114:4,7
God, when you set out at the head of your people, 7
and marched across the desert, •the earth rocked, *Pause* 8
the heavens deluged at God's coming,[d]
at the coming of God, the God of Israel.

29; 78:24f
Ex 16:1+, 13
God, you rained a downpour of blessings, 9
when your heritage was faint you gave it strength;
your family found a home, where you 10
in your goodness, God, provided for the needy.[e]

The Lord gives his couriers the news, 11a
Gn 17:1+
'Shaddai has scattered •a huge army'.[f] 14a 11b
Jg 5:19,22
Kings are in flight, armies in flight, 12
the women at home take their pick of the loot.[g]

Jg 5:16
Meanwhile you others were lolling in the sheepfolds.[h] 13
There were dove-wings covered with silver,
on their pinions the sheen of green gold;
jewels were there like snow on Dark Mountain.[i] 14b

That peak of Bashan, a mountain of God? 15
Rather, a mountain of pride, that peak of Bashan!
Peaks of pride, have you the right to look down on 16
42:6; 132:13-14
Jdt 7:10
Ezk 43:7
a mountain where God has chosen to live,[j]
where Yahweh is going to live for ever?

2 K 6:17; 7:6
With thousands of myriads of divine chariots[k] 17
the Lord has left Sinai for his sanctuary.[l]

47:5
✗ Ep 4:8-10
God, you have ascended to the height,[m] and captured prisoners, 18
you have taken men as tribute,
yes, taken rebels to your dwelling, Yahweh![n]

145:2
Blessed be the Lord day after day, 19
Dt 32:11
Is 46:3-4; 63:9
the God who saves us and bears our burdens!

130:7
This God of ours is a God who saves, 20
to the Lord Yahweh belong the ways of escape from death;

Dt 32:42
but God will smash the heads of his enemies, 21
the hairy skull of the man who parades his guilt.

The Lord has promised, 'I will bring them back from Bashan, 22
I will bring them back from the bottom of the sea,

58:10
Dt 32:42
1 K 21:19; 22:38
for your feet to wade in blood, 23
for the tongues of your dogs to lap their share of the enemy'.[o]

God, your procession can be seen, 2 K 9:36▲ 2 S 6:5
my God's, my king's procession to the sanctuary,
with cantors marching in front, musicians behind, 149:3
and between them maidens playing tambourines.

Bless God in your choirs, Dt 33:28 Jr 2:13; 17:13
bless the Lord, you who spring from Israel![p]

Benjamin, the youngest, is there in the lead,[q] 80:1-2
the princes of Judah in brocaded robes,
the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.[r] Is 8:23

Take command, God, as befits your power,[s]
that power, God, you have wielded on our behalf
from your Temple high above Jerusalem!
Kings will come to you, bringing presents.

Rebuke the Beast of the Reeds,[t] Ezk 29:2f
that herd of bulls, those calves, that people,
until, humbled, they bring gold and silver.
Scatter those warmongering pagans! Jdt 16:2

Ambassadors[u] will come from Egypt, Is 18:7; 45:14
Ethiopia will stretch out her hands to God.

Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth, 138:4
play for[v] •the Rider of the Heavens, the ancient heavens! *Pause* 68:4+
Listen to him shouting, to his thundering,
and acknowledge the power of God!

Over Israel his splendour, in the clouds his power,
God in his[w] sanctuary is greatly to be feared.
He, the God of Israel, 28:8; 29:11
gives power and strength to his people.

Blessed be God.

68 b. 'they disperse' versions; 'you disperse them' Hebr.

c. 'rejoice' corr.; 'in his name' Hebr.

d. Hebr. gloss 'that is, Sinai', as in Jg 5:5. This strophe shows Yahweh taking the field; his departure from Egypt in the cloud, Ex 13:21; Nb 14:14, and the theophany of Sinai, Ex 19:16+.

e. The miracles of the Exodus: the manna, the quails and the entry into the Promised Land.

f. Hebr. divides differently 'the couriers are a huge army'.

g. The victories of the conquest. 'Women' (lit. 'fair one') means possibly Jael, Jg 5:24, or perhaps the wives of the conquerors, cf. Jg 5:30; 11:34; 1 S 18:6.

h. Lit. 'in the middle of the two walls' (leading in to the sheepfold); some translate 'between the hearth-stones' or 'between the two panniers' (carried by a donkey), cf. Gn 49:14.

i. Text corr. The Hebr. of v. 14 has 'When Shaddai routed the kings on it (fem.) snow fell on Dark Mountain'. 'Dark Mountain' is probably a wooded hill near Shechem (cf. Jg 9:48-49). In imitation of Jg 5:16f, the poet here seems to address the unco-operative clans who took no part in the fighting. He jibes at them with his boast of abundant spoil (cf. Jos 22:8; Jg 8:26) which the womenfolk divide: the precious stones gleam on their dusky skin (cf. Sg 1:5) like a dove's plumage or like snow on dark ground (Sg 2:14; Lm 4:7).

j. The hill of Zion, God's dwelling place on earth, 2 S 5:9+.

k. Not the chariots of Solomon, 1 K 10:26, but the heavenly chariots seen by Elisha, 2 K 6:17; cf. 7:6; Is 66:15. What follows refers to the victories of the monarchical period.

l. 'has left...' corr.; 'in them, Sinai in the sanctuary' Hebr.

m. Zion.

n. 'O God' follows 'Yahweh' in Hebr. Text uncertain.

o. Allusion to the death of Ahab, 1 K 21:19; 22:38, of Jehoram, 2 K; 9:24, and of Jezebel, 2 K 9:36.

p. Liturgical antiphon. For 'you who spring from' (lit. 'fountain') some suggest the similar Hebr. word for 'assembly'.

q. Meaning doubtful.

r. Vv. 24-27 refer to the Passover of Hezekiah, 2 Ch 30, in which the N. tribes took part.

s. Text corr., cf. versions; 'your God has commanded your strength' Hebr. The text and rhythm of the two following strophes are rather uncertain.

t. Alluding to Egypt. The 'bulls' and 'calves' are leaders and people.

u. Lit. 'great men' corr.; 'bronze(?)' Hebr. 'stretch out' corr.

v. Hebr. adds 'the Lord. *Pause*'.

w. 'his sanctuary' cf. versions; 'your sanctuary' or 'your sanctuaries' Hebr.

31:9;130:1f

PSALM 69

V 68

Lament[a]

45:inscr. *For the choirmaster Tune: 'Lilies...' Of David*

18:4+ Jb 22:11 Save me, God! The water 1
is already up to my neck![b]

40:2; 42:7; 124:4-5 Jon 2:6 I am sinking in the deepest swamp, 2
there is no foothold;
I have stepped into deep water
and the waves are washing over me.

Worn out with calling, my throat is hoarse, 3
123:2 Is 38:14 my eyes are strained, looking for my God.

40:12 Lm 3:52 More people hate me for no reason 4
than I have hairs on my head,
35:19 ↗Jn 15:25 more are groundlessly hostile
than I have hair to show.[c]
(They ask me to give back what I never took.)[d]

God, you know how foolish I have been, 5
my offences are not hidden from you;

40:16 but let those who hope in you not blush for me, 6
Yahweh Sabaoth![e]
Let those who seek you not be ashamed of me,
God of Israel!

Jr 15:15 It is for you I am putting up with insults 7
that cover me with shame,

Jb 19:13-15 that make me a stranger to my brothers, 8
an alien to my mother's other sons;

=119:139 ↗Jn 2:17 ↗Rm 15:3 zeal for your house devours me, 9
and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.

109:24 If I mortify[f] myself with fasting, 10
they make this a pretext for insulting me;
if I dress myself in sackcloth, 11

Lm 3:14 I become their laughing-stock,

Jb 30:9 the gossip of people sitting at the city gate, 12
and the theme of drunken songs.

32:6; 102:13 Is 49:8 For my part, I pray to you, Yahweh, 13
at the time you wish;
in your great love, answer me, God,
faithful in saving power.

40:2 Pull me out of this swamp; let me sink no further, 14
let me escape those who hate me,
save me from deep water!
Do not let the waves wash over me, 15
do not let the deep swallow me
or the Pit close its mouth on me.

In your loving kindness, answer me, Yahweh, 16
in your great tenderness turn to me;
=102:2; 143:7 do not hide your face from your servant, 17
quick, I am in trouble, answer me;

18 come to my side, redeem me,
from so many enemies ransom me.

19a You know all the insults I endure,
19c every one of my oppressors is known to you;
20a the insults have broken my heart,
19b my shame and disgrace •are past cure;[g]
20b I had hoped for sympathy, but in vain,
20c I found no one to console me.

Jb 6:14
Lm 1:2
Mt 26:40p
Jn 16:32

21 They gave me poison to eat instead,
when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink.

Lm 3:15
↗ Mt 27:34, 48

22 May their own table prove a trap for them,
and their plentiful supplies, a snare!

↗ Rm 11:9-10

23 may their eyes grow dim, go blind,
strike their loins with chronic palsy!

24 Vent your fury on them,
let your burning anger overtake them;
25 may their camp be reduced to ruin,
and their tents left unoccupied:

↗ Ac 1:20

26 for hounding a man after you had struck him,
for adding more wounds to those which you inflicted.[h]

71:11
Is 53:4

27 Charge them with crime after crime,
deny them further access to your righteousness,
28 blot them out of the book of life,
strike them off the roll of the virtuous!

139:16
Ex 32:32
1 S 25:29
Is 4:3
Dn 12:1
Rv 3:5

29 For myself, wounded wretch that I am,
by your saving power, God, lift me up!
30 I will praise the name of God with a song,
I will extol him with my thanksgiving,

22:25f; 40:6

31 more pleasing to Yahweh than any ox
or bull with horn and hoof.

50:8+,14; 51:16

32 Then, seeing this, the humble can rejoice:
long life to your hearts, all you who seek for God!

22:26; 70:4; 119:144

33 Yahweh will always hear those who are in need,
will never scorn his captive people.
34 Let heaven and earth acclaim him,
the oceans and all that moves in them!

35 For God will save Zion,
and rebuild the towns of Judah:
they will be lived in, owned,
36 handed down to his servants' descendants,
and lived in by those who love his name.

102:28, 21-22
Is 44:26
Ezk 36:10

5:11
Is 65:9

69 a. This psalm is composed of two laments of differing rhythms, each containing a lamentation followed by a prayer. The first, vv. 1-6 and 13-15, elaborates the themes of the nether waters, 18:4+, and enemies, 35 etc. The second, vv. 7-12 and 16f, is a cry of distress of a devout man who suffers for his zeal, cf. Is 53:10; Jr 15:15; Ps 22. The psalm ends as a hymn of national application, vv. 30f, cf. 22:27f and 102:13f. The messianic character of the psalm is brought out by the use made of it in the N.T.

b. Or 'up to my soul'.

c. Lit. 'than my tresses' corr.; 'those who would destroy me' Hebr.

d. This line, recalling Lv 5:23, has perhaps been added.

e. Hebr. inserts 'Lord' before 'Yahweh'.

f. Lit. 'humble' cf. versions; 'weep' Hebr.

g. 'are past cure' corr.; 'I tremble' Hebr.

h. 'adding' versions; 'recounting' Hebr. The object of persecution in v. 26 is plural in Hebr., adapting the psalm to liturgical use.

=40:13-17

PSALM 70

V 69

A cry of distress[a]

38:inscr. *For the choirmaster Of David For commemoration*

Oh come and rescue me, God, 1
Yahweh come quickly and help me!
Shame and dishonour on those 2
who are out to kill me!

Down with them! Disgrace on those
who enjoy my misfortune!
May they be aghast with shame, 3
those who say to me, 'Aha! Aha!'

69:32 But joy and gladness 4
for all who seek you!
To all who love your saving power
give constant cause to say, 'God is great!'

To me, poor wretch, 5
come quickly, God!
My helper, my saviour, Yahweh,
come without delay!

31:9

PSALM 71

V 70

An old man's prayer

=31:1-3 In you, Yahweh, I take shelter; 1
25:2 never let me be disgraced.
In your righteousness rescue me, deliver me, 2
turn your ear to me and save me!

Be a sheltering rock for me, 3
a walled fortress[a] to save me!
For you are my rock, my fortress.
140:1 My God, rescue me from the hands of the wicked, 4
from the clutches of rogue and tyrant!

For you alone are my hope, Lord, 5
Yahweh, I have trusted you since my youth,
I have relied on you since I was born, 6
Jr 17:14 you have been my portion[b] from my mother's womb,
22:3; 109:1 and the constant theme of my praise.

31:11 / Is 52:14 To many I have seemed an enigma,[c] 7
but you are my firm refuge.
My mouth is full of your praises, 8
filled with your splendour all day long.

22:11,19 Do not reject me now I am old, 9
nor desert me now my strength is failing,
for my enemies are uttering threats, 10
spies hatching their conspiracy:

3:2; 22:8 / 69:26 'Hound him down now that God has deserted him, 11
seize him, there is no one to rescue him!'

12 God, do not stand aside, 22:11+
my God, come quickly and help me!
13 Shame and ruin on those =40:14
who attack me; =35:4
may insult and disgrace cover those
whose aim is to hurt me!
14 I promise that, ever hopeful,
I will praise you more and more,
15 my lips shall proclaim your righteousness 35:28; 109:30
and power to save, all day long.[d]
16 I will come[e] in the power of Yahweh
to commemorate your righteousness, yours alone.
17 God, you taught me when I was young, 129:1-2 Is 46:3-4 Jr 2:1 Ho 2:17
and I am still proclaiming your marvels.
18 Now that I am old and grey,
God, do not desert me;[f]
let me live to tell the rising generation 36:6; 48:13; 145:4
about your strength[g] and power,
19 about your heavenly righteousness, God. 22:30+
You have done great things; 72:18
who, God, is comparable to you? 86:8+
20 You have sent me misery and hardship,
but you will give me life again,
you will pull me up again from the depths of the earth, 9:13; 40:2
21 prolong my old age, and once more comfort me.
22 I promise I will thank you on the lyre, 109:30-31
my ever-faithful God,
I will play the harp in your honour,
Holy One of Israel. Is 6:3+
23 My lips shall sing for joy as I play to you, 7:17+
and this soul of mine which you have redeemed.
24 And all day long, my tongue
shall be talking of your righteousness.
Shame and disgrace on those
whose aim is to hurt me!

PSALM 72

V 71 Is 11:1-5 Zc 9:9f

The promised king[a]

Of Solomon

1 God, give your own justice to the king, 99:4 2 S 23:3 Jr 23:5
your own righteousness to the royal son,

70 a. Doublet of 40:13-17, where see notes.

71 a. 'sheltering' ('of security') MSS, versions. 'a walled fortress' Greek and 31:2.
b. Meaning uncertain (versions 'my strength'?).
c. Because of his sufferings; they are surprised to see a good man suffer, cf. Jb.
d. Hebr. adds 'I have not known how to read the letters', doubtless the gloss of a scribe puzzled by the following word.
e. Meaning uncertain; possibly 'strengthened by Yahweh I shall come (into the sanctuary)'. Hebr. inserts 'Lord' before 'Yahweh'.
f. This passage could be applied to Israel, whose 'youth' and 'old age' were often referred to by the prophets.
g. Lit. 'your arm', a figure of speech found in the prophets, Is 51:9; 53:1, referring to the miracles of the Exodus.

72 a. This psalm dedicated to Solomon whose wealth, glory and just and peaceful reign it celebrates (1 K 3:9, 12,28; 4:20; 10:1-29; 1 Ch 22:9), evokes the image of the future ideal king. Jewish and Christian tradition see it as a portrait of the messianic King foretold by Isaiah, 9:5; 11:1-5, and Zechariah, 9:9f.

so that he may rule your people rightly 2
Pr 31:8 and your poor with justice.

Is 45:8; 52:7; 55:12 Let the mountains and hills 3
bring a message of peace for the people.
Uprightly[b] •he will defend the poorest, 4
he will save the children of those in need,
and crush their oppressors.

65:7 Like sun and moon he will endure,[c] 5
age after age,
Dt 32:2 Is 45:8 Ho 6:3 welcome as rain that falls on the pasture,[d] 6
and showers to thirsty soil.

89:37; 119:165 2 S 7:13f Jr 31:35; 33:20 *Si 44:21* Zc 9:10 In his days virtue[e] will flourish, 7
a universal peace till the moon is no more;[f]
his empire shall stretch from sea to sea, 8
from the river to the ends of the earth.[g]

Is 27 Mi 7:17 The Beast[h] will cower before him 9
and his enemies grovel in the dust;
Is 49:23; 60:5 the kings of Tarshish and of the islands 10
will pay him tribute.

1 K 10:1+ The kings of Sheba and Seba
will offer gifts;
47:8 all kings will do him homage, 11
all nations become his servants.

‖Jb 29:12 Pr 31:8 He will free the poor man who calls to him, 12
and those who need help,
he will have pity on the poor and feeble, 13
and save the lives of those in need;

he will redeem their lives from exploitation and outrage, 14
116:15 their lives will be precious in his sight.
61:6-7 (Long may he live, may gold from Sheba be given him!)[i] 15
Prayer will be offered for him constantly,
blessings invoked on him all day long.[j]

Is 27:6 Ho 14:6-9 Am 9:13 Grain everywhere in the country, 16
even on the mountain tops,
abundant as Lebanon its harvest,
luxuriant as common grass![k]

21:6 Blessed be his name for ever, 17
enduring as long as the sun![l]
Gn 12:3+ Zc 8:13 May every race in the world be blessed in him,
and all the nations call him blessed!

Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, 18
71:19; 136:4 who alone performs these marvels!
Blessed for ever be his glorious name, 19
57:5 Nb 14:21 may the whole world be filled with his glory!
Amen. Amen!

End of the prayers of David, son of Jesse.[m] 20

PSALM 73

V 72 94:3-4 Qo 8:14 Jr 12:1f

The triumph of justice[a]

Psalm *Of Asaph*

God is indeed good to Israel,[b]
the Lord is good to pure hearts.[c]

My feet were on the point of stumbling,
a little further and I should have slipped,
envying the arrogant as I did, — 37:1+ Jb 21:13-26 Pr 23:17
and watching the wicked get rich.

For them,[d] no such thing as pain,
their bodies are healthy and strong,
they do not suffer as other men do,
no human afflictions for them!

So pride is their chain of honour,
violence the garment that covers them; — 17:10; 109:19; 119:70
their spite oozes like fat,[e] — *Jb 15:27* Jr 5:28
their hearts drip with slyness.

Cynical advocates of evil,
lofty advocates of force,
they think their mouth is heaven
and their tongue can dictate on earth.[f]

This is why my people turn to them
and lap up all they say,[g]
asking, 'How will God find out?
Does the Most High know everything? — 10:11+ Jb 22:13
Look at them: these are the wicked,
well-off and still getting richer!' — 17:14

After all, why should I keep my own heart pure, — Ml 3:14
and wash my hands in innocence, — =26:6
if you plague me all day long
and discipline me every morning? — Jb 7:18

b. Division of verse according to Greek. Text uncertain.

c. 'He will endure' Greek; 'they will fear you' Hebr.

d. The versions translate 'fleece', cf. Jg 6:37f.

e. 'virtue' MSS and versions; 'the virtuous man' Text. Rec., cf. Jr 23:5; Zc 9:9.

f. The messianic age will last to the end of time.

g. The boundaries of an ideal Palestine, cf. Jg 20:1+.

h. The word, meaning the animals or demons of the desert, Is 13:21; 34:14; Jr 50:39; Ezk 34:28, here refers to subjugated heathen states, cf. Is 27:1; Dn 7:3, etc.; Rv 13:1, etc.

i. Probably a prayer for the Messiah added later.

j. Another translation 'He (the Messiah) will pray (intercede) for him (the poor man) and bless him'.

k. 'abundant,' lit. 'May it abound', 'its harvest', lit. 'putting forth' (or 'making it rise'), misplaced in Hebr. to after 'luxuriant' (lit. 'may they [the mountains] be luxuriant'), is often translated 'from the city' (Zion). Some interpret 'May the inhabitants of Zion flourish'.

l. 'blessed' and 'every race in the world': Greek; absent from Hebr. 'enduring' one MS and versions; 'branching forth is his name' Hebr., alluding to the messianic title 'Branch', Is 4:2; Jr 23:5; 33:15; Zc 3:8; 6:12.

m. The colophon and preceding doxology close the second book of the Psalter.

73 a. The poet-sage is troubled by the prosperity of the godless and the sufferings of the upright, cf. Jr 12:1f; Ml 3:15; Qo 7:15, etc.; Jb 21 etc., but goes on to contrast the passing pleasures of the sinner with the enduring peace of God's friendship.

b. It is possible that 'Israel' is the result of dittography and that we ought to read 'the virtuous man'.

c. 'the Lord' conj.; 'and I' Hebr. (after 'hearts').

d. 'For them' corr.; 'At their death' Hebr.

e. 'spite' versions; 'eye' Hebr. Fatness symbolises the hardened heart.

f. Lit. 'they set their mouth against heaven, their tongue goes about on earth'.

g. Lit. 'waters come to them in abundance'. Verse translated according to versions. Meaning obscure. Possibly read 'They are crammed with riches, and days (Greek) of plenty come to them'.

Had I said, 'That talk appeals to me', 15
I should have betrayed your children's race.
Instead, I tried to analyse the problem, 16
hard though I found it—

119:130 until the day I pierced the mystery[h] 17
and saw the end in store for them:
they are on a slippery slope, you put them there, 18
you urge them on to ruin,

until suddenly they fall, 19
done for, terrified to death.
When you wake up, Lord, you shrug them off 20
39:5-6; 49:14 Jb 20:8 like the phantoms of a morning dream.[i]

When my heart had been growing sourer 21
with pains shooting through my loins,
I had simply failed to understand, 22
my stupid attitude to you was brutish.[j]

121:5 Even so, I stayed in your presence, 23
you held my right hand;
now guide me with advice 24
16:10+; 49:15 and in the end receive me into glory.[k]

17:15 I look to no one else in heaven, 25
I delight in nothing else on earth.
16:5+ Lm 3:24 My flesh and my heart are pining with love,[l] 26
my heart's Rock, my own, God for ever!

So then: those who abandon you are doomed, 27
you destroy the adulterous deserter;[m]
whereas my joy lies in being close to God. 28
I have taken shelter in the Lord,
continually to proclaim what you have done.[n]

44; 79

PSALM 74 V 73

Lament on the destruction of the Temple[a]

Poem *Of Asaph*

10:1; 44:23; 77:7; 80:4 Is 63:17 God, have you finally rejected us, 1
raging at the flock you used to pasture?
Dt 7:6+ Remember the people you long since made your own, 2
your hereditary tribe whom you redeemed,
Ex 15:17 Jr 10:16; 51:19 and this Mount Zion where you came to live.

Pick your steps over these endless ruins: 3
the enemy have sacked everything in the sanctuary.
They roared where your Assemblies used to take place, 4
they stuck their enemy emblems over the entrance,[b]
emblems •we had never seen before.[c] 5

Axes deep in the wood, •hacking at the panels, 6
they battered them down with mallet and hatchet;
Is 64:10 then, God, setting fire to your sanctuary, 7
they profanely razed the house of your name to the ground.

77:8.9 Lm 2:9 Ezk 7:26 Determined to destroy us[d] once and for all, 8
they burned down every shrine of God in the country.

9 Deprived of signs, with no prophets left,
who can say how long this will last?[e] 6:3; 89:46

10 How much longer, God, is the oppressor to blaspheme,
is the enemy to insult your name for ever?
11 Why hold back your hand,
why keep your right hand hidden?[f] Is 50:12

12 Yet, God, my king from the first,
author of saving acts throughout the earth,
13 by your power you split the sea in two,
and smashed the heads of monsters on the waters. 89:9-10 Jb 7:12+ Is 51:9-10

14 You crushed Leviathan's heads,[g]
leaving him for wild animals[h] to eat, 114:3 Ex 40:36 Jb 3:8+; 40:25+
15 you opened the spring, the torrent,
you dried up inexhaustible rivers.[i] Is 27:1

16 You are master of day and night, Gn 1
you instituted light and sun,
17 you fixed the boundaries of the world,
you created summer and winter.

18 Now, Yahweh, remember the enemy's blasphemy,
how frenzied people dare to insult your name.
19 Do not betray your turtledove to the beast,[j]
do not forget your wretched people for good. 10:11

20 Respect the covenant! We can bear no more—
every cave in the country is the scene of violence!
21 Do not let the hard-pressed retreat in confusion,
give the poor and needy cause to praise your name.

22 Rise, God, say something on your own behalf,
do not forget the madman's day-long blaspheming,
23 remember the shouting of your enemies,
this ever-rising clamour of your adversaries.

h. Lit. 'the sanctuaries of God'. The psalmist is not referring to the Temple where God may have enlightened him, nor to divine mysteries, Ws 2:22, revealed to him, but to the teaching contained in the scriptures, dwelling place of wisdom, Pr 9:1f; Si 14:21f, and staple of Jewish piety, Si 39:1.

i. On God's 'awakening', cf. 35:23; 44:23; 59:5; 78:65; Is 51:9. On the 'phantom', or 'shape', cf. 49:14; 90:5; Jb 20:8; Is 29:7-8.

j. Lit. 'Behemoth', crassness personified, cf. Jb 40: 15+.

k. Probably not a reference to heavenly glory (Enoch, Gn 5:24; Elijah, 2 K 2:3). The versions translate 'with glory', giving the word its usual sense when used of men; this interpretation suggests that God preserves the just man from an early and shameful death and will vindicate him, even though the upright man dies while the wicked survive. Moreover, as in 16:9f, the psalmist yearns for unbreakable union with God; this is a milestone on the road to a formulated belief in resurrection and eternal life, cf. 16:10+.

l. Lit. 'are fainting', i.e. with desire, cf. 84:2; Jb 19:27, not with weakness, cf. 143:7.

m. Lit. 'those who are adulterou stowards you'. In prophetic literature the expression means infidelity to God.

n. Greek adds 'in the gates of the daughter of Zion', cf. 9:14.

74 a. According to the Targum, the 'madman' (v. 22) is Antiochus Epiphanes, the 'mad king' who burned the Temple gates, 1 M 4:38; 2 M 1:8, and profaned the sanctuary, 1 M 1:21f,39; 2 M 6:5. But the psalm can also apply to the sack of the Temple by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, 2 K 25:9; Is 64:10, from which epoch the voice of prophecy ceased, v. 9, cf. Ps 77:8; Lm 2:9; Ezk 7:26 and 1 M 4:46; 9:27; 14:41.

b. 'entrance' versions.

c. Lit. 'signs which they had not known' Greek; 'signs; it is known' Hebr.

d. Lit. '(They have said in their heart,) "Let us destroy them"' cf. Syr.; "their offspring" Hebr.

e. Jeremiah had spoken of 70 years of exile, Jr 25:11; 29:10, a figure symbolising long duration.

f. Lit. 'why is your right hand kept in the grip of your bosom' corr.; 'why is your right hand consumed from your bosom' Hebr.

g. Allusion to the crossing of the Reed Sea, Ex 14:30, and the defeat of the Egyptians, Ezk 29:3; 32:4.

h. 'wild animals', lit. 'to people, to animals'.

i. Allusion to the miracles of the Exodus, Ex 17:1-7; Nb 20:2-13, and to the crossing of the Jordan, Jos 3, as manifestations of the power of the creator. This recapitulation of divine favours in the past, vv. 12-17, preludes the closing entreaty, vv. 18-23.

j. Hosea compared Israel to a dove, Ho 7:11; 11:11, cf. Sg 5:2. Greek and Syr. 'the soul that gives you thanks'.

PSALM 75

V 74

To the divine judge[a]

For the choirmaster Tune: 'Do not destroy' Psalm Of Asaph Song

We give thanks to you, God, 1
we give thanks as we invoke your name,
as we recount your marvels.[b]

93:1f; 96:10 'At the moment I decide 2
I will dispense strict justice;
46:2; 60:2 the earth shall quake and all its inhabitants, 3
24:2 1 S 2:8 it is I who poised its columns.

1 S 2:3 'I said to the boastful: Enough of boasting! 4
Zc 2:1-4 and to the wicked: How dare you raise your horn,[c]
Lm 2:3 how dare you raise your horn like that, 5
94:4 Jb 15:25 how dare you speak so boldly! '

Jr 3:23 Mt 24:23-28 Not from the east, nor from the west, 6
not from the desert, nor from the mountains,[d]
but from God the judgement comes, 7
1 S 2:7 Jb 5:11 Dn 2:21 60:3 lowering one, raising another.

Jb 21:20 Is 51:17 + Ezk 23:32 Hab 2:16 Yahweh is holding a cup 8
of frothing wine, heavily drugged;[e]
he pours it out, they drain it to the dregs,[f]
all drink of it, the wicked of the earth.

But I will never stop proclaiming the God of Jacob 9
or playing in his honour;
I will cut off the horns of all the wicked 10
92:10 and raise the horns of the virtuous.

PSALM 76

V 75

Ode to God the awe-inspiring[a]

For the choirmaster For strings Psalm Of Asaph

Hab 3:2 God is renowned in Judah, 1
his name is great in Israel;
87:2; 122:6f his tent is pitched in Salem,[b] 2
his home is in Zion;
48:3-7 Jdt 9:7 Hab 3:2 46:9 there he has broken the lightning-swift arrow,[c] 3
the shield, the sword and the line of battle.[d] *Pause*

You the Illustrious and Majestic: 4
mountains of spoil •have been captured;[e] 5
2 K 19:35 Jr 51:39,57 Na 3:18 heroes are now sleeping their last sleep,
the warriors' arms have failed them;
at your reproof, God of Jacob, 6
chariot and horse stand spellbound.

Dt 7:21; 10:17 You the Terrible! Who can oppose you 7
1 S 6:20 Na 1:6 Ml 3:2 and your furious onslaught?[f]
When your verdicts thunder from heaven, 8
earth stays silent with dread;

9 when God stands up to give judgement
and to save all the humble of the earth. *Pause*

10 Man's wrath only adds to your glory;[g]
the survivors of your wrath you will draw like a girdle around you;[h] Jr 13:11

11 fulfil the promises you make to Yahweh your God, Nb 30:3
make offerings to the Terrible, you who surround him;[i]

12 he snuffs out the lives of princes,
he is terrible to the kings of the earth.

PSALM 77 V 76

Meditation on Israel's past[a]

For the choirmaster... Jeduthun Of Asaph Psalm

1 Loudly I cry to God,
loudly to God who hears me.

2 When in trouble I sought the Lord, 50:15; 88:1 Is 26:16
all night long I stretched out my hands,
my soul refusing to be consoled.

3 I thought of God and sighed, Jon 2:8
I pondered and my spirit failed me.

4 You stopped me closing my eyes, 119:148
I was too distraught to speak;

5 I thought of the olden days, =143:5
6 years long past •came back to me, Dt 32:7
I spent all night meditating[b] in my heart,
I pondered and my spirit asked this question:

7 'If the Lord has rejected you, is this final? 13:1; 74:1; 89:46f
If he withholds his favour, is this for ever? Lm 1:31

8 Is his love over for good Lm 3:22-23
and the promise void for all time?

9 Has God forgotten to show mercy, 74:9
or has his anger overcome his tenderness? *Pause* Is 49:14f; 63:15

75 a. An antiphon, v. 1, introduces a divine oracle addressed to the wicked, and foretelling judgement on them, vv. 2-5. Vv. 6-8 describe the universal judgement at which the virtuous man rejoices, vv. 9-10.

b. 'as we invoke your name, as we recount' versions; 'near is your name, they recount' Hebr.

c. The horn is the symbol of arrogant or aggressive strength, 89:17; 92:10; Dt 33:17; 1 K 22:11; Zc 2:4.

d. 'nor from the mountains' corr.; '(from the desert) of the mountains' Hebr. V. 6 names the 4 points of the compass, the 'desert' being to the S., the 'mountains' (of Lebanon) to the N. As in Zc 2:1, the emphasis is placed on the universality of the judgement on the day of Yahweh.

e. The image of the cup of wrath with its heady and stupefying wine, cf. 11:6+, is taken from the prophets, cf. Is 51:17+.

f. Lit. 'he pours from it, only the dregs they drink'; Greek and Syr. suppose 'he pours from one (cup) to the other'.

76 a. Eschatological hymn. Like 46 and 48:5, it apparently refers to the defeat of Sennacherib in 701 at the gates of Jerusalem, 2 K 19:35, which defeat is now symbolic of the rescue which the 'humble' may hope for, v. 9. The Greek title includes 'Concerning the Assyrian'.

b. Abridged name of Jerusalem, cf. Gn 14:18 Jdt 4:4, the city of peace *(shalom)*.

c. Lit. 'flashings of the bow'.

d. Others translate 'the weapons of war'.

e. Lit.' of mountains of spoil they were plundered'. Hebr. interprets 'majestic from the mountains of spoil'; Greek 'from the everlasting mountains' (the same word means both 'everlasting' and 'spoil').

f. Lit. 'under the strength (of your fury)' corr.; 'since' Hebr.

g. Because God has frustrated the fury of the enemy.

h. The image, taken from Jeremiah, cf. 109:19, symbolises close union. Like Terror (= the Terrible) in v. 11, the wrath of God is here apparently personified, cf. 58:9. The helpless 'wrath' of man can only witness to the power and justice of God.

i. Like his 'girdle', v. 10.

77 a. In the hard times after the return from exile the psalmist recalls Yahweh's past favours to Israel, the miracles attending the Exodus from Egypt, as an earnest of Yahweh's future interventions on behalf of his people.

b. Lit. 'I murmured' Greek, Syr.; 'I will remember my lyre' Hebr. Vv. 5-6 here divided as in versions.

'This' I said then 'is what distresses me:[c] 10
Mt 3:6 that the power of the Most High is no longer what it was.'
Remembering[d] Yahweh's achievements, 11
remembering your marvels in the past,
I reflect on all that you did, 12
143:5 I ponder on all your achievements.

18:30-31; 89:6 Ex 15:1-18 God, your ways are holy! 13
What god so great as God?
Dt 32:4 You are the God who did marvellous things 14
and forced nations to acknowledge your power,
Ne 1:10 with your own arm redeeming your people, 15
Gn 46:26-27 the sons of Jacob and Joseph. *Pause*

18:15; 114:3 Jb 7:2+ Na 1:4 Hab 3:10-11 When the waters saw it was you, God, 16
when the waters saw it was you, they recoiled,
shuddering to their depths.
The clouds poured down water, 17
18:14; 114:6 the sky thundered,
your arrows darted out.[e]

29 Ex 19:16+ Your thunder crashed as it rolled, 18
your lightning lit up the world,
=97:4 the earth shuddered and quaked.
Ne 9:11 Ws 14:3 Is 43:16; 51:10 Hab 3:15 You strode across the sea, 19
you marched across the ocean,
but your steps could not be seen.

78:52,72 Is 63:11-14 Mi 6:4 You guided your people like a flock 20
by the hands of Moses and Aaron.

105; 106; 114; 136 Ne 9:5,9-37 Ws 16-19 Is 63:7f

PSALM 78 V 77

The lessons of Israelite history[a]

Psalm *Of Asaph*

Dt 32:1 Listen to this Law, my people, 1
pay attention to what I say;
49:4 ✗ Mt 13:35 I am going to speak to you in parable[b] 2
and expound the mysteries of our past.

44:1 Dt 4:9+ What we have heard and known for ourselves, 3
and what our ancestors have told us,
145:4 Ex 10:2; 13:14 Jb 8:8; 15:18 must not be withheld from their descendants, 4
but be handed on by us to the next generation;

that is: the titles of Yahweh, his power
and the miracles he has done.
Dt 33:4 When he issued the decrees for Jacob 5
147:19 and instituted a Law in Israel,

Dt 4:9; 6:7 he gave our ancestors strict orders
to teach it to their children;
22:30+ the next generation was to learn it, 6
the children still to be born,

and these in their turn were to tell their own children
so that they too would put their confidence in God, 7

never forgetting God's achievements,
and always keeping his commandments,

8 and not becoming, like their ancestors,
a stubborn and unruly generation, Dt 31:27; 32: 5,20
a generation with no sincerity of heart, 95:10
in spirit unfaithful to God.

9 The sons of Ephraim, who were bowmen, Ho 7:13-16
turned tail when the time came to fight;[c]
10 they had not kept God's covenant,
they refused to follow his Law;

11 they had forgotten his achievements, 106:7
the marvels he had shown them:[d]
12 he had worked wonders for their ancestors
in the plains of Zoan, down in Egypt:

13 dividing the sea, bringing them through, Ex 14-15
making the waters stand up like dikes, 33:7
14 leading them with a cloud by day Ex 14:22; 15:8
and with a fiery glow at night, *105:39*

15 splitting rocks in the wilderness, Ex 17:1-7 Nb 20:2-13
quenching their thirst with unlimited water,
16 conjuring streams from the rock 105:41; 114:8
and bringing down water in torrents. Is 48:21

17 They only sinned against him more than ever, Ezk 20:13
defying the Most High in the desert,
18 deliberately challenging God 106:14 Ex 16:2-36
by demanding their favourite food.

19 They blasphemed against God, Ws 1:11
'Is it likely' they said 'that God
could give a banquet in the wilderness? 23:5

20 'Admittedly, when he struck the rock,
waters gushed, torrents streamed out,
but bread now, can he give us that, Ex 16:3
can he provide meat for his people?'

21 Yahweh was enraged when he heard them, Nb 11
a fire flared at Jacob, Dt 32:22
the wrath attacked Israel
22 for having no faith in God,
no trust in his power to save.

23 He gave orders to the skies above,
he opened the doors of heaven, 2 K 7:2 Ml 3:10
24 he rained down manna to feed them, *68:9*
he gave them the wheat of heaven; ↗Jn 6:31

e. Lit. 'what weakens me' Aquila and Jerome; 'I am pierced' Hebr.

d. Lit. 'I remember' versions; 'I shall make known' Hebr. *ketib*.

e. Cosmic imagery, cf. Jb 7:12+, to describe the crossing of the Red Sea. V. 18 refers to the theophany of Sinai, Ex 19:16+.

78 a. A didactic meditation, in the manner of Dt, on the history of Israel, the sins of the nation and their punishment. The psalm stresses the responsibility of Ephraim, the ancestor of the Samaritans, the choice of Judah and the call of David.

b. Parable *(mashal)*: rhythmical maxim expressed in poetic parallelism.

c. The psalmist blames the sins of the nation on Ephraim, thus anticipating the future history of the Northern Kingdom (or possibly alluding to the Samaritan schism, cf. Zc 11:14). Cf. v. 67.

d. The miracles of the Exodus, vv. 12-31.

Ws 16:20
1 Co 10:3
men ate the bread of Immortals,[e] 25
105:40
Dt 8:3
he sent them more food than they could eat.

He stirred up an east wind in the heavens, 26
he conjured up a south wind by his power,
he rained down meat on them like dust; 27
birds as thick as sand on the seashore
he sent tumbling into their camp, 28
in all directions round their tents.

Ho 13:6
They all had enough and to spare, 29
he having provided what they wanted;
Nb 11:33
but they had hardly satisfied their craving, 30
the food was still in their mouths,

when the wrath of God attacked them, 31
Nb 14:29
slaughtering their strongest men
and laying the flower of Israel low.

Ex 16:1f
Despite all this they went on sinning,[f] 32
and put no faith in his marvels;
for which he blasted their days 33
and their years in a flash.[g]

Nb 21:7
Is 26:16
Ho 5:15
Whenever he slaughtered them they sought him, 34
they came to their senses and sought him earnestly
Dt 32:15,18
remembering that God was their rock, 35
God the Most High, their redeemer.

Ho 6:4
But though they outwardly flattered him 36
and used their tongues to lie to him,
95:10
Is 29:13
Ho 8:1
in their hearts they were not true to him, 37
they were unfaithful to his covenant.

65:3;85:3
Ex 32:14
Nb 14:20
Is 48:9
Ezk 20:22
Ho 11:8-9
Compassionately, however, 38
he forgave their guilt instead of killing them,
repeatedly repressing his anger
instead of rousing his full wrath,
Ws 12:8
remembering they were creatures of flesh, 39
Jb 7:7
a puff of wind that passes and does not return.

Ex 14:11
Dt 9:22
How often they defied him in the wilderness, 40
how often they outraged him in the desert,
repeatedly challenging God, 41
Is 6:3+
provoking the Holy One of Israel—
106:21
entirely oblivious of his hand 42
and of the time he saved them from the oppressor:

135:9
Ex 7:14-11:10; 12:29-36
by imposing his signs[h] on Egypt, 43
by displaying his wonders in the plains of Zoan,
Ws 16-18
by turning their rivers into blood 44
to stop them drinking from their streams,

Ex 8:17
by sending horseflies to eat them 45
and frogs to devastate them,
by consigning their crops to the caterpillar 46
and their hard-won harvest to the locust,

Ws 16:16
by killing their vines with hail 47
and their sycamore trees with frost,
Ex 9:3
by condemning their cattle to plague[i] 48
and their flocks to feverish pests,

49 by unleashing his fierce anger, rage,
indignation and hardship on them,
a mission of angels of disaster,
50 by giving his anger free rein,

by not even exempting them from death,
by condemning them to plague,
51 by striking down all the first-born in Egypt, =105:36; 136:10
the first-fruits of their virility in the tents of Ham, Ex 12:29

52 by driving his people out like sheep,[j] 77:20
by leading them through the wilderness like a flock,
53 by guiding them safe and unafraid
while the sea engulfed their enemies, Ex 14:26-28

54 by bringing them to his sacred frontier, 114:2
the highlands conquered by his own right hand,
55 by expelling the pagans in front of them 44:2
and by marking out a heritage for each, Jos 24:8-13
in which the tribes of Israel could pitch their tents.

56 Even so, they went on challenging God the Most High, Jdt 8:19
rebelliously disregarding his decrees;[k]
57 as perverse and disloyal as their ancestors,
treacherous as a bow with a warp,
58 provoking him with their high places
and rousing his jealousy with their idols. Dt 32:16,21

59 God was enraged when he heard them,
he rejected Israel out of hand,
60 he left his home in Shiloh, Jos 18:1
that tent where he once lived with men. 1 S 1:3+ Jr 7:12; 26:6

61 He consigned his power to captivity,
his splendour[l] to the enemy's clutches; 1 S 4:11,22
62 he condemned his own people to the sword, Jr 12:7
he raged at his heritage,

63 whose young men were then burnt to death— Dt 32:22-25
no brides left to hear the wedding song; Jr 7:34
64 whose priests fell by the sword—
no widows left to raise the dirge. Jb 27:15

65 Then, like a sleeper, like a hero
fighting-mad with wine, the Lord woke up
66 to strike his enemies on the rump[m] 1 S 5:6f
and put them to everlasting shame.

67 Rejecting the tent of Joseph,[n]
not choosing the tribe of Ephraim,
68 instead he chose the tribe of Judah
and his well-loved mountain of Zion,

78 e. Lit. 'the Mighty', i.e. the angels, cf. 103:20.
f. A general review, vv. 32-39, of the inconstancy of Israel and the patience of God.
g. Lit. 'with haste' Greek.
h. The 'plagues of Egypt', Ex 7:8+, summarised in vv. 43-51.
i. 'plague' corr.; 'hail' Hebr.
j. The Exodus from Egypt and invasion of Canaan, vv. 52-55.
k. The sins of Israel in the time of Samuel and Saul, vv. 56-64.
l. The ark of the covenant, 2 Ch 6:41; Ps 132:8.
m. Reference to the haemorrhoids inflicted on the Philistines when they had detained the ark.
n. Rejection of Ephraim, v. 67, choice of Zion, dwelling place of Yahweh and model of the heavenly sanctuary, vv. 68-69, and call of David, Yahweh's anointed, shepherd of his people and type of the awaited Messiah, vv. 70-72.

87:2
2 S 5:9+
48:2
where he built his sanctuary, a copy of high heaven,[o] 69
founding it firm as the earth for ever.

89:20
1 S 13:14;
16:11-13
2 S 7:8
Ezk 34:23;
37:24
Am 7:14
Choosing David as his servant, 70
he took him from the sheepfolds,
called him from tending ewes in lamb 71
to pasture his people Jacob
and Israel his heritage:

77:20
who did this with unselfish care 72
and led them with a sensitive hand.

44; 74; 80
Si 36:1-17

PSALM 79

V 78

National lament[a]

Psalm *Of Asaph*

2 K 25:9-10
Lm 1:10
God, the pagans have invaded your heritage, 1
they have desecrated your holy Temple;
they have reduced Jerusalem to a pile of ruins,

80:12-13
Jr 7:33
they have left the corpses of your servants 2
to the birds of the air for food,

✗1 M 7:17
and the flesh of your devout to the beasts of the earth.

Zp 1:17
They have shed blood like water 3

Jr 14:16
throughout Jerusalem, not a gravedigger left!

=44:13;
80:6
Zp 2:8
we are now insulted by our neighbours, 4
butt and laughing-stock of all those around us.

=89:46+
44:23
How much longer will you be angry, Yahweh? For ever? 5

Dt 4:24+
Is your jealousy to go on smouldering like a fire?

Si 36:1-5
||Jr 10:25
Pour out your anger on the pagans, 6
who do not acknowledge you,
and on those kingdoms

14:4
that do not call on your name,

Jr 50:7
for they have devoured Jacob 7
and reduced his home to desolation.

Do not hold our ancestors' crimes against us, 8
in tenderness quickly intervene,

142:6
we can hardly be crushed lower;
help us, God our saviour, 9

Ex 32:12+
Ezk 20:44;
36:22
for the honour of your name;
Yahweh, blot out our sins,
rescue us for the sake of your name.

=115:2
||Jl 2:17
42:3; 126:2
Dt 32:43
Jl 4:21
Why should the pagans ask, 'Where is their God?[a]' 10
May we soon see the pagans learning what vengeance
you exact for your servants'[b] blood shed here!

102:20; 119:
170
Jb 16:18+
May the groans of the captive reach you; 11
by your mighty arm rescue those doomed to die!

Pay our neighbours sevenfold, strike to the heart 12

89:50
for the monstrous insult proffered to you, Lord!

Ezk 34:1+
And we your people, the flock that you pasture, 13
giving you everlasting thanks,
will recite your praises for ever and ever.

PSALM 80

V 79 44; 79 Is 63:15-64:11

Prayer for the restoration of Israel[a]

For the choirmaster Tune: 'The decrees are lilies' Of Asaph Psalm 45:inscr.

1 Shepherd of Israel, listen, 68:27; 95:7 Gn 48:15 Ezk 34:1+
you who lead Joseph like a flock;
enthroned on the cherubs, shine Ex 25:18+
2 on Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh;[b]
rouse your strength,
come to us and save us!

3 Yahweh Sabaoth,[c] bring us back, 85:4 Jr 31:18
let your face smile on us and we shall be safe. 4:6+

4 Yahweh[d] Sabaoth, how much longer 44:23+
will you smoulder at your people's prayer? 74:1
5 Having fed us on the bread of tears, 42:3
having made us drink them in such measure,
6 you now let our neighbours quarrel over us 79:4+
and our enemies deride us.

7 Yahweh Sabaoth, bring us back,
let your face smile on us and we shall be safe.

8 There was a vine:[e] you uprooted it from Egypt; Is 5:1+
to plant it, you drove out other nations,
9 you cleared a space where it could grow,
it took root and filled the whole country.

10 It covered the mountains with its shade,
the cedars of God[f] with its branches,
11 its tendrils extended to the sea,
its offshoots all the way to the river.[g] Jg 20:1+

12 Why have you destroyed its fences? 79:2; 89:40 Jr 12:7-13 Ho 2:14
Now anyone can go and steal its grapes,
13 the forest boar can ravage it
and wild animals eat it.

14 Please, Yahweh Sabaoth, relent!
Look down from heaven, look at this vine,
15 visit it, •protect
what your own right hand has planted.[h]
16 They threw it on the fire like dung,[i]
but one look of reproof from you
and they will be doomed.

o. Lit. 'like the heights of heaven' corr.; 'the high (beings)' Hebr.

79 a. This psalm possibly refers to the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldaeans in 587, and to the plundering of the city by Edom, Moab and other neighbouring powers, 2 K 24:2.

b. God is the 'avenger of blood' for Israel, Nb 35:19+.

80 a. This psalm could apply equally well either to N. Israel (cf. vv. 1-2) laid waste by the Assyrians (mentioned in the Greek title), cf. Jr 31:15f, or to Judah after the sack of Jerusalem in 586, cf. Jr 12:7-13. The psalmist looks forward to the reuniting of the kingdom, cf. Is 49:5; Ezk 37:16; Zc 9:13; 10:6, within its ideal frontiers, v. 11, cf. Jg 20:1+.

b. Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph, with whom Benjamin is sometimes reckoned, are the two principal tribes of the North.

c. 'Yahweh Sabaoth' Syr.; 'God' Hebr.

d. Hebr. adds 'God'. So also in v. 19.

e. Allegory frequent in the prophets, cf. Is 5:1+.

f. Or 'the branches were cedars of God' (i.e. the highest of cedars, cf. 36:6; 68:15).

g. The Euphrates.

h. Hebr. adds 'and on the son you authorised' (lit. 'strengthened') anticipation of 17b.

i. Line corr.

May your hand protect the man at your right, 17
the son of man who has been authorised by you.[j]
We shall never turn from you again; 18
our life renewed, we shall invoke your name.

Yahweh Sabaoth, bring us back, 19
let your face smile on us and we shall be safe.

PSALM 81 V 80

For the feast of Tabernacles[a]

8:inscr. *For the choirmaster On the... of Gath Of Asaph*

Jdt 16:1 Shout for joy to honour God our strength, 1
shout to acclaim the God of Jacob!

43:4; 149:3 Start the music, sound the drum, 2
the melodious lyre and the harp;
sound the New Moon trumpet, 3
Lv 23:34 Nb 29:12 at the full moon, on our feastday![b]

Ex 23:14+ This is a statute binding on Israel, 4
an ordinance of the God of Jacob,
this decree he imposed on Joseph 5
when he went to war against[c] Egypt.

I can hear[d] a voice I no longer recognise,
Ex 1:14; 6:6 'It was I who relieved your shoulder of the burden, 6
your hands could drop the labourer's basket;[e]
66:12 you called in your trouble, so I rescued you. 7

Ex 19:19 'Hidden in the storm, I answered you,[f]
95:8 Ex 17:1-7 I tested you at the waters of Meribah. *Pause*
Listen, you are my people, let me warn you. 8
Ex 15:26 Is 55:2-3 Israel, if you would only listen to me!

Ex 20:2-3p 'Tolerate no foreign god, 9
worship no alien god;
I, Yahweh, am your God, 10
I who brought you here from Egypt;
you have only to open your mouth for me to fill it.

Dt 9:7 'My people refused to listen to me, 11
Israel refused to obey me,
Jr 3:17; 7:24 so I left them to their stubborn selves 12
to do whatever they pleased.

Is 48:18 'If only my people would listen, 13
if Israel would follow my ways,
Lv 26:7-8 at one blow I would defeat their enemies 14
and strike at all who attack them.

66:3 'Then those who hate Yahweh would cringe, 15
Lk 21:24 their doom being sealed for ever;
147:14 Dt 32:13-14 while I would feed you on pure wheat 16
and satisfy you with the wild rock honey.'

PSALM 82

V 81 58

Against corrupt judges[a]

Psalm *Of Asaph*

1 God stands in the divine assembly, Is 3:13-14
among the gods he dispenses justice:

2 'No more mockery of justice,[b] 58:2
no more favouring the wicked! *Pause*

3 Let the weak and the orphan have justice, Ex 23:6+ Dt 1:17
be fair to the wretched and destitute;

4 rescue the weak and needy,
save them from the clutches of the wicked!'

5 Ignorant and senseless, they carry on blindly,
undermining the very basis of earthly society.

6 I once said, 'You too are gods, 58:1+ ↗Jn 10:34
sons of the Most High, all of you',[c]

7 but all the same, you shall die like other men;
as one man, princes, you shall fall.

8 Rise, God, dispense justice throughout the world, 67:4
since no nation is excluded from your ownership.

PSALM 83

V 82

Against the enemies of Israel[a]

Song *Psalm* *Of Asaph*

1 God, do not remain silent; 44:23; 50:3; 109:1
do not be unmoved, O God, or unresponsive!

2 See how your enemies are stirring,
see how those who hate you rear their heads.

3 Weaving a plot against your people,

4 conspiring against those you protect, •they say,
'Come, we will finish them as a nation, Jr 11:19
the name of Israel shall be forgotten!'

5 Unanimous[b] in their plot, 2:2
they seal a treaty against you:

j. Probable allusion to Zerubbabel, Hg 1:1; Ezr 3:2, rather than to Benjamin ('son of the right hand'), Amaziah ('Yahweh is trusty') cf. 2 Chr 25:5, or Israel (cf. Ex 4:22).

81 a. A prelude, vv. 1-5, introduces a divine oracle, cf. 50;95, in the style of Dt. The feast of Tabernacles, Ex 23:14+, commemorated the period in the desert and the Law given at Sinai. It was the greatest feast of the year.

b. The first day of the lunar month was a feast day, 2 K 4:23; Am 8:5; Ho 2:13; Is 1:13. The 1st day of the 7th month was long reckoned as the 1st day of the new year. Lv 23:24; Nb 29:1; at the full moon next following, the feast of Tabernacles was celebrated. Lv 23:34; Nb 29:12.

c. 'against'; Greek interprets 'from', making the subject not God but Joseph.

d. Greek and Syr. translate 'He heard'.

e. Allusion to the forced labour imposed on Israel in Egypt.

f. At the theophany of Sinai.

82 a. A warning to wicked rulers and judges in an eschatological setting, vv. 1,5,8.

b. Indictment frequent in the prophets: Is 1:17f; Jr 5:28; 21:12; 22:3; Ezk 22:27,29; Mi 3:1-11; Zc 7:9-10; cf. Jb 29:12; Pr 18:5; 24:11-12.

c. The rulers and judges are reckoned with the 'sons of the Most High', the members of the heavenly court, cf. Jb 1:6+. Christ applies this passage, in a different context, to the Jews instructed by the word of God.

83 a. Without naming any particular hostile coalition, the psalm enumerates ten traditional enemies of Israel whose hostility was maintained to a late date, cf. 2 Ch 20:1f; Ne 2:19, etc.; 1 M 5:3f.

b. Lit. 'with one heart, and' corr.

Nb 20:23+ the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, 6
1 Ch 5:10,19 Moab and the Hagrites,[c]

Ex 17:8+ Gebal,[d] Ammon, Amalek, 7
Jos 13:2+ Philistia and the Tyrians;
and now Assur[e] has joined them 8
to reinforce the sons of Lot. *Pause*

Ex 2:15+ Jg 7 Treat them like Midian and Sisera, 9
Is 9:3; 10:26 Jg 4-5 like Jabin at the river Kishon,
wiped out at En-dor, 10
Jr 8:2 they served to dung the ground.

Jg 7:25 Treat their generals like Oreb and Zeeb, 11
Jg 8:10-21 their commanders like Zebah and Zalmunna,
those who once said, 'Let us take for ourselves 12
possession of the Dwellings of God!'

35:5 Is 17:13; 29:5 Jb 27:21 58:9 My God, bowl them along like tumbleweed,[f] 13
Jb 13:25 Is 5:24; 10:17 Ezk 21:3 like chaff at the mercy of the wind;
as fire devours the forest, 14
as the flame licks up the mountains,

drive them on with your whirlwind, 15
Jr 25:32 rout them with your tornado;
cover their faces with shame, 16
until they seek your name, Yahweh.

Shame and panic be always theirs, 17
disgrace and death; •and let them know this: 18
=97:9 you alone bear the name Yahweh,
46:10; 59:13 Dt 4:39 Is 33:5; 42:8 Dn 3:45 Most High over the whole world.

PSALM 84 V 83

Pilgrimage song[a]

8:inscr. *For the choirmaster On the... of Gath Of the sons of Korah Psalm*

122:1 How I love your palace, 1
Yahweh Sabaoth!
42:1-2; 122:1 How my soul yearns and pines 2
for Yahweh's courts!
My heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God.

The sparrow has found its home at last, 3
the swallow a nest for its young,
your altars, Yahweh Sabaoth,
=5:2 my king and my God.

Happy those who live in your house 4
and can praise you all day long; *Pause*
and happy the pilgrims inspired by you 5
with courage to make the Ascents![b]

As they go through the Valley of the Weeper,[c] 6
they make it a place of springs,
Ezk 34:26 Jl 2:23 clothed in blessings[d] by early rains.
Thence they make their way from height to height, 7
soon to be seen before God on Zion.[e]

8 Yahweh[f] Sabaoth, hear my prayer,
listen, God of Jacob; *Pause*
9 God our shield, now look on us
and be kind to your anointed.[g]

10 A single day in your courts Jb 22:25
is worth more than a thousand elsewhere;
merely to stand on the steps of God's[h] house
is better than living with the wicked.

11 For God is battlement[i] and shield,
conferring grace and glory;
Yahweh withholds nothing good
from those who walk without blame.

12 Yahweh Sabaoth,
happy the man who puts his trust in you!

PSALM 85 V 84

Prayer for peace[a]

For the choirmaster Of the sons of Korah Psalm

1 Yahweh, you favour your own country, 126
you bring back the captives of Jacob, 14:7
2 you take your people's guilt away,
you blot out all their sins, *Pause*
3 you retract all your anger, 78:38+
you abjure your fiery rage.

4 Bring us back, God our saviour, 80:3
master your resentment against us.
5 Do you mean to be angry with us for ever, 79:5+
to prolong your wrath age after age?

6 Will you not give us life again,
for your people to rejoice in you?
7 Yahweh, show us your love, Is 49:14f; 54:7f
grant us your saving help.

8 I am listening. What is Yahweh saying?
What God is saying means peace
for his people, for his friends,

e. Sons of Hagar, nomads of Transjordania.
d. Gebal: here Gabalene, district of Idumaea to the N. of Petra, and not Byblos as in Ezk 27:9.
e. Either Assyria (here perhaps standing for Seleucid Syria, cf. Jdt 16:3) or the Ashshurite tribe, Gn 25:3; 2 S 2:9+; cf. Nb 24:22.
f. Or possibly 'thistledown', the seed of which turns round and round as it flies.

84 a. Song of Zion praising Yahweh as host in his Temple, dispensing happiness and forgiveness to pilgrims, vv. 5-7, and to all who serve in his sanctuary, vv. 4,10.
b. 'Ascents', Greek; 'pathways' Hebr. The psalms entitled 'Gradual' or 'of Ascents', 120f, were sung by pilgrims on the march.
c. In seven MSS and in the versions 'Valley of Tears', cf. Jg 2:5. The 'Weeper' must here be the balsam tree (2 S 5:23-24). The 'Valley of the Balsam tree', to the N. of the Ge-hinnom valley, was the last stage of the pilgrimage, the junction of roads coming from N.,W., and S. Cf. 2 S 5:17-25.
d. Text uncertain. Greek 'the lawgiver will bestow blessings'. A possible correction 'the leader will call out the blessings'. We follow the Hebr. text. The allusion to the first rains of autumn make it feasible to connect the psalm with the feast of Tabernacles, Ex 23:14+.
e. 'from height to height'; others translate 'from strength to strength', or (Targ.) 'from battlement to battlement'. 'soon ...Zion': lit. 'God will appear to them in Zion'; for 'God to them' Hebr. has 'the God of gods'.
f. Hebr. inserts 'God'.
g. Here the 'anointed' ('messiah') is probably the high priest, chief authority in the post-exilic community.
h. The sons of Korah (cf. inscr.) were the gatekeepers (cf. 1 Ch 26:1).
i. Hebr. inserts 'Yahweh' before 'God'. For 'battlement' cf. Is 54:12.

85 a. The psalm promises the returned exiles the peace of the messianic age foretold by Isaiah and Zechariah.

if only they renounce their folly;
25:10 Ex 24:16+ Ezk 11:23; 43:2 Jn 1:14 61:7; 89: 14; 97:2 for those who fear him, his saving help is near, 9
and the glory will then live in our country.[b]

Love and Loyalty now meet, 10
Righteousness and Peace now embrace;[c]
Is 45:8+ Loyalty reaches up from earth 11
and Righteousness leans down from heaven.

Yahweh himself bestows happiness 12
=67:6+ Zc 8:12 Is 58:8 as our soil gives its harvest,
Righteousness always preceding him 13
Zc 9:10 and Peace[d] following his footsteps.

PSALM 86 V 85

Prayer in ordeal

Prayer *Of David*

Listen to me, Yahweh, and answer me, 1
poor and needy as I am;
keep my soul: I am your devoted one, 2
save your servant who relies on you.

You are my God, •take pity on me, Lord, 3
I invoke you all day long;
give your servant reason to rejoice, 4
9:10; =25:1; 143:8 for to you, Lord, I lift my soul.

Lord, you are good and forgiving, 5
most loving to all who invoke you;
5:1-2 Yahweh, hear my prayer, 6
listen to me as I plead.

Lord, in trouble I invoke you, 7
Ex 15:11 and you answer my prayer;
35:10; 89:8 Dt 3:24 Jr 10:6 there is no god to compare with you, 8
no achievement to compare with yours.[a]

22:27 ↗Rv 15:4 All the pagans[b] will come and adore you, Lord, 9
all will glorify your name,
Jdt 16:13 since you alone are great, you perform marvels, 10
you God, you alone.

25:4; 26:3; =27:11 Yahweh, teach me your way, 11
how to walk beside you faithfully,
make me single-hearted in fearing your name.

I thank you with all my heart, Lord my God, 12
I glorify your name for ever,
your love for me has been so great, 13
88:6 you have rescued me from the depths of Sheol.

=54:3 Now arrogant men, God, are attacking me, 14
a brutal gang hounding me to death:
people to whom you mean nothing.

130:7 =Ex 34:6+ Lord God, you who are always merciful and tender-hearted, 15
103:8; 145:8 *slow to anger, always loving, always loyal,*
= 25:16 turn to me and pity me. 16

Give me your strength, your saving help,
me your servant, this son of a pious mother, 116:16 Ws 9:5
17 give me one proof of your goodness.

Yahweh, make my opponents ashamed,
show them that you are my help and consolation.

PSALM 87

V 86 46:4; 48; 133:1 2 S 5:9+ Is 2:2-3

Zion, mother of nations[a]

Of the sons of Korah Psalm Song

2a 1 Yahweh loves •his city 76:2; 78:68 Zc 2:14
founded on the holy mountain;
2b he prefers the gates of Zion
2c to any town in Jacob.
3 He has glorious predictions to make[b] of you,
city of God! *Pause*

4 'I will add Egypt and Babylon
to the nations that acknowledge me.
Of Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia,
"Here so and so was born" men say. Is 62:4-5
5 But all call Zion "Mother",[c] ↗ Ga 4:26 ↗ Ep 5:22-23
since all were born in her.'[d]

It is he who makes her what she is, 48:8
6 he, the Most High, •Yahweh;
and as he registers the peoples,[e] Is 4:3 Ezk 13:9
'It was here' he writes 'that so and so was born'. *Pause*
7 And there will be princes dancing there.[f] 149:3 Is 66:21
All find their home in you.[g]

PSALM 88

V 87 39

Lament[a]

Song Psalm Of the sons of Korah For the choirmaster In sickness or suffering Poem For Heman the native-born 89:inscr.

1 Yahweh my God, I call for help all day,[b] 77:2
I weep to you all night;

b. The glory of Yahweh, Ex 24:16+, which had deserted the Temple and the holy city, is to return to the restored Temple, Ezk 43:2; Hg 2:9.

c. Personified attributes of God; these will inaugurate the kingdom of God on earth and in the hearts of men.

d. 'Peace' conj.; 'will put (his steps on the path)' Hebr.

86 a. Lit. 'there are no works like those you have made'.

b. Hebr. here adds 'you have made', words misplaced from the preceding line.

87 a. Holy Zion, the city of God, 2 S 5:9+, is to become the sacred metropolis and mother of all peoples. All the pagan neighbours of Israel: Egypt ('Rahab'), Ethiopia, Syro-Palestine, Mesopotamia, are summoned to acknowledge the true God and to provide him with converts. Such is the will of Yahweh as expressed in the oracle of vv. 4-5. The psalm draws on Isaiah and Zechariah. Isaiah had already spoken of Zion as mother, fruitful spouse of Yahweh and, as such, a foreshadowing of the Church.

b. Lit. 'He says (Hebr. 'it is said') glorious things'.

c. 'Mother' Greek; absent from Hebr.

d. The pagans, wherever born, are adopted by Zion, which becomes their true country.

e. Reference to the roll of citizenship, Is 4:3; Ezk 13:9, not to the apocalyptic book of dooms, Ps 69:28. The pagans are listed as citizens of Zion.

f. 'princes' MSS and versions; 'singers' Text. Rec. 'dancing there', lit. 'as dancers'. The nations are made freemen of the city and their princes are allowed to sing and dance in her sacred liturgy, 149:3; 150:4; cf. 2 S 6:5.

g. Following Greek. Hebr. 'all my water-sources are in you'.

88 a. With this anguished prayer, cf. the complaints of Job.

b. Text corr.; Hebr. 'Yahweh, God of my salvation, on the day...'

119:170 may my prayer reach you 2
hear my cries for help;

Jb 10:15; 17:1 for my soul is all troubled, 3
my life is on the brink of Sheol;
Nb 16:33+ I am numbered among those who go down to the Pit, 4
143:7 a man bereft of strength:

a man alone,[c] down among the dead, 5
among the slaughtered in their graves,
among those you have forgotten,
those deprived of your protecting hand.

86:13 You have plunged me to the bottom of the Pit, 6
to its darkest, deepest place,
42:7 weighted down by your anger, 7
18:4+ drowned beneath your waves. *Pause*

38:11+; 41:5-6 You have turned my friends against me 8
Jb 19:13 and made me repulsive to them;
142:7 in prison and unable to escape,
Lm 3:7 my eyes are worn out with suffering. 9

Yahweh, I invoke you all day,
I stretch out my hands to you:
are your marvels meant for the dead, 10
6:5+; 30:9 can ghosts rise up to praise you? *Pause*
Is 38:18+

Who talks of your love in the grave, 11
of your faithfulness in the place of perdition?[d]
Do they hear about your marvels in the dark, 12
about your righteousness in the land of oblivion?

But I am here, calling for your help, 13
praying to you every morning:
why do you reject me? 14
Why do you hide your face from me?

Jb 13:24; 20:25 Wretched, slowly dying since my youth, 15
I bore your terrors—now I am exhausted;
119:120 your anger overwhelmed me, 16
Jb 6:4 you destroyed me with your terrors
which, like a flood, were round me, all day long, 17
all together closing in on me.
Jb 19:13 You have turned my friends and neighbours against me, 18
Jb 17:13-14 now darkness is my one companion left.

PSALM 89 V 88

Hymn and a prayer to God's faithfulness[a]

88:inscr. *Poem* *For Ethan the native-born*

Is 63:7 I will celebrate your love for ever, Yahweh, 1
age after age my words shall proclaim your faithfulness;
for I claim that love is built to last for ever 2
and your faithfulness founded firmly in the heavens.[b]

2 S 7:8-16 + 'I have made a covenant with my Chosen, 3
I have given my servant David my sworn word:

I have founded your dynasty to last for ever,
I have built you a throne to outlast all time.' *Pause* 61:7

Yahweh, the assembly of holy ones in heaven
applaud the marvel of your faithfulness. 61:7 Jb 5:1+
Who in the skies can compare with Yahweh? 29:1; 82:1
Which of the heaven-born[c] can rival him? Jb 1:6+

God, dreaded in the assembly of holy ones,
great[d] and terrible to all around him,
Yahweh, God of Sabaoth, who is like you?— 86:8+; 113:5
mighty Yahweh, clothed in your faithfulness!

You control the pride of the ocean, 74:13 Jb 7:12+
when its waves ride high, you calm them; 65:7+
you split Rahab[e] in two like a carcase 107:28
and scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.

The heavens are yours and the earth is yours, 24:1-2
you founded the world and all it holds,
you created north and south;
Tabor and Hermon hail your name with joy.

Yours was the arm, and yours the prowess,
mighty and exalted your right hand;
Righteousness and Justice support your throne, 89:14; 97:2
Love and Faithfulness are your attendants. Ex 34:6-7

Happy the people who learn to acclaim you! 47:1+
Yahweh, they will live in the light of your favour;
they will rejoice in your name all day
and exult in your righteousness.

You are their glory and their strength,
you, by your kindness, raise our fortunes,[f] 112:9; 148:14
since both our shield and our king
belong to Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel. 47:9 Is 6:3+

Once you spoke in vision 132:11-12 2 S 7:8-16+
and said to your friends,[g]
'I have conferred the crown[h] on a hero,
and promoted one chosen from my people.

'I have selected my servant David 78:70+
and anointed him with my holy oil;
my hand will be constantly with him, Ws 3:1 Is 42:1
he will be able to rely on my arm.

'No enemy will be able to outwit him,
no wicked man to worst him,
I myself will crush his opponents,
I will strike dead all who hate him.

c. Meaning uncertain. Greek 'free'. Others translate 'my couch', 'my place of imprisonment'.
d. In Hebr. 'Abaddon', Jb 26:6; 28:22; Pr 15:11; Rv 9:11.

89 a. The prelude, vv. 1-2, followed by the rehearsal of the Davidic covenant, vv. 3-4, and a hymn to the creator, vv. 15-18, introduces a messianic oracle, vv. 19-37, and, in contrast, an account of the humiliations of the nation, vv. 38-45, concluded by a prayer, vv. 46-51. The pairing of 'love' with 'faithfulness' is a feature of this psalm.
b. 'for I claim' lit. 'I have said'; versions 'you have said', 'is built' versions; 'you built' Hebr. 'in the heavens' Greek (lit. 'the heavens, in them').
c. Lit. 'sons of the gods', i.e. the angels; so also the 'holy ones' in v. 7.
d. 'great' corr.; Hebr. joins 'great' with 'assembly'.
e. A mythical monster personifying the watery chaos, cf. Jb 7:12+; it also sometimes means Egypt, Ps 87:4.
f. Lit. 'lift up our horn'.
g. Samuel and Nathan.
h. 'crown' corr.; 'help' Hebr.

'With my faithfulness and love, 24
1 S 2:10 his fortunes shall rise in my name.
I will give him control of the sea, 25
complete control of the rivers.

2:7 'He will invoke me, "My father, 26
2 S 7:14+ my God and rock of my safety",
Col 1:15,18 and I shall make him my first-born, 27
+ Rv 1:5 the Most High[f] for kings on earth.
2 S 7:9

18:50 'I will keep my love for him always, 28
Is 55:3 my covenant with him shall stand,
61:7 I have founded his dynasty to last for ever, 29
2 S 7:11 his throne to be as lasting as the heavens.

'Should his descendants desert my Law 30
Si 47:22 and disregard my rulings,
should they violate my statutes 31
and not keep my commandments,

2 S 7:14 'I will punish their sins with the rod 32
and their crimes with the whip,
40:11; 61:7 but never withdraw my love from him 33
Jr 31:36-37 or fail in my faithfulness.

Jr 33:20-21 'I will not break my covenant, 34
I will not revoke my given word;
110:4 I have sworn on my holiness, once for all, 35
Am 4:2 and cannot turn liar to David.

61:7 'His dynasty shall last for ever, 36
I see his throne like the sun,
72:5,7 enduring for ever like the moon, 37
Si 43:6 that faithful witness in the sky.' *Pause*

And yet you have rejected, disowned 38
and raged at your anointed;[g]
you have repudiated the covenant with your servant 39
and flung his crown dishonoured to the ground.

80:12-13 You have pierced all his defences, 40
and laid his forts in ruins;
anyone may go and loot him, 41
his neighbours treat him with scorn.

You have let his opponents get the upper hand, 42
Lm 1:5 and made all his enemies happy,
you have snapped his sword on a rock 43
and failed to support him in battle.

You have stripped him of his glorious sceptre, 44
and toppled his throne to the ground,
you have aged him before his time 45
and covered him in shame. *Pause*

13:1; 44:23; 74:9; = 79:5 Yahweh, how much longer will you hide? For ever? 46
How much longer must your anger smoulder like a fire?
39:4 Remember me, the short time I have left[h] 47
Jb 7:7 and the void to which you destine mankind.
90:3f What man can cling to life and not see death? 48
Who can evade the clutches of Sheol? *Pause*

49 Lord, where are those earlier signs of your love?
You swore your oath to David on your faithfulness!
50 Lord, do not forget how your servant was insulted, 79:12
how I take these pagans' taunts[l] to heart,
51 insults, Yahweh, that your enemies have offered,
insults to your anointed wherever he goes.

Blessed be Yahweh for ever. =106:48
Amen. Amen![m]

PSALM 90 V 89

The human condition[a]

Prayer *Of Moses, man of God*

1 Lord, you have been
our refuge[b] age after age.

2 Before the mountains were born, 48:14
before the earth or the world came to birth, Gn 1:1
you were God from all eternity and for ever. Pr 8:5
93:2
Hab 1:12

3 You can turn man back into dust *89:48; 103:*
by saying, 'Back to what you were, you sons of men!' 14;104:29; 146:4
4 To you, a thousand years are a single day, *Gn 3:19+*
a yesterday now over, an hour of the night. ↗2 P 3:8

5 You brush men away like waking[c] dreams, Is 38:12; 40: 6-7
they are like grass *Jb 14:1-2;*
6 sprouting and flowering in the morning, 20:8
withered and dry before dusk. 37:2; 102:11; 103:15-16

7 We too are burnt up by your anger
and terrified by your fury;
8 having summoned up our sins 109:15
you inspect our secrets by your own light. Ho 7:2

9 Our days dwindle under your wrath,
our lives are over in a breath[d] 39:5-6
10 —our life lasts for seventy years, Gn 6:3
eighty with good health, *102:25a*
Pr 10:27
Qo 6:12
Si 18:8-9

but they all add up to[e] anxiety and trouble— Qo 12:1-7
over in a trice, and then we are gone.
11 Who yet has felt the full force of your fury,
or learnt to fear the violence of your rage?[f]

12 Teach us to count how few days we have
and so gain wisdom of heart.[g]

i. A divine title here applied to God's anointed king.
j. Here the word indicates the whole Davidic dynasty.
k. Lit. 'what duration' text uncertain.
l. 'taunts' cf. Syr.
m. Doxology terminating the third book of the Psalter.

90 **a.** A sage's meditation on the shortness of human life made shorter still by sin, cf. Gn 3.
b. 'refuge' MSS and versions; 'dwelling place' Hebr.
c. Hebr. has 'you sweep them away, a dream they are, in the morning like . . .'
d. Lit. 'like a sigh' Hebr.; Syr. 'spider', a word added in Greek and Vulg.
e. Lit. 'but most of them' corr.
f. 'fear the violence' corr.
g. Awareness of human weakness leads to wisdom, which is fear of God, Pr 1:7+.

Relent, Yahweh! How much longer do we have? 13
Take pity on your servants![h]

17:15+ Let us wake in the morning filled with your love 14
and sing and be happy all our days;
Nb 14:34 Jr 31:13 make our future as happy as our past was sad, 15
those years when you were punishing us.

Let your servants see what you can do for them, 16
let their children see your glory.
33:22 May the sweetness of the Lord be on us! 17
Make all we do succeed.[i]

Jb 5:19-22 Si 33:1 Is 43:2

PSALM 91

V 90

God's protection[a]

If you live in the shelter of Elyon 1
and make your home in the shadow of Shaddai,[b]
18:2; 142:5 you can say[c] to Yahweh, 'My refuge, my fortress, 2
my God in whom I trust!'

11:1 He rescues you from the snares 3
of fowlers hoping to destroy[d] you;
17:8+ Dt 32:11 Rt 2:12 Mt 23:37 he covers you with his feathers, 4a
and you find shelter underneath his wings. 4b

Pr 3:25 Sg 3:8 You need not fear the terrors of night, 5
the arrow that flies in the daytime,
the plague that stalks in the dark, 6
Dt 32:24 Si 34:16 Jr 15:8 Ho 13:14 the scourge that wreaks havoc in broad daylight.[e]

Though a thousand fall at your side, 7
ten thousand at your right hand,
you yourself will remain unscathed,
with his faithfulness for shield and buckler. 4c

You have only to look around 8
54:7; 92:11 to see how the wicked are repaid,
142:5 you who can say, 'Yahweh my refuge', 9
and make Elyon your fortress.[f]

Pr 12:21 No disaster can overtake you, 10
Dt 7:15 no plague come near your tent:
↗ Mt 4:6 Heb 1:14 he will put you in his angels' charge 11
to guard you wherever you go.

121:3 Pr 3:23 They will support you on their hands 12
in case you hurt your foot against a stone;
Jb 5:22 Is 11:8 ↗ Lk 10:19 you will tread on lion[g] and adder, 13
trample on savage lions and dragons.

'I rescue all who cling to me, 14
9:10; 119: 132 Jr 33:3 Zc 13:9 I protect whoever knows my name,
I answer everyone who invokes me, 15
Is 43:2 I am with them when they are in trouble;
Dt 4:40 I bring them safety and honour.

16 I give them life, long and full,
and show them how I can save.' Jb 5:26 Pr 3:2-3; 10:27 =*50:23*

PSALM 92 V 91

The virtuous man rejoices

Psalm Song For the sabbath

1 It is good to give thanks to Yahweh, 33:1-3; 147:1
to play in honour of your name, Most High,
2 to proclaim your love at daybreak
and your faithfulness all through the night
3 to the music of the zither and lyre,
to the rippling of the harp.

4 I am happy, Yahweh, at what you have done;
at your achievements I joyfully exclaim,
5 'Great are your achievements, Yahweh, 8; 139:6, 17-18 Ws 13:1; 17:1
immensely deep your thoughts!'
6 Stupid men are not aware of this,
fools can never appreciate it.

7 The wicked may sprout as thick as weeds 37:35-36
and every evil-doer flourish,
but only to be everlastingly destroyed,
8 whereas you are supreme[a] for ever.
9 See how your enemies perish,[b] 68:1-2; 125:5
how all evil men are routed.

10 You raise my horn as if I were a wild ox, 75:10 Dt 33:17
you pour[c] fresh oil on my head; 23:5
11 I was able to see those who were spying on me,[d] 54:7; 91:8
to overhear what the wicked were whispering,
12 so the virtuous flourish like palm trees 1:3
and grow as tall as the cedars of Lebanon.

13 Planted in the house of Yahweh, 52:8
they will flourish in the courts of our God,
14 still bearing fruit in old age,
still remaining fresh and green,
15 to proclaim that Yahweh is righteous,
my rock in whom no fault is to be found! Dt 32:4

h. In vv. 14-17, the meditation and prayer, concerned initially with the fate of the individual, are extended to the whole of Israel.

i. Hebr. adds, after 'Lord', 'our God' and, in conclusion, 'over us, and make the work of our hands succeed'.

91 a. This psalm elaborates the traditional teaching of the Sages, cf. Jb 5:19f, on God's protection of the virtuous man. The concluding divine oracle, vv. 14-16, assumes that the virtuous will be tested, but that God will deliver them.

b. Four divine names in this one strophe: Elyon ('the Most High'), Shaddai (Gn 17:1+; here translated 'the God of heaven' by Greek and Vulg., elsewhere 'the Almighty'), Yahweh (Ex 3:14+), Elohim (God).

c. 'you' (lit. 'he') versions; 'I' Hebr.

d. 'hoping to destroy' (lit. 'who speaks of destroying') corr.; 'from the plague' Hebr.; 'from the word' versions (so also in v. 6).

e. 'that wreaks havoc in broad daylight' (lit. 'noon'); versions 'from the noonday devil'.

f. 'you who can say' corr.; 'you' Hebr. 'fortress' Greek; 'dwelling place' Hebr.

g. Greek and Syr. 'asp'.

92 a. Lit. 'exalted' corr. Hebr. adds 'Yahweh'.

b. Hebr. has 'See how your enemies, Yahweh, see how your enemies perish'.

c. 'you pour' Syr.

d. Versions 'my enemies'. Hebr. adds 'those who rise up against me'.

19:1f; 47

PSALM 93

V 92

The majesty of God[a]

97:1; 99:1; 145:11 47:7; 75:2-3; 96:10 Is 52:7

Yahweh is king, robed in majesty, 1
Yahweh is robed in power,
he wears it like a belt.

55:19;=96:10; 104:5 90:2

You have made the world firm,[b] unshakeable;
your throne has stood since then,[c] 2
you existed from the first, Yahweh.[d]

18:4+ Jb 7:12+

Yahweh, the rivers raise, 3
the rivers raise their voices,
the rivers raise their thunders;

greater than the voice of ocean, 4
transcending[e] the waves of the sea,
Yahweh reigns transcendent in the heights.

1 K 9:3

Your decrees[f] will never alter; 5
holiness will distinguish your house,[g]
Yahweh, for ever and ever.

PSALM 94

V 93

The justice of God[a]

Dt 32:35 Na 1:2

Yahweh, God of revenge, 1
God of revenge, appear!

Jr 51:56 Lm 3:64

Rise, judge of the world, 2
give the proud their deserts!

13:1 Jr 12:1 Ml 2:17; 3:14

Yahweh, how much longer are the wicked, 3
how much longer are the wicked to triumph?

73; 75:5

Are these evil men to remain unsilenced, 4
boasting and asserting themselves?

Yahweh, they crush your people, 5
they oppress your hereditary people,

Ex 22:21-22 Dt 24:17-22

murdering and massacring 6
widows, orphans and guests.

10:11+; 64:5-6 Ezk 9:9

'Yahweh sees nothing,' they say 7
'the God of Jacob takes no notice.'

Pr 1:22; 8:5

You most stupid of men, you fools, 8
think this over and learn some sense.

33:15 Ex 4:11 Pr 20:12

Is the inventor of the ear unable to hear? 9
The creator of the eye unable to see?

The punisher of the pagans unable to punish? 10
Yahweh the teacher of mankind

1 Co 3:20

knows exactly how men think, 11

39:6 Qo 1:2+

how their thoughts are a puff of wind.

119:71 || Jb 5:17

Yahweh, happy the man whom you instruct, 12
the man whom you teach through your law;[b]

his mind is at peace though times are bad, 13
while a pit is being dug for the wicked.

14 For Yahweh has not abandoned — 1 S 12:22; Si 47:22
or deserted his hereditary people;
15 for verdict will return to righteousness again,
and, in its wake, all upright hearts.

16 No one ever stood up for me against the wicked,
not a soul took a stand to save me from evil men;
17 without Yahweh's help, I should, long ago,
have gone to the Home of Silence.[c] — 115:17

18 I need only say, 'I am slipping',
and your love, Yahweh, immediately supports me; — 145:14
19 and in the middle of all my troubles
you console me and make me happy.

20 You never consent to that corrupt tribunal
that imposes disorder as law,
21 that takes the life of the virtuous
and condemns the innocent to death.

22 No! Yahweh is still my citadel,
my God is a rock where I take shelter; — 7:16; Pr 5:22; 12 14
23 he will pay them back for all their sins,
he will silence their wickedness, — 63:11; 107:42
Yahweh our God will silence them.

PSALM 95 — V 94

Psalm for daily use

1 Come, let us praise Yahweh joyfully,
acclaiming the Rock[a] of our safety; — Dt 32:15
2 let us come into his presence with thanksgiving,
acclaiming him with music.

3 For Yahweh is a great God, — 47:2; 96:4; 135:5; 145:3; Est 4:17r
a greater King than all other gods;
4 from depths of earth to mountain top — Jb 36:22; Dn 2:47
everything comes under his rule;
5 the sea belongs to him, he made it, — 24:1-2
so does the land, he shaped this too.

6 Come in, let us bow, prostrate ourselves,
and kneel in front of Yahweh our maker,
7 for this is our God, — =100:3
and we are the people he pastures, — 23:1-4; 80:1; Ezk 34:1; Mi 7:14
the flock that he guides.[b]

93 a. The sovereignty of God, displayed by the laws he imposes on the physical world, and the Law which he gives to man. According to the title in Greek and Talmud, this psalm was recited 'on the eve of the sabbath, when the earth was inhabited' (cf. Gn 1:24-31).

b. 'You have made firm' corr., 'is set firm' Hebr.; 'He laid the foundations of', versions.

c. The heavens are the palace of God, 8:2, etc. The 'waters', vv. 3-4, probably represent those powers hostile to God and his people, cf. Jb 7:12+; Ps 18:4+; Is 8:7; 17:12; Dn 7:2; Rv 17:15.

d. 'Yahweh' is not found in Hebr.

e. Lit. 'more majestic than' corr.; 'majestic' Hebr.

f. These 'decrees' are the revealed Law, as immutable as the physical universe, and the basis of Yahweh's absolute sovereignty over Israel, as over the creation.

g. I.e., the Temple, consecrated for ever, 1 K 8:13; 9:3, and consecrating all who approach the holy God there, Ex 19:6+; Lv 10:3; 19:2; Ezk 42:14.

94 a. This psalm expresses the traditional teaching of the sages, in the manner of Pr.

b. In the broadest sense: of revelation and moral teaching.

c. I.e. Sheol.

95 a. Allusion, repeated in v. 8, to the rock that yielded water in the desert, Ex 17:1f, or to the rock on which the Temple was built, 2 S 24:18.

b. Lit. 'of his hand'.

Ex 19:5
81:8; 106:32
Ex 17:1-7; 19:5
↗ Heb 3:7-11
Nb 14:22; 20:2-13
Dt 6:16; 33:8
78:8,37
Nb 14:30,34
Dt 32:5,20
Jb 21:14
132:8,14
Dt 12:9
Ezk 20:15

If only you would listen to him today,
'Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, 8
as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness,[c]
when your ancestors challenged me, tested me, 9
although they had seen what I could do.

'For forty years that[d] generation repelled me, 10
until I said: How unreliable these people
who refuse to grasp my ways!
And so, in anger, I swore that not one 11
would reach the place of rest I had for them.'

47
‖1 Ch 16:23-33

PSALM 96

V 95

Yahweh, king and judge[a]

=98:1
Is 42:10

Sing Yahweh a new song! 1
Sing to Yahweh, all the earth!
98:4
Sing to Yahweh, bless his name. 2

98:2
105:1

Proclaim his salvation day after day,
tell of his glory among the nations, 3
tell his marvels to every people.

=48:1; 145:3
95:3
Si 43:28
97:7
Is 40:17-20
1 Co 8:4-6

Yahweh is great, loud must be his praise, 4
he is to be feared beyond all gods.
Nothingness, all the gods of the nations.[b] 5

Yahweh himself made the heavens,
in his presence are splendour and majesty, 6
in his sanctuary power and beauty.

=29:1-2

Pay tribute to Yahweh, families of the peoples, 7
tribute to Yahweh of glory and power,
tribute to Yahweh of his name's due glory.[c] 8

=29:2

Bring out the offering, bear it[d] before him,
worship Yahweh in his sacred court,[e] 9
tremble before him, all the earth!

93:1+

Say among the nations, 'Yahweh is king!' 10
75:2-3; =93:1
Firm has he made the world, and unshakeable;
he will judge each nation with strict justice.

Let the heavens be glad, let earth rejoice, 11
=98:7
let the sea thunder and all that it holds,
65:12
Is 55:12
let the fields exult and all that is in them, 12
let all the woodland trees cry out for joy,

=98:9

at the presence of Yahweh, for he comes, 13
he comes to judge the earth,
9:8
to judge the world with justice
and the nations with his truth.

47

PSALM 97

V 96

The triumph of Yahweh[a]

93:1+

Yahweh is king! Let earth rejoice, 1
the many isles be glad!

2 Cloud and Darkness surround him, 1 K 8:12
Righteousness and Justice support his throne. 29: 85:10+; 89:14

3 A fire precedes him as he goes, =18:8; 50:3
devouring all enemies around him;
4 his lightning lights up the world, =77:18
earth observes and quakes.

5 The mountains melt like wax[b] 68:2 Jg 5:5 Jdt 16:15 Mi 1:4
at the coming of the Master of the world;
6 the heavens proclaim his righteousness, =50:6
all nations see his glory.

7 Shame on those who worship images,
who take pride in their idols: 96:5
bow down as he passes, all you gods!

8 Zion hears and rejoices, =48:11
the daughters of Judah[c] exult
at the rulings you utter, Yahweh.

9 For you are Yahweh =83:18
Most High over the world, Is 33:5
far transcending all other gods.

10 Yahweh loves those who repudiate[d] evil, 121:7-8
he guards the souls of the devout,
rescuing them from the clutches of the wicked.

11 Light dawns[e] for the virtuous, 112:4 Pr 13:9
and joy, for upright hearts. 4:6; 36:9
12 Rejoice in Yahweh, you virtuous, =30:4
remember his holiness, and praise him!

PSALM 98

V 97 47

The judge of the world[a]

Psalm

1 Sing Yahweh a new song =96:1
for he has performed marvels,
his own right hand, his holy arm, Jdt 13:11 Is 52:10; 59:16; 63:5
gives him the power to save.

2 Yahweh has displayed his power; 96:2
has revealed his righteousness to the nations,

c. Meribah means 'dispute', Massah 'temptation'.
d. 'that' versions; omitted by Hebr.

96 a. A hymn, possibly combining two poems, in honour of the sovereignty of God and of his coming as judge of the world, is composed of material from psalms and from Is. The order is different in the version of 1 Ch 16:23-33.
b. Greek here translates 'the demons'. This theme appears frequently in the second part of Is (40:18f) etc. Cf. 1 Co 8:4+.
c. The poet adapts 29:1-2 and stresses the universalist aspect, cf. Zc 14:17; Ps 47:9.
d. 'bear it' corr., cf. 1 Ch; 'enter into his courts' (cf. Ps 95:6) Hebr.
e. 'court' versions; 'adornment' Hebr.

97 a. Eschatological hymn with numerous reminiscences of other psalms.
b. Hebr. adds 'before Yahweh'.
c. I.e. the other towns of Judah.
d. Lit. 'loves the man who hates' corr.; 'those who love (Yahweh) hate' Hebr.
e. 'dawns' versions; 'is sown' Hebr.

98 a. Eschatological hymn, inspired by the closing chapters of Is, and very similar to Ps 96.

mindful of his love and faithfulness 3
to the House of Israel.

The most distant parts of the earth have seen
the saving power of our God.
96:1 Acclaim Yahweh, all the earth, 4
Is 52:9 burst into shouts of joy![b]

Sing to Yahweh, sing to the music of harps, 5
and to the sound of many instruments;
47:5 to the sound of trumpet and horn[c] 6
Ex 19:16 acclaim Yahweh the King!

=96:11 Let the sea thunder and all that it holds, 7
and the world, with all who live in it;
Is 55:12 let all the rivers clap their hands 8
and the mountains shout for joy,

=96:13 at the presence of Yahweh, for he comes 9
to judge the earth,
9:8; 67:4 to judge the world with righteousness
1 S 2:10 and the nations with strict justice.
=67:4

47 **PSALM 99** V 98

God, righteous and holy king[a]

18:9,10; 80:1; 93:1 Yahweh is king, the nations tremble; 1
he is enthroned on the cherubs, earth quakes;
48:1 Yahweh is great in Zion. 2

He is high over all nations;
may they praise your great and terrible name, 3
Is 6:3+ 'Holy is he, •and mighty!'[b] 4

72:1f You are a king who loves justice,
insisting on honesty, justice, virtue,
as you have done for Jacob.

Let us extol Yahweh our God, 5
132:7 and worship at his footstool,
'Holy is he!'

Jr 15:1 Moses, Aaron one of his priests, and Samuel[c] 6
his votary, all invoked Yahweh:
and he answered them.

Ex 19:18-19; 33:9 Nb 12:5 He talked with them in the pillar of cloud; 7
they obeyed his decrees, the Law he gave them.

Yahweh our God, you responded to them, 8
Ex 32:11+ a God of forgiveness for them,
Nb 20:12+ in spite of punishing their sins.

Extol Yahweh our God, 9
worship at his holy mountain,
'Holy is Yahweh our God!'

PSALM 100 V 99

Invitation to praise God

Psalm *For thanksgiving*

1 Acclaim Yahweh, all the earth,
2 serve Yahweh gladly,
come into his presence with songs of joy!

3 Know that he, Yahweh, is God, =95:7 Dt 32:39 Is 43:10,13 *Is 64:7*
he made us and we belong to him,
we are his people, the flock that he pastures.

4 Walk through his porticos giving thanks,
enter his courts praising him,
give thanks to him, bless his name!

5 Yes, Yahweh is good,[a] =106:1; 107:1; 118:1f; 130:7; 136:1f; 138:8 ||Jr 33:11
his love is everlasting,[b]
his faithfulness endures from age to age.

PSALM 101 V 100

The ideal ruler[a]

Of David *Psalm*

1 My song is about kindness and justice;
Yahweh, I sing it to you.
2 I mean to make good progress, as the blameless do: 26:11-12
when will you come to me?[b] 50:3

In my household, I will advance 1 K 9:4 Is 33:15
in purity of heart;
3 I will not let my eyes rest
on any misconduct.

I hate the practices of the apostate, Pr 11:20
they have no appeal for me;
4 perverted hearts must keep their distance,
the wicked I disregard.

5 The man who secretly slanders his neighbour Pr 17:20; 30:10
I reduce to silence;
haughty looks, proud heart, Pr 21:4
I cannot tolerate these.

6 I look to my religious countrymen
to compose my household;

b. Hebr. adds 'and sing'.
c. These fanfares, reserved in Israel for the accession of a new king, 2 S 15:10; 1 K 1:34, accompany the enthronement of Yahweh, Ps 47:5, for whom they had rung out on Sinai, Ex 19:16.

99 a. Eschatological hymn, the two parts of which, vv. 1-4, 6-8, end with a refrain, vv. 5 and 9, celebrating the holiness of the King of Israel.
b. 'mighty' corr.; 'the might (of the king)' Hebr.
c. The great intercessors, cf. Ex 32:11+; Nb 17:11-13; Ps 106:23.

100 a. Cf. Mt 19:17.
b. An ancient refrain, Jr 33:11, often repeated in Ps as antiphon or prelude, and quoted in 2 Ch 5:13; 7:3; 20:21; Ezr 3:11; Jdt 13:21 (Vulg.); 1 M 4:24. Cf. Mi 7:20.

101 a. Portrait of the virtuous ruler; reminiscent of several passages in Pr.
b. Thus the versions; possibly alluding to the expected coming of the Messiah, 'he who comes', Mt 11:3; Jn 4:25. Or 'When you come to me'.

only the man who makes progress, as the blameless do,
can be my servant.

26:11 Pr 14:35; 20:7

There is no room in my house 7
for any hypocrite;
no liar keeps his post
where I can see him.

Pr 25:5
5:5

Morning after morning[c] I reduce to silence 8
all who are wicked in this country,
banishing from the city of Yahweh
all evil men.

PSALM 102 V 101

Prayer in misfortune[a]

Prayer of the downtrodden telling Yahweh their troubles at a moment of distress

Yahweh, hear my prayer, 1
let my cry for help reach you;
=69:17 do not hide your face from me 2
143:7 when I am in trouble;
bend down to listen to me,
when I call, be quick to answer me!

For my days are vanishing like smoke, 3
38:7-8 my bones smouldering like logs,
my heart shrivelling like scorched grass 4
and my appetite has gone;
whenever I heave a sigh, 5
my bones stick through my skin.

I live in a desert like the pelican, 6
in a ruin like the screech owl,
I stay awake, lamenting[b] 7
like a lone bird on the roof;
my enemies insult me all day long, 8
those who used to praise me[c] now use me as a curse.[d]

Ashes are the bread I eat, 9
42:3 what I drink I lace with tears,
under your furious anger, 10
since you only picked me up to throw me down;
109:23 Qo 6:12 my days dwindle away like a shadow, 11
90:6 I am as dry as hay.

135:13; 145:13 Lm 5:19 Whereas, Yahweh, you remain for ever; 12
each generation in turn remembers you!

Rise, take pity on Zion!— 13
69:13 the time has come to have mercy on her,
the hour has come;
for your servants prize her stones 14
Is 52:2 and are moved to pity by her dust.

Is 59:19; 66:18 Then will the nations fear the name of Yahweh 15
and all kings on earth respect your glory;
Is 60:1 when Yahweh builds Zion anew, 16
57:5 he will be seen in his glory;

17 he will answer the prayer of the abandoned,
he will not scorn their petitions.

18 Put this on record for the next generation, 22:30-31+
so that a race still to be born can praise God:[c]
19 Yahweh has leaned down from the heights of his sanctuary, 11:4
has looked down at earth from heaven,
20 to hear the sighing of the captive, 79:11
and to set free those doomed to die.

28 Your servants' sons will have a permanent home, 69:35-36
and their descendants be in your presence always,
21 to proclaim the name of Yahweh in Zion,
his praise in Jerusalem;
22 nations and kingdoms will be united Is 60:3f
and offer worship to Yahweh together.

23a My strength has already run out;[f]
24a tell me •how much longer I have left.[g] 39:4; 90:10
23b
24b Do not take me prematurely,
when your own life lasts for ever.

25 Aeons ago, you laid earth's foundations, ||Is 51:6-8
the heavens are the work of your hands; ↗ Heb 1:10-12
26 all will vanish, though you remain, Jb 14:10
all wear out like a garment, Ws 7:27
like clothes that need changing you will change them; Is 65:17; 66:22
Rv 20:11; 21:1
27 but yourself, you never change,[h] and your years are unending. *Lm 5:19* Heb 13:8

PSALM 103 V 102

God is love

Of David

1 Bless Yahweh, my soul,
bless his holy name, all that is in me!
2 Bless Yahweh, my soul,
and remember all his kindnesses:

3 in forgiving all your offences,
in curing all your diseases, 41
4 in redeeming your life from the Pit, Ex 15:26 Is 38:17
in crowning you with love and tenderness, Jb 42:10
5 in filling your years[a] with prosperity,
in renewing your youth like an eagle's.[b] Jb 33:25 Is 40:31

6 Yahweh, who does what is right, 146:6
is always on the side of the oppressed;

c. Lit. 'Each morning'. Morning is the hour of divine favours, 17:15+, as also of human and divine justice, 2 S 15:2; Jr 21:12; Zp 3:5; Is 33:2; Jb 7:18; Ps 46:5; 73:14.

102 a. This psalm of repentance combines two poems of differing rhythm: a personal complaint, inscr. to v. 11 and 23-27, cf. 69, and a prayer for the restoring of ruined Zion, vv. 12-22 and 28 (we transpose v. 28 to before v. 21).

b. Lit. 'and I groan'; 'I am' Hebr.

c. 'those who used to praise me' MSS and versions; 'those who deride me' Text. Rec.

d. I.e., as a sample of the fate they wish for their enemies, cf. Jr 29:22.

e. 'God'; Hebr. 'Yah'.

f. 'my strength has run out' corr.

g. Lit. 'tell me what few days I have' versions; 'he has shortened my days; I say: 'My God' Hebr.

h. Lit. 'you (are) he'.

103 a. 'your years' (or 'your existence') corr.; 'your adornment' Hebr.

b. The eagle was credited with long life, and renewal of strength after moulting.

he revealed his intentions to Moses, 7
his prowess to the sons of Israel.

=86:15 ‖Ex 34:6-7+ 109:21; 111: 4; 145:8 Si 51:3 Mi 7:18 Is 57:16 Jr 3:12 Jon 4:2 Jl 2:13
Yahweh is tender and compassionate, 8
slow to anger, most loving;[c]
his indignation does not last for ever, 9
his resentment exists a short time only;
he never treats us, never punishes us, 10
as our guilt and our sins deserve.

Is 55:9
No less than the height of heaven over earth 11
is the greatness of his love for those who fear him;
he takes our sins farther away 12
than the east is from the west.

As tenderly as a father treats his children, 13
145:9 Jdt 16:15
so Yahweh treats those who fear him;
he knows what we are made of, 14
90:3+ Ws 12:8
he remembers we are dust.

37:2; 90:5-6 Is 40:7
Man lasts no longer than grass, 15
no longer than a wild flower he lives,
one gust of wind, and he is gone, 16
Jb 7:10
never to be seen there again;

Ex 20:6
yet Yahweh's love for those who fear him 17
lasts from all eternity and for ever,
like his goodness to for their children's children,
as long as they keep his covenant 18
and remember to obey his precepts.

Yahweh has fixed his throne in the heavens, 19
22:8
his empire is over all.
148:2 Dn 3:58
Bless Yahweh, all his angels, 20
heroes mighty to enforce his word,
attentive to his word of command.

Dn 3:61
Bless Yahweh, all his armies, 21
servants to enforce his will.
Dn 3:57
Bless Yahweh, all his creatures 22
in every part of his empire!

Bless Yahweh, my soul.

PSALM 104 V 103

The glories of creation[a]

8; 19:1; 148 Gn 1 Jr 10:12 Ac 17:28
Bless Yahweh, my soul. 1
40:16
Yahweh my God, how great you are!
Clothed in majesty and glory,
Gn 1:3 Jb 9:8 Is 40:22
wrapped in a robe of light! 2

19:1f Gn 1:6-7 Am 9:6
You stretch the heavens out like a tent,
you build your palace on the waters above; 3
using the clouds as your chariot,
18:10; 68:4 ↗ Heb 1:7
you advance on the wings of the wind;
you use the winds as messengers 4
Ezk 1:14
and fiery flames as servants.

5 You fixed the earth on its foundations, 93:1 1 S 2:8 Si 43:23f
unshakeable for ever and ever;
6 you wrapped it with the deep as with a robe,
the waters overtopping the mountains.

7 At your reproof the waters took to flight, 29:3 Jb 7:12+ Pr 8:29
they fled at the sound of your thunder,
8 cascading over the mountains, into the valleys, Gn 1:9
down to the reservoir you made for them;
9 you imposed the limits they must never cross again, Jb 38:8-11 Jr 5:22
or they would once more flood the land. Gn 9:11-15

10 You set springs gushing in ravines, 147:8-9
running down between the mountains,
11 supplying water for wild animals,
attracting the thirsty wild donkeys;[b]
12 near there the birds of the air make their nests Ezk 31:6,13
and sing among the branches.

13 From your palace you water the uplands Jb 36:31
until the ground has had all that your heavens have to offer;[c]
14 you make fresh grass grow for cattle Gn 1:11-12[a] 29-30; 2:16
and those plants made use of by man,
for them to get food from the soil: Gn 2:15; 3: 17-19
15 wine to make them cheerful, *Gn 9:20* Qo 10:19 Si 31:27
oil to make them happy Zc 10:7
and bread to make them strong. *Gn 5:29* Jg 19:5,8

16 The trees of Yahweh get rain enough,
those cedars of Lebanon he planted;
17 here the little birds build their nest
and, on the highest branches,[d] the stork has its home.
18 For the wild goats there are the mountains,
in the crags rock-badgers[e] hide.

19 You made the moon to tell the seasons, Si 43:6
the sun knows when to set:
20 you bring darkness on, night falls,
all the forest animals come out:
21 savage lions roaring for their prey, Jb 38:39
claiming their food from God.

22 The sun rises, they retire,
going back to lie down in their lairs, Jb 37:8
23 and man goes out to work,
and to labour until dusk.
24 Yahweh, what variety you have created, 8:1 Pr 8:22-31+ Si 39:16
arranging everything so wisely!
Earth is completely full of things you have made:

25 among them vast expanse of ocean,
teeming with countless creatures, Si 43:25
creatures large and small,

c. These are attributes of the name of Yahweh which were revealed to Moses, Ex 34:6+; the psalm develops these throughout, stressing mercy and kindness, cf. vv. 17-18 and Ex 20:6, thus preparing for 1 Jn 4:8.

104 a. This hymn follows the sequence of the creation narrative in Gn 1.

b. Lit. 'the thirsty wild donkeys hope for them (i.e. the springs)' corr.

c. 'your heavens' corr.; 'your works' Hebr.

d. 'on the highest branches' cf. Greek.

e. Probably the hyrax, cf. Pr 30:26.

with the ships going to and fro 26
Jb 3:8+; 40: 25+ and Leviathan whom you made to amuse you.

136:25; 145: 15-16; 147:8-9 Ws 16:25 All creatures depend on you 27
to feed them throughout the year;
you provide the food they eat, 28
with generous hand you satisfy their hunger.

30:7; 146:4 Gn 3:19 Jb 34:14-15 Qo 3:20 Ws 15:16 *90:3* You turn your face away, they suffer, 29
you stop their breath, they die
and revert to dust.
Gn 1:2; 2:7 Jdt 16:14 Ws 7:27 Ezk 37:10 Ac 2:2f You give breath, fresh life begins,[f] 30
you keep renewing the world.

Glory for ever to Yahweh! 31
Gn 1:31 May Yahweh find joy in what he creates,
at whose glance the earth trembles, 32
144:5 at whose touch the mountains smoke!

=146:2 I mean to sing to Yahweh all my life, 33
I mean to play for my God as long as I live.
7:17+ May these reflections of mine give him pleasure, 34
as much as Yahweh gives me!
May sinners vanish from the earth 35
and the wicked exist no more!

Bless Yahweh, my soul.[g]

78 ## PSALM 105 V 104

The wonderful history of Israel[a]

Alleluia!

18:49; 96: 3; 145:5 ||1 Ch 16:8-22 Give thanks to Yahweh, call his name aloud, 1
proclaim his deeds to the peoples!
Is 12:4-5 Sing to him, play to him, 2
tell over all his marvels!
Glory in his holy name, 3
Dt 4:29-31 let the hearts that seek Yahweh rejoice!

Seek Yahweh and his strength, 4
27:8 seek his face untiringly;
remember the marvels he has done, 5
his wonders, the judgements from his mouth.

Stock of Abraham his servant, 6
sons of Jacob his chosen one![b]
He is Yahweh our God, 7
his authority is over all the earth.

Remember his covenant for ever, 8
his word of command for a thousand generations,
Gn 15:1+ the pact he made with Abraham, 9
Gn 26:3 his oath to Isaac.

He established it as a statute for Jacob, 10
an everlasting covenant for Israel.
Gn 15:8 'I give you a land,' he said 11
'Canaan, your allotted heritage.

12 'There where you were easily counted, Dt 4:27; 26:5
few in number, strangers to the country.'
13 They went from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people;

14 he let no man oppress them,
he punished kings on their behalf. Gn 12:10-20; 20; 26:1-11
15 'Do not touch my anointed ones,' he said
'do not harm my prophets!'

16 Next, he called down famine on the country, Gn 41:54
he broke their staff, that is, their bread;[c] Lv 26:26
17 he sent a man ahead of them, Gn 37:28; 45:5
Joseph, sold as a slave. Ws 10:14

18 They tortured his feet with fetters, Gn 39:20
they put his neck in irons;
19 time passed, Joseph's oracle came true, Gn 40; 41: 9-13
Yahweh's word proved him right.

20 The king gave orders to release him, Gn 41:1
that master of nations set him free,
21 putting him in charge of his household, Gn 41:39-44
in control of all he possessed,

22 to train[d] his officials as he thought fit
and convert his elders into sages.
23 Israel then migrated to Egypt, Gn 46:1-47: 12
Jacob settled in the land of Ham.

24 He made his people fertile Ex 1:7
and more vigorous than their oppressors,
25 whose hearts he then disposed to hatred of his people Ex 1:8f
and double-dealing with his servants.

26 He sent his servant Moses, Ex 3:10
and Aaron, the man of his choice; Ex 4:27
27 there they displayed[e] his signs,
his wonders in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, darkness fell, Ex 10:21-29
but still they defied[f] his word.
29 He turned their rivers into blood, Ex 7:14-25
thus killing all their fish.

30 Their country was overrun with frogs Ex 7:26-8:11
even in the royal apartments;
31 he spoke: flies and mosquitoes Ex 8:12-15
swarmed throughout the country.

32 He sent them hail instead of rain, Ex 9:13-35
fire swept across their land;
33 he blasted their vines and fig trees,
he shattered the trees throughout the country.

f. The spirit of God is the source of all being and life.
g. Hebr. places here the 'Alleluia' which Greek has at the beginning of 105.

105 a. The psalm successively recalls the story of the patriarchs, vv. 8-15, the story of Joseph, vv. 16-23, the mission of Moses, vv. 24-27, the plagues of Egypt, vv. 28-36, the Exodus and journey through the wilderness, vv. 37-43, and finally the entry into Canaan, the land promised to Abraham, vv. 44-45.
b. 'his chosen one' two MSS; 'his chosen ones' Text. Rec.

c. The metaphor of the 'staff of bread' occurs in Ezk 4:16; 5:16; 14:13 and Lv 26:26.
d. 'to train' versions; 'to bind' Hebr.
e. Lit. 'they performed'; versions 'he performed'.
f. 'they defied' versions; 'they did not defy' Hebr.

Ex 10:1-20
Jl 1:4

He spoke: there came locusts, 34
grasshoppers, more than you could count,
eating every scrap of greenstuff, 35
every blade their soil produced.

=78:51
Ex 12:29-36

Next, he struck down all the first-born in their land, 36
the entire first-fruits of their fertility;
then he led Israel out with gold and silver, 37
and not one man of their tribes was left behind.

Ex 12:33

Egypt was glad to see them go, 38
they had filled her with alarm;
=78:14
Ex 13:21-22;
40:36

he spread a cloud to cover them, 39
and a fire to glow at night.

=78:24
Ex 16:2-36+
Ws 16:20

They demanded food, he sent them quails, 40
he satisfied them with the bread of heaven;
=78:15
Ex 17:1-7+

he opened the rock, the waters gushed 41
to flow through the desert like a river.

Yes, faithful to the sacred promise 42
given to his servant Abraham,
he led his happy people forward, 43
Ex 15

to joyful shouts from his chosen,

Dt 4:37-40;
6:20-25;
7:8-11

and gave them the pagans' territories. 44
Where others had toiled, they took possession,
on condition that they kept his statutes 45
and remained obedient to his laws.

78

PSALM 106

V 105

National confession[a]

Alleluia!

=107:1

Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, 1
=100:5+
||1 Ch 16:34
Jr 33:11
Dn 3:89

his love is everlasting!
Who can count all Yahweh's triumphs? 2
Who can praise him enough?[a]

Is 56:1-2

Happy are we if we exercise justice 3
and constantly practise virtue!
Ne 5:19; 13:
14,22,31
25:7
106:47

Yahweh, remember me, 4
for the love you bear your people,
come to me as a saviour,
let me share the happiness of your chosen, 5
the joys of your nation
and take pride in being one of your heirs.

Lv 26:40
1 K 8:47
Ba 2:12
Dn 9:5

We have sinned quite as much as our fathers, 6
we have been wicked, we are guilty;
78:11-17

our ancestors in Egypt never grasped 7
the meaning of your marvels.

They failed to appreciate your great love,
78:17
Ezk 2:8-9,14;
36:20-22;
39:25

they defied the Most High[b] at the Sea of Reeds.
For the sake of his name, he saved them 8
to demonstrate his power.

9 One word from him dried up the Sea of Reeds, — 89:9+ Is 50:2; 63: 11-14 Na 1:4
he led them across the sea bed like dry land,
10 he saved them from the grasp of those who hated them — Ex 14
and rescued them from the clutches of the enemy.

11 And the waters swallowed their oppressors,
not one of them was left.
12 Then, having faith in his promises, — Ex 14:31
they immediately sang his praises. — Ex 15:1-21

13 They forgot his achievements as quickly, — Jdt 8:19 Lm 3:26 *Ex 15:24;* 16:3
going on before asking his advice;
14 their desires overcame them in the desert, — Nb 11:4-6
they challenged God in the wilds. — 78:18

15 He granted them what they asked for,
then struck them with a wasting fever;[c] — Nb 11:33
16 in camp, they grew jealous of Moses
and Aaron, Yahweh's holy one.

17 The earth opened, swallowing Dathan, — Nb 16 Dt 11:6
closing on Abiram's faction,
18 fire flamed out against their faction,
the renegades went up in flames. — Is 26:11

19 They made a calf at Horeb, — Ex 32 Dt 9:8-21; 25-29 ‖*Jr 2:11*
performed prostrations to a smelted thing,
20 exchanging the one who was their glory — Rm 1:23
for the image of a grass-eating ox.

21 They forgot the God who had saved them — 78:42 Dt 32:18 Jr 2:32
by performing such feats in Egypt,
22 such wonders in the land of Ham,
such fearful things at the Sea of Reeds.

23 He talked of putting an end to them — Dt 9:25
and would have done, if Moses his chosen — Ex 32:11+ Ezk 22:30
had not stood in the breach, confronting him,
and deflecting his destructive anger.

24 They refused a land of delight, — Nb 13:25–14:37 Dt 1:25-36
having no faith in his promise;
25 they stayed in their camp and grumbled,
they would not listen to Yahweh's voice.

26 So, raising his hand, he swore — Lv 26:33 Nb 14:29f Ezk 20:15,23
to make them fall dead in the desert
27 and their descendants to fall to the heathen,
and to disperse them throughout those countries.

28 They accepted the yoke of Baal-peor — Nb 25
and ate sacrifices to the dead. — Dt 26:14+ Tb 4:17
29 They provoked him by their behaviour;
plague broke out among them.

30 Then up stood Phinehas to intervene, — Nb 25:7f Si 45:23-24
and the plague was checked;

106 a. Vv. 1-5 and 48 provide a liturgical setting for a historical psalm, inspired by Dt and Nb, forming a national confession, in which the repentant nation rehearses its collective sins committed in the past and confesses them to God. Cf. 1 K 8:33-34; Is 63:7-64:11; Ne 9:5-37; Dn 9; Ba 1:15-3:8.

b. 'the Most High' conj.; 'at the sea' Hebr.

c. Word of uncertain meaning. Greek translates 'a glut'.

Nb 25:11-13
hence his reputation for virtue 31
through successive generations for ever.

95:8-9 Ex 17:1-7 Nb 20:2-13
They enraged him at the waters of Meribah; 32
as a result, things went wrong for Moses,
since they had embittered[d] his spirit 33
Nb 20:12+
and he spoke without stopping to think.

Dt 7:1 Jg 1:21f; 2:1-5
They did not destroy the pagans 34
as Yahweh had told them to do,
Lv 18:3
but, intermarrying with them, 35
adopted their practices instead.

Jg 2:11-13
Serving the pagans' idols, 36
they found themselves trapped
Lv 18:21+ Dt 32:17 Ba 4:7 1 Co 10:20
into sacrificing their own sons 37
and daughters to demons.

They shed innocent blood, 38
the blood of their sons and daughters,
offering them to the idols of Canaan,
Nb 35:33
they polluted the country with blood.

They defiled themselves by such actions, 39
their behaviour was that of a whore.[e]
Jdt 5:17
Yahweh's anger blazed out at his people, 40
he came to loathe his heirs.

Jg 2:14-23
He handed them over to the pagans, 41
those who hated them became their masters;
their enemies tyrannised over them, 42
crushing them under their rule.

136:24 Is 63:7-9
Time and again he rescued them, 43
107:11
but they went on defying him deliberately
and plunging deeper into wickedness;
even so, he took pity on their distress 44
each time he heard them calling.

Lv 26:42 Jr 42:10
For their sake, he remembered his covenant, 45
he relented in his great love,
Ezr 9:9
making their captors mitigate 46
the harshness of their treatment.

106:4 1 Ch 16:35-36
Yahweh our God and saviour, 47
gather us from among the pagans,
to give thanks to your holy name
and to find our happiness in praising you.

=89:51
Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel, 48
from all eternity and for ever!
Here, all the people are to say, 'Amen'.[f]

PSALM 107

V 106

God, a refuge in all dangers[a]

Alleluia!

=106:1
Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, 1
=100:5+ Jr 33:11
his love is everlasting:

2 let these be the words of Yahweh's redeemed, Is 62:12
those he has redeemed from the oppressor's clutches,
3 by bringing them home from foreign countries, Is 43:5-6; 49: 12
from east and west, from north and south.[b] Zc 8:7

4 Some had lost their way in the wilds and the desert, Dt 8:15; 32: 10
not knowing how to reach an inhabited town;
5 they were hungry and desperately thirsty, Is 49:10
their courage was running low.

6 Then they called to Yahweh in their trouble Is 63:9
and he rescued them from their sufferings, Ho 5:15
7 guiding them by a route leading Is 35:8; 40:3; 43:19
direct to an inhabited town.[c] Dt 6:10

8 Let these thank Yahweh for his love,
for his marvels on behalf of men; Is 49:10; 55:1
9 satisfying the hungry,
he fills the starving with good things. ↗ Lk 1:53

10 Some were living in gloom and darkness, Jb 36:8f
fettered in misery and irons Is 42:7,22
11 for defying the orders of God, 106:43
for scorning the advice of the Most High; Lv 26:40-41 Pr 1:25
12 who bent them double with hardship,
to breaking point, with no one to help them.

13 Then they called to Yahweh in their trouble
and he rescued them from their sufferings;
14 releasing them from gloom and darkness, Is 42:7,16; 49:9; 51: 14; 52:2; 61:1
shattering their chains.

15 Let these thank Yahweh for his love,
for his marvels on behalf of men;
16 breaking bronze gates open, Is 45:2; 61:1
he smashes iron bars.

17 Some, driven frantic by their sins,
made miserable by their own guilt
18 and finding all food repugnant, Jb 6:6-7; 33: 20
were nearly at death's door.

19 Then they called to Yahweh in their trouble
and he rescued them from their sufferings;
20 sending his word and curing them, 147:15 Ws 16:12 Is 55:11 Mt 8:8
he snatched them from the Pit.[d]

21 Let these thank Yahweh for his love,
for his marvels on behalf of men.
22 Let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices
and proclaim with shouts of joy what he has done.

23 Others, taking ship and going to sea, Sl 43:25
were plying their business across the ocean;

d. 'embittered' corr.; 'rebelled against (God's spirit)' Hebr.

e. Prophetic expression for apostasy and idolatry.

f. Closing doxology to the fourth book of the Psalter; followed by a liturgical rubric.

107 a. Hymn of thanksgiving, inspired by the second part of Is, for the mercies of Providence: the Exodus, vv. 4-9, the return from exile, vv. 10-16, the help given to those who suffer, vv. 17-22, and to those on the high seas, vv. 23-32. The epilogue, vv. 33-43, elaborates the wisdom theme of the reversal of situations. There is a two-part refrain: vv. 6 and 8, 13 and 15, 19 and 21, 28 and 31.

b. 'south' corr.; 'sea' Hebr. This prelude calls on the returned exiles to praise God.

c. Probable reference to Canaan. The Exodus and the installation in the Promised Land had already, in Is 40f, served as prototype of the return from exile.

d. Lit. 'their life from the pit' corr.

they too saw what Yahweh could do,
what marvels on the deep! 24

Jon 1:4f He spoke and raised a gale,
lashing up towering waves. 25

Pr 23:34 Flung to the sky, then plunged to the depths,
they lost their nerve in the ordeal, 26

Is 29:9 staggering and reeling like drunkards
with all their seamanship adrift. 27

Jon 1:14-15 Then they called to Yahweh in their trouble
89:10+ and he rescued them from their sufferings, 28

65:7+ Ws 14:5 Mt 8:26p reducing the storm to a whisper
until the waves grew quiet, 29

Is 43:2; 54: 11; 57:20 bringing them, glad at the calm,
safe to the port they were bound for. 30

Let these thank Yahweh for his love,
for his marvels on behalf of men. 31

Let them extol him at the Great Assembly
and praise him in the Council of Elders. 32

Is 42:15; 50: 2 Sometimes he turned rivers into desert,
springs of water into arid ground, 33

Gn 13:10; 19:23-28 Dt 29:22 Si 39:23 or a fertile country into salt-flats,
because the people living there were wicked. 34

Is 41:18 Or again, he turned a desert into sheets of water,
=114:8 and an arid country into flowing springs, 35

where he gave the hungry a home
Ezk 36:35 in which to found a habitable town. 36

Is 65:21 Jr 31:5 There, they sow the fields and plant their vines,
there, they show a profitable harvest. 37

Dt 7:13f Is 49:21 He blesses them, they grow in number,
he sees that their livestock does not decrease. 38

Their numbers had fallen, they had grown weak
under pressure of disaster and hardship. 39

||Jb 12:21-24 Pouring his contempt upon the nobly born,
he left them to wander in a trackless waste. 40

113:7-9 ||Jb 22:19 Is 65:12f Jr 31:27 *58:10;* 63:11; 94:23 ||Ho 14:10 But now, he lifts the needy out of their misery,
and gives them a flock of new families; 41

at the sight of which, upright hearts rejoice
and wickedness must hold its tongue. 42

If you are wise, study these things
and realise how Yahweh shows his love. 43

PSALM 108

V 107

Morning hymn and national prayer[a]

Song Psalm Of David

=57:7-11 My heart is ready, God
—I mean to sing and play. 1

Awake, my muse,
awake, lyre and harp, 2

I mean to wake the Dawn!

3 Yahweh, I mean to thank you among the peoples, 43:4
to play music to you among the nations;
4 your love is high as heaven,
your faithfulness as the clouds.
5 Rise high above the heavens, God, 148:13
let your glory be over the earth!

6 To bring rescue to those you love =60:5-12
save with your right hand and answer us!

7 God promised us once from his sanctuary,
'I the Victor will parcel out Shechem,
and share out the Valley of Succoth.

8 'Gilead is mine, Manasseh mine,
Ephraim is my helmet,
Judah, my marshal's baton.

9 'Moab a bowl for me to wash in!
I throw my sandal over Edom Rt 4:7-8+
and shout: Victory! over Philistia.'

10 Who is there now to take me into the fortified city,
to lead me into Edom?[a]
11 God, can you really have rejected us?
You no longer march with our armies.

12 Help us in this hour of crisis,
the help that man can give is worthless.
13 With God among us, we shall fight like heroes,
he will trample on our enemies.

PSALM 109 V 108

An appeal against enemies[a]

For the choirmaster Of David Psalm

1 God whom I praise, break your silence, 35:22; 71:6; 83:1
2 now that the wicked and the false
are both accusing me.
They are defaming me,
3 saying malicious things about me, 31:20
attacking me for no reason.

4 In return for my friendship, they denounce me, Pr 17:13 Jr 18:20
though all I had done was pray for them;[b] 35:13
5 they pay me back evil for kindness 35:12; 38:20
and hatred for friendship.

6 'Give him a venal judge,
find someone to frame the charge;[c]

108 a. With a few variants an editor has combined 57:7-11 and 60:5-12. See notes to these psalms.

109 a. Slandered and falsely accused, the psalmist invokes divine vengeance, cf. Jr 11:20; 18:19f and Ps 5:10+. In the oriental manner, the litany of imprecations, 6-20, piles up highly coloured curses. Perhaps vv. 6-15 (within quotation marks here) express the accuser's enmity, cf. vv. 2-3, and what follows is the psalmist's retort, invoking the law of retaliation, vv. 16-20, cf. Ex 21:25+.

b. Lit. 'and I a prayer'.

c. Lit. 'let the accuser stand at his right hand'. The Accuser (Hebr. *satan*) was a name later given to the devil, cf. Jb 1:6+. He, like the advocate, v. 31, stands on the right of the accused, Zc 3:1; Jb 30:12.

let him be tried and found guilty, 7
let his prayer be construed as a crime!

↗ Ac 1:20 'Let his life be cut short, 8
let someone else take his office;

Ex 22:23 Ws 3:12 Jr 18:21 may his children be orphaned 9
and his wife widowed!

Jb 5:4-5 Jr 18:21 'May his children be homeless vagabonds, 10
beggared and hounded from[d] their hovels;

Jb 20:18 may the creditor seize his possessions 11
and foreigners swallow his profits!

Is 14:21 'May no one be left to show him kindness, 12
may no one look after his orphans,

21:10 Jb 18:19 Pr 10:7 may his family die out, 13
its name disappear in one generation!

Ex 20:5 Jr 18:23 'May the crimes of his fathers be held against him[e] 14
and his mother's sin never be effaced;

90:8; 139:16 =34:16 may Yahweh bear these constantly in mind, 15
to wipe their memory off the earth!'

Jb 20:19 That wretch never thought of being kind, 16
but hounded the poor, the needy
and the broken-hearted to death.
He loved cursing, may it recoil on him, 17
had no taste for blessing, may it shun him![f]

He used to wrap curses round him like a cloak, 18

Nb 5:24 let them soak right into him like water,[g]
deep into his bones like oil.

73:6 May they now envelop him like a gown, 19

76:10+ Jr 13:11 be tied round his waist for ever!

May Yahweh pay all my accusers, 20
all my detractors like this!

Yahweh, defend me for the sake of your name, 21

103:8+ rescue me, since your love is generous!

Reduced to weakness and poverty, 22
my heart is sorely tormented;[h]

102:11 Qo 6:12 I am dwindling away like a shadow, 23

Jb 30:22 they have brushed me off like a locust.[i]

69:10 My knees are weak for lack of food, 24
my body is thin for lack of oil;

22:6f I have become an object of derision, 25
people shake their heads at me in scorn.

Help me, Yahweh my God, 26
save me since you love me,

and let them know that you have done it, 27

22:31; 64:9 that it was you, Yahweh, who did it.

Nb 22:2f 2 S 16:12 Counter their curses with your blessing, 28
shame my aggressors, make your servant glad!

Is 65:13-15 Jr 20:11 Clothe my accusers in disgrace, 29
cover them with a cloak of shame.

22:25f; 71: 15,22f I will give thanks aloud to Yahweh 30
and praise him in the Assembly,

31 for conducting the poor man's defence
against those who would have sentenced him to death.

PSALM 110 V 109 2

The Messiah: king and priest[a]

Of David *Psalm*

1 Yahweh's oracle to you, my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand[b] ↗ Mt 22:44p ↗ Ac 2:34-35+ ↗ Heb 8:1
and I will make your enemies a footstool[c] for you'.

2 Yahweh will force all your enemies ↗ *Heb 1:13;* 10:12-13 ↗ 1 P 3:22
under the sway of your sceptre in Zion.

3 Royal dignity was yours from the day you were born, on the holy mountains,[d] 2:6
royal from the womb, from the dawn of your earliest days.[e]

4 Yahweh has sworn an oath which he never will retract, 89:35; 132:11
'You are a priest of the order of Melchizedek, and for ever'. Gn 14:18+ ↗ Heb 5:6

5 The Lord is at your right hand.[f]
When he grows angry he shatters[g] kings, 2:9

6 he gives the nations their deserts,
smashing their skulls, he heaps the wide world with corpses.[h]

7 Drinking from the stream as he goes,[i]
he can hold his head high in victory.[j] 3:3

PSALM 111 V 110

In praise of the divine attributes[a]

1 Alleluia!

Aleph I give thanks to Yahweh with all my heart
Beth where the virtuous meet and the people assemble.

d. Greek; Hebr. 'seeking'.
e. Hebr. adds 'before Yahweh'.
f. 'recoil on', 'shun': versions; Hebr. has past tenses. Curse and blessing are here personified.
g. Probable allusion to the trial by water described in Nb 5:11-31.
h. Lit. 'my heart writhes in me': 'writhes' versions; 'is wounded' Hebr.
i. Lit. 'I am shaken out like a locust'. Possibly, helpless as a locust blown by the wind; more probably 'shaken off' from life.

110 a. The prerogatives of the Messiah, worldwide sovereignty and perpetual priesthood, cf. 2 S 7:1+; Zc 6:12-13, are no more conferred by earthly investiture than were those of the mysterious Melchizedek, Gn 14: 18+. V. 1 is accepted in the N. T. epistles and elsewhere as a prophecy of the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father.
b. The risen Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, Rm 8:34; Heb 10:12; 1 P 3:22.
c. Cf. Jos 10:24; Dn 7:14.
d. Zion; the plural is 'of majesty', cf. 87:1 (Hebr.).
e. Verse corr.; Hebr. 'Your people is generosity on the day of your strength, in sacred splendours, from (or: from the time of) the womb of the dawn (meaning uncertain), to you the dew of your youth'. Greek 'With you is the royal dignity..., from the womb before the dawn I begot you' (cf. Hebr. MSS, and 2:7). Many Hebr. MSS, Symmachus and Jerome have 'on the holy mountains'. We correct 'your strength' (Hebr.) to 'you were born' (lit 'your birth').
f. As the text stands, this is addressed to the Messiah: the Lord (Yahweh) is to be at his right hand. Possibly the original text attributed the following act of judgement to the Messiah himself, and we should read 'At his (Yahweh's) right hand the Lord (the Messiah, as in v. 1)'. This text may have been corrected in order to reserve the functions of eschatological judge as described in the following lines. However this may be, Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, claimed this right to judge as his own, Mt 24:30; 26:64; Jn 5:22; cf. Ac 7:56; 10:42; 17:31.
g. As for the following verbs, so here the subject seems to be not Yahweh but the Messiah.
h. 'skulls' Greek; in the singular (collective?) in Hebr. 'he gives...corpses': lit. 'he heaps up corpses, he smashes skulls over the wide world' (versions 'skulls of man').
i. The Messiah drinks of the torrent of ordeal, 18:4+; 32:6; 66:12, or of the torrent of divine favours, 36:8; 46:4. Or possibly he is compared to the warrior pursuing his enemies, pausing only a moment to quench his thirst, Jg 7:5; 15:18; 1 S 30:9.
j. The text is applied to the suffering and glorified Christ, cf. Ph 2:7-11.
111 a. 'Alphabetical' psalm, like the following which is akin to it in doctrine, style, and poetic structure.

Ghimel The works of Yahweh are sublime, 2
Daleth those who delight in them are right to fix their eyes on them.

He Every work that he does is full of glory and majesty, 3
=112:3 *Wau* and his righteousness can never change.

Zain He allows us to commemorate his marvels.[b] 4
103:8+; 112:4; Si 17:29 *Heth* Yahweh is merciful and tenderhearted,

Teth he provides food for those who fear him;[c] 5
Yod he never forgets his covenant.

112:4+ *Kaph* He reminds his people of the power that he wields 6
Lamed by giving them the inheritance of the nations.

Mem All that he does is done in faithfulness and justice, 7
Nun in all ways his precepts are dependable,

Samek ordained to last for ever and ever, 8
Ain framed in faithfulness and integrity.

Pe Quickly he comes to his people's rescue, 9
Sade imposing his covenant once and for all;
Qoph so holy his name, commanding our dread.

Pr 1:7+ *Resh* This fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom; 10
Shin they have sound sense who practise it.
Tau His praises will be sung for ever.

PSALM 112 V 111

In praise of the virtuous[a]

Alleluia! 1

1:1-2; 119:1; 128:1 *Aleph* Happy the man who fears Yahweh
Beth by joyfully keeping his commandments!

Ghimel Children of such a man will be powers on earth, 2
Daleth descendants of the upright will always be blessed.

128:2 *He* There will be riches and wealth for his family, 3
111:3 *Wau* and his righteousness[b] can never change.

37:6; 97:11; 111:6; Pr 13:9; Is 58:10 *Zain* For the upright he shines[c] like a lamp in the dark, 4
he is merciful, tenderhearted, virtuous.

Teth Interest is not charged by this good man, 5
Yod he is honest in all his dealings.

Kaph Kept safe by virtue, he is ever steadfast, 6
Pr 10:7; Ws 8:13 *Lamed* and leaves an imperishable memory behind him;

Mem with constant heart, and confidence in Yahweh, 7
Nun he need never fear bad news.

Samek Steadfast in heart he overcomes his fears: 8
Ain in the end he will triumph over his enemies.

Pr 22:9 *Pe* Quick to be generous, he gives to the poor, 9
Sade his righteousness can never change,
89:17 *Qoph* men such as this will always be honoured,[d]

10 *Resh* though this fills the wicked with fury
Shin until, grinding their teeth, they waste away, 1:6
Tau vanishing like their vain hopes. Pr 10:28; 11:7

PSALM 113

V 112

To God the glorious, the merciful[a]

1 Alleluia!

You servants of Yahweh, praise, 135:1
praise the name of Yahweh!
2 Blessed be the name of Yahweh,
henceforth and for ever!
3 From east to west,
praised be the name of Yahweh! 48:10

4 High over all nations, Yahweh! 148:13
His glory transcends the heavens!
5 Who is like Yahweh our God?— 89:6,8
enthroned so high, he needs to stoop
6 to see the sky and earth!

7 He raises the poor from the dust; 107:41
he lifts the needy from the dunghill ||1 S 2:8
8 to give them a place with princes, Ezk 17:24
with the princes of his people.
9 He enthrones the barren woman in her house 1 S 2:5
by making her the happy mother[b] of sons. Is 54:1

PSALM 114

V 113A 78

Hymn for the Passover[a]

Alleluia![b]

1 When Israel came out of Egypt,
the House of Jacob from a foreign nation,
2 Judah became his sanctuary 78:54
and Israel his domain. Ex 19:6+
Jr 2:3

3 The sea fled at the sight, 66:6; 74:14-15; 77:16
the Jordan stopped flowing,
4 the mountains skipped like rams, 29:6; 68:8
and like lambs, the hills. Jg 5:4
Ws 19:9

5 Sea, what makes you run away?
Jordan, why stop flowing?

b. By instituting the yearly feasts, cf. Ex 23:14+.
c. Allusion to the miracles of manna and quails, Ex 16:1+.

112 a. Expressions used of God in the preceding psalm are here applied to the virtuous man.
b. The word indicates both the virtue and the happiness that rewards it.
c. Lit. 'he rises'. What has been said of God, 18:28; 27:1, is here applied to the virtuous man. Others translate 'For the virtuous man in darkness a light arises; the upright man is kind and compassionate'.
d. Lit. 'his horn is exalted in honour'.

113 a. Opening hymn of the Hallel (Ps 113-118) which the Jews recited at the great feasts, including the Passover supper, cf. Mt 26:30p.
b. Like Sarah, Gn 16:1; 17:15-21; 18:9-15; 21:1-7, and Hannah, 1 S 1-2.

114 a. This hymn, which the versions wrongly unite with the following, treats in parallel, cf. 66:6+, of the crossing of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan, Ex 14 and Jos 3.
b. Greek. Hebr. puts the 'Alleluia' at the end of the preceding psalm.

Why skip like rams, you mountains,
why like lambs, you hills? 6

68:8
Jg 5:4
Quake, earth, at the coming of your Master,
at the coming of the God of Jacob, 7

78:15-16;
107:35
Ex 17:1-7+
Is 41:18
1 Co 10:4
who turns rock into pool
flint into fountain. 8

PSALM 115 V 113B

The one true God

Ezk 36:22-23
23:3
Not by us, Yahweh, not by us,
by you alone is glory deserved,
by your love and your faithfulness! 1

=79:10
Do the pagans ask, 'Where is their God?' 2

=135:6
Jdt 9:5
Ws 12:18
Is 40:19
135:15-17
Ws 13:18;
15:15
Is 44:9f
Jr 10:1f
Ba 6:3,7f
Ours is the God whose will is sovereign
in the heavens and on earth;[a] 3
whereas their idols, in silver and gold,
products of human skill, 4
have mouths, but never speak, 5
eyes, but never see,
ears, but never hear, 6
noses, but never smell,
hands, but never touch, 7
feet, but never walk,
and not a sound from their throats.

135:18
Their makers will end up like them,
and so will anyone who relies on them. 8

=135:19-20
Dt 33:29
House of Israel, rely on Yahweh,
on him, our help and shield! 9

118:2-4
=33:20
House of Aaron, rely on Yahweh,
on him, our help and shield! 10

Qo 8:12
Ml 3:16
You who fear Yahweh, rely on Yahweh,
on him, our help and shield![b] 11

Yahweh remembers us, he will bless,[c] 12
he will bless the House of Israel,
he will bless the House of Aaron,
he will bless those who fear Yahweh, 13
without distinction of rank.

127:3
Dt 1:10-11
May Yahweh add to your numbers, 14
yours and your children's too!
May you be blessed by Yahweh, 15
maker of heaven and earth!
Heaven belongs to Yahweh, 16

Gn 1:28
earth he bestows on man.

6:5; 94:17
Est 4:17h
Si 17:27
Is 38:18-19+
The dead cannot praise Yahweh, 17
they have gone down to silence;

118:17
but we, the living, bless Yahweh 18
henceforth and evermore.

PSALM 116

V 114-115 Is 38:9

Thanksgiving

Alleluia![a]

I love! For Yahweh listens
to my entreaty;
he bends down to listen to me
when[b] I call.

Death's cords were tightening round me, 18:4-6 Jon 2:3
the nooses[c] of Sheol;
distress and anguish gripped me,
I invoked the name of Yahweh:

'Yahweh, rescue me!'

Yahweh is righteous and merciful, Ex 34:6+
our God is tenderhearted;
Yahweh defends the simple,
he saved me when I was brought to my knees.

Return to your resting place, my soul, 13:5
Yahweh has treated you kindly.
He has[d] rescued (me from death) my eyes from tears = 56:13 Is 25:8 Rv 21:4
and my feet from stumbling.

(I will walk in Yahweh's presence
in the land of the living.)[e] 27:13; 56:13

I have faith, even when I say, ↗ 1 Co 4:13
'I am completely crushed'.
In my alarm, I declared,
'No man can be relied on'. 12:2; 62:9 Jr 9:2

What return can I make to Yahweh
for all his goodness to me?
I will offer libations to my saviour, 1 Co 10:16
invoking the name of Yahweh.[f]

(I will pay what I vowed to Yahweh;
may his whole nation be present!)

The death of the devout 72:14 Is 43:4
costs Yahweh dear.[g]
Yahweh, I am your servant, 143:12
your servant, son of a pious mother, 86:16 Ws 9:5
you undo my fetters.

I will offer you the thanksgiving sacrifice, Lv 7:11+
invoking the name of Yahweh.

115 a. 'and on earth' Greek; omitted by Hebr.
b. These three groups appear again in 118:2-4, 'those who fear Yahweh' are the proselytes, cf. 15:4+.
c. Versions 'he has blessed us'.

116 a. 'Alleluia' Greek; Hebr. puts it at the end of the preceding psalm.
b. Lit. 'on the day' Syr.; 'in my days' Hebr.
c. 'nooses' Jerome; 'sorrow' Hebr. Hebr. adds 'I undergo' at the end.
d. 'He has' versions; 'you (sing.) have' Hebr.
e. This verse is to be read after v. 17; it has been attracted to v. 8 under the influence of the parallel 56:13. Vulgate Ps 115 begins at the following verse.
f. Thanksgiving ritual preserved in Jewish and Christian liturgy. Cf. 1 Co 10:16.
g. Lit. 'is precious in the sight of Yahweh'; death severed all contact between them and him, cf. Ps 6:5+. The versions interpret this text in the light of the dogma of the resurrection 'Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints' which in the liturgy concludes the reading of the Martyrology, and recalls the 'birth in heaven' of the martyrs.

27:13; 52:5; 142:5 Is 38:11
I will walk in Yahweh's presence 9
in the land of the living.

Lv 7:11+ Jon 2:10
I will pay what I vowed to Yahweh; 18
may his whole nation be present,
in the courts of the house of Yahweh, 19
in your heart, Jerusalem.

PSALM 117 V 116

Summons to praise

Alleluia![a]

↗ Rm 15:1
Praise Yahweh, all nations, 1
extol him, all you peoples!
For his love is strong, 2
his faithfulness eternal.

PSALM 118 V 117

Processional hymn for the feast of Tabernacles[a]

Alleluia![b]

100:5+; 136:1f
Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, 1
his love is everlasting!

124:1
Let the House[c] of Israel say it, 2
'His love is everlasting!'

115:9-11+; 135:19-20
Let the House of Aaron say it, 3
'His love is everlasting!'
Let those who fear Yahweh say it, 4
'His love is everlasting!'

4:1
Hard-pressed, I invoked Yahweh, 5
he heard me and came to my relief.

27:1
With Yahweh on my side, I fear nothing: 6
what can man do to me?

56:11
↗ Heb 13:6
With Yahweh on my side, best help of all, 7
I can triumph over my enemies.

62:5
54:4,7
62:5
I would rather take refuge in Yahweh 8
than rely on men;
I would rather take refuge in Yahweh 9
than rely on princes.

The pagans were swarming round me, 10
in the name of Yahweh I cut them down;[d]
they swarmed round me closer and closer, 11
in the name of Yahweh I cut them down;

Dt 1:44
they swarmed round me like bees, 12
they blazed[e] like a thorn-fire,
in the name of Yahweh I cut them down.

129:1-2
I was pressed,[f] pressed, about to fall, 13
but Yahweh came to my help;

Ex 15:2 Is 12:2
Yahweh is my strength and my song, 14
he has been my saviour.

15 Shouts of joy and safety
in the tents of the virtuous:
Yahweh's right hand is wreaking havoc,[g]
16 Yahweh's right hand is winning,
Yahweh's right hand is wreaking havoc!

17 No, I shall not die, I shall live — 115:18 Is 38:9
to recite the deeds of Yahweh;
18 though Yahweh has punished me often,
he has not abandoned me to Death.

19 Open the gates of virtue to me,
I will come in and give thanks to Yahweh. — 24:7-10
20 This is Yahweh's gateway, — Is 1:26
through which the virtuous may enter. — Is 26:2
21 I thank you for having heard me,
you have been my saviour.

22 It was the stone rejected by the builders — Ne 6:16 Jb 38:6 Is 28:16 Zc 3:9; 4:7 ↗ Mt 21:42p ↗ Ac 4:11 1 Co 3:11 Ep 2:20 ↗ 1 P 2:7-8
that proved to be the keystone;
23 this is Yahweh's doing
and it is wonderful to see.[h]
24 This is the day made memorable by Yahweh,
what immense joy for us![i]

25 Please, Yahweh, please save us.[j] — Ne 1:11
Please, Yahweh, please give us prosperity.
26 Blessings on him who comes in the name of Yahweh! — 129:8; 134:3 ↗ Mt 21:9p; ↗ 23:39p
We bless you from the house of Yahweh.
27 Yahweh is God, he smiles on us.
With branches in your hands draw up in procession — Lv 23:40 Ne 8:15 2 M 10:7
as far as the horns of the altar,[k]

28 You are my God, I give you thanks,
I extol you, my God;
I give you thanks for having heard me,
you have been my saviour.
29 Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good,
his love is everlasting!

PSALM 119 — V 118 — 1: 19:7-14

In praise of the divine Law[a]

1 *Aleph* Ah, how happy those of blameless life — 1:1; 15:2; 112:1 Mt 5:3f
who walk in the Law of Yahweh!

117 a. 'Alleluia' Greek; Hebr. puts it with preceding psalm.

118 a. This psalm ends the Hallel, cf. 113:1+. An invitatory, vv. 1-4, precedes the hymn of thanksgiving put into the mouth of the personified community, and is followed by a number of versicles and responses, vv. 19f, 25f, chanted by various groups as the procession entered the Temple. The psalm may have been used for the feast described in Ne 8:13-18, cf. Ezr 3:4; Zc 14:16 and Ex 23:14+. Cf. also Ezr 3:11.

b. 'Alleluia' Greek; Hebr. puts it with preceding psalm.

c. 'the House' Greek; absent from Hebr.

d. Some translate 'I cause them to be circumcised' (John Hyrcanus forced circumcision on the Idumaeans and Greeks).

e. 'blazed' Greek; 'were extinguished' Hebr.

f. 'I was pressed' versions; 'You pressed me' Hebr.

g. Versions 'The right hand of the Lord has raised me up'.

h. The Temple is rebuilt, cf. Hg 1:9; Zc 1:16. The 'keystone' (or 'crowning stone'), cf. Jr 51:26, that may become 'a stone of stumbling', is a messianic theme, Is 8:14; 28:16; Zc 3:9; 4:7, applied to Christ, Mt 21:42p; Ac 4:11; Rm 9:33; 1 P 2:4f, cf. Ep 2:20; 1 Co 3:11.

i. In the Christian liturgy this verse is sung on Easter Day.

j. Ritual cry (*Hosanna:* 'Oh, grant salvation!') to which the priests answer with a blessing. The acclamation was taken up by the crowds on Palm Sunday and is incorporated in the Sanctus of the Roman Mass.

k. Lit. 'Inaugurate the ceremony with branches up to the horns of the altar!' Ritual of the *lulab*, branch of myrtle or palm, waved as the procession circled the altar.

119 a. 'Alphabetical' psalm. The 8 verses of each strophe begin with one of the 22 letters of the Hebr.

How happy those who respect his decrees, 2
Dt 4:29 2 Ch 31:21 and seek him with their whole heart,
and, doing no evil, 3
walk in his ways!
You yourself have made your precepts known, 4
to be faithfully kept.
Oh, may my behaviour be constant 5
in keeping your statutes.
If I concentrate on your every commandment, 6
I can never be put to shame.
I thank you from an upright heart, 7
schooled in your rules of righteousness.
I mean to observe your statutes; 8
never abandon me.

Beth

How can a youth remain pure? 9
By behaving as your word prescribes.
Tb 4:19 I have sought you with all my heart, 10
do not let me stray from your commandments.
I have treasured your promises in my heart, 11
since I have no wish to sin against you.
25:4; 143: 10 Tb 4:19 How blessed are you, Yahweh! 12
Teach me your statutes!
With my lips I have repeated them, 13
all these rulings from your own mouth.
In the way of your decrees lies my joy, 14
a joy beyond all wealth.
I mean to meditate on your precepts 15
and to concentrate on your paths.
I find my delight in your statutes, 16
I do not forget your word.

Ghimel

Be good to your servant and I shall live,[b] 17
I shall observe your word.
Open my eyes: I shall concentrate 18
on the marvels of your Law.
39:12 Exile though I am on earth, 19
do not hide your commandments from me.
My soul is overcome 20
with an incessant longing for your rulings.
You reprove the arrogant,[c] the accursed 21
who stray from your commandments.
Avert[d] their insults and contempt from me, 22
since I respect your decrees.
Though princes put me on trial, 23
your servant will meditate on your statutes,
since your decrees are my delight, 24
your statutes[e] are my counsellors.

=44:25 *Daleth*

Down in the dust I lie prostrate: 25
revive me as your word has guaranteed.
I admitted my behaviour, you answered me, 26
Tb 4:19 now teach me your statutes.
Explain to me how to keep your precepts, 27
that I may meditate on your marvels.
I am sleepless with grief: 28
raise me as your word has guaranteed.

29 Turn me from the path of delusion,
grant me the grace of your Law.
30 I have chosen the way of fidelity, 26:3
I have set my heart[f] on your rulings.
31 I cling to your decrees:
Yahweh, do not disappoint me.
32 I run the way of your commandments,
since you have set me free.

33 *He* Expound to me the way of your statutes, Yahweh, Tb 4:19
and I will always respect them.[g] 19:11
34 Explain[h] to me how to respect your Law
and how to observe it wholeheartedly.
35 Guide me in the path of your commandments, 25:4
since my delight is there.
36 Turn my heart to your decrees
and away from getting money.
37 Avert my eyes from lingering on inanities,
give me life by your word.[i]
38 Keep your promise to your servant,
so that others in turn may fear you.
39 Avert the insults that I fear,
in the kindness of your rulings.
40 Look how I yearn for your precepts:
give me life by your righteousness.

41 *Wau* For, Yahweh, visited by your love
and saving help, as you have promised,
42 I can find an answer to the insults,
since I rely on your word.
43 Do not deprive me of that faithful word,
since my hope has always lain in your rulings.
44 Let me observe your Law unfailingly
for ever and ever.
45 So, having sought your precepts,
I shall walk in all freedom. Ezr 7:10
46 I shall proclaim your decrees to kings
without fear of disgrace.
47 Your commandments fill me with delight,
I love them deeply.
48 I stretch out my hands[j] to your beloved commandments,
I meditate on your statutes.

49 *Zain* Remember the word you pledged your servant,
on which you have built my hope.
50 This has been my comfort in my suffering:
that your promise gives me life.

alphabet and each verse (excepting only v. 122) contains one of the terms for the Law: decree, precept, statute, commandment, promise, word, judgement, way. The word 'law' and its synonyms are here to be understood in the widest sense of revealed teaching, as handed on by the prophets. The psalm is one of the most remarkable monuments of Israelite devotion to the divine revelation.

119 b. 'Life' in this psalm is to be understood in its fullest sense: happiness, security, liberation; a theme recurrent in Ezk 3:21; 18; 33. Cf. Ps 133:3 and Dt 4:1, etc.

c. The greatest of God's enemies, vv. 51,69,78, 85,122; 19:13; 86:14; Is 13:11; Ml 3:19.

d. Or 'remove from me' versions; 'uncover' Hebr.

e. 'your statutes' Greek; absent in Hebr.

f. Lit. 'I have desired' Syr.; 'I have put (your rulings)' Hebr. 'I have not forgotten' Greek.

g. Faithfulness to the commandments is the joy and immediate reward of the upright.

h. A wish often repeated in this psalm and reiterated by the sages.

i. 'by your word' MSS, Targ.; 'in your path' Text. Rec.

j. Gesture of veneration, cf. 44:20.

Endlessly the arrogant have jeered at me, 51
but I have not swerved from your Law.
Remembering your rulings in the past, 52
Yahweh, I take comfort.
Fury grips me when I see the wicked 53
abandoning your Law.
Where I live in exile, 54
your statutes are psalms for me.
All night, Yahweh, I remember your name 55
and observe your Law.
Surely it will count to my credit: 56
that I respect your precepts.

Heth

Have I not said, Yahweh, that my task 57
is to observe your words?
Wholeheartedly I now entreat you, 58
take pity on me as you have promised!
After reflecting on my behaviour, 59
I turn my feet to your decrees.
Wasting no time, I hurry 60
to observe your commandments.
Though the nooses of the wicked tighten round me, 61
I do not forget your Law.
I get up at midnight to thank you 62
for the righteousness of your rulings.
I am a friend to all who fear you 63
and observe your precepts.
=33:5 Yahweh, your love fills the earth: 64
teach me your statutes.

Teth

In accordance with your word, Yahweh, 65
you have been good to your servant.
Teach me good sense and knowledge, 66
for I rely on your commandments.
In earlier days I had to suffer, I used to stray, 67
but now I remember your promise.
You, so good and kind, 68
teach me your statutes!
Though the arrogant tell foul lies about me, 69
I wholeheartedly respect your precepts.
17:10; 73:7 Their hearts are gross as fat, 70
but my delight is in your Law.
94:12 It was good for me to have to suffer, 71
the better to learn your statutes.
I put the Law you have given 72
before all the gold and silver in the world.

Dt 32:6 Jb 10:8 *Yod*

Yahweh, my maker, my preserver, 73
explain your commandments for me to learn.
Seeing me, those who fear you will be glad, 74
since I put my hope in your word.
I know that your rulings are righteous, Yahweh, 75
that you make me suffer out of faithfulness.
Now, please let your love comfort me, 76
as you have promised your servant.
Treat me tenderly, and I shall live, 77
since your Law is my delight.

78 Shame seize the arrogant who defame me,
when I meditate on your precepts!
79 May those who fear you rally to me,
all those familiar with your decrees!
80 Blameless in your statutes be my heart:
no such shame therefore for me!

81 *Kaph* Keeping my hope in your word, 130:5
I have worn myself out waiting for you to save me,
82 and have strained my eyes waiting for your promise: 123:2
when, I want to know, will you console me?
83 Though smoked as dry as a wineskin,[k] 35:14 Jb 30:30
I do not forget your statutes.
84 How much longer has your servant to live,
when will you condemn my persecutors?
85 The arrogant have dug pitfalls for me
in defiance of your Law.
86 Your commandments epitomise faithfulness;
when liars hound me, you must help me.
87 Though these wretches have almost done for me,
I have never abandoned your precepts.
88 Lovingly intervene, give me life,
and I will observe your decrees.

89 *Lamed* Lasting to eternity, your word, 19:9 Pr 8:22f Is 40:8
Yahweh, unchanging in the heavens:
90 your faithfulness lasts age after age;
you founded the earth to endure.
91 Creation is maintained by your rulings,
since all things are your servants.
92 Had your Law not been my delight
I should have perished in my suffering.
93 I shall never forget your precepts;
by these you have kept me alive.
94 I am yours, save me,
since I study your precepts.
95 The wicked may hope to destroy me,
but I am scrupulous about your decrees.
96 I have noticed limitations to all perfection,
but your commandment has no limits at all.

97 *Mem* Meditating all day on your Law,
how I have come to love it!
98 By your commandment, ever mine,
how much wiser you have made me than my enemies!
99 How much subtler than my teachers,
through my meditating on your decrees!
100 How much more perceptive than the elders, Jb 32:6f Ws 4:8-9
as a result of my respecting your precepts!
101 I refrain my feet from every evil path,
the better to observe your word.
102 I do not turn aside from your rulings,
since you yourself teach me these.
103 Your promise, how sweet to my palate! 19:10 Jr 15:16
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

119 k. Which, after hanging in the house, shrivels and blackens.

Your precepts endow me with perception; 104
I hate all deceptive paths.

18:28 Pr 6:23 Ws 5:6 *Nun*

Now your word is a lamp to my feet, 105
a light on my path.
I have sworn to observe, I shall maintain, 106
your righteous rulings.
Yahweh, though my suffering is acute, 107
revive me as your word has guaranteed.
50:14,23 Heb 13:15
Yahweh, accept the homage that I offer, 108
teach me your rulings.
I would lay down my life at any moment,[l] 109
I have never yet forgotten your Law.
The wicked have tried to trap me, 110
but I have never yet veered from your precepts.
Your decrees are my eternal heritage, 111
they are the joy of my heart.
I devote myself to obeying your statutes— 112
compensation enough for ever!

Samek

Odious, those whose allegiance is divided; 113
I love your Law!
You, my refuge and shield, 114
I put my hope in your word.
=6:8; 139: 19
Away from me, you wicked people! 115
I will respect the commandments of my God.
Support me as you have promised, and I shall live, 116
do not disappoint me of my hope.
Uphold me, and I shall be safe 117
with your statutes constantly before my eyes.[m]
You spurn all who stray from your statutes, 118
their notions being delusion.
Ezk 22:18-22
You scour the wicked off the earth like rust; 119
that is why I love your decrees.
88:16 Jb 4:14-15; 23:15
My whole being trembles before you, 120
your rulings fill me with fear.

Ain

Persevering in justice and virtue, 121
must I now be abandoned to my oppressors?
Guarantor of your servant's well-being, 122
forbid the arrogant to oppress me!
My eyes are worn out looking for your saving help, 123
for your promise of righteousness to come.
Treat your servant lovingly, 124
teach me your statutes.
I am your servant; if you will explain, 125
I shall embrace your decrees.
Yahweh,[n] now is the time to act, 126
your Law is being broken.
19:10
Yes, I love your commandments 127
more than gold, than purest gold.
Yes, I rule myself[o] by all your precepts; 128
I hate all deceptive paths.

Pe

Your decrees are so wonderful 129
my soul cannot but respect them.
73:17
As your word unfolds, it gives light, 130
and the simple understand.

131 I open my mouth, panting
eagerly for your commandments.
132 Turn to me please, pity me, 5:11;=25:16; 91:14
as you should those who love your name.
133 Direct my steps as you have promised,[p]
let evil win no power over me.
134 Rescue me from human oppression; 125:3
I will observe your precepts.
135 Treat your servant kindly, 4:6+
teach me your statutes.
136 My eyes stream with tears, Ezr 9:3f Ezk 9:4
because others disregard your Law.

137 *Sade* Righteous, indeed, Yahweh! Tb 3:2
And all your rulings correct!
138 The decrees you impose, how righteous,
how absolutely faithful!
139 Zeal for your house[q] devours me, =69:9
since my oppressors forget your word.
140 But your promise is well tested,
and your servant holds it dear.
141 Puny and despised as I am,
I do not forget your precepts.
142 Your righteousness is eternal righteousness,
your Law holds true for ever.
143 Though distress and anguish grip me,
your commandments are my delight.
144 Eternally righteous, your decrees—
explain them to me, and I shall live. 69:32

145 *Qoph* Sincere, my call—Yahweh, answer me!
I will respect your statutes.
146 I invoke you, save me,
I will observe your decrees.
147 I am up before dawn to call for help,
I put my hope in your word.
148 I lie awake throughout the night, 63:6; 77:4
to meditate on your promise.
149 In your love, Yahweh, listen to my voice,
let your rulings give me life.
150 My cruel persecutors[r] are closing in,
how remote they are from your Law!
151 But, Yahweh, you are closer still
and all your commandments are true.
152 Long have I known that your decrees
were founded to last for ever.

153 *Resh* Take note of my suffering and rescue me,
for I do not forget your Law.
154 Take up my cause, defend me,[s] 43:1
give me life as you have promised.

119 l. Lit. 'My soul in my hands continually'; the psalmist is prepared to sacrifice his life if necessary.
m. Lit. 'I have regard for your statutes'; versions 'I shall take delight in your statutes'.
n. 'Yahweh' one MS and Jerome; 'for Yahweh' Text. Rec.
o. With Greek and Jerome.
p. Lit. 'according to your promise' MSS and Greek; 'in your promise' Text. Rec.
q. 'Zeal for your house' Greek; 'My zeal' Hebr.
r. With versions; 'those who pursue (malice)' Hebr.
s. Lit. 'be my redeemer'.

You will never save the wicked, 155
if they do not study your statutes,
but many are your mercies to me, Yahweh, 156
by your rulings give me life.
Many hound me and oppress me, 157
but I do not swerve from your decrees.
139:21 The sight of these renegades disgusts me, 158
they do not observe your promise;
but, Yahweh, see how I love your precepts, 159
and lovingly give me life.
Faithfulness is the essence[t] of your word, 160
your righteous rulings hold good for ever.

Shin

Unjustifiably though princes hound me, 161
your word is what fills me with dread.
I rejoice in your promise, 162
like someone on finding a vast treasure.
I hate, I detest, delusion; 163
your Law is what I love.
Seven times daily I praise you 164
for your righteous rulings.
37:11; 72:7 Universal peace for those who love your Law, 165
no stumbling-blocks for them!
Waiting for you, Yahweh, my saviour, 166
I fulfil your commandments.
My soul observes your decrees; 167
these I wholly love.
5:20 I observe your precepts, your decrees; 168
you know how I keep to your paths.

Tau

Yahweh, may my cry approach your presence; 169
let your word endow me with perception!
79:11; 88:2 May my entreaty reach your presence; 170
rescue me as you have promised.
May my lips proclaim your praise, 171
since you teach me your statutes.
May my tongue recite your promise, 172
since all your commandments are righteous.
May your hand be there to help me, 173
since I have chosen your precepts.
22:26; 69:32 I long for you, Yahweh, my saviour, 174
Is 38:19; 55:3 your Law is my delight.
Long may my soul live to praise you, 175
long be your rulings my help!
Is 53:6 Jr 50:6 Ezk 34:1+ Lk 15:1-7 I am wandering like a lost sheep:[u] 176
come and look for your servant.

No, I have never forgotten your commandments.

PSALM 120 V 119

The enemies of peace

Song of Ascents[a]

Jon 2:3 When I am in trouble, I call to 1
Yahweh, and he answers me.

2 Yahweh, save me from these lying lips
and these faithless tongues!
12:2-4;52:2,4 Si 51:2

3 How will he pay back the false oath?[b]
of a faithless tongue[a]

4 With war arrows hardened
over red-hot charcoal!
11:6; 140:10 Pr 16:27

5 This is worse than a life in Meshech,[c]
or camping in Kedar!

6 Too long have I lived
among people who hate peace,
35:20; 140:2

7 who, when I propose peace,[d]
are all for war.

PSALM 121

V 120

The guardian of Israel[a]

Song of Ascents

1 I lift my eyes to the mountains:
where is help to come from?
Is 38:14 Jr 3:23

2 Help comes to me from Yahweh,
who made heaven and earth.
Ho 13:9 =124:8;146:6

3 No letting our footsteps slip!
This guard of yours, he does not doze!
66:9; 91:12 1 S 2:9 Pr 3:24.26

4 The guardian of Israel
does not doze or sleep.
Dt 32:10

5 Yahweh guards you, shades you.
With Yahweh at your right hand
16:8; 73:23; 142:4

6 sun cannot strike you down by day,
nor moon at night.
Ws 18:3 Is 25:4 Is 49:10

7 Yahweh guards you from harm,
he guards your lives,
97:10 Nb 6:24

8 he guards you leaving, coming back,
now and for always.

PSALM 122

V 121

Hail, Jerusalem![a]

Song of Ascents Of David

1 How I rejoiced when they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of Yahweh!'
42:4,6; 43:3; 84:2-5; 137:6

t. Lit. 'head'.

u. The 'lost sheep' theme of the prophets, Ezk 34: 1+, is here applied to the individual.

120 a. The 'Songs of Ascents' (Ps 120-134) were probably sung by pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, cf. 84: 6+; Is 30:29. With the exception of 132 their verses are 'elegiac' (unequal lines: 3 + 2 accents) and the 'stair' device is often used (a verse takes up a word or expression from its predecessor, cf. 120:2-3,5.6 and 7).

b. Lit. 'What will he give you and add to you?', a formula corresponding to the imprecatory oath, Rt 1:17+.

c. The country of the Moschoi, a Caucasian people, Gn 10:2; Ezk 27:13, where Gog is later to be king, Ezk 38:2. The Arabs of Kedar lived in the Syrian desert. The psalmist makes 'Meshech' and 'Kedar' synonymous with 'barbarian'.

d. Lit. 'I, peace; but when I speak'.

121 a. This psalm is equally appropriate for pilgrims on the hard road to Jerusalem, as for those on their pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem.

122 a. The pilgrims halt at the gates and salute the holy city with '*Shalom*!' ('Peace!'), alluding to the popular etymology of 'Jerusalem', 'city of peace', cf. 76:2. This 'peace' plays a prominent part in the messianic hope, cf. Is 11:6+; Ho 2:20+. Affection for holy Zion, 2 S 5:9+, is a characteristic of Jewish piety, cf. 48; 84; 87; 133; 137.

And now our feet are standing
in your gateways, Jerusalem. 2

48:12-13
↗ Ep 2:19-22
Jerusalem restored! The city,
one united whole![b] 3

Here the tribes come up,
the tribes of Yahweh, 4

Dt 16:16+
they come to praise Yahweh's name,
as he ordered Israel,

Dt 17:8
1 K 7:7
2 Ch 19:8
here where the tribunals of justice are,
the royal tribunals of David. 5

76:2
Nb 6:26
Pay for peace in Jerusalem,
'Prosperity to your houses![c] 6

48:12
Sg 4:4
Peace inside your city walls!
Prosperity to your palaces!' 7

Since all are my brothers and friends,
I say 'Peace be with you!' 8

26:8; 128:5b
Tb 13:14
Since Yahweh our God lives here,
I pray for your happiness. 9

PSALM 123 V 122

Prayer of the distressed[a]

Song of Ascents

25:15
I lift my eyes to you,
1 K 8:30
to you who have your home in heaven, 1

eyes like the eyes of slaves
fixed on their master's hand; 2

like the eyes of a slave-girl
fixed on the hand of her mistress,

25:15; 69:3;
119:82;
141:8
so our eyes are fixed on Yahweh our God,
for him to take pity on us;

Ne 3:36
pity us, Yahweh, take pity on us, 3

44:13f
we have had more than our share of scorn,

more than our share 4

Jb 12:5
of jeers from the complacent,

Zc 1:15
of scorn from the proud.[b]

PSALM 124 V 123

The saviour of Israel[a]

Song of Ascents *David*

56:9
If Yahweh had not been on our side 1

118:2f;
=129:1
—let Israel repeat it—

if Yahweh had not been on our side 2
when they attacked us,

Pr 1:12
they would have swallowed us alive 3
and burnt us to death in their rage.

18:4+; 69:1
The waters would have closed over us, 4
the torrent have swept us away,

5 either would have drowned us
in their turbulent waves.

6 Blessed be Yahweh who did not let us fall
a victim to those teeth,
7 who let us escape like birds 6:4
from the fowler's net.

He tore the net
and we escaped;
8 our help is in the name of Yahweh, =121:2 Pr 18:10
who made heaven and earth. 146:6

PSALM 125 V 124

God protects his faithful

Song of Ascents

1 Those who trust in Yahweh are like Mount Zion, Pr 10:25
unshakeable, standing for ever.
2 Jerusalem! Encircled by mountains, Dt 32:10 Mt 28:30
as Yahweh encircles his people
now and for always.

3 No wicked sceptre shall rule[a]
this heritage of the virtuous,
or the virtuous in their turn
might take to evil. 119:134

4 Yahweh, be good to the good, 18:25f Ex 21:25+
to those of upright heart.
5 But the perverts, those who follow twisting paths— Pr 3:32
may Yahweh send them to join the evil-doers! 92:9

Peace to Israel! =128:6 Ga 6:16

PSALM 126 V 125 30:11; 85:1 Is 9:2; 35:10

Song of the returning exiles[a]

Song of Ascents

1 When Yahweh brought Zion's captives home, 14:7
at first it seemed like a dream;
2 then our mouths filled with laughter ||Jb 8:21
and our lips with song.

Even the pagans started talking 79:10 Ezk 36:36
about the marvels Yahweh had done for us!
3 What marvels indeed he did for us, Lk 1:49
and how over joyed we were!

b. Jerusalem solidly restored, Ne 2:17f, is a symbol of the unity of the chosen people (versions 'that is one in fellowship') and a type of the unity of the Church.

c. Lit. 'tents' corr. (one MS; cf. Jb 12:6).

123 a. Probably composed shortly after the return from exile or in the time of Nehemiah; the restored community was exposed to the contempt and hostility of surrounding pagans, cf. Ne 2:19; 3:36.

b. Lit. 'for the proud', meaning uncertain.

124 a. Thanksgiving for dangers overcome, described in conventional metaphors.

125 a. With Greek and Vulg.; Hebr. 'He will not permit a sceptre of the wicked to fall'.

126 a. For the returned exiles faced with the difficulties of reconstruction (cf. Ne 5, etc.), the return from Babylon portends the coming of the messianic age.

Yahweh, bring all our captives back again 4
like torrents in the Negeb![b]
Is 25:8-9 Ba 4:23 Rv 21:4 Those who went sowing in tears 5
now sing as they reap.

Jr 31:9 They went away, went away weeping, 6
carrying the seed;
Is 65:19 Jn 12:24; 16:20 they come back, come back singing,
carrying their sheaves.

PSALM 127 V 126

Trust in Providence[a]

Song of Ascents Solomon

Dt 8:11-18 Ne 6:16 Jb 12:14 Pr 3:5-6; 10:22 Si 11:11 Mt 6:25-34 Jn 15:5 If Yahweh does not build the house, 1
in vain the masons toil;
if Yahweh does not guard the city,
in vain the sentries watch.

In vain you get up earlier, 2
and put off going to bed,
sweating to make a living,
Pr 3:24-26 Qo 2:24+ since he provides for his beloved as they sleep.[b]

115:14 Dt 28:11 Sons are a bounty from Yahweh, 3
128 he rewards with descendants:
Pr 17:6 like the arrows in a hero's hand 4
are the sons you father when young.

Happy the man who has filled his quiver 5
with arrows of this sort;
Jb 5:4; 29:5, 7f Pr 31:23 in dispute with his enemies at the gate,[c]
he will not be worsted.

127:3

PSALM 128 V 127

Blessing for the devout[a]

Song of Ascents

37:3-5; 112:1 Happy, all those who fear Yahweh 1
and follow in his paths.

112:3 You will eat what your hands have worked for, 2
happiness and prosperity will be yours.

31 Your wife: a fruitful vine 3
on the inner walls of your house.

Jb 29:5 Pr 17:6 Your sons: round your table
144:12 like shoots round an olive tree.

Such are the blessings that fall 4
on the man who fears Yahweh.

=134:3; 20:3; 122:9 May Yahweh bless you from Zion 5a
all the days of your life! 5c

Gn 50:23 Jb 42:16 Pr 17:6 May you see Jerusalem prosperous 5b
and live to see your children's children! 6

=125:5 Peace to Israel!

PSALM 129 V 128

Against the enemies of Zion

Song of Ascents

Hard as they have harried me since I was young[a] 71:17
—let Israel repeat it— =124:1
hard as they have harried me since I was young, 118:13 Jn 16:33
they have not overcome me.

Ploughmen have ploughed on my back Is 51:23
longer and longer furrows,
but now Yahweh the Righteous has shattered
the yoke of the wicked.

May they all be thrown into confusion, be routed,
who have hated Zion,
be blasted by winds from the east like grass[b] Is 37:27
sprouting on the roof!

Roof-grass never yet filled
reaper's arm or binder's lap—
and no one passing them will ever say, Rt 2:4
'Yahweh's blessing on you!'

We bless you in the name of Yahweh. =118:26

PSALM 130 V 129

From the depths[a]

Song of Ascents

From the depths I call to you, Yahweh, 18:4; 69 Jon 2:3
Lord, listen to my cry for help! *5:1-2; 55:1-2* Lm 3:55,56
Listen compassionately 2 Ch 6:40; 7:15 Ne 1:6f
to my pleading!

If you never overlooked our sins, Yahweh, Jb 9:2
Lord, could anyone survive?
But you do forgive us: Ex 34:7 1 K 8:39-40 Mi 7:18 Na 1:6
and for that we revere you.[b]

[c] I wait for Yahweh, my soul waits for him, 56:4; 119:81
I rely on his promise,
my soul relies on the Lord Is 21:11; 26:9
more than a watchman on the coming of dawn.

b. Which, nearly always dry, cf. Jb 6:15, fill swiftly in winter and fertilise the soil.

127 a. Without God, man's work is useless; daily bread and children are gifts from God.

b. Lit. 'he gives to his loved one in sleep', or 'he gives sleep'; versions 'while he gives sleep to those he loves'. The Hebr. title of the psalm identifies the 'loved one' with Solomon, cf. 2 S 12:25, and possibly the 'sleep' with Solomon's dream at Gibeon, 1 K 3:5.

c. Lit. 'when he speaks with his enemies in the gate', i.e. the gate of the city, where business is transacted.

128 a. This psalm celebrates the domestic happiness granted by God to the virtuous, in accordance with the teaching of the sages on earthly retribution.

129 a. The early days of Israel's history; the years in Egypt and the entry into Canaan.

b. Lit. '(let them be like grass) that the east wind blasts' conj.; 'before it is gathered it dries up' Hebr.

130 a. Penitential psalm, cf. 6: inscr., but still more a psalm of hope; it takes a prominent place in the Christian liturgy for the dead, not as a lament but as an expression of trust in God the Redeemer.

b. Lit. 'that you may be feared'; Greek 'because of your law'.

c. The text of vv. 5-7 is disordered. Greek '*5* I await you, Lord, my soul awaits your word; *6* my soul relies on the Lord, from dawn-watch to night (Jerome and Syr.: to morning-watch). *7* From dawn-watch let Israel rely on the Lord.'

Let Israel rely on Yahweh 7
as much as the watchman on the dawn!
Is 30:18 For it is with Yahweh that mercy is to be found,
68:20; 86:15; 100:5+; 103:8+ and a generous redemption;
25:22 it is he who redeems Israel 8
Mt 1:21 from all their sins.

PSALM 131 V 130

Childlike trust in God[a]

Song of Ascents Of David

Si 23:4 Mi 6:8 Yahweh, my heart has no lofty ambitions, 1
my eyes do not look too high.
139:6 I am not concerned with great affairs
Si 3:21 or marvels beyond my scope.
Is 30:15 Enough for me to keep my soul tranquil and quiet 2
↗ Mt 18:3p like a child in its mother's arms,
Is 66:12-13 Ho 11:4 as content as a child that has been weaned.

Israel, rely on Yahweh, 3
now and for always!

1 K 8:16

PSALM 132 V 131

The ark is taken to Zion: anniversary hymn[a]

Song of Ascents

Yahweh, remember David 1
and all the hardships he suffered,
and the oath he swore to Yahweh, 2
Gn 49:24 his vow to the Mighty One of Jacob:

2 S 7:1-2 1 Ch 28:2 not to enter tent or house, 3
not to climb into bed,
not to allow himself to sleep, 4
not even to close his eyes,
until he had found a place for Yahweh, 5
a home for the Mighty One of Jacob!

Listen: we heard it[b] was in Ephrathah, 6
1 S 7:1-2 we found it at Fields-of-the-Forest![c]
2 S 6:2 1 Ch 28:2 Let us go where he[d] is waiting 7
=99:5 and worship at his footstool.

68:1; 95:11 Nb 10:35 ‖2 Ch 6:41-42 Yahweh, go up to your resting place, 8
you and your ark of power.
Si 24:7 Jb 29:14 Your priests are vesting in virtue 9
and your devout are shouting for joy.
2:2 Ex 30:22+ 1 S 9:26+ For the sake of your servant David, 10
do not banish your anointed.

110:4 2 S 7:12 Yahweh swore to David 11
and will remain true to his word,
89:19f 2 S 7:1+ 'I promise that your own son
shall succeed you on the throne.

12 'If your sons observe my covenant,
the decrees that I have taught them,
their sons too shall succeed you
on the throne for evermore.'

13 For Yahweh has chosen Zion, 68:16 2 S 5:9+; 6:2 1 K 8:13 Si 24:7
desiring this to be his home,
14 'Here I will stay for ever, 95:11
this is the home I have chosen.

15 'I will bless her virtuous[e] with riches,
provide her poor with food,
16 vest her priests in salvation ||2 Ch 6:41
and her devout shall shout for joy. Is 61:10 Jr 31:14

17 'Here, I will make a horn sprout for David, Is 11:1 Jr 33:15 Ezk 29:21 Zc 3:8
here, I will trim a lamp[f] for my anointed,
18 whose enemies I shall clothe in shame, ↗Lk 1:69
while his[g] crown bursts into flower.'

PSALM 133 V 132

Brotherly love[a]

Song of Ascents Of David

1 How good, how delightful it is 87
for all to live together like brothers:

2 fine as oil on the head, Ex 30:25,30 Sg 5:13
running down the beard,
running down Aaron's beard[b]
to the collar of his robes;

3 copious as a Hermon dew Ho 14:6
falling on the heights of Zion,
where Yahweh confers his blessing, 36:9 Dt 28:8; 30:20
everlasting life.

PSALM 134 V 133

Night hymn[a]

Song of Ascents

1 Come, bless Yahweh, =135:1-2 Dn 3:85
all you who serve Yahweh,
serving in the house of Yahweh,

131 a. The soul at peace abandons itself to God, laying aside anxiety and ambition. The same childlike trust is demanded, v. 3, of the people of God, cf. Is 30:15.

132 a. Messianic psalm, cf. especially vv. 17-18. The divine promises, 2 S 7:1+, here take the form of the divine answer to an oath pronounced by David. A processional hymn, vv. 6f, recalls the finding and translation of the ark, 1 S 6:13f; 2 S 6.

b. The ark.

c. Place-name akin to Kiriath-jearim ('town of the woodlands') which, like Bethlehem, was in the district of Ephrathah.

d. Yahweh.

e. 'her virtuous' conj.: 'her provisions' Hebr.

f. Cf. 1 K 11:36; 15:4; 2 K 8:19; 2 Ch 21:7. On the extinguished lamp, cf. Jr 25:10; Jb 18:5. The Messiah will be the light of the nations, Is 42:6; 49:6; Lk 2:32.

g. Greek and Syr. 'my'.

133 a. The brotherly relationships binding priests and Levites in the Temple and holy city.

b. Text corr.

134 a. Call to prayer, or liturgical dialogue between pilgrims and Temple ministers, perhaps used at a nocturnal ceremony inaugurating the feast of Tabernacles, cf. Ex 23:14+.

141:2 in the courts of the house of our God![b]
28:2 Stretch out your hands towards the sanctuary, 2
1 Ch 9:33; 23-30 =128:5 bless Yahweh night after night!
118:26 Nb 6:24 May Yahweh bless you from Zion, 3
he who made heaven and earth![c]

PSALM 135 V 134

Hymn of praise[a]

Alleluia! 1
=134:1 Praise the name of Yahweh,
=113:1 Jdt 16:1 praise Yahweh, you who serve him,
serving in the house of Yahweh, 2
in the courts of the house of our God!

Praise Yahweh, for Yahweh is good. 3
7:17+ Play for his name, for he inspires love;
33:12 Ex 19:5 since Yahweh has chosen Jacob, 4
Dt 7:6+ Israel as his own.
||Ex 18:11 I have learnt for myself that Yahweh is great, 5
=95:3 that our Lord surpasses all other gods.
=115:3 In the heavens, on the earth, 6
Am 9:3 in the ocean, in the depths,
Jdt 9:5 Ws 12:18 Yahweh's will is sovereign.
||Jr 10:13; ||51:16 He raises up clouds from the boundaries of earth, 7
148:8 Jb 28:26; 37:9 makes the lightning flash for the downpour
and brings the wind out of his storehouse.
=136:10 Ex 12:29 He struck down the first-born of Egypt, 8
of man and beast alike,
78:43 Ex 7:3 Ws 10:16 he sent signs and wonders 9
among you, Egypt,
against Pharaoh and his officials.

=136:17-22 He struck the pagans down in droves, 10
he slaughtered mighty kings,
Sihon, king of the Amorites, 11
and Og, the king of Bashan,
and all the kingdoms of Canaan;
he gave their lands as a legacy, 12
a legacy to his people Israel.

102:12 Ex 3:15 Is 63:12 Yahweh, your name endures for ever! 13
Yahweh, your memory is always fresh!
||Dt 32:36 Since Yahweh vindicates his people, 14
and cares for those who serve him;

115:4-6 whereas pagans' idols, in silver and gold, 15
products of human skill,
have mouths, but never speak, 16
eyes, but never see,

ears, but never hear, 17
and not a breath in their mouths.
=115:8 Their makers will end up like them 18
and so will anyone who relies on them.

19 House of Israel, bless Yahweh,
House of Aaron, bless Yahweh,
20 House of Levi, bless Yahweh,
you who fear Yahweh, bless Yahweh!
21 Blessed be Yahweh in Zion,
in Jerusalem his home!

=115:9-11; 118:2-4
Dn 3:83

PSALM 136

V 135 78
Ezr 3:11

Litany of thanksgiving[a]

Alleluia![b]

1 Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good,
his love is everlasting!
2 Give thanks to the God of gods,
his love is everlasting!
3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
his love is everlasting!

100:5
2 Ch 7:3,6; 20:21
Dn 3:89
Dt 10:17
Est 4:17r

4 He alone performs great marvels,
his love is everlasting!
5 His wisdom made the heavens,
his love is everlasting!
6 He set the earth on the waters,
his love is everlasting!

=72:18
Ex 15:11
Pr 3:19; 8: 27-29
24:2

7 He made the great lights,
his love is everlasting!
8 The sun to govern the day,
his love is everlasting!
9 Moon and stars to govern the night,
his love is everlasting!

Gn 1:16
Jr 31:35

10 He struck down the first-born of Egypt,
his love is everlasting!
11 And brought Israel out,
his love is everlasting!
12 With mighty hand and outstretched arm,
his love is everlasting!

=78:51; 135: 8
Ex 12:29
Dt 4:34

13 He split the Sea of Reeds,
his love is everlasting!
14 Led Israel through the middle,
his love is everlasting!
15 Drowned Pharaoh and his army,
his love is everlasting!

Ex 14:21f

16 He led his people through the wilderness,
his love is everlasting!
17 He struck down mighty kings,
his love is everlasting!

Dt 8:2,15

b. With Greek; line omitted by Hebr.
c. With this liturgical blessing, cf. Nb 6:23f, the series of 'Songs of Ascents' comes to an end, 120:1+.

135 a. Song of praise, composed entirely of reminiscences of, or borrowings from, the psalms or from other texts.

136 a. This litany, cf. Dn 3:52-90, is called by the Jews 'the Great Hallel'; at the Passover meal it was recited after the 'Lesser Hallel', Ps 113-118.
b. 'Alleluia' Greek; Hebr. joins it with preceding psalm.

He slaughtered famous kings, 18
his love is everlasting!
Dt 2:30f Sihon, king of the Amorites, 19
his love is everlasting!
Dt 3:1f And Og, the king of Bashan, 20
his love is everlasting!
44:2 He gave their lands as a legacy, 21
his love is everlasting!
Is 41:8; 44: 21 A legacy to his servant Israel, 22
his love is everlasting!
↗ Lk 1:48 He remembered us when we were down, 23
his love is everlasting!
106:43f ↗ Lk 1:71 And snatched us from our oppressors, 24
his love is everlasting!
104:27; 145: 15-16 Ws 16:25 He provides for all living creatures, 25
his love is everlasting!
Dn 2:18+ Give thanks to the God of Heaven, 26
his love is everlasting!

PSALM 137 V 136

Ballad of the exiles[a]

Ezk 3:15 Beside the streams of Babylon 1
Lm 3:48 we sat and wept
at the memory of Zion,
Is 24:8 Jr 25:10 Lm 5:14 leaving our harps 2
hanging on the poplars there.

For we had been asked 3
to sing to our captors,
to entertain those who had carried us off:[b]
'Sing' they said
'some hymns of Zion'.

How could we sing 4
one of Yahweh's hymns
in a pagan country?
Jr 51:50 Jerusalem, if I forget you, 5
may my right hand wither![c]

May I never speak again, 6
if I forget you!
122:1+ If I do not count Jerusalem
the greatest of my joys!

Yahweh, remember 7
Jr 49:7 what the Sons of Edom did
Lm 4:21-22 Ezk 25:12-14+; 35 Ob 10-14 on the day of Jerusalem,[d]
how they said, 'Down with her!
Raze her to the ground!'

Tb 14:15 Is 47:1f Jr 50-51 ↗ Rv 18:6 Destructive[e] Daughter of Babel, 8
a blessing on the man who treats you
as you have treated us,
Is 14:22 Ho 14:1 a blessing on him who takes and dashes 9
your babies against the rock!

PSALM 138 V 137

Hymn of thanksgiving

Of David

I thank you, Yahweh, with all my heart, =9:1
because you have heard what I said.[a]
In the presence of the angels[b] I play for you,
and bow down towards your holy Temple. =5:7 Tb 3:11 Dn 6:11

I give thanks to your name for your love and faithfulness;
your promise is even greater than your fame.[c]
The day I called for help, you heard me
and you increased my strength.[d] Is 40:29

Yahweh, all kings on earth give thanks to you, 68:32 Ml 1:11
for they have heard your promises;
they celebrate Yahweh's actions,
'Great is the glory of Yahweh!'
From far above, Yahweh sees the humble, Is 57:15 Lk 1:51-52
from far away he marks down the arrogant.

Though I live surrounded by trouble,
you keep me alive—to my enemies' fury! 23:5
You stretch your hand out and save me,
your right hand •will do everything for me.[e] 57:2
Yahweh, your love is everlasting, 100:5+
do not abandon us whom you have made.

PSALM 139 V 138

In praise of God's omniscience[a]

For the choirmaster Of David Psalm

Yahweh, you examine me and know me, 33:15 *2 K 19:27* Jb 31:4 Jr 12:3 *44:21* Heb 4:13
you know if I am standing or sitting,
you read my thoughts from far away,
whether I walk or lie down, you are watching,
you know every detail of my conduct.

The word is not even on my tongue,
Yahweh, before you know all about it;
close behind and close in front you fence me round,
shielding me with your hand.
Such knowledge is beyond my understanding, 92:5; 131:1
a height to which my mind cannot attain.

137 a. This psalm recalls the fall of Jerusalem in 587 and the Babylonian exile.
b. Following Targum.
c. 'wither' corr.: 'forget' Hebr.
d. The 9th day of the 4th month (June-July, 587), when the Chaldaeans breached the walls of Jerusalem, Jr 39:2; 52:7; or else the 10th day of the 5th month when the Temple was burnt down, Jr 52:13, cf. Zc 7:5; 8:19. The Edomites, Nb 20:23+, then joined forces with the besieging army; a number of prophetic oracles invokes the vengeance of Yahweh on them, Jr 49:17; Is 34:5f; Ml 1:3f; Jl 4:19.
e. Lit. 'destroyer' versions; 'destroyed' Hebr.

138 a. Greek. Line omitted by Hebr.
b. With Greek and Vulg. Some versions interpret 'gods' (idols), 'kings', 'judges'.
c. Lit. 'you have made your promise great above all your name'. Text uncertain.
d. Lit. 'gave more strength in my soul' versions.
e. Hebr. divides 'and your right hand saves me. Yahweh will do everything for me.'

139 a. Cf. this meditation on God's omniscience with the reflexions of Job on the fear of man under the eye of God, Jb 7:17-20+.

Jb 11:8-9; 23:8-9 Ws 1:7 Si 16:17-18
Where could I go to escape your spirit? 7
Where could I flee from your presence?
Jr 23:23-24
If I climb the heavens, you are there, 8
15:11 Jb 26:6
there too, if I lie in Sheol.

If I flew to the point of sunrise, 9
or westward across the sea,
your hand would still be guiding me, 10
your right hand holding me.

If I asked darkness to cover me,[b] 11
and light to become night around me,
Jb 12:22; 24:22
that darkness would not be dark to you, 12
Dn 2:22
night would be as light as day.[c]

Jb 10:8f
It was you who created my inmost self, 13
Ws 7:1
and put me together in my mother's womb;
Qo 11:5
for all these mysteries I thank you: 14
for the wonder of myself, for the wonder of your works.[d]

You know me[e] through and through,
from having watched my bones take shape 15
when I was being formed in secret,
Jb 1:21
knitted together in the limbo of the womb.[f]

69:28; 109:15 Jdt 8:14 Dn 7:10 Ml 3:16
You had scrutinised my every action,[g] 16
all were recorded in your book,[h]
my days[i] listed and determined,
31:15 Jb 14:5
even before the first of them •occurred.[j] 17

40:5; 92:5 Jb 11:7 Qo 3:11 Si 18:5-7 Rm 11:33
God, how hard it is to grasp your thoughts!
How impossible to count them!
I could no more count them than I could the sand, 18
and suppose I could,[k] you would still be with me.[l]

God, If only you would kill the wicked! 19
119:115
Men of blood, away from me!
They talk blasphemously about you, 20
Jb 21:14
regard your thoughts as nothing.

Yahweh, do I not hate those who hate you, 21
119:158
and loathe those who defy you?
5:10+
I hate them with a total hatred, 22
I regard them as my own enemies.

17:3; 26:2
God, examine me and know my heart, 23
probe me and know my thoughts;
make sure I do not follow pernicious ways, 24
5:8; 142-3; 143:10
and guide me in the way that is everlasting.

PSALM 140 V 139

Against the wicked

For the choirmaster Psalm Of David

71:4
Yahweh, rescue me from evil people, 1
defend me from men of violence,
from people plotting evil, 2
forever intent on stirring up strife,

3 who make their tongues as sharp as serpents' 64:3
with viper's venom on their lips. *Pause* 58:4 ↗ Rm 3:13

4 Yahweh, guard me from attacks by the wicked,
defend me from those who love force,
from people plotting to make me stumble, Jr 18:22
5b forever laying snares where I walk,[a] 56:6; 57:6 Jb 18:8
5a insolent wretches, concealing pitfall and noose Si 12:6
5c to trap me as I pass. *Pause*

6 I have told Yahweh, 'You are my God'. 31:14
Yahweh, listen to my cry for help.
7 Yahweh, my Lord, my saving strength,
shielding my head when I have to fight,
8 Yahweh, do not grant their wicked wishes,
do not let their plots succeed.

9 May those besieging me not •win,[b] *Pause*
may their own cruel words overtake them,
10 may red-hot embers rain down on them,[c] 11:6; 120:4 Gn 19:24 Nb 16:31f
may they be flung into the abyss for good,
11 may evil hound the man of violence to death
and the slanderer[d] not hold his own on earth. 55:23

12 I know Yahweh will avenge the wretched,
and see justice done for the poor.
13 The virtuous shall have good cause to thank your name, 11:7; 16:11; 17:15
and the upright to find a home with you.

PSALM 141 V 140

Against the attractions of evil

Psalm Of David

1 Yahweh, I am calling, hurry to me,
listen to me, I am invoking you.
2 My prayers rise like incense, 134:2 Ex 29:39; 30:8 Nb 28:4 Jdt 9:1
my hands like the evening offering.[a]
3 Yahweh, set a guard at my mouth, Si 22:27
a watcher at the gate of my lips.
4 Let me feel no impulse to do wrong,
to share the godlessness of evil-doers.

No, I will not sample their delights.
5 A virtuous man may strike me in reproof, for my own good, Pr 9:8; 25:12; 27:6,9 Si 23:2
but a wicked one shall never anoint my head with oil![b]

b. 'cover' Symmachus and Jerome; 'crush' Hebr.
c. The text adds an Aramaic gloss 'As the darkness, so the light'.
d. Hebr. lit. 'I am wonderful, your works are wonderful'.
e. Lit. 'you know my soul' corr.; 'my soul knows it' Hebr.
f. Lit. 'in the depths of the earth'.
g. Lit. 'my actions' cf. Syr.; 'my embryo' Hebr.
h. On this theme, cf. Rv 20:12+.
i. 'my days' Targum; 'the days' Hebr.
j. Lit. 'appeared' conj.
k. Lit. 'when I reach the end' 3 MSS; 'when I awake' Hebr.
l. Either 'I should still be conscious of God's presence'; or 'I should still be faced with the mystery of God'.

140 a. Lit. 'for my feet' Greek; omitted by Hebr.
b. Text corrected, cf. Greek; Hebr. divides differently.
c. Lit. 'may it rain coals of fire': 'may it rain' corr. 'of fire' Greek.
d. Lit. 'the man of tongue'.

141 a. A prescribed daily offering. Jewish piety thus associates prayer with sacrifice, cf. 51:16; cf. Rv 5:8; 8:4.
b. With Greek, Syr. and Hebr. MSS; 'excellent oil let not my head decline it' Hebr.

Daily I counter their malice with prayer.[c]
When their judges are flung on jagged rock,[d] 6
they will learn how mild my words have been,
'Like a millstone smashed[e] on the ground, 7
our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol'.

25:15; 123:2 To you, Yahweh my Lord, I turn my eyes. 8
I take shelter in you, do not leave me exposed!
142:3 Keep me out of traps that are set for me, 9
from the bait laid for me by evil men.
Let the wicked fall into their[f] own net, 10
while I go on my way.

PSALM 142 V 141

Prayer of a hunted man[a]

57:inscr. *Poem Of David When he was in the cave Psalm*

To Yahweh, my cry! I plead. 1
To Yahweh, my cry! I entreat.
I pour out my supplications, 2
I unfold all my troubles;
143:4 my spirit fails me, 3
139:24 but you, you know my path.

141:9 On the path I follow
they have concealed a trap.
121:5 Look on my right[b] and see, 4
there is no one to befriend me.
All help is denied me,
no one cares about me.

I invoke you, Yahweh, 5
91:2,9 I affirm that you are my refuge,
16:5; 27:13+; 116:9 my heritage in the land of the living.[e]
Listen to my cries for help, 6
79:8 I can hardly be crushed lower.

Rescue me from persecutors
stronger than I am!
88:8 Lm 3:7 Free me from this imprisonment, 7
and I will thank your name once more
in the Assembly of the virtuous,[d]
for the goodness you show me.

PSALM 143 V 142

A humble entreaty

Psalm Of David

Yahweh, hear my prayer, 1
listen to my pleading,
Jb 9:2; 14:3-4 answer me faithfully, righteously;
Qo 7:20 ↗ Rm 3:20 do not put your servant on trial, 2
Jb 4:17 no one is virtuous by your standards.[a]

3 An enemy who hounds me — 7:5
to crush me into the dust,
forces me to dwell in darkness — ‖Lm 3:6
like the dead of long ago;
4 my spirit fails me — 142:3 Jb 17:1
and my heart is full of fear.

5 I recall the days of old, — =77:5; 77:12
I reflect on all that you did,
I ponder your deeds;
6 I stretch out my hands,
like thirsty ground I yearn for you. *Pause* 63:1

7 Quick, Yahweh, answer me
before my spirit fails; — 10:1; 69:17; 102:2
if you hide your face much longer,
I shall go down to the Pit like the rest. — 28:1; 88:4

8 Let dawn bring proof of your love, — 17:15+
for one who relies on you;
let it show the right road, — 25:4
to one who lifts up his soul to you. — 25:1-2; 86:4

9 Yahweh, rescue me from my enemies,
I have fled[b] to you for shelter;
10 teach me to obey you, — 25:4-5; 119:12
since you are my God;
may your good spirit guide me — 139:24
on to level ground.

11 Yahweh, for the sake of your name,
keep your promise to save me;
protect me from oppression,
12 love me, kill my enemies, — 54:5
destroy my oppressors,
for I am your servant. — 116:16

PSALM 144 V 143

War hymn and the fruits of victory[a]

David

1 Blessed be Yahweh, my rock, — =18:46 Tb 13:1
who trains my hands for war — =18:34
and my fingers for battle,
2 my love, my bastion, — =18:2
my citadel, my saviour,
I shelter behind him, my shield,
he makes the nations submit to me. — =18:47

c. Meaning of this and the following obscure.
d. The word may indicate God the Rock (95:1, etc.) who crushes the wicked.
e. 'a millstone smashed' cf. Greek and Syr.; 'shattering and splitting (the ground)' Hebr.
f. 'their' Syr.; 'his' Hebr.

142 a. This psalm has been applied to Christ in his sufferings.
b. Versions 'I look to the right hand'. A man's advocate stands on his right.
c. This earth, cf. 27:13.
d. Lit. '(the virtuous will) gather round'; Greek and Syr. 'hope'.

143 a. Cf. 51:5; 130:3. St Paul uses this passage somewhat freely, Rm 3:20; Ga 2:16.
b. 'I have fled' Greek.

144 a. The first half, vv. 1-11, a summary of liturgical prayers for the king, is inspired by 18 and other psalms. The second, vv. 12-15, is original and describes the prosperity of the messianic age.

=8:4 Yahweh, what is man, that you should notice him? 3
A human being, that you should think about him?
=39:5-6 Jb 7:16; 14:2 Ws 2:5 Man's life, a mere puff of wind, 4
his days, as fugitive as shadows.

=18:9; 29 2 S 22:10,15 Yahweh, lower your heavens, come down to us! 5
Touch the mountains, make them smoke,
=104:32 Is 63:19 flash your lightning—scatter them, 6
=18:14; 77:17 shoot your arrows—rout them.

=18:16 2 S 22:17 Reach down your hand from above, 7
save me, rescue me from deep waters,
from the power of aliens
who tell nothing but lies, 8
who are prepared to swear to falsehood!

=33:2-3 Jdt 16:13 God, I have made a new song for you. 9
to be played on the ten-string lyre,
=18:50 you who give victory to kings 10
and safety to your servant David.[b]

From peril of sword •save me, 11
rescue me from the power of aliens
who tell nothing but lies,
who are prepared to swear to falsehood!

128:3 May our sons be like plants 12
growing strong from their earliest days,
Jb 42:14-15 Si 26:18 our daughters like corner-statues,[c]
carvings fit for a palace;
Lv 26:4-5 Dt 7:13 may our barns overflow 13
with every possible crop,
may the sheep in our fields be counted
in their thousands and tens of thousands,

may our cattle be stout and strong; 14
Lv 26:6 and may there be an end of raids and exile,
Is 65:19 and of panic in our streets.

29:11 Dt 33:29 Happy the nation of whom this is true, 15
=33:12 happy the nation whose God is Yahweh!

PSALM 145 V 144

Hymn of praise to Yahweh the king

Hymn *Of David*

44:4 *Aleph* I sing your praises, God my King, 1
I bless your name for ever and ever,
34:1; 68:19 *Beth* blessing you day after day, 2
and praising your name for ever and ever.
48:1; 95:3; 96:4 Jb 36:26 Si 43:28 *Ghimel* Can anyone measure the magnificence 3
of Yahweh the great, and his inexpressible grandeur?

71:18; 78:4 *Daleth* Celebrating your acts of power, 4
one age shall praise your doings to another.
105:1-3 *He* Oh, the splendour of your glory, your renown![a] 5
I tell myself the story of your marvellous deeds.[b]

6 *Wau* Men will proclaim your fearful power
and I shall assert your greatness;
7 *Zain* they will celebrate your generous kindness
and joyfully acclaim your righteousness.

8 *Heth* He, Yahweh, is merciful, tenderhearted, — 86:15; 103:8+
slow to anger, very loving, — Si 2:11
9 *Teth* and universally kind; Yahweh's tenderness — 103:13
embraces all his creatures. — Ws 1:13-14; 11:24

10 *Yod* Yahweh, all your creatures thank you, — Dn 3:57
and your faithful bless you.
11 *Kaph* Kingly and glorious they proclaim you, — 93:1
they affirm your might. — 1 Ch 29:11

12 *Lamed* Let mankind learn your acts of power,
and the majestic glory of your sovereignty!
13 *Mem* Your sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty, — 10:16; Lm 5:19; Dn 3:33(100); *102:13*; 146:10
your empire lasts from age to age.
(Nun) Always true to his promises, — 1 Tm 1:17; Rv 11:15
Yahweh shows love in all he does.[c]
14 *Samek* Only stumble, and Yahweh at once supports you, — = 94:18
if others bow you down, he will raise you up. — = 146:8

15 *Ain* Patiently all creatures look to you — = 104:27-28
to feed them throughout the year; — 136:25; Mt 6:25f
16 *Pe* quick to satisfy every need,
you[d] feed them all with a generous hand.

17 *Sade* Righteous in all that he does, — Dt 32:4
Yahweh acts only out of love,
18 *Qoph* standing close to all who invoke him, — Dt 4:7; Is 55:6; 58:9; Jr 29:13
close to all who invoke Yahweh faithfully.

19 *Resh* Those who fear him need only to ask to be answered;
he hears their cries for help and saves them. — 34:17
20 *Shin* Under his protection the pious are safe, — Jg 5:31
but Yahweh is destruction to the wicked.

21 *Tau* Yahweh's praise be ever in my mouth,
and let every creature bless his holy name — Si 39:35
for ever and ever!

PSALM 146 V 145

Hymn to the God of help[a]

1 Alleluia!

Praise Yahweh, my soul!
2 I mean to praise Yahweh all my life, — = 104:33
I mean to sing to my God as long as I live. — 7:17+

3 Do not put your trust in men in power,
or in any mortal man—he cannot save, — Is 2:22

b. 'David my servant' has become a messianic title. Jr 33:21; Ezk 34:23-24; 37:24.
c. Rare word suggesting caryatids.
145 a. Text corr. Hebr. 'the glory of your renown'.
b. Versions 'Let them tell, let them tell the story of your marvellous deeds'.
c. The *Nun* verse is omitted in Hebr. but preserved in the versions.
d. Cf. Greek.
146 a. This is the first psalm of a third Hallel, Ps 146-150, recited by Jews in the morning; cf. 113-118 and 136.

90:3; 104:29 Qo 12:7 Si 40:11 ✗ *1 M 2:63*
he yields his breath and goes back to the earth he came from, 4
and on that day all his schemes perish.

2:12 Jr 17:7
Happy the man who has the God of Jacob to help him, 5
whose hope is fixed on Yahweh his God,

121:2; 124:8
maker of heaven and earth, 6
and the sea, and all that these hold!

103:6
Yahweh, forever faithful,

Ba 6:35
gives justice to those denied it, 7
gives food to the hungry,

68:6 Is 49:9; 61:1
gives liberty to prisoners.

Yahweh restores sight to the blind, 8a

145:14
Yahweh straightens the bent, 8b

Ex 22:20
Yahweh protects the stranger, 9a

68:5 Ex 22:21f
he keeps the orphan and widow. 9b

11:7
Yahweh loves the virtuous, 8c
and frustrates the wicked. 9c

Ex 15:18
Yahweh reigns for ever, 10

145:13+ Lm 5:19
your God, Zion, from age to age.

PSALM 147 V 146-147

Hymn to the Almighty[a]

Alleluia![b]

33:1; 92:1
Praise Yahweh—it is good to sing 1
in honour of our God—sweet is his praise.[c]

Is 11:12; 56:8 Jr 31:10
Yahweh, Restorer of Jerusalem! 2
He brought back Israel's exiles,

Jr 33:6
healing their broken hearts, 3

Jb 5:18 Is 61:1
and binding up their wounds.

19:1f Is 40:26
He decides the number of the stars 4

Ba 3:35
and gives each of them a name;

Jdt 16:13 Is 40:28
our Lord is great, all-powerful, 5
of infinite understanding.

1 S 2:7-8
Yahweh, who lifts up the humble, 6
humbles the wicked to the ground.

Sing to Yahweh in gratitude, 7
play the lyre for our God:

104:10-14, 27-28
who covers the heavens with clouds, 8

Jb 5:9-10 Jr 14:22 Jl 2:23
to provide the earth with rain,
to produce fresh grass on the hillsides
and the plants that are needed by man,[d]
who gives their food to the cattle 9

Jb 38:41 Mt 6:26
and to the young ravens when they cry.

20:7-8; 33:16-18 1 S 16:7
The strength of the war horse means nothing to him, 10
it is not infantry that interests him.
Yahweh is interested only in those who fear him, 11
in those who rely on his love.

Praise Yahweh, Jerusalem, 12
Zion, praise your God:[e]

13 for strengthening the bars of your gates, 48:13
for blessing your citizens, Jr 33:10f
Is 65:18f
14 for granting you peace on your frontiers, Lv 26:6
for feeding you on the finest wheat. 81:16
15 He gives an order; 19:1f; 29-3f; 33:9; 107:20
his word flashes to earth:[f] Is 55:10-11
16 to spread snow like a blanket, Si 43:13f
to strew hoarfrost like ashes,
17 to drop ice like breadcrumbs, Jb 6:16; 37:10; 38:22
and when the cold is unbearable,
18 he sends his word to bring the thaw
and warm wind to melt the snow.
19 He reveals his word to Jacob, 78:5
his statutes and rulings to Israel: Dt 33:3-4
Ba 3:37
20 he never does this for other nations, Dt 4:7-8
he never reveals his rulings to them. Ac 14:16

PSALM 148

104
Gn 1
Dn 3:57-90

Cosmic hymn of praise

1 Alleluia!
Let heaven praise Yahweh:
praise him, heavenly heights,
2 praise him, all his angels, 103:20-21
praise him, all his armies! Jb 38:7
3 Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, shining stars,
4 praise him, highest heavens,
and waters above the heavens! Gn 1:7
1 K 8:27
5 Let them all praise the name of Yahweh,[a]
at whose command they were created; 33:9
6 he has fixed them in their place for ever, Jdt 16:14
by an unalterable statute.
7 Let earth praise Yahweh:
sea-monsters and all the deeps,
8 fire and hail, snow and mist, 135:7
gales that obey his decree,
9 mountains and hills, Is 44:23
orchards and forests,
10 wild animals and farm animals, Is 43:20
snakes and birds,
11 all kings on earth and nations,
princes, all rulers in the world,
12 young men and girls, Jr 31:13
old people, and children too!

147 a. Though divided into two (after v. 11) in several versions, including Vulg., the psalm forms one poem. The poet celebrates God as the liberator of Israel, the creator, and friend of the lowly.

b. 'Alleluia' Greek; Hebr. joins it with preceding psalm.

c. Hebr. adds '(praise) is befitting', omitted by Greek.

d. This line (Greek; cf. 104:14) is absent from Hebr.

e. The Fathers apply this second part of the psalm to the new Jerusalem, militant or triumphant.

f. The word of God is represented here as a messenger, almost as a person. Cf. 107:20; Is 55:11; Jn 1:14+.

148 a. Greek and Vulg. here add 33:9a.

Let them all praise the name of Yahweh, 13
for his name and no other is sublime,
108:5; 113:4 transcending earth and heaven in majesty,
89:17 Dt 4:7 raising the fortunes of[b] his people, 14
to the praises of the devout,
Dt 7:6+ Ep 2:13 of Israel, the people dear to him.

PSALM 149

Song of triumph[a]

Alleluia! 1
Sing Yahweh a new song,
40:9 Jdt 16:1 let the the congregation of the faithful sing his praise!
Let Israel rejoice in his maker, 2
and Zion's children exult in their King;
87:7; 150:4 let them dance in praise of his name, 3
68:25; 81:2 playing to him on strings and drums!
Is 61:9; 62:4-5 For Yahweh has been kind to his people, 4
conferring victory on us who are weak;
1 S 2:8 the faithful exult in triumph, 5
prostrate before God[b] they acclaim him
with panegyrics on their lips, 6
Ne 4:10-12 2 M 15:27 and a two-edged sword in their hands
Ws 3:8 Zc 9:13-16 to exact vengeance on the pagans, 7
to inflict punishment on the heathen,
2:3 to shackle their kings with chains 8
and their nobles with fetters,
to execute the preordained sentence.[c] 9
Thus gloriously are the faithful rewarded!

PSALM 150

Final chorus of praise[a]

Alleluia! 1
Dn 3:53 Praise God in his Temple on earth,
praise him in his temple in heaven,
praise him for his mighty achievements, 2
praise him for his transcendent greatness!
2 S 6:5 Praise him with blasts of the trumpet, 3
praise him with lyre and harp,
149:3 praise him with drums and dancing, 4
praise him with strings and reeds,
2 S 6:5 praise him with clashing cymbals, 5
praise him with clanging cymbals!
Rv 5:13 Let everything that breathes praise Yahweh! 6
Alleluia!

b. Lit. 'raising a horn for'.

149 a. This national hymn looks to the eschatological future, cf. Is 61:2f, when Israel will be the instrument of divine justice, cf. Zc 9:13-16.

b. Lit. 'on their couches', i.e., from the place where they lie prostrate in worship, cf. 95:6; Jdt 6:18; or it may mean: praise that does not cease, even at night. Cf. Ho 7:14; Ps 4:4; 63:6.

c. Allusion to the 'Oracles against the Nations' in the prophetic books.

150 a. A more elaborate doxology than those concluding the first four books of the Psalter, 41:13; 72:18-20; 89:51; 106:48; this one invites every musical instrument and every living being to praise Yahweh.

INTRODUCTION TO
THE PROVERBS

The Book of Proverbs is the most representative work of Israelite wisdom literature, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books. The body of the book is made up of two collections: 10-22:16, called 'The proverbs of Solomon' (375 aphorisms) and ch. 25-29, introduced by 'The following also are proverbs of Solomon, transcribed by the men of Hezekiah' (128 aphorisms). Appendices have been added to each of these two collections: to the first, 'sayings of the sages' (22:17–24:22) and 'The following also are taken from the sages' (24:23-34); to the second, 'the sayings of Agur' (30:1-14), followed by numerical proverbs (30:15-33) and 'the sayings of Lemuel' (31:1-9). The whole is preceded by a long introduction, ch. 1-9, in which a father commends wisdom to his son and in which Wisdom herself intervenes. The book closes with an alphabetical poem in praise of the ideal wife, 31:10-31.

The order in which the central sections are arranged is of little importance: it differs in the Greek Bible, and the maxims inside the various sections are juxtaposed without concern for logical sequence. The book is therefore a collection of collections, within the framework of a prologue and epilogue. It reflects a hint of literary development, outlined in the general Introduction to the Wisdom Books. The two main collections show the *mashal* in its most primitive form and consist exclusively of brief aphorisms, usually of a single couplet. In the appendices, however, the form is more elaborate; the short numerical poems of 30:15-33, cf. 6:16-19, add the charm of a riddling manner to their edifying matter, a device already practised in earlier times, cf. Am 1. The prologue, ch. 1-9, consists of a long discourse interrupted by two exhortations from Wisdom personified; the epilogue, 31:10-31, is a 'learned' composition.

This evolution of form corresponds to successive periods of literary activity. The earliest sections are the two great collections, ch. 10-22 and 25-29. These are attributed to Solomon who, according to 1 K 5:12, was the author of 'three thousand proverbs' and who was always considered to have been the greatest sage of Israel. The impersonal accent of the proverbs makes it impossible for us to assign any particular maxim to the king, but there is no reason to doubt that this collection as a whole dates from his time; the maxims of the second collection were already ancient when 'the men of Hezekiah' collected them, in about 700 B.C. These two collections form the core of the book and give it its full name, 'the proverbs of Solomon', 1:1. The sub-titles of the smaller sections however show that this title is not to be taken too literally, embracing, as it does, the aphorisms of anonymous sages, 22:17–24:34, and the sayings of Agur and Lemuel, 30:1–31:9. Even if the names of these two Arabian sages

are fictitious and did not belong to real people, they testify to a respect for the wisdom of other lands, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books. Clear proof of this respect is to be found in some of the 'sayings of the sages', 22:17–23:11, which are based on the Egyptian maxims of Amenemophis, committed to writing at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. The imitation is by no means slavish, and bears witness to the originality of the Israelite sages. The nucleus of the book, ch. 10-29, may therefore safely be dated in the pre-exilic period; the date of ch. 30-31 is uncertain. The prologue, ch. 1-9, is certainly later: it has literary affinities with post-exilic writings suggesting the fifth century as the date of its composition, which is also presumably when the whole book was given its definitive form.

Since, then, the book represents several centuries of thought on the part of the sages, developments of doctrine are discernible in it. In the two primitive collections the dominant tone is that of human, worldly wisdom, disconcerting to the Christian reader, though even here one proverb in every seven is religious in theme. This religious teaching is not speculative but practical: God rewards truth, charity, purity of heart, humility, and punishes their contrary vices. The source and the sum of all these virtues is wisdom, that is to say the fear of God, 15:16,33; 16:6; 22:4, in whom alone man must put his trust, 20:22, 29:25. The opening chapters offer the same principles of human and sacred wisdom; they emphasise vices of which the earlier sages do not speak, such as adultery, 2:16f; 5:2f,15f. The epilogue, too, bears witness to a greater respect for women. More important still, the prologue offers the first example of a logically ordered doctrine of wisdom, its worth and its function as guide and controller of behaviour. The speaker is Wisdom herself; she sings her own praise and explains her relationship with God, in whom she has been from all eternity and whom she assisted when he made the world, 8:22-30. This is the earliest of all the texts (listed in Introduction to Wisdom Books) to deal with Wisdom personified.

The teaching of the Book of Proverbs has undoubtedly been far transcended by that of Christ, the Wisdom of God; even so, several maxims anticipate the moral teaching of the gospel. It should also be remembered that true religion can only develop on the foundations of human decency; while the frequent use of the book (fourteen quotations and about twenty allusions) made by the New Testament, commands the respect of Christians for these thoughts of the ancient sages of Israel.

THE PROVERBS

Title and purpose of the book

1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

2 for learning what wisdom and discipline are,
for understanding words of deep meaning,
3 for acquiring an enlightened attitude of mind
—virtue, justice and fair-dealing;
4 for teaching sound judgement to the ignorant,
and knowledge and sense to the young;
6 for perceiving the meaning of proverbs and obscure sayings,
the sayings of the sages and their riddles.
5 Let the wise listen and he will learn yet more, 22:17
and the man of discernment will acquire the art of guidance. Qo 9:17

7 The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge;[a] 9:10; 15:33 Dt 4:6 Jb 28:28 ‖Ps 111:10 Si 1:14
fools spurn wisdom and discipline.

I. PROLOGUE

A COMMENDATION OF WISDOM

The sage speaks: avoid bad company

8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction, =6:20 Ps 34:11
do not reject your mother's teaching:
9 they will be a crown of grace for your head, 3:22; 4:9 Si 6:24,29
a circlet for your neck.
10 My son, if sinners try to seduce you,
do not give way. Ps 1:1
11 If they say, 'Come with us: Ps 64:5
there is blood to be had if we lie in wait for it, Ps 10:8 Si 11:32
if we plan an ambush for the innocent;
12 we can swallow them alive, like Sheol, Nb 16:33+ Ps 55:16
alive and whole like those who go down to the Pit.
13 We shall find treasures of every sort,
we shall fill our houses with plunder;
14 throw in your lot with us:
one purse between us all.'
15 My son, do not follow them in their way,
keep your steps out of their path

1 a. The 'fear of Yahweh' in the Bible is approxi- to God. Wisdom, being its product, is essentially
mately what we call the virtue of religion, or devotion religious.

6:18 Is 59:7 (for their feet hasten to evil, 16
they are quick to shed blood);
the net is always spread in vain 17
if the bird is watching.[b]
It is for their own blood these men lie in wait, 18
their own selves they lie in ambush for.
15:27 To this come[c] all men who are after dishonest gain, 19
which robs of their lives all those who take it for their own.

Wisdom speaks: a warning to the heedless

8:1-3; 9:3 Si 24 Jn 7:37 Wisdom calls aloud in the streets,[d] 20
she raises her voice[e] in the public squares;
Ws 6:16 she calls out at the street corners, 21
she delivers her message at the city gates,
Ps 94:8 'You ignorant people, how much longer will you cling to 22
your ignorance?
How much longer will mockers revel in their mocking
and fools hold knowledge contemptible?
Si 16:24 Pay attention to my warning: 23
now I will pour out my heart to you,
and tell you what I have to say.
Ps 107:11 Is 65:2,12; 66:4 Jr 7:13 Since I have called and you have refused me, 24
since I have beckoned and no one has taken notice,
1 S 8:18 since you have ignored all my advice 25
and rejected all my warnings,
Ws 4:18 I, for my part, will laugh at your distress, 26
Dt 28:63 I will jeer at you when calamity comes,
Jr 23:19 when calamity bears down on you like a storm 27
and your distress like a whirlwind,
when disaster and anguish bear down on you.
Then they shall call to me, but I will not answer, 28
Jr 11:11+ Ho 5:6+ Jn 7:34 they shall seek me eagerly and shall not find me.
They despised knowledge, 29
they had no love for the fear of Yahweh,
they would take no advice from me, 30
Jr 6:19 and spurned all my warnings:
so they must eat the fruits of their own courses, 31
and choke themselves with their own scheming.
8:36 Ba 4:1 For the errors of the ignorant lead to their death, 32
Jr 5:12-13 Am 6:1 and the complacency of fools works their own ruin;
but whoever listens to me may live secure, 33
he will have quiet, fearing no mischance.'

Wisdom, a safeguard against bad company

2 My son, if you take my words to heart,[a] 1
if you set store by my commandments,
tuning your ear to wisdom, 2
and applying your heart to truth:
yes, if your plea is for clear perception, 3
if you cry out for discernment,
3:14; 8:19; 16:16 Mt 13:44-46 if you look for it as if it were silver, 4
and search for it as for buried treasure,
you will then understand what the fear of Yahweh is, 5
and discover the knowledge of God.
1 K 4:9 Jb 28:23; 32:8 Ps 141:5 For Yahweh himself is giver of wisdom, 6
from his mouth issue knowledge and discernment.

7 He keeps his help for honest men,
he is the shield of those whose ways are honourable;
8 he stands guard over the paths of justice,
he keeps watch on the way of his devoted ones.
9 Then you will understand what virtue is, justice, and fair dealing,
all paths that lead to happiness.

10 When wisdom comes into your heart
and knowledge is a delight to you,
11 then prudence will be there to watch over you,
and discernment be your guardian
12 to keep you from the way that is evil,
from the man whose speech is deceitful,
13 from those who leave the paths of honesty
to walk the roads of darkness:
14 men who find their joy in doing wrong,
and their delight in deceitfulness,
15 whose tracks are twisted,
and the paths that they tread crooked.
16 Keeping you also from the alien woman,[b]
from the stranger, with her wheedling words;
17 she has left the partner of her younger days,
she has forgotten the covenant of God;
18 towards death her house is declining,
down to the Shades her paths go.
19 Of those who go to her not one returns,
they never regain the paths of life.

20 So you will pursue the way of good men,
persisting in the paths of the virtuous.
21 For the land will be for honest men to live in,
the innocent will have it for their home;
22 while the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the faithless rooted out of it.

Ws 9:10▲ Si 1:1▲ Dn 2:21▲ Jm 1:5▲
Ps 141:5
10:23
5:2-20; 6:24–7:27 Si 9:9; 23:22
Ex 20:14
Ps 27:9,29 Mt 5:4
10:30 Ps 52:5

How to acquire wisdom

1 3 My son, do not forget my teaching,
let your heart keep my principles,
2 for these will give you lengthier days,
longer years of life, and greater happiness.

3 Let kindliness and loyalty never leave you:
tie them round your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 So shall you enjoy favour and good repute
in the sight of God and man.
5 Trust wholeheartedly in Yahweh,
put no faith in your own perception;

8:35 Dt 8:1; 30:16 1 K 3:14 *4:10; 9:11*
Dt 4:40; 8:3 Ne 9:29 Si 1:20
=6:21.=7:3 Dt 6:6-9 Sg 8:6 Jr 17:1
↗ Rm 12:17 Lk 2.52 Ps 37:5 28:26

b. The meaning is, apparently, that as the bird avoids the net if it has seen the hunter spread it, so the youth duly admonished will know how to avoid the pitfalls of life.

c. Lit. 'Such is the end' Greek; 'Such is the way' Hebr.

d. 'in the streets' Greek; 'outside' Hebr.

e. Wisdom personified, cf. 8:22+, acts like a prophet, cf. Jr 5:1; 7:2, walking through the streets and urging her doctrine on the people.

2 a. All wisdom comes from God, v. 6, but the dispositions needed for receiving it are an enquiring mind, vv. 3-4, and a willingness to learn from the teaching of one's elders, vv. 1-2, etc.

b. I.e. another man's wife. This first section of Pr, the last to be added to the collection, often warns against adultery, 2:16-19; 5:2-23; 6:24–7:27. Adultery is identified, 2:17, with apostasy from the covenant of God, cf. also 5:15+; it leads to Sheol, 2:18; 5:5,6; 7:26-27. In these passages there is only one allusion to prostitution, 6:26, which the older proverbs identify with adultery, cf. 23:27;31:3, cf. 29:3, since both corrupt kings and rob warriors of their vigour.

16:3 Si 2:6
in every course you take, have him in mind: 6
he will see that your paths are smooth.

26:12 Ps 34:9,14 ✗Rm 12:16
Do not think of yourself as wise, 7
fear Yahweh and turn your back on evil:
health-giving, this, to your body, 8
relief to your bones.

Ml 3:10-12 Dt 26:1+
Honour Yahweh with what goods you have 9
and with the first-fruits of all your returns;

Dt 28:8 Ps 4:7
then your barns will be filled with wheat,[a] 10
your vats overflowing with new wine.

✗Heb12:5-6 Jb 5:17
My son, do not scorn correction from Yahweh, 11
do not resent his rebuke;

26:12 Dt 8:5+ ✗Rv 3:19
for Yahweh reproves the man he loves, 12
as a father checks a well-loved son.

The joys of wisdom

20:15
Happy the man who discovers wisdom, 13
the man who gains discernment:

2:4+; 16:16
gaining her is more rewarding than silver, 14
more profitable than gold.

8:11
She is beyond the price of pearls, 15
nothing you could covet is her equal.
In her right hand is length of days; 16

8:18
in her left hand, riches and honour.

Ws 8:16 Si 4:12 Mt 11:29
Her ways are delightful ways, 17
her paths all lead to contentment.

11:30 Gn2:9; 3:22 Rv 2:7
She is a tree of life for those who hold her fast, 18
those who cling to her live happy lives.

8:22-31 Ps 136:5
By wisdom, Yahweh set the earth on its foundations, 19
by discernment, he fixed the heavens firm.
Through his knowledge the depths were carved out, 20
and the clouds rain down the dew.

4:20
My son, hold to sound judgment and to prudence, 21
do not let them out of your sight;
they will prove the life of your soul, 22

1:9
an ornament round your neck.

4:12; 6:22
You will go on your way in safety, 23

Ps 91:12
your feet will not stumble.

Ps 121:3; 127:2
When you sit down,[b] you will not be afraid, 24

Ps 3:6
when you lie down, sweet will be your sleep.

Ps 91:5 1 P 3:14
Have no fear of sudden terror 25
or of assault from wicked men,

Jb 5:19-27 Ps 121:3
since Yahweh will be your guarantor, 26
he will keep your steps from the snare.

Si 4:3 Mt 7:12
Do not refuse a kindness to anyone who begs it, 27
if it is in your power to perform it.

13:12 Mt 5:43-48 Lk 10:25-37
Do not say to your neighbour,[c] 'Go away! Come another time! 28
I will give it you tomorrow', if you can do it now.
Do not plot harm against your neighbour 29
as he lives unsuspecting next door.
Do not pick a groundless quarrel with a man 30
who has done you no harm.

23:17 Ps 37:1 Si 11:21
Do not emulate the man of violence,[d] 31
never model your conduct on his;

32 for the wilful wrong-doer is abhorrent to Yahweh, Ps 125:5
who confides only in honest men.
33 Yahweh's curse lies on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the home of the virtuous.
34 He mocks those who mock,
but accords his favour to the humble. Ps 18:27 Si 3:18,20
35 Honour is the portion of the wise, ↗Jm 4:6 ↗1 P 5:5
all that fools inherit[e] is disgrace.

On choosing wisdom

1 4 Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; Ps 34:11
pay attention, and learn what clear perception is.
2 What I am commending to you is sound doctrine:
do not discard my teaching.
3 I too was once a son with a father,
in my mother's eyes a tender child, unique. Sg 6:9
4 This was what he used to teach me,
'Let your heart treasure what I have to say,
keep my principles and you shall live; =7:2; 8:35
5 acquire wisdom, acquire perception,
never forget her, never deviate from my words.
6 Do not desert her, she will keep you safe,
love her, she will watch over you.
7 The beginning of wisdom? The acquisition of wisdom;[a] Ws 6:17 Mt 13:44-46
at the cost of all you have, acquire perception.
8 Hold her close,[b] and she will make you great;
embrace her, and she will be your pride;
9 she will set a crown of grace on your head, 1:9 Sg 5:16 Si 6:31
present you with a glorious diadem.'

10 Listen, my son, take my words to heart, 7:27 Jdt 8:14 Si 1:12
and the years of your life shall be multiplied.
11 I have educated you in the ways of wisdom,
I have guided you along the paths of honesty. Ps 23:3
12 As you walk, your going will be unhindered, 3:23+ Jb 18:7
as you run, you will not stumble.
13 Hold fast to discipline, never let her go,
keep your eyes on her, she is your life.
14 Never set your foot on the path of the wicked,
do not walk the way that the evil go.
15 Avoid it, do not take it,
turn your back on it, pass it by.
16 For they cannot sleep unless they have first done wrong,
they miss their sleep if they have not brought someone down;
17 wickedness is the bread they eat,
and violence the wine they drink.

18 The path of the virtuous is like the light of dawn, Jb 3:23 Jn 8:12+
its brightness growing to the fulness of day;

3 a. 'with wheat' Greek.
b. 'you sit down' Greek; 'you lie down' Hebr.
c. 'Neighbour' originally meant companion, friend, associate, i.e., one with whom a man had a specific relationship. But in Pr the word takes on a wider sense 'fellow man', cf. 6:1,3,29; 25:9; 27:17. This is the first step towards the broadening of the precept of charity, Lv 19:18, which will reach its final form in the command of Jesus 'love your enemies', Mt 5:43f.
d. The seeming prosperity of the godless ('men of violence', 'perverse men', 'wicked', 'mockers', 'fools', various terms for the enemies of Yahweh) has always been a threat to the constancy of the Israelites, cf. 24:1,19; Ps 73, and later becomes a serious theological problem, Jr 12:1; Jb 21:7, etc.
e. 'inherit' conj.

4 a. I.e. to win wisdom one must first realise that it is essential to have it and that it demands self-sacrifice.
b. 'Hold her close' Greek.

1 Jn 2:10 the way of the wicked is as dark as night, 19
they cannot tell what it is they stumble over.

3:21 Ba 3:9 My son, pay attention to my words, 20
listen carefully to the words I say;
do not let them out of your sight, 21
keep them deep in your heart.
They are life to those who grasp them, 22
health for the entire body.
More than all else, keep watch over your heart, 23
since here are the wellsprings of life.
Turn your back on the mouth that misleads, 24
keep your distance from lips that deceive.
Let your eyes be fixed ahead, 25
your gaze be straight before you.
Heb 12:13 Let the path you tread be level 26
and all your ways made firm.
Turn neither to right nor to left, 27
Dt 5:32; 28:14 keep your foot clear of evil.

Flight from the seductress. Where the wise man's love should be

31:2 5 My son, pay attention to my wisdom, 1
listen carefully to what I know,
6:24 Si 9:9; 23:22-27 and so have prudence and knowledge to protect you; 2
these will keep a guard on your lips.
2:16+ Take no notice of a loose-living woman,[a]
7:12 Sg 4:11 for the lips of this alien drip with honey, 3
her words are smoother than oil,
Qo 7:26 Si 21:3 but their outcome is bitter as wormwood, 4
sharp as a two-edged sword.
7:27 Nb 16:33+ Si 19:3 Her feet go down to death, 5
her steps lead down to Sheol;
7:11 far from following the path of life, 6
her ways are undirected, irresponsible.

And now, my son,[b] listen to me, 7
never deviate from what I say:
set your course as far from her as possible, 8
go nowhere near the door of her house,
or you will surrender your honour to others, 9
your years to one who has no pity,
and strangers will batten on your property, 10
your labours going to some alien house,
29:3 and, at your ending, 11
when body and flesh are consumed,
you will groan and exclaim, 12
'Alas, I hated discipline,
my heart spurned all correction;
I would not hear the voice of my masters, 13
I would not listen to those who tried to teach me.
Si 1:30 Now I am all but reduced to the depths of misery, 14
in the presence of the whole community.'

11:16; 31:10f Si 36:21-27 Drink the water from your own cistern, 15
fresh water from your own well.[c]
Sg 4:12 Do not let your fountains flow to waste[d] elsewhere, 16
nor your streams in the public streets.

17 Let them be for yourself alone,
not for strangers at the same time.
18 And may your fountain-head be blessed!

Find joy with the wife you married in your youth, Qo 9:9
19 fair as a hind, graceful as a fawn.
Let hers be the company you keep,[e]
hers the breasts that ever fill you with delight,
hers the love that ever holds you captive.
20 Why be seduced, my son, by an alien woman,
and fondle the breast of a woman who is a stranger?
21 For the eyes of Yahweh observe a man's ways 15:3 Ps 119:168
and survey all his paths.
22 The wicked man is snared in his own misdeeds, 11:27 Ps 94:23 Ac 8:23
is caught in the meshes of his own sin.
23 For want of discipline, he dies,
and is lost through his own excessive folly.[f]

On surety rashly offered[a]

11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26-27; =27:13 Si 29:14-20

1 6 My son, if you have gone surety for your neighbour,
if you have guaranteed the bond of a stranger,
2 if you have committed yourself with your own lips,
if through words of yours you have been entrapped,
3 do this, my son, to extricate yourself—
since you have put yourself in the power of your neighbour:
go, go quickly, and plead with your neighbour,
4 give your eyes no sleep,
your eyelids no rest,
5 break free like a gazelle from the trap, Ps 124:7
like a bird from the snare.[b]

The idler and the ant

20:4,13; 22:13-16; 24:30-34; 30:24-25

6 Idler, go to the ant;
ponder her ways and grow wise:[c]
7 no one gives her orders, Ps 5:5-6
no overseer, no master,
8 yet all through the summer she makes sure of her food,
and gathers her supplies at harvest time.[d]
9 How long do you intend to lie there, idler?
When are you going to rise from your sleep? 10:5 Qo 4:5
10 A little sleep, a little drowsiness,
a little folding of the arms to take life easier,

5 **a.** Following Greek and Lat. The line is absent from Hebr.

b. 'my son' Greek; 'my sons' Hebr.

c. Metaphors for the lawful wife. The condemnation of adultery, 2:16+, is now complemented by this eulogy of marital fidelity and of the lawful wife, vv. 15-18a and vv. 18b-19. For further passages in praise of the ideal wife, a gift from God and the consolation of her husband, cf. 18:22; 19:14 (cf., by contrast, 11:22; 19:13; 21:9,19; 25:24; 27:15; 31:3) and cf. particularly the enthusiastic commendation of the perfect wife with which the book ends, 31:10-31. Perhaps here too, as in 31:10f, behind the characteristics of the lawful wife we should see a symbolic portrait of Wisdom personified. In the context of ch. 1-9, adultery and married faith would, according to the prophetic tradition, cf. Ho 1:2+, stand respectively for religious apostasy and faithfulness to God and his Law as the source of wisdom.

d. 'Do not let' Greek; 'Let' Hebr.

e. 'Let hers be the company you keep' Greek.

f. The four admonitions that follow, 6:1-5,6-11, 12-15,16-19, are an addition; the discourse of the sage is resumed at 6:20.

6 **a.** Surety was practised in Israel from ancient times. The earliest proverbs contain warnings against its abuse, though the later Si commends it as a charitable work.

b. 'from the trap', 'from the snare' with Greek; 'from the hand' Hebr.

c. A knowledge of nature is part of the sage's intellectual equipment, cf. 1 K 5:13; Pr 30:24-31, etc.

d. Greek adds 'or go to the bee and see how diligent she is and how considerable the work she does. Kings and commoners take what she yields for their health; she is sought after and revered by all; her strength may be feeble, but because she does homage to wisdom she wins respect.'

=24:33-34 and like a vagrant, poverty is at your elbow 11
and, like a beggar,[e] want.

Ps 36:1-4 **Portrait of a scoundrel**

A scoundrel, a vicious man, 12
he goes with a leer on his lips,
10:10 winking his eye, shuffling his foot, 13
Si 27:22 beckoning with his finger.
Ps 64:5 Deceit in his heart, always scheming evil, 14
he sows dissension.
Disaster will overtake him sharply for this, 15
suddenly, irretrievably, his fall will come.

Seven things hateful to God[f]

There are six things that Yahweh hates, 16
seven that his soul abhors:
a haughty look, a lying tongue, 17
hands that shed innocent blood,
a heart that weaves wicked plots, 18
1:16 feet that hurry to do evil,
a false witness who lies with every breath, 19
a man who sows dissension among brothers.

More fatherly advice

=1:8; 7:3 Ep 6:2 Keep your father's principle, my son, 20
do not spurn your mother's teaching.
=3:3 Bind them ever to your heart, 21
tie them round your neck.
3:23-24 When you walk, these will guide you, 22
when you lie down, watch over you,
when you wake, talk with you.

Ps 119:105 Ba 4:2 For this principle is a lamp, 23
this teaching is a light;
10:17 correction and discipline are the way to life,
2:16-19; 5:2-20 Si 23:22-27 preserving you from the woman subject to a husband,[g] 24
from the smooth tongue of the woman who is a stranger.
Si 26:9 Do not covet her beauty in your heart 25
or let her captivate you with the play of her eyes;
29:3 a harlot can be bought for a hunk of bread, 26
but the adulteress is aiming to catch a precious life.[h]
Can a man hug fire to his breast 27
without setting his clothes alight?
Can a man walk on red-hot coals 28
without burning his feet?
So it is the man who consorts with his neighbour's wife: 29
no one who touches her will go unpunished.
Men attach small blame to the thief 30
who in hunger steals to fill his belly;
Ex 22:1-8 though, once caught, he must pay back sevenfold, 31
and has to hand over all his family resources.
Jb 31:11 But the adulterer has no sense; 32
act like him, and court your own destruction.
All he gets is blows and insults, 33
and disgrace that will not be blotted out.
For jealousy inflames the husband 34
27:4 who will show no mercy when the day comes for revenge,

35 he will not consider any compensation,
lavish what gifts you may, he will not be placated.

1 **7** My son, keep my words, Jb 31:9
and treasure my principles,
2 keep my principles and you will live, =4:4; 8:35
keep my teaching as the apple of your eye.
3 Bind these to your fingers, Dt 6:8 Jr 17:1
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 To Wisdom say, 'My sister!' =3:3; 6:20-21
Call Perception your dearest friend,
5 to preserve you from the alien woman, =2:16+ Si 23:22
from the stranger, with her wheedling words.

6 From the window of her house
she looked out on the street,
7 to see if among the men, young and callow,
there was one young man who had no sense at all.[a]
8 And now he passes down the lane, and comes near her corner,
reaching the path to her house
9 at twilight when day is declining, Jb 24:15
at dead of night and in the dark.
10 But look, the woman comes to meet him,
dressed like a harlot, wrapped in a veil.[b] Gn 38:14
11 She is loud and brazen; 5:6
her feet cannot rest at home.
12 Now in the street, now in the square, 23:27-28
she is on the look-out at every corner.
13 She catches hold of him, she kisses him, 5:3
the bold-faced creature says to him,
14 'I had to offer sacrifices:
I discharged my vows today,
15 that is why I came out to meet you,
to look for you, and now I have found you. Sg 3:2f
16 I have made my bed gay with quilts,
spread[c] the best Egyptian sheets,
17 I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh,
with aloes and with cinnamon.
18 Come, let us drink deep of love until the morning,
and abandon ourselves to delight.
19 For my husband is not at home,
he has gone on a very long journey,
20 taking his moneybags with him;
he will not be back until the moon is full.'
21 With her persistent coaxing she entices him,
draws him on with her seductive patter.
22 Bemused,[d] he follows her
like an ox being led to the slaughter,
like a stag caught in a noose,[e]
23 till he is pierced to the liver by an arrow,
like a bird darting into a snare Qo 7:26; 9:12
not knowing its life is at stake.

e. 'beggar' conj.; 'armed man (?)' Hebr.
f. 'Numerical proverb', cf. 30:15+.
g. Greek; 'from the wicked woman' Hebr.
h. The adulterous woman is more dangerous than the prostitute: the latter is content with a wage, the former demands a man's whole life.

7 a. Vv. 6-7 follow Greek. Hebr. 'I looked out... I saw...'
b. 'veil' conj.
c. '(I have) spread' Greek.
d. 'Bemused' Greek.
e. The translation of this line follows the Greek.

And now, my son,[f] listen to me, 24
pay attention to the words I have to say:
do not let your heart stray into her ways, 25
or wander into her paths;
Si 19:3 she has done so many to death, 26
and the strongest have all been her victims.
5:5 Her house is the way to Sheol, 27
the descent to the courts of death.

Wisdom again personified[a]

1:20-33 8 Does Wisdom not call meanwhile? 1
Does Discernment not lift up her voice?
Ws 6:16 On the hilltop, on the road, 2
at the crossways, she takes her stand;
beside the gates of the city,[b] 3
Jn 7:37 at the approaches to the gates she cries aloud,
Ps 49:1f 'O men! I am calling to you; 4
my cry goes out to the sons of men.
Ps 94:8 You ignorant ones! Study discretion; 5
and you fools, come to your senses![c]
Listen, I have serious things to tell you, 6
from my lips come honest words.
My mouth proclaims the truth, 7
wickedness is hateful to my lips.
All the words I say are right, 8
nothing twisted in them, nothing false,
all straightforward to him who understands, 9
honest to those who know what knowledge means.
3:14; 16:16 Accept my discipline rather than silver, 10
knowledge in preference to pure gold.
3:15 Jb 28:15-19 For wisdom is more precious than pearls, 11
and nothing else is so worthy of desire.

Wisdom sings her own praises. Wisdom, the guide of kings

'I, Wisdom, am mistress of discretion,[d] 12
the inventor of lucidity of thought.
Good advice and sound judgement belong to me, 14
perception to me[e], strength to me.
Jb 28:28 (To fear Yahweh is to hate evil.) 13
Si 15:8 I hate pride and arrogance,
wicked behaviour and a lying mouth.
Ws 1:1; 6:12 I love those who love me; 17
✗ Mt 7:7-11 those who seek me eagerly shall find me.
Ws 6:2 Is 11:15 By me monarchs rule 15
Jr 23:5 and princes issue just laws;
1 K 3:4-15 Si 10:4 by me rulers govern, 16
and the great impose justice[f] on the world.
3:16 Si 6:19 With me are riches and honour, 18
lasting wealth and justice.
2:4; 16:16 Si 1:16f The fruit I give is better than gold, even the finest, 19
the return I make is better than pure silver.
I walk in the way of virtue, 20
in the paths of justice,
enriching those who love me, 21
filling their treasuries.

Wisdom as creator[g]

22 'Yahweh created me[h] when his purpose first unfolded,
before the oldest of his works.
23 From everlasting I was firmly set,
from the beginning, before earth came into being.
24 The deep[i] was not, when I was born,
there were no springs to gush with water.
25 Before the mountains were settled,
before the hills, I came to birth;
26 before he made the earth, the countryside,
or the first grains of the world's dust.
27 When he fixed the heavens firm, I was there,
when he drew a ring on the surface of the deep,
28 when he thickened the clouds above,
when he fixed fast the springs of the deep,
29 when he assigned the sea its boundaries
—and the waters will not invade the shore—
when he laid down the foundations of the earth,
30 I was by his side, a master craftsman,
delighting him day after day,
ever at play in his presence,
31 at play everywhere in his world,
delighting to be with the sons of men.

Jn 1:1-3+
3:19; 14:1 Gn 1:1 Si 1:4,9; 24:8-9 Is 40:13
Jn 1:1
Jb 15:7
Jb 28:23-27 Ps 136:5 Ws 8:4; 9:4 Si 24:5 Jr 10:12
Ws 9:9
Jb 38:8-11 Ps 104:7-9
Ws 1:6 Ba 3:38

The great invitation

32a 'And now, my sons, listen to me;
33 listen to instruction and learn to be wise,
do not ignore it.
32b Happy those who keep my ways!
34 Happy the man who listens to me,
who day after day watches at my gates
to guard the portals.
35 For the man who finds me finds life,
he will win favour from Yahweh;
36 but he who does injury to me does hurt to his own soul,
all who hate me are in love with death.'

Si 14:20-27
Dt 30:16 Ws 6:14 Rv 3:20
3:1-2; 4:4 Ba 4:1 1 Jn 5:12
1:32 Ws 1:12-16

f. 'my son' Greek; 'my sons' Hebr.

8 a. Ch. 8-9 mark the height of Proverbial teaching on wisdom, cf. 8:22+. The same theme is developed in later books: Si 1:1-20; 24; Ws 6-9 (cf. also Jb 28).

b. Text overloaded. Add. 'at the wide opening'.

c. 'come to your senses' Greek.

d. Lit. 'I possess discretion' Syr., Targ.; 'I dwell with discretion' Hebr., Greek.

e. 'to me' with versions.

f. 'impose justice on' Greek. Read v. 17 before v. 15.

g. The concept of a personified wisdom, a mere literary device in Pr 14:1, was further developed in the post-exilic period, when polytheism was no longer a threat to true religion. In Jb 28 and Ba 3:9–4:4 wisdom is represented as a thing distinct from God and man, desirable in itself; in Pr 1:20-23; 3:16-19 and 8-9 it is represented as a person. Here Wisdom herself reveals her origin (created before all other creatures, vv. 22-26), the active part she plays in the creation, vv. 27-30, and the function she discharges among men in leading them to God, vv. 31, 35-36. This doctrine will be further developed in Si: Si 1:1-10 recalls Jb 28, but Si 4:11-19; 14:20–15:10 and especially 24:1-29 (cf. Si 24:1+) are in line with Pr 8. Wisdom is personified in all these texts but, as in the case of the Word and the Spirit, it is hard to discern how much is poetic device, how much the expression of older forms of religious thought, how much the appreciation of newly revealed truths. Finally, Ws 7:22–8:1 gives the impression that wisdom an 'outpouring of God's glory', has a share in the divine nature, although the abstract terms used may equally well apply to a divine attribute as to a distinct personality. The doctrine of wisdom, thus outlined in the O.T., will be resumed in the N.T. which will give it new and decisive completion by applying it to the person of Christ. Jesus is referred to as Wisdom itself, the Wisdom of God, Mt 11:19p; Lk 11:49, cf. Mt 23: 34-36; 1 Co 1:24-30; like Wisdom, he participates in the creation and preservation of the world, Col 1:16-17, and the protection of Israel, 1 Co 10:4, cf. Ws 10:17f. Finally, St John in his prologue attributes the characteristics of creative Wisdom to the Word, and his gospel throughout represents Christ as the Wisdom of God, cf. Jn 6:35+. Hence, Christian tradition from St Justin onwards sees in the Wisdom of the O.T. the person of Christ himself. By 'accommodation' the liturgy applies Pr 8:22f to the Virgin, collaborating with the Redeemer as Wisdom collaborates with the Creator.

h. Thus the Greek, Syr., Targ., cf Si 1:4,9; 24:8,9, translate the Hebrew verb *(qanani)*. The translation 'acquired me' or 'possessed me' (Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion) was adopted by St Jerome (Vulg.), doubtless with an eye to the heretic Arius who maintained that the Word (= Wisdom) was a created being.

i. The watery abyss on which rest both the earth's disc and the canopy of heaven, cf. Gn 1; Ps 104; Jb 38.

Mt 22:1-14p **Wisdom as hostess**

9 Wisdom has built herself a house, 1
she has erected[a] her seven pillars,
she has slaughtered her beasts, prepared her wine, 2
she has laid her table.
1:20 She has despatched her maidservants 3
and proclaimed from the city's heights:
'Who is ignorant? Let him step this way.' 4
To the fool she says,
Si 15:3; 24:19-21; Is 55:1-3; Mt 5:6; Jn 6:35+ 'Come and eat my bread, 5
drink the wine I have prepared!
Leave your folly and you will live, 6
walk in the ways of perception.'

Against cynics[b]

Correct a mocker and you make an enemy; 7
rebuke a wicked man, you get insult in return.
15:12; 19:25; Ps 141:5 Do not rebuke the mocker, he will only hate you, 8
rebuke a wise man and he will love you for it.
Be open with the wise, he grows wiser still, 9
teach a virtuous man, he will learn yet more.
1:7+; Dt 4:6 The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom; 10
the knowledge of the Holy One—perception indeed!
3:1-2; Dt 30:16 For days are multiplied by me 11
and years of life increased.
Are you wise? It is to your advantage. 12
A mocker? The burden is yours alone.

9:1-6 **Dame Folly apes Wisdom**[c]

Dame Folly acts on impulse, 13
is childish and knows nothing.
She sits at the door of her house, 14
on a throne commanding the city,
inviting the passers-by 15
as they pass on their lawful occasions,
'Who is ignorant? Let him step this way.' 16
To the fool she says,
'Stolen waters are sweet, 17
and bread tastes better when eaten in secret'.
The fellow does not realise that here the Shades are gathered, 18
Nb 16:33+; Si 19:3 that her guests are heading for the valleys of Sheol.

II. THE MAJOR COLLECTION ATTRIBUTED TO SOLOMON[a]

10 The proverbs of Solomon. 1
=15:20; 17:25; 19:13 A wise son is his father's joy,
a foolish son his mother's grief.
Si 5:8 Treasures wickedly come by give no benefit, 2
=11:4; 12:28 but right conduct brings delivery from death.
Ps 34:9 Yahweh does not leave the virtuous man hungry, 3
but he thwarts the greed of the wicked.

4 The slack hand brings poverty,
but the diligent hand brings wealth. — 15:19; 19:15

5 Gathering in summer is the mark of the prudent,
sleeping at harvest is the sign of the shameless. — 20:4; 6:9-11

6 The blessings of Yahweh[b] are on the head of the virtuous man,
premature mourning stops the mouths of the wicked.[c] — 10:16-24; 11:18,30

7 The virtuous man is remembered with blessings,
the wicked man's name rots away. — 10:7; 12:7; 14:11; Ps 109:13; Ws 4:1

8 The heart that is wise is obedient to instruction,
the gabbling fool is heading for ruin. — Mt 7:24

9 He walks secure whose ways are honourable,
but he who follows crooked ways is soon discovered. — 28:18

10 A wink of the eye, and a man makes trouble,
a bold rebuke, and a man makes peace.[d] — 6:13; Si 27:22

11 The mouth of the virtuous man is a life-giving fountain,
violence lurks in the mouth of the wicked.[e]

12 Hatred provokes disputes,
love covers over all offences. — 17:9; ↗ 1 Co 13:7; Jm 5:20; ↗ 1 P 4:8

13 On the lips of a discerning man is wisdom found,
on the back of a fool, the stick. — 19:29; 26:3

14 Wise men store up knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool makes ruin imminent. — 18:7; Mt 12:34-35

15 The rich man's wealth is his stronghold,
poverty is the poor man's undoing. — =18:11; Ps 49:6; Si 8:2

16 The virtuous man's wage affords him life,
but destruction[f] is all the wicked man earns. — 10:6; Rm 6:21-22

17 The path of life is to abide by discipline,
and he who ignores correction goes astray. — 6:23; 15:32

18 The lips of just men[g] silence hatred,
he who voices slander is a fool. — 13:3; 17:27; Qo 5:2; Jm 3:8

19 A flood of words is never without its fault,
he who has his lips controlled is a prudent man. — 11:13; Jm 1:19; 3:2

20 The virtuous man's tongue is purest silver,
the heart of the wicked is of trumpery value.

21 The lips of the virtuous man nourish a multitude,
but fools die in poverty.[h]

9 a. 'erected' Greek.
b. Aphorisms subsequently inserted as a commentary on v. 6.
c. Folly is now personified in her turn, and her activities contrasted with those of wisdom, 9:1-6. The meaning of the parable is plain: there are two ways open to man, of virtue or of vice (4:18-19; Dt 30:15-20; Ps 1; cf. also Didache, Pseudo-Barnabas, and Qumran MSS); there are two invitations offered to man, two banquets he may attend. He must choose for himself, cf. Rm 12:21; 2 Co 6:14f; Tt 1:15.
10 a. Probably the oldest section of the book. There is no apparent order in this collection other than occasional superficial relationships between neighbouring maxims.
b. 'of Yahweh' Greek and Lat.; omitted by Hebr.
c. With Greek. Hebr. 'and the mouth of the wicked conceals violence', cf. v. 11b.
d. With Greek. Hebr. 'the gabbling fool is heading for ruin', cf. v. 8b.
e. Lit. 'and the mouth of the wicked conceals violence'.
f. 'destruction' conj.; 'sin' Hebr.
g. 'of just men' Greek; 'that lie' Hebr.
h. 'in poverty' Greek; 'for lack of sense' Hebr.

Ps 127:1 The blessing of Yahweh is what brings riches, 22
to this hard toil has nothing to add.

2:14 The joy of the fool lies in doing wrong, 23
but the joy of the man of discernment in acquiring wisdom.

Jb 3:25
Ps 37:4 What the wicked man fears overtakes him, 24
what the virtuous desires comes to him as a present.

12:3
Ps 125:1
Mt 7:24-27
1 Jn 2:16-17 When the storm is over, the wicked man is no more, 25
but the virtuous stands firm for ever.

13:17; 25:13;
26:6 As vinegar to the teeth, smoke to the eyes, 26
so the sluggard[t] to the one who sends him.

4:10
Ps 90:10;
91:16
Qo 7:18 The fear of Yahweh adds length to life, 27
the years of the wicked will be cut short.

Jb 8:13
Ps 112:10 The hope of virtuous men is all joy, 28
the expectations of the wicked are frustrated.

Yahweh is a stronghold for the man of honest life, 29
for evildoers nothing but ruin.

2:21-22 The virtuous man will never be moved from his own place, 30
but the land will offer no home for the wicked.

||Ps 37:30 The mouth of the virtuous man utters wisdom, 31
the deceitful tongue shall be torn out.

Qo 10:12 The lips of the virtuous man drip with kindness, 32
the mouth of the wicked with deceit.

16:11;
20:10,23
Dt 25:13-16
Ho 12:8
Am 8:5-6
Mi 6:10-11 **11** A false balance is abhorrent to Yahweh, 1
a just weight is pleasing to him.

=13:10 Pride comes first, disgrace comes after; 2
with the humble is wisdom found.

Honest men have their own honesty for guidance, 3
treacherous men are ruined by their own perfidy.

=10:2
Tb 12:8
Jb 21:30
Ps 49:6-8
Jm 5:3 In the day of wrath riches will be of no advantage, 4
but virtuous conduct delivers from death.

The virtues of the blameless man smooth the way before him, 5
the wicked man founders in his own wickedness.

Their virtuous conduct sets honest men free, 6
11:3 treacherous men are imprisoned by their own desires.

10:28
Ps 112:10 The hope of the wicked perishes with death, 7
the expectation of the godless is frustrated.

Est 8:1 The virtuous man escapes misfortune, 8
the wicked man incurs it instead.

29:5 Through his mouth the godless man is the ruin of his neighbour, 9
but by knowledge the virtuous are safeguarded.

28:12; 29:2 When virtuous men prosper the city rejoices, 10
there are glad cries, too, when the wicked are ruined.

14:1 A city is raised on the blessing of honest men, 11
and demolished by the mouth of the wicked.

12 Who scoffs at his neighbour is a fool; 14:21
the man of discernment holds his tongue.

13 A tittle-tattler lets secrets out, 10:19;17:27f Si 22:22
a trustworthy man keeps things hidden.

14 For want of guidance a people fails, =24:6
safety lies in many advisers. 15:2 Ws 6:24

15 He who goes bail for a stranger will rue it, 6:1+
the man who hates going surety is safe.

16 A gracious woman brings honour to her husband, 31:10f
she who has no love for justice is dishonour enthroned.[a] 5:15+

The indolent lack resources,
men of enterprise grow rich.

17 The generous man is his own benefactor, Si 14:6
a cruel man injures his own flesh.

18 The livelihood won by the wicked is illusory, 10:6 2 Co 9:6 Ga 6:8
he who sows virtue reaps a solid reward.

19 A virtuous man[b] may count on life,
the pursuer of evil on death.

20 Men of depraved heart are abhorrent to Yahweh, 12:22; 15:9,11 Ps 101:3
dear to him, those whose ways are blameless.

21 Be sure of it, a wicked man will not go unpunished, 16:5
but the race of the virtuous will come to no harm. 12:21

22 A golden ring in the snout of a pig
is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

23 The desire of the virtuous ends in happiness,
the hope of the wicked is in vain.[c]

24 One is extravagant, yet his riches grow, Si 11:11 2 Co 9:6
another excessively mean, but only grows the poorer.

25 The generous soul will prosper, 28:27 Is 58:10
he who waters, will be watered. Mt 7:2; 10:42

26 The people's curse is on the man who hoards the wheat,
a blessing on him who sells it.

27 He who strives after good is striving after favour,[d] 12:2
he who looks for evil will have evil come to him. 5:22

28 He who trusts in riches will have his fall,
the virtuous will flourish like the leaves. Jb 31:24 Ps 1:3; 52:9-10

29 He who misgoverns his house inherits the wind, Mk 10:23
and the fool becomes slave to the wise. Si 10:25

30 From fruits of virtue grows a tree of life; 3:18 Ps 1; 10:6
the wicked are carried off before their time.[e]

31 If here on earth the virtuous man gets his due, 1 P 4:18
how much more the wicked, how much the sinner!

i. I.e. the messenger who dawdles.

11 a. Following Greek. Hebr. 'A gracious woman wins renown, bold men acquire riches'.

b. Lit. 'son' Greek.
c. 'is in vain' Greek.
d. The favour of Yahweh who rewards the virtuous, cf. 12:2.
e. Verse translated from Greek.

13:18; 15:5,10 Si 21:6 **12** He who loves discipline, loves knowledge, 1
stupid is the man who hates correction.

11:27 The good man wins the favour of Yahweh, 2
but he condemns the man who is a schemer.

10:25 No man is made secure by wickedness, 3
but nothing shakes the roots of virtuous men.

31:10f Si 26:1 A good wife, her husband's crown, 4
a shameless wife, a cancer in his bones.

The plans of virtuous men are honest, 5
the intrigues of the wicked are nothing if not deceit.

14:3 The words of wicked men are snares to shed blood, 6
but honest men have an answer and elude them.

10:7 Mt 7:24-27 Once thrown down, the wicked are no more, 7
but the house of virtuous men stands firm.

10:2 The praise of a man is in proportion to his prudence, 8
men of depraved heart are held in contempt.

Si 10:27 Better a common man who does his own work[a] 9
than one who plays the lord and goes short of bread.

27:23 The virtuous man looks after the lives of his beasts, 10
but the wicked man's heart[b] is ruthless.

=28:19 He who tills his land shall have bread and to spare, 11
he who chases fantasies has no sense.

The desires of the godless are sickly, 12
the roots of the devout are firmly set.[c]

18:7 Ps 59:12 His own lips are to blame when the wicked man is entrapped,[d] 13
the virtuous man finds his own way out of misfortune.

13:2; 18:20; 22:8 Ps 94:23 Lk 6:37-38 When a man is filled with good things, it is the fruit of his own words, 14
each man's labour brings its own return.

In the eyes of a fool the way he goes is right, 15
the wise man listens to advice.

29:11 2S13:20f,32 The fool shows his displeasure straight away, 16
the discreet man overlooks the insult.

14:25 To tell the truth is to further justice, 17
a false witness is nothing but deceit.

15:4 Ps 55:21 There are some whose thoughtless words pierce like a sword, 18
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Lips that tell the truth abide firm for ever, 19
the tongue that lies lasts only for a moment.

Bitterness[e] is in the heart of the schemer, 20
Mt 5:9 joy with those who give counsels of peace.

11:21 Jb 4:7 Ps 91:10 Si 33:1 No harm can come to the virtuous man, 21
but the wicked have their fill of troubles.

11:20; 15:9 Si 20:26 Lips that lie are abhorrent to Yahweh; 22
dear to him those who speak the truth.

23 The man of discretion keeps his knowledge hidden,
the heart of fools proclaims their folly. 10:19; 13:16; 18:2

24 For the diligent hand, authority;
for the slack hand, forced labour.

25 Worry makes a man's heart heavy,
a kindly word makes it glad. 15:13

26 An impartial arbiter is his own best friend;[f]
the way of the wicked leads them astray.

27 The idle man has no game to roast:[g]
diligence is a man's most precious possession.

28 Life lies along the path of virtue,
the way of the vicious leads to death.[h] 10:16 Rm 6:21-23

1 13 A wise son loves[a] discipline,
a mocker will not listen to reproof.

2 When a man has good things to eat, it is the fruit of his own words, 12:14; 18:20
but the appetite of the treacherous feeds on violence.

3 He keeps his life who guards his mouth,[b] 21:23
he who talks too much is lost. Si 28:25-26 Jm 3:2-12

4 The idler yearns, but there is no food for him; 6:6-11; 21:25
hard workers get their fill.

5 The virtuous man hates lying words, Si 20:24
but the wicked man slanders and defames.

6 Virtue preserves the man of honest life,
wickedness proves the ruin of the sinner.[c]

7 There are some who, on nothing, pretend to be rich, Qo 6:8 Lk 12:21,33 Rv 3:17
some, with great wealth, pretend to be poor.

8 A man's wealth may ransom his life, 15:16 Qo 5:11
but the poor man sees no threat.[d]

9 The light of virtuous men burns bright,[e] Ps 97:11; 112:4
the lamp of the wicked goes out.

10 Insolence breeds disputes;
with the humble[f] is wisdom found. =11:2

11 A sudden[g] fortune will dwindle away, 20:21
he grows rich who accumulates little by little.

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, 3:28; 13:19
desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

13 He who despises the word will destroy himself,
he who respects the commandment will be safe.[h]

12 a. 'who does his own work' Greek; 'who has a slave' Hebr.
b. Lit. 'bowels'.
c. Verse translated from Greek.
d. 'the wicked man is entrapped' Greek.
e. 'Bitterness' conj.; 'deceit' Hebr.
f. Following Greek. Hebr. 'A just man shows the way(?) to his neighbour'.
g. Since he has not caught anything.
h. Following Greek.

13 a. 'loves' corr.
b. Possibly a play on words: the Hebr. for 'soul' (here translated 'life') can also mean 'throat'.
c. 'of the sinner' corr.; 'of sin' Hebr.
d. Since he has nothing to lose.
e. 'burns bright' corr.; 'rejoices' Hebr.
f. 'with the humble' corr.; 'with those who take advice' Hebr.
g. 'sudden' corr. (Hebr. lit. 'that comes from emptiness').
h. 'will destroy himself' corr. 'will be safe' Greek; 'will be rewarded' Hebr.

= 14:27
Si 7:23; 21:13
The wise man's teaching is a life-giving fountain, 14
for eluding the snares of death.

Intelligent prudence secures favour, 15
the way of the treacherous is hard.

12:23
Qo 10:3
Every man of discretion acts by the light of knowledge, 16
the fool parades his folly.

10:26
25:13
A malicious messenger means a fall[i] into misfortune, 17
a trusty envoy heals.

12:1
15:5
For the man who rejects discipline: poverty and disgrace; 18
for the man who accepts correction: honour.

13:12
29:27
Desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul; 19
fools are loth to turn from evil.[j]

14:7
Si 6:33-34; 8:8
Make the wise your companions and you grow wise yourself; 20
make fools your friends and suffer for it.[k]

Misfortune dogs the sinner; 21
good fortune rewards the virtuous.

28:8
Est 8:2
Jb 27:16-17
Qo 2:26
Si 14:4
The good man bequeaths his heritage to his children's children, 22
the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the virtuous.

The poor man's fallow yields food in plenty; 23
there are some who perish when justice fails.[l]

3:12; +22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15-17
Si 30:1-13
Ep 6:4
The man who fails to use the stick hates his son; 24
the man who is free with his correction loves him.

The virtuous man eats to his heart's content, 25
the belly of the wicked goes empty.

8:22+; 9:1; 11:11; 24:3
14 Wisdom[a] builds herself a house; 1
with her own hands Folly pulls it down.

He whose course is honest fears Yahweh, 2
he whose paths are crooked scorns him.

12:6
The fool's mouth contains a rod of pride, 3
the wise man's lips watch over him.[b]

No oxen, no cattle-feed; 4
stout ox, rich crop.

The truthful witness tells no lies, 5
the false witness lies with every breath.[c]

In vain the mocker looks for wisdom, 6
knowledge comes easy to the discerning man.

13:20
Keep well clear of the fool, 7
you will not find wise lips there.

To the man of discretion, wisdom means a watch on his own conduct, 8
but the folly of fools is delusion.

God mocks the wicked, 9
he shows favour to honest men.[d]

The heart knows its own grief best, 10
nor can a stranger share its joy.

11 The house of the wicked shall be destroyed,
the tent of honest men will stand firm.[e] — 10:7 Jb 8:22

12 There is a way that some think right,
but it leads in the end to death. — = 16:25

13 Even in laughter the heart finds sadness,
and joy makes way for sorrow. — Qo 2:1-2; 7:2-6 Lk 6:25

14 The unstable heart is satisfied with its own ways,
the good man with his own hard work.[f]

15 The simpleton believes what he is told,
the man of discretion watches how he treads.

16 The wise man sees evil coming and avoids it,
the fool is rash and presumptuous.

17 A quick-tempered man commits rash acts,
the prudent man will be long-suffering.[g] — 10:4; 14:29; 20:3; 29:22 Jm 1:19

18 Simpletons have folly for their portion,
men of discretion knowledge for their crown. — 14:24

19 The evil bow down before the good,
the wicked, at the gates of the virtuous.

20 The poor man is detestable even to his neighbour,
but the rich man has friends and to spare. — 19:4-7 Si 6:8-12; 13:22

21 He who looks down on his neighbour sins,
blessed is he who takes pity on the poor. — 11:12 Ps 41:1

22 To be a schemer, is this not evil?
Lay worthy plans, and kindliness and loyalty await you.

23 Hard work always yields its profit,
idle talk brings only want.

24 Sound judgement is the crown of the wise,
folly the diadem of fools.[h] — 14:18

25 A truthful witness is a saver of lives,
he who utters lies is an impostor.[i] — 12:17

26 Fear of Yahweh gives good grounds for confidence,
in him his children find a refuge. — 19:23

27 The fear of Yahweh is a life-giving spring,
for eluding the snares of death. — = 13:14; 19:23

28 A king's majesty shows in the numbers of his people,
with few to rule, a prince is ruined.

29 The equable man is full of discernment,
the hasty is more than foolish.[j] — 14:17; 15:18; 19:11; 20:3

i. Lit. 'causes a fall' corr.; 'falls' Hebr.
j. The text of this verse is probably corrupt or defective.
k. 'suffer for it' corr.; 'become wicked' Hebr.
l. The text seems corrupt. Greek 'Just men pass many years in wealth; the unjust speedily perish'.
14 a. 'Wisdom' corr.; 'The wisest women' Hebr., though the verb is in the singular.
b. Text uncertain.
c. On false witness, cf. 6:19; 12:17; 14:25; 19:5,9; 21:28; 24:28; 25:18, possibly also 10:11; 11:9; 12:6. Cf. Ex 20:16; 23:1; Dt 19:15-21.
d. Text corr.
e. 'will stand firm' Greek.
f. Lit. 'his work' conj.
g. Following Greek. Hebr. 'the prudent man is detested'.
h. 'sound judgement' Greek; 'their riches' Hebr. 'diadem of fools' corr. following 4:9; Hebr. 'the folly of fools is folly'.
i. Text corr.; Hebr. 'craftiness utters lies'.
j. 'is more than foolish' Greek.

17:22 The life of the body is a tranquil heart, 30
but envy is a cancer in the bones.

17:5 To oppress the poor is to insult his creator, 31
to be kind to the needy is to honour him.

The wicked man is overthrown by his own malice, 32
the virtuous finds shelter in his integrity.[k]

In the hearts of discerning men wisdom makes her home, 33
within the fool she has no place at all.[l]

29:4 Virtue makes a nation great, 34
by sin whole races are disgraced.

16:13 Gn 41:37-44 Si 8:8 Mt 24:45 A clever servant enjoys the favour of the king, 35
he uses his shrewdness to avoid disgrace.[m]

1 S 25:32-33 1 K 12:12-19 Si 6:5 **15** A mild answer turns away wrath, 1
sharp words stir up anger.

Qo 10:12 The tongue of wise men distils[a] knowledge, 2
the mouth of fools spews folly.

5:21; 15:11 The eyes of Yahweh are everywhere: 3
16:2 Ps 7:9; 139:1f observing the evil and the good.

Si 36:23 Zc 4:10 The tongue that soothes is a tree of life; 4
12:18 the barbed tongue, a breaker of hearts.

12:1; 13:18 He who spurns his father's discipline is a fool, 5
he who accepts correction is discreet.

In the house of the virtuous there is no lack of treasure, 6
the earnings of the wicked are fraught with anxiety.

Wise men's lips keep guard on[b] knowledge, 7
not so the heart of fools.

=21:27; 28:9 1 S 15:22+ The sacrifice of the wicked is abhorrent to Yahweh, 8
dear to him is the prayer of honest men.

11:20; 12:22 The conduct of the wicked is abhorrent to Yahweh, 9
but he loves the man who makes virtue his goal.

Correction is severe for him who leaves the way; 10
12:1; 15:32 he who hates being reprimanded will die.

15:3 Jb 26:6 Jn 2:25 Sheol and Perdition lie open to Yahweh; 11
how much more the hearts of mankind!

9:8 The mocker does not care to be reprimanded, 12
he will not choose the wise for his companions.

12:25 Si 13:25 Glad heart means happy face, 13
where the heart is sad the spirit is broken.

18:15 The heart of the discerning makes knowledge its search, 14
the mouth of fools feeds on folly.

For the sorrowing every day is evil, 15
Si 30:25 for the joyous heart it is festival always.

13:8; 16:8; 17:1 Ps 37:16 Better to have little and with it fear of Yahweh 16
than to have treasure and with it anxiety.

17 Better a dish of herbs when love is there
than a fattened ox and hatred to go with it. 17:1

18 The hot-headed man provokes disputes,
the equable man allays dissension. 14:29; 28:2,25 Si 8:16; 28:8 Mt 5:9

19 The way of the lazy is strewn with thorns,
the path of the industrious is a broad highway.[c]

20 A wise son is his father's joy, =10:1
a foolish man despises his mother. 17:25; 23:22

21 Folly appeals to a man with no sense,
the man of discernment goes straight forward.

22 Without deliberation plans come to nothing, 11:14
where counsellors are many plans succeed.

23 When a man has a ready answer he has joy too:
how satisfying is the apt reply!

24 The upward path to life is for the wise man, Qo 3:21
that he may avoid Sheol below.[d] Nb 16:33+

25 Yahweh pulls down the house of the proud, 22:28; 23:10-11
but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact. Dt 19:14 Ho 5:10

26 Wicked scheming is abhorrent to Yahweh,
but words that are kind are pure.

27 He who seeks dishonest gain brings trouble on his house, 1:19
he who hates bribes shall have life. 17:23+

28 The heart of the virtuous man contemplates kind actions,[e]
the mouth of wicked men spews out malice. =19:28

29 Yahweh stands far from the wicked, Is 59:2 Jn 9:31
but he listens to the prayers of the virtuous.

30 A kindly glance gives joy to the heart,
good news lends strength to[f] the bones.

31 The ear attentive to wholesome correction 25:12
finds itself at home in the company of the wise.

32 He who rejects discipline despises his own self; 15:10
he who listens to correction wins discernment. 10:17; 19:20

33 The fear of Yahweh is a school of wisdom, 1:7+; =16:9 Si 1:27; 32:10
humility goes before honour.

1 **16** Man's heart makes the plans, 16:9; 19:21 Qo 9:1
Yahweh gives the answer.[a]

2 A man's conduct may strike him as pure, 15:3; =21:2 24:12
Yahweh, however, weighs the motives.

3 Commend what you do to Yahweh, 3:6
and your plans will find achievement. Ps 37:5

k. 'in his integrity' corr. following Greek; 'in his death' Hebr.
l. Greek (lit. 'she is not known').
m. Following Greek.

15 a. 'distils' corr.; 'makes pleasing' Hebr.
b. 'keep guard on' Symmachus.
c. Verse translated according to Greek.
d. 'upward' and 'below': omitted by Greek. The 'path of life' seems to mean a prolongation of earthly life; descent to Sheol being death. Later it comes to be understood as the way to heavenly happiness.
e. 'kind actions' conj.; '(considers) how to answer' Hebr.
f. Lit. 'fattens'.

16 a. Man proposes, God disposes.

Yahweh made everything for its own purpose, 4
Rm 9:22 yes, even the wicked for the day of disaster.[b]

The arrogant heart is abhorrent to Yahweh, 5
11:21 be sure it will not go unpunished.

Tb 12:9 By kindliness and loyalty atonement is made for sin; 6
with the fear of Yahweh goes avoidance of evil.

Let Yahweh be pleased with a man's way of life 7
Gn 26:26f; 31:1f and he makes his very enemies into friends.

15:16+ Tb 12:8 Ps 37:16 Better have little and with it virtue, 8
than great revenues and no right to them.

16:1; 19:21; 20:24 Si 37:15 A man's heart plans out his way 9
but it is Yahweh who makes his steps secure.

20:8 The lips of the king utter oracles,[c] 10
he does not err when he speaks in judgement.

11:1+ To Yahweh belong the balance and scales,[d] 11
all the weights in the bag are of his making.

Evil-doing is abhorrent to kings, 12
25:5; 29:14 since virtue is the throne's foundation.

14:35; 22:11 Si 8:8 Virtuous lips are welcome to a king, 13
he loves a man of honest words.

19:12; 20:2 The king's wrath is the herald of death, 14
but a wise man will appease it.

19:12 Jb 29:24 Ps 4:6+ When the king's face brightens it spells life, 15
his favour is like the rain in spring.

3:14; 8:19 Si 51:28 Better gain wisdom than gold, 16
choose discernment rather than silver.

Si 32:23 To turn from evil is the way of honest men; 17
he keeps his life safe who watches where he goes.

11:2; 15:33; 18:12 Pride goes before destruction, 18
a haughty spirit before a fall.

Is 57:15 Better be humble among the lowly 19
than share the booty with the proud.

13:13; 29:25 Ps 2:12; 40:4 He who listens closely to the word shall find happiness; 20
he who puts his trust in Yahweh is blessed.

16:23 He whose heart is wise is proclaimed discerning; 21
sweetness of speech makes words the more persuasive.

Shrewdness is a fountain of life for its possessor, 22
the folly of fools is their own punishment.

16:21 The wise man's heart lends shrewdness to his mouth 23
Qo 10:12 and makes his words more persuasive.

Kindly words are a honeycomb, 24
sweet to the taste, wholesome to the body.

=14:12 There is a way that some think right, 25
but it leads in the end to death.

26 A worker's appetite works on his behalf,
his hungry mouth drives him on.

27 A scoundrel digs deep for mischief-making, Ps 120:4
on his lips is a fire that scorches. Jm 3:6; 5:3

28 A troublemaker sows strife, 17:9
a talebearer divides friend from friend. Si 28:13f

29 A violent man lures his neighbour astray
and leads him by a way that is not good.

30 He who closes his eyes meditates mischief;
he who purses his lips has already done wrong.

31 White hairs are a crown of honour, 20:29
they are found in the paths of virtue. Ws 4:9
Si 25:4-6
1 Th 2:19

32 Better an equable man than a hero,
a man master of himself than one who takes a city. 25:28

33 On the breast the lot is drawn,[e]
from Yahweh the decision comes.

1 17 Better a dry crust and with it peace 15:16,17
than a house where feast and dispute go together.[a]

2 Where the son is profligate the shrewd slave is master, Si 10:25
with the other brothers, he will share the inheritance.

3 A crucible for silver, a furnace for gold, =27:21
but Yahweh for the testing of hearts! Ws 3:6
Si 23:19
Jr 11:20+;
17:10

4 An evil-doer pays attention to malicious lips,
a liar listens to a slanderous tongue.

5 To mock the poor is to insult his creator, 14:31
he who laughs at distress shall not go unpunished. Lv 19:14
Jb 31:15
Ps 127:3

6 The crown of the aged is their children's children; Ps 128:3,6
the children's glory is their father. Si 3:10-11

7 Fine words do not become the foolish,
false words become a prince still less.

8 A gift works like a talisman for him who gives it: 18:16; 21:14
he prospers whichever way he turns. 17:23+

9 He who covers an offence promotes love, 10:12; 16:28
he who raises the matter again divides friends.

10 On a man of discernment a reproof makes more impression
than a hundred strokes on a fool.

11 The wicked man thinks of nothing but rebellion,
hence a cruel messenger will be sent against him.[b]

12 Rather come on a bear robbed of her cubs
than on a fool in his folly.

b. When misfortune comes to him it will be a lesson in God's justice.

c. Since the king pronounces judgement in the name of God, cf. 2 S 14:18-20; 1 K 3:4-28. Vv. 10-15 (except v. 11) are royal proverbs.

d. Hebr. inserts 'just'.

e. Allusion to the *ephod* worn on the high priest's breast, Ex 28:6+, here identified with the other *ephod* which held the sacred lots, 1 S 2:28+.

17 a. Lit. 'full of sacrifices of dispute'. Probably a reference to meat offered in sacrifice and then eaten at a sacred meal. But the text is not certain.

b. Possibly 'the destroying angel', cf. Ex 12:23+; Greek 'The Lord will send a ruthless angel against him'.

Ps 109:4f
He who returns evil for good
will not rid his house of evil. 13

Mt 5:25,40
As well loose a flood as initiate legal proceedings;
break off before the dispute begins. 14

18:5
Ex 23:7
Dt 16:18-20
Is 5:20
To absolve the guilty and condemn the virtuous,
both alike are abhorrent to Yahweh. 15

What good is money in a foolish hand?
To purchase wisdom, when he has no sense? 16

18:19,24
1 S 20
Si 6:7-10,16; 12:8
A friend is a friend at all times,
it is for adversity that a brother is born. 17

6:1+
He lacks sense who offers guarantees
and goes surety for his neighbour. 18

He who has a taste for dispute has a taste for blows,[c]
the man of haughty speech[d] courts destruction. 19

Ps 101:5
The contrary heart does not find happiness,
the deceitful tongue falls into distress. 20

10:1
Si 16:1; 22:3
He who begets a stupid son begets him to his sorrow,
the father of a fool knows no joy. 21

14:30
A glad heart is excellent medicine,
a spirit depressed wastes the bones away.[e] 22

15:27
Ex 23:8
Dt 16:19; 27:25
1 S 8:3
Is 1:23
Am 5:12
Under cover of the cloak a venal man takes the gift
to pervert the course of justice.[f] 23

The man of discernment has wisdom there before him,
but the eyes of the fool range to the ends of the earth.[g] 24

10:1; 15:20; 19:13; 29:15
A foolish son is his father's sorrow,
and the grief of her who gave him birth. 25

To fine the innocent is not right,
to strike the noble is still worse. 26

10:19; 11:13
A man who can control his tongue has knowledge,
a man of discernment keeps his temper cool. 27

Jb 13:5
Si 20:5
If a fool can hold his tongue, even he can pass for wise,
and pass for clever if he keeps his lips tight shut. 28

18 Who lives by himself follows his own whim,
he is angered by advice of any kind.[a] 1

The fool has no love for reflection
12:23 but only for airing his opinion. 2

When wickedness comes, contempt comes too,
and, with disgrace, dishonour. 3

20:5
Si 21:13
Jn 7:38
Deep waters, such are the words of man:
a swelling torrent, a fountain of life.[b] 4

17:15+
24:23+
It is not good to show partiality for the wicked
and so to deprive the virtuous when giving judgement. 5

The lips of the fool draw him[c] into arguments
and his mouth pleads for a beating. 6

7 The mouth of the fool works his own ruin, 10:14; 13:3
his lips are a snare for his own life. Ps 59:12

8 The words of a talebearer are tasty morsels =26:22
that go right down into the belly.

9 The man who is idle at work
is blood-brother to the destroyer.

10 The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; Ps 20:1; 61:3; 124:8
the virtuous man runs to it and is secure.

11 The rich man's wealth is his stronghold, =10:15
a high wall, as he supposes.

12 The human heart is haughty until destruction comes, 16:18
humility goes before honour. =15:33 Si 32:10

13 To retort without first listening Si 11:8
is folly to work one's own confusion.

14 Sickness the spirit of man can endure,
but when the spirit is broken, who can bear this?

15 The heart of the discerning gains in knowledge, 15:14
the ear of the wise man searches for knowledge.

16 A present opens every door for you 17:8, 23+; 21:14
and wins you access to the great. Si 20:29

17 The first to plead is adjudged to be right,
in comes his opponent, then the trial begins.

18 The lot puts an end to disputes
and decides between men of power.

19 Brother helped by brother is a fortress,[d] 17:17 Qo 4:9-12
friends are like the bars of a keep.[e] Si 6:14

20 When a man's stomach is full, it is the fruit of his own mouth, 12:14; 13:2
it is the yield of his lips that fills him.

21 Death and life are in the gift of the tongue, 21:23 Si 5:13; 37:14 Jm 3:2-12
those who indulge it must eat the fruit it yields.

22 Who finds a wife finds happiness, 5:15+; 31:10f Si 26:1-4
receiving a mark of favour from Yahweh.

23 The poor man's language is entreaty, Si 13:3
the rich man's answer harshness.

24 There are[f] friends who lead one to ruin, 17:17; 27:10
others are closer than a brother.

1 19 Better a poor man living an honest life =28:6
than the adept at double-talk who is a fool.

c. 'blows' corr.; 'sin' Hebr.
d. Lit. 'he who makes his door high'.
e. Lit. 'dries up the bones'.
f. Bribes taken by judges and false witnesses. Cf. 17:8; 18:16 and 21:14 where the 'gift' has a more general sense.
g. I.e. the fool misses nothing and interferes in everything.
18 a. Text uncertain: solitude commended or condemned?
b. 'fountain of life' Greek; 'fountain of wisdom' Hebr.
c. 'draw him' Greek.
d. Following Greek. Hebr. 'a brother sinned against is more than a fortress'.
e. 'friends' conj.; 'quarrels' Hebr.
f. 'There are' corr.

21:5 Where reflection is wanting, zeal is not good; 2
he who goes too quickly misses his way.

Si 15:11-20 Jm 1:13-14 It is man's folly that spoils his fortunes, 3
yet it is against Yahweh that his heart rages.

14:20 Si 6:8-12; 12:8; 13:21 Wealth multiplies friends, 4
but the one friend the poor man has is taken from him!

=19:9 The false witness will not go unpunished, 5
21:28 the man who utters lies will not go free.

Si 13:5-6 Qo 5:10 The generous man has many to court his favour, 6
to one who gives, everyone is friend.

The poor man's brothers hate him, every one; 7
Si 13:21 his friends—how much the more do these desert him!

He goes in search of words, but there are none to be had.[a]

He who obtains wisdom works his own good, 8
he who cares about discernment finds happiness.

+19:5; 21:28 The false witness shall not go unpunished, 9
the man who utters lies will meet his end.

30:22 Qo 10:6-7 It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, 10
still less for a slave to govern princes.

14:29 A man's shrewdness shows in equanimity, 11
his self-respect in overlooking an offence.

=20:2 Like the roaring of a lion, the anger of a king, 12
16:14-15 but like dew on the grass his favour.

10:1; 17:25; 21:9; =27:15 A foolish son is the ruin of his father, 13
a woman's scolding is like a dripping gutter.

18:22; 31:10f From fathers comes inheritance of house and wealth, 14
from Yahweh a wife who is discreet.

10:4 Idleness lulls a man to sleep, 15
the feckless soul will go hungry.

Si 32:24 Lk 10:28; 11:28 He who keeps the commandment is keeper of himself, 16
but he who despises the word[b] shall die.

22:9; 28:27 Tb 4:7 ✗ Mt 25:40 The man who is kind to the poor lends to Yahweh: 17
he will repay him for what he has done.

23:13; 29:17 Dt 21:18-21 All the while there is hope, chastise your son, 18
but do not set out to destroy him altogether.

A violent man lays himself open to a penalty; 19
spare him, and you aggravate your own misfortune.[c]

15:32 Listen to advice, accept correction, 20
to be the wiser in the time to come.

16:1,9; 20:24 Ps 33:11 Plans multiply in the human heart, 21
but the purpose of Yahweh stands firm.

A man's attraction lies in his kindness, 22
better a poor man than a liar.

Ps 25:12 The fear of Yahweh leads to life, 23
14:27 a man has food and shelter, and no evil to fear.

24 Into the dish the idler dips his hand,
but bring it back to his mouth he cannot. =26:15

25 Strike a mocker and the ignorant will be more wary,
correct a man of discernment and he will listen to reason. 9:8; 21:11 Si 42:8

26 He who dispossesses his father and drives out his mother
is a son as shameless as depraved. 20:20; 23:22; 30:17 Ex 21:17+ Si 3:12,16

27 Give up listening to instruction, my son,
and ignoring what knowledge has to say.[d]

28 A witness of bad character holds justice in contempt;
the mouth of the wicked gorges on iniquity. =15:28

29 The stick[e] was created for mockers,
and beating for the backs of fools. 10:13; 26:3 Si 42:8

1 20 Wine is reckless, strong drink quarrelsome;
unwise is he whom it seduces. 23:29-35 Si 31:25-31

2 Like the roaring of a lion the fury of a king;
whoever provokes his anger wrongs his own life. 16:14; =19:12

3 It is to a man's honour if he avoids quarrels,
but fools never exercise self-control.[a] 14:17; 29

4 Autumn is over but the idler does not plough,
at harvest time he looks—nothing there! 6:6; 10:5; 21:25

5 Deep in water are the purposes in human hearts,
the discerning man has only to draw them out. 18:4

6 Many describe themselves as kindly men,
but who can find a man really to be trusted? 27:2 Si 37:1 Mt 6:2,5,16

7 A virtuous man whose ways are blameless—
happy his children after him! Ps 101:6

8 A king enthroned on the judgement seat
with one look scatters[b] all that is evil. 16:10

9 What man can say, 'I have cleansed my heart,
I am purified of my sin'? 1 K 8:46 Jb 4:17+ Ps 51 1 Jn 1:8-10

10 One weight here, another there; here one measure, there another:
both alike are abhorrent to Yahweh. 11:1+ Dt 25:13-16 Jb 31:5

11 Even at play a child reveals
whether his actions will be pure and right.

12 Ear that hears, eye that sees,
Yahweh has made both of these. Ex 4:11 Ps 94:9

13 Do not love sleep or you will know poverty;
keep your eyes open and have bread and to spare. 6:6

14 'No good, no good!' says the buyer,
but he goes off congratulating himself. Si 37:11

19 a. Fragmentary proverb, probably lacking first line.
b. 'the word' corr., cf. 13:13; 'his ways' Hebr.
c. Text very doubtful.
d. The context suggests that the 'instruction' is that of evil counsellors. Others consider the proverb to be ironic.
e. 'The stick' Greek; 'Judgements' Hebr.

20 a. Lit. 'but every fool breaks out'.
b. Or 'winnows', 'sifts', (by distinguishing between just and unjust suits) cf. 20:26.

3:13-15 There is gold, and profusion of pearls, 15
but lips that speak of knowledge, that is the priceless ornament.

=27:13 Take the man's clothes! He has gone surety for a stranger. 16
6:1+ Seize him to the profit of persons unknown!

Jb 20:12-14 A man finds bread sweet when it is got by fraud, 17
but later his mouth is full of grit.

Weigh[c] your plans in consultation, 18
with sound guidance wage your war.

11:13+ Si 22:22 The bearer of gossip lets out secrets; 19
have nothing to do with chatterers.

29:26+ Ex 20:12; 21:17+ Whoever curses father or mother 20
in blackest darkness shall have his lamp snuffed out.

13:11 Property quickly come by at first 21
will not be blessed in the end.

25:22+ Rm 12:17 1 Th 5:15 Do not say, 'I will repay evil'; 22
put your hope in Yahweh and he will keep you safe.

11:1+ One weight here, another there: this is abhorrent to Yahweh, 23
false scales are not good.

16:9; 19:21 ||Ps 37:23 Jr 10:23 Yahweh guides a man's steps: 24
how could man discern the way he goes?

Dt 23:22f Qo 5:3-5 Si 18:23 Mt 15:5p A man is trapped when he shouts 'Dedicated!' 25
and only begins to reflect after the vow.

A wise king winnows the wicked, 26
and makes their spite[d] recoil on themselves.

Mt 6:22 ↗1 Co 2:11 Man's spirit is the lamp of Yahweh, 27
searching his deepest self.

Ps 61:7 Is 16:5 Kindness and loyalty mount guard over the king, 28
his throne is founded on kindness.

The glory of the young is their strength, 29
16:31 the dignity of the old, grey hairs.

Wounding strokes are good medicine for evil, 30
blows bring healing to the deepest self.[e]

21 Like flowing water is the heart of the king in the hand of Yahweh, 1
who turns it where he pleases.

=16:2 A man's conduct may strike him as upright, 2
Lk 16:15; 18:9-14 Yahweh, however, weighs the heart.

1 S 15:22+ Am 5:22-24+ To act virtuously and with justice 3
is more pleasing to Yahweh than sacrifice.[a]

Ps 101:5 Haughty eye, proud heart, 4
lamp of the wicked, nothing but sin.[b]

19:2 Si 11:11 The hardworking man is thoughtful, and all is gain; 5
too much haste, and all that comes of it is want.

To make a fortune with the help of a lying tongue, 6
such the idle fantasy of those who look for death.

7 The marauding of the wicked entraps them
through their refusal to do what is right.

8 The way of the felon is devious,
the conduct of the innocent straightforward.

9 Better the corner of a loft to live in =25:24
than a house shared with a scolding woman. 19:13; 21:19 Si 25:16

10 The wicked man's soul is intent on evil,
he looks on his neighbour with dislike.

11 When a mocker is punished, the ignorant man grows wiser, =19:25
when a wise man is instructed he acquires more knowledge.

12 The Just One[c] watches the house of the wicked:
he hurls the wicked to destruction.

13 He who shuts his ear to the poor man's cry Mt 6:15 Jm 2:13
shall himself plead and not be heard.

14 Anger is mollified by a covert gift, 17:8, 23+ Si 20:29
raging fury by a bribe under cover of the cloak.

15 For the virtuous man it is a joy to execute justice,
but it brings dismay to evil-doers.

16 The man who strays from the way of prudence Ws 5:6
will rest where the Shades gather round him.

17 Pleasure-lovers stay poor, 23:20-21
he will not grow rich who loves wine and good living.[d]

18 The wicked man is the price to be paid for the virtuous,
the deceiver for the upright.[e]

19 Better to live in a desert land 21:9+ Si 25:16
than with a scolding and irritable woman.

20 If in a wise man's dwelling there is precious treasure and oil,
the fool will gobble it up.

21 He who pursues virtue and kindness Mt 5:6
shall find life and honour too.[f]

22 The wise man can scale a citadel of warriors Qo 7:19; 9:13-15
and throw down the rampart it trusted in.

23 He who keeps watch over his mouth and his tongue 13:3; 18:21
preserves himself from disaster.

24 Arrogant, haughty, his name is 'Mocker';
overweening pride marks his behaviour.

25 The idler's desires are the death of him, 13:4; 20:4
since his hands will do no work.

c. 'Weigh' corr.; Hebr. 'Plans take shape'.
d. 'spite', corr., cf. Ps 94:23; 'the wheel' Hebr.
e. Text very doubtful.

21 a. This insistence on sincerity of heart as the necessary condition of all ritual observance recurs throughout the O.T. Cf. Am 5:22f; Ho 6:6; Is 1:11; Jr 7:21-23.
b. Translation uncertain. Lit. 'the lamp of the wicked is sin'.
c. I.e. Yahweh (cf. Jb 34:17), but the text is uncertain.
d. Lit. 'wine and oil'.
e. Cf. 11:8. The proverb apparently assumes that there must be a certain quota of misery in this world from which, however, God shields the virtuous and to which he condemns the wicked.
f. 'life and honour' Greek; 'life, justice, and honour' Hebr.

Lk 6:30,34 The godless[g] is forever coveting, 26
the virtuous man gives without ever refusing.

=15:8 Si 7:9 The sacrifice of wicked men is abhorrent,[h] 27
above all when they offer for bad motives.

19:5,9 The false witness will meet his doom, 28
but the speech of the obedient will always be heard.

The wicked man assumes an air of confidence, 29
the honest man gives his own conduct careful thought.

Neither wisdom, nor prudence, nor advice, 30
Is 8:9-10 can stand in Yahweh's presence.[i]

Ps 20:7 Ho 1:7+ The horse is caparisoned for the day of battle, 31
but to Yahweh the victory belongs.

Qo 7:1 Si 41:12 **22** A good name is more desirable than great wealth, 1
the respect of others is better than silver or gold.

=29:13 Jb 31:15 Ws 6:7 Mt 5:45 Rich and poor are found together, 2
Yahweh has made them all.

=27:12 The discreet man sees danger and takes shelter, 3
the ignorant go forward and pay for it.

The reward of humility is the fear of Yahweh, 4
riches, honour and life.

Si 32:23 Thorns and snares line the path of the wilful, 5
he who values his life will keep his distance.

Si 6:18 Instruct a child in the way he should go,[a] 6
and when he grows old he will not leave it.

The rich man lords it over the poor, 7
the borrower is the lender's slave.

12:14 Jb 4:8; 15:15 Si 7:3 He who sows injustice reaps disaster, 8
and the rod of his anger falls on himself.[b]

19:17; 28:27 Ps 112:9 Lk 14:13-14 A blessing awaits the man who is kindly, 9
since he shares his bread with the poor.

26:20 Expel the mocker and strife goes too, 10
dispute and abuse die down.

16:13 ↗ Mt 5:8 Yahweh[c] loves the pure in heart, 11
friend to the king is the man of gracious speech.

Ws 1:8 The eyes of Yahweh see knowledge safe preserved, 12
but he confounds the words of liars.

6:6; =26:13 'There is a lion outside,' says the idler 13
'I shall be killed in the street!'

5:2+; 23:27 The mouth of alien women is a deep pit, 14
into it falls the man whom Yahweh detests.

13:24; 29:15 Innate in the heart of a child is folly, 15
judicious beating will rid him of it.

Oppress the poor and you enrich him, 16
give to the rich and you make him poor.[d]

III. A COLLECTION OF THE SAGES

17 Sayings of the sages.

Give ear to my words[e] 1:5
and apply your heart to knowing them;
18 for it will be a delight to keep them deep within you
to have them all ready on your lips.
19 So that your trust may be in Yahweh,
today I propose to make your way[f] known to you.

20 Have I not written for you thirty chapters[g]
of advice and knowledge,
21 for you to be able to expound the truth
and with sound words to answer those who question you?[h]

22 Because a man is poor, do not therefore cheat him, Ex 23:6
nor, at the city gate,[i] oppress anybody in affliction;
23 for Yahweh takes up their cause, 23:11 Is 33:1
and extorts the life of their extortioners.

24 Make friends with no man who gives way to anger, Qo 7:9 Si 8:15
make no hasty-tempered man a companion of yours,
25 for fear you learn from his behaviour
and in this risk the loss of your own life.

26 Do not be one of those who go guarantor, 6:1+
who go surety for debts:
27 if you have no means of paying
you will find your bed taken[j] from under you.
28 Do not displace the ancient landmark, 15:25+; =23:10 Dt 19:14
set by your ancestors.

29 You see some man sharp at business?
He will come to serve kings.
Not for him the service of obscure people.

1 23 If you take your seat at a great man's table, Si 13:7; 31:12-24
take careful note of what you have before you;
2 put a knife to your throat[a]
if you are prone to gluttony.
3 Do not crave his choice food, =23:6
for it is doubtful nourishment.

4 Do not weary yourself with getting rich,
and have nothing to do with dishonest gain.[b]
5 You fix your gaze on this, and it is there no longer,

g. 'the godless' Greek; 'he covets' Hebr.
h. The Greek adds 'to Yahweh' as in 15:8.
i. Or 'prevail against Yahweh'.
22 a. Others translate 'from his earliest years' (lit. 'beginning of his way') or 'according to his dispositions'.
b. 'falls on himself' corr.; 'falls' Hebr. Meaning uncertain.
c. 'Yahweh' following versions.
d. This proverb expresses either a natural law by which hardship alone stimulates effort and procures success, or a religious faith in the justice of Yahweh who will reverse the situations of rich and poor.
e. Following Greek. Hebr. (which lacks the heading) 'Give ear and listen to the words of the wise'.
f. 'your way' Greek.
g. The 'thirty chapters' (corr.; Hebr. 'the day before yesterday' or 'three times') is apparently derived from the text of the *Wisdom of Amenemophis* on which this whole passage is based.
h. The text adds 'of the words of truth' after truth'. 'who question you' corr. following Greek.
i. The city gate where cases were judged, cf. 24:7.
j. Lit. 'they will take' corr. following Greek.
23 a. Presumably 'set bounds to your gluttony'. Others interpret 'To be a glutton is to put a knife to your throat (i.e. to endanger your life)'.
b. Text corr.; 'refrain from dwelling on it' Hebr.

for it is able to sprout wings
like an eagle that flies off to the sky.

=23:3 Si 31:12-24
Do not dine with a niggardly man, 6
do not crave his choice food.
It would be like a tempest in his throat.[c] 7
'Eat and drink', he tells you, but his heart is not in it.
You will spit out what little you have eaten 8
and find your compliments wasted.

Mt 7:6
Do not waste words on a fool, 9
he will not appreciate the shrewdness of your remarks.

15:25; =22:28+ Jb 24:9 Si 35:14
Do not displace the ancient landmark 10
or encroach on orphans' lands,
Ex 22:21-23 Pr 22:23
for he who avenges them is strong 11
and will take up their cause against you.[d]

Apply your heart to discipline, 12
and your ears to words that are wise.

13:24; 19:18 Si 30:1-13
Do not be chary of correcting a child, 13
a stroke of the cane is not likely to kill him.
A stroke of the cane 14
and you save him from Sheol.

My son, if your heart is wise, 15
then my own heart is glad,
and my inmost self rejoices 16
when from your lips come honest words.

24:1 Ps 37:1-4; 73:3
Do not let your heart be envious of sinners 17
but be steady every day in the fear of Yahweh;
3:31; =24:14 Ps 9:18; 37:37
for there is a morrow, 18
and your hope will not be nullified.

28:7
Listen, my son, and learn to be wise, 19
and guide your heart in the way...[e]

Si 18:33; 31:25-31
Do not be one of those forever tippling wine 20
nor one of those who gorge themselves with meat;
21:17
for the drunkard and glutton impoverish themselves, 21
and a drowsy head makes a wearer of rags.

15:20; 19:26+ Dt 21:18-21 Tb 4:3
Listen to your father who begot you, 22
do not despise your mother in her old age.

Truth you must purchase, never sell; 23
this is wisdom, discipline, and discernment.

10:1
The father of the virtuous man will rejoice indeed, 24
he who fathers a wise man will have joy of it.

17:25
May you be the joy of your father,[f] 25
the gladness of her who bore you!
My son, attend to me, 26
keep your eyes fixed on my advice:
22:14 Si 9:3
a harlot is a deep pit, 27
a narrow well, the woman who is a stranger.
7:12
Yes, like a robber she is on the watch 28
and many are the men she dupes.[g]

29 For whom is everybody's pity and everyone's contempt, 20:1 Si 31:25
for whom is strife reserved, for whom dissatisfaction,
for whom blows struck from all sides,
for whom the clouded eye?
30 For those who linger over wine too long,
ever on the look-out for the well-blended wine.
31 Never relish how red it is, this wine, Ep 5:18-19
how sparkling in the cup,
how smooth its flow.
32 In the end its bite is like a serpent's,
its sting as sharp as an adder's.
33 Your eyes will see strange things,
distorted words will come from your heart.
34 You will be like one sleeping in mid-ocean,
like one asleep at the mast-head. Ps 107:26-27
35 'Struck me, have they? But I'm not hurt.
Beaten me? I don't feel anything.
When shall I wake up?...
I'll ask for more of it!'

1 **24** Do not be envious of wicked men 23:17
or wish for their company,
2 for their hearts are scheming violence,
their lips talking of mischief.

3 By wisdom a house is built, 14:1
by discernment the foundation is laid;
4 by knowledge its storerooms filled
with riches of every kind, rare and desirable.

5 Better the wise man than the strong, 1 S 16:7 Qo 9:16
the man with knowledge than the brawny fellow;[a]
6 for war is won by sound thinking Lk 14:31
and victory rests in having many counsellors. =11:14

7 Wisdom is coral[b] to the fool: 31:23 Si 6:20
at the city gate he does not open his mouth.

8 The man intent on evil-doing
is called a rank intriguer.

9 The foolish scheme nothing but sin,
the mocker is abhorrent to men.

10 If you lose heart,
when adversity comes your strength will only be weakness.[c] Jb 4:5

11 Rescue those being led away to death,
hold back those who are being dragged to the slaughter.[d]
12 Will you object, 'But look, we did not know'? 16:2 Jb 34:11 Si 23:19 2 Tm 4:14
Has he who weighs the heart no understanding,
he who scans your soul no knowledge?
He himself will repay a man as his deeds deserve. Jr 17:10

c. Text corr.
d. The avenger, cf. Nb 35:19+, is Yahweh.
e. Possibly a word omitted: '(way) of prudence'?
f. Lit. 'May your father rejoice at you'; 'at you' corr., cf. Greek; 'and your mother' Hebr.
g. Lit. 'she increases dupes (corr.; Hebr. 'deceivers') among men'.

24 a. Translation following versions.
b. Too delicate a thing for him to appreciate. Text uncertain. 'The gate' is the city gate where public business is transacted.
c. The thought is obscure; possibly 'when you prosper' should be supplied in the first line.
d. Apparently a reference to innocent men unjustly condemned. It is not certain whether this verse should be taken with the following.

Eat honey, my son, since it is good; 13
honey that drips from the comb is sweet to the taste:
Ps 37:37 and such is knowledge of wisdom for your soul: 14
find it, and there will be a morrow,
=23:18 and your hope will not be in vain.

Do not lurk, wicked man, round the virtuous man's dwelling, 15
do not despoil his house.
For though the virtuous man falls seven times, he stands up again; 16
the wicked are the ones who stumble in adversity.

Jb 31:29 Should your enemy fall, do not rejoice, 17
when he stumbles do not let your heart exult;
for fear that at the sight Yahweh will be displeased 18
and turn his anger away from him.

Ps 37:1 Do not be indignant about the wicked, 19
do not be envious of evil men,
since there is no morrow for the wicked man; 20
the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.

✗1 P 2:17 Fear Yahweh, my son, and fear the king; 21
Qo 8:2 do not rebel against either of them;
for suddenly their vengeance will arise, 22
and then who knows what ruin both of them will send?[e]

IV. ANOTHER COLLECTION OF THE SAGES

The following are also taken from the sages: 23

18:5; 28:21; 31:5 To show partiality in judgement is not good.[f]
Si 35:13 Jm 2:9 The man who says, 'You are innocent' to the guilty; 24
the peoples will have only curses for him, and the nations horror;
but those who deal out punishment have cause for satisfaction, 25
on them a blessing rests.

He who returns an honest answer 26
plants a kiss on the lips.

On the open ground, plan what you have to do, 27
Si 7:15 make your preparation in the field;
then you may go
and build your house.

Do not bear witness lightly against your neighbour,[g] 28
nor with your lips deceive.

Mt 6:12,14-15 Do not say, 'I will treat him as he has treated me; 29
I will repay each man as he deserves'.

6:6; 26:13-16 By the idler's field I was passing, 30
by the vineyard of a man who had no sense,
there it all lay, deep in thorns, 31
entirely overgrown with nettles,
and its stone wall broken down.
And as I gazed I pondered, 32
I drew this lesson from the sight,
=6:10-11 'A little sleep, a little drowsiness, 33
a little folding of the arms to take life more easily,
and like a vagrant, poverty is at your elbow 34
and, like a beggar, want'.[h]

V. THE SECOND COLLECTION ATTRIBUTED TO SOLOMON

1 **25** The following also are proverbs of Solomon transcribed by Hezekiah, king of Judah.

2 To conceal a matter, this is the glory of God, — Dt 29:28 Jb 12:7 Rm 11:33
to sift it thoroughly, the glory of kings.
3 High though the heavens are, deep the earth,
there is no fathoming the heart of kings.

4 From silver remove the dross
and it emerges wholly purified;[a]
5 from the king's presence remove the wicked — 16:12; 29:14 Ps 101:7
and on virtue his throne is founded.

6 In the presence of the king do not give yourself airs, — Si 7:4; 13:9-10 Lk 14:8
do not put yourself where the great are standing;
7 better to be invited, 'Come up here' — ↗ Lk 14:7-11
than be humiliated in the presence of the prince.

What your eyes have witnessed[b]
8 do not come out with[c] too quickly at the trial,
for what are you to do at the end
should your neighbour confute you?

9 Have the quarrel out with your neighbour, — Si 6:9; 19:8; 22:22
but do not disclose another's secret,
10 or someone, hearing, will reproach you with it,
and so you lose your reputation.

11 Like apples of gold in a silver setting
is a word that is aptly spoken.
12 A golden ring, an ornament of finest gold, — 15:31 Ps 141:5
is a wise rebuke to an attentive ear.

13 The coolness of snow in harvest time, — 10:26; 25:25
such is the trusty messenger to those who send him: — 13:17
he revives the soul of his master.

14 Clouds and gusts and yet no rain, — Jude 12
such is the man whose promises are princely but never kept.[d]

15 With patience a judge may be cajoled: — Si 28:17 Lk 18:1-8
a soft tongue breaks bones.

e. The second lines of vv. 21 and 22 are corrected according to Greek. Hebr. 'do not ally yourself with agitators... and who knows what ruin will come to them both?' The Greek text here adds five verses:

22a A son who cherishes the word will escape destruction,
for he has accepted it willingly.

22b Let nothing false be spoken by the tongue of the king,
let nothing false proceed from his tongue.

22c The tongue of the king is a sword, not a thing of flesh:
the man who is handed over to him will be crushed.

22d For once his wrath is aroused
he destroys men, sinews and all.

22e He devours the bones of men
and, like a flame, burns them up,
they will not serve to feed even the eagles' young.

After this the Greek inserts 30:1-14.

f. The Law forbids the judge to be a respecter of persons, Lv 19:15; Dt 1:17; 16:19. The prophets similarly insist, though in different terms, on this same duty, Am 2:6; 5:7,10; Is 10:2; Mi 3:9,11; Jr 5:28; Ezk 22:12. The Messiah will judge impartially, Is 11:3-5; Jr 23:5-6; Ps 72:4,12,14, like God himself, cf. Ga 2:6.

g. Greek 'Do not bear false witness'.

h. 'like a beggar' translation conj.

25 a. 'wholly purified' Greek; 'a vessel for the smith' Hebr.

b. Translation follows the versions.

c. Lit. 'do not bring out' corr.

d. Lit. 'who boasts of a lying gift'.

25:27; 27:7 Eat to your satisfaction what honey you may find, 16
but not to excess or you will bring it up again.

Do not set foot too often in your neighbour's house, 17
for fear he tires of you and comes to hate you.

A mace,[e] a sword, a keen arrow, 18
such is the man who bears false witness against his neighbour.

Decaying tooth, lame foot, 19
such is the fickle man when trusted in time of trouble.
as well take off your coat in bitter weather. 20

It is to treat a wound[f] with vinegar
to sing songs to a sorrowing heart.

Ex 23:4-5+ Mt 5:44f If your enemy is hungry, give him something to eat; 21
if thirsty, something to drink.
20:22 By this you heap red-hot coals on his head, 22
↗ Rm 12:20 and Yahweh will reward you.

The rain is born of the north wind, 23
the ravaged face of a backbiting tongue.

=21:9 Si 25:16 Better the corner of a loft to live in 24
than a house shared with a scolding woman.

25:13 Cold water to a thirsty throat: 25
such is good news from a distant land.

A churned up spring, a fountain fouled: 26
such is the virtuous man trembling before the wicked.

25:16 It is not good to eat too much honey, 27
or to be taken in by fawning words.[g]

16:32 An open town, and without defences: 28
such is the man lacking self-control.

26 Snow no more befits the summer, or rain the harvest-time, 1
than honours befit a fool.

Nb 23:8 Dt 23:5f As the sparrow escapes, and the swallow flies away, 2
so the undeserved curse will never hit its mark.

Si 33:25; 42:8 10:13; 19:29 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, 3
and for the backs of fools, the stick.

Do not answer a fool in the terms of his folly 4
for fear you grow like him yourself.

Answer a fool in the terms of his folly 5
for fear he imagines himself wise.[a]

10:26 ...He drinks a bitter draught[b] 6
=26:9 who sends a message by a fool.

Unreliable as a lame man's legs: 7
Si 20:20 so is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

Like fixing a stone tight in the sling,[c] 8
=26:7 so is giving honours to a fool.

A thorn branch in a drunkard's hand: 9
Si 20:20 such is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

10 An archer wounding all who pass:
such is the man who employs a fool.[d]

11 As a dog returns to its vomit,
so a fool reverts to his folly. ↗2 P 2:22

12 You see some man who thinks himself wise? 3:7
More hope for a fool than for him! =29:20

13 'There is a lion in the street,' says the idler =22:13; 24:30
'a lion in the square!'

14 The door turns on its hinges,
the idler, on his bed.

15 Into the dish the idler dips his hand =19:24
but is too tired to bring it back to his mouth.

16 The idler thinks himself wiser
than seven men who answer with discretion.

17 Like catching a stray dog by the tail,[e]
so is interfering in the quarrels of others.

18 Like a madman hurling firebrands, Jm 3:6
arrows and death,
19 so is the man who lies to his neighbour
and then says, 'It was all a joke'.

20 No wood, and the fire goes out; Si 28:10
no talebearer, and quarrelling dies down. 22:10

21 Charcoal for live embers, wood for fire,
for kindling strife a quarrelsome man.

22 The words of a talebearer are tasty morsels =18:8
that go right down into the belly.

23 A glaze applied to an earthen pot: Mt 23:25-28
such are smooth lips and wicked heart. 1 Jn 3:18

24 Where hatred is there are dissembling lips, Si 12:10-11, 16
but deep within lies treachery;
25 do not trust him if the man be fair of speech, Si 27:23
since in his heart lurk seven abominations. Jr 9:4-8
26 Hatred may well disguise itself with guile, Ps 28:3
only to unmask its spite before the community.

27 The man who digs a pit falls into it, 28:10
the stone comes back on him that rolls it. Est 8:1
Ps 7:15
Qo 10:8
Si 27:25-27

28 The lying tongue hates the truth,[f]
the fawning mouth brings ruin.

1 27 Do not boast about tomorrow, Lk 12:19-20
since you do not know what today will bring forth. Jm 4:13-14

e. 'mace' Greek.
f. 'a wound' Greek; 'saltpetre' Hebr.
g. Following versions. Hebr. 'to search out their glory is glory'.

26 a. The contradiction between this and the preceding proverb is deliberate and plays on the two meanings of the phrase 'in the terms of his folly'.
b. Lit. 'he cuts off his feet, he drinks of shame'. Greek 'he drinks of the shame of his own feet'. Text very doubtful.
c. Fixed too securely in the sling and therefore likely to recoil on the slinger.

d. Text conj. Hebr. lit. 'An archer (?) wounding everyone, the man who employs a fool, and the man who employs passers-by'. The Greek is entirely different.
e. 'by the tail' Greek; 'by the ears' Hebr.
f. 'the truth' Greek; 'its victims' Hebr.

2Co10:12-13 Let the other man praise you, but not your own mouth. 2
A stranger, but not your lips.

Si 22:15 Heaviness of stone, weight of sand, 3
heavier than both: annoyance from a fool.

6:34-35 Cruelty of wrath, surge of anger. 4
But jealousy, who can withstand that?

28:23 Better open reproof 5
than voiceless love.

From one who loves, wounds are well-intentioned; 6
26:24-26 Mt 26:49 from one who hates, kisses are ominous.

25:16 Lk 15:16 The gorged throat revolts at honey, 7
the hungry throat finds all bitterness sweet.

Si 29:21-28 Like a bird that strays from its nest, 8
so is the man who strays from where he belongs.

Fragrant oil gladdens the heart, 9
friendship's sweetness comforts the soul.[a]

Si 37:6 Do not abandon friend, or father's friend; 10
when trouble comes, do not go running to your brother's house.
18:24 Better a friend near than a brother far away.

Learn to be wise, my son, and gladden my heart, 11
that I may have an answer for the man who insults me.

The discreet man sees danger and takes shelter, 12
=22:3 the ignorant go forward and pay for it.

=20:16 Take the man's clothes! He has gone surety for a stranger. 13
6:1+ Seize him to the profit of persons unknown![b]

He who at dawn loudly blesses his neighbour 14
is accounted to curse.[c]

19:13 Si 25:16 The steady dripping of a gutter on a rainy day 15
and a scolding woman are alike.

Whoever can restrain her, can restrain the wind, 16
and with his right hand grasp oil.[d]

Iron is made the finer by iron, 17
a man is refined by contact with his neighbour.

He who tends the fig tree eats its figs, 18
he who looks after his master shall be honoured.

As no two faces are ever alike, 19
unlike, too, are the hearts of men.[e]

30:15-16 Qo 1:8; 6:7 Hab 2:5 Sheol and Perdition are never satisfied, 20
nor are the eyes of man[f] ever satisfied.

=17:3 A crucible for silver, a furnace for gold, 21
a man for testing the words of flatterers.[g]

Pound the fool in a mortar[h] as you may, 22
you will not separate him from his folly.

12:10 Know your flocks' condition well, 23
Si 7:22 take good care of your herds;

24 since riches do not last for ever,
wealth is not handed down[i] from age to age.
25 The grass once gone, the aftergrowth appearing,
the hay gathered in from the mountains,
26 you should have lambs to clothe you,
goats to pay for your fields,
27 goat's milk sufficient to feed you,[j]
and to provide for your serving girls.

1 28 The wicked man flees when no one is after him, Lv 26:17,36 1 S 17:37 Ps 118:6
the virtuous man is bold as a lion.

2 The fault lies with the headstrong when quarrels flare up, 15:8
the discreet man quenches them.[a]

3 A wicked[b] man who oppresses the poor:
here is a devastating rain—and farewell, bread!

4 Those who forsake the law have a good word for the wicked,
those who observe the law have no time for such.

5 The wicked do not know what justice means, Jn 10:26+
those who fear Yahweh understand everything. Ws 3:9 1 Co 2:14

6 Better a poor man living an honest life =19:1
than a man of devious ways, rich though he be.

7 A discerning son is he who keeps the Law; 23:19-22
an associate of profligates brings shame on his father.

8 He who increases his wealth by usury and interest 13:22 Ex 22:24+
amasses it for someone else who will bestow it on the poor.[c]

9 He who turns his ear away from listening to the Law,
his prayer is an abomination. 15:8

10 He who seduces honest men to evil ways
will fall into his own pit. 26:27+
Blameless men are the heirs to happiness.

11 The rich man may think himself wise, 11:10; 29:2
but a poor man with sense will unmask him. =28:28

12 When the virtuous triumph, there is great rejoicing;
when the wicked are in the ascendant, men take cover.

13 He who conceals his faults will not prosper, Ps 32 Si 4:26
he who confesses[d] and renounces them will find mercy. Lk 18:9-14 1 Jn 1:9

14 Happy the man who is never without fear,
he who hardens his heart will fall into distress. Si 3:26

15 A roaring lion, a hungry bear, Jb 4:10
such is the bad ruler of a poor people.

27 a. 'comforts the soul' conj.; 'more than the counsellor of the soul' Hebr.
b. 'persons unknown' corr.; 'an unknown woman' Hebr.
c. The Talmud forbids greetings before morning prayer.
d. 'grasp' corr.
e. Following Greek. But Hebr. 'Like water, face (is) to face, so (is) the heart of man to man'. This could mean: as a face is reflected in water, so a man reads his own mind into others.
f. The eyes are the seat of envy.
g. 'flatterers' Greek; 'his reputation' Hebr.
h. Hebr. adds 'among wheat with a pestle'.
i. Following Greek.
j. Hebr. adds 'to feed your household'.
28 a. Following Greek. Hebr. 'A country for its sins has many rulers but with one understanding and wise ruler it lasts long'.
b. 'wicked' Greek; 'poor' Hebr.
c. Ill-gotten gains give no lasting profit and in the end revert to the poor.
d. Allusion to the confession of sins, cf. Lv 5:5; Nb 5:7; Ps 32:5; Ho 14:2-4; Is 1:16-18.

A prince lacking sense[e] is rich in rapacity, 16
he who hates avarice will lengthen his days.

A man wanted for murder 17
will be a fugitive until death. Do not lay hands on him.

10:9 He who lives an honest life will be safe, 18
he who wavers between two ways falls down in one of them.

=12:11 He who tills his land shall have bread and to spare, 19
he who chases fantasies, poverty in plenty.

Si 31:5 A trustworthy man will be overwhelmed with blessings, 20
but he who tries to get rich quickly will not go unpunished.

24:23
Dt 16:19+ It is not good to show partiality, 21
but men will do wrong for a mouthful of bread.

He chases after wealth, the man of greedy eye, 22
not knowing that want is overtaking him.

27:5-6 He who reproves another will enjoy more favour 23
in the end than the flatterer.

He who robs his father (and his mother) saying, 'No wrong here!' 24
is comrade for a brigand.

15:18 The covetous man provokes disputes, 25
he who trusts in Yahweh shall prosper.

3:5-6
1 Co 3:18 He who trusts his own promptings is a fool, 26
he whose ways are wise will be safe.

11:25; 19:17
22:9 He who gives to the poor shall never want, 27
he who closes his eyes to them will bear many a curse.

=28:12;
29:2 When the wicked are in the ascendant, men take cover, 28
but when they perish, virtuous men multiply.

29 The man often rebuked but stubborn still: 1
suddenly, irretrievably, his fall will come.

11:10;
28:12, 28 When virtuous men are in power,[a] the people are joyful, 2
when the wicked rule, the people groan.

5:11; 10:1 The lover of Wisdom makes his father glad, 3
6:26
Si 9:6
Lk 15:13 but the patron of harlots fritters his wealth away.

14:34
Is 11:4-5 A king gives a country stability by justice, 4
an extortioner brings it to ruin.

11:9 The man who flatters his neighbour 5
spreads a net for his feet.

Jb 18:7-10 Under the feet of the wicked man[b] there is a snare, 6
but the virtuous runs on rejoicing.

Jb 29:7 The virtuous man is concerned for the rights of the poor, 7
the wicked knows no such concern.[c]

Scoffers set cities in a ferment, 8
but wise men moderate anger.

Let a wise man argue with a fool, 9
be he angry or good-humoured he will not gain his end.

10 Men of blood hate the blameless man,
but honest men cherish[d] his life.

11 The fool comes out with all his angry feelings, 12:16
but the wise man subdues and restrains them.

12 When a ruler listens to false reports,
all his ministers will be scoundrels.

13 Poor man and usurer are found together, =22:2
Yahweh gives light to the eyes of both. Mt 5:45

14 The king who judges the poor with equity 16:12; 20:28; 25:5
sees his throne set firm for ever.

15 The stick and the reprimand bestow wisdom, 10:1; 22:15 Si 30:1-13
a child left to himself brings shame on his mother.

16 When the wicked are in power,[e] sin multiplies,
but the virtuous shall witness their downfall.

17 Correct your son, and he will give you peace of mind; 13:24; 19:18
he will delight your soul.

18 Where there is no vision the people get out of hand;
blessed are they who keep the Precept.[f]

19 Not by words is a slave corrected: Si 33:25-30
even if he understands, he will take no notice.

20 You see some man too ready of speech? =26:12
More hope for a fool than for him.

21 If a man's slave is pampered from childhood,
he will prove ungrateful in the end.[g]

22 A bad-tempered man provokes disputes, 14:17 Si 1:22
a man prone to anger is a great cause of sin.

23 A man's pride brings him humiliation, ↗ Mt 23:12p
he who humbles himself will win honour.

24 Complicity with thieves and a wrong to oneself:
to hear the curse[h] and make no disclosure.

25 To be afraid of men is a snare, 16:20
he who puts his trust in Yahweh is secure.

26 Many a man seeks a ruler's favour,
but the rights of each come from Yahweh.

27 Abhorrent to the virtuous is the sinful man, 13:19
abhorrent to the wicked is the man of honour.

e. Greek 'short of revenue'.
29 a. 'are in power' corr.; 'increase' Hebr.
b. Lit. '(in the wicked man's) steps' corr.; 'sin' Hebr.
c. Lit. 'does not understand knowledge'.

d. 'cherish' corr.; 'seek' Hebr.
e. 'are in power' corr., cf. 29:2; 'increase' Hebr.

f. The 'vision' seems to be an allusion to the function of the prophets. 'Precept', or 'instruction', (*torah*) may also refer to this, or possibly to the written Law. Cf. Ezk 7:26; Lm 2:9.
g. Translation uncertain.
h. The curse pronounced on the unidentified criminal or on witnesses who refuse to come forward. Cf. Lv 5:1; Jg 17:2.

VI. THE SAYINGS OF AGUR

30 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh, of Massa.[a] Oracle of this man for Ithiel, for Ithiel and for Ucal.[b] 1

Surely I must be the most stupid of men, 2
bereft of human intelligence,
I have not learnt wisdom, 3
and I lack the knowledge of the Holy Ones.[c]
Is 40:12 Jn 3:13 Who has mounted to the heavens, then descended? 4
Who has gathered the wind in the clasp of his hand?
Jb 38:39 Si 1:2-3 Who has wrapped the waters in his cloak?
Who has set all the ends of the earth firm?
What is his name, or the name of his son,
if you know it?

||2 S 22:31 Ps 12:6; =18:30 Every word of God is unalloyed, 5
he is the shield of those who take refuge in him.
To his words make no addition, 6
lest he reprove you and know you for a fraud.

Two things I beg of you, 7
do not grudge me them before I die:
keep falsehood and lies far from me, 8
Ps 119:29 give me neither poverty nor riches,
Mt 6:11 grant me only my share of bread to eat,
Dt 6:12; 32:15 for fear that surrounded by plenty, I should fall away 9
and say, 'Yahweh—who is Yahweh?'
or else, in destitution, take to stealing
Lv 5:21 and profane the name of my God.

Ps 101:5 Phm 8-20 Do not denounce a slave to his master, 10
lest he curse you, and you suffer for it.

Ex 21:17 There is a breed of man who curses his father 11
and does not bless his mother;
a breed that, laying claim to purity, 12
has yet not been cleansed of its filth;
a breed haughty of eye, 13
with disdain in every glance;
a breed with swords for teeth, 14
with knives for jaws,
Jb 19:22 Is 9:11 with which to devour the poor and rid the earth of them,
to devour the needy and rid mankind of them.[d]

VII. NUMERICAL PROVERBS[e]

The leech has two daughters: 'Give, give!' their cry. 15

There are three insatiable things,
four, indeed, that never say, 'Enough!'
27:20 Gn 30:1 Nb 16:33 Sheol, the barren womb, 16
earth which can never have its fill of water,
fire which never says, 'Enough!'

19:26+ Dt 21:18-21 Si 3:16 The eye which looks jeeringly on a father, 17
and scornfully on an ageing mother,[f]

shall be pecked out by the ravens of the valley,
and eaten by the vultures.

18 There are three things beyond my comprehension,
four, indeed, that I do not understand:
19 the way of an eagle through the skies, Ws 5:10-12
the way of a snake over the rock,
the way of a ship in mid-ocean,
the way of a man with a girl.

20 This is how the adulteress behaves:
when she has eaten,
she wipes her mouth clean and says,
'I have done nothing wrong'.

21 There are three things at which the earth trembles,
four, indeed, which it cannot endure:
22 a slave become king, Qo 10:5-7
a churlish man full-fed, 19:10
23 a jilted girl wed at last,
a maid supplanting[g] mistress. Gn 16:3-6

24 There are four creatures little on the earth,
though wisest of the wise:[h]
25 the ants, a race with no strength, 6:6-8
yet in the summer they make sure of their food;
26 the rock rabbits,[i] a race with no defences,
yet they make their home in the rocks;
27 the locusts, these have no king,
and yet they all march in good order;[j]
28 the lizard which you can catch in your hand,
yet it frequents the palaces of kings.

29 There are three things of stately tread,
four, indeed, of stately bearing:
30 the lion, bravest of beasts,
he will draw back from nothing;
31 the cock that proudly struts among the hens,
the he-goat, leader of the flock,
and the king when he harangues his people.[k]

32 If you have been foolish enough to fly into a passion Si 5:12
and now have second thoughts, lay your hand on your lips.
33 For by churning the milk you produce butter,
by wringing the nose you produce blood,
and by whipping up anger you produce strife.

30 a. 'of Massa' corr.; 'the oracle' Hebr. On Massa cf. 31:1+. The Vulgate does not take these as proper names and translates 'Words of him who gathers, son of him who vomits'. In the Greek text 30:1-14 has been inserted between 24:22 and 24:23, and 30:15–31:9 follows 24:34.

b. Interpretation very doubtful. Others render 'I am weary, O God, I am weary, I am worn out'. Vulg. 'Vision told by the man with whom God is and who, God being with him, has been consoled'. Greek 'This is what the man says to those who trust in God, and I cease'.

c. I.e. of the sages, or 'of the Holy One' (with plural of majesty), i.e. of God.

d. It is not known whether this portrait, vv. 11-14, should be applied to a specific nation or social class, or to individuals.

e. The 'numerical proverb' has in it an element of maxim, of riddle, of comparison. This literary device is already found earlier in an undeveloped form, in Hebr. prophetic literature, Am 1:3,6,9,11,13; Is 17:6; Mi 5:4; cf. Ps 62:11f, and recurs throughout the Wisdom books, Pr 6:16f; 30:15-33; Jb 5:19; 40:5; Qo 11:2; 4:12(?); Si 23:16f; 25:7; 26:5-7,28; 50:25; cf. 25:1,2. This small collection, 30:15-33, betrays a special interest in the wonders of nature and in the habits of animals.

f. 'an ageing mother' Greek; 'the man who obeys his mother' Hebr.

g. 'supplanting' Greek; 'inheriting from' Hebr.

h. 'wisest of the wise' versions.

i. The hyrax, a small and very shy rock-dwelling mammal. Cf. Ps 104:18; Lv 11:5.

j. 'in good order' Greek; 'in bands' Hebr.

k. Following Greek. Hebr. 'the animal with agile(?) loins and the he-goat, and a king when his army is with him'.

VIII. THE SAYINGS OF LEMUEL

31 The sayings of Lemuel king of Massa,[a] taught him by his mother: 1

5:1-14 What, my son! What, son of my womb! 2
What, son of my vows!

1 K 11:1-4
Si 9:2; 19:2 Do not spend all your energy on women, 3
nor your loins[b] on these destroyers of kings.

Qo 10:16-17
Si 31:25-31 Not for kings, O Lemuel, 4
not for kings the drinking of wine,[c]
not for princes to love[d] strong drink,

24:24 for fear that in liquor they forget what they have decreed 5
and override the rights of all in distress.

Mt 27:34 Procure strong drink for a man about to perish, 6
wine for the heart that is full of bitterness:
let him drink and forget his misfortune, 7
and remember his misery no more.

Ps 72:2-4;
12-14 Speak, yourself, on behalf of the dumb, 8
on behalf of all the unwanted;
speak, yourself, pronounce a just verdict, 9
uphold the rights of the poor, of the needy.

IX. ALPHABETIC POEM ON THE PERFECT WIFE[e]

5:15; 11:16;
12:4;
18:22
Si 26 *Aleph* A perfect wife—who can find her? 10
She is far beyond the price of pearls.

Beth Her husband's heart has confidence in her, 11
from her he will derive no little profit.

Ghimel Advantage and not hurt she brings him 12
all the days of her life.

Daleth She is always busy with wool and with flax, 13
she does her work with eager hands.

He She is like a merchant vessel 14
bringing her food from far away.

Wan She gets up while it is still dark 15
giving her household their food,
giving orders to her serving girls.

Zain She sets her mind on a field, then she buys it; 16
with what her hands have earned she plants a vineyard.

Heth She puts her back into her work 17
and shows how strong her arms can be.

Teth She finds her labour well worth while; 18
her lamp does not go out at night.

Yod She sets her hands to the distaff, 19
her fingers grasp the spindle.

Kaph She holds out her hand to the poor, 20
she opens her arms to the needy.

21 *Lamed* Snow may come, she has no fears for her household,
with all her servants warmly clothed.[f]

22 *Mem* She makes her own quilts,
she is dressed in fine linen and purple.

23 *Nun* Her husband is respected at the city gates, 24:7+ Ps 127:5
taking his seat among the elders of the land.

24 *Samek* She weaves linen sheets and sells them,
she supplies the merchant with sashes.

25 *Ain* She is clothed in strength and dignity,
she can laugh at the days to come.[g]

26 *Pe* When she opens her mouth, she does so wisely;
on her tongue is kindly instruction.

27 *Sade* She keeps good watch on the conduct of her household,
no bread of idleness for her.

28 *Qoph* Her sons stand up and proclaim her blessed, Sg 6:9
her husband, too, sings her praises:

29 *Resh* 'Many women have done admirable things,
but you surpass them all!'

30 *Shin* Charm is deceitful, and beauty empty;
the woman who is wise[h] is the one to praise.

31 Give her a share in what her hands have worked for,
and let her works tell her praises at the city gates.

31 **a.** Ishmaelite tribe of N. Arabia, Gn 25:14. The wisdom of 'the sons of the East', Nb 24:21+, was renowned, cf. 1 K 5:10; Jr 49:7, and the friends of Job.

b. 'your loins' corr.; 'your ways' Hebr.

c. Insistence on the dangers of wine is a characteristic of 'desert' morality (cf. the Rechabites, Jr 35, and the modern Arabs).

d. 'to love' corr.

e. Alphabetical poem (cf. Ps 9-10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119; 145; Lm 1-4; Na 1:2-8, Si 51:13-29 (Hebr.)): each verse (in other examples, each strophe) begins with a consecutive letter of the Hebr. alphabet. On the interpretation of this poem cf. v. 30+ and 5:15+. Cf. 11:16; 12:4; 18:22; 19:14 and Si 7:19.

f. Lit. 'doubly clothed' Vulg.

g. She looks confidently to the future, whether to the bright fortunes of her family or to the reward God will one day give her for her diligence.

h. 'the woman who is wise' corr.; 'the woman, the fear of Yahweh' Hebr. The Hebr. gloss, incorporated and developed by the Greek ('a wise woman will be praised—the fear of the Lord, that is the thing to boast of') seems to show that the scribes understood this whole passage allegorically as a description of Wisdom personified, cf. 8:22+. This would make it an apt conclusion to the book. The Roman liturgy applies the passage to Holy Women.

INTRODUCTION TO
ECCLESIASTES

The title of this short book reads: 'The Words of Qoheleth, son of David, king in Jerusalem'. 'Qoheleth', cf. 1:2 and 12; 7:27; 12:8-10, is not a proper name but a common noun, sometimes preceded by the definite article; though feminine in form it is treated as a masculine. The most likely explanation is that Qoheleth indicates the function of one who speaks in the assembly (*qahal*; in Greek the *ekklesia*, hence the book's Latin and English title transliterated from the Greek Bible); it could therefore be rendered: the Preacher. This Preacher is called 'son of David and king in Jerusalem', 1:12, and there is no doubt that he is identified with Solomon to whom the text makes clear reference, 1:16 (cf. 1 K 3:12; 5:10-11; 10:7) and 2:7-9 (cf. 1 K 3:13; 10:23), though the name is not mentioned. This, however, is no more than a conventional literary device; the author commends his thoughts to the public under the name of the greatest sage in Israel. The book's vocabulary and style, as also its doctrine of which we shall speak later, make it impossible to date it before the Exile. It has often been maintained that the author is not one but many, that two, three, four or even eight hands can be detected. But there is a growing dislike for any dissection that betrays a misunderstanding of the book's literary form and of its theme.

As with the other Wisdom Books such as Job and Ecclesiasticus, not to mention the composite Book of Proverbs, the theme progresses fitfully: the idea is stated, repeated, amended. There is no defined plan here, rather variations on a single theme, the emptiness of things human, which is enunciated at the beginning of the book, 1:2, and at the end, 12:8. Knowledge, wealth, love, life itself, all these things are illusory. Life is no more than a succession of unrelated and meaningless events, 3:1-11, ending in senility, 12:1-7, and death befalling wise and foolish, rich and poor, man and beast alike, 3:14-20. Qoheleth's problem is the same as Job's: do virtue and vice get their deserts on this earth? Both Qoheleth and Job answer: No. Experience gives the lie to the conventional answer, 7:25-8:14. But, unlike Job who seeks a meaning for his sufferings, Qoheleth enjoys good health yet discovers that happiness itself is an empty thing and consoles himself with the limited joys that life has to offer, 3:12-13; 8:15; 9:7-9. Or rather he tries to console himself, for indeed his failure is as evident at the end as at the beginning. He taxes his brain over the problem of a future life, but in vain, 3:21; 9:10; 12:7. And yet he has faith in God: the ways of God to man may dismay him, but God, he says, does not need to justify them, 3:11,14; 7:13, while man for his part must resign himself to accepting the sorrows and joys that God sends, 7:14, in bad times and good keeping the commandments and obeying a God who reads the human heart, 12:13-14, cf. 9:1.

The doctrine as we have stated it is drawn from the whole book, including the last few verses which raise doubts even among those who maintain the unity of authorship. And indeed its incoherency is obvious. Rather than explain the self-corrections and self-contradictions by a plurality of authors, it would seem preferable to attribute them to the oscillation of one man's mind confronted with a mystery of mysteries and lacking the data for a solution. No answer could satisfy either Qoheleth or Job but that of reward and punishment beyond the grave, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books.

This book has the characteristics of a period of transition. The old conventional convictions have been shaken and as yet nothing has taken their place. Hebrew thought is here at the crossroads and foreign influence on Qoheleth's thinking has been the object of recent study. Scholars have looked to Egypt with its *Dialogue of the Man weary of life with his soul* and the *Sad Songs of the Harpists;* they have seen the influence of Greece (exercised through the Egypt of the hellenistic period) with its Stoic, Epicurean, and Cynic philosophies. No detailed comparison carries conviction but all breathe the same atmosphere. Qoheleth is a Palestinian Jew but, being a sage by profession, he is alive to international thought and sensitive to foreign influence. We have here the first though indirect contact with hellenism. This dates the book. It must have been written at some time in the 3rd century B.C., during the Greek period but before the time of the Maccabees when fresh faith and a new hope came to Israel. Palestine was then under the suzerainty of the Ptolemies and therefore orientated towards Alexandria.

Ecclesiastes represents only one stage in the religious development of Israel; it cannot be assessed in isolation from what has gone before and what will follow. By underlining the inadequacies of earlier notions and by compelling reconsideration of the human enigma, it exposes the need of a new revelation. It warns against attachment to the goods of this world and, by denying that the rich are happy, prepares the world for hearing that 'blessed are the poor', Lk 6:20.

ECCLESIASTES

Ps 12:8; 62:9; 94:11; Rm 8:20

1 The words of Qoheleth[a] son of David, king in Jerusalem.[b] •Vanity of 1 2
vanities,[c] Qoheleth says. Vanity of vanities. All is vanity! •For all his toil, his 3
toil under the sun, what does man gain by it?

PART ONE

Prologue[d]

Si 14:18

A generation goes, a generation comes, yet the earth stands firm for ever. 4
The sun rises, the sun sets; then to its place it speeds and there it rises. •Southward 5 6
goes the wind, then turns to the north; it turns and turns again; back then to its
Si 40:11 circling goes the wind. •Into the sea all the rivers go, and yet the sea is never 7
filled, and still to their goal the rivers go. •All things are wearisome. No man 8
Pr 27:20 can say[e] that eyes have not had enough of seeing, ears their fill of hearing. •What 9
2:12; 3:15; 6:10 was will be again; what has been done will be done again; and there is nothing
new under the sun. •Take anything of which it may be said, 'Look now, this 10
2:16; Ws 2:4 is new'. Already, long before our time, it existed. •Only no memory remains 11
of earlier times, just as in times to come next year itself will not be remembered.

The career of Solomon[f]

I, Qoheleth, have reigned in Jerusalem over Israel. •With the help of wisdom 12 13
I have been at pains to study all that is done under heaven; oh, what a weary
3:10; Gn 3:17-19 task God has given mankind to labour at! •I have seen everything that is done 14
under the sun, and what vanity it all is, what chasing of the wind![g]

7:13

What is twisted cannot be straightened, 15
what is not there cannot be counted.

1 K 3:12; 5:9-10; 10:1-13; Si 47:14-18

I thought to myself, 'I have acquired a greater stock of wisdom than any 16
of my predecessors in Jerusalem. I have great experience of wisdom and learning.'
Wisdom has been my careful study; stupidity, too, and folly. And now I have 17
come to recognise that even this is chasing of the wind.

Ws 8:16

Much wisdom, much grief, 18
the more knowledge, the more sorrow.

2 I thought to myself, 'Very well, I will try pleasure and see what enjoyment 1
Pr 14:13 has to offer'. And there it was: vanity again! •This laughter, I reflected, is a 2
madness, this pleasure no use at all. •I resolved to have my body cheered with 3
1 K 11:1-3 wine, my heart still devoted to wisdom; I resolved to embrace folly to see what
made mankind happy, and what men do under heaven in the few days they
1 K 3:13; 7:1-12 have to live. •I did great things: built myself palaces, planted vineyards; •made 4 5

myself gardens and orchards, planting every kind of fruit tree in them. •I had 1 Ch 27:27
pools made for watering the plantations; •bought men slaves, women slaves;
had home-born slaves as well; herds and flocks I had too, more than anyone
in Jerusalem before me. •I amassed silver and gold, the treasures of kings and 1 K 9:28; 10
provinces; acquired singing men and singing women and every human luxury,
chest on chest[a] of it. •So I grew great, greater than anyone in Jerusalem before
me; nor did my wisdom leave me. •I denied my eyes nothing they desired, 1 K 10:23
refused my heart no pleasure, a heart that found all my hard work a pleasure;
such was the return I got for all my efforts. •I then reflected on all that my hands
had achieved and on all the effort I had put into its achieving. What vanity it
all is, and chasing of the wind! There is nothing to be gained under the sun.

My reflections then turned to wisdom, stupidity, folly.[b] For instance, what 1:9
can the successor of a king do? What has been done already. •More is to be
had from wisdom than from folly, as from light than from darkness; this, of
course, I see:

> The wise man sees ahead, 10:2
> the fool walks in the dark. Jn 8:12+ 1 Jn 2:10-11

No doubt! But I know, too, that one fate awaits them both. •'The fool's fate' 6:8
I thought to myself 'will be my fate too. Of what use my wisdom, then? This,
too,' I thought 'is vanity.' •Since there is no lasting memory for wise man or 1:11 Ws 2:4
for fool, and in the days to come both will be forgotten; wise man, alas, no Si 44:8-15
less than fool must die. •Life I have come to hate, for what is done under the Ps 49:10
sun disgusts me, since all is vanity and chasing of the wind. •All I have toiled 6:2
for and now bequeath to my successor I have come to hate; •who knows whether
he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will be master of all the work into which
I have put my efforts and wisdom under the sun. That, too, is vanity. •And
hence I have come to despair of all the efforts I have expended under the sun.
For so it is that a man who has laboured wisely, skilfully and successfully must Si 11:18f
leave what is his own to someone who has not toiled for it at all. This, too,
is vanity and great injustice; •for what does he gain for all the toil and strain Ps 39:6
that he has undergone under the sun? •What of all his laborious days, his cares Jb 7:2 Si 40:5-6
of office, his restless nights? This, too, is vanity.

There is no happiness for man but to eat and drink and to be content with 3:12-13,22; 5:17; 8:15; 9:7-8
his work.[c] This, too, I see as something from God's hand, •since plenty and Ps 127:2
penury[d] both come from God; •wisdom, knowledge, joy, he gives to the man Si 14:14
who pleases him; on the sinner lays the task of gathering and storing up for Si 1:10
another who is pleasing to God.[e] This, too, is vanity and chasing of the wind. Jb 27:16-17 Pr 13:22

1 a. 'Qoheleth' or 'Ecclesiastes': the personage of the assembly (Hebr. *qahal*, Greek *ekklesia*), i.e. the President or Preacher; or possibly the spokesman for the assembly, personification of the Public which, wearied of conventional teaching, is now itself going to claim a hearing.

b. Literary fiction identifying the author with Solomon, model of sages, 1 K 5:9-14.

c. The traditional 'vanity' is retained here; the Hebr. term means primarily 'mist', 'breath', one of the traditional group of images (water, shadow, smoke, etc.) used in Hebr. poetry to describe the transitory nature of man. But in Qo the word has lost this sense and signifies only the illusory nature of things and hence the delusions to which they subject mankind.

d. The determinism of the cosmos, the monotonous framework of human life. This wearies Qoheleth while exciting Job to wonder and adoration (Jb 38-40; and cf. Ps 104).

e. Or 'all is (more) wearisome (than) man can say'; this would change the meaning of what follows: 'The eyes have not seen enough and the ears have not heard their fill'.

f. Solomon himself, for all his pomp, 1 K 10:4f, and despite his wisdom, was not truly happy.

g. I.e. useless effort, waste of time.

2 a. The meaning of the word in post-biblical Hebr. Others interpret 'a princess, princesses' or 'a concubine, concubines', alluding to Solomon's harem.

b. Wisdom and folly, of course, are of more and less worth; but wisdom does not secure a progeny to be proud of or a lasting memory; nor does it absolve from death. Hence, why should the wisee man bother about either?

c. The maxim, epicurean in flavour, is adduced for the sake of argument; though the author uses it as a refrain, 5:17; 8:15; 9:7, it does not represent his whole view of life; he is not recommending pleasure, to the exclusion of duty, as the ultimate motive of human acts.

d. Text corr.

e. Such was the explanation of the sages for the problem of the prosperous wicked, cf. Pr 11:8; 13:22; Jb 27:16f. Qoheleth comments ironically on the insufficiency of this doctrine.

Death[a]

Si 33:15; 42:2 3 There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven: 1

A time for giving birth, 2
a time for dying;
a time for planting,
a time for uprooting what has been planted.
A time for killing, 3
a time for healing;
a time for knocking down,
a time for building.
A time for tears, 4
a time for laughter;
a time for mourning,
a time for dancing.
A time for throwing stones away, 5
a time for gathering them up;
a time for embracing,
a time to refrain from embracing.
A time for searching, 6
a time for losing;
a time for keeping,
a time for throwing away.
A time for tearing, 7
a time for sewing;
a time for keeping silent,
a time for speaking.
A time for loving, 8
a time for hating;
a time for war,
a time for peace.

What does a man gain for the efforts that he makes? 9
•I contemplate the task 10
1:13; 8:17; 11:5 that God gives mankind to labour at. •All that he does is apt for its time; but 11
Ps 139:17; Si 11:4; 18:6; Is 55:8-9; Rm 11:33 though he has permitted man to consider time in its wholeness,[b] man cannot comprehend the work of God from beginning to end.

I know there is no happiness for man except in pleasure and enjoyment while 12
2:24+ he lives. •And when man eats and drinks and finds happiness in his work, this 13
is a gift from God.

Ps 33:11; Si 42:41 I know that what God does he does consistently.[c] To this nothing can be 14
added, from this nothing taken away; yet God sees to it that men fear him. •What 15
1:9 is, already was; what is to be, has been already; yet God cares for the persecuted.
4:1,3; 5:7 But I still observe that under the sun crime is where law should be, the criminal 16
where the good should be. •'God' I thought to myself 'will judge both virtuous 17
and criminal, because there is a time here for all that is purposed or done.' •I also 18
thought that mankind behaves like this so that God may show them up for what
Ps 49:12,20 they are, and expose them for the brute beasts they are to each other. •Indeed, 19
9:4 the fate of man and beast is identical; one dies, the other too, and both have
the selfsame breath; man has no advantage over the beast, for all is vanity.
Gn 2:7; 3:19; Jb 34:15 Both go to the same place; both originate from the dust and to the dust both 20
12:7; Jb 14:10; Pr 15:24; Si 16:29 return. •Who knows if the spirit of man mounts upward or if the spirit of the 21
beast goes down to the earth?[a]

I see there is no happiness for man but to be happy in his work, for this is 22
2:24+; 6:12 the lot assigned him. Who then can bring him to see what is to happen after
his time?

Society[a]

4 I come again to contemplate all the oppression that is committed under the sun. Take for instance the tears of the oppressed, with no one to protect them; the power their oppressors wield. No one to protect them! •So, rather than the living who still have lives to live, I salute the dead who have already met death; •happier than both of these is he who is yet unborn and has not seen the evil things that are done under the sun. •I see that all effort and all achievement spring from men's mutual jealousy. This, too, is vanity and chasing of the wind. 3:16; 5:7 Jb 3:11-23; 10:18-22 6:3 Jr 20:17,18 3:16

The fool folds his arms
and eats his own flesh away. Pr 6:9-11

—Better one handful of repose
than two hands full of effort

in chasing the wind. •And I observe another vanity under the sun: •a man is quite alone—no son, no brother; and yet there is no end to his efforts, his eyes can never have their fill of riches. For whom, then, do I work so hard and grudge myself pleasure? This, too, is vanity, a sorry business.

Better two than one by himself, since thus their work is really profitable. Pr 18:19 Si 6:14
If one should fall, the other helps him up; but woe to the man by himself with no one to help him up when he falls down. Lk 10:1
•Again: they keep warm who sleep two together, but how can a man keep warm alone? •Where one alone would be overcome, two will put up resistance; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Better a lad beggarly yet wise,
than a king old yet foolish

who will no longer take advice. •The lad may well step from prison to the throne, or have been born a beggar in the kingdom he now owns. •I observe that all who live and move under the sun side with that lad, the usurper who has succeeded. He takes his place at the head of innumerable subjects; sad, if later no one has cause to be glad of him. This too, most certainly, is vanity and chasing of the wind. Si 11:5

When you go to the Temple, be on your guard. Go near so that you can hear; the sacrifice is more valuable than the offering of fools, even if they are unaware of doing wrong.

5 Be in no hurry to speak; do not hastily declare yourself before God; for God is in heaven, you on earth. Be sparing, then, of speech: Si 7:14; 18:23 Mt 6:7

Dreaming comes from much worrying,
foolish talk from a multiplicity of words. Pr 10:19

If you make a vow to God, discharge it without delay, for God has no love for fools. Discharge your vow. •Better a vow unmade than made and not discharged. Do not allow your own words to bring guilt on you, nor tell your angel afterwards it was unintentional.[a] Why should a word of yours give God occasion to be angry, and destroy what your hands have worked for? Lv 27:1+ Nb 30:3 Dt 23:22-24 Pr 20:25 Si 18:22

3 a. Half man's occupations are ill-omened, half his activities have to do with sorrow. Death casts its shadow on life, which is a series of contradictory acts, vv. 1-8, without any other goal, vv. 9-13, than death, itself meaningless, vv. 14-22.

b. Or 'God has set eternity in their heart'. This phrase, however, is not to be taken in the Christian sense; it means simply: God has given the human heart (mind) awareness of 'duration', he has endowed him with the power of reflecting on the sequence of events and thus of controlling the present. But, the author adds, this awareness is deceptive; it does not reveal the meaning of life.

c. In the conventional theory of retribution, death is the punishment of sin. For Qoheleth death is no more than the common lot; moral considerations are irrelevant. The fate of man and beast is identical. Even in the realm of justice, might is the criterion of right, vv. 16,18, though God himself shows preference for the weak, v. 15b.

d. This passing doubt is enough to invest death with terror. The concluding words of the book are less wild; the life of man returns to God who gave it, 12:7.

4 a. Life in the social group: brute force and the dangers facing the friendless, 4:1-12, political anomalies, 4: 13-16, mechanical religion and the abuse of vows, 4:17–5:6; tyranny, 5:7-8.

5 a. Allusion to sins committed 'through inadvertence', Lv 4:2,22,27; Nb 15:22,29. The 'angel'

Si 34:1-5 For every dream, a vanity to match; 6
too many words, a chasing of the wind.[b]

12:13 Therefore, fear God.
3:16; 4:1 If in a province you see the poor oppressed, right and justice violated, do not 7
be surprised. You will be told that officials are under the supervision of superiors,
who are supervised in turn; •you will hear talk of the service of the king.[c] 8

Money[d]

Ps 62:9
Si 14:3-9 He who loves money never has money enough, 9
he who loves wealth never has enough profit;

this, too is vanity.

Pr 19:6
Si 13:6 Where goods abound, 10
parasites abound;

and what is the good of them to their owner? That he can feast his eyes on
Pr 13:8 them. •The labourer's sleep is sweet, whether he has eaten little or much; but 11
the rich man's wealth will not let him sleep at all. •There is a great injustice 12
that I observe under the sun: riches stored and turning to loss for their owner.
One unlucky venture, and those riches are lost; a son is born to him, and he has 13
Jb 1:21
1 Tm 6:7 nothing to leave him. •Naked from his mother's womb he came, as naked as 14
he came he will depart again; nothing to take with him after all his efforts. •This 15
is a grievous wrong, that as he came, so must he go; what profit can he show
after toiling to earn the wind, •as he spends the rest of his days in darkness, 16
grief, worry, sickness and resentment?[e]
2:24+ This, then, is my conclusion: the right happiness for man is to eat and drink 17
and be content with all the work he has to do under the sun, during the few
days God has given him to live, since this is the lot assigned him. •And whenever 18
God gives a man riches and property, with the ability to enjoy them and to find
contentment in his work, this is a gift from God. •He will not need to brood, 19
at least, over the duration of his life so long as God keeps his heart occupied
with joy.

Si 14:3-19 6 There is an evil I observe under the sun, that weighs men down: •suppose 1/2
2:18-19 a man has received from God riches, property, honours—nothing at all left
Lk 12:20 him to wish for. Yet God does not give him the chance to enjoy them, but some
stranger enjoys them. There is vanity here, and grievous suffering. •Or perhaps 3
a man has had a hundred sons and as many daughters[a] and lived for many
years, and then derives no benefit from his estate, not even a tomb to call his
4:2
Jb 3:11
Ps 58:8 own. Why then I say, better the untimely-born than he:

In darkness arriving, 4
in darkness departing;

even his name is wrapped in darkness.

Never seeing the sun, 5
never knowing rest;

Si 41:4 the one no more than the other.[b] •Even if the man had lived a thousand years 6
twice over, without deriving profit from his estate, do not both alike go to the
same place?

Pr 27:20 Man toils but to eat, 7
yet his belly is never filled.

2:15
Pr 13:7 What advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what about the pauper 8
who keeps up appearances before his fellow men?[c] •Do appearances count more 9
than the condition of the belly? This, too, is vanity and chasing of the wind.
1:9-11
Jb 9:32 What has been already has a name; and what man is, is known; he cannot 10

11 dispute with one stronger than himself. •The more words, the greater the
vanity of it all; and what does man get from it?
12 1 Who knows what is good for man in his lifetime, in those few days he lives 3:22; 8:13 Jb 8:9; 14:2 Ps 39:6; 90:10; 102:11; 109:23 Ws 2:5
so vainly, days that like a shadow he spends? Who can tell a man what will happen
under the sun after his time?

PART TWO

Prologue[a]

1 2 7 Better a good name than costly oil, Pr 21:1 Si 41:12
the day of death than the day of birth.
2 3 Better go to the house of mourning Pr 14:13
than to the house of feasting;
for to this end all men come,
let the living take this to heart.
3 4 Better sadness than laughter, Si 27:13
a severe face confers some benefit.
4 5 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
the heart of fools in the house of gaiety.
5 6 Better attend to a wise man's reprimand
than listen to a song sung by a fool.
6 7 For like the crackling of thorns under the cauldron
is the laughter of fools:
this is vanity, too.
7 8 For laughter makes a fool of the wise man
and merriment corrupts the heart.[b]

Sanctions[c]

8 9 Better the end of a matter than its beginning,
better patience than pride.

9 10 Do not be hasty with your resentment, for resentment is found in the heart Pr 22:24 Jm 1:19
10 11 of fools. •Do not ask why earlier days were better than these, for that is not
11 12 a question prompted by wisdom. •Wisdom is a precious legacy,[d] a boon for Si 39:16,33f
12 13 those on whom the sun shines. •For as money gives protection, so does wisdom;
and the good that knowledge imparts is this: its possessor finds that wisdom
keeps him safe.

(messenger) may be the priest who witnesses the discharging of the vow, but the LXX reading ('God') suggests that angel is the right meaning here, one of the angelic functions being to give God an account of man's good works, Tb 12:12 +; Ac 10:4.

b. Text corrupt: we add 'chasing of the wind'.

c. Lit. 'The profit of the earth is for all, the king is served by the field'. These are common excuses for corrupt administration, cf. 1 S 8:12-14; 1 K 21 (Naboth).

d. A satire not (as in Pr) on the wicked plutocrat but on money itself, ill or well acquired, ill or well used. Money secures neither life nor happiness. This evaluation prepares the ground for the gospel teaching on detachment, Mt 6:19-21,24,25-34. The sequence of ideas is as follows: money is badly distributed, 5:9, squandered, 5:10, hard to come by, 5:11, painful to lose, 5:12-16. Therefore, man may as well spend it as it comes, 5:17-19. Three examples of all this: wealth that goes to another, 6:1-2, the rich man without a tomb, 6:3-6, poverty aping plenty, 6:7-11. Conclusion: 6:12.

e. The translation follows the Greek.

6 a. 'a hundred sons and as many daughters' corr.; 'a hundred (sons) and (living) many years' Hebr.

b. Lit. '(why choose) one rather than the other?'

c. Lit. 'who knows how to walk before the living'.

7 a. Austere strictures on gaiety.

b. 'laughter, merriment' corr. Hebr. 'oppression bribe'.

c. The Law had enunciated the principle of collective retribution: for Israel, prosperity was contingent on fidelity, cf. Dt 7:12f; 11:26-28; 28:1-68; Lv 26. The sages had applied this principle to the individual: God renders to each as his works deserve, Pr 24:12; Ps 62:12; Jb 34:11. From this they inferred that a man's present condition was proportionate to his deserts. When experience contradicted this, their answer was: the prosperity of the wicked and the misfortunes of the virtuous are neither of them lasting. This is the thesis of Ps 37 and of the friends of Job. Qoheleth refutes it. He counters the conventional solution with scepticism, 7:9-12. Life must be taken as it comes, without seeking explanations, 7:13-15. If life and death are so capriciously ordained, 7:15, there is no point in making superhuman efforts, 7:16-18. Reputation means nothing, 7:19-22. The world of the senses is inexplicable. Reality is a fathomless mystery, 7:23f (with a parenthesis directed against women, 7:25-28). Fate is blind, pitiless (not sparing kings, 8:1-9) and even perverse, 8: 10-14. Conclusion: 8:15.

d. Lit. 'Wisdom is good as (with?) an inheritance'.

1:15 Consider the work of God; who can set straight what he has made crooked? 13 13
When times are prosperous, enjoy your happiness; when times are bad, consider 14 14
this: the one is God's doing, as is the other, in order that man may know
8:14; 9:2 nothing of his destiny.[e] •In this fleeting life of mine I have seen so much: the 15 15
virtuous man perishing for all his virtue, for all his godlessness the godless
living on.

Do not be over-virtuous 16 16
nor play too much the sage;

why drive yourself too hard?

Do not be wicked to excess, 17 17
and do not be a fool;

Pr 10:27 why die before your time? •The best thing is to hold the one and not let go the 18 18
other, for both of these will happen to the God-fearing man.[f]
9:16f Pr 21:22 Wisdom lends more strength to the wise than ten rulers in a city. •There 19 19
1 K 8:46 Jb 14:4+ 1 Jn 1:8-9 is no virtuous man on earth who, doing good, is ever free of sin. •Another 21 21
thing: pay no attention to telltales; you may hear that your servant has reviled
you; •your own heart knows how often you have reviled others. 22 22

I have put all this to the test by wisdom, claiming to be wise; but wisdom has 23 23
Jb 28:12 Ps 64:6 been beyond my reach. •Reality lies beyond my grasp; and deep, so deep, who 24 24
can discover it?

Once again I was at pains to study wisdom and retribution,[g] to see wickedness 25 25
Jg 16 Pr 5:3-4; 7: 23 Si 42:14 as folly, and foolishness as madness. •I find woman more bitter than death; 26 26
she is a snare, her heart a net, her arms are chains;

He who is pleasing to God eludes her,
but the sinner is her captive.

This then you must know, says Qoheleth, is the sum of my investigation, putting 27 27
this and that together. •I have made other researches too, without result. 28 28

One man in a thousand I may find,
but never a woman better than the rest.[h]

This, however, you must know: I find that God made man simple; man's complex 29 29
problems are of his own devising.

8 Who is like the sage? 1
Who else can solve a problem?
The wisdom of a man lends brightness to his face;
his face, once grim, is altered.

Rm 13:1f This I say:[a] Obey the command of the king, for the sake of the oath of God;[b] 2
do not rashly transgress it; do not be stubborn when the cause is not a good 3
one, since he acts as he thinks fit; •for the word of the king is paramount, and 4
Dn 4:32 who dare say to him, 'Why do that?'

He who obeys the command will come to no harm, 5
and the wise man knows there will be a time of judgement.

For there is a time of judgement for everything; and man runs grave risks,[c] 6
10:14 since he does not know what is going to happen; and who can tell him when 7
Ws 2:1 it will happen? •No man can master the wind so as to hold it back, nor control 8
the day of death. There is no discharge in time of war; no more can wickedness
set its author free. •All this I observe as I consider all that is done under the 9
sun, whenever man tyrannises over man to his hurt.

And then I see the wicked brought to burial and people come from the Temple 10
to honour them in the city for having been the men they were.[d] This, too, is
Si 5:4 vanity. •Since the sentence on wrong-doing is not carried out at once, men's inmost 11

12 hearts are intent on doing wrong. •The sinner who does wrong a hundred times survives even so. I know very well that happiness is reserved for those who fear
13 God, because they fear him; •that there will be no happiness for the wicked man and that he will only eke out his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.
14 But there is a vanity found on earth; the good, I mean, receive the treatment the wicked deserve; and the wicked the treatment the good deserve. This, too, I say, is vanity.
15 Joy, then, is the object of my praise, since under the sun there is no happiness for man except in eating, drinking and pleasure. This is his standby in his toil through the days of life God has given him under the sun.

Ps 115:11
6:12+ Ws 2:5
7:15; 9:2 Ps 73 Jr 12:1f
2:24+

Love

16 Wisdom having been my careful study, I came to observe the business that goes on here on earth. And certainly the eyes of man never rest, day and night.
17 And I look at all the work of God: plainly no one can discover what the work is that goes on under the sun or explain why man should toil to seek yet never discover. Not even a sage can discover it, though he may claim to know.
1 **9** For I have reflected on all this and come to understand that the virtuous and the wise with all they do are in the hand of God.[a]
2 Man does not know what love is, or hate,[b] and both of these in his eyes •are vanity.[c]
Just as one fate comes to all, to virtuous as to wicked, to clean and unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice, so it is with the good man
3 and the sinner, with him who takes an oath and him who shrinks from it. •This is the evil that inheres in all that is done under the sun: that one fate comes to all; further, that the hearts of men should be full of malice; that they should practise
4 such extravagances towards the living in their lifetime and the dead thereafter.[d] For anyone who is linked with all that live still has some hope,[e] a live dog being
5 better than a dead lion. •The living know at least that they will die, the dead know nothing; no more reward for them, their memory has passed out of mind.
6 Their loves, their hates, their jealousies, these all have perished, nor will they ever again take part in whatever is done under the sun.[f]

Sl 40:5-6
3:11+
Dt 33:3 Pr 16:1 Ws 7:16
Jb 9:22; 21:26
7:15; 8:14
3:19-21
Jb 21:21 Ws 2:4
Sl 14:19

7 Go, eat your bread with joy
and drink your wine with a glad heart;

2:24+ Jg 9:13

for what you do God has approved beforehand.

8 Wear white all the time,
do not stint your head of oil.

9 Spend your life with the woman you love, through all the fleeting days of the life that God has given you under the sun; for this is the lot assigned to you in life

Pr 5:15+

e. Lit. 'may find nothing after him'. Or possibly understand 'find no created thing reliable'.

f. 'to the God-fearing man' with Greek.

g. Text corr.

h. Lit. 'in all these'.

8 a. 'This (I) say' added.

b. The king wields a sacred authority. The 'oath of God' may be the promise given by God to the king, 2 S 7; Ps 89, or else the oath sworn to God either by the king or by his subjects.

c. Probable meaning. Hebr. obscure; lit. 'for the misery of man is great on him'.

d. Lit. 'because they acted thus'. The whole verse is obscure and has been corrected here following the Greek, cf. Jb 21:27-34. Other translations 'Then, too, I have seen the wicked carried to the grave; they used to go forth from the holy place and were honoured in the city'; or 'Then, too, I have seen the wicked approaching and entering, but they went away from the Holy Place; while those who had done good were forgotten in the city'.

9 a. Hebr. repeats 'all this'. 'I have come to understand' corr. (Lit. 'my heart saw'). 'all they do' lit. 'their works', following Syr.

b. He experiences these emotions but fails to understand them. Like death and destiny love is blind and capricious.

c. 'vanity' corr.; 'everything' Hebr.

d. Apparently referring to extravagant presents to the living and (by building elaborate tombs) to the dead. Hebr. lit. 'Madness is in their hearts while they live and afterwards for the dead'. We insert 'towards the living' before 'in their lifetime'.

e. 'is linked' *qere* and versions; 'is chosen' *ketib*.

f. Sorrow at the death of those once loved moderates the following invitation to enjoy life, vv. 7-8, cf. 2:24+, by a recommendation to constancy, v. 9, until the final parting, v. 10.

Si 14:16; 41:4 and in the efforts you exert under the sun. •Whatever work you propose to 10
do, do it while you can, for there is neither achievement, nor planning, nor
knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

Chance[g]

I see this too under the sun: the race does not go to the swift, nor the battle 11
to the strong; there is no bread for the wise, wealth for the intelligent, nor favour
Lk 12:20 for the learned; all are subject to time and mischance. •Man does not know his 12
Pr 7:23 hour; like fish caught in the treacherous net, like birds taken in the snare, so
is man overtaken by misfortune suddenly falling on him.

Est 6:3 Pr 21:22 I observe another evil[h] under the sun, to me a grave one. •There was a 13 14
small town, with only a few inhabitants; a mighty king marched against it,
laid siege to it and built great siege-works round it. •But a poverty-stricken sage 15
confronted him and by his wisdom saved the town. No one remembered this
poor man afterwards. •Now I say: wisdom is better than strength, but a poor 16
7:19 Pr 1:5; 24:5 man's wisdom is never valued and his words are disregarded. •The gentle words 17
of the wise are heard above the shouts of a king of fools.

Better wisdom than warlike weapons, but one mistake[i] undoes a deal of 18
Ga 5:9 good. **10** Dead flies spoil a bowl[a] of perfumed oil; a little folly is stronger than 1
wisdom and honour.

2:14 The wise man's heart leads him aright, 2
the fool's heart leads him astray.[b]

Pr 13:16 A fool has only to walk along the road and, having no sense, he makes plain 3
to all what a fool he is.

Pr 14:17 With the anger of the ruler mounting against you, do not leave your post; 4
composure avoids many a fault. •There is an evil I observe under the sun, 5
Pr 19:10; 30:22 the type of misjudgement to which rulers are prone: •folly promoted to high 6
11:5 dignities, rich men taking the lowest place. •Slaves I see on horseback, princes 7
going on foot like slaves.

Ps 7:15 Pr 26:27 Si 27:26-27 He who digs a pit may fall into it; 8
a man saps a wall, the serpent bites him.
He who quarries stones may be hurt by them; 9
he who chops wood takes a risk.

If for want of sharpening the axe is blunt, you have to strike very hard, but the 10
reward given by wisdom is success.[c] •If the snake bites before it is charmed, 11
what is the use of the charmer?

Pr 10:32; 15:2 Words from a wise man's mouth are pleasing, 12
but a fool's lips procure his own ruin.

Is 32:6 Of the words he speaks folly is the beginning, sheer madness the end. •A fool 13 14
8:7 is a great spender of words; man does not know the future; so who can tell him
what is to happen after his time?

Fools find hard work irksome; 15
he who does not know the way cannot go to town.[d]

2 Ch 22:4 Pr 31:4-7 Is 3:4 A bad outlook for you, country with a lad for king, and where princes feast 16
in the morning. •Happy the country whose king is nobly born, where princes 17
eat at a respectable hour to keep themselves strong, not to make themselves
drunk.

Owing to neglect the roof-tree gives way; 18
for want of care the house lets in the rain.

Jg 9:13 Ps 104:15 —But meals are made for laughter. Wine gives joy to life. Money is the answer 19
to everything.[e]

20 Do not curse the king, even in thought;[f] Ex 22:27
do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom,
for a bird of the air will carry the news; Lk 12:2-3
indiscretion sprouts wings.

11 1 2 Cast your bread on the water; at long last you will find it again.[a] •Share
3 with seven, yes with eight, for you never know what disaster may occur
on earth. •When clouds are full of rain, they empty it out on the earth. Let the
tree fall south or north, where the tree falls there it lies.

4 Keep watching the wind and you will never sow,
stare at the clouds and you will never reap.

5 Just as you do not know the way of the wind or the mysteries of a woman with Ps 139:14-16 Jn 3:8
child, no more can you know the work of God who is behind it all. 3:11+ 2 M 7:22

6 In the morning sow your seed,
do not let your hands lie idle in the evening.

For which will prove successful, this or that, you cannot tell; and it may be that both will turn out well together.

Old age[b]

7 8 Light is sweet; at sight of the sun the eyes are glad. •However great the number Ps 56:13
of the years a man may live, let him enjoy them all, and yet remember that dark days will be many. All that is to come is vanity.

9 Rejoice in your youth, you who are young;[c]
let your heart give you joy in your young days.
Follow the promptings of your heart
and the desires of your eyes.

But this you must know: for all these things God will bring you to judgement.

10 Cast worry from your heart,
shield your flesh from pain.

12 1 Yet youth, the age of dark hair, is vanity. **12** And remember your creator in
the days of your youth, before evil days come and the years approach when Jb 17:1 Ps 90:10
2 you say, 'These give me no pleasure', •before sun and light and moon and stars
grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain;

3 the day when those who keep the house tremble[a]
and strong men are bowed;
when the women grind no longer at the mill,
because day[b] is darkening at the windows

g. A less coherent section than those preceding: Qoheleth here assembles sayings and illustrations on the subject of chance. Chance ignores merits, 9:11-12. Many things fail or succeed for trivial causes, 9:13–10:20. Life is a game of chance: risk is an essential part of it, 11:1-6.

h. 'evil' corr., cf. 5:12; 6:1; 9:3. 'a(piece of) wisdom' Hebr.

i. 'mistake' corr.; 'sinner' Hebr.

10 a. 'a bowl' Syr.

b. Lit. 'The wise man's heart is on his right hand, the fool's on his left'.

c. The words 'wisdom' and 'success' have been interchanged for the sake of the sense.

d. Text of this line doubtful; we insert 'the way cannot'.

e. V. 19 refers back to vv. 16-17, representing the empty excuse of the carousing princes.

f. Also translated 'in sleep'.

11 a. Some take this to mean bait thrown in the water by the fisherman and recovered in the form of his catch; others interpret 'bread' as merchandise, shipped abroad and bringing home a profit. This passage on taking chances throws light on the attitude Qoheleth wishes to instil into his disciple. He does not wish to discourage him for discouragement's sake, but to rob him of his illusions and thus save him from error. After all, risks do have to be taken.

b. Long life was the reward promised to the Israelites in the discourses of Dt (5:16,33; 11:9,21; 22:7, etc.), and was the greatest happiness the sages had to offer the virtuous. For Qoheleth, old age is not happiness but fear of death, 11:8, regrets for youth, 11:8–12:2, the slowing-down of life, 12:3-5b, a waiting for the irremediable, 12:5c-7.

c. A maxim on youth which Qoheleth emends with sober advice.

12 a. Picture of old age and its weakness.

b. 'day' corr.; 'the women who look out' Hebr.

and the street doors are shut; 4
when the sound of the mill is faint,
when the voice of the bird is silenced,[c]
and song notes are stilled,
when to go uphill is an ordeal 5
and a walk is something to dread.

Yet the almond tree is in flower,
the grasshopper is heavy with food
and the caper bush bears its fruit,[d]

Ps 49:11 while man goes to his everlasting home. And the mourners are already walking to and fro in the street

before the silver cord has snapped, 6
or the golden lamp been broken,
or the pitcher shattered at the spring,
or the pulley cracked at the well,

3:20-21+ Ps 104:29; 146:4 or before the dust returns to the earth as it once came from it, and the breath 7
to God who gave it.[e]

1:2 Vanity of vanities, Qoheleth says. All is vanity.[f] 8

Epilogue[g]

Besides being a sage, Qoheleth also taught his knowledge to the people, 9
having weighed, studied and amended a great many proverbs. •Qoheleth tried 10
to write in an attractive style and to set down truthful thoughts in a straightforward manner.

The words of the sages are like goads, like pegs driven deep; a shepherd uses 11
these for the good of his flocks.[h]

One last thing, my son, be warned that writing books involves endless hard 12
work, and that much study wearies the body.

5:6 To sum up the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments, since 13
Si 1:13 this is the whole duty of man.[i] •For God will call all hidden deeds, good or bad, 14
to judgement.

12 c. 'the voice of the bird is silenced (ceases)' corr.
d. Here again, cf. 1:4f, indifferent nature forms the backcloth for human death. The old man dies at the very moment that nature revives with the spring. 'is heavy with food', 'bears its fruit', corr.
e. The earthly part of man returns to earth. But since nothing on this earth can satisfy him, not all of him originates from earth, and that which is of God, returns to God.
f. The book ends as it began but has covered much ground in between. It has taught man his wretchedness but also his greatness, by showing that this world is not worthy of him. It incites the reader to disinterested religion and to that kind of prayer in which a creature, aware of its nothingness, adores the mystery of God. Cf. Ps 39.
g. Commendatory epilogue; eulogy of Qoheleth, vv. 9-11, hardships of writing books, v. 12, advice for a quiet mind, vv. 13-14.
h. Meaning doubtful, text corr.
i. Defective phrase; we insert 'duty'.

INTRODUCTION TO
THE SONG OF SONGS

The Song of Songs, that is to say 'the greatest of all songs', is a series of love poems in which lover and loved are now united, now divided, now sought, now found. The lover is called 'king', 1:4 and 12, and 'Solomon', 3:7 and 9; his beloved is called 'the Shulammite', 7:1, which title, it is thought, is related to the 'Shunammite' of David's time and Solomon's, 1 K 1:3; 2:21-22. That Solomon was a writer of songs Hebrew tradition was aware, 1 K 5:12; for this reason 'the greatest of all songs' was attributed to him (hence the title, 1:1); in the same way as Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Wisdom were credited to Solomon in his capacity of sage. This titular attribution caused the Song to be placed among the Wisdom Books, after Ecclesiastes in the Greek Bible, between Ecclesiastes and Wisdom (two 'Solomonic' books) in the Vulgate. In the Hebrew Bible it is the first of the five *megilloth*, or 'rolls', which were recited at the great feasts; the Song was read at Passover.

People have found it surprising that a book that makes no mention of God and whose vocabulary is so passionate should figure in the sacred canon. The doubts in Jewish circles of the 1st century A.D. were, however, settled by an appeal to tradition. On these same grounds the Christian Church has always accepted the Song as part of holy scripture.

Of all the Old Testament books this has been most variously interpreted. Only two of these interpretations are acceptable. The Jewish rabbis understood it allegorically; the relationship of lover and beloved is that between God and Israel, the traditional prophetic marriage metaphor dating from Hosea. The writers of the early Church, with the exception of Theodore of Mopsuestia, adopted the same explanation, though with them the allegory becomes one of Christ and his Church. This allegorical interpretation is accepted, under various forms, by the majority of Catholic commentators today. Some are content with the general theme, the elaboration being purely literary, of God the bridegroom of Israel. Others see in the sequence of the Song the story of Israel's changing seasons of conversion, hope, disillusionment. This last interpretation is fully explained in the footnotes given here.

Other scholars prefer the more obvious meaning. For them the Song is a collection of hymns to true love sanctified by union. And since God has given his blessing to marriage, the theme is of the religious and not merely of the physical order. Other books of the Old Testament touch upon this same subject of human love, Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus for example; the approach is the same as that of the Song and, at times, the very phrases. It is a noble theme and the prophets rightly saw in it an apt image of God's love for Israel. The topic is not unworthy of a book that was to be received into the sacred canon and recognised as inspired.

If we accept the allegorical interpretation, it is permissible to look for a planned arrangement in the Song matching the development of God's relations with Israel, and to establish the date of the book by its historical allusions. This method points to the second half of the 5th century B.C., not earlier. If however the book is a collection of songs, possibly of varying periods, the historical argument is inapplicable; nevertheless, the vocabulary and style themselves indicate a post-exilic origin.

Whatever theory of interpretation we adopt we are justified in applying the Song to the mutual love of Christ and his Church or to the union of the individual soul with God. Mystics like St John of the Cross were wise to use the Song as they did.

THE SONG OF SONGS

TITLE AND PROLOGUE

1 **1** The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

2 THE BRIDE — Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.
Your love is more delightful than wine; — 4:10

3 delicate is the fragrance of your perfume,[a] — 1:12
your name is an oil poured out,
and that is why the maidens[b] love you. — 6:8+

4 Draw me in your footsteps, let us run.
The King[c] has brought me into his rooms;[d]
you will be our joy and our gladness.[e]
We shall praise your love above wine; — 4:10
how right it is to love you.

FIRST POEM

5 THE BRIDE — I am black[f] but lovely, daughters of Jerusalem,[g]
like the tents of Kedar,
like the pavilions of Salmah.[h]

6 Take no notice of my swarthiness,
it is the sun that has burnt me.
My mother's sons turned their anger on me,[i]
they made me look after the vineyards.[j]
Had I only looked after my own![k] — Is 5:1+

7 *Tell me then*, you whom my heart loves: — Gn 37:16
Where will you lead your flock to graze,
where will you rest it at noon?[l] — Ps 23:1-3 Ezk 34:1+ Jn 10:1-21

1 a. Throughout the Song this image is symbolic of the charms that entrance and intoxicate the heart.

b. The maidens may represent the nations, cf. Is 23:12; 37:22; 47:1; Jr 14:17, etc. Although Israel is the privileged bride, this does not exclude other nations from falling under the spell of the Bridegroom, cf. Is 45:14+.

c. Yahweh is king of Israel, 1 S 12:12; Is 6:1,5; Jr 23:2; Ezk 34:11-16. He is frequently given this title in post-exilic literature, cf. Dt 33:5; Is 24:23; 33:22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; Jr 51:57; Ob 21; Zc 14:9; Ml 1:14, as also in the eschatological contexts in Ps 24:7; 47:8; 48:2; 68:24, etc. The Song may be in the same tradition.

d. Possibly, and in 3:4; 8:2, the Temple in Jerusalem, focus of Israelite devotion in post-exilic times, Ezk 43:1-9 (cf. v. 8); Is 40:3,9,10; 52:8,12; Zc 1:16-17; 2:10-13; 8:3; Ps 132.

e. Abounding joy characterises all the prophecies of salvation, e.g. Is 9:2; 66:10; Jl 2:21,23; Zp 10:7; Ps 14:7; 16:9; 21:1.

f. Symbolic of a serious ordeal, cf. v. 6; Jb 30:30; Lm 4:8.

g. The 'daughters of Jerusalem', distinguished from Zion by a literary fiction, cf. 3:11; Ho 2:4; 9:13, correspond to the chorus in Greek tragedy, appealed to by the speaker to express his thoughts for him.

h. 'Salmah' corr.; 'Solomon' Hebr.

i. The Chaldaeans destroyed Jerusalem. They were 'brothers' of Israel, cf. Gn 11:28,31; 15:7; 22:20-23. See also Dt 26:5.

j. The forced labour of the exile.

k. The vineyard of the Bride is Palestine, cf. Is 5:1+; Jr 12:10f; Ps 80, lost to her for a while, Ho 2:5,14,17.

l. Yahweh, shepherd of his people, Ezk 34:1+, will lead them home from exile, cf. Ezk 34:13-15. Noon symbolises the height of happiness, cf. Is 58:10; Ps 37:6; Jb 11:17, here eschatological happiness, cf. Sg 2:17; Is 5:30; 8:20–9:1; Am 5:18,20.

That I may no more wander like a vagabond[m]
beside the flocks[n] of your companions.

THE CHORUS
Jr 31:21 If you do not know this, O loveliest of women, 8
follow the tracks of the flock,
and take your kids to graze
close by the shepherds' tents.[o]

THE BRIDEGROOM To my mare harnessed to Pharaoh's chariot 9
I compare you, my love.[p]
Your cheeks show fair between their pendants 10
and your neck within its necklaces.
We shall make you golden earrings 11
and beads of silver.

DIALOGUE OF THE BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM[q]
1:3+ —While the King rests in his own room 12
my nard yields its perfume.
My Beloved is a sachet of myrrh 13
lying between my breasts.
My Beloved is a cluster of henna flowers 14
among the vines of Engedi.

—How beautiful you are, my love, 15
how beautiful you are!
Your eyes are doves.

—How beautiful you are, my Beloved, 16
and how delightful!
All green is our bed.[r]

3:9 —The beams of our house are of cedar, 17
the panelling of cypress.[s]

2 —I am the rose of Sharon, 1
the lily of the valleys.[a]
—As a lily among the thistles, 2
so is my love among the maidens.[b]
8:5 —As an apple tree among the trees of the orchard, 3
so is my Beloved among the young men.
In his longed-for shade I am seated
and his fruit is sweet to my taste.
He has taken me to his banquet hall,[c] 4
and the banner he raises over me[d] is love.
Feed me with raisin cakes, 5
restore me with apples,
for I am sick with love.

=8:3 His left arm is under my head, 6
his right embraces me.

=3:5; 5:2-5; =5:8; =8:4,5 —I charge you, 7
daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles, by the hinds of the field,[e]
not to stir my love, nor rouse it,
until it please to awake.[f]

SECOND POEM

THE BRIDE I hear my Beloved. 8
See how he comes

leaping on the mountains,
bounding over the hills.[g]
9 My Beloved is like a gazelle,
like a young stag.

See where he stands
behind our wall.
He looks in at the window,
he peers through the lattice.

10 My Beloved lifts up his voice,
he says to me,
'Come then, my love,
my lovely one, come.
11 For see, winter is past,[h] 6:11;7:13-14
the rains are over and gone.
12 The flowers appear on the earth.
The season of glad songs has come,
the cooing of the turtledove is heard
in our land.
13 The fig tree is forming its first figs
and the blossoming vines give out their fragrance.
Come then, my love,
my lovely one, come.
14 My dove, hiding in the clefts of the rock,
in the coverts of the cliff,
show me your face,
let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet
and your face is beautiful.'

15 Catch the foxes for us,
the little foxes
that make havoc of the vineyards,
for our vineyards are in flower.[i]

16 My Beloved is mine and I am his.[j] =6:3; 7:13
He pastures his flock among the lilies. 2:1+

17 Before the dawn-wind rises,
before the shadows flee,[k]

m. 'a vagabond' Syr.; Vulg. 'a woman veiled' Hebr.

n. The foreign nations, Jr 6:3, whose kings are 'companions' of Yahweh, Ps 45:7. Straying Israel seeks her Bridegroom, Jr 31:22.

o. Mt. Zion, royal residence of Israel.

p. Exile in Babylon is traditionally compared with slavery in Egypt, Is 11:11,16; 43:16f; 48:21; 51:9-10; 52:4; Jr 23:7-8.

q. Possibly referring to the joyful return from exile.

r. The miraculous fertility of Palestine after the restoration of the exiles, cf. Ho 2:23f; 14:6f; Is 29:17; 30:23f; Jr 31:12,14; Ezk 34:26f; 36:29f; 47:1-12.

s. Cedar and cypress from Lebanon, precious materials of the Temple and the palace of Solomon.

2 a. The 'rose' (actually the crocus) and 'lily' (the red Palestinian anemone, cf. Mt 6:28) are symbolic of spring, and of the eschatological age, cf. Is 35:1; Ho 14:6.

b. Israel has the unique distinction of being God's chosen nation, Dt 7:6+.

c. Once brought back to Palestine, the banquet hall (lit. 'house of wine') of God, cf. Is 62:8; Jr 31:12, Israel will be intoxicated with the wine of divine love. Cf. 1:2, 4, 14.

d. The rallying signal for the captives, cf. Is 11:12; 49:22; 62:10.

e. A play on words (*ayyaloth*, gazelles; *sebaoth*, hinds) evoking the name of the Lord of hosts (Elohei Sebaoth).

f. Sleep symbolises the ordeal of exile, cf. Is 51:17, 21-22; 52:1-2; restoration depends on the willing conversion of the Bride, cf. Ho 2:18; Jr 31:19.

g. The mountains of Judah. Cf. Is 40:3-5,9-11; 52:7; 62:10-12.

h. Spring is a symbol of salvation, Ho 14:6-8, cf. 2:5,14, and this description preludes the invitation to return.

i. Cryptic verse, to be understood in the light of Ho 2:14,20 and Jr 12:7f. The little foxes are malevolent neighbours, Samaritans, Ammonites, Arabs, Philistines, hostile to the restoration of Judah, cf. Ezr 4:2; 9:2; 10:18f; Ne 2:19; 3:34f; 4:1, etc.; Ps 60:8-9. Cf. Is 27:2-4; Ps 80:6,12-13.

j. Adaptation of the prophetic formula 'Israel is the nation of Yahweh and Yahweh is the God of Israel', expressing the final restoration of the covenant after a true change of heart. Cf. Ho 2:25; Jr 31:33; Ezk 36:28.

k. This image, like the 'morning' and 'awakening' of Ps 17:15+, stands for the eschatological hour of deliverance; the verse is related to 1:7; 2:7; 3:5; 8:4.

8:14 return![i] Be, my Beloved,
like a gazelle,
a young stag,
on the mountains of the covenant.[m]

3 On my bed, at night,[a] I sought him 1
whom my heart loves.
5:6 Jn 20:13 I sought but did not find him.[b]
So I will rise and go through the City;[c] 2
in the streets and the squares
Pr 7:15 I will seek him whom my heart loves.
... I sought but did not find him.[d]

5:7 The watchmen[e] came upon me 3
on their rounds in the City:
'Have you seen him whom my heart loves?'

Scarcely had I passed them 4
Jn 20:17 than I found him whom my heart loves.
I held him fast, nor would I let him go
till I had brought him
8:2,5 into my mother's house,[f]
into the room of her who conceived me.

=2:7;=5:8; =8:4 THE BRIDEGROOM I charge you, 5
daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles, by the hinds of the field,
not to stir my love, nor rouse it,
until it please to awake.

THIRD POEM

6:10; 8:5 What is this coming up from the desert 6
like a column of smoke,[g]
breathing of myrrh and frankincense
and every perfume the merchant knows?

See, it is the litter of Solomon.[h] 7
Around it are sixty champions,
the flower of the warriors of Israel;
all of them skilled swordsmen, 8
veterans of battle.
Each man has his sword at his side,
against alarms by night.

King Solomon 9
has made himself a throne[i]
1:17 of wood from Lebanon.
The posts he has made of silver, 10
the canopy of gold,
the seat of purple;
the back is inlaid with ebony.[j]

Daughters of Zion, 11
come and see
King Solomon,
wearing the diadem with which his mother crowned him
on his wedding day,[k]
on the day of his heart's joy.

THE BRIDEGROOM

1 How beautiful you are, my love,
how beautiful you are!
Your eyes, behind your veil,[a] 4:3; 6:7
are doves;
your hair is like a flock of goats = 6:5-7
frisking[b] down the slopes of Gilead.
2 Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes
as they come up from the washing.
Each one has its twin,
not one unpaired with another.
3 Your lips are a scarlet thread
and your words enchanting.
Your cheeks, behind your veil, 4:1
are halves of pomegranate.
4 Your neck is the tower of David 6:10 Ps 122:7
built as a fortress,
hung round with a thousand bucklers, Ezk 27:10-11
and each the shield of a hero.
5 Your two breasts are two fawns, = 7:4
twins of a gazelle,
that feed among the lilies.

6 Before the dawn-wind rises,
before the shadows flee,
I will go to the mountain of myrrh,
to the hill of frankincense.[c]

7 You are wholly beautiful, my love,
and without a blemish.[d]

8 Come[e] from Lebanon, my promised bride,[f]
come from Lebanon, come on your way.
Lower your gaze, from the heights of Amana,
from the crests of Senir and Hermon,

l. The bride had thought her beloved was coming to her, vv. 8-16, but he is no longer there, cf. 3:1. Israel asks Yahweh to return to her.

m. Lit. 'the mountains of the victims cut in half'. The expression alludes to Gn 15:10 and recalls the scene when Yahweh gave Abraham his promise that the captives would return, Gn 15:16.

3 a. Night symbolises long and painful waiting cf. Is 5:30; 8:22; 9:1; 21:11; 26:9; 59:9; Ps 130:6, etc.,

b. To 'seek' or 'find' or 'not find' Yahweh are expressions occurring often in the prophets, cf. Am 5:4+. Before letting himself be found, Yahweh insists on a true change of heart, Ho 3:5; 5:6,15; Jr 29:13.

c. Jerusalem. Cf. the allusions to the Temple, 1:4,17; 3:4; 5:10-16, and the references to the 'daughters of Jerusalem'.

d. Expressing the discouragement of those back from exile, cf. Is 59:9-11; 63:15–64:11.

e. Possibly the foreign power in control of the capital.

f. The Temple built by the former Israel, mother of the present Israel. The 'room' is the Holy of Holies.

g. Sign, cf. Ex 13:22+, of the presence of Yahweh who leads the exiles home in a second Exodus, cf. Is 40:3+.

h. 'Solomon' (whose name and history are evocative of peace) is here the messianic king who brings the eschatological peace so long desired by the exiles, cf. Is 11:6+, a hope associated with the coming of the Messiah, cf. Is 9:5-6; Ezk 34:23-25; Zc 9:9-10; Ps 72:7-8.

i. The Hebr. word, not used elsewhere in the Bible, seems to suggest the throne room of Solomon, 1 K 7:7, cf. 10:18-20; or (by emendation) the audience chamber of the Persian kings, in which case 'Solomon' would be associated with the Great King.

j. 'ebony' corr.; 'love' Hebr., which adds 'from the daughters of Jerusalem'.

k. Enthronement with messianic overtones. The king's mother is the nation, whose acclamation is the necessary prelude to his assumption of power, cf. 1 S 11:15; 1 Ch 11:10; 29:22, etc. The coming of the messianic age is also the day of the mystical marriage between King Yahweh and his people.

4 a. The bride was veiled when presented to her husband, cf. Gn 24:65; 29:23-25.

b. The Hebr. verb suggests violent movement; the comparison evokes the black waving hair of the bride.

c. Vv. 6 and 7 should probably be interchanged. The mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense represent the site of the Temple. 'Myrrh' (Hebr. *mor*) is apparently intended to suggest Moriah, cf. 2 Ch 3:1; incense was used only in sacrifice.

d. Israel has been purified by exile, cf. Is 40:2. The Catholic liturgy applies this verse to the Immaculate Conception.

e. 'Come' versions; 'With me' Hebr. In contrast to 2:8f, it is now the bridegroom who is in Jerusalem (v. 6) calling to the bride.

f. The 'promised bride', or 'betrothed', not yet taken to wife, is in reality wife already: Israel the unfaithful and rejected wife, Ho 2:4; Jr 3:1,8; Is 54:1, 6-7; but when Yahweh takes her back she becomes the 'betrothed' once more, Ho 2:21-22; Is 49:18; 61:10; 62:5.

the haunt of lions,
the mountains of leopards.[g]

You ravish my heart, 9
my sister,[h] my promised bride,
you ravish my heart
with a single one of your glances,
with one single pearl of your necklace.
1:2,4 What spells lie in your love, 10
my sister, my promised bride!
How delicious is your love, more delicious than wine!
How fragrant your perfumes,
more fragrant than all other spices!
Pr 5:3 *Your lips*, my promised one, 11
distil wild honey.
Honey and milk[i]
are under your tongue;
and the scent of your garments
Ho 14:7 is like the scent of Lebanon.

6:2 She is a garden enclosed,[j] 12
my sister, my promised bride;
a garden[k] enclosed,
Pr 5:16 a sealed fountain.
Your shoots form an orchard of pomegranate trees, 13
the rarest essences are yours:[l]
nard and saffron, 14
calamus and cinnamon,
with all the incense-bearing trees;
myrrh and aloes,
with the subtlest odours.
Pr 5:15-16 Fountain that makes the gardens fertile, 15
well of living water,
streams flowing down from Lebanon.

THE BRIDE Awake, north wind, 16
come, wind of the south!
Breathe over my garden,
to spread its sweet smell around.
Let my Beloved come into his garden,
let him taste its rarest fruits.

5 THE BRIDEGROOM I come into my garden, 1
my sister, my promised bride,
I gather my myrrh and balsam,
I eat my honey and my honeycomb,
I drink my wine and my milk.
Is 55:1-2 Eat, friends, and drink,
drink deep, my dearest friends.[a]

FOURTH POEM

2:7+; 8:5 THE BRIDE[b] I sleep, but my heart is awake.[c] 2
I hear my Beloved knocking.
'Open to me, my sister, my love,
my dove, my perfect one,
for my head is covered with dew,[d]
my locks with the drops of night.'

—'I have taken off my tunic,
am I to put it on again?
I have washed my feet,
am I to dirty them again?'[e]
My Beloved thrust his hand
through the hole in the door;[f]
I trembled to the core of my being.
Then I rose
to open to my Beloved,
myrrh ran off my hands,
pure myrrh off my fingers,
on to the handle of the bolt.

I opened to my Beloved,
but he had turned his back and gone!
My soul failed at his flight.[g]
I sought him but I did not find him,[h] 3:1+
I called to him but he did not answer.
The watchmen came upon me 3:3+
as they made their rounds in the City.
They beat me, they wounded me,
they took away my cloak,
they who guard the ramparts.

I charge you, =2:7; 3:5
daughters of Jerusalem,
if you should find my Beloved,
what must you tell him . . . ?
That I am sick with love.

THE CHORUS What makes your Beloved better than other lovers,
O loveliest of women?
What makes your Beloved better than other lovers,
to give us a charge like this?

THE BRIDE My Beloved is fresh and ruddy,
to be known among ten thousand.[i]
His head is golden, purest gold,[j]
his locks are palm fronds[k]
and black as the raven.
His eyes are doves
at a pool of water,[l]

g. From the N. came Israel's traditional enemies ('lions' and 'leopards') and conquerors, Jr 4:7; 5:6; 50:17; 51:38; Na 2:12-14; Hab 1:8. The bride is urged to make her way through the Pass of Hamath in the Lebanon, the regular route for invaders whose arrogance is often symbolised by the cedars of Lebanon, Is 10:33-34; Ezk 31; Zc 11:1-2; Ps 29:5. From this same mountain road the returning exiles gaze down on the land of their ancestors.

h. Expression borrowed from Egyptian love poetry.

i. Typifying the Promised Land, Ex 3:8, etc.

j. Traditional metaphor for the new Israel, Ho 14:6-7; Ezk 36:35; Is 51:3; 61:11.

k. 'garden' ancient versions; 'spring' (?) Hebr.

l. Hebr. adds 'with cypress and nard'.

5 a. The Israelites, invited to enjoy the happiness of the new era.

b. The following passage balances 3:1-4.

c. Among the returned exiles only the best are spiritually alert; see, for example, Is 56-59; 63-66.

d. Dew is symbolic of divine blessings, Ps 133:3, especially those of the eschatological age, Ho 14:6.

e. Empty excuses which the ardour of the bride will refute.

f. Lit. 'the hole' into which a large wooden key was inserted from the outside to slide back the bolt.

g. 'his flight' corr.

h. The prophetic formula, 3:1,3, here used in association with another traditional formula expressing the withdrawal of Yahweh from unfaithful Israel, cf. Is 50:2; 65:12; 66:4; Jr 7:27; Pr 1:28.

i. The allusions are to the description of the Temple of Solomon in 1 K 6-7, cf. 2 Ch 3.

j. Pure gold overlaid the panelling of the Holy of Holies, 1 K 6:20-21; 2 Ch 3:8.

k. The decoration mentioned in 1 K 6:18,29,32,35.

l. In 2 S 22:16 the expression ('springs of water') means 'the sea bed'; here it refers to the 'bronze Sea', 1 K 7:23-26; 2 Ch 4:2-5.

bathed in milk,
at rest on a pool.[m]
His cheeks[n] are beds of spices, 13
Ps 133:2 banks sweetly scented.
His lips are lilies,
distilling pure myrrh.
His hands are golden, rounded, 14
set with jewels of Tarshish.
His belly a block of ivory
covered with sapphires.
His legs are alabaster columns 15
set in sockets of pure gold.
His appearance is that of Lebanon,
unrivalled as the cedars.[o]
His conversation is sweetness itself, 16
he is altogether lovable.
Such is my Beloved, such is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

6 THE CHORUS Where did your Beloved go, 1 17
O loveliest of women?
Which way did your Beloved turn
so that we can help you to look for him?

4:12-16 THE BRIDE My Beloved went down to his garden,[a] 2 1
to the beds of spices,
to pasture his flock in the gardens
and gather lilies.
=2:16 I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine. 3 2
He pastures his flock among the lilies.[b]

FIFTH POEM

THE BRIDEGROOM You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love, 4 3
fair as Jerusalem.[c]
Turn your eyes away, 5 4
for they hold me captive.[d]
=4:1-3 Your hair is like a flock of goats
frisking down the slopes of Gilead.
Your teeth are like a flock of sheep 6 5
as they come up from the washing.
Each one has its twin,
not one unpaired with another.
4:1 Your cheeks, behind your veil, 7 6
are halves of pomegranate.

There are sixty queens 8 7
and eighty concubines[e]
(and countless maidens).
But my dove is unique, 9 8
mine, unique and perfect.
Pr 4:3 She is *the darling of her mother*,
the favourite of the one who bore her.
Pr 31:28 The maidens saw her, *and proclaimed her blessed*,
queens and concubines *sang her praises*:
3:6 'Who is this arising like the dawn, 10 9
Rv 12:1

fair as the moon,
resplendent as the sun,
terrible as an army with banners?' 4:4

11/10 I went down to the nut orchard 4:12+
to see what was sprouting in the valley,
to see if the vines were budding 2:11+
and the pomegranate trees in flower. 7:13-14
12/11 Before I knew ... my desire had hurled me
on the chariots of my people, as their prince.[f]

1/12 7 THE CHORUS Return, return, O maid of Shulam,[a]
return, return, that we may gaze on you![b]

1 THE BRIDEGROOM Why do you gaze on the maid of Shulam
dancing as though between two rows of dancers?[c]

2 How beautiful are your feet in their sandals,
O prince's daughter!
The curve of your thighs is like the curve of a necklace,
work of a master hand.
3/2 Your navel[d] is a bowl well rounded
with no lack of wine,
your belly a heap of wheat
surrounded with lilies.
4/3 Your two breasts are two fawns, =4:5
twins of a gazelle.[e]
5/4 Your neck is an ivory tower.
Your eyes, the pools of Heshbon,
by the gate of Bath-rabbim.
Your nose, the Tower of Lebanon,[f]
sentinel facing Damascus.
6/5 Your head is held high like Carmel,
and its plaits are as dark as purple;
a king is held captive in your tresses.[g]
7/6 How beautiful you are, how charming,
my love, my delight![h]
8/7 In stature like the palm tree,[i]

m. Hebr. obscure. Another reference to the 'bronze Sea'?

n. Lower part of the cheeks where the beard grows, hence the following comparison. Cf. 1 K 6:29.

o. Cedar wood was liberally used in the construction of the Temple, cf. 1 K 6:9, etc.; 'the whole of it was of cedar', 1 K 6:18.

6 a. The garden is Palestine, here identified with the Bride, 4:12.

b. Repetition of 2:16 with an inversion in the first line to emphasise that the bride's return to Yahweh is wholehearted.

c. The text adds 'terrible as armies'. Tirzah ('she is pleasing' or 'favoured') was the first capital of the Northern Kingdom; the second capital, Samaria, is deliberately suppressed. By naming the N. and S. capitals the author hints that the bride is the personification of the new 'Greater Israel'—a traditional aspiration, Jr 3:18+.

d. Lit. 'they take me by storm'.

e. Wives of full status and concubine slaves as in Solomon's harem. Here the women represent the pagan nations; Sg 1:3+, associates them with Israel, uniquely chosen by God, Dt 7:6+.

f. This difficult verse seems to mean that by a spontaneous impulse Yahweh places himself at the head of his people.

7 a. 'maid of Shulam' i.e., 'she who has peace'; in the new Solomon, 3:7+, she has found or recovered her peace.

b. The word 'return' repeated four times evokes the return from exile, cf. 1:7-11; 2:7,13; 3:6; 4:8; 8:5. In Ho and Jr it is the key word of the prophetic theme of the return: the exiles will 'return' home, Jr 3:12; 12:15, etc., cf. Is 35:10; 49:5-6; 51:11; but their hearts must 'return' to God, Ho 3:5; 5:15; Jr 3:14, etc. The play on these two senses in Jr 31:18 (cf. 15:19) is traditional.

c. Lit. 'as a dance of two camps'. Obscure. The following description of the Bride balances that of the Bridegroom in 5:10-16, though here there are references to certain geographical features of Palestine.

d. Jerusalem, in the centre of the nations, Ezk 5:5, cf. 38:12; it is encircled by valleys.

e. Ebal and Gerizim, 'twin' mountains.

f. Possibly Great Hermon, overlooking Damascus.

g. Veiled reference to the king of Tyre, ally of David and Solomon, 2 S 5:11; 1 K 5:15f; 9:10f; 10:11f.

h. Lit. 'daughter of delights', Syr. and Aquila; 'in delights' Hebr.

i. Tamar, 'palm tree', is the name of several women in the Bible, Gn 38:6; 2 S 13:1; 14:27.

its fruit-clusters your breasts.
'I will climb the palm tree,' I resolved 9 8
'I will seize its clusters of dates.'[j]
May your breasts be clusters of grapes,
your breath sweet-scented as apples,
your speaking, superlative wine. 10 9

THE BRIDE

Wine flowing straight to my Beloved,
as it runs on the lips of those who sleep.[k]
7:13 Gn 3:16 I am my Beloved's, 11 10
and his desire is for me.[l]
2:10-14 Come, my Beloved, 12 11
let us go to the fields.[m]
We will spend the night in the villages,
2:11; 6:11 and in the morning we will go to the vineyards.[n] 13 12
We will see if the vines are budding,
if their blossoms are opening,
if the pomegranate trees are in flower.
2:16; 7:11 Then I shall give you
the gift of my love.[o]
The mandrakes yield their fragrance,[p] 14 13
the rarest fruits are at our doors;
the new as well as the old,[q]
I have stored them for you, my Beloved.

8

Ah, why are you not my brother, 1
nursed at my mother's breast![a]
Then if I met you out of doors, I could kiss you
without people thinking ill of me.[b]
3:4 I should lead you, I should take you 2
into my mother's house,[c] and you would teach me![d]
I should give you spiced wine to drink,
juice of my pomegranates.
=2:6 His left arm is under my head 3
and his right embraces me.

=2:7; =3:5; 8:5 THE BRIDEGROOM

I charge you, 4
daughters of Jerusalem,
not to stir my love, nor rouse it,
until it please to awake.

CONCLUSION

3:4,6 THE CHORUS

Who is this coming up from the desert 5
leaning on her Beloved?[e]

2:7; 3:5; 5:2; 8:4 THE BRIDEGROOM

I awakened you under the apple tree,[f]
there where your mother conceived you,
there where she who gave birth to you conceived you.[g]
Dt 6:6,8; 11:18 Pr 3:3 Jr 31:33 Set me like a seal on your heart, 6
like a seal[h] on your arm.
For love is strong as Death,
Dt 4:24 jealousy[i] relentless as Sheol.[j]
The flash of it is a flash of fire,
a flame of Yahweh himself.
Is 43:2 Love no flood can quench, 7
no torrents drown.

APPENDICES

Aphorism of a sage

Were a man to offer all the wealth of his house to buy love, contempt is all he would purchase.

Two epigrams[k]

Our sister is little: her breasts are not yet formed.[l] What shall we do for our
8 sister on the day she is spoken for?[m] •If she is a rampart, on the crest we will
9 build a battlement of silver; if she is a door, we will board her up[n] with planks of cedar.

— I am a wall, and my breasts represent its towers. And under his eyes
10 I have found true peace.

Solomon[o] had a vineyard at Baal-hamon.[p] He entrusted it to overseers,[q]
11 and each one was to pay him the value of its produce, a thousand shekels of silver. •But I look after my own vineyard myself.[r] You, Solomon,[s] may have
12 your thousand shekels, and those who oversee its produce[t] their two hundred.

Final additions

13 You[u] who dwell in the gardens, my companions[v] listen for your voice; deign to let me hear it.

14 Haste away, my Beloved. 2:17
Be like a gazelle,
a young stag,
on the spicy mountains.[w]

l. The bride belongs only to Yahweh, cf. Ho 2:4; Ezk 23:3,21.

k. Possibly the sleeping Shulammitess, cf. 2:7; 3:5; 8:4,5.

l. In Gn 3:16 the woman's yearning is contrasted with the man's authority; here the mystic bride of Yahweh meets with love instead.

m. Invitation to enjoy the springtime, as in 2:10f; but it is the bride who speaks now.

n. 'Night', 'morning', ordeal followed by the eschatological Dawn. See 1:7; 2:17; 3:1; 5:2.

o. Consummation of the new and conclusive covenant between Yahweh and Israel.

p. The mandrake was thought to stimulate sexual desire and to promote fertility, cf. Gn 30:14-16.

q. The fruits old and new, Lv 26:10, evoke, cf. Ho 2:17-18; Jr 2:2; Is 54:6-8, the time of primitive fidelity in the desert and that of renewed fidelity in the future.

8 a. Yahweh, the bridegroom of the Shulammitess is still inaccessible; she prays him to come as a 'brother', as Immanuel, 'God-with-us', Is 7:14; 8:8.

b. The author has Pr 7:13 in mind, but more specifically the classic formula 'Where is your God?', Jl 2:17; Mi 7:10; Ps 42:3,10; 79:9-10; 115:2.

c. To the Temple, 3:4+, where the messianic King, descended from David, will have his throne, Is 11:10; Mi 4:8; Zc 6:9-15; 9:9-10; Ps 2:6; 110:2.

d. In the eschatological age, God himself will teach his people, Is 48:17; 54:13; 55:1f; Jr 31:33-34. Cf. Pr 9:1-6.

e. It is the bride approaching, leaning on the Beloved who has spoken heart to heart with her in the desert. Ho 2:16-25; she will now enjoy her own land again.

f. Hitherto she has defied awakening, 2:7; 3:5; 5:2; 8:4; now at last on the soil of the Holy Land Yahweh himself rouses her.

g. Namely, the 'Hittite' of Ezk 16:3,44-45, designating the indigenous peoples of Canaan, with whom the Israelites intermarried after the conquest. This early blemish was the cause of subsequent unfaithfulness.

h. The seal, attesting the wishes of its owner, here symbolises the wishes of Yahweh, i.e. the Law.

i. Yahweh is a 'jealous' God, Ex 34:14; Dt 4:24, etc.

j. Sheol, Nb 16:33+, is a personification here and more or less equivalent to Death, cf. Pr 27:20; 30:16.

k. Bitter criticism, based on traditionally theocratic principles, of the worldly wisdom of a Jewish ruler, probably John Hyrcanus (135-105).

l. Jerusalem, weak and poorly fortified.

m. Asked in marriage. The girl's brothers are the Sadducees. They plan stout and costly defences, v. 9. But the personified City proudly answers that she has no need of these; God is her protector, what should she fear?

n. Lit. 'set up against her' corr.; 'enclose her' Hebr.

o. The Solomon not of metaphor but of history.

p. Lit. 'the populous one', veiled allusion to Palestine, cf. 1 K 4:20.

q. Officials responsible for collecting the tribute and taxes, cf. 1 K 4:7-19; 5:7-8.

r. It is under my own care, without assistance from anyone else.

s. Here Solomon is probably John Hyrcanus (a 'Solomon' in his political ambition); let him keep what he has extorted.

t. The Sadducean officials.

u. Singular, here referring to Wisdom, identified with the bride of the Song, cf. Ws 8:2.

v. 'my companions' corr.; 'the companions' Hebr. The company of the devout, cf. Ps 119:62.

w. Wisdom gives her answer (composed by a different author who makes use of the words of the Bride in 2:17).

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF WISDOM

The book entitled 'The Book of Wisdom' by the Vulgate is known in the Greek manuscripts as 'The Wisdom of Solomon'. Its first section defines the function of wisdom in man's destiny and compares the fate of the good and the bad during life and after, ch. 1-5. The second section, 6-9, treats of the origin and nature of wisdom and of how it is to be won. The last section, ch. 10-19, celebrates the part played by Wisdom and by God in the history of the chosen people and, if we except a brief introduction, in one single but critical event in that history, the deliverance from Egypt. This third section contains also a long and exhaustive digression on idolatry, ch. 13-15.

The authorship is attributed to Solomon who, though not named, is clearly indicated in 9:7-8,12. The speaker is represented as a king, 7:5; 8:9-15, addressing his fellow kings, 1:1; 6:1-11,21. It is evident, however, that this is a literary device; as with Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, this wisdom book is published under the patronage of the name borne by Israel's greatest sage. And indeed the whole book is written in Greek (including the first section, ch. 1-5, wrongly supposed by some scholars to have been originally written in Hebrew). The unity of authorship is apparent in the closely knit composition of the book and also in the consistency of a literary style which is supple and expressive and, when need arises, oratorical.

There is no doubt that the author is a Jew: he is devoted to 'the God of the fathers', 9:1, and proud to belong to 'the holy people', a 'blameless race', 10:15. But he is a hellenised Jew. That he dwells on the events of the Exodus, contrasts Egyptians with Israelites and attacks animal worship shows that he lived in Alexandria, chief city of the hellenistic world under the Ptolemies and home of so many Jews of the Dispersion. When the author quotes Scripture it is from the Septuagint, the Greek version that came from these circles. He lived, therefore, after this version was made but before Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.–54 A.D.) of whose work he knows nothing; it seems that he wrote towards the middle of the 1st century B.C.

The author is writing for his fellow Jews whose faith is shaken by the attraction of the cultural life of Alexandria, its imposing philosophical systems, its advance in the physical sciences, its fascinating mystery religions, astrology, Hermetic doctrines, its seductive popular cults. Nevertheless, he has the pagans in mind too, hoping to lead them to God the lover of all men; certain remarks and turns of phrase betray this intention. But the intention remains a secondary one; the book is very much more concerned with safeguarding Jews than with conciliating pagans.

Given the author's circumstances, his culture and his purpose, it is not surprising that his work has multiple contacts with Greek thought. The significance of these, however, must not be exaggerated. His hellenistic education

provided him with a range of abstract terms and an easy familiarity with processes of argument beyond the capacity of the Hebrew vocabulary and syntax. To this same education he owes several philosophical terms, categories of classification and academic topics. But this restricted and superficial dependence does not mean intellectual commitment: the author borrows only to give expression to ideas deriving from the Old Testament itself. Of the various schools of philosophy and of astrological speculations he probably knew no more than the average cultured man of his own place and time.

The author is neither a philosopher nor a theologian; he is a typical sage of Israel. Like the wisdom writers before him he commends wisdom, born of God, obtained by prayer, mainspring of all the virtues, source of every good. But he outstrips his predecessors, adding to the sum of this wisdom the most recent achievements of human knowledge, 7:17-21; 8:8. The problem of retribution, for so long the study of the sages, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books, finds its solution in this book. The author makes use of the Platonic distinction of body from soul, cf. 9:15, and of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul to proclaim that God has made man imperishable, 2:23, and that incorruption is the reward of wisdom and the way to God, 6:18-19. This life is only a preparation for another in which the virtuous live with God and the wicked are punished, 3:9-10.

His doctrine of God's attribute, Wisdom, is traditional. Wisdom was active in the whole work of creation and Wisdom carries history to its goal. The qualities assigned to Wisdom are from ch. 11 onwards attributed to God himself, but this is because Wisdom and God in his function of world ruler are the same thing. Wisdom, however, is 'an emanation of the glory of the Almighty...a reflection of the eternal light...an image of his goodness' 7:25-26, and is therefore distinguished from God. The author, it seems, goes no further than the other wisdom writers here, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books; it does not appear that he gives Wisdom an existence of its own; but the whole passage on the nature of Wisdom, 7:22–8:8, is a step forward in the expression of the traditional ideas and a deeper perception of them. It is not surprising that the New Testament draws upon this passage for its theology of the Word: Col. 1:15-16; Heb 1:3, and especially St John, Jn 1 *passim;* 3:16-17; 5:20.

The author was not the first to make a survey of Israel's history. Ben Sira had been before him, Si 44-50, cf. also Ps 78, 105, 106, 135, 136; but his originality emerges in two ways. In the first place he looks for explanations of the facts and outlines a religious philosophy of history behind which lies a fresh interpretation of the texts; so, for example, his disquisition on the moderation that God exercised towards Egypt and Canaan, 11:15-12:27. Secondly, and more significantly, he manipulates the biblical narrative in the interests of his thesis. In ch. 16-19, a sustained contrast between the fortunes of Egyptian and Israelite, the author fills out the narrative with imaginative elements, draws together episodes which in effect were disconnected, makes the facts more than lifesize. All this is an excellent example of midrash, the exegetical method practised later by the rabbis.

Tastes have changed and the Book of Wisdom has lost its original impact, but its first section, ch. 1-9, has much to offer the Christian mind, and the liturgy has made generous use of it.

THE BOOK OF WISDOM

I. WISDOM AND MAN'S DESTINY

On seeking God and rejecting evil

Jos 10:1 Mt 6:33 **1** Love virtue,[a] you who are judges on earth,[b] 1
let honesty prompt your thinking about the Lord,
2 Ch 15:2 Pr 8:17 seek him[c] in simplicity of heart;
since he is to be found by those who do not put him to the test, 2
he shows himself to those who do not distrust him.
But selfish intentions divorce from God; 3
and Omnipotence, put to the test, confounds the foolish.
Rm 7:24; 8:2 No, Wisdom will never make its way into a crafty soul 4
nor stay in a body that is in debt to sin;[d]
Ps 51:12 Rm 8:14 the holy spirit of instruction[e] shuns deceit, 5
it stands aloof from reckless purposes,
is taken aback[f] when iniquity appears.

7:23 Pr 8:31 Ti 3:4 Heb 4:13 Jr 11:20+ Wisdom is a spirit,[g] a friend to man, 6
though she will not pardon the words of a blasphemer,
since God sees into the innermost parts of him,[h]
truly observes his heart,
and listens to his tongue.
Ps 139:7-12 Jr 23:24 *Ac 2:4* The spirit of the Lord, indeed, fills the whole world, 7
and that which holds all things together[i] knows every word that is said.[j]
Pr 22:12 Si 39:19 The man who gives voice to injustice will never go unnoticed, 8
nor shall avenging Justice pass him by.
11:20 Jos 10:1 For the godless man's deliberations will be examined, 9
and a report of his words will reach the Lord
to convict him of his crimes.
Dt 29:19 There is a jealous ear that overhears everything, 10
not so much as a murmur of complaint escapes it.
Ex 15:24+ Ps 18:19 Beware, then, of complaining about nothing, 11
and keep your tongue from finding fault;[k]
since the most secret word will have repercussions,
and a lying mouth deals death to the soul.

Pr 8:36 Do not court death by the errors of your ways, 12
nor invite destruction through your own actions.
2:23-24; 11:24; 12:1 Ps 145:9 Death[l] was not God's doing, 13
he takes no pleasure in the extinction of the living.
Ezk 18:32; 33:11 Ho 11:9 Jn 8:44 To be—for this he created all;[m] 14
the world's created things have health in them,
in them no fatal poison can be found,
and Hades[n] holds no power on earth;
3:4+; 3:15; 15:3 for virtue is undying.[o] 15

Life as the godless see it

16 But the godless[p] call with deed and word for Death, — 2:9
counting him friend, they wear themselves out for him, — Pr 8:36
with him they make a pact, — Is 28:15
and are fit to be his partners.[q] — Si 14:12

1 2 For they say to themselves, with their misguided reasoning:

'Our life is short and dreary,[a] — Jb 14:1-2+ Ps 39:4-6 Qo 8:8
nor is there any relief when man's end comes,
nor is anyone known who can give release[b] from Hades. — Jb 7:9+
2 By chance we came to birth,
and after this life we shall be as if we had never been.
The breath in our nostrils is a puff of smoke, — Ps 102:3
reason a spark from the beating of our hearts;[c]
3 put this out and our body turns to ashes,
and the spirit melts away like idle air.
4 In time, our name will be forgotten, — Jb 18:17-19 Qo 1:11; 2:16; 9:5f
nobody will remember what we have done;
our life will pass away like wisps of cloud, — Jb 7:9
dissolve like the mist
that the sun's rays drive away
and the heat of it overwhelms.
5 Yes, our days are the passing of a shadow, — 5:9 1 Ch 29:15 Jb 8:9; 14:2 Ps 39:6; 144:4 Qo 6:12; 8:13
from our death there is no turning back,
the seal is set: no one returns.

1 a. By 'virtue' (Greek *dikalosune*, Hebr. *sedeq*, 'righteousness', 'justice') is to be understood perfect accord of mind and act with the divine will as manifested in the precepts of the Law and the injunctions of conscience.

b. To 'judge' is the primary function of government. By a literary fiction the author poses as Solomon, 9:7-8,12, addressing his fellow kings; in fact he is admonishing his Jewish compatriots threatened by their pagan surroundings.

c. 'Seek God' is a recurrent prescription in prophetic and wisdom literature, cf. Am 5:4+.

d. The body is not evil in itself but may become the instrument of sin and thus dominate the soul. St Paul, Rm 7:14-24, and St John, 8:34, give authoritative expression to this idea.

e. Var. 'the holy spirit of Wisdom'. Reference to the divine power directing man's life; the text finds its highest application, however, in the Holy Spirit, Jn 14:26.

f. Text obscure. Lit. 'is confuted', 'thwarted'.

g. 'Wisdom is a spirit'; var. 'The spirit of wisdom'.

h. Lit. 'kidneys'; considered the centre of the emotions and of instinctive impulse, Pr 23:16; Ps 16:7; 73:21; Jb 19:27; in the 'heart' is localised conscious activity of intellect and of will. 'Heart' and 'kidneys' are frequently associated. Ps 7:9; 26:2; Jr 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Rv 2:23, to signify all man's inner forces.

i. A phrase from the Stoic vocabulary, emphasising the function of the spirit of the Lord which maintains the cosmos in unity (cf. the part ascribed to Christ, Col 1:17; Heb 1:3). The notion is new: the O.T. knew God as sole creator, Gn 1+; Is 42:8+, but had considered his activity in the universe only from the point of view of omniscience and ubiquity, Am 4:13; 9:2-3; Jr 23:24; 1 K 8:27; Jb 34:21-23; Ps 139:7-12; Si 42:18-20.

j. Lit. 'has knowledge of sounds'. The liturgy of Pentecost applies this text to the 'gift of tongues', Ac 2:2-4.

k. With God and his providence.

l. The author is thinking simultaneously of physical and of spiritual death which are interconnected; sin is the cause of death, and physical death for the sinner is also spiritual and eternal death. The thought of the author moves imperceptibly from one to the other. His view of the creation is basically optimistic. The universe as created by God was harmonious, cf. Gn 1, and contained neither death nor harmful animals. The creation enjoyed peace such as Isaiah saw renewed in the messianic future, Is 11:6+. God is therefore not the cause of evil or of death, which do not however proceed from any independent principle. Man by his sin has spoiled the order of the world and introduced the supreme disorder, death, as the negation of God's creative act, cf. Gn 3. But the only real and irreparable death is that of the wicked, that is to say, of those in whom sin is nursed and can continue its fatal work. The virtuous man remaining faithful to God 'the lover of life', 11:26, suffers only an apparent death: immortality is in store for him. St Paul, Rm 5:12-21+, cf. 1 Co 15:35-37, will elaborate this doctrine, introducing the antithesis of the old sinful Adam and the new saving Adam; St John will speak of death's destruction on the day of judgement, sin's agents being condemned to the 'second death', Rv 20:14-15; 21:4,8.

m. God, 'He-who-is', Ex 3:14+, caused all things to 'be'.

n. 'Hades', the Hebr. Sheol, Nb 16:33+, here represents not the dwelling place of the dead but the power of personified Death, cf. Rv 6:8; 20:14.

o. The man who practises 'virtue', cf. 1:1+, is assured of immortality. Vet. Lat. adds 'but injustice (vice) is the obtaining of death'.

p. The 'godless' here are primarily renegade and profligate Jews who persecute their fellows and defy God; the pagans, however, are not excluded.

q. Lit. 'to belong to his portion'. The wicked are the 'portion' of Death, as Israel is the portion of God, Dt 32:9; Zc 2:16; 2 M 1:26, and as God is the 'portion' of the faithful soul, Ps 16:5; 73:26; 142:5.

2 a. Pessimistic verdict; the author has just contradicted it, 1:13-15.

b. Or possibly 'who has returned', in which case Hades (Sheol) would mean, as in Rv 1:18, the dwelling place of the dead, Nb 16:33+, from which there is no return, Jb 7:9+, and no longer the power of personified Death as in 1:14 and Rv 6:8.

c. Allusion to ancient theories on the origin of thought.

Is 22:13
1 Co 15:32
'Come then, let us enjoy what good things there are, 6
use this creation with the zest of youth:
Is 5:11;22:13
take our fill of the dearest wines and perfumes, 7
let not one flower of springtime pass us by,
before they wither crown ourselves with roses.[d] 8
Let none of us forgo his part in our orgy, 9
let us leave the signs of our revelry everywhere,
1:16
Is 57:6
this is our portion, this the lot assigned us.

5:1
Ne 9:26
Ex 22:21+
Lv 25:35-37
'As for the virtuous man who is poor,[e] let us oppress him; 10
let us not spare the widow,
Lv 19:32
nor respect old age, white-haired with many years.[f]
12:16
Si 5:3
Let our strength be the yardstick of virtue, 11
since weakness argues its own futility.
Is 52:13
Jr 11:19;
20:10-13
Let us lie in wait for the virtuous man, since he annoys us[g] 12
and opposes our way of life,
Mt 23; 26:
3-4
Jn 5:16,18
reproaches us for our breaches of the law
and accuses us of playing false to our upbringing.
Mt 11:27
He claims to have knowledge of God,[h] 13
5:5
and calls himself a son of the Lord.
Lk 22:70
Before us he stands, a reproof to our way of thinking, 14
the very sight of him weighs our spirits down;
5:4
Est 3:8,
13de
his way of life is not like other men's, 15
the paths he treads are unfamiliar.[i]
In his opinion we are counterfeit; 16
he holds aloof from our doings as though from filth;
Mt 5:11
he proclaims the final end of the virtuous as happy[j]
Jn 5:18
and boasts of having God for his father.
Let us see if what he says is true, 17
let us observe what kind of end he himself will have.[k]
Ps 22:8
↗ Mt 27:43
If the virtuous man is God's son, God will take his part 18
and rescue him from the clutches of his enemies.
Let us test him with cruelty and with torture, 19
Is 53:7
Mt 26:67-
68; 27:12f
and thus explore this gentleness of his
and put his endurance to the proof.
5:4
Let us condemn him to a shameful death 20
since he will be looked after—we have his word for it.'[l]

The godless gravely mistaken

This is the way they reason, but they are misled, 21
their malice makes them blind.
They do not know the hidden things of God, 22
they have no hope that holiness will be rewarded,
they can see no reward for blameless souls.
Ps 8:5
Yet God did make man imperishable, 23
Gn 1:26+
2 P 1:4
he made him in the image of his own nature;[m]
Gn 3
Jn 8:44
Rm 5:12
it was the devil's envy that brought death into the world,[n] 24
as those who are his partners will discover.

The destinies of good and bad men compared

Dt 33:3
Ps 89:21
Is 51:16
Jn 10:28
3 But the souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, 1
no torment shall ever touch them.
4:17
In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, 2
their going looked like a disaster,
their leaving us, like annihilation; 3
Is 57:2
but they are in peace.[a]

4 If they experienced punishment as men see it,
their hope was rich with immortality;[b] 1:15; 2:23+; 6:18
5 slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be. Rm 8:18
God has put them to the test[c] 2 Co 4:17
and proved them worthy to be with him;
6 he has tested them like gold in a furnace, Jb 23:10
and accepted them as a holocaust. Ps 17:3; 26:2 Pr 17:3
7 When the time comes for his visitation[d] they will shine out; 6:20
as sparks run through the stubble, so will they.[e] Dn 12:3 Mt 13:43
8 They shall judge nations, rule over peoples, Ps 149:7f
and the Lord will be their king for ever. Dn 7:27 1 Co 6:2 Rv 5:10; 20:4-6
9 They who trust in him will understand the truth, *Pr 28:5*
those who are faithful will live with him in love;[f] 1 Co 13:12 1 Jn 3:2
for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.[g]

10 But the godless will be duly punished for their reasoning,
for neglecting the virtuous man and deserting the Lord.
11 Yes, wretched are they who scorn wisdom and discipline:[h]
their hope is void,
their toil unavailing,
their achievements unprofitable;
12 their wives are reckless, 12:11 Ps 109:9-10 Si 41:5-6
their children depraved,
their descendants accursed.

Better be barren than have godless children

13 Blessed the barren woman[i] if she be blameless, 4:1 Is 54:1
she who has known no guilty bed; Heb 13:4
her fruitfulness will be seen at the scrutiny of souls.[j]
14 Blessed, too, the eunuch[k] whose hand has committed no crime, Is 56:3-7
who has contemplated no wrong against the Lord;
for his loyalty special favour will be granted him,
a most desirable portion in the temple of the Lord.[l] Ps 16:5-6
15 For the fruit of honest labours is glorious, 1:15; 2:23
and the root of understanding does not decay.

d. Vulg. adds 'let no meadow be free of our excesses'.

e. Sarcasm: the 'virtuous man' (the faithful Jew) is 'poor' despite the promises of scripture, Ps 37:25; 112:3; Tb 4:21; Pr 3:9-10; 12:21, etc.

f. The very persons whom scripture bids us respect and defend.

g. Literary influence of Is 3:10 (LXX).

h. Boast of the faithful Jew, cf. Rm 2:17-20.

i. Echo of the opinion of the ancient world on the Jewish people as separated from the rest of mankind by their beliefs and behaviour.

j. Possibly alluding to the story of Job, 42:12-15, cf. Jm 5:11. On the earthly reward of the virtuous, see Introduction to Wisdom Books.

k. Vulg. 'Let us observe what happens to him, and we shall know what sort of end he himself will have'.

l. I.e. the loyal Alexandrian Jews derided and persecuted by renegades and their pagan allies. In this passage Christian tradition sees a foreshadowing of the Passion of Christ, the essentially Virtuous, and the target for the hatred of sinners, Heb 12:3, cf. Mt 27:43.

m. 'nature'; var. 'eternity', 'likeness'.

n. 'devil' in the LXX renders the Hebr. Satan, cf. Jb 1:6+. Here the author is interpreting Gn 3, cf. Rv 12:9; 20:2; Jn 8:44; 1 Jn 3:8. The death introduced by the devil is spiritual, with physical death as its consequence, cf. 1:13+; Rm 5:12f.

3 a. Not, as in Is 57:2; Jb 3:17-18, freedom from suffering but possession of all good in intimacy with God, vv. 7-9.

b. This word, appearing here in the O.T. for the first time, gives philosophical expression to the hope of the Psalmist who could not resign himself to the loss of intimacy with God through death, Ps 16:10+. The resurrection of the body, 2 M 7:9+, is not envisaged here.

c. Sorrow tests and purifies the virtuous, Ps 66:10; 119:75; Pr 3:11-12; Tb 12:13; 2 M 6:12-17; 7:32-33; 1 Co 11:32; Heb 12:11.

d. Lit. 'in the day of their visitation', cf. Ex 3:16+.

e. Symbolising the triumph of Israel over all enemies, who perish like stubble in the fire, Is 1:31 (LXX); Jr 5:14; Zc 12:6; Ml 3:19.

f. Knowledge and love together constitute the happiness of the faithful, cf. Jn 15:9f; 17:3,26.

g. 'those he has chosen' var. 'saints'. Add 'and for his saints a reward'.

h. The wisdom in question is practical; life directed by wisdom, hence virtuous. It is achieved by discipline, 1:5; 2:12; 6:17; 7:14.

i. Sterility was considered a disgrace or a punishment, fertility was a sign of God's blessing; to the barren but virtuous woman is here ascribed a spiritual fruitfulness.

j. Lit. 'she will have fruit in the visitation of souls'. 'Visitation' here, cf. 3:7+, means the day of Judgement, ch. 5.

k. Eunuchs were excluded from the community of Israel, Dt 23:2.

l. I.e. in heaven.

But children of adulterers,[m] these shall have no future, 16
the offspring of an unlawful bed must vanish.
Even if they live long, they will count for nothing, 17
their old age will go unhonoured at the last;
while if they die early, they have neither hope 18
nor comfort on the day of doom.
12:11 Si 16:4 Yes, harsh is the fate of a race of evil-doers. 19

3:13 Si 16:3 Pr 10:7 4 Better to have no children yet to have virtue, 1
since immortality perpetuates its memory
and God and men both think highly of it.
Present, we imitate it,[a] 2
absent, we long for it;
5:16 crowned, it holds triumph through eternity,
having striven for blameless prizes and emerged the victor.[b]

But the swarming brood of the godless shall bring no advantage; 3
Si 23:25; 40:15 offspring of bastard stock, it will never strike deep roots,
never put down firm foundations.
Branch out for a time they may; 4
Ps 58:9 but, frailly rooted, they will sway in the wind,
be torn up by the violence of the storm;
hardly grown, their branches will be snapped off, 5
their fruit be useless,
too unripe to eat,
fit for nothing.
For children begotten of unlawful intercourse 6
witness, when God judges them,[c] to the wrong their parents did.

The premature death of the virtuous man[d]

3:3+ Is 57:1-2 *Jb 32:9* Dn 13:50 The virtuous man, though he die before his time, will find rest. 7
Length of days is not what makes age honourable, 8
Si 25:4-6 nor number of years the true measure of life;
understanding, this is man's grey hairs, 9
Pr 16:31 untarnished life, this is ripe old age.
He has sought to please God, so God has loved him; 10
Gn 5:24 Si 44:16 as he was living among sinners, he has been taken up.
Heb 11:5 He has been carried off so that evil may not warp his understanding 11
Is 57:1 or treachery seduce his soul;
for the fascination of evil throws good things into the shade, 12
and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart.
Coming to perfection in so short a while, he achieved long life; 13
his soul being pleasing to the Lord, 14
he has taken him quickly from the wickedness around him.

Is 57:1 Yet people[e] look on, uncomprehending;
it does not enter their heads
that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord, 15
and protection, his holy ones.
The virtuous man who dies condemns the godless who survive, 16
and youth's untimely end the protracted age of the wicked.
3:2 Si 4:12 These people see the wise man's ending 17
without understanding what the Lord has in store for him
or why he has taken him to safety; 18
Ps 37:13; 59:8 Pr 1:26 they look on and sneer,
but the Lord will laugh at them.
Soon they will be corpses without honour,[f] 19

objects of scorn among the dead for ever.
The Lord will dash them down headlong, dumb. Ac 1:18
He will tear them from their foundations,
they will be utterly laid waste,
anguish will be theirs,
and their memory shall perish.

Virtuous men and godless at the judgement[g]

20 They will come trembling to the reckoning of their sins,
and their crimes, confronting them, will accuse them.
1 5 Then the virtuous man stands up boldly Mt 13:43
to face those who have oppressed him,
those who thought so little of his sufferings. 2:10-20
2 And they, at the sight of him, will shake with cowards' fear,
amazed he should be saved so unexpectedly.
3 Stricken with remorse, each will say to the other,
say with a groan and in distress of spirit:

4 'This is the man we used to laugh at once,
a butt for our sarcasm, fools that we were!
His life we regarded as madness, 2:15
his ending as without honour. 2:20
5 How has he come to be counted as one of the sons of God? 2:13
How does he come to be assigned a place among the saints?[a] Col 1:12
6 Clearly we have strayed from the way of truth; Pr 21:16
the light of justice has not shone for us, Ps 119:105
the sun[b] never rose on us.
7 We have left no path of lawlessness or ruin unexplored,
we have crossed deserts where there was no track,
but the way of the Lord is one we have never known.
8 Arrogance, what advantage has this brought us?
Wealth and boasting, what have these conferred on us?
9 All those things have passed like a shadow, 2:5 Jb 9:25-26
passed like a fleeting rumour.
10 Like a ship that cuts through heaving waves — Pr 30:19
leaving no trace to show where it has passed,
no wake from its keel in the waves.
11 Or like a bird flying through the air —
leaving no proof of its passing;
it whips the light air with the stroke of its pinions,
tears it apart in its whirring rush,
drives its way onward with sweeping wing,
and afterwards no sign is seen of its passage.
12 Or like an arrow shot at a mark,

m. 'Adulterers' means either renegade Jews, or Jews married to pagans, or else adulterers in the literal sense of the word, whether Jew or pagan.

4 a. Lit. 'they imitate'; var. 'they honour'.

b. The metaphor of the games and the victor's crown is elaborated in the N.T., 1 Co 9:24+.

c. Lit. 'at their examination': either at the judgement or when they are punished on earth; whether the pronoun refers to parents, children, or both, is uncertain.

d. Happiness and long life on earth were considered the reward of the virtuous, Dt 5:16; 30:20; Ps 21:4; 23:6; 91:16; Pr 3:2; Si 1:12, etc. His early death set a problem to which the author of Ws gives the final answer. Cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books.

e. Lit. 'the peoples'; var. 'others'.

f. This verse, which for the most part draws on Is 14:4-21, describes the lot of the wicked after death, either in this world or the next.

g. Description of the universal judgement; unlike Mt 25:31-46, the author is less interested in the pronouncing of the sentence than in the state of soul of the sinners. Their confession, Ws 5:4-14, is in marked contrast to what they used to say, 2:1-20. Their punishment is described in apocalyptic terms, 5:17-23. In 5:15-16 the fate of the virtuous, already described in 3:1-9, is briefly mentioned.

5 a. 'Sons of God' and 'saints' may mean the angels, Jb 1:6+; 2:1, but here more probably the elect, cf. Ws 2:13,16,18.

b. The sun of virtue, cf. Ml 3:20+; Is 59:9.

the pierced air closing so quickly on itself,
there is no knowing which way the arrow has passed.
So with us: scarcely born, we have ceased to be; 13
of virtue not a trace have we to show,
we have spent ourselves on wickedness instead.'[e]

Jb 20:8 Ps 1:4 Is 29:5 — Yes, the hope of the godless is like chaff carried on the wind, 14
like fine spray[d] driven by the gale; 15
Ps 37:20; 68:3 — it disperses like smoke before the wind,
goes like the memory of a one-day guest.

Is 62:11 Jm 1:12 — But the virtuous live for ever, 15
their recompense lies with the Lord,[e] 16
the Most High takes care of them.
6:20 1 Co 9:25+ — So they shall receive the royal crown of splendour, 16
the diadem of beauty from the hand of the Lord; 17
4:2 Pr 4:9 Is 28:5 — for he will shelter them with his right hand
Ps 7:10 — and shield them with his arm.

Is 59:16-17+ — [f]For armour he will take his jealous love, 17
16:24; 19 — he will arm creation to punish his enemies; 18
Ep 6:15 — he will put on justice as a breastplate, 19
and for helmet wear his undissembling judgement;
Lv 17:1+ — he will take up invincible holiness for shield, 20
he will forge a biting sword[g] and of his stern wrath, 21
16:17 — and the universe will march with him to fight the reckless.
Ps 7:12-13; 18:14 — Bolts truly aimed, the shafts of lightning will leap,[h] 22
and from the clouds, as from a full-drawn bow, fly to their mark;
and the catapult will hurl hailstones[i] charged with fury. 23
The waters of the sea will rage against them,[j]
the rivers engulf them without pity.[k]
Is 30:27-28 — The breath of Omnipotence will blow against them 24
and winnow them like a hurricane.
So lawlessness will bring the whole earth to ruin
and evil-doing bring the thrones of the mighty down.

II. THE ORIGIN, NATURE AND EFFECTS OF WISDOM HOW IT IS TO BE HAD

The duty of kings to cultivate wisdom

1:1 Ps 2:10 Si 33:19 — 6 [a]Listen then, kings, and understand; 1 2
rulers of remotest lands, take warning;
Ps 8:5 — hear this, you who have thousands under your rule, 2 3
Pr 8:15-16 — who boast of your hordes of subjects.
1 Ch 29:12 Dn 2:21-27 Jn 19:11 Rm 13:1 — For power is a gift to you from the Lord, 3 4
sovereignty is from the Most High;
he himself will probe your acts and scrutinise your intentions.

If, as administrators of his kingdom, you have not governed justly 4 5
nor observed the law,
nor behaved as God would have you behave,
he will fall on you swiftly and terribly. 5 6
Ruthless judgement is reserved for the high and mighty;[b]
the lowly will be compassionately pardoned, 6 7
the mighty will be mightily punished.[c]
12:8 Dt 10:17 — For the Lord of All does not cower before a personage, 7 8

he does not stand in awe of greatness, Jb 34:17-19▲ Si 35:12f▲
since he himself has made small and great Jb 31:15
and provides for all alike; Pr 22:2
8 9 but strict scrutiny awaits those in power.

9 10 Yes, despots, my words are for you,
that you may learn what wisdom is and not transgress;
10 11 for they who observe holy things holily will be adjudged holy,
and, accepting instruction from them, will find their defence in them.
11 12 Look forward, therefore, to my words;
yearn for them, and they will instruct you.

Wisdom sought is Wisdom found

12 13 Wisdom is bright, and does not grow dim. 8:2 Jr 29:13-14
By those who love her she is readily seen, Pr 8:17 Si 6:27
and found by those who look for her. Mt 7:7-11p
13 14 Quick to anticipate those who desire her, she makes herself Jn 14:21
known to them.[a]
14 15 Watch for her early and you will have no trouble; Pr 8:34 Si 6:36; 39:5
you will find her sitting at your gates.
15 16 Even to think about her is understanding fully grown;
be on the alert for her and anxiety will quickly leave you.
16 17 She herself walks about looking for those who are worthy of her Pr 1:20-21; 8:2-3
and graciously shows herself to them as they go, Si 15:2 Is 65:1-2,24
in every thought of theirs coming to meet them. 1 Jn 4:10

17 18 Of her the most sure beginning is the desire for discipline, Pr 4:7
care for discipline means loving her,
18 19 loving her means keeping her laws,[c] Jn 14:15
obeying her laws guarantees incorruptibility, 3:4+
19 20 incorruptibility brings near to God;
20 21 thus desire for Wisdom leads to sovereignty.[f] 3:7-8; 5:16
21 22 If then, despots of nations, you delight in throne and sceptre,
honour Wisdom, thus to reign for ever.[g]

Solomon sets out to describe Wisdom

22 24 What Wisdom is and how she came to be, I will now declare,
I will hide none of the secrets from you; 7:13 Jb 28
I will trace her right from the beginning
and set out knowledge of her, plainly,
not swerving from the truth.
23 25 Neither will I take blighting Envy as my travelling companion,[h] Si 14:9; 51: 23f

c. Vulg. adds 'this is what the sinners say in hell', and counts this addition as v. 14.
d. 'spray'; var. 'hoarfrost' or 'spider's web'.
e. Or 'their recompense is in the Lord' who is their 'portion', Ps 16:5-6; 73:26; cf. Ws 3:14.
f. The fate of sinners seems to be described in terms of the great apocalyptic battle at the end of time, Ezk 38-39; Is 24-26; Rv 20:7-10, with its concomitant universal upheaval, cf. Am 8:9+.
g. On the 'sword' of God, cf. Is 49:2; Ezk 21:8-9; Heb 4:12; Rv 1:16; 19:15.
h. Storm is the traditional image of divine intervention, cf. Ps 18:7-15; Ex 19:16+
i. As in the days of the Exodus period, Ex 9:23-25, and Joshua Jos 10:11 and in the various judgements of God foretold by the prophets, Is 28:17; Ezk 13:13; 38:22 cf. Rv 8:7; 11:19; 16:21.
j. As at the crossing of the Reed Sea, Ex 14:26-30, and in the theophany of Ps 18.
k. As the torrent Kishon carried away the corpses of Sisera's soldiers, Jg 5:21. The unleashing of floods is a symbol of great disasters, Ps 18:4+.

6 a. Vulg. begins this chapter with an addition: 'Wisdom is better than strength, the prudent man better than the mighty'. This addition is v. 1 in Vulg.
b. Thus Moses, Nb 20:12, David, 2 S 24:10-17 Hezekiah, 2 K 20:16-19, etc.
c. Or 'examined'.
d. These initiatives on the part of Wisdom foreshadow 'prevenient grace', cf. Jn 6:44-46; 10:3,26-27; Ph 2:13; 1 Jn 4:19.
e. Love implies obedience, Ex 20:6; Dt 5:10; 7:9; Si 2:15; Jn 14:15,21, etc.
f. Vv. 17-20 are a syllogism of linked propositions (a 'sorites') though somewhat freely stated.
g. Vulg. adds 'Love the light of Wisdom, all you who govern nations', v. 23.
h. Who restricts the secrets of mystery religions, 14:23, or the findings of philosophy, to a few initiates.

for she has nothing in common with Wisdom.
Ps 11:14 In the greatest number of wise men lies the world's salvation, 24
Pr 29:4 Si 10:1-3 in a sagacious king the stability of a people. 26
Learn, therefore, from my words; the gain will be yours. 25 27

Solomon a man like other men

Gn 2:7 Ps 139:13-16 Si 17:1 Jb 10:10+ 7 Like all the others, I too am a mortal man, 1
descendant of the first being fashioned from the earth,
I was modelled in flesh within my mother's womb,
for ten months[a] taking shape in her blood 2
by means of virile seed and pleasure, sleep's companion.
I too, when I was born, drew in the common air, 3
I fell on the same ground that bears us all,[b]
a wail my first sound, as for all the rest.
I was nurtured in swaddling clothes, with every care. 4
No king has known any other beginning of existence; 5
1 K 2:2 for all there is one way only into life,[c] as out of it. 6

Solomon's respect for Wisdom

9 1 K 3:6-9, 12; 5:9-14 Si 47:12-17 And so I prayed, and understanding was given me; 7
I entreated, and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.
I esteemed her more than sceptres and thrones; 8
compared with her, I held riches as nothing.
Jb 28:17 I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer, 9
for compared with her, all gold is a pinch of sand,
and beside her silver ranks as mud.[d]
I loved her more than health or beauty, 10
preferred her to the light,
Is 60:19-20 since her radiance never sleeps.
1 K 3:13; 10:21f Si 47:18 Mt 6:33 In her company all good things came to me, 11
at her hands riches not to be numbered.
All these I delighted in, since Wisdom brings them, 12
7:21; 8:5-6 but as yet I did not know she was their mother.[e]
What I learned without self-interest, I pass on without reserve; 13
6:22 I do not intend to hide her riches.
Si 6:19 Lk 12:33 For she is an inexhaustible treasure to men, 14
and those who acquire it[f] win God's friendship,
commended as they are to him by the benefits of her teaching.

The appeal to divine inspiration

May God grant me to speak as he would wish 15
and express thoughts worthy of his gifts,
since he himself is the guide of Wisdom,
since he directs the sages.
Jb 12:10 Ps 31:15 Qo 9:11 Si 10:5 We are indeed in his hand, we ourselves and our words, 16
with all our understanding, too, and technical knowledge.
It was he who gave me true knowledge of all that is,[g] 17
who taught me the structure of the world and the properties of the elements,
the beginning, end and middle of the times, 18
the alternation of the solstices and the succession of the seasons,
the revolution of the year and the positions of the stars, 19
1 K 5:13 the natures of animals and the instincts of wild beasts, 20
the powers of spirits[h] and the mental processes of men,
the varieties of plants and the medical properties of roots.

21 All that is hidden, all that is plain, I have come to know,
instructed by Wisdom who designed them all. 7:12; 8:4,6; 9:9; 14:2 Pr 8:22-31+

In praise of Wisdom[i]

22 For within her is[j] a spirit intelligent, holy, Heb 1:2-3
unique, manifold, subtle,
active, incisive, unsullied,
lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, sharp, Jm 3:17
23 irresistible, beneficent, loving to man, 9:11
steadfast, dependable, unperturbed,
almighty, all-surveying,
penetrating all intelligent, pure 1:6-10
and most subtle spirits;
24 for Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion;
she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things.

25 She is a breath of the power of God, Ex 24:16+ Si 24:3
pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;
hence nothing impure can find a way into her.
26 She is a reflection of the eternal light,[k] ✗Jn 1:9 ✗Col 1:15 ✗Heb 1:3
untarnished mirror of God's active power,
image of his goodness.

27 Although alone, she can do all;
herself unchanging, she makes all things new. Ps 102:26, 27; 104: 30
In each generation she passes into holy souls,
she makes them friends of God[l] and prophets;
28 for God loves only the man who lives with Wisdom.
29 She is indeed more splendid than the sun,
she outshines all the constellations;
compared with light, she takes first place,
30 for light must yield to night,
but over Wisdom evil can never triumph. ✗Jn 1:5; 16:33
1 8 She deploys her strength from one end of the earth to the other,
ordering all things for good.

7 a. Ten lunar months.
b. Lit. 'that suffers the same fate' (from all).
c. 'life'; var. 'the world'.
d. Familiar dictum of wisdom literature: Pr 3:14-15; 4:7; 8:10,11,19; 16:16; Ps 19:10; 119:72,127; Jb 28:15-19.
e. 'mother'; var. 'source'.
f. 'acquire it'; var. 'make use of it'.
g. To describe, vv 17-21, Solomon's exhaustive knowledge, cf. 1 K 5:9-14, the author credits him with mastery of the problems investigated by the hellenistic schools of the author's own day.
h. Demons, to whom the ancients, Jew and pagan, ascribed considerable influence over the world.

i. The peak of O.T. speculation on Wisdom, here represented as a person, cf. Pr 8:22+. The author excels his predecessors in the range of his vocabulary (he uses, though not technically, terms taken from Greek philosophy), but more significantly in his greater emphasis on the divine character of Wisdom. Her origin is described, vv. 25-26, by images indicating that she has a share in what she proceeds from; several of her qualities, omnipotence, vv. 23,27, sanctity and immutability, vv. 22,25, are exclusively divine. Her mission is to men, v. 27, cf. 9:10, 'penetrating all spirits', v. 23, and 'passing into holy souls', v. 27. She has a part in governing the universe, 8:1, as in its creation, 7:12,21; 8:6. She is loved by God as a bride, 8:3. All these attributes make this eulogy of Wisdom a preparation for the theology of the Trinity; they are resumed by St Paul and St John and applied to Christ, the Incarnate Word and Wisdom of God; see the texts quoted Pr 8:22+. It should also be noted that this doctrine of Wisdom gives rise not only to a theology of the Word but to a theology of the Spirit, cf. Is 11:2+, of the sanctifying Spirit, the inspiration of the prophets, the source of knowledge and understanding in the world. The author at times seems even to identify Wisdom with the Spirit, cf. 1:6; 9:17 and the variant in 7:22. He gives them common attributes: ubiquity, cf. 1:7; 12:1 with 7:24; 8:1; horror of sin, cf. 1:4 with 1:5. More particularly, he credits Wisdom with functions that many O.T. texts attribute to the Spirit: the guidance of men, Jb 32:8; Ps 51:10; 143:10, and of kings, Is 11:2, artistic, Ex 31:3, and prophetic inspiration, 1 S 10:6, etc. Even so, Wisdom, and not the Spirit, holds the foreground of the author's speculations, and from Justin onwards Christian tradition in its development of trinitarian doctrine has almost always identified the Wisdom of this passage with the Word.
j. Var. 'she is within herself'. The author now lists twenty-one attributes of Wisdom: the most perfect of perfect numbers (3×7).
k. In the O.T. God is never called 'light', cf. 1 Jn 1:5; Jm 1:17; but light accompanies him, Ex 24:17, cf. Ex 24:16+; Ezk 1:27; Hab 3:4; Ps 50:3; 104:1-2; Is 60:19-20. See Jn 8:12+.
l. Like Abraham, Is 41:8; 2 Ch 20:7; Jm 2:23, cf. Jn 15:14-15.

From Wisdom comes all that is desirable

6:12-16 She it was I loved and searched for from my youth; 2
Si 15:2 I resolved to have her as my bride,
I fell in love with her beauty.
Her closeness to God lends lustre to her noble birth, 3
since the Lord of All has loved her.
Yes, she is an initiate in the mysteries of God's knowledge, 4
9:9 making choice of the works he is to do.
Pr 8:27-30
7:12 If in this life wealth be a desirable possession, 5
7:21+ what is more wealthy than Wisdom whose work is everywhere?
Or if it be the intellect that is at work, 6
where is there a greater than Wisdom, designer of all?
Or if it be virtue you love, 7
why, virtues are the fruit of her labours,
since it is she who teaches temperance and prudence,
justice and fortitude;[a]
nothing in life is more serviceable to men than these.
Or if you are eager for wide experience, 8
she knows the past, she forecasts the future;
she knows how to turn maxims, and solve riddles;[b]
she has foreknowledge of signs and wonders,[c]
of the unfolding of the ages and the times.[d]

Wisdom indispensable to rulers

I therefore determined to take her to share my life, 9
knowing she would be my counsellor in prosperity,
my comfort in cares and sorrow.
Jb 29:9 Through her, I thought, I shall be acclaimed where people gather 10
Si 15:5-6 and honoured, while still a youth, among the elders.
1 K 3:7f
1 K 3:16-28 I shall be reckoned shrewd when I sit in judgement, 11
1 K 5:14, in presence of the great I shall be admired.[e]
21; 10:4-9 They will wait on my silences, 12
and pay attention when I speak;
if I speak at some length, they will lay their hand on their lips.[f]
By means of her, immortality shall be mine, 13
Ps 112:6 I shall leave an everlasting memory to my successors.
Si 39:9
1 K 5:1 I shall govern peoples and nations will be subject to me; 14
at the sound of my name fearsome despots will be afraid; 15
I shall show myself kind to my people and valiant in battle.
When I go home I shall take my ease with her, 16
for nothing is bitter in her company,
when life is shared with her there is no pain,
Pr 3:17-18 gladness only, and joy.
Qo 1:18

Solomon prepares to ask for Wisdom

Inwardly revolving these thoughts, 17
and considering in my heart
that immortality is found in being kin to Wisdom
pure contentment in her friendship, 18
inexhaustible riches in what she does,
intelligence in the cultivation of her society,
and renown in the fellowship of her conversation,
I went in all directions seeking by what means I might make her mine.
I was a boy of happy disposition, 19
I had received a good soul as my lot,
or rather, being good, I had entered an undefiled body;[g] 20

21 but knowing I could not master Wisdom[h] but by the gift of God — Si 1:1 Jm 1:5
—a mark itself of understanding, to know whose the bounty was—
I turned to the Lord and entreated him,
with all my heart I said:

A prayer for Wisdom[a] 7:7

1 9 'God of our ancestors,[b] Lord of mercy, 1 K 3:6-9
who by your word have made all things, Si 42:15+
2 and in your wisdom have fitted man 10:2
to rule the creatures that have come from you, Gn 1:28+
3 to govern the world in holiness and justice
and in honesty of soul to wield authority,[c]
4 grant me Wisdom, consort of your throne, Pr 8:27,30 Si 1:1 Ba 3:29
and do not reject me from the number of your children.

5 'For I am your servant, son of your serving maid, Ps 86:16; 116:16
a feeble man, with little time to live,
with small understanding of justice and the laws.
6 Indeed, were anyone perfect among the sons of men,
if he lacked the Wisdom that comes from you, he would still
count for nothing.
7 You yourself have chosen me[d] to be king over your people,
to be judge of your sons and daughters.
8 You have bidden me build a temple on your holy mountain, 2 S 7:13 1 K 5:19 Si 47:13
an altar in the city where you have pitched your tent,
a copy of that sacred tabernacle[e] which you prepared
from the beginning.
9 With you is Wisdom, she who knows your works, 8:4
she who was present when you made the world; 7:21 Pr 8:22-31+
she understands what is pleasing in your eyes
and what agrees with your commandments.
10 Despatch her from the holy heavens, Pr 2:6
send her forth from your throne of glory Ba 3:38
to help me and to toil with me
and teach me what is pleasing to you,
11 since she knows and understands everything. 7:23
She will guide me prudently in my undertakings
and protect me by her glory.[f] Ex 24:16+
12 Then all I do will be acceptable,

8 a. The four virtues of the Greek philosophers, the 'cardinal virtues' of Christian theology. 'virtue' at the beginning of this verse translates *dikaiosuné*, cf. 1:1+; the same word is rendered 'justice' later in the verse.

b. 'Maxims' and 'riddles': moral aphorisms in deliberately obscure terms. Cf. Pr 1:6; Si 39:2-3; Ezk 17:2; Jg 14:12. Solomon was a master of this art, 1 K 5:12; 10:1-3; Qo 12:9; Si 47:15-17.

c. Extraordinary events by which God displays his power and declares his will: miracles.

d. The course of history. This description of Wisdom's 'wide experience' completes the picture of 7:17-21.

e. Vulg. adds 'and the faces of princes will admire me'.

f. Gesture indicating silence, Pr 30:32; Si 5:12, especially respectful, admiring silence, Mi 7:16; Jb 21:5; 29:9; 40:4.

g. This text does not assert the pre-existence of the soul as it might seem if isolated from its context; it amends the phrasing of v. 19, which seemed to give pre-eminence to the body, and emphasises the superiority of the soul.

h. Vulg. wrongly translates 'I could not remain chaste'.

9 a. Composite prayer: elements taken from the historic prayer of Solomon, 1 K 3:6-9; 2 Ch 1:8-10; ideas common in the Wisdom terature; the author's own reflections. vv. 8c, 14-18, etc.

b. I.e., all the ancestors of Israel, especially the patriarchs, Gn 32:10; 2 Ch 20:6, including David, 1 K 3:6; 1 Ch 28:9; 2 Ch 1:9.

c. Or 'dispense justice'.

d. In preference to Absalom or Adonijah, 2 S 3:2-5; 1 K 1:5,28-31.

e. Either heaven, the true temple of God, Ps 11:4; 18:6; Rv 3:12, or a heavenly prototype of the Temple in Jerusalem, Heb 8:2,5; 9:23; Rv 8:3-4; 11:19; 13:6; 14:18; 15:5, or else the tabernacle built by Moses to the specifications of Yahweh, Ex 25:9,40; 26:30.

f. I.e. by her power, cf. Rm 6:4. Or 'keep me in her glory'.

I shall govern your people justly
and shall be worthy of my father's[g] throne.

Rm 11:34
1 Co 2:16
'What man indeed can know the intentions of God? 13
Who can divine the will of the Lord?
The reasonings of mortals are unsure 14
and our intentions unstable;
Jb 4:19
Is 38:12
Rm 7:14, 25+
2 P 1:13
for a perishable body presses down the soul, 15
and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind.[h]
It is hard enough for us to work out what is on earth, 16
laborious to know what lies within our reach;
Is 55:9
Jn 3:12
who, then, can discover what is in the heavens?
Mt 11:27
As for your intention, who could have learnt it, had you not granted Wisdom 17
Ps 51:12
and sent your holy spirit from above?
Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened 18
Ba 4:4
and men been taught what pleases you,
and saved, by Wisdom.'[i]

III. WISDOM AND GOD IN HISTORY

From Adam to Moses

10 The father of the world, the first being to be fashioned, 1
created alone,[a] he had her for his protector
and she delivered him from his fault;[b]
9:2
Gn 1:26,28
she gave him the strength to subjugate all things.[c] 2
But when a sinner[d] in his wrath deserted her, 3
Gn 4:8-13
he perished in his fratricidal fury.

Gn 7-8
1 P 3:20-21
When because of him[e] the earth was drowned, it was Wisdom again who saved it, 4
14:6-7
Gn 6:9;
11:1-9
piloting the virtuous man[f] on a paltry piece of wood.
Again, when, concurring in wickedness, the nations had been thrown into confusion, 5
Gn 12:1-3
it was she who singled out[g] the virtuous man, preserved him blameless before God
Gn 22:1-19
and fortified him against pity for his child.
Gn 19
2 P 2:6-8
It was she who, while the godless perished, saved the virtuous man[h] 6
as he fled from the fire raining down on the Five Cities,[i]
in witness against whose evil ways 7
a desolate land still smokes,
Dt 32:32
where shrubs bear fruit that never ripens
Gn 19:26
and where, monument to an unbelieving soul, there stands a pillar of salt.
For, by neglecting the path of Wisdom, 8
not only were they kept from knowledge of the good,
Gn 19:1+
they actually left the world a memorial of their folly,
so that their crimes might not escape notice.

But Wisdom delivered her servants from their ordeals. 9
Gn 27:43
The virtuous man,[j] fleeing from the anger of his brother, 10
was led by her along straight paths.
Gn 28:10-22
She showed him the kingdom of God
and taught him the knowledge of holy things.
Gn 29:1; 31:16
She brought him success in his toil
and gave him full return for all his efforts;
she stood by him against grasping and oppressive men 11
and she made him rich.

12 She guarded him closely from his enemies
and saved him from the traps they set for him.
In an arduous struggle she awarded him the prize,
to teach him that piety is stronger than all.[k]

Gn 31:23-29; 32-33
Gn 32:25-31
Ho 12:4-5

13 She did not forsake the virtuous man when he was sold,[l]
but kept him free from sin;

Gn 37-39

14 she went down to the dungeon with him;
she would not abandon him in his chains,
but procured for him the sceptre of a kingdom
and authority over his despotic masters,
thus exposing as liars those who had traduced him,
and giving him honour everlasting.

Ps 105:17-22
Gn 41:40-44

The Exodus

15 A holy people and a blameless race,[m]
this she delivered from a nation of oppressors.

18:1
Ex 19:6+

16 She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord,[n]
and withstood fearsome kings[o] with wonders and signs.

Ex 7-12
Ps 135:9-10

17 To the saints she gave the wages of their labours;
she led them by a marvellous road;
she herself was their shelter by day
and their starlight through the night.[p]

18:3
Ex 3:21
Ex 13:21-22+

18 She brought them across the Red Sea,
led them through that immensity of water,

Ex 14:21-29

19 while she swallowed their enemies in the waves
then spat them out from the depths of the abyss.

20 So the virtuous despoiled the godless;[q]
Lord, they extolled your holy name,
and with one accord praised your protecting hand,

Ex 15

21 for Wisdom opened the mouths of the dumb
and gave speech to the tongues of babes.[r]

Ps 8:2
Mt 21:16

1 11 At the hand of a holy prophet[a] she gave their actions success.

Dt 18:15,18; 34:10

2 They journeyed through an unpeopled wilderness
and pitched their tents in inaccessible places.

Ho 12:14
Dt 32:10

3 They stood firm against their enemies, fought off their foes.

4 On you[b] they called[c] when they were thirsty,
and from the rocky cliff water was given them,

Ex 17:1-7
Nb 20:2-13

g. David.

h. The terms are reminiscent of Plato but the metaphor is no less biblical, see Jb 4:19 (cf. 2 Co 4:7) and Is 38:12 (cf. 2 Co 5:1,4). The antithesis between body and spirit is elaborated later by St Paul, Ga 5:17; Rm 7:14-25+.

i. Vulg. joins the beginning of v. 18 to v. 17 ('if the paths...had not been straightened...and if men...'), and continues 'since by Wisdom, Lord, all have been saved who have pleased you from the beginning'.

10 a. The meaning seems to be that Adam held a unique position in creation.

b. By repentance and atonement (the common opinion of contemporary Judaism).

c. After his sin, Adam is thus still lord of creation and receives the power to be this: a new development on Gn 1-3.

d. Cain.

e. I.e. of his descendants. Jewish traditions emphasised their wickedness.

f. Noah, cf. Gn 6:9.

g. Lit .'knew', in the biblical sense, i.e. thought highly of, loved; reference to the choosing of Abraham.

h. Lot.

i. The five 'cities of the plain', Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, Zoar, cf. Gn 19:25+.

j. Jacob.

k. Since she wins over God himself. Reference to the 'wrestling with God' on the banks of the Jabbok.

l. Joseph.

m. 'holy and blameless' because the chosen people, cf. Ex 19:6+. The author chooses to disregard Israel's acts of infidelity, unlike Ps 106; Ac 7:2-53.

n. Moses, cf. Ex 3:12; 4:12; 7:1.

o. This plural stands for the pharaoh.

p. The author attributes to Wisdom what Ex says of God present in the cloud.

q. According to Jewish tradition the Israelites despoiled the dead Egyptians of their weapons.

r. As God had loosened Moses' tongue for him to speak to Pharaoh, Ex 4:10; 6:12,30, so he now loosens the tongues of the Israelites, for his praise.

11 a. Moses, Nb 12:7+; Dt 18:15+.

b. God. Henceforth, Wisdom is not mentioned (except in 14:2,5), yielding place to God, to his breath (or spirit), 11:20; 12:1, to his word, 12:9; 16:12; 18:15, to his hand, 11:17; 14:6; 16:15; 19:8, to his arm, 11:21; 16:16.

c. The author does not mention the 'grumbling' of the people, cf. 10:15+. In the biblical narrative, it is

from hard stone their thirst was quenched.

How water proved the ruin of Egypt and the saving of Israel[d]

Thus, what served to punish their enemies 5
became a benefit for them in their distress. 5,6
You gave them not that ever-flowing source of river water 6
turbid with defiling floods, 7
Ex 1:15-16 stern answer for their decree of infanticide,[e] 7
Ex 7:17-21; 17:3-6 but, against all hope, water in abundance, 8
16:4 showing by the thirst that then was raging[f] 8
how severely you punished their enemies. 9
Dt 8:2-5 2 M 6:14 From their ordeals,[g] which were no more than the reproofs of Mercy, 9,10
they learned what tortures a sentence of wrath inflicts on the godless;
12:22 Dt 8:5+ you tested them indeed, correcting them like a father, 10
but the others you strictly examined, like a severe king who condemns. 11
Near or far away,[h] they were equally worn down, 12
double indeed was the grief that seized on them, 12,13
double the groaning at the memory of the past;
hearing that what punished them[i] had set the others rejoicing, 13
they saw the Lord in it,[j] 14
Ex 1:2;22:3 and for him whom long ago they had cast out, exposed, and later mockingly rebuffed,[k] 14,15
they felt only amazement when all was done;
the thirst of the virtuous and theirs had worked so differently.

God's forbearance with Egypt

12:24-25,27; 15:8; 16: 9 Rm 1:21 As their foolish and wicked notions led them astray 15,16
into worshipping mindless reptiles and contemptible beasts,[l]
12:23; 16:1; 18:4 you sent hordes of mindless creatures[m] to punish them
and teach them that the instruments of sin are instruments of punishment.[n] 16,17
And indeed your all-powerful hand did not lack means 17,18
—the hand that from formless matter created the world[o]—
12:9 to unleash a horde of bears or savage lions on them
or unknown beasts, newly created, full of rage, 18,19
exhaling fiery breath,
ejecting swirls of stinking smoke
Jb 41:10-13 or flashing fearful sparks from their eyes,
beasts not only able to crush them with a blow, 19,20
but also to destroy them by their terrifying appearance.
1:7 Jb 4:9 Is 11:4 But even without these, they could have dropped dead at a single breath, 20,21
pursued by your justice,
whirled away by the breath of your power.
Jb 28:25 Si 1:9 Is 40:12 But no, you ordered all things by measure, number, weight.

This forbearance explained

Si 10:16 For your great strength is always at your call; 21,22
who can withstand the might of your arm?
Is 40:15 In your sight the whole world is like a grain of dust that tips the scales,[p] 22,23
Ho 6:4; 13: 3 like a drop of morning dew falling on the ground.
Jb 34:29 Si 18:12 12:2,10 Yet you are merciful to all,[q] because you can do all things 23,24
and overlook men's sins so that they can repent.
Rm 2:4; 3: 25 1:13,14; 2: 23-24 Gn 1:31+ Ps 145:9 Yes, you love all that exists, you hold nothing of what you have made in abhorrence, 24,25
for had you hated anything, you would not have formed it.
And how, had you not willed it, could a thing persist, 25,26

how be conserved if not called forth by you?
26 You spare all things because all things are yours, Lord, lover of life,[r] Ezk 18:23+; 33:11
27 you whose imperishable spirit is in all.[a] Gn 2:7+
1 **12** Little by little, therefore, you correct those who offend, 11:23; 12:10
2 you admonish and remind them of how they have sinned, Jb 34:29
so that they may abstain from evil and trust in you, Lord. Am 4:6+
Lk 15:7

God's forbearance with Canaan

3 The ancient inhabitants of your holy land
4 you hated for their loathsome practices, Dt 12:31; 18:10f
their deeds of sorcery and unholy rites,
5 hated as ruthless murderers of children, 14:23
as eaters of entrails at feasts of human flesh,[b] Lv 18:21+
initiated while the bloody orgy goes on,[c]
6 as murderous parents of defenceless beings.
You determined to destroy them at our fathers' hands, Nb 33:51-56
7 so that this land, dearer to you than any other, Dt 20:16-18
might receive a colony of God's children worthy of it. Dt 11:12

8 Even so, since these were men, you treated them leniently, 6:7; 11:23+
sending hornets as forerunners of your army, Ps 78:39; 103:14
to destroy them bit by bit.[d] *Ex 23:28+*
9 Not that you could not hand the godless over to the virtuous in pitched battle
or destroy them at once by savage beasts or one stern word from you; 11:17-19
10 but, by condemning them piece by piece, you gave them the chance to repent, 11:23; 12:2 Am 4:6
although you knew very well they were inherently evil,
innately wicked
11 and fixed in their cast of mind;
for they were a race accursed from the beginning. 3:12,19 Gn 9:25

This forbearance explained

12 Nor was it from awe of anyone that you left them unpunished for their sins.
Who would venture to say, 'What have you done?' Jb 9:12 Is 29:16 Jr 49:19
Who would dare to defy your sentence? Rm 9:19-23

either Moses or Aaron who calls on Yahweh.

d. First of the seven antitheses in the parallel between Egyptians and Israelites. The remaining six will be elaborated in ch. 16 onwards.

e. According to Ex 7:14-25 Yahweh turned the waters of the Nile into blood to constrain Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. The author, however, represents the miracle as a punishment for the decree of Ex 1:15f.

f. Vulg. adds 'how you exalted your own'.

g. Thirst, and possibly including other hardships suffered by Israel in the desert; these were intended to make them understand the punishment of the Egyptians.

h. 'Near' the Israelites, while the Egyptians were enduring the plagues; 'far away' after the Israelites had left them, while the Egyptians remembered the plagues in contrast to the happy lot of Israel. The author supposes, v. 13, that the Egyptians knew about the wonders performed in the desert.

i. Water, withheld from the Egyptians, was miraculously supplied to the Israelites, 11:4.

j. Vulg. adds 'marvelling at the outcome of these events'.

k. Moses, exposed on the waters, Ex 1:22; 2:3; rebuffed by Pharaoh, Ex 5:2-5; 7:13,22, etc.

l. The cult of animals: 'reptiles' (crocodile, serpent, lizard, frog), 'contemptible beasts' (the scarab) enjoyed great esteem in Ptolemaic Egypt.

m. Frogs, Ex 8:1-2, mosquitoes, 8:13-14, gadflies, 8:20, locusts, 10:12-15.

n. Cf. 12:23; 16:1; 18:4 and Ps 7:14-16; 57:6; Pr 1:31; 5:22.

o. Platonic expression (*Timaeus* 51a), but the idea differs profoundly. The author is not teaching that matter is eternal, but presumably thinking of how the world was organised from chaos, Gn 1.

p. Or 'that does not even tip the scales'.

q. The thought of vv. 23f is not new to Israel but it had never before been expressed so powerfully, nor so serenely or so logically argued as in vv. 25-26.

r. Lit. 'lover of the soul'.

12 a. The breath of life infused into the creatures by God, Gn 2:7+, not the spirit, the soul of the world in Stoic philosophy. Vulg. translates inaccurately 'How good and kind, Lord, is your spirit in all beings'.

b. There is no evidence of cannibalism in Canaan though it was practised by other ancient peoples.

c. The author borrows characteristics of the hellenistic mystery religions to describe the practices of the Canaanites.

d. The author elaborates the ancient explanations (Jg 2:6+; 3:20-23) of the delay attending the extermination of the Canaanites; God's care for his own people yields to his patient concern for the sinful Canaanites.

Jb 9:19 Who arraign you for destroying nations which you have created?
What champion of guilty men dare come to confront you
and challenge you?
Dt 32:39
Jb 34:13+ For there is no god, other than you, who cares for every thing,[e] 13
to whom you might have to prove that you never judged unjustly;
as for those you punished, no king, no despot, dare reproach you 14
with it to your face.
Gn 18:25 Being just yourself, you order all things justly, 15
holding it unworthy of your power
to condemn a man who has not deserved to be punished.
2:11 Your justice has its source in strength,[f] 16
your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all.
You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned 17
and you expose the insolence of those who know it;[g]
but, disposing of such strength, you are mild in judgement, 18
you govern us with great lenience,[h]
Ps 115:3;
135:6 for you have only to will, and your power is there.

What is to be learned from God's forbearance

By acting thus you have taught a lesson to your people 19
how the virtuous man must be kindly to his fellow men,[i]
and you have given your sons the good hope
11:23 that after sin you will grant repentance.
Rm 9:22 If with such care and such indulgence[j] you have punished 20
the enemies of your children,
when death was what they deserved,
and given them time and room to rid themselves of wickedness,[k]
with what exact attention have you not judged your sons, 21
Gn 12:7+ to whose ancestors you made such fair promises by oaths
and covenants.
11:10
2 M 6:14 Thus, while you correct us, you flog our enemies ten thousand 22
times harder,
Mt 5:7; 7:2 to teach us, when we judge, to reflect on your kindness
and when we are judged, to look for mercy.

God follows clemency with severity

16:1 This is why, against those who were leading wicked and foolish lives, 23
11:16 you turned their own abominations[l] to torment them;
Rm 1:23 they had indeed strayed too far from paths that strayed already, 24
11:15 and came to regard the vilest, most contemptible[m] animals as gods,
being deceived, like silly little children.
So, as to children with no sense, 25
you sent them a punishment to mock them,
but they who took no warning from such mocking correction 26
were soon to experience a punishment worthy of God.
Worn down by what they suffered from these beasts, 27
11:15; 16:1,
16 those beasts they had taken for gods, now the means of
their punishment,
they saw straight, and acknowledged as true God
him they had hitherto refused to know.[n]
That is why[o] the extreme penalty[p] was inflicted on them.

Astral and nature cults

13:5 13 Yes, naturally stupid[a] are all men who have not known God 1
and who, from the good things that are seen, have not been
Ex 3:14+ able to discover Him-who-is,

or, by studying the works, have failed to recognise the Artificer.[b] Si 17:8 Ac 14:17 Rm 1:19-20

2 Fire however, or wind, or the swift air,
the sphere of the stars, impetuous water, heaven's lamps,
are what they have held to be the gods who govern the world. Dt 4:19; 17:3 Jb 31:26-28

3 If, charmed by their beauty, they have taken things for gods,
let them know how much the Lord of these excels them,
since the very Author of beauty has created them.

4 And if they have been impressed by their power and energy,
let them deduce from these how much mightier is he that has formed them,

5 since through the grandeur and beauty of the creatures
we may, by analogy, contemplate their Author. 13:1+

6 Small blame, however, attaches to these men,
for perhaps they only go astray
in their search for God and their eagerness to find him; Ac 17:27

7 living among his works,[c] they strive to comprehend them
and fall victim to appearances, seeing so much beauty.

8 Even so, they are not to be excused:

9 if they are capable of acquiring enough knowledge
to be able to investigate the world,
how have they been so slow to find its Master?

The cults of idols[d]

10 But wretched are they—in dead things[e] putting their hopes— 15:6 Rm 1:23
who have given to things made by human hands the title of gods, Dt 4:28 2 K 19:18 Is 40:18-20
gold and silver, finely worked,
likenesses of animals,
or some useless stone, carved by some hand long ago.

11 Take a woodcutter.[f] He fells a suitable tree, Is 40:20+; 44:15 Jr 10:3-5
neatly strips off the bark all over
and then with admirable skill
works the wood into an object useful in daily life. 15:7-13

12 The bits left over from his work
he uses for cooking his food, then eats his fill.

13 There is still a good-for-nothing bit left over,
a gnarled and knotted billet:
he picks it up, whittles it with the concentration of leisure,
he shapes it with the skill of relaxation,[g]

e. Or 'all men'.
f. Power is used by the wicked to defeat justice, 2:11, by God to temper it; he is 'patient because eternal'.
g. 'who know it' (defying it, however, like Pharaoh); var. 'who do not know it'.
h. Not only Jews, but everyone.
i. Like Wisdom herself, 1:6; 7:23. The kindness enjoined by the Law on the Israelite in dealing with his compatriot is here extended into a universal obligation, in preparation for the N.T., cf. Mt 5:43-48.
j. 'indulgence'; var. 'entreaty'.
k. The idea that God tries to rescue his people from evil by means of ordeals and punishments occurs frequently in the O.T., cf. Am 4:6+, but it had never before been applied to the pagans.
l. Biblical term for false gods.
m. Var. 'most hostile'.
n. Pharaoh, obstinate at first, Ex 7-11, finally acknowledged the hand of God, Ex 12:31-32.
o. Since, having acknowledged him, they continued to defy him.
p. Extermination of the first-born, and destruction of the Egyptian army.

13 a. Lit. 'vain', 'empty'; the epithet is often used of false gods. The man who devotes himself to such 'vanity' becomes 'vain' himself, Jr 2:5; Rm 1:21.

b. A Greek touch, cf. vv. 5,7; Si 43:9-12. The O.T. had praised the power and majesty of the creating God, Ps 19:1; Jb 36:22-26; Is 40:12-14, etc., but not the beauty of the world conceived as a work of art.
c. Or 'familiar with his works'.
d. Polemic against idols was a regular feature of Greek philosophy, still more of Jewish teaching, cf. Ba 6; Is 40:20+ and the Sybilline Oracles.
e. The forces of nature were at least active and productive, idols are dead things and impotent. God himself is 'the Living One'.
f. Description calculated to make the idol appear ridiculous: the wood is of no special value, the worker an uncultured woodcutter, the work carelessly performed.
g. Ironic. Var. for the preceding and this line 'with professional concentration' and 'with a craftsman's skill'.

he gives it a human shape
15:4 or perhaps he makes it into some vile animal, 14
smears it with ochre, paints its surface red,
coats over all its blemishes.
He next makes a worthy home for it, 15
Is 46:7 lets it into the wall, fixes it with an iron clamp.
Thus he makes sure that it will not fall down— 16
he is well aware it cannot help itself:
Ba 6:25-27 it is only an image, and it needs to be helped.
And yet, if he wishes to pray for his goods, for marriages, 17
for his children,
Is 44:17 Jr 2:27 he does not blush to harangue this lifeless thing—
for health he invokes weakness,
for life he pleads with death, 18
15:15 for help he goes begging to utter inexperience,
Ps 115:4-7 for his travels, to something that cannot stir a foot;
for his profits and plans and success in pursuing his craft, 19
he asks skill from something whose hands have no skill whatever.

14 Or someone else, taking ship to cross the raging sea, 1
invokes a log[a] even frailer than the vessel that bears him.
7:21 No doubt that ship is the product of a craving for gain, 2
its building embodies the wisdom[b] of the shipwright,
but your providence,[c] Father, is what steers it, 3
17:2 Tb 13:4 Ps 77:19 Is 43:16 you having opened a pathway even through the sea,
a safe way over the waves,
showing that you can save, whatever happens, 4
so that even without skill a man may sail abroad.

It is not your will that the works of your Wisdom lie idle, 5
and hence men entrust their lives to the smallest piece of wood,
Ps 107:29-30 cross the high seas on a raft and come safe to port.
10:4 Gn 6:1-5 + Si 16:7 Ba 3:26-28 Why, in the beginning even, while the proud giants were perishing, 6
the hope of the world took refuge on a raft[d]
and, steered by your hand, preserved the germ of a new
generation for the ages to come.

Ga 3:13-14 For blessed is the wood which serves the cause of virtue,[e] 7
Dt 27:15 but accursed that hand-made thing[f] and its maker, 8
he for having made it, the perishable thing itself because it
has been called god.
Yes, God holds the godless and his godlessness in equal hatred; 9
work and workman alike shall be punished. 10
14:14 Is 2:18-20 Jr 10:11-15 Zc 13:2 Hence judgement[g] shall fall on the idols themselves of the heathen, 11
since, although part of God's creation, they have become
an abomination,
snares for the souls of men,
Ex 23:33 a pitfall for the feet of the reckless.

The origin of the cult of idols

Ex 34:16 Dt 31:16 The invention of idols was the origin of fornication,[h] 12
their discovery the corrupting of life.[i]
They did not exist at the beginning,[j] they will not exist for ever; 13
through human vanity they came[k] into the world 14
14:11 and hence a sudden end has been designed for them.

A father afflicted by untimely mourning 15
makes an image of his child so swiftly taken,

and now he honours as a god what yesterday had only been a dead man,
bequeathing mysteries and initiations to his dependents.[l]
16 Then in the course of time the godless custom hardens, and is observed as law
17 and, by command of princes, the carved images receive worship.

Of those who lived too far away to be honoured in person
men would make a portrait from a distance
and produce a visible image of the king they honoured,
meaning, by such zeal, to flatter the absent as if he were with them.[m]
18 Even people who did not know him
were stimulated into spreading his cult by the idealism of the artist;
19 for the latter, doubtless wishing to please the ruler,
exerted all his skill to make the likeness finer than reality
20 and the crowd, carried away by the beauty of the work,
accorded divine honours to him whom only recently they had honoured as a man. Dn 3:1-7
21 And this became a pitfall for life,[n]
that men, whether slaves to misfortune or princely power,[o]
should have bestowed the incommunicable name on sticks and stones. Ex 3:14+

The consequences of idolatry Rm 1:24-32

22 Soon it is not enough for them that their knowledge of God should be at fault;
in the great struggle[p] to which ignorance condemns their lives
they next give such massive ills the name of peace.
23 With their child-murdering initiations, their secret mysteries, 12:5; 14:28 Lv 18:21+
their orgies with outlandish ceremonies,[q]
24 they no longer retain any purity in their lives or their marriages,
one treacherously murdering the next or doing him in jury by adultery.
25 Everywhere a welter of blood and murder, theft and fraud,
corruption, treachery, riots, perjury,
26 disturbance of decent people, forgetfulness of favours,
pollution of souls, sins against nature,
disorder in marriage, adultery, debauchery.
27 For the worship of unnamed[r] idols
is the beginning, cause, and end of every evil.
28 Either that, or they rave in ecstasy, 14:23
or utter false oracles,

14 a. The effigy of a tutelary god at the prow or on the poop.
b. The technical skill of the artisan, fruit of Wisdom, 8:6; Ex 31:3; 35:31.
c. The term, appearing for the first time here in LXX, is borrowed from Greek philosophy and literature; the idea, however, is biblical, Ps145:8,9,15,16; 147:9, etc.
d. Noah's ark.
e. By serving the accomplishment of God's intention. Several of the Fathers apply this text to the wood of the cross.
f. The idol of 13:11f.
g. Lit. 'a visitation', cf. Ex 3:16+.
h. Probably in the sense of religious infidelity, cf. Ho 1:2+.
i. The mind errs, and corruption of morals follows as a consequence, cf. Rm 1:24-32; Ep 4:17-19.
j. Monotheism came before polytheism. Gn says the same.
k. Var. 'death entered'.
l. Religious rites in honour of the new god. Classical antiquity has left records of such occurrences.
m. The worship of rulers and even of important personages during their lifetime was a common feature of the hellenistic period, particularly in Egypt.
n. Or 'for mankind'.
o. 'Misfortune', vv. 15-16; 'princely power', vv. 17-20. The whole passage, vv. 14-20, assumes the theory of Euhemerus that the gods were originally men subsequently deified.
p. Internal conflict, cf. 5:7,13, since religious error has unleashed passion, cf. 14:12+; external conflict since these passions disrupt society.
q. Allusion to the Bacchanalian orgies of the Dionysiac Mysteries, or else to the frenzy and immorality of the Phrygian Mysteries.
r. I.e. non-existent. Or possibly interpret 'Whose name should not be used', cf. Ex 23:13.

or lead lives of great wickedness,
or perjure themselves without hesitation;
for since they put their trust in lifeless idols 29
they do not reckon their false oaths can harm them.

But justice will overtake them on two counts: 30
as idolaters, for degrading the concept of God,
as frauds, for swearing in despite of truth,
in defiance of all that is holy.
For it is not the power of the things by which men swear 31
but the retribution due to sinners
that always overtakes the offence of the guilty.

Israel not idolatrous

Ex 34:6-7+ 15 But you, our God, are kind, loyal and slow to anger, 1
and you govern all things with mercy.
If we sin, we still are yours, since we acknowledge your power, 2
but, knowing you acknowledge us as yours, we will not sin.
Jn 17:3 To acknowledge you is indeed the perfect virtue, 3
1:15; 2:23 to know your power is the root of immortality.
No invention of perverted human skill has led us astray, 4
no painter's sterile labour,
13:14 no figure daubed with assorted colours,
the sight of which sets fools yearning 5
and reverencing the lifeless form of some unbreathing image.
13:10 Lovers of evil and worthy of such hopes, 6
are those who make them, those who reverence them and those who worship them.

13:10-19 **The makers of idols are fools**[a]

Rm 9:21 Take a potter, now, laboriously working the soft earth, 7
shaping all sorts of things for us to use.
Out of the same clay, even so, he models
vessels intended for clean purposes
and the contrary sort, all alike;
Is 29:16+ but which of these two uses each will have
is for the potter himself to decide.
Then—effort very evilly spent—of the same clay he shapes 8
a futile god—
Gn 2:7+ he who, so recently made out of earth himself,
Gn 3:19 will shortly return to what he was taken from,
once he is called to give an account of his life.

Even so he wastes no thought on imminent death 9
or on the shortness of his life.
Far from it, he strives to outdo the goldsmiths and silversmiths,[b]
apes the bronzeworkers too,
and takes pride in the spurious models that he makes.
Is 44:20 Ashes, his heart, 10
meaner than dirt his hope,
his life more ignoble than clay,
Dt 32:15 since he misconceives the One who shaped him, 11
Gn 2:7 who breathed an active soul into him
and inspired a living spirit.
What is more, he looks on[c] this life of ours as a kind of game, 12
Ac 19:24 and our time here like a fair, full of bargains.
'However foul the means,' he says 'a man must make a living.'

13 He, more than any other, knows he is sinning, Jn 17:3
he who from the same earthly material makes both breakable vessel and idol.

The folly of the Egyptians; their indiscriminate idolatry

14 But most foolish,[d] more pitiable even than the soul of a little child,[e]
are the enemies who once played the tyrant with your people,[f]
15 and have taken all the idols of the heathen for gods,[g]
which can use neither their eyes for seeing 13:18 Ps 115:4-7
nor their nostrils for breathing the air
nor their ears for hearing
nor the fingers on their hands for handling;
while their feet are no use for walking,
16 since a human being made them,
a creature of borrowed breath gave them shape. Gn 2:7 Ps 104:29-30
Now no man can shape a god as good as himself;
17 subject to death, his impious hands can only produce something dead.
He himself is worthier than the things he worships;
he will at least have lived, but never they.
18 Even the most hateful animals are worshipped, 11:15
worse than the rest in their degree of stupidity.
19 With no trace of beauty to prompt the inclination—as some animals might have—
the praise and blessing of God do not come their way.[h]

Egypt and Israel:[a] harmful animals, quails

1 16 Thus they were appropriately punished by similar creatures 11:16; 12: 23, 27
and were tormented by hordes of brutes.
2 In contrast to this punishment, you treated your own people with kindness
and, to satisfy their sharp appetite,
you provided for their food quails, a luscious rarity. Ex 16:9-13 Nb 11:10-32
3 Thus the Egyptians,[b] at the repulsive sight of the creatures sent against them,[c]
were to find, though they longed for food,
that even their natural appetite had revolted.
While your own people,[d] after a short privation,
were to have a rare relish for their portion.
4 Inevitable that relentless want should seize on the former, the oppressors;
enough for the latter to be shown how their enemies were being tortured. 11:8-9

15 a. Having arraigned the idols the author next turns on their makers. He instances a maker of figurines, of whom many existed in the hellenistic world.

b. This 'potter' makes himself ridiculous by competing with gifted workers in precious metals.

c. Var. 'they look on'.

d. Var. 'But the most foolish of all are'.

e. Since even more easily deceived.

f. After a long digression, 13:1–15:13, the author returns to the Egyptians, 'oppressors' of Israel before the Exodus, and again under the Ptolemies.

g. Not content with worshipping their own gods, they adopted those of other peoples.

h. Lit. 'they escape God's praise and blessing'. At the dawn of creation, God had blessed the living creatures, Gn 1:22,28; 2:3. After the Fall the serpent was cursed, Gn 3:14-15; the animal-gods of the Egyptians deserve the same condemnation.

16 a. The concluding section of the book, ch. 16-19, develops a lengthy comparison, already broached in 11:5-14, between Egyptians and Israelites. At the time of the Exodus, the very things that plagued the former proved the salvation of the latter; the Egyptians owing to their obstinacy suffered the consequences of the law of retribution, the Israelites owing to their constancy continued to enjoy the divine mercies. These chapters, which add a number of details to the narrative in Ex, interpreting the latter with considerable freedom by minimising Israel's faults and their punishment, and emphasising God's goodness to his people, provide an example of midrash or commentary on the scriptures in the rabbinic manner.

b. Lit. 'those'.

c. Var. 'because of the food shown them by the creatures sent against them'. Reference to the frogs, Ex 7:27-29; 8:2.

d. Lit. 'they'.

Egypt and Israel: the plague of locusts, the bronze serpent

When the savage rage of wild animals overtook them 5
Nb 21:4-9 and they were perishing from the bites of writhing snakes,
your wrath did not continue to the end.
2 K 18:4 It was by way of reprimand, lasting a short time, that they 6
were distressed,
Nb 21:9+ for they had a saving token[e] to remind them of the commandment
of your Law.
Jn 3:14-17 Whoever turned to it was saved, not by what he looked at, 7
Is 45:14+ but by you, the universal saviour.[f]

And by such means you proved to our enemies 8
that it is you who deliver from every evil;
Ex 8:16-20; 10:4-15 Rv 9:3 since the bites of locusts and flies proved fatal to them 9
and no remedy could be found to save them—
11:15-16 and well they deserved to be punished by such creatures.

But, for your sons, not even the fangs of venomous serpents 10
could bring them down;
your mercy came to their help and cured them.
One sting—how quickly healed!—to remind them of your oracles 11
rather than that, by sinking into deep forgetfulness,
they should be cut off from your kindness.
No herb, no poultice cured them, 12
Ps 107:20 Is 55:10-11 but it was your word, Lord, which heals all things.[g]

Dt 32:39+ For you have power of life and death, 13
you bring down to the gates of Hades and bring back again.[h]
1 S 2:6 Tb 13:2 Man in his malice may put to death, 14
he does not bring the departed spirit back
or free the soul that Hades has once received.

Egypt and Israel: the elements

Dt 32:39+ Tb 13:2 It is not possible to escape your hand. 15
12:27 The godless who refused to acknowledge you 16
were scourged by the strength of your arm,
pursued by no ordinary rains, hail and unrelenting downpours,
Ex 9:24-25 Ps 78:47-49 and consumed by fire.
19:18 Even more wonderful, in the water—which quenches all— 17
the fire raged fiercer than ever;
5:17,20 for the elements fight for the virtuous.
At one moment the flame would die down, 18
19:21 to avoid consuming the animals sent against the godless
and to make clear to them by that sight, that the sentence
of God was pursuing them;
16:22 at another, in the very heart of the water, it would burn more fiercely 19
than fire
to ruin the harvests of a guilty land.
Ex 16 Ps 78:25; 105:40 How differently with your people! You gave them the food of angels,[i] 20
from heaven untiringly sending them bread already prepared,
containing every delight, satisfying every taste.
And the substance you gave[j] demonstrated your sweetness towards 21
your children,
for, conforming to the taste of whoever ate it,
it transformed itself into what each eater wished.
19:21 Snow and ice[k] endured the fire,[l] without melting; 22
by which they were to know that, to destroy the harvests
of their enemies,

fire would burn even in hail and flare in falling rain, 16:19
23 whereas, on the other hand, it would even forget its own virtue
in the service of feeding the virtuous.

24 For creation, in obedience to you, its maker, 5:17; 19:6
exerts itself to punish the wicked
and slackens for the benefit of those who trust in you.
25 Thus it became, by a total transformation, 19:18
the agent of your all-nourishing bounty, Ps 104:27, 28; 136: 25;145:16
conforming to the wish of those in need,
26 so that your beloved children, Lord, might learn
that the various crops are not what nourishes man,
but your word which preserves all who trust in you. Dt 8:3+
27 For that, which fire could not destroy
melted in the heat of a single fleeting sunbeam, Ex 16:21
28 to show that, to give you thanks, we must rise before the sun
and pray to you when light begins to dawn;[m] Ps 5:3 Si 39:5
29 for the hope of the ungrateful will melt like winter's frost
and flow away like water running to waste. Ps 58:7

Egypt and Israel: darkness and light

1 17 Your judgements are indeed great and inexpressible, Ps 92:5-6 Rm 11:33-35
which is why undisciplined souls[a] have gone astray.
2 When impious men imagined they had the holy nation in their power,
they themselves lay prisoners of the dark,[b] in the fetters of long night, Ex 10:21-23
confined under their own roofs, banished from eternal providence. 14:3
3 While they thought to remain unnoticed with their secret sins,[c] Jb 15:20
curtained by dark forgetfulness,
they were scattered[d] in fearful dismay,
terrified by apparitions.
4 The hiding place sheltering them could not ward off their fear;
terrifying noises echoed round them;
and gloomy, grim-faced spectres haunted them.
5 No fire had power enough to give them light,
nor could the brightly blazing stars
illuminate that dreadful night—
6 only a great blaze, burning of its own accord,
that, full of dread, shone through to them;
And in their terror, once that sight had vanished,
they thought what they had seen more terrible than ever.
7 Their magic arts proved utterly unavailing,[e]

e. Var. 'counsellor'.

f. The author interprets Nb 21:4-9 as an act of divine mercy. He seems to assume that the 'saving token' was given before the serpents appeared. He asserts that the bronze serpent had no power of itself. In it he sees a reminder of the Law and a God-given sign of 'universal' salvation.

g. 'all things'; var. 'all men'.

h. Here the author teaches that God has absolute power over life and death, not only in the sense that he can rescue anyone he pleases from imminent death, cf. Is 38:10-17; Ps 9:13; 107:18-19, but also apparently in the profounder sense that he can bring a soul that has gone to Sheol back to physical life, cf. 1 K 17:17-23; 2 K 4:33-35; 13:21.

i. Manna, 'bread of angels' (LXX), cf. Ps 78:25, which tasted like a honey cake, Ex 16:31, and symbolised the 'sweetness' of God, v. 21; Ps 34:8; 119:103. V. 21 elaborates one of the elements in the Jewish legend of the manna. The liturgy uses these texts in praise of the Eucharist.

j. Lit. 'And your substance'.

k. Manna; Ex 16:14 compares it to dew, and Nb 11:7 (LXX) to ice, cf. Ws 19:21.

l. The cooking fire, cf. Nb 11:8.

m. Such was the Jewish practice.

17 a. The Egyptians.

b. Allusion to the 'ninth plague'. A variety of ingredients go to the making of the following midrash: biblical narrative, Jewish legend, rabbinic speculations also found in Philo, and imagination and reflections of the author. The Greek mind too is also perceptible, cf. the literary elaboration, vv. 3-4; 16-18, and the preoccupation with causation, vv. 10-12. The author may furthermore have derived some of his ideas from the many 'Descents into Hades' of Greek literature.

c. Probable allusion to 14:23. Cf. Jb 24:13f; Ps 10:8-11; 19:12; Is 29:15. New application of the 'eye for eye' *(lex talionis)*, cf. 11:16; 18:4; physical darkness is the punishment for moral darkness.

d. 'scattered'; var. 'plunged into darkness'.

e. Cf. Ex 7:11,22; 8:3 and Ex 8:14; 9:11.

their boasted cunning was ignominiously confounded;
for those who professed to drive out fears and disorders from sick souls, 8
themselves fell sick of a ridiculous terror.
Even when there was nothing frightful to scare them, 9
the prowling of beasts and the hissing of reptiles terrified them;
they died convulsed with fright,
refusing so much as to look at the air, which cannot be eluded anyhow!
Jb 18:11 Wickedenss is confessedly very cowardly, and it condemns itself; 10
under pressure from conscience it always assumes the worst.[f]
Fear, indeed, is nothing other 11
than the abandonment of the supports offered by reason;
the less you rely within yourself on these, 12
the more alarming it is not to know the cause of your suffering.
And they, all locked in the same sleep, 13
while that darkness lasted, which was in fact quite powerless
and had issued from the depths of equally powerless Hades,
were now chased by monstrous spectres, 14
now paralysed by fainting of their souls;
for a sudden, unexpected terror had swept over them.

And thus, whoever it might be that fell there 15
stayed clamped to the spot in this prison without bars.
Whether he was ploughman or shepherd, 16
or someone working by himself,
he was still overtaken and suffered the inevitable fate,
for all had been bound by the one same chain of darkness.
The soughing of the wind, 17
the tuneful noise of birds in the spreading branches,
the measured beat of water in its powerful course,
the harsh din of the rocky avalanche,
the invisible, swift course of bounding animals, 18
the roaring of the savagest wild beasts,
the echo rebounding from the clefts in the mountains,
Lv 26:36 all held them paralysed with fear.
The whole world was shining with brilliant light 19
and, unhindered, went on with its work;
over them alone there spread a heavy darkness, 20
image of the dark[g] that would receive them.
But heavier than the darkness, the burden they were to themselves.

10:15 Ex 10:23 **18** But for your holy ones all was great light. 1
The Egyptians[a] who could hear their voices, though not see their shapes,
called them fortunate because they had not suffered too;[b]
they thanked them for doing no injury in return for previous wrongs 2
and asked forgiveness for their past ill-will.[c]
19:5 Ex 13:21-22+ In contrast to the darkness, you gave your people a pillar of blazing fire, 3
to guide them on their unknown journey,
10:17 Ps 121:6 a mild sun for their ambitious migration.
11:16 But well they deserved, those others, to be deprived of light and imprisoned in darkness, 4
for having kept in captivity your children,
Is 2:3,5 by whom the imperishable light of the Law was to be given to the world.

Egypt and Israel: the Destroyer

5 As they had resolved to kill the infants of the holy ones,
and as of those exposed only one child had been saved,[d] Ex 1:22-2:10
to punish them, you made away with thousands of their children, Ex 12:29,30
and destroyed them all together in the wild waves. Ex 14:26-28
6 That night had been foretold to our ancestors,[e]
so that, once they saw what kind of oaths they had put their
trust in, they would joyfully take courage.
7 This was the expectation of your people,
the saving of the virtuous and the ruin of their enemies;
8 for by the same act with which you took vengeance on our foes
you made us glorious by calling us to you.[f]
9 The devout children of worthy men offered sacrifice[g] in secret
and this divine[h] pact they struck with one accord:
that the saints would share the same blessings and dangers alike;
and forthwith they had begun to chant the hymns of the fathers.[i]

10 In echo came the discordant cries of their enemies Ex 11:6; 12:30
and the pitiful sound rang out of those lamenting their children.
11 The same punishment struck slave and master alike, Ex 11:5; 12:29
commoner and king suffered the selfsame loss.
12 All had innumerable dead alike, 19:3
struck by the same death.
There were not enough living left to bury them, Nb 33:4
for in a moment the flower of their race had perished.
13 They who, thanks to their sorceries, had been wholly[j] incredulous,
at the destruction of their first-born now acknowledged
this people to be son of God. Ex 4:22 Ho 11:1

14 When peaceful silence lay over all, Ex 11:4; 12:29
and night had run the half of her swift course, Is 55:11
15 down from the heavens, from the royal throne, leapt your
all-powerful Word;[k] Rv 19:11-13
into the heart of a doomed land the stern warrior leapt.
Carrying your unambiguous command like a sharp sword, Rv 19:15
16 he stood, and filled the universe with death;
he touched the sky, yet trod the earth.
17 Immediately,[l] dreams and gruesome visions overwhelmed Jb 4:13-15
them[m] with terror,
unexpected fears assailed them.
18 Hurled down, some here, some there, half dead,
they proclaimed why it was they were dying;

f. The imaginary causes of fear are dispelled by reflection which, however, is impeded and frustrated by a guilty conscience.

g. The darkness of Sheol.

18 a. Lit. 'they'.

b. 'because they had not suffered'; var. 'despite their past sufferings'.

c. Or 'asked them as a favour to leave', cf. Ex 11:8; 12:33.

d. To establish a connection between Pharaoh's infanticidal decree, Ex 1:16,22, and the destruction of the first-born, the author has possibly drawn on Ex 4:22-23.

e. Either the Israelites at the time of the Exodus, Ex 11:4-7, or more probably the patriarchs to whom God had promised that he would free their descendants from slavery in Egypt, Gn 15:13-14; 46:3-4.

f. The destruction of the first-born of Egypt, the celebration of the Passover, the Exodus itself, identified Israel once and for all as the people of God, cf. Dt 7:6+.

g. The Passover is called a sacrifice, Ex 12:27; Nb 9:7; Dt 16:5. This sacrifice is called 'secret' since it was celebrated inside the houses, Ex 12:46.

h. 'divine'; var. 'holy'.

i. The author represents the first Passover in terms of later Passovers at which the Hallel was chanted, Ps 113-118.

j. Or 'for a long time', cf. Ex 7:11-13,22; 8:3,11.

k. The Word of God is personified as the executant of divine judgement, cf. also Ho 6:5; Is 55:11; Jr 23:29; Ps 33:6; 147:15,18; 148:8. And see Heb 2:2. The Christmas liturgy applies this text to the incarnation of the Word.

l. What follows has no relation to the narrative of the Exodus.

m. The first-born.

for the dreams that had troubled them had warned them why beforehand, 19
so that they might not perish without knowing why they had been struck down.

But the virtuous, too, felt the touch of death;[n] 20
Nb 17:6-15 1 Co 10:8 a multitude was struck down in the wilderness.
But the wrath did not last long,
for a blameless man[o] hastened to champion their cause. 21
Wielding the weapons of his sacred office,
Nb 17:11,12 prayer and atoning incense,[p]
he took his stand against the Anger and put an end to the calamity,
showing that he was indeed your servant.
He conquered the bitter plague, not by physical strength, 22
not by force of arms;
but by word[q] he prevailed over the Punisher,
Ex 32:11-13 by recalling the oaths made to the Fathers, and the covenants.
Already the corpses lay piled in heaps, 23
when he interposed and beat back the wrath
and cut off its approach to the living.
For the whole world was on his flowing robe,[r] 24
Ex 28:17-21, 29 the glorious names of the Fathers[s] on the four rows of stones,
Ex 28:36 and your Majesty[t] on the diadem on his head.
From these the Destroyer recoiled,[u] he was afraid of these;[v] 25
a mere taste of the wrath had been enough.

Egypt and Israel: the Red Sea

19 But the godless were assailed by merciless anger to the very end, 1
for God knew beforehand what they would do,
how, after letting his people leave and hastening their departure, 2
Ex 14:5-9 they would change their minds and set out in pursuit.
18:12 They were actually still conducting their mourning rites 3
and lamenting at the tombs of their dead,
when another mad scheme entered their heads,
and they set out to pursue as fugitives the very people they had begged to go away.
A well-deserved fate urged them to this extreme 4
and made them forget what had already happened,
so that to all their torments they might add the one penalty still outstanding
18:3 and, while your people accomplished[a] a miraculous journey, 5
themselves meet an extraordinary death.

For, to keep your children from all harm, 6
5:17; 16:24 the whole creation, obedient to your commands,
was once more, and newly, fashioned in its nature.[b]
Ex 14:19-22 Overshadowing the camp there was the cloud, 7
where water had been, dry land was seen to rise,
the Red Sea became an unimpeded way,
the tempestuous flood a green plain;
3:1 sheltered by your hand, the whole nation passed across, 8
gazing at these amazing miracles.
Is 63:10-14 Mi 3:20 They were like horses at pasture, 9
Ps 114:4 they skipped like lambs,
Ex 15 singing your praises, Lord, their deliverer.

Nature refashioned for Israel

They still remembered the events of their exile, 10

how the land, not bearing animals, had bred mosquitoes instead, Ex 8:12-15
how, instead of fish, the river had disgorged innumerable frogs. Ex 8:2
11 Later they saw a new method of birth for birds Nb 11:31
when, goaded by hunger, they asked for food they could relish,
12 and quails came out of the sea to satisfy them.[c] Ex 16:13

Egypt more blameworthy than Sodom

13 On the sinners, however, punishments rained down
not without violent thunder as early warning;
and deservedly they suffered for their crimes,
since they evinced such bitter hatred towards strangers.
14 Others[d] had refused to welcome unknown men on their arrival,
but these had made slaves of guests and benefactors.
15 The former, moreover—and this will be to their credit[e]—
had shown the foreigners hostility from the start;
16 not so the latter: these welcomed your people with feasting Gn 45:17-20; 47:1-12
and after granting them equal rights with themselves
then afflicted them with forced labour. Ex 1:8-14; 5:4-18
17 Thus they were struck with blindness[f]
like the former at the door of the virtuous man,[g]
when, yawning darkness all around them,
each had to grope his way through his own door. Gn 19:11

Nature refashioned at the Exodus 16:17-22

18 Thus the elements interchanged their qualities, 16:25
as on a harp the notes may change their rhythm,
though all the while preserving their tone;
this clearly appears from a scrutiny of the events.
19 Creatures that live on land became aquatic,[h]
and those that swim[i] emerged on land.
20 Fire increased its own virtue in the water,
water forgot its property of extinguishing.
21 Flames, on the other hand, would not scorch the flesh 16:18
of animals, however frail, that ventured into them;
nor would they melt that heavenly food 16:22
like hoarfrost, and as easily melted.

Conclusion

22 Yes, Lord, in every way you have made your people great and glorious; Is 45:17,25
you have never disdained them, but stood by them always
and everywhere.

n. As penalty for the revolt following the punishment of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.
o. Aaron.
p. Lit. 'the atonement sacrifice of incense'.
q. I.e. prayer.
r. On the long robe of the high priest in the author's day the entire universe was represented in symbolic designs.
s. The twelve sons of Jacob who gave their name to the twelve tribes.
t. The gold plate on the high priest's head-dress bore the inscription 'Sacred to Yahweh'.
u. Possibly an angel like the one in 1 Ch 21:15-16. Cf. 12:23 and 1 Co 10:10.
v. Var. 'they were afraid of these'.
19 a. Var. 'experienced'.
b. The author will now show how, by divine intervention on behalf of Israel, the very elements underwent what might be called a change of nature.
c. The author takes Nb 11:31 literally; the quails came out of the sea (as the mosquitoes came out of the earth).
d. The inhabitants of Sodom, Gn 19, commonly regarded as the worst of criminals; the author, by attenuating their sin, means to show that the Egyptians outdid them in criminality.
e. The author apparently means to exculpate the people of Sodom. But an alternative rendering is possible 'and they will be called to account for this'.
f. Oratorical description of the plague of darkness.
g. Lot, 10:6.
h. The Israelites and their cattle while crossing the Red Sea; or possibly the horses of the Egyptian army engulfed in the waves.
i. The frogs, Ex 8:2.

INTRODUCTION TO
ECCLESIASTICUS

This book forms part of the Greek Bible though it does not appear in the Jewish Canon; it is therefore one of the deuterocanonical books accepted by the Church. It was written in Hebrew; St Jerome and the rabbis (who quote from it) knew the book in its original language. About two-thirds of this Hebrew text was discovered in 1896 in fragments of several late manuscripts; these represent a recension which differs considerably from the Greek and is somewhat corrupt. The Church recognises the canonicity only of the Greek text and from this our translation is made, though the Hebrew variants will be found in the footnotes.

The Latin title Ecclesiasticus (*liber*) is relatively recent (St Cyprian); it probably calls attention to the fact that the Church adopted it for her official use although the Synagogue did not. In Greek, cf. the *subscriptio* of 51:30, the book was called 'Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach' and the author is again named in 50:27. Nowadays he is referred to as Ben Sira or Siracides (following the Greek form: Sirach). In a foreword, vv. 1-34, the grandson of the author tells how he translated the book when he went to settle in Egypt in the 38th year of King Euergetes, v. 27. This can only be Ptolemy VII Euergetes (170-117 B.C.), and the date corresponds to 132 B.C. Ben Sira himself presumably lived and wrote about sixty years before his grandson, therefore about 190 B.C. A passage in the book confirms this date: Ben Sira's eulogy of the High Priest Simon, 50:1-21, is based on personal reminiscence. This was Simon II, who died shortly after 200 B.C.

At this period Palestine had just come under the dominion of the Seleucids (198). Hellenisation, that is to say the imitation of Greek manners, was supported by a section of the ruling class; and soon afterwards Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163) was to attempt to impose it by force. Against these dangerous innovations Ben Sira marshals all the forces of tradition. He is a scribe in whom the pursuit of wisdom is coupled with zeal for the Law. He is devoted to the Temple with its liturgy and has a high regard for the priestly office; but the sacred books, too, are his spiritual nourishment; he has studied the Prophets and above all the wisdom writings. He in his turn undertakes to teach wisdom to all who are eager for it, 33:18; 50:27, cf. the translator's prologue, vv. 7-14.

In form, the book resembles its predecessors and models. Apart from the section hymning the glory of God in nature, 42:15–43:33, and in history, 44:1–50:29, with the appendices of, respectively, a hymn of thanksgiving, 51:1-12, and a poem on the quest for wisdom, 51:13-30, the book is no more logically put together than Proverbs or Ecclesiastes. The most diverse topics are dealt with, in no order and with some repetition; the topics are presented in small groups of loosely connected maxims.

The doctrine, too, is traditional. The wisdom which Ben Sira commends comes from God; it is rooted in the fear of the Lord; it forms the youthful character and brings happiness. On human destiny and the problem of retribution Ben Sira shares the same uncertainty as Job and Ecclesiastes. He believes in retribution, he is aware of the tragic importance of the hour of death, but he does not yet see how God can reward every man as his activities deserve, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books. On the nature of divine wisdom, 24:1-22, he elaborates the notions of Proverbs and Job, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books.

But Ben Sira's original contribution is to identify wisdom with the Law of Moses, 24:23-24 (the wisdom poem in Baruch 3:9–4:4 does the same). Unlike his predecessors, he integrates wisdom with the observance of the Law. Further, he identifies observance of the Law with a punctilious performance of religious duties, 35:1-10; he is a firm supporter of liturgical worship.

In contrast with earlier sages, Ben Sira meditates on the history of salvation, 44:1-49:16. He reviews the great personalities of the Old Testament from Enoch to Nehemiah. On three of them, Solomon (even though he was the model of sages), Rehoboam and Jeroboam, his verdict is as severe as that passed by deuteronomic historians, and like them he condemns all the kings *en bloc* except David, Hezekiah and Josiah. But he dwells principally on the saintly figures of the Old Testament and on the wonders God worked through them. He tells how God made a covenant with Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Phinehas and David, embracing the whole nation but especially ensuring lasting privileges to certain families, and the priestly families in particular. For the author holds the deepest respect for the priesthood: Aaron and Phinehas take leading places in his gallery of ancestors, and his eulogy concludes with a long and enthusiastic tribute to Simon the reigning high priest. He looks back on the departed glories with a certain sadness, as he thinks of the present, and he prays as he thinks of judges and prophets 'that their bones may flower again from the tomb', 46:12; 49:10, and that they may have successors. He wrote on the eve of the Maccabaean revolt; he may perhaps have lived to see it end and to think that his prayer had been heard.

Though in this history of salvation Ben Sira gives prominence to the doctrine of the covenant, it is fairly correct to say that he does not look forward to a messianic deliverance. True, in his prayer of 36:1-17 he reminds God of his promises, begging him to take pity on Zion and reassemble the tribes of Jacob, but if this is messianism it is very vague. From start to finish the teaching of the sages, being concerned with the problems of the individual, remains clearly distinguished from the preaching of the prophets, though sometimes not far removed.

Ben Sira is the last canonical representative of Jewish wisdom in Palestine. He is an outstanding example of those *hasidim* (the 'devout') of Judaism, cf. 1 M 2:42+, who were soon to defend their faith against the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, and preserve little islands of faith in Israel, in which the teaching of Christ could later take root. Though Ecclesiasticus was not accepted into the Hebrew Canon, it is frequently quoted in the rabbinical writings; in the New Testament, the Epistle of St James borrows many expressions from it, and it is, next to the Psalms, the Old Testament book most frequently quoted in the Christian liturgy.

ECCLESIASTICUS

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD[a]

Many and wonderful are the gifts we have been granted by means of the 1
Law and the Prophets •and the others that followed them,[b] •an education in 2 3
wisdom on which Israel is indeed to be complimented. •But it is not enough 4
merely for those who read the scriptures to be learned in them; •students should 5
also be able to be of use to people outside •by what they say and write. •So it 6 7
was that my grandfather Jesus, having devoted himself more and more to reading
the Law •and the Prophets and •the other volumes of the fathers, •and having 8,9 10,11
gained ability enough in these matters, •was brought to the point of himself 12
writing down some of the things that have a bearing on education in wisdom,
in order that those studiously inclined and with obligations in these matters 13
might make all the more progress in living according to the Law. 14

You are therefore asked •to read this book •with good will and attention 15 16,17
and to show indulgence •in those places where, notwithstanding our efforts 18 19
at interpretation, we may seem •to have failed to give an adequate rendering 20
of this or that expression; •the fact is that you cannot find an equivalent •for 21 22
things originally written in Hebrew when you come to translate them into
another language; •what is more, •you will find on examination that the Law 23 24
itself, the Prophets •and the other books •differ considerably in translation 25 26
from what appears in the original text.

It was in the thirty-eighth year of the late King Euergetes,[c] •when after my 27 28
arrival in Egypt I had already spent some time there, •that I found a work[d] 29
of more than common instructional worth, •which convinced me of the urgency 30
of applying myself in my turn with pains and diligence to the translation of the
book that follows; •and I spent much time and learning on it •in the course of 31 32
this period, •to complete the work and to publish the book •for the benefit 33 34
especially of those who, domiciled abroad, wish to study how to fit themselves
and their manners for living according to the Law. 35

I. COLLECTIONS OF SAYINGS

The mystery of wisdom[a]

Pr 2:6 Ws 8:21; 9:4

1 All wisdom is from the Lord,[b] 1
and it is his own for ever.

Pr 30:4

The sand of the sea and the raindrops, 2
and the days of eternity, who can assess them?

The height of the sky and the breadth of the earth, 3
and the depth of the abyss,[c] who can probe them?

24:8,9 Pr 8:22 Ba 3:20-22

Before all other things wisdom was created, 4
shrewd understanding is everlasting.[d]

6 For whom has the root of wisdom ever been uncovered? Jb 28:12-23
Her resourceful ways, who knows them?[e]
8 One only is wise, terrible indeed,
9 seated on his throne, •the Lord.[f] Ws 11:20
He himself has created her,[g] looked on her and assessed her, Jb 28:27
and poured her out on all his works Jl 3:1-2
10 to be with all mankind as his gift, Ac 2:17f,33
and he conveyed her to those who love him. Qo 2:26

The fear of God[h]

11 The fear of the Lord is glory and pride, 9:16
and happiness and a crown of joyfulness.
12 The fear of the Lord will gladden the heart 1:20;11:27
giving happiness and joy and long life.[i] Pr 4:10
13 With him who fears the Lord it will be well at the last, Qo 12:13
and he will be blessed on the day of his death.
14 16 To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Dt 4:6
she was created with the faithful in their mothers' womb; Pr 1:7+
15 19 she has made a nest among men, an age-old foundation,
and to their offspring she will cling faithfully.
16 20 To fear the Lord is the perfection of wisdom;
she intoxicates them with her fruits; Pr 8:18-19
17 21 she fills their whole house with their heart's desire,
and their storerooms with her produce. Ws 7:11
18 22 The fear of the Lord is the crown of wisdom;
it makes peace and health to flourish.
19 23 The Lord has looked on her and assessed her, Jb 23:27
24 she has showered down learning and discernment,
and exalted the renown of those who hold her close.
20 25 To fear the Lord is the root of wisdom,
and her branches are long life.[j] 1:12 Pr 3:2

Patience and self-control

22 28 The rage of the wicked man cannot justify him,[k]
for the weight of his rage is his downfall. Pr 29:22
23 29 The patient man will hold out till the time comes,
but his joy will break out in the end.
24 30 He will hide his words till the time comes,
and stories of his discernment will be on many lips.

F a. This foreword by the Greek translator is not strictly a part of Si and is not usually considered canonical.

b. The three-part division of the Hebr. Bible, cf. 1 M 12:9+ and List of Contents. So also vv. 8-10, 24-25.

c. Probably Ptolemy VII Euergetes Physkon (170-117). The date would therefore be 132 B.C.

d. Lit. 'a copy' (var. 'opportunity'). Presumably the reference is to a copy of the Greek Bible or of a collection of wisdom books which the translator wanted to complete by adding his grandfather's work.

1 a. This first chapter is a series of variations on the themes enunciated at the beginning of Pr.

b. The term 'Lord' *(Kyrios)* in LXX usually renders 'Yahweh', the ineffable name of God. Ben Sira's translator uses it repeatedly, even to translate other divine appellations.

c. 'the depth of the abyss', Lat., cf. Syr.; 'the abyss and wisdom' Greek.

d. Add. v. 5 'Wisdom's source is the word of God in the heavens; her ways are the eternal laws'.

e. Add. v. 7 'To whom has the knowledge of wisdom been manifested? And who has understood the abundance of her ways?'

f. The author emphasises the uniqueness and sublimity of God. Wisdom is an attribute of God, the hallmark of his creation, the gift of God to man; though frequently personified in wisdom literature, Pr 8:22+, here it is a created thing and cannot be identified with God.

g. Vulg. adds 'in the Holy Spirit'.

h. The 'fear of the Lord' in the wisdom books no longer implies physical fear in presence of God's terrifying power but rather reverence and devoted obedience.

i. Syr. 'eternal life'.

j. Add. v. 21 'The fear of the Lord takes sin away, he who perseveres turns away anger'.

k. Text corr.; 'Unjust rage cannot be justified' Greek.

Wisdom and uprightness

In wisdom's treasuries there are learned sayings, 25
but reverence for God is loathsome to the sinner. 31 32
If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments,[l] 26
and the Lord will convey her to you. 33
Pr 15:33 For wisdom and instruction mean the fear of the Lord, 27
and what pleases him is faithfulness and gentleness. 34 35
Do not be unsubmissive to the fear of the Lord, 28
do not practise it with a double heart. 36
2:12; 5:9 Jm 1:6-8 Do not act a part in public,[m] 29
and keep a watch over your lips. 37
Do not raise yourself up, in case you fall 30
and bring disgrace on yourself, 38
for the Lord would then reveal your secrets 39
Pr 5:14 and humiliate you before the whole community
for not having attained the fear of the Lord, 40
and for having a heart full of deceit.

The fear of God in time of ordeal[a]

Jm 1:2-4 Rv 2:10 2 My son, if you aspire to serve the Lord, 1
prepare yourself for an ordeal.
Be sincere of heart, be steadfast, 2
1 P 4:12 and do not be alarmed when disaster comes.
Cling to him and do not leave him, 3
Rv 3:20 so that you may be honoured at the end of your days.
Whatever happens to you, accept it, 4
and in the uncertainties of your humble state, be patient,
Rm 5:3 Jm 1:2-4 since gold is tested in the fire, 5
and chosen men in the furnace of humiliation.
Trust him and he will uphold you, 6
Pr 3:5-6 follow a straight path and hope in him.
You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy; 7
do not turn aside in case you fall.
You who fear the Lord, trust him, 8
and you will not be baulked of your reward.
You who fear the Lord hope for good things, 9
for everlasting happiness and mercy.
Look at the generations of old and see: 10 11
Jb 4:7 who ever trusted in the Lord and was put to shame?
Ps 22:4-5 Or who ever feared him steadfastly and was left forsaken? 12
Ps 37:25 Or who ever called out to him, and was ignored?
Ex 34:6-7 Ps 145:8f For the Lord is compassionate and merciful, 11 13
he forgives sins, and saves in days of distress.
Woe to faint hearts and listless hands,[b] 12 14
and to the sinner who treads two paths.
Woe to the listless heart that has no faith,[c] 13 15
for such will have no protection.
Woe to you who have lost the will to endure; 14 16
what will you do at the Lord's visitation? 17
Those who fear the Lord do not disdain his words, 15 18
Jn 14:15, 21,23 and those who love him keep his ways.
Those who fear the Lord do their best to please him, 16 19
and those who love him find satisfaction in his Law.[d]
Those who fear the Lord keep their hearts prepared 17 20
and humble themselves in his presence. 21

18 22b 23 Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, not into the hands of men; 2 S 24:14
for as his majesty is, so too is his mercy.

Duties towards parents Ex 20:12+ Ep 6:1-3

1 2 3 Children, listen to me your father, Dt 5:16
do what I tell you, and so be safe;
2 3 for the Lord honours the father in his children,
and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons.
3 4 Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins,
4 5 he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a fortune.
5 6 Whoever respects his father will be happy with children of his own,
he shall be heard on the day when he prays.
6 7 Long life comes to him who honours his father,
he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to the Lord.[a]
7b 8b He serves his parents as he does his Lord.[b]
8 9 Respect your father in deed as well as word, Mt 21:28-31
10 so that blessing may come on you from him;
9 11 since a father's blessing makes the houses of his children firm, Gn 27:27f; 48:15-20; 49:3-27
while a mother's curse tears up their foundations.[c] Dt 33:1-25
10 12 Do not make a boast of disgrace overtaking your father,
your father's disgrace reflects no honour on you;[d]
11 13 for a man's honour derives from the respect shown to his father, Pr 17:6
and a mother held in dishonour is a reproach to her children.
12 14 My son, support your father in his old age, Mt 15:4-6
do not grieve him during his life. Pr 19:26
13 15 Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy,
do not despise him in your health and strength;
14 17 for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten
but will serve as reparation for your sins.
15 In the days of your affliction it will be remembered of you,
like frost in sunshine, your sins will melt away.
16 18 The man who deserts his father is no better than a blasphemer, Ex 21:17+ Pr 19:26; 30:17
and whoever angers his mother is accursed of the Lord.[e]

Humility

17 19 My son, be gentle in carrying out your business,
and you will be better loved than a lavish giver.[f]
18 20 The greater you are, the more you should behave humbly, Pr 3:34 Mt 20:26-28 Ph 2:5-8
and then you will find favour with the Lord;[g]
20 21 for great though the power of the Lord is,
he accepts the homage of the humble.[h] Pr 3:34 Zp 2:3+

l. For Ben Sira wisdom and observance of the Law go together, 19:20. Cf. Qo 12:13. Here, wisdom is the reward of observance.

m. Lit. 'before men' some MSS and versions.

2 a. A favourite O.T. theme, particularly in the Ps.

b. The author is seemingly commending resistance under persecution; he condemns even an outward show of surrender, vv. 12b,15. cf. 2 M 6:21-28.

c. Following Syr.; Greek 'to the listless heart since it has no trust'.

d. Ben Sira does not oppose love to obedience; he identifies them. Love is unselfish; reward is no primary motive. The attitude is characteristic of Ben Sira but is found elsewhere in Jewish sources. Cf. for example *Pirke Aboth*, 1:3: 'Do not be like slaves who serve their master for the sake of reward. Be like slaves who serve their master without looking for reward.'

3 a. Corr. following Hebr.; Greek 'he who shows obedience to the Lord sets his mother at ease'. Add. v. 7a 'He who fears the Lord respects his father'.

b. Greek lit. 'as masters', probably a mistaken interpretation of the Hebr. word *Adonai*.

c. Hebr. 'A father's blessing plants, a mother's curse uproots what is planted'.

d. Corr.; Greek '(in addition) to the disgrace'.

e. Hebr. 'To curse one's mother is to infuriate one's creator'.

f. 'lavish' Hebr.; 'beloved' Greek.

g. Add. v. 19 'Many are the arrogant and renowned, but the humble are those to whom he reveals his secrets'.

h. The verse calls attention to God's condescension in welcoming the homage of the lowly. Hebr. 'for great is the mercy of God; he makes his secrets known to the humble', cf. Pr 3:32; Ps 25:14.

Do not try to understand things that are too difficult for you, 21
or try to discover what is beyond your powers.[i] 22
Ps 131:1
Concentrate on what has been assigned you, 22
you have no need to worry over mysteries.
Do not meddle with matters that are beyond you;[j] 23
what you have been taught already exceeds the scope of the 24
human mind. 25
For many have been misled by their own presumption,[k] 24
and wrong-headed opinions have warped their ideas.[l] 26

Pride

A stubborn heart will come to a bad end at last, 26
and whoever loves danger will perish in it.[m] 27
Pr 28:14
Rm 2:5
A stubborn heart is weighed down with troubles, 27
the sinner[n] heaps sin on sin. 29
There is no cure for the proud man's malady, 28
since an evil growth has taken root in him. 30
The heart of a sensible man will reflect on parables, 29
an attentive ear is the sage's dream. 31

7:32-36; 29: 8-13 **Charity to the poor**

Dt 15:7-11
Water quenches a blazing fire, 30
almsgiving atones for sins. 33
Tb 4:10
Dn 4:24
Whoever gives favours[o] in return is mindful of the future; 31
at the moment of his fall he will find support. 34
Tb 12:9
1 P 4:8
4 My son, do not refuse the poor a livelihood, 1
do not tantalise the needy.
Do not add to the sufferings of the hungry, 2
do not bait a man in distress.
Do not aggravate a heart already angry, 3
nor keep the destitute waiting for your alms.
Pr 3:27-28+
Do not repulse a hard-pressed beggar, 4
nor turn your face from a poor man.
Tb 4:7
Do not avert your eyes from the destitute, 5
give no man occasion to curse you;
for if a man curses you in the bitterness of his soul, 6
his maker will hear his imprecation.
Ex 22:22
Dt 15:9
Gain the love of the community, 7
bow your head to a man of authority.
To the poor man lend an ear, 8
and return his greeting courteously.
Jb 29:15-17
Save the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor, 9
and do not be mean-spirited in your judgements.
Ex 22:21
Be like a father to orphans, 10
and as good as a husband to widows.[a]
Ps 41:1-3
Lk 6:35
Jn 14:21,23
And you will be like a son to the Most High, 11
whose love for you will surpass your mother's.

Wisdom as educator

Wisdom brings up her own sons, 11
and cares for those who seek her.[b] 12
6:27-28
Pr 3:16-18
Whoever loves her loves life, 12
those who wait on her early will be filled with happiness. 13
Ws 8:17-18
Pr 3:35
Whoever holds her close will inherit honour, 13
and wherever he walks the Lord will bless him. 14
Those who serve her minister to the Holy One, 14

and the Lord loves those who love her. Jn 14:21
15 Whoever obeys her judges aright,[c]
16 and whoever pays attention to her dwells secure.
16 If he trusts himself to her he will inherit her,
17 and his descendants will remain in possession of her;
17 for though she takes him at first through winding ways, Mt 7:14
18 bringing fear and faintness on him,
19 plaguing him with her discipline until she can trust him,
and testing him with her ordeals,
18 in the end she will lead him back to the straight road,[d]
20 and reveal her secrets to him. Jb 11:6 Dn 2:21-22
19 If he wanders away she will abandon him, Jn 15:15
21 and hand him over to his fate.[e]

Shame and human respect[f]

20 My son,[g] bide your time and be on your guard against evil,
23 and have no cause to be ashamed of yourself;
24
21 for there is a shame that leads to sin, 20:22
25 as well as a shame that is honourable and gracious.
22 Do not show partiality, to your own detriment,
26 or deference, to your own downfall.
27
23 Do not refrain from speech at an opportune time,
28 and do not hide your wisdom;[h]
24 for wisdom shall be recognised in speech,
29 and instruction by what the tongue utters.
25 Do not contradict the truth,
30 rather blush for your own ignorance.
26 Do not be ashamed to confess your sins, Lv 5:5 Nb 5:7
31a 32b do not strive against the current of a river.[i] 1 K 21:27f Pr 28:13
27 Do not grovel to a foolish man, Jm 5:16
31b 32a do not show partiality to a man of influence.
28 Fight to the death for truth,[j] Jn 18:37
33 and the Lord God will war on your side.
29 Do not be bold of tongue,
34 yet idle and slack in deed; 1 Jn 3:18
30 do not be like a lion[k] at home,
35 or a coward before your servants.
31 Do not let your hands be outstretched to receive,
36 yet closed when the time comes to give back. Ac 20:35

Wealth and presumption

1 5 Do not give your heart to your money, 11:24 Lk 12:15-21
or say, 'With this I am self-sufficient'.

i. Against curiosity (vv. 21-24): the Law is a sufficient study for the wise man.
j. 'with matters that are beyond you' Hebr.; 'with unnecessary works' Greek.
k. Hebr. 'For many are the thoughts of men'.
l. Add. v. 25 'For lack of eyes you want for light; if you are without knowledge do not attempt to convince'.
m. Hebr. 'and whoever loves happiness will be led by it'.
n. 'the sinner' Greek; 'he who frets' Hebr.
o. The text does not make clear whether this means returning good for good (cf. Hebr.) or good for evil.
4 a. 'widows' Hebr.; 'their mothers' Greek.
b. Wisdom is here personified as in Pr 1:23-25; 8:12-21; 9:1-6. Her 'sons' are those who pursue wisdom and put it into practice, cf. Lk 7:35.
c. 'judges aright' corr. following Hebr.; 'judges the nations' Greek.
d. Greek adds 'to him and gladden him', absent from Hebr.
e. The Hebr. makes Wisdom the speaker in this passage, vv. 15-19, in imitation of Pr 1:22f and 8:1f.
f. This passage possibly alludes to actual events: in the presence of the hellenisers, Jews were tempted to disguise their faith and religious practice, cf. 1 M 1: 12-15; 2 M 4:11-16. But the injunctions are valid for all times.
g. 'My son' Hebr. and Lat.
h. 'at an opportune time', Lit. 'at a time of salvation', meaning uncertain. 'and do not hide your wisdom' following Hebr., Greek 248 and Lat.; these last two add 'for beauty'.
i. It would be easier to stop it than to conceal one's sins from God.
j. 'truth' Greek; 'justice' Hebr. and Lat.
k. Var. 'a dog', which would make the two lines synonymous instead of antithetical.

Do not be led by your appetites and energy 2
to follow the passions of your heart.
Ps 12:4 Ws 2:11 And do not say, 'Who has authority over me?'[a] 3
for the Lord will certainly be avenged on you.
Qo 8:11-14 Rm 2:4; 3:25 Do not say, 'I sinned, and what happened to me?'[b] 4
for the Lord's forbearance is long.
Do not be so sure of forgiveness 5
that you add sin to sin.
And do not say, 'His compassion is great, 6
he will forgive me my many sins';
16:11 Ex 20:5-6 for with him are both mercy and wrath, 7
and his rage bears heavy on sinners.
7:16-17 Is 55:6-7 Lk 12:35-40 Do not delay your return to the Lord, 7 8
do not put it off day after day;
for suddenly the Lord's wrath will blaze out, 9
and at the time of vengeance you will be utterly destroyed.
Do not set your heart on ill-gotten gains, 8 10
Pr 10:2 they will be of no use to you on the day of disaster.

Straightforwardness and self-possession

Do not winnow in every wind, 9 11
or walk along every by-way
(such is the practice of the deceitful sinner).
Mt 5:37 Jm 5:12 Be steady in your convictions, 10 12
sincere in your speech.
Be quick to listen, 11 13
↗Jm 1:19 and deliberate in giving an answer.
If you understand the matter, give your neighbour an answer, 12 14
Pr 30:32 if not, put your hand over your mouth.
Both honour and disgrace come from talking, 13 15
Pr 18:21 Jm 3:6 a man's tongue can cause his downfall.
Do not get a name for scandal-mongering, 14 16
do not set traps with your tongue;
for as shame lies in store for the thief, 17
so harsh condemnation awaits the deceitful.
Avoid offences[c] in great as in small matters, 15 18
and do not become an enemy where you should stay a friend; 1
for a bad name will earn you shame and reproach, 1
6 as happens to the deceitful sinner.
Do not give in[a] to the promptings of your temper, 2
in case it gores your soul like a mad bull;
in case it gobbles up[b] your leaves and you lose your fruits, 3
Jn 15:5-6 and are left like a withered tree.
An evil temper destroys the man who has it 4
and makes him the laughing-stock of his enemies.

37:1-6 **Friendship**

Pr 15:1 A kindly turn of speech multiplies a man's friends, 5
and a courteous way of speaking invites many a friendly reply.
Let your acquaintances[c] be many, 6
37:7-15 but your advisers one in a thousand.
12:8-9 Pr 17:17 If you want to make a friend, take him on trial, 7
and be in no hurry to trust him;
for one kind of friend is only so when it suits him 8
Jb 19:20 but will not stand by you in your day of trouble.
Another kind of friend will fall out with you 9

and to your dismay make your quarrel public, Pr 25:9-10
and a third kind of friend will share your table,
but not stand by you in your day of trouble:
when you are doing well he will be your second self,
ordering your servants about;[a] Pr 19:4,7
but if ever you are brought low he will turn against you
and will hide himself from you.
Keep well clear of your enemies,
and be wary of your friends.
A faithful friend is a sure shelter, Pr 18:19 Qo 4:9-12
whoever finds one has found a rare treasure.
A faithful friend is something beyond price,
there is no measuring[e] his worth.
A faithful friend is the elixir of life, Pr 17:17; 18:24
and those who fear the Lord will find one.
Whoever fears the Lord makes true friends,
for as a man is, so is his friend.[f]

Apprenticeship to wisdom

My son, from your earliest youth choose instruction, 51:13 Pr 22:6
and till your hair is white you will keep finding wisdom.
Cultivate her[g] like the ploughman and the sower, Pr 8:18-19 Ws 7:14
and wait for her fine harvest,
for in tilling her you will toil a little while,
but very soon you will be eating her crops.
How very harsh she is to the undisciplined!
The senseless man does not stay with her for long: Pr 24:7
she will weigh on him like a heavy stone,[h]
and he will lose no time in throwing her off;
for discipline[i] is true to her name,
she is not accessible to many.
Listen, son, and take my warning,
do not reject my advice:
put your feet into her fetters,
and your neck into her harness; Pr 1:9 Mt 11:29
give your shoulder to her yoke,
do not be restive in her reins;
court her with all your soul,
and with all your might keep in her ways; Dt 6:5
go after her and seek her; she will reveal herself to you; Ws 6:12
once you hold her, do not let her go.
For in the end you will find rest in her 4:11-12 Jr 6:16 Mt 11:29
and she will take the form of joy for you:
her fetters you will find are a strong defence,
her harness, a robe of honour. Pr 1:9
Her yoke will be a golden ornament,[j]

5 a. Like the 'fool' who denies God's providence, Ps 53:1.
b. The sceptic defies divine justice when it is apparently inactive.
c. 'avoid offences' following Hebr.: 'do not be ignorant' Greek.
6 a. 'Do not give in' following Hebr.; 'Do not exalt yourself' Greek.
b. 'gobbles up' following Hebr.; 'do not swallow' Greek.
c. Lit. 'those who are at peace with you', or possibly 'those who wish peace to you'. Cf. Hebr. 'the men of your greeting'.
d. Hebr. 'In your misfortune he leaves you'.
e. Lit. 'weighing'.
f. Usually interpreted 'for his friend is as dear to him as himself'. But equally probable is 'for his friend will be inevitably like himself, God-fearing'.
g. 'Cultivate her', lit. 'come to her'.
h. Hebr. 'touchstone'.
i. 'discipline' following Hebr.; 'wisdom' Greek. Probably a play on *musar*, 'discipline', and *musar*, 'set apart'.
j. Text corr. following Hebr.

her reins, purple ribbons;
you will wear her like a robe of honour, 31 32
Pr 4:9 you will put her on like a crown of honour.[k]
If you wish, my son, you can acquire instruction, 32 33
if you give your mind to it, subtlety will be yours.
8:8 Pr 13:20 If you love listening you will learn, 33 34
if you lend an ear, wisdom will be yours.
Attend the gathering of elders; 34 35
if there is a wise man there, attach yourself to him.
Listen willingly to any discourse coming from God, 35
do not let shrewd proverbs escape you.
Ws 6:14 If you see a man of understanding, visit him early, 36
let your feet wear out his doorstep.
Reflect on the injunctions of the Lord, 37
Ps 1:2 busy yourself at all times with his commandments.
He will strengthen your mind,
and the wisdom you desire will be granted you.

Miscellaneous advice

Gn 4:7 7 Do no evil, and evil will not befall you; 1
shun wrong, and it will avoid you. 2
Jb 4:8 Pr 22:8 Ga 6:7-8 Son, do not sow in the furrows of wrong-doing, 3
or you may reap it seven times over.

13:9-10 Pr 25:6-7 Do not ask the Lord for the highest place, 4
or the king for a seat of honour.
Do not parade your virtue before the Lord, 5
or your wisdom before the king.
Do not scheme to be appointed judge, 6
in case you are not strong enough to stamp out injustice,
in case you let yourself be swayed by an influential man,
Lv 19:15 and so risk the loss of your integrity.
Do not wrong the general body of citizens 7
and so lower yourself in popular esteem.

Do not be drawn to sin twice over, 8
for you will not go unpunished even once.
Pr 21:27 Am 5:21+ Do not say, 'God will consider the great number of my gifts; 9 11
when I make my offerings to the Most High God he will accept them'.

Jm 1:6 Do not be impatient in prayer; 10 9
3:30+ do not neglect to give alms. 10

Do not laugh at a man when he is sad of heart, 11 12
1 S 2:7 Lk 1:52 for he who brings him low can lift him high.

Do not draw up a lying indictment against your brother, 12 13
do not do it against a friend either.
Mind you tell no lies, 13 14
for no good can come of it.[a]

Do not make long-winded speeches in the gathering of elders, 14 15
Qo 5:1 Mt 6:7 and do not repeat yourself at your prayers.

Do not shirk wearisome labour, 15 16
Pr 24:27 or farm work, which the Most High created.

Do not swell the ranks of the sinners, 16 17
5:7 remember that the wrath will not delay. 18

17/19 Be very humble,
since the punishment for the godless is fire and worms. Jdt 16:17; 2 M 9:9; Is 66:24; Mk 9:48

18/20 Do not barter a friend for profit,
nor a real brother for the gold of Ophir.

19/21 Do not turn against a wise and good wife,[b]
for her charm is worth more than gold.

20/22 Do not ill-treat a slave who is an honest worker, 33:25-33; Dt 24:14-15
or a wage-earner who does his best for you.

21/23 Love an intelligent slave like your own self,[c] Ex 21:2; Dt 15:12-15
and do not deny him his freedom.

Children

22/24 Have you cattle? Look after them;
if they are making you a profit, keep them. Pr 27:23

23/25 Have you children? Educate them, 30:1-13
make them bow the neck from childhood.[d] Pr 13:24+

24/26 Have you daughters? Take care of their bodies,
but do not be over-indulgent. 42:9-11

25/27 Marry a daughter off, and you have finished a great work;[e]
but give her to a man of sense. 1 Co 7:36-38

26/28 Have you a wife to your liking? Do not turn her out;
but if you dislike her, never trust her.

Parents

27/29 With all your heart honour your father, Ex 20:12
never forget the birthpangs of your mother. Tb 4:4

28/30 Remember that you owe your birth to them;
how can you repay them for what they have done for you?

Priests

29/31 With all your soul hold the Lord in awe,
and revere his priests.[f]

30/32 With all your might love him who made you,
and do not abandon his ministers.

31/33 Fear the Lord and honour the priest
34 and give him the portion enjoined on you:[g]
first-fruits and sacrifices of reparation and the shoulder-gift,
35 the sacrifice of sanctification, and first-fruits of the holy things.

The poor and afflicted 3:30–4:10; 29:8-13

32/36 Stretch your hand out also to the poor man,
that your blessing[h] may be perfect. Dt 14:29; Ps 41:1

33/37 Be generous in your gifts to all the living,
do not withhold your favour even from the dead.[i]

k. 'honour' Hebr.; 'gladness' Greek.

7 a. 'can come of it' following Hebr.

b. Or possibly 'Do not hesitate to marry a wise and good wife', cf. v. 26.

c. 'Love... like your own self' Hebr.; 'let your soul love' Greek.

d. Hebr. 'and betroth them from childhood'.

e. 'you have finished a great work' Greek; 'and your cares will vanish' Hebr.

f. Ben Sira reveres the liturgy and its ministers, cf. ch. 50. Here, reverence for the priest is juxtaposed with worship of the Lord, in the same spirit as those texts to which v. 31 alludes; Nb 18:11-18 (first-fruits); Lv 5:6 (sacrifices of reparation, or 'for sin'); Ex 29:27; Lv 7:32; Dt 18:3 (the shoulder-gift). The 'sacrifice of sanctification' (Hebr. 'of justice') is probably the oblation of Lv 2:1-16.

g. The Hebr. goes on 'holocaust meat(?) and free-will offerings, sacrifices of justice and sacred offerings'.

h. The blessing given by God.

i. On the duty of burying the dead worthily, cf. 2 S 21:10-14; Jr 22:19; Is 34:3; Tb 1:17-18; 12:12. At a later period, prayers and sacrifices were also offered for them, 2 M 12:38-46. But the Law seems to have forbidden certain pagan rites connected with the dead, Dt 26:14, cf. Ba 6:26; Si 30:18. Ben Sira does not go into details.

37:12 Rm 12:15 Do not fail those who weep, 34 38
but share the grief of the grief-stricken.
Mt 25:35 Do not shrink from visiting the sick; 35 39
in this way you will make yourself loved
38:20 In everything you do,[j] remember your end, 36 40
and you will never sin.[k]

Prudence and commonsense

8 Do not try conclusions with an influential man, 1
in case you later fall into his clutches.
Do not quarrel with a rich man, 2
Pr 10:15 in case he turns the scales against you;
for gold has destroyed many, 3
and has swayed the hearts of kings.

Do not quarrel with a man of quick tongue, 3 4
do not pile logs on his fire.
Do not jest with an ill-mannered man, 4 5
in case you hear your ancestry insulted.[a]

Mt 7:1-5p Rm 3:9-20 1 Jn 1:8-10 Do not revile a repentant sinner; 5 6
remember that we all are guilty.[b]
Lv 19:32 Do not despise a man in his old age; 6 7
after all, some of us too are growing old.
Do not gloat over a man's death;[c] 7 8
remember that we all must die.

Tradition

6:33 Pr 13:20 Do not ignore the talk of the wise, 8 9
be conversant with their proverbs,
since from these you will learn the theory and art 10
Pr 14:35; 16:13f of serving the great.[d]
Do not underrate the talk of old men, 9 11
after all, they themselves learned it from their fathers;[e]
from them you will learn how to think, 12
Col 4:6 and the art of the timely answer.

Prudence

Do not kindle the coals of the sinner, 10 13
in case you scorch yourself in his blaze.
Refuse to be drawn by an arrogant man, 11 14
for fear he tries to trap you in your words.

Do not lend to anyone who is stronger than you are— 12 15
29:4 if you do lend, resign yourself to loss.

Do not stand surety beyond your means; 13 16
29:14-20 Pr 6:1+ if you do stand surety, be prepared to pay up.

Do not go to law with a judge, 14 17
since judgement will be given in his favour.

Do not travel with a reckless fellow, 15 18
Pr 22:24-25 in case he imposes on you;
he will act as the whim takes him,
and you will both be ruined by his folly.
Pr 15:18 Do not argue with a quick-tempered man, 16 19
or travel with him through the wilderness;
since blood counts for nothing in his eyes,
and where no help is to be had, he will strike you down.

17/20 Do not ask a fool for advice,
since he will not be able to keep a confidence.
18/21 In a stranger's presence do nothing that should be kept secret,
since you cannot tell what use he will make of it.
19/22 Do not open your heart to every man,
or solicit favours from all comers.[f]

Women

1 9 Do not be jealous of the wife you love, Nb 5:14-15
or teach her lessons in evil to your detriment.
2 Do not give your soul to a woman, Jg 16:4-21 1 K 11:1-4 Pr 31:3
for her to trample on your strength.
3 Do not keep company with a harlot,
in case you get entangled in her snares. Pr 23:27; 29:3
4 Do not dally with a singing girl,
in case you get caught by her wiles. Pr 7:6-27
5 Do not stare at a virgin, Jb 31:1 Mt 5:28
in case you and she incur the same punishment.
6 Do not give your soul to whores, Pr 29:3 Lk 15:13
or you will ruin your inheritance.
7 Keep your eyes to yourself in the streets of a town,
do not prowl about its unfrequented quarters.
8 Turn your eyes away from a handsome woman, 41:22-23 Pr 2:16
do not stare at the beauty that belongs to someone else.
9 Woman's beauty has led many astray;
it kindles desire like a flame.
9/12 Never sit down with a married woman, Pr 2:16; 5: 2+
13 or sit at table with her drinking wine,
in case you succumb to her charms,
and in your ardour you slide down to your ruin.

Relations with men

10/14 Do not desert an old friend;
the new one will not be his match.
15 New friend, new wine;
when it grows old, you drink it with pleasure.

11/16 Do not envy the sinner his success; 11:21 Ps 37:73
you do not know what turn his career will take.
12/17 Do not take pleasure in what pleases the godless;
remember they will not go unpunished to their grave.[a]

13/18 Keep your distance from the man who has the power to put to death,
and you will not be haunted by the fear of dying.
19 If you do approach him, make no false move,
or he may take your life.

j. 'you do' following Hebr.; Greek lit. 'your words'.

k. Ben Sira may have no sure or clear idea of retribution after death but on several occasions he emphasises the importance of the last moment, cf. 11:26-28. It may also be that the Greek translation has moved further in this direction, for the Hebr. has simply 'in all your actions consider the end', i.e. think of the consequences of your acts; the Greek is more explicit and for 'the end' reads 'your last moments' *(ta eschata sou)*, inviting reflection on 'the last things'.

8 a. By the type of curse so common in the East.

b. 'guilty' Hebr.; 'in chastisements' Greek.

c. Lit. 'Do not gloat over a dead man'; Vulg. 'Do not gloat over the death of an enemy'.

d. One of the traditional attributes of wisdom it makes a reliable official.

e. The rabbis think highly of tradition which they call 'the spoken law'. Cf. Dt 4:9; 11:19; Ps 44:1; 78:3f; Jb 8:8; 12:12. Most books of the Bible formed part of the oral tradition before being committed to writing. This is notably true of the proverbs and maxims of the sages.

f. Hebr. 'and do not drive away your good fortune'.

9 a. Lit. 'to Sheol'. On the question of retribution in this life, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books.

Realise that you are treading among trip-lines, 20
that you are strolling on the battlements.[b]

Cultivate[c] your neighbours as far as you can, 14 21
37:7-15 and consult with wise men.
37:12 For conversation seek intelligent men, 15 22
let all your discussions bear on the law of the Most High.
Have virtuous men for your table companions, 16 23
1:11; 10:22 and let your pride be in fearing the Lord.

Work from skilled hands will earn its praise, 17 24
but a leader of the people must be shrewd of speech.[d]
A phrase-maker is a terror to his town, 18 25
37:20 a loose talker is detested.

Government

Ws 6:24 10 The wise magistrate will be strict with his people, 1
and the government of a prudent man will be well-regulated.
As the magistrate is, so will his officials be, 2
as the governor is, so will be the inhabitants of his city.
An uneducated[a] king will be the ruin of his people, 3
a city owes its prosperity to the intelligence of its leading men.
Jr 27:5 The government of the earth is in the hands of the Lord, 4
Pr 8:15 Is 11:2-5 he sets the right man over it at the right time.
Ws 7:16 A man's success is in the hands of the Lord, 5
Rm 13:1 it is he who invests the lawgiver[b] with honour.

Against pride

Lv 19:18 Mt 5:21-24; 18:21-22 Do not resent[c] your neighbour's every offence, 6
and never act in a fit of passion.

Pride is hateful to God and man, 7
and injustice is abhorrent to both.

Empire passes from nation to nation 8
because of injustice, arrogance and money.[d]

17:32 Gn 2:7; 18; 27 What has dust and ashes to pride itself on? 9
Even in life its guts are repellent.[e] 10b
A long illness mocks the doctor;[f] 10 12
a king today is a corpse tomorrow.
Jb 17:14 Is 14:11 When a man comes to die, 11 13
his inheritance will be creeping things, beasts of prey, worms.

Dt 8:14 The beginning of human pride is to desert the Lord, 12 14
and to turn one's heart away from one's maker. 15
Since the beginning of pride is sin, 13
whoever clings to it will pour forth filth.

For which reason the Lord inflicted extraordinary punishments on them 16
and utterly overthrew them.
11:5 1 S 2:4-8 Lk 1:52 The Lord has thrown down rulers' thrones, 14 17
and seated the humble in their place.
33:12 Dn 2:35 The Lord has plucked up proud men[g] by the roots, 15 18
and planted the lowly in their place.
The Lord has overthrown the lands of the heathens 16 19
11:21-22 Is 40:15-17 and destroyed them to the very foundations of the earth.
He has taken some of them away and destroyed them, 17 20
and blotted out their memory from the earth. 21

18 22 Pride was not created for men,
nor furious rage for those born of woman.

Persons deserving honour

19 23 What race deserves honour? The human race. Jr 9:22-23
What race deserves honour? Those who fear the Lord. 1 Co 1:26-31 2 Co 10:17
What race deserves contempt? The human race. Jm 1:9
What race deserves contempt? Those who break the commandments.
20 24 Among brothers the leader of them deserves honour,
and those who fear the Lord deserve honour in his sight.[h]
22 25 Let rich and noble and poor
take pride in fearing the Lord. 9:16; 10:30
23 26 It is not right to despise a poor but intelligent man,
and it is not good to honour a man who is a sinner.
24 27 Ruler, magistrate, influential man, all are to be honoured,
but none of them is greater than him who fears the Lord.
25 28 A wise slave will have free men waiting on him, Pr 11:29; 17:2
and the man of sense will not grumble.[i]

Frankness and humility

26 29 Do not try to be smart when you do your work, Lk 17:10
do not put on airs when you are in difficulties.
27 30 Better a hardworking man who has plenty of everything,
than a pretentious man at a loss for a meal.[j] Pr 12:9
28 31 My son, be modest in your self-esteem, Jr 9:22 1 Co 1:31
and value yourself at your proper worth.
29 32 Who can justify a man who runs himself down,
or respect a man who despises himself?
30 33 A poor man is honoured for his wits, 10:22; 11:1
and a rich man for his wealth.
31 34 Honoured in poverty, how much the more in wealth!
Dishonoured in wealth, how much the more in poverty!

Do not go by appearances

1 11 The poor man's wisdom keeps his head erect, 10:30
and gives him a place with the great.

2 Do not praise a man for his good looks, 1 S 16:7 2 Co 10:10-11
nor dislike anybody for his appearance.

3 Small among winged creatures is the bee Mt 13:31-32
but her produce is the sweetest of the sweet.

4 [a]Do not preen yourself on your fine clothes,
nor be swollen headed on your day of glory;
for the Lord's deeds are marvellous, Qo 3:11
though hidden from mankind.[b]

b. And thus a target for the arrows of the enemy. But the text is uncertain. Hebr. 'on nets'.
c. Following Hebr. (or possibly 'answer'); 'watch' Greek.
d. Text uncertain.
10 a. 'uneducated' Greek; 'undisciplined' Hebr.
b. 'lawgiver' Greek; 'scribe' Hebr.
c. Hebr. 'Do not punish'.
d. 'because of injustice...' Greek; 'because of domineering pride' Hebr.
e. Following several quotations. Greek 'it casts its guts'; Hebr. 'its guts are full of worms'.
f. 'mocks the doctor'; var. 'the doctor laughs at it'.
g. 'proud men' corr.; 'nations' Greek.
h. Hebr.(?) 'the man who fears the Lord is (honoured) still more'. Add. v. 21 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of advancement, but the beginning of rejection is stubbornness and pride'.
i. Cf. St Paul's remarks on slavery, Ga 3:28; Col 3:11; Phm 16.
j. Following Hebr., cf. Pr 12:9. Greek 'than a man who struts about, is proud, and without bread'.
11 a. Hebr. 'Do not jeer at a man in rags, do not mock anyone who is in trouble'.
b. I.e. unseen and unforeseeable. One turn of the

10:14 Many monarchs have been made to sit on the ground,[e] 5
Qo 4:14; 10:6-7 and the man nobody thought of has worn the crown.
Many influential men have been utterly disgraced, 6
and prominent men have fallen into the power of others.

Deliberation and reflection

Do not find fault before making thorough inquiry; 7
first reflect, then give a reprimand.
Pr 18:13 Listen before you answer, 8
and do not interrupt a speech in the middle.

Do not wrangle about something that does not concern you, 9
nor interfere in the squabbles of sinners.

38:24 My son, do not take on a great amount of business; 10
if you multiply your interests, you are bound to suffer for it;
hurry as fast as you can, yet you will never arrive,[d]
nor will you escape by running away.
Ps 127:1-2 Pr 11:24; 21:5 A man labours and toils and forges ahead, 11
only to find himself the more out-distanced.

Trust in God alone

Another man is a poor creature begging for assistance, 12
Zp 2:3+ badly off for support, but rich in poverty,
and the Lord turns a favourable eye on him,
sets him on his feet out of his abject condition,
Ps 3:3 and enables him to hold his head high, 13
to the utter amazement of many.
Jb 1:21 Is 45:7 Good and bad, life and death, 14
poverty and wealth, all come from the Lord.[e]
The Lord's gift remains constant to the devout,[f] 17
and his goodwill means a good journey for ever.
Jb 27:16-23 Ps 49:10,17-18 A man grows rich by his sharpness and grabbing, 18
and here is the reward he receives for it:
Qo 2:21-23 Lk 12:16-21 he says, 'I have found rest, 19
and now I can enjoy my goods';
but he does not know how long this will last;[g] 20
he will have to leave his goods for others and die.
Persevere at your duty, take pleasure in doing it,[h] 20 21
and grow old at your work.
9:11 Pr 3:31; 23:17 Do not be astonished at the sinner's achievements; 21 22
trust the Lord and keep to your duty;
since it is a trifle in the eyes of the Lord, 23
in a moment, suddenly to make a poor man rich.
The devout man receives the Lord's blessing as his reward, 22 24
in a moment God brings his blessing to flower.[i]
Mt 6:25-26 Do not say, 'What are my needs, 23 25
what will be my profits in future?'
5:1 Lk 12:16-21 And do not say, 'I am self-supporting, 24 26
what losses can I suffer in future?'
18:25 Jn 16:21 In a time of profit, losses are forgotten, 25 27
and in a time of loss, no one remembers profits.
Yet it is a trifle for the Lord on the day a man dies 26 28
to repay him as his conduct deserves.
A moment's adversity, and pleasures are forgotten; 27 29
1:13 in a man's last hour his deeds will stand revealed.[j]
Call no man fortunate before his death; 28 30
it is by his end[k] that a man will be known.[l]

Distrust the wicked

29/31 Do not bring every man home with you,
for many are the traps of the crafty.
30/32 Like a decoy partridge in a basket, such is the proud man's heart;[m]
like a spy he watches for your downfall.[n]
31/33 The slanderer twists good into evil,[o]
will cast a slur on what deserves most praise.
32/34 A hearthful of glowing coals starts from a single spark,
and the sinner lurks for the chance to spill blood. Pr 1:11
33/35 Beware of a scoundrel and his evil contrivances,
in case he puts a smear on you for ever.
34/36 Bring a stranger home with you and he will start trouble,
and estrange you from your own family.

Rules for doing good

Mt 5:43-48
Lk 14:12-14

1 12 If you do a good turn, know for whom you are doing it,
and your good deeds will not go to waste.
2 Do good to a devout[a] man, and you will receive a reward,
if not from him, then certainly from the Most High. Dt 14:29
3 No good will come to a man who persists in evil,
or who refuses to give alms.[b]
4 Give to a devout man,
do not go to the help of a sinner.[c]
5 Do good to a humble man,
give nothing to a godless one.
Refuse him bread, do not give him any,
it might make him stronger than you are;
then you would be repaid evil twice over
for all the good you had done him.[d]
6 For the Most High himself detests sinners, Mt 5:45
Lk 6:35
and will repay the wicked with a vengeance.
7 Give to the good man,
and do not go to the help of a sinner.

True and false friends

6:5-17

8 In prosperity you cannot always tell a true friend,
but in adversity you cannot mistake an enemy. Pr 17:17; 19:4
9 When a man is doing well his enemies are sad,[e]
when he is doing badly, even a friend will keep his distance.
10 Do not ever trust an enemy; Pr 26:24-26
as bronze tarnishes, so does his malignity.

wheel and all conditions are reversed. Cf. Ps 113:7f; 1 S 2:8; Jb 12:17-19. This is exemplified in the sayings that follow.

c. Lit. 'have sat on the ground', which could possibly be taken to mean: 'have been destitute before they came to the throne'.

d. Hebr. 'if you do not run you will not achieve, if you do not seek, you will not find'.

e. Add. vv. 15-16 'Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of the Law comes from the Lord, charity and the doing of good works come from him. Folly and darkness were created for sinners; for those who take pleasure in evil, evil grows old.'

f. 'devout' Greek; 'virtuous' Hebr.

g. 'how long this will last' Greek; 'what awaits him' Hebr.

h. 'duty' Hebr.; 'covenant' Greek. 'pleasure' Hebr.; 'conversion' (?) Greek.

i. 'devout' Greek; 'virtuous' Hebr. 'in a moment' Greek; 'at the appointed time' Hebr.

j. 'his deeds...' Greek; 'he shows what he is' Hebr.

k. 'by his end' Hebr.; 'in his children' Greek.

l. Ben Sira therefore expects a judgement and an apportioning of deserts on the day of death, cf. 7:36+ and Introduction to Wisdom Books.

m. The proud man like a decoy bird inside a trap decoys his fellow into sin.

n. Hebr. 'he is in ambush to rend him like a wolf'.

o. Following Hebr.; Greek 'Making evil of good, he is on the watch'.

12 a. 'devout' Greek; 'virtuous' Hebr.

b. Hebr. 'It is no use a man's doing good to the wicked; he does not even perform a good work'.

c. Contrast the words of Jesus, Mt 5:43-47.

d. The Hebr. of vv. 4-5 differs considerably.

e. 'his enemies ...' Greek; 'even his enemy makes friends' Hebr.

Even if he behaves humbly and comes bowing and scraping, 11
maintain your reserve and be on your guard against him.
Behave towards him as if you were polishing a mirror,
you will find that his tarnish cannot last.[f]
Do not stand him beside you 12
in case he thrusts you out and takes your place.
Do not seat him at your right hand,
or he will be after your position,
and you will end up by admitting the truth of my words,
and feeling the sting in them.
Who feels sorry for a snake-charmer bitten by a snake, 13
or for those who take risks with savage animals? —
just so for someone consorting with a sinner, 14 13b
and being accomplice to his sins.
As long as you maintain your stand he will not reveal himself,[g] 15 14
but if you once give way he will press his advantage.
Ps 140:4-5 Pr 26:24-26 Jr 9:7 An enemy may have sweetness on his lips, 16 15
and in his heart a scheme to throw you in the ditch.
An enemy may have tears in his eyes, 16
but if he gets a chance not even blood will satisfy him.
If you meet with misfortune, you will find him there before you, 17
and, pretending to help you, he will trip you up.
He will wag his head and clap his hands,[h] 18 19
he will whisper a lot and his expression will change.

Mix with your equals

13 Whoever touches pitch will be defiled, 1
and anyone who associates with a proud man will come to be like him.
Do not try to carry a burden too heavy for you, 2
do not associate with someone more powerful and wealthy than yourself.
Why put the clay pot next to the iron cauldron? 3
It will only break when they collide.[a]
Pr 18:23 The rich man wrongs a man and puts on airs, 3 4
while the poor man is wronged and apologises.
If you are useful he will exploit you, 4 5
if you cannot keep up with him he will desert you.
Pr 19:6 Are you well off?—he will live with you, 5 6
he will clean you out without a single qualm.
Qo 5:10 Does he need you?—he will hoodwink you, 6 7
smile at you and raise your hopes;
he will speak to you with smooth words
and say, 'I wonder what you would like?'
Pr 23:1-3 And he will put you to shame with his grand dinners, 8
until he has cleaned you out two or three times over,
and he will finish by making you ridiculous.[b]
When he sees you afterwards he will snub you,
and wag his head about you.

Take care you are not hoodwinked 8 11
and thus humiliated through your own stupidity.[c]
7:4 Pr 25:6 When an influential man invites you, show reluctance, 9 12
and he will press his invitation all the more.
Do not thrust yourself forward, in case you are pushed aside, 10 13
but do not stand aloof, or you will be overlooked.[d]

11/14 Do not affect to treat him as an equal,
do not trust his flow of words;
since all this talking is expressly meant to test you,
under cover of geniality he will be weighing you up.

12/15 Pitiless is the man who is too free with his words,
he will not spare you either blows or chains.
13/16 Be wary, take very great care,
because you are walking with your own downfall.[e]

15/19 Every living thing loves its own sort,
and every man his neighbour.
16/20 Every creature mixes with its kind,
and man sticks to his own sort.
17/21 How can wolf and lamb agree?—
Just so with sinner and devout.[f]
18/22 What peace can there be between hyena and dog?
And what peace between rich man and poor?
19/23 Wild donkeys are the prey of desert lions;
so too, the poor are the quarry of the rich.
20/24 The proud man thinks humility abhorrent;
so too, the rich abominate the poor.

21/25 When the rich man stumbles he is supported by friends; Pr 19:4,7
when the poor man falls, his friends push him away.
22/26 When the rich man slips,[g] there are many hands to catch him, Pr 14:20
if he talks nonsense he is congratulated.
27 The poor man slips, and is blamed for it,
he may talk good sense, but no room is made for him.
23/28 The rich man speaks and everyone stops talking,
and then they praise his discourse to the skies.
29 The poor man speaks and people say, 'Who is this?'
and if he staggers they push him down.

24/30 Wealth is good where there is no sin,
poverty is evil, the godless say.[h]
25/31 A man's heart moulds his expression Pr 15:13
whether for better or worse.
26/32 The mark of a good heart is a cheerful expression;
inventing proverbs is weary work.[i]

True happiness

1 **14** Happy the man who has not sinned[a] in speech 19:16; 25:8 Jm 3:2
and who need feel no remorse for sins.

f. 'Behave towards him ...' Greek; Hebr. 'Behave towards him as a revealer of secrets so that he may do no harm to you, and know the common ending of jealousy'.

g. Following Hebr.; Greek 'he stays an hour with you'.

h. Wagging the head is a gesture of derision, Ps 22:7; 109:25; Jb 16:4; cf. Mt 27:39. For 'clapping hands' cf. Ezk 25:6; Na 3:19. Cf. Lm 2:15.

13 a. Classic comparison, found earlier in Aesop.

b. Hebr. 'So long as it serves him he will make fun of you; two, three times over he will squeeze you dry'.

c. 'through your own stupidity' corr. following Syr. and Lat.; 'through your enjoyment' Greek. Hebr. 'Beware of losing control and of acting like a fool'.

d. The words of Jesus in Lk 14:8-10, at first sight similar, are actually in marked contrast to this example of worldly wisdom.

e. 'because you are walking ...' Greek; 'do not go with rascals' Hebr. Add. v. 14 'When you hear that, wake from your sleep; love the Lord all your life long and pray to him for your salvation'.

f. 'devout' Greek; 'virtuous' Hebr.

g. 'slips' Greek; 'speaks' Hebr.

h. Or perhaps 'in proportion to the godlessness (that may go with it)'.

i. 'inventing...' Greek (but text uncertain); Hebr. 'reflection and concentration: thoughts of sadness'.

14 a. Lit. 'has not slipped'. Many Psalms similarly celebrate the happiness of the pure in heart, Ps 1; 32; 119; of the wise, Ps 41, of the devout, Ps 128, as opposed to those who are 'happy' by this world's standards.

Happy the man whose own soul does not accuse him, 2
and who has never given up hope.

Qo 5:9; 6:2 **Envy and greed**

Wealth is not the right thing for a niggardly man, 3
and what use are possessions to a covetous one?
Jb 27:16-17 Lk 12:16-21 A man who hoards by stinting himself is hoarding for others, 4
and others will live sumptuously on his riches.
Pr 13:22

If a man is mean to himself, to whom will he be good? 5
He does not even enjoy what is his own.
Pr 11:17 No one is meaner than the man who is mean to himself, 6
and this is how his wickedness pays him back.
If he does good at all, he does it without intending to, 7
and in the end he himself reveals his wickedness.
Evil is the man who has a grudging eye, 8
averting his face,[b] and careless of others' lives.

Ws 6:23 The eye of the grasping man is not content with his portion, 9
greed[c] shrivels up the soul.

The miser is grudging of bread,[d] 10
there is famine at his table.

My son, treat yourself as well as you can afford, 11
and bring worthy offerings to the Lord.
Remember that death will not delay, 12
Nb 16:33+ Ws 1:16 Is 28:15 and that the covenant of Sheol[e] has not been revealed to you.
Be kind to your friend before you die, 13
treat him as generously as you can afford.
Qo 2:24 Do not refuse yourself the good things of today, 14
do not let your share of what is lawfully desired pass you by.
Will you not have to leave your fortune to another, 15
and the fruit of your labour to be divided by lot?
Qo 9:10 Then give and receive, and take your ease, 16
for in Sheol you cannot look for pleasure. *17*
Every living thing grows old like a garment, 17 *18*
the age-old law is 'Death must be'.
Like foliage growing on a bushy tree, 18
some leaves falling, others growing, *19*
Qo 1:4 so are the generations of flesh and blood:
one dies, another is born.
Qo 9:6 Hab 2:13 ↗ Rv 14:13 Every achievement rots away and perishes, 19 *20*
and with it goes its author.[f]

The happiness of the sage

Pr 8:32-35 Happy the man who meditates on wisdom, 20 *22*
and reasons with good sense,
who studies her ways in his heart, 21 *23*
and ponders her secrets.[g]
He pursues her like a hunter, 22
and lies in wait by her path;
he peeps in at her windows, 23 *24*
and listens at her doors;
he lodges close to her house, 24 *25*
and fixes his peg in her walls;[h]
he pitches his tent at her side, 25
and lodges in an excellent lodging;

he sets his children in her shade,[i]
and camps beneath her branches;
he is sheltered by her from the heat,
and in her glory[j] he makes his home.

15 Whoever fears the Lord will act like this,
and whoever grasps the Law[a] will obtain wisdom.
She will come to meet him like a mother, 51:13 Ws 6:16; 8:2
and receive him like a virgin bride.
She will give him the bread of understanding to eat, Pr 9:5
and the water of wisdom to drink. 24:19-22 Jn 4:1+
He will lean on her and will not fall,
he will rely on her and not be put to shame.
She will raise him high above his neighbours, Ws 8:10-15
and in full assembly she will open his mouth.
He will find happiness and a crown of joy,
he will inherit an everlasting name.
Foolish men will not gain possession of her,
nor will sinful men set eyes on her.
She stands remote from pride,[b] Pr 8:13
and liars cannot call her to mind.
Praise is unseemly in a sinner's mouth,
since it has not been put there by the Lord.
For praise should only be uttered in wisdom,
and the Lord himself then prompts it.[c]

Man is free

Do not say, 'The Lord was responsible for my sinning', Pr 19:3 1 Co 10:13 ↗Jm 1:13-14
for he[d] is never the cause of what he hates.
Do not say, 'It was he who led me astray',
for he has no use for a sinner.
The Lord hates all that is foul,
and no one who fears him will love it either.
He himself made man in the beginning,
and then left him free to make his own decisions.[e]
If you wish, you can keep the commandments,
to behave faithfully is within your power.[f]

He has set fire and water before you; Dt 11:26-28
put out your hand to whichever you prefer.
Man has life and death before him; Dt 30:15-20 Jr 21:8
whichever a man likes better will be given him.

b. From those who need his help.
c. 'greed' corr. (lit. 'the evil eye'); 'wicked injustice' Greek.
d. Hebr. 'the miser falls (avidly) on bread'.
e. Probably the decree assigning the date of death. Cf. Is 28:15,18.
f. Hebr. 'All men's deeds are destined to perish and the works of his hands will follow him', i.e. into corruption. Rv 14:13 transforms this notion: man's works follow him into the glory of a new life.
g. Cf. Ps 119, especially vv. 15, 23, 148, on the happiness derived from meditating on the Law. Here the object of study is wisdom, which is to be found notably in the proverbs and maxims of the sages.
h. To pitch his tent there.
i. Hebr. 'he makes his nest in her branches'.
j. This 'glory' (Hebr. 'refuge') possibly refers to the cloud which used to manifest the presence of Yahweh, cf. Ex 16:10; 24:16+, the *shekinah* ('presence') of the rabbinical writings.

15 a. Jr 2:8 speaks of four official functions: priest, lawyer, prince, prophet. The man who 'grasps the Law' belongs to the second of these classes: he is the 'scribe' or 'doctor of the Law' who became increasingly important in Judaism, cf. Ezr 7:6+.
b. 'pride' Greek; 'scoffers' Hebr.
c. 'in wisdom' Greek; 'in the mouth of the wise' Hebr. 'the Lord' Greek; 'the master' Hebr.
d. 'he is' following Hebr.; 'thou art' Greek.
e. 'to make his own decisions' (lit. 'in the hand of his own counsel') Greek; 'in the hand of his own inclination' Hebr. This verse is a classic text for the doctrine of free will. The Hebr. adds 'and he has handed him over to the power of his enemy', thus offering another explanation of the origin of evil.
f. Hebr. 'If you wish, you can follow the commandment and have the good sense to do his will; if you have faith in him, you too will live'.

Ps 33:13-18
For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; 18
he is almighty and all-seeing. 19
34:16 Ps 34:15
His eyes are on those who fear him, 19
he notes every action of man. 20
He never commanded anyone to be godless, 20
he has given no one permission to sin. 21

Curses reaped by the wicked

Pr 17:21; 19:13
16 Do not long for a brood of worthless children, 1
and take no pleasure in godless sons.
However many you have, take no pleasure in them, 2
unless the fear of the Lord lives among them.
Do not count on their having long life, 3
do not put too much faith in their future;
for better have one than a thousand,
Ws 4:1
better die childless than have godless ones.[a] 4
One man of sense can populate a city, 4
Ws 3:19
but the race of lawless men will be destroyed.[b] 5
My eyes have seen many such things, 5
my ears have heard things still more impressive. 6
21:9 Nb 11:1; 16: 1-30
Fire will be kindled in a community of sinners; 6
the wrath was kindled in a disobedient nation. 7
God did not pardon the giants of old 7
Gn 6:1-7
who, confident in their strength, rebelled. 8
Gn 19:1-29
He did not spare the people with whom Lot lived, 8
whom he abhorred for their pride. 9
He had no pity on that people doomed to destruction,[c] 9
who were wiped out in their sins, 10
nor on the six hundred thousand men on the march 10
who banded together in their obstinacy.[d] 11
Had there been even only one stubborn man, 11
it would have been astonishing if he had escaped unpunished, 12
5:6
since mercy and wrath alike belong to the Lord
Ex 34:6-7
who is mighty to forgive and to pour out wrath.
His mercy is great, but his severity is as great; 12
he judges every man as his deeds deserve: 13
the sinner shall not escape with his ill-gotten gains, 13
nor the devout man's patience go for nothing. 14
He allows free play to his mercy;[e] 14
Jb 34:11
yet every man shall be treated as his deeds deserve.[f] 15

Certainty of retribution

Ps 139:7-12 Ws 14:16 Jr 23:24 Am 9:2-3
Do not say, 'I will hide from the Lord, 16
who will remember me up there? 17
I shall certainly not be noticed among so many;
what am I in the immensity of creation?'[g] 18
Why look, the sky and the heavens above the sky,
the deep and the earth tremble at his visitation. 19
Jb 37:1-7 Ps 18:7
The mountains and the base of the earth together
quail and tremble when he looks at them. 20
But who bothers his head about such things? 21
Who attempts to understand the way he moves?
The storm wind itself is invisible,
Rm 11:33
and most of what he does goes undetected.[h] 22
'Who will report whether justice has been done?
Who will be expecting it? The covenant is far away.'[i]

23 Such are the thoughts of the man of little sense,
the rash misguided man who loves his illusions.

Man in creation

24 Listen to me, my son, and learn knowledge, Pr 1:23
and give your whole mind to my words.[j]
25 I will expound discipline to a nicety,
and proclaim knowledge with precision.

26 When God created[k] his works in the beginning, Gn 1
he allotted them their portions as soon as they were made.
27 He determined his works for all time, 42:20-25
from their beginnings to their distant future.
They know neither hunger nor weariness,
and they never desert their duties.
28 None has ever jostled its neighbour,
29 they will never disobey his word.[l]
29 30 And afterwards the Lord looked at the earth, Qo 3:20
and filled it with his good things.
30 31 He covered its surface with every kind of animal, Gn 1:24-25
and to it they will return. Gn 3:19 Ps 104:29

1 **17** The Lord fashioned man from the earth,[a] Gn 2:7 Ps 8:5 Qo 3:20; 12:7
to consign him back to it.
2 He gave them so many days' determined time, *Gn 6:3*
he gave them authority over everything on earth. Gn 1:28+ Ws 9:2-3
3 He clothed them with strength like his own,[b]
and made them in his own image. Gn 1:27
4 He filled all living things with dread of man, Gn 9:2
making him master over beasts and birds.[c]
6 5 He shaped for them[d] a mouth and tongue, eyes and ears,
and gave them a heart to think with.[e]
7 6 He filled them with knowledge and understanding,
and revealed to them good and evil. Gn 2:1
8 7 He put his own light[f] in their hearts
to show them the magnificence of his works.[g] Ws 13:1 Rm 1:19-20
10 8 They will praise his holy name,
as they tell of his magnificent works.
11 9 He set knowledge before them, Dt 30:15-20
he endowed them with the law of life.

16 a. 'their future' (lit. 'their place'): var. 'their number'; Hebr. 'their end'. 'one': the Hebr. and some Greek MSS add 'doing the will (of God)'. 'thousand': some Greek MSS add 'sinners'.

b. 'man of sense' Greek; 'man who fears God' Hebr. 'will be destroyed' Greek; 'destroys it' Hebr.

c. The former population of Canaan.

d. Recalling Ex 12:37 or Nb 11:21. These men died in the wilderness and did not reach Canaan, Nb 14:20-33.

e. Hebr. 'There is a wage for every man who practises virtue'.

f. Add. vv. 15-16 'God made Pharaoh obstinate so that he did not acknowledge him, to make his works known under heaven. His mercy shows itself to all creation, he divided his light and his darkness among men' (cf. Mt 5:45 and Si 12:6).

g. As Adam and Cain tried to hide from the sight of God, Gn 3:10; 4:9.

h. Hebr. '*20* Nor does he take notice of me; who is concerned about my ways? *21* Should I sin, no eye sees me, if I tell a hidden lie, who knows of it?' The discourse of the sinner continues on these lines to v. 22, vv. 18 and 19 being parenthetical.

i. The objection seems to be that retribution delays and is not certain. On the meaning of 'covenant' here, cf. 14:12+. Hebr. for this line has 'What hope is there, for the decree is far away?'

j. The scribe is speaking here, not Wisdom personified.

k. 'God created' corr. from Hebr.; 'in the judgement' Greek. From here to 30:11 the Hebr. text is extant only in a few passages.

l. Referring to the determined course of the stars and planets.

17 a. The author follows the order of Gn 1: creation of stars, plants and animals, man.

b. 'his own' corr.; 'their own' Greek.

c. Add. v. 5 'They received the use of the five powers from the Lord, as a sixth was given to them a share of intelligence and as a seventh reason, interpreter of his powers'. This appears to be a gloss of Stoic origin.

d. 'He shaped for them' corr.; 'Inclination' Greek.

e. The Israelites believed the heart to be the seat of reason.

f. Lit. 'eye'.

g. Add. v. 9 'and he granted them to proclaim his words for ever'.

Ex 34:10f
He established an eternal covenant with them, 12 10
and revealed his judgements[h] to them.
Their eyes saw his glorious majesty, 13 11
Dt 4:11-12 and their ears heard the glory of his voice.
He said to them, 'Beware of all wrong-doing'; 14
he gave each a commandment concerning his neighbour. 12

The divine judge

Their ways are always under his eye, 15 13
they cannot be hidden from his sight.[i]
Over each nation he has set a governor, 17 14
Dt 7:6+ but Israel is the Lord's own portion.[j] 15
All their works are as the sun to him, 19 16
and his eyes rest constantly on their ways.
Their iniquities are not hidden from him, 20 17
all their sins are before the Lord.[k]
A man's almsgiving is like a signet ring to him, 22 18
he cherishes a man's generosity like the pupil of his eye.[l]
One day he will rise and reward them, 23 19
he will pay back their deserts on their own heads.[m]
But to those who repent he permits return, 24 20
and he encourages those who were losing hope.

Exhortation to repentance

Return to the Lord and leave sin behind, 25 21
plead before his face and lessen your offence. 22
Ps 34:14 Come back to the Most High and turn away from iniquity,[n] 26 23
and hold abhorrence all that is foul.
Ps 6:5; 115: 17 Is 38:18 Who will praise the Most High in Sheol, 27 (26)
if the living do not do so by giving glory to him?
To the dead, as to those who do not exist, praise is unknown, 28 (27)
only those with life and health can praise the Lord.
Ps 111:4 How great is the mercy of the Lord, 29 28
his pardon on all those who turn towards him!
Man cannot have everything, 30 29
since the son of man is not immortal.
37:3 What is brighter than the sun? Yet it suffers eclipse. 31 30
Gn 6:5; 8:21 Jb 15:14-16 Flesh and blood think of nothing but evil.
He surveys the armies of the lofty sky,[o] 32 31
10:9 Gn 18:27 while all men are no more than dust and ashes.

The greatness of God

Dn 4:31; 12:7 18 He who lives for ever created all the universe. 1
The Lord alone will be found righteous.[a] 2
He has given no one the power to proclaim his works, 4 2
and who can fathom his magnificent deeds? 3
Who can assess his magnificent strength, 5 4
and who can go further and tell of his mercies?
42:21 Qo 3:11 Nothing can be added to them, nothing subtracted, 6 5
it is impossible to fathom the marvels of the Lord.
Ps 139:17f When a man finishes he is only beginning, 7 6
and when he stops he is as puzzled as ever.[b]

The nothingness of man

Ps 8:4 What is man, what purpose does he serve? 8 7
What is the good in him, and what the bad?

9/8 Take the number of a man's days; a hundred years is very long. 17:2 Ps 90:10
10 Like a drop of water from the sea, or a grain of sand,
such are these few years compared with eternity.
11/9 For this reason the Lord shows them forbearance,
and pours out his mercy on them.
12/10 He sees and recognises how wretched their end is, Ws 11:23
11 and so he makes his forgiveness the greater.
13/12 Man's compassion extends to his neighbour,
13 but the compassion of the Lord extends to everything that lives;
rebuking, correcting and teaching,
bringing them back as a shepherd brings his flock.[c]
14 He has compassion on those who accept correction,
and who fervently look for judgements.

The art of giving[d]

15 My son, do not temper your favours with disparagement,
nor any of your gifts with words that hurt.
16 Does not dew relieve the heat?
In the same way a word is worth more than a gift.
17 Why surely, a word is better than a good present,
but a generous man is ready with both.
18 A fool will offer nothing but insult,
and a grudging man's gift makes the eyes smart.

Reflection and foresight

19 Learn before you speak,
take care of yourself before you fall ill.
20 Examine yourself before judgement comes,
and on the day of visitation you will find yourself acquitted.
21 Humble yourself before you fall ill,[e]
and when you sin, repent.
22 Let nothing prevent your discharging a vow in good time, Dt 23:22-2 Qo 5:3
and do not wait till death before setting matters to rights.
23 Prepare yourself before making a vow, Pr 20:25 Qo 5:1-6
and do not be like a man who tempts the Lord.
24 Bear the wrath of the last days in mind,
the time of vengeance when God averts his face.[f]
25 In a time of plenty remember times of famine, 11:25
poverty and want in days of wealth.

h. The Mosaic Law: the following verses refer to the revelation on Sinai.

i. Add. vv. 16-17a 'From childhood their ways lead to evil and they cannot change that heart of stone for a heart of flesh, for in dividing the nations of the whole earth...' Possibly a gloss derived from Ezk 11:19; 36:26, and asserting the inability of man to do good. The text itself seems less pessimistic.

j. Add. v. 18 'his first-born whom he rears with discipline, bestowing on him the light of his love, not deserting him'. In the days of Ben Sira, Israel had no king. Furthermore, opposition to monarchical government, already marked in antiquity (1 S 8), had all the more grounds for existence at the time of the Maccabaean revival.

k. Add. v. 21 'but the Lord is good and knows his creatures, he does not destroy or desert them, but rather spares them'.

l. Add. 'distributing repentance to his sons and daughters'.

m. When and what the retribution will be is not clear.

n. Add. 'for he will bring you out of darkness to the light of health'.

o. Probably the stars, cf. 16:28; Is 24:21-23.

18 a. Add. 'and there are no others besides him. He guides the world with a turn of the hand, all things obey his will; for he is king of all and by his power separates sacred things from profane.'

b. When man has exhausted his efforts to know God and his wonders, he has not even started to understand. These observations recall those of Qo, but the conclusion drawn is entirely different; for Ben Sira, the weakness of man serves only to emphasise the greatness of God.

c. Cf. 2 M 6:13-16; Ws 12:19-22. Later Judaism was concerned to justify instances of divine punishment. God's all-embracing mercy in its instructive aspect, emphasised here (v. 13c, d), appears for the first time in the O.T. at this point.

d. At this point the discourse on good behaviour is resumed.

e. Sickness is often represented as punishment for sin; amendment and repentance as a means of preventing sickness.

f. The day of death, cf. 1:13, rather than the day of judgement.

The time slips by between dawn and dusk, 26
all things pass swiftly in the presence of the Lord.
A wise man will be cautious in everything, 27
and in sinful days[g] he will take care not to offend.
Every man of sense recognises wisdom, 28
and will respect anyone who has found her.
Those who understand sayings have themselves grown wise 29
and have poured out apt proverbs.[h]

Self-control

Do not follow your lusts, 30
restrain your desires.
If you allow yourself to satisfy your desires, 31
this will make you the laughing-stock of your enemies.
Do not indulge in luxurious living, 32
nor get involved in such society.[i]
Pr 23:20-21 Do not beggar yourself by banqueting on credit 33
when there is nothing in your pocket.

19 Behave like that and you will never grow rich;[a] 1
he who despises trifles will sink down little by little.
Pr 31:3-5 Ho 4:11 Wine and women corrupt sensible men, 2
the customer of whores loses all sense of shame.
Pr 5:5; 7: 26f; 9:18 Grubs and worms will have him as their legacy, 3
and the man who knows no shame shall lose his life.[b]

Against loose talk

Being too ready to trust shows shallowness of mind, 4
by committing sin a man does wrong to himself.
Taking pleasure in evil[c] earns condemnation, 5
by hating gossip a man avoids evil.[d] 6
Never repeat what you are told 7
and you will come to no harm;
Pr 25:9-10 whether to friend or foe, do not talk about it, 8
unless it would be sinful not to, do not reveal it;
you would be heard out, then mistrusted, 9
and in due course you would be hated.
Have you heard something? Let it die with you. 10
Courage! It will not burst you!
A fool will suffer birthpangs over something told him, 11
like a woman labouring with child.
Like an arrow stuck in the flesh of the thigh, 12
such is a piece of news inside a fool.

Do not trust everything you hear

22:21-22 Question your friend, he may have done nothing at all, 13
and if he has done anything, he will not do it again.
Question your neighbour, he may have said nothing at all, 14
and if he has said anything, he will not say it again.
Question your friend, for slander is very common, 15
Qo 7:21 do not believe all you hear. *16*
A man sometimes makes a slip, without meaning what he says; 16
and which of us has never sinned by speech? *17*
Question your neighbour before you threaten him, 17
Lv 19:17 and leave scope for the Law of the Most High.[e] *18*

True and false wisdom

Wisdom consists entirely in fearing the Lord, 20

and wisdom is entirely constituted by the fulfilling of the Law.[f]
22/19 But being learned in evil is not wisdom,
and there is no shrewd judgement in the advice of sinners.
23/20 There is a cleverness that is foul,
he who does not have wisdom is a fool.
24/21 Better be short of sense and full of fear,
than abound in shrewdness and violate the Law.[g]
25/22 There is an adroit sort of cleverness promoting injustice,
23 there is the man who will abuse favours to establish his case.
26 There is the man who will walk[h] bowed down with grief,
when inwardly this is nothing but deceit:
27/24 he hides his face and pretends to be deaf,
and when you are off your guard he takes advantage of you.
28/25 This man may think he lacks the power to sin,
but he will do wrong when he gets the chance.
29/26 You can tell a man by his appearance,
you can tell a thinking man by the look on his face.
30/27 A man's dress tells you what he does,[i]
and a man's walk tells you what he is.

Silence and speech

1/28 20 There is the rebuke that is untimely,
and there is the man who keeps quiet, and he is the shrewd one.

2/1 But how much better to rebuke than to fume!
3 The man who acknowledges a fault wards off punishment.

4/2 Like a eunuch longing to take a girl's virginity 30:20
3 so is he who uses force to argue cases.

5 There is the man who keeps quiet and is considered wise, Pr 17:28
another incurs hatred for talking too much.

6 There is the man who keeps quiet, not knowing how to answer,
another keeps quiet, because he knows when to speak.

7 A wise man will keep quiet till the right moment,
but a garrulous fool will always misjudge it.

8 The man who talks too much will get himself disliked,
and the self-appointed oracle will make himself hated.

Paradoxes

9 There is the man who finds misfortune the saving of him,
and the lucky find that may turn to loss.

10 There is the gift that affords you no profit,
and the gift that repays you double.

g. I.e. days when sin appeals even to the wise.
h. Allusion to collections of wisdom sayings like Pr.
i. Hebr. 'for a twofold poverty will result'.

19 a. Hebr.; Greek 'A drunken workman will never grow rich'.
b. By premature death.
c. 'in evil'; var. 'in his heart'.
d. Add. 'By resisting pleasure a man crowns his life, by mastering his tongue a man shall live without trouble'.
e. Add. 'who is without anger. *18* The fear of the Lord is the beginning of his clemency and wisdom wins his affection. *19* The knowledge of the Lord's commandments is lifegiving discipline, those who do what pleases him gather from the tree of immortality.'

f. Cf. 1:16,18, etc.; Pr 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; Ps 111:10; Jb 28:28. Add. 'and the knowledge of his omnipotence. *21* The servant who says to his master: I will not do what you want, even if he does it later, angers the man who keeps him'.
g. Not all intelligence is wisdom: there is vitiated intellect and sinister shrewdness.
h. 'will walk' some MSS; 'does evil' Text. Rec.
i. tells you what he does' Syr.; 'and his smile' (?) Greek.

There is the honour that leads to humiliation, 11
Lk 1:52 and there are men in a low state who raise their heads.[a]

There is the man who buys much for little, 12
yet pays for it seven times over.

The wise man will win love by his words, 13
while fools may shower favours in vain.
A stupid man's gift will bring you no advantage, 14
his eyes look for seven times as much in return.[b]
He gives little and reviles much, 15
he opens his mouth like the town crier,
he lends today and demands payment tomorrow; *16*
he is a detestable fellow.
The fool will say, 'I have no friends, 16 *17*
I get no gratitude for my good deeds;
those who eat my bread have malicious tongues'. 17 *18*
How often he will be laughed at, and by how many!

Inappropriate talk

Better a slip on the pavement than a slip of the tongue; 18 *20*
this is how ruin takes the wicked by surprise.
A coarse-grained man is like an indiscreet story 19 *21*
endlessly retold by the ignorant.[c]

Pr 26:7,9 A maxim is rejected when coming from a fool, 20 *22*
since he does not utter it on the apt occasion.

Take a man who is prevented from sinning by poverty; 21 *23*
no qualms of conscience disturb his rest.

4:21 Take a man who destroys himself out of false shame, 22 *24*
destroys himself for the sake of a fool's opinion.

Take a man who, out of false shame, makes promises to a friend, 23 *25*
and so makes an enemy for nothing.

Lying

Pr 13:5 Lying is an ugly blot on a man, 24 *26*
and ever on the lips of the ignorant.

A thief is preferable to an inveterate liar, 25 *27*
but both are heading for ruin.

Pr 12:12 Lying is an abominable habit, 26 *28*
so that disgrace is the liar's for ever.

The wise man: his dignity and his dangers

A wise man advances himself by his words, 27 *29*
a shrewd man will please princes.[d]
He who tills the soil will have a full harvest, 28 *30*
Pr 14:35 he who pleases princes will secure pardon for his offences.

Pr 17:18; 18:16; 21:14 Presents and gifts blind wise men's eyes 29 *31*
and stifle rebukes like a muzzle on the mouth.

=41:14-15 Mt 5:14-16 Wisdom concealed, and treasure undiscovered, 30 *32*
what use is either of these?
Better a man who conceals his folly 31 *33*
than a man who conceals his wisdom.

Various sins

1 21 My son, have you sinned? Do not do it again,
and ask forgiveness for your previous faults.
2 Flee from sin as from a snake,
if you approach it, it will bite you;
3 its teeth are lion's teeth,
they deprive men of their lives.
3 4 All law-breaking is like a two-edged sword, Pr 5:4
the wounds it inflicts are beyond cure.

4 5 Panic and violence make havoc of palaces,[a]
similarly, desolation overtakes the houses of the proud.
5 6 A plea from a poor man's mouth goes straight to the ear of God,
whose judgement comes without delay.

6 7 Whoever resents reproof walks in the sinner's footsteps; Pr 12:1
the man who fears the Lord bears repentance in his heart.

7 8 The glib speaker is known far and wide,
but when he makes a slip the thinking man detects it.

8 9 To build your house on other people's money
is like collecting stones for your own tomb.[b]

9 10 A meeting of lawless men is like a heap of tow : 16:6
they will end in a blazing fire.
10 11 The sinner's road is smoothly paved, Mt 7:13
but it ends at the pit of Sheol.[c]

The wise man and the fool

11 12 Whoever keeps the Law will master his instincts;[d] 37:3 Gn 4:7
13 the fear of the Lord is made perfect in wisdom.

12 14 The man who lacks intelligence cannot be taught,
15 but intelligence can increase a man's bitterness.

13 16 The wise man's knowledge will increase like a flood, Pr 13:14; 18:4
and his advice is like a living spring.
14 17 The heart[e] of a fool is like a broken jar,
it will not hold any knowledge.
15 18 If a cultured man hears a wise saying,
he praises it and caps it with another;
if an imbecile hears it, he laughs at it,[f]
and tosses it behind his back.

16 19 The talk of a fool is like a load on a journey,
but it is a pleasure to listen to an intelligent man.
17 20 The shrewd man's utterance will be eagerly awaited in the assembly,
what he says will be given serious consideration.

18 21 The wisdom of a fool is like the wreckage of a house,
the knowledge of a dolt is incoherent talk.

20 a. Meaning uncertain.
b. Following Syr. and Lat.; 'for he has many eyes instead of one' Greek.
c. Translation uncertain. Syr. 'Like a fat sheep's tail eaten without salt such is an unseasonable word'.
d. The scribe's wisdom is primarily a knowledge of how to get on in life, especially through winning the favour of the influential.

21 a. 'palaces' Syr.; 'riches' Greek.
b. 'for your own tomb' var. and Syr.; 'for the winter' Text. Rec.
c. Vulg. 'but at the end are hell, darkness, torment'. These two verses affirm the certainty of retribution. To the Christian mind they suggest the punishment of hell, cf. Is 50:11; 66:24.
d. 'his instincts' Syr.; 'his understanding (of the law)' Greek.
e. 'The heart' Syr., Lat.; 'the entrails' Hebr.
f. Following Syr.; 'the wastrel hears it and it displeases him' Greek.

To the senseless fellow instruction is like fetters on his feet, 19 22
like manacles on his right hand.

A fool laughs at the top of his voice, 20 23
but a man of intelligence quietly smiles.

To the shrewd man instruction is like a golden ornament, 21 24
like a bracelet on his right arm.[g]

The foot of a fool goes straight into a house, 22 25
but a man of much experience is respectful in his approach;[h]
a stupid man peeps inside through the door, 23 26
a well-bred man waits outside.
Listening at doors is a sign of bad upbringing, 24 27
a perceptive man would be ashamed to do so.

The lips of gossips repeat the words of others,[i] 25 28
the words of wise men are carefully weighed.

The heart of fools is exposed in their words; 26 29
the words of wise men reveal their heart.

When a godless man curses his enemy,[j] 27 30
he is cursing himself.
The scandal-monger sullies himself 28 31
and earns the hatred of the neighbourhood.

The idler

22 An idler is comparable to a stone covered in filth, 1
everyone whistles at his disgrace.
An idler is comparable to a lump of dung, 2
anyone picking it up shakes it off his hand.

Degenerate children

Pr 17:21 It is a disgrace to have fathered a badly brought-up son, 3
and the birth of a daughter is a loss.
A sensible daughter is a treasure to her husband,[a] 4
but a shameless one is a grief to her father.
An insolent daughter puts father and mother to shame, 5
and will be disowned by both.

An untimely remonstrance is like music at a funeral, 6
but a thrashing and correction are wisdom at all times.[b]

Wisdom and folly

Mt 7:6 You are gluing the broken pieces of a pot together if you try 9 7
to teach a fool,
you are rousing a man who is besotted with sleep. 8
A fool is the same as a drowsing man if you have to explain 10 9
anything to him,
when you have finished he will say, 'What is it all about?'

Shed tears for the dead man, since he has left the light behind; 11 10
shed tears for the fool,[c] since he has left his wits behind;
Shed quieter tears for the dead, since he is at rest, 11
for the fool, life is sadder than death. 12
Mourning for the dead lasts seven days, 12 13
for the foolish and ungodly all the days of their lives.

Do not waste many words on a stupid man, 13 14
do not go near a dolt.

15 Beware of him, or he will give you trouble,
and will leave you soiled by contact with him.
16 Avoid him, and you will find rest
and not be exasperated by his folly.

14/17 What is heavier than lead,
and what is its name if not 'fool'?
15/18 Sand, and salt, and a lump of iron Pr 27:3
are all easier to bear than a dolt.

16/19 A tie-beam bonded into a building
will not be dislodged by an earthquake;
20 so too, a heart resolved after due reflection
will not flinch at the critical moment.

17 A heart founded on intelligent reflection
is like a stucco[d] decoration on a smooth wall.

18/21 Pebbles[e] placed on top of a wall
will not stand up to the wind;
22 no more can the heart of a fool frightened at his own thoughts
stand up to fear.

Friendship

19/24 Prick an eye and you will draw a tear,
prick a heart and you bring its feelings to light.
20/25 Throw stones at birds and you scare them away,
revile a friend and you break up friendship.

21/26 If you have drawn your sword on a friend, 19:13-17
do not despair; there is a way back.
22/27 If you have opened your mouth against your friend, 27:16-21
do not worry; there is hope for reconciliation;
but insult, arrogance, betrayal of secrets, and the stab in the back— Pr 11:13; 20:19; 25:9
in these cases any friend will run away.

23/28 Win your neighbour's confidence when he is poor,
so that you may enjoy his later good fortune with him;
29 stand by him in times of trouble,
in order to have your share when he comes into a legacy.

24/30 Fire is heralded by the reek of the furnace and smoke,
so too bloodshed by insults.

25/31 I will not be ashamed to shelter a friend,
nor will I hide from his face;
26 and if evil comes to me through him,
32 everyone who hears about it will beware of him.

Vigilance[f]

27/33 Who will set a guard on my mouth, 28:25 Ps 141:3
and a seal of prudence on my lips,

g. This verse echoes v. 19.

h. 'is respectful in his approach' corr. following Hebr.; 'is abashed before a face' Greek.

i. Following var.; 'The lips of strangers will be grieved by them' Text. Rec.

j. 'his enemy' corr.; 'Satan' Greek. The foolish man is his own worst enemy. The Greek reading suggests a different interpretation: the foolish man blames the Tempter, cf. Jb 1:6+, instead of his own wicked self.

22 a. 'is a treasure to her husband' corr. following Lat.; 'will obtain her husband' Greek.

b. The sages advocate corporal punishment in education, Pr 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15,17; it is always effective, whereas the time for verbal rebuke must be carefully chosen. Add. vv. 7-8: 'Children who live a good life, without shortcomings, make one forget their parents' humble origin. Contemptuous, ill-bred and haughty children disgrace their family's nobility.'

c. The 'fool' is a man not simply without wits but obstinate, sceptical, licentious.

d. Lit. 'decoration of sand'. Meaning uncertain.

e. 'Pebbles' var.; 'Stakes' Text. Rec.

f. Note the deeply religious quality of the passage: each good resolution concludes with a prayer.

to keep me from falling,
and my tongue from causing my ruin?

Tb 13:4 **23** Lord, father and master of my life, 1
do not abandon me to their whims,
do not let me fall because of them.
Who will lay whips to my thoughts, 2
and the discipline of wisdom to my heart,
Ps 141:5 to be unmerciful to my errors,
and let none of my sins go unchecked
in case my errors multiply, 3
and my sins increase in number,
and I fall before my adversaries,
and my enemy gloats over me?
Tb 13:4 Lord, father and God of my life, 4
Ps 131:1 do not give me proud eyes,
turn lust away from me, 5
do not let lechery and lust grip me, 6
do not give me over to shameless desire.

Swearing

Listen, children, to the instruction I have to give; 7
whoever keeps it will not be caught out.
The sinner is ensnared[a] by his own lips, 8
both the abusive and the proud man are tripped by them.
Mt 5:34f; 23:20f Jm 5:12 Do not accustom your mouth to swearing, 9
nor get into the habit of naming the Holy One; *(10)*
for just as a slave who is constantly overseen 10 *11*
will never be without bruises,[b]
so too the man who is continually swearing oaths and uttering the name
will not be exempt from sin.
A man forever swearing is full of iniquity, 11 *12*
and the scourge will not depart from his house.
If he offends,[c] his sin will be on him, *13*
if he swears lightly, he sins twice over;
if he swears a false oath, he will not be treated as innocent, *14*
for his house will be filled with calamities.

Foul talk[d]

There is a manner of talking that is fraught with death; 12 *15*
let it not be found in the inheritance of Jacob,
for devout men will keep all that far from them, *16*
they will not wallow in sin.
Do not habituate your mouth to coarseness and foul language, 13 *17*
for this means sinful talk.
Remember your father and mother 14 *18*
when you are sitting among princes,
in case you forget yourself in their presence,[e] *19*
and behave like a fool,
and then wish you had not been born,
and curse the day of your birth.
A man in the habit of using improper words 15 *20*
will never break himself of it however long he lives.

Incest and adultery

Two kinds of men multiply sins,[f] 16 *21*

and a third draws down wrath:
17/22 there is a desire that, blazing like a furnace,
cannot be quenched until it is slaked;
23 there is the man who lusts for his own flesh:
he will not give up until the fire consumes him;
24 to a fornicator all food is sweet,
and he will not weary of it until he dies.
18/25 The man who sins against his own marriage bed,
and says to himself, 'Who can see me?
26 There is darkness all round me, the walls hide me,
nobody sees me; why should I worry?
The Most High will not call my sins to mind':
27 what he fears is the eyes of men,
19/28 he does not realise that the eyes of the Lord — Pr 15:3,11; 17:3; 24:12
are ten thousand times brighter than the sun,
observing every aspect of human behaviour,
seeing into the most secret corners.
20/29 All things were known to him before they were created,[g] — Pr 8:22f
and are still, now that they are finished.[h]
21/30 This man will be punished in view of the whole town,
and will be seized where he least expects it.

The adulteress — Pr 2:16; 5:2-20; 6:24-35; 7:5

22/32 Similarly the woman who deserts her husband,
and provides him with an heir by another man:
23/33 first, she has disobeyed the Law of the Most High;
secondly, she has been false to her husband;
and thirdly, she has gone whoring in adultery
and conceived children by another man.
24/34 She will be led before the assembly,
an enquiry will be held about her children.
25/35 Her children will strike no root, — 40:15; Ws 4:3
her branches will bear no fruit.
26/36 She will leave an accursed memory behind her,
her shame will never be wiped out.
27/37 And those who survive her will recognise
that nothing is better than fearing the Lord,
and nothing sweeter than adherence to the Lord's commandments.[i]

Discourse of Wisdom[a] — Pr 1:20-33; 8:1-36; 9:1-6; Jb 28; Ba 3:9f

1 **24** Wisdom speaks her own praises,
in the midst of her people she glories in herself.
2 She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High,
she glories in herself in the presence of the Mighty One;

23 a. 'ensnared' some MSS; 'abandoned to' Text. Rec.
b. Translation uncertain.
c. By not fulfilling his oath. The author envisages three cases in order of increasing gravity: a sincere oath unfulfilled, an oath lightly sworn, an insincere oath.
d. The context shows that the reference is to impurity in speech, but the text itself is vague and the precise sin uncertain.
e. 'when' following Syr. 'you forget yourself' following Syr.; '(God) forgets you' Lat.;'you forget (it)' Greek.
f. Numerical proverb, cf. Pr 30:15+, but obscure as it stands.
g. This knowledge of God, antecedent to creation, is divine wisdom itself, Pr 8:22+.
h. After creation God continues to watch over the world.
i. Add. v. 28 'To follow God is a great honour and to be acceptable to him is to lengthen one's days'.
24 a. Subtitle in Greek 'Eulogy of Wisdom'. This is the pivotal chapter of the book, summing up the whole doctrine of wisdom; there are frequent echoes of earlier biblical literature but there is also a development. Even more than in Pr, cf. Pr 8:22+, wisdom is shown as being in union with God and yet distinct from him, which characteristics will later be applied to the person of the Word, as also to the person of the Spirit. Cf. Ws 7:22+. The liturgy applies this passage, by 'accommodation', to the Blessed Virgin.

Ws 7:25 'I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, 3
Gn 1:2 and I covered the earth like mist.[b] 5
6
Ba 3:29 I had my tent in the heights, 4
Ex 13:21-22 and my throne in a pillar of cloud.[c] 7
Jb 22:14 Alone I encircled the vault of the sky, 5
Pr 8:27 and I walked on the bottom of the deeps.[d] 8
Over the waves of the sea and over the whole earth, 6
and over every people and nation I have held sway.[e] 9
10
Among all these I searched for rest, 7
and looked to see in whose territory I might pitch camp. 11
Ps 132:8 Then the creator of all things instructed me, 8
Ba 3:37 and he who created me fixed a place for my tent. 12
He said, "Pitch your tent in Jacob, 13
make Israel your inheritance".
Pr 8:23 From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, 9
and for eternity I shall remain. 14
Ba 3:37 I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle,[f] 10
and thus was I established on Zion. 15
In the beloved city he has given me rest, 11
and in Jerusalem I wield my authority.
I have taken root in a privileged people, 12
in the Lord's property, in his inheritance. 16
I have grown tall as a cedar on Lebanon, 13
as a cypress on Mount Hermon; 17
I have grown tall as a palm in Engedi,[g] 14
as the rose bushes of Jericho; 18
as a fine olive in the plain, 19
as a plane tree I have grown tall.
I have exhaled a perfume like cinnamon and acacia, 15
I have breathed out a scent like choice myrrh, 20
like galbanum, onycha and stacte, 21
Ex 30:7f,34f like the smoke of incense in the tabernacle.[h]
I have spread my branches like a terebinth, 16
and my branches are glorious and graceful. 22
I am like a vine putting out graceful shoots, 17
my blossoms bear the fruit of glory and wealth.[i] 23
15:3 Approach me, you who desire me, 19
Pr 9:5 and take your fill of my fruits, 26
Is 55:2
Mt 11:28 for memories of me are sweeter than honey, 20
Jn 6:35 inheriting me is sweeter than the honeycomb. 27
Ps 19:10 They who eat me will hunger for more, 28
Mt 5:6 they who drink me will thirst for more. 21
Jn 4:13-14 Whoever listens to me will never have to blush, 29
whoever acts as I dictate will never sin.' 22
30

Wisdom and the Law[j]

Ex 19:1+ All this is no other than the book of the covenant of the 23
Ba 4:1 Most High God, 32
Dt 33:4 the Law that Moses enjoined on us, 33
an inheritance for the communities of Jacob.[k]
Gn 2:11 That is what makes wisdom brim like the Pishon,[l] 25
like the Tigris in the season of fruit, 35
what makes understanding brim over like the Euphrates, 26
Jos 3:15 like the Jordan at harvest time; 36
and makes discipline flow like the Nile,[m] 27
Gn 2:13 like the Gihon at the time of vintage. 37

28/38 The first man never managed to grasp her entirely, Jr 2:8
nor has the most recent one fully comprehended her;
29/39 for her thoughts are wider than the sea,
and her designs more profound than the abyss.
30/40 And I,[n] like a conduit from a river, Is 58:11 Jn 4:14
41 like a watercourse running into a garden,
31/42 I said, 'I am going to water my orchard,
I intend to irrigate my flower beds'.
43 And see, my conduit has grown into a river, Ezk 47:1-12
and my river has grown into a sea. Is 11:9 Jn 7:38
32/44 Now I shall make discipline shine out,
I shall send its light far and wide.
33/46 I shall pour out teaching like prophecy,
as a legacy to all future generations.
34/47 Observe that I have not toiled for myself alone,
but for all who are seeking wisdom.

Proverbs

1 25 There are three things my soul delights in,
and which are delightful to God and to men:[a]
2 concord between brothers, friendship between neighbours,
and a wife and husband who live happily together.

2/3 There are three sorts of people my soul hates,
and whose existence I consider an outrage:
4 a poor man swollen with pride, a rich man who is a liar
and an adulterous old man who has no sense.

Old men

3/5 If you have gathered nothing in your youth,
how can you find anything in your old age?
4/6 How fine a thing: sound judgement with grey hairs, Jb 32:7 Pr 16:28
and for greybeards to know how to advise!
5/7 How fine a thing: wisdom in the aged, Ws 4:8-9
and considered advice coming from men of distinction!
6/8 The crown of old men is ripe experience,
their true glory, the fear of the Lord.

Numerical proverbs

7/9 There are nine things I can think of which strike me as happy,
and a tenth which is now on my tongue:

b. Wisdom is identified with the spirit of God hovering over the waters, Gn 1:2.

c. The pillar of cloud in the desert, which in the oldest texts manifested the presence of God.

d. Wisdom was present at every act of the creation.

e. 'I have held sway' one Greek MS, Syr., Lat.; 'I have obtained possession' Text. Rec.

f. For Ben Sira the Temple worship in Jerusalem is one more achievement of Wisdom, either because it expresses the divine perfection in the same way as the order of the universe does, or else because this worship is laid down in detail in the Law which itself, 24:23f, is Wisdom.

g 'Engedi' var.; 'on the shores' Text. Rec.

h. Wisdom plays her part in public worship, 24:10+; hence of all the notable perfumes mentioned, she is lastly compared to the incense of the liturgy.

i. Add. v. 18 'I am the mother of pure love, of fear, of knowledge, and of holy hope; I am bestowed on all my children, from all eternity on those appointed by him'. In place of the last phrase the Latin reads 'In me is all grace of way and of truth, in me all hope of life and of strength', a Christian gloss alluding to Jn 14:6 and based on the identification of Wisdom with Christ.

j. Wisdom's discourse finishes at this point. The author now develops his thesis on the identity of Wisdom with the Law.

k. Add. v. 24 'Do not cease to be strong in the Lord, cling to him that he may strengthen you. The Lord Almighty alone is God and there is no saviour other than he.'

l. Throughout, the author is thinking of the earthly Paradise and its four rivers, Gn 2:10f, symbolic of fertility.

m. 'flow like the Nile' corr., cf. Syr.; 'shine like a light' Greek.

n. The sage whose wisdom is derived from divine wisdom.

25 a. Following Syr. and Lat.; Greek 'In three things I was pre-eminent, and pre-eminent I remained before God'—making this a discourse delivered by Wisdom.

a man whose joy is in his children, 10
he who lives to see the downfall of his enemies;
happy the man who keeps house with a sensible wife; 8 11
he who does not toil with ox and donkey;[b]
14:1 he who has never sinned with his tongue;
he who does not serve a man less worthy than himself;
happy the man who has acquired good sense[c] 9 12
and can find attentive ears for what he has to say;
how great the man is who has acquired wisdom; 10 13
but no one excels the man who fears the Lord.
The fear of the Lord surpasses everything; 11 14
what can compare with a man who has mastered that?[d] 15

Women

Any wound rather than a wound of the heart! 13 17
Any spite rather than the spite of woman!
Any evil rather than an evil caused by an enemy! 14 18
Any vengeance rather than the vengeance of a foe! 19
There is no poison[e] worse than the poison of a snake, 15 22
there is no fury worse than the fury of an enemy. 23
Pr 21:9,19; 25:24; 27; 15 I would sooner keep house with a lion or a dragon 16
than keep house with a spiteful wife.

A woman's spite changes her appearance 17 24
and makes her face as grim as any bear's.[f]
When her husband goes out to dinner with his neighbours, 18 25
he cannot help[g] heaving bitter sighs.

No wickedness comes anywhere near the wickedness of a woman, 19 26
may a sinner's lot be hers!

As climbing up a sandhill is for elderly feet 20 27
such is a garrulous wife for a quiet husband.
Do not be taken in by a woman's beauty, 21 28
never lose your head over a woman.

Bad temper, insolence and shame hold sway 22 29
where the wife supports the husband.
Low spirits, gloomy face, stricken heart: 23 31
such the achievements of a spiteful wife.
Slack hands and sagging knees 32
indicate a wife who makes her husband wretched.

Gn 3:1-6 Rm 5:12 1 Co 15:22 1 Tm 2:14 Sin began with a woman, 24 33
and thanks to her we all must die.[h]

Do not let water find a leak, 25 34
do not allow a spiteful woman free rein for her tongue.[i]
If she will not do as you tell her,[j] 26 35
get rid of her.[k] 36
Pr 31:10f Pr 12:4 26 Happy the husband of a really good wife; 1
the number of his days will be doubled.
A perfect wife is the joy of her husband, 2
he will live out the years of his life in peace.
A good wife is the best of portions, 3
reserved for those who fear the Lord;
rich or poor, they will be glad of heart, 4
cheerful of face, whatever the season.

There are three things my heart dreads,
and a fourth which terrifies me:[a]
slander by a whole town, the gathering of a mob,
and a false accusation—these are all worse than death;
but a woman jealous of a woman means heartbreak and sorrow,
and all this is the scourge of the tongue.[b]

A bad wife is a badly fitting ox yoke,[c]
trying to master her is like grasping a scorpion.
A drunken wife will goad anyone to fury,
she makes no effort to hide her degradation.

A woman's wantonness shows in her bold look, Pr 6:25
and can be recognised by her sidelong glances.
Keep a headstrong daughter under firm control,
or she will abuse any indulgence she receives.
Keep a strict watch on her shameless eye,
do not be surprised if she disgraces you.
Like a thirsty traveller she will open her mouth
and drink any water she comes across;
she will sit in front of every peg,
and open her quiver to any arrow.

The grace of a wife will charm her husband,
her accomplishments will make him the stronger.[d]
A silent wife is a gift from the Lord,
no price can be put on a well-trained character.
A modest wife is a boon twice over,
a chaste character cannot be weighed on scales.
Like the sun rising over the mountains of the Lord
is the beauty of a good wife in a well-kept house.
Like the lamp shining on the sacred lamp-stand[e]
is a beautiful face on a well-proportioned body.
Like golden pillars on a silver base Ps 144:12
are shapely legs on firm-set heels.[f]

b. Either in the literal, cf. Lv 19:19; Dt 22:10, or, preferably, in the metaphorical sense (cf. 2 Co 6:14) of an ill-assorted couple. This line has been restored following Syr. (and Hebr.?); it is absent from Greek.

c. 'good sense'; Vulg. 'a friend'.

d. Add. v. 12 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of loving him but it is by faith that a man begins to cling to him'.

e. 'poison' corr.; 'head' Greek.

f. 'bear'; var. 'sack'. Hebr. 'changes the appearance of her husband and makes him look like a bear'.

g. Lit. 'in spite of himself' one MS; 'as he listens' Text. Rec.

h. Alluding to the first sin. St Paul also recalls the guilt of Eve, 2 Co 11:3; 1 Tm 2:14, but cf. Rm 5:12.

i. Lit. 'freedom to speak', several MSS; others omit 'to speak'.

j. Lit. 'if she will not walk according to your hand'.

k. Lit. 'separate her from your flesh', cf. Gn 2:24; Ep 5:31. The Mosaic Law, Dt 24:1-4, allowed divorce, cf. Mt 19:3-9p.

26 a. 'terrifies me'; var. 'is for me a subject of prayer'.

b. Following Syr.; 'and the scourge of the tongue that falls on all alike' Greek.

c. Which rubs and slips back and forth on the creature's neck, causing galls and pain.

d. Lit. 'fatten his bones'.

e. Probably alluding to the seven-branched lamp-stand, 1 M 4:49,50.

f. Following some MSS and Lat. Add. vv. 19-27:

19 My son, preserve the bloom of your youth
and do not waste your strength on strangers. (cf. Pr 5: 9-10).

20 Search the whole plain for a fertile field,
sow your own seed there, trusting in your own good stock.

21 Thus your offspring will survive,
they will grow great, confident of their breeding.

22 A woman for hire is not worth spitting at,
but a lawful wife is as strong as a tower.

23 A godless wife is assigned to a transgressor as his fortune,
but a devout wife given to the man who fears the Lord.

24 A shameless wife takes pleasure in disgracing herself,
a modest wife is diffident even with her husband.

25 A headstrong wife is no more respected than a dog,
but one with a sense of shame fears the Lord.

26 A wife who respects her husband will be acknowledged wise by all,
but one who proudly despises him will be known by all as wicked.

Happy the husband of a good wife,
for the number of his days will be doubled (= 26:1).

27 A loud-mouthed, gossiping wife is like a trumpet sounding the charge,
and any man saddled with one spends his life in the turmoil of war.

Depressing things

There are two things which grieve my heart 28 25
and a third arouses my anger:
a warrior wasting away through poverty, 26
intelligent men treated with contempt,
a man turning back from virtue to sin— 27
the Lord marks this man out for a violent death.

Commerce

It is difficult for a merchant to avoid doing wrong 29 28
and for a salesman not to incur sin.

27 Many have sinned for the sake of profit,[a] 1
he who hopes to be rich must be ruthless.[b]
A peg will stick in the joint between two stones, 2
and sin will wedge itself[c] between selling and buying.
If a man does not hold earnestly to the fear of the Lord, 3 4
his House will soon be overthrown.

Speech

In a shaken sieve the rubbish is left behind, 4 5
so too the defects of a man appear in his talk.
The kiln tests the work of the potter, 5 6
the test of a man is in his conversation.
Mt 7:16 The orchard where the tree grows is judged on the quality of its fruit, 6 7
similarly a man's words betray what he feels.[d]
Do not praise a man before he has spoken, 7 8
since this is the test of men.

Virtue

If you pursue justice you will achieve it 8 9
and put it on like a festal gown.
Birds consort with their kind, 9 10
justice comes home to those who practise it.[e]
The lion lies in wait for its prey, 10 11
so does sin for those who do wrong.

The devout man's conversation is wisdom at all times,[f] 11 12
but the fool is as changeable as the moon.

Among stupid people look for your opportunity to leave,[g] 12 13
but among thoughtful men take your time.

The conversation of fools is disgusting, 13 14
Qo 7:3-6 raucous their laughter at their sinful orgies.

The talk of hard-swearing men makes your hair stand on end, 14 15
their brawls make you stop your ears.

A quarrel between proud men leads to bloodshed, 15 16
their abuse is painful to hear.

Secrets

22:22+ A betrayer of secrets forfeits all esteem 16 17
and will never find the kind of friend he wants.
Be fond of a friend and keep faith with him, 17 18
but if you have betrayed his secrets, do not pursue him any more; 19
for as a man destroys his enemy, 18 20
so you have destroyed the friendship of your neighbour,

19 21 and as you let a bird slip through your fingers,
so you have let your friend go, and will not catch him.
20 22 Do not go after him—he is far away,
he has fled like a gazelle from the snare.
21 23 For a wound can be bandaged and abuse forgiven,
24 but for the man who has betrayed a secret there is no hope.

Hypocrisy

22 25 The man with a sly wink is plotting mischief, Ps 35:19 Pr 6:13; 10:10
no one can dissuade him from it.
23 26 Honey-tongued to your face, Pr 26:25
he is lost in admiration at your words;
but behind your back he has other things to say,
and makes your own words sound offensive.
24 27 I have found many things to hate, but nothing to equal this man,
and the Lord hates him too.

25 28 The man who throws a stone in the air, throws it on to his own head;
a treacherous blow cuts both ways.[h]
26 29 The man who digs a pit falls into it, Ps 7:16; 9:16 Pr 26:27 Qo 10:8
he who sets a snare will be caught by it.
27 30 On the man who does evil, evil will recoil,
though where it came from he will not know.

28 31 Sarcasm and abuse are the mark of an arrogant man,
but vengeance lies in wait like a lion for him.
29 32 The trap will close on all who rejoice in the downfall of the devout,
and pain will eat them up before they die.[i]

Resentment

30 33 Resentment and anger, these are foul things too,
and both are found with the sinner.
1 **28** He who exacts vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord,
who keeps strict account of sin.
2 Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you, Mt 5:23-24; 6:12b,14-15
and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.
3 If a man nurses anger against another,
can he then demand compassion from the Lord?
4 Showing no pity for a man like himself, Mt 18:23-35
can he then plead for his own sins?
5 Mere creature of flesh, he cherishes resentment;
who will forgive him his sins?
6 Remember the last things, and stop hating, 7:36; 38:20
7 remember dissolution and death, and live by the commandments.
7 8 Remember the commandments, and do not bear your neighbour ill-will; Lv 19:17-18
9 remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook the offence. Ex 23:4-5

Quarrels

8 10 Avoid quarrelling and you will sin less; Pr 15:18
11 for a hot-tempered man provokes quarrels,

27 a. 'for the sake of profit'; var. 'for a trifle'.
b. Lit. 'averts his eyes', cf. Pr 28:27.
c. 'wedge itself' corr.; 'is crushed' Greek.
d. Text corr.
e. 'justice' corr.; 'truth' Greek, cf. 4:28. 'Justice' here means both the doing and the reward of good.
f. Vulg. 'The holy and wise man is as fixed as the sun'.
g. Translation uncertain.
h. Lit. 'and a treacherous blow distributes wounds'.
i. Temporal retribution as maintained by the traditional view. Cf. Jb 21:20-21.

a sinner sows trouble between friends, 9
introducing discord among men at peace.
Pr 26:20-21 The way a fire burns depends on its fuel, 10 12
a quarrel spreads in proportion to its violence;
a man's rage depends on his strength,
his fury grows fiercer in proportion to his wealth.
A sudden quarrel kindles fire, 11 13
a hasty dispute leads to bloodshed.
Blow on a spark and up it flares, 12 14
spit on it and out it goes;
both are the effects of your mouth.

↗Jm 3:1-12 **The tongue**

A curse on the scandal-monger and the deceitful, 13 15
Pr 16:28 he has ruined many who lived in concord.
That third tongue has shaken many,[a] 14 16
and driven them from nation to nation;
it has pulled down fortified cities, 17
and overturned the houses of princes.
The third tongue has driven virtuous wives out of house and home, 15 19
and deprived them of the due reward for their hard work.
Anyone who listens to it will never know peace of mind. 16 20
will never live in peace again.
A stroke of the whip raises a weal, 17 21
Pr 25:15 but a stroke of the tongue breaks bones.
Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, 18 22
but many more have fallen by the tongue.
Ps 31:20 Happy the man who has been sheltered from it, 19 23
and has not experienced its fury,
who has not dragged its yoke about,
or been bound in its chains;
for its yoke is an iron yoke, 20 24
its chains are bronze chains;
the death it inflicts is a miserable death, 21 25
Sheol is preferable to it.
Jm 3:6 It cannot gain a hold over the devout, 22 26
they are not burnt by its flames.
Those who desert the Lord will fall into it, 23 27
it will flare up inextinguishably among them,
it will be let loose against them like a lion,
it will tear them like a leopard.
Look, fence your property round with a quickthorn hedge, 24 28
lock away your silver and gold;
then make scales and weights for your words, 25 29
22:27 and put a door with bolts across your mouth.
Pr 13:3 Take care you take no false step through it, 26 30
in case you fall a prey to him who lies in wait.

Loans[a]

29 Making your neighbour a loan is an act of mercy,[b] 1
to lend him a helping hand is to keep the commandments.
Lend to your neighbour in his time of need, 2
and in your turn repay your neighbour on time.
Be as good as your word and keep faith with him, 3
and you will find your needs met every time.
8:12 Many treat a loan as a windfall,[c] 4

and embarrass those who have come to their rescue.
5 Until he gets something, a man will kiss his neighbour's hand,
and refer to his wealth in respectful tones;
6 but when the loan falls due, he puts this off,
he repays with offhand words,
and pleads the inconvenience of the time.
6 7 Even if he can be made to pay, his creditor will barely recover half,
and consider even that a windfall.
8 But otherwise he will be cheated of his money,
and undeservedly[d] gain himself an enemy;
9 the man will pay him back in curses and recriminations,
and instead of respect will have contempt for him.
7 10 Many, not out of malice,[e] refuse to lend;
they are merely anxious not to be cheated for nothing.

Generosity

3:30-4:10;7:32-36 Tb 12:8-9 Mt 6:19-21; 19:21

8 11 Nevertheless, be patient with those who are badly-off,
do not keep them waiting on your generosity.
9 12 For the commandment's sake go to the poor man's help, Dt 15:11
do not turn him away empty-handed in his need.
10 13 Better let your silver go on brother or friend,
do not let it go to waste, rusting under a stone. Jm 5:3
11 14 Invest your treasure as the Most High orders, Mt 6:19-21 Jm 5:3
and you will find it more profitable than gold.
12 15 Deposit generosity in your storerooms Tb 4:9-11 Mt 6:19-20 Lk 16:9
and it will release you from every misfortune.
13 16 Better than sturdy shield or weighty spear,
17 it will fight for you against the enemy.

Securities

8:13 Pr 6:1+

14 18 A good man will go surety for his neighbour;
a man has lost all shame if he fails him.
15 19 Do not forget the favour your guarantor has done you;
he has given his life for you.
16 21 A sinner is careless of his guarantor's prosperity,
an ungrateful man forgets the one who saved him.
17 23 Going surety has ruined many prosperous men
and rocked them like a wave of the sea.
18 24 It has driven powerful men from home
to wander among foreign nations.
19 25 The sinner who involves himself with guarantees,
in pursuit of a deal, will find himself involved in lawsuits.
20 26 Come to your neighbour's help as far as you can,
but take care not to fall into the same plight.

Home and hospitality

21 27 The first thing in life is water, and bread, and clothing,
and a house for the sake of privacy.
22 28 Better a poor man's life under a roof of planks,
than lavish fare in the house of another.

28 a. Either the third tongue that interferes in a quarrel, or the tongue that makes three victims: the slanderer himself, the listener, the person slandered (thus the Talmud).

29 a. Lending (without interest) to Israelites is enjoined in the Law, Ex 22:24; Lv 25:35-36; Dt 15:7-11, cf. Mt 5:42; Ps 37:21,26.

b. Following Syr.; Greek 'He who shows mercy will make loans to his neighbour'.

c. Lit. 'as something found'.

d. 'undeservedly' Greek MSS, Syr., Lat.; 'needlessly' Text. Rec.

e. 'not out of malice' Greek MSS, Syr., Lat.; 'because of the wickedness (of those who borrow)' Text. Rec.

Whether you have little or much, be content with it, 23/29
and you will not be dubbed an intruder.[f]
Pr 27:8 It is a miserable life, going from house to house; 24/30
wherever you stay, not daring to open your mouth;
you are a stranger, you know the taste of humiliation,[g] 25/31
not to mention the sound of embittering words,
'Come along, stranger, lay the table, 26/32
if you have anything with you, give it to me to eat'.
'Go away, stranger, make room for someone important; 27/33
my brother is coming to stay, I need the house.'
It is hard for a cultured man 28/34
to hear himself begrudged hospitality
and treated like an undischarged debtor.[h]

Pr 13:24; 23: 13,14; 29:15 7:23; 42:5 **Bringing up children**

30 A man who loves his son will beat him frequently 1
so that in after years the son may be his comfort.

A man who is strict with his son will reap the benefit, 2
and be able to boast of him to his acquaintances.

A man who educates his son will be the envy of his enemy, 3
and will be proud of him among his friends.

Tb 9:6 Even when the father dies, he might well not be dead, 4
since he leaves his likeness behind him.
In life he has had the joy of his company, 5
dying, he has no anxieties.
He leaves an avenger against his enemies, 6
and a rewarder of favours for his friends.

A man who coddles his son will bandage his wounds, 7
his heart will turn over at every shout.
A horse badly broken-in turns out stubborn, 8
an uncontrolled son turns out headstrong.
Pamper your child, and he will give you a fright, 9
play with him, and he will bring you sorrow.

Do not share his laughter, if you do not wish to share his sorrow 10
and to end by grinding your teeth.
Allow him no independence in childhood, 11
and do not wink at his mistakes.
Bend his neck in youth, 12
bruise his ribs while he is a child,
or else he will grow stubborn and disobedient,
and hurt you very deeply.
Be strict with your son, and persevere with him, 13
or you will rue his insolence.

Health

Better a poor man healthy and fit 14
than a rich man tormented in body.
Health and strength are better than any gold, 15
a robust body than untold wealth.[a]
No riches can outweigh bodily health, 16
no enjoyment surpass a cheerful heart.
Jb 7:3 Better death than a wretched life, 17
and everlasting rest than chronic illness.

18 Good things lavished on a closed mouth
are like food offerings put on a grave.[b]
19 What use is an offering to an idol Dt 4:28 Ps 115:4-7 Is 40:20+
which can neither eat nor smell?
20 How describe a man pursued by the Lord's displeasure?[c]
20 21 He looks and sighs 20:4
as a eunuch embracing a virgin sighs.

Happiness

21 22 Do not abandon yourself to sorrow,
do not torment yourself with brooding.
22 23 Gladness of heart is life to a man,
joy is what gives him length of days.
23 24 Beguile your cares,[d] console your heart,
chase sorrow far away;
25 for sorrow has been the ruin of many,
and is no use to anybody.
24 26 Jealousy and anger shorten your days,
and worry brings premature old age.[e]
25 27 A genial heart makes a good trencherman,[f] Pr 15:15
one who benefits from[g] his food.

Riches

1 31 The sleeplessness brought by wealth makes a man lose weight,
the worry it causes drives away sleep.
2 The worries of the daytime interfere with slumber,[a]
as a serious illness drives away sleep.
3 The rich man toils, piling up money,
and when he leaves off, he stuffs himself with luxuries;
4 the poor man toils, his livelihood dwindling,
and when he leaves off, is destitute.

5 The man who loves gold will not be reckoned virtuous, Jb 31:24 Pr 28:20
the man who chases after profit will be caught out by it.[b]
6 Many have gone to their ruin for the sake of gold,
though their destruction stared them in the face;[c]
7 it is a snare[d] for those who sacrifice to it,
and every fool will be caught in it.
8 Happy the rich man who is found to be blameless
and does not go chasing after gold.[e]

9 Who is he, for us to congratulate him,
since he has achieved wonders among his kind?
10 Who has been through this test and emerged perfect?
He may well be proud of that!

f. Text corr. following Lat.
g. Text corr. following Syr.; 'you are a stranger, you provide drink without being thanked' Greek.
h. Text corr., cf. v. 23b; 'the reproach of the household, the insult of the debtor' Greek.

30 a. Hebr. 'and a happy spirit than pearls'.

b. 'on a grave'; Hebr. 'in front of an idol'.
c. I.e. the sick man who can take no food, cf. Hebr. 'Thus it is with the man who has a fortune and cannot enjoy it'.
d. Lit. 'Beguile your soul'; var. 'Delight your soul'.
e. All the Greek MSS put 33:16–36:10 before 30:25–33:16. The Syr. and Lat. versions preserve the original order which is also attested by the Hebr. fragments.
f. Hebr. 'The sleep of the heart serves as its food'.
g. 'benefits from' following Hebr.; 'gives heed to' Greek.

31 a. 'The worries of the daytime' Hebr. 'interfere with slumber'; var. 'invite slumber'.
b. Corr. following Hebr.; 'the man who chases after corruption will be filled with it' Greek.
c. Hebr. 'They put their hopes in pearls'.
d. Lit. 'a stumbling block'. The author is possibly thinking of wealth as an idol to which 'sacrifice' is offered. 'sacrifice to it': var. 'are obsessed with it'; Hebr. 'it is a snare for the fool'.
e. In Hebr. 'riches', *mammon*, a word of Aramaic origin often used in rabbinical literature, and cf. Mt 6: 24; Lk 16:9,11,13.

Who has had the power to sin and has not sinned,
to wrong another and not done it?[f]
His fortune will be firmly based 11
and the assembly[g] will acclaim his generosity.

Pr 23:1-3,6-8 **Dinner parties**

Have you sat down at a lavish table? 12
Do not gape at it,
do not say, 'What a feast!' 13
Remember how bad it is to have a greedy eye; 13 14
is anything in creation greedier than the eye? 15
That is why it waters on every occasion.[h]
Do not reach out for anything your host has his eye on, 14 16
do not jostle him at the dish. 17
Judge your fellow guest's needs by your own, 15 18
be thoughtful in every way.[i]
Eat what is offered you like a well brought-up person,[j] 16 19
do not wolf your food or you will earn dislike.
For politeness' sake be the first to stop; 17 20
do not act the glutton, or you will give offence,
and if you are sitting with a large party, 18 21
do not help yourself before the others do.
A little is quite enough for a well-bred person; 19 22
his breathing is easy when he gets to bed.
A moderate diet ensures sound sleep, 20 24
a man gets up early, in the best of spirits.
Sleeplessness, biliousness and gripe 23
are what the glutton has to endure.
If you are forced to eat too much, 21 25
get up, go and be sick,[k] and you will feel better.
Listen to me my son, do not disregard me, 22 26
eventually you will see the force of my words.
Be moderate[l] in all your activities 27
and illness will never overtake you.

People praise the man who keeps a splendid table, 23 28
and their opinion of his munificence is sound;
similarly, the man who keeps a mean table will be notorious 24 29
throughout the town,
and their opinion of his meanness is not doubtful either.

Pr 20:1; 23:20-21,29-35 **Wine**

Do not play the valiant at your wine, 25 30
Pr 31:4-7 for wine has been the undoing of many.
Is 5:22; 28:1-4 The furnace proves the temper of steel, 26 31
and wine proves hearts in the drinking bouts of braggarts.
Wine is life for man 27 32
if drunk in moderation.
What is life worth without wine? 33
Ps 104:15 It was created to make men happy. 35
Drunk at the right time and in the right amount, 28 36
Jg 9:13 wine makes for a glad heart and a cheerful mind. 37
1 Tm 5:23 Bitterness of soul comes of wine drunk to excess[m] 29 39
out of temper or bravado.[n]
Drunkenness excites the stupid man to a fury to his own harm, 30 40
it reduces his strength while leading to blows.

31/41 Do not rebuke your neighbour at a wine feast,
do not slight him when he is enjoying himself,
42 do not speak reproachfully to him,
or annoy him by reclaiming money owing.

Banquets

1 32 Have they made you president?[a] Do not let it go to your head,
behave like everyone else in the party,
see that they are happy and then sit down yourself.
2 Having discharged your duties, take your place
and enjoy yourself with the others,
3 and receive the crown for your competence.[b]

3/4 Speak, old men, it is proper that you should;
5 but know what you are talking about, and do not interrupt
the music.[c]
4/6 If entertainment is provided, do not keep up a running commentary,
and do not play the sage at the wrong moment.
5/7 A carbuncle seal on a precious stone,
such is a concert of music at a wine feast.
6/8 An emerald seal in a golden setting,
such are strains of music with a vintage wine.

7/9,10 Speak, young men, if you have to;
11 but twice at most, and then only if questioned.
8/12 Keep to the point, say much in few words;
give the impression of knowing but not wanting to speak.
9/13 Among eminent men do not behave as though you were their equal;
do not make frivolous remarks when someone else is speaking.[d]
10/14 Lightning comes before the thunder, Pr 15:33; 18:12
favour goes ahead of a modest man.
11/15 Rise in good time to take your leave, do not bring up the rear;
hurry home without loitering.
12/16 There amuse yourself, and do what you have a mind to,
but do not sin by arrogant talk.[e]
13/17 And for all this bless him who made you
and plies you with his good things.

The fear of God[f]

14/18 The man who fears the Lord will accept his correction;
those who eagerly look for him will win his favour.
15/19 The man who seeks the Law will be nourished by it,[g]
the hypocrite will find it a stumbling-block.
16/20 Those who fear the Lord will have justice done them,
and make their good deeds shine like a light.[h]

f. 'may well be proud of that'; lit. 'glory'. Lat. 'everlasting glory'. 'another' Hebr. and Syr.
g. Here, no doubt, the synagogue. Lat. 'The whole assembly of the saints'.
h. 'on every occasion' corr. following Hebr.; 'on every face' Greek. Hebr. for 13b, c 'God has created nothing worse than the eye, that is why it is always on the move'.
i. Hebr. 'and think of what you yourself dislike'.
j. 'well brought up' following Hebr.
k. 'go and be sick' Hebr. and Greek MSS; 'in the middle of the meal (?)' Text. Rec.
l. 'moderate' Hebr.; 'industrious' Greek.
m. Hebr. 'Headaches, wormwood and shame'.
n. 'bravado' following Hebr. (?)

32 a. I.e. organiser of the feast, cf. 2 M 2:27; Jn 2:8.
b. On festal crowns, cf. Is 28:1-4; Ws 2:8.
c. Term for music, singing or any artistic performance: recited poetry, dramatic interlude.
d. 'when someone else is speaking'; Lat. (and Hebr.?) 'where there are old men'.
e. Hebr. 'in the fear of God and in poverty'.
f. The beginning of a section in which various themes already touched on are resumed, though in no logical order.
g. 'be nourished by it'; Hebr. 'find it'.
h. 'will have justice done them...light'; Hebr. 'understand justice and bring their thoughts out of darkness'.

The sinner waves reproof aside, 17/21
he finds excuses to do what he wants.[i]
A sensible man never scorns a suggestion;[j] 18/22
a proud and godless[k] man will be immune to fear.

Never act without reflection, 19/24
and you will have nothing to regret when you have done it.[l]
Do not venture on a rough road, 20/25
for fear of stumbling over the stones.
Do not be over confident on an even road,[m] 21
and beware of your own children.[n] 22/26
Dt 4:9 Pr 13:3; 16: 17; 22:5 Watch yourself[o] in everything you do, 23/27
this is what keeping the commandments means.

The man who trusts in the Law pays attention to the commandments, 24/28
Pr 19:16 the man who has confidence in the Lord will come to no harm.

Jb 5:19 Ps 1:91 Pr 12:21 **33** If a man fears the Lord, evil will not come his way, 1
again and again he will be rescued in his trials.
The man who hates the Law is not wise,[a] 2
if hypocritical in observance, he is like a ship in a storm.
A man of understanding will put his faith in the Law,[b] 3
1 S 14:41+ 1 M 3:48+ for him the Law is as dependable as an oracle.

Prepare what you have to say and you will get a hearing,[c] 4
marshal your information before you answer.
The feelings of a fool are like a cart-wheel, 5
his thought revolves like a turning axle.
A rutting stallion is like a sarcastic[d] friend; 6
he neighs, whoever rides him.

Inequality

Why is one day better than another, 7
when each day's light throughout the year comes from the sun?
They have been differentiated in the mind of the Lord, 8
who has diversified the seasons and feasts;
some he has made more important[e] and hallowed, 9
others he has made ordinary days.
All men come from the ground, 10
Adam himself was formed out of earth;
in the fulness of his wisdom[f] the Lord has made distinctions 11
between them,
and diversified their conditions.
1 S 2:6-8 Lk 1:51-53 Some he has blessed and made more important, 12
some he has hallowed and set near him;
10:14-15 others he has cursed and humiliated
by degrading them from their positions.
Is 29:16+ Rm 9:21 Like clay in the hands of the potter 13
to mould as[g] it pleases him,
so are men in the hands of their Maker
to reward as he judges right.[h]
39:25 Opposite evil stands good, 14
opposite death, life;
42:24-25 Qo 3:1-8 so too, opposite the devout man stands the sinner.[i]
This is the way to view all the works of the Most High; 15
they go, in pairs, by opposites.

Is 24:13 Jr 49:9 I myself have been the last to keep watch, 16
like a gleaner following the vintagers.

17 By the blessing of the Lord I have come in first,
and, like a vintager, filled the winepress.
18 Observe that I have not toiled for myself only,
but for all who seek instruction.

19 Listen to me, you princes of the people, Ws 6:1
leaders of the assembly,[j] lend ear.

Independence

20 Neither to son nor wife, brother nor friend,
give power over yourself during your own lifetime.
And do not give your property to anyone else,
in case you regret it and have to ask for it back.
21 As long as you live and there is breath in your body,
do not yield power over yourself to anyone;
22 since it is better for your children to be your suppliants,
than for you to have to look to the generosity of your sons.
23 In all you do be the master,
and do not spoil the honour that is rightly yours.
24 The day your life draws to a close,
when death is approaching, is the time to distribute your
inheritance.

Slaves[k]

25 Fodder, the stick and burdens for a donkey, Ps 26:3
bread, discipline and work for a slave. 42:5
26 Work your servant hard, and you will know peace of mind;
leave his hands idle,[l] and he will start thinking of his freedom.
27 Yoke and harness will bow the neck,
for a criminal slave there is the rack and torture. 42:5
28 Keep him occupied, or he will idle;[m]
idleness teaches all sorts of mischief.
29 Keep him at his duties, where he should be,
if he is disobedient, clap him in irons. Pr 29:19
30 But do not be over-exacting with anyone,
and do nothing contrary to justice.

31 You have only one slave? Treat him like yourself,
since you have acquired him with blood.[n]
32 You have only one slave? Treat him as a brother, 7:20
since you need him as you need yourself.
33 If you ill-treat him and he runs away,
which way will you go to look for him?

i. 'finds excuses'; Hebr. 'does violence to the law'.
j. Hebr. 'The wise man does not conceal wisdom'.
k. 'godless' following Hebr.; 'stranger' Greek.
l. Or 'and entertain no regrets when you set about doing anything'.
m. Hebr. 'a robber's road (?)'.
n. Hebr. 'look to the future'.
o. 'Watch yourself' following Hebr.; 'do not trust yourself' Greek.

33 a. With Hebr.; 'The wise man does not hate the law' Greek.
b. Hebr. 'understand the word of Yahweh'.
c. 'and you will get a hearing'; Hebr. 'and then act'.
d. 'sarcastic'; Lat. 'adulterous'.
e. 'made more important'; Hebr. and Syr. 'blessed'.
f. 'wisdom' Hebr.; 'knowledge' Greek.
g. 'to mould as' one Greek MS, Lat.; 'all his ways (are) as' Greek.
h. Hebr. 'to settle their fate in his sight'.
i. Hebr. and Syr. add 'so, too, opposite light stands darkness'.

j. The synagogue where devout Jews assembled to be taught.
k. On the strict treatment of slaves, cf. Ex 21:20-21; and Mt 18:34; Lk 12:46. Nevertheless, slaves were not entirely at the mercy of their masters: their rights were laid down in detail by the Law: Ex 21:1-6,26-27; Lv 25:46; Dt 15:12-18, cf. vv. 30, 31-33 of our passage. Cf. the attitude of St Paul, Ep 6:9; Col 4:1; Phm 16.
l. 'you will know peace of mind'; Hebr. 'lest he demand rest'. 'leave his hands idle'; Hebr. 'if he raises his head'.
m. 'he will idle'; Hebr. 'he will rebel'.
n. I.e. you have bought him with your hard-earned money. But the text is uncertain. Hebr. 'do not be jealous of your own blood' (do not ill-treat him).

Dreams[a]

34

Vain and deceptive hopes are for the foolish, 1
and dreams put fools in a flutter.
As well clutch at shadows and chase the wind 2
as put any faith in dreams.
Mirror and[b] dream are similar things: 3
confronting a face, the reflection of that face.[c]
Jb 14:4 What can be cleansed by uncleanness, 4
what can be verified by falsehood?
Qo 5:6 Divinations, auguries and dreams are nonsense, 5
like the delirious fancies of a pregnant woman.[d]
Unless sent as emissaries from the Most High, 6
do not give them a thought;
for dreams have led many astray, 7
and those building their hopes on them have been disappointed.
Fulfilling the Law requires no such falsehood, 8
and wisdom is most perfectly expressed by truthful lips.[e]

Travelling

51:13 A much travelled man knows many things, 9
and a man of great experience will talk sound sense.
Someone who has never had his trials knows little; 10
but the travelled man is master of every situation.
I have seen many things on my travels, 11 12
I have understood more than I can put into words.
I have often been in danger of death, 12 13
but I have been spared, and this is why:
Jdt 16:16 the spirit of those who fear the Lord can survive, 13 14
for their hope is in someone with power to save them. 15
The man who fears the Lord will not be faint-hearted, 14 16
will not be daunted since the Lord is his hope.
Happy the soul of the man who fears the Lord. 15 17
On whom does he rely? Who supports him? 18
15:19 The eyes of the Lord watch over those who love him, 16 19
Ps 33:18; 34: 15; 94:14 he is their powerful protection and their strong support,
their screen from the desert wind, their shelter from the midday sun,
a guard against stumbling, an assurance against a fall. 20
He revives the spirit and brightens the eyes, 17
he gives healing, life and blessing.

35:1+ **Sacrifices**

The sacrifice of an offering unjustly acquired is a mockery; 18 21
the gifts of impious men are unacceptable.
The Most High takes no pleasure in offerings from the godless, 19 23
Am 5:21+ multiplying sacrifices will not gain his pardon for sin.
Offering sacrifice from the property of the poor 20 24
is as bad as slaughtering a son before his father's very eyes.
A meagre diet is the very life of the poor, 21 25
he who withholds it is a man of blood.
A man murders his neighbour if he robs him of his livelihood, 22 26
Lv 19:13 sheds blood if he withholds an employee's wages. 27
Dt 24:14-15 Jr 22:13 If one man builds while another pulls down, 23 28
what else do they gain but trouble?[f]
If one man prays and another calls down a curse, 24 29
whose voice will the master listen to?
Nb 19:11 If a man washes after touching a corpse, and then touches it again, 25 30

what is the good of his washing?
26 31 Just so with a man who fasts for his sins,
and then goes off and commits them again.
Who will listen to his prayers?
What is the good of his self-abasement?

The Law and sacrifices[a]

1 2 3 35 A man multiplies offerings by keeping the Law; — 34:18-26
he offers communion sacrifices by following the commandments. — Lv 3:1+
2 4 By showing gratitude he makes an offering of fine flour, — 38:11 Lv 2:1+
by giving alms he offers a sacrifice of praise. — Lv 7:11
3 5 Withdraw from wickedness and the Lord will be pleased,
withdraw from injustice and you make atonement. — 45:16 Lv 16:1+
4 6 Do not appear empty-handed in the Lord's presence;
7 for all these things are due under the commandment.
5 8 A virtuous man's offering graces the altar,[b]
and its savour rises before the Most High. — Ex 29:18
6 9 A virtuous man's sacrifice is acceptable, — 45:16
its memorial will not be forgotten. — Lv 2:1-3
7 10 Honour the Lord with generosity, — Dt 26:1+
do not stint the first-fruits you bring.
8 11 Add a smiling face to all your gifts, — 2 Co 9:7
and be cheerful as you dedicate your tithes. — Dt 14:22+
9 12 Give to the Most High as he has given to you,
generously as your means can afford; — Dt 12:6; 14:23; 26:12-15
10 13 for the Lord is a good rewarder,
he will reward you seven times over.[c]

The justice of God

11 41 Offer him no bribe, he will not accept it,
15 do not put your faith in an unvirtuous sacrifice;
12 since the Lord is a judge[d] — Dt 10:17 Jb 34:19 Ws 6:7
who is no respecter of personages.
13 16 He shows no respect of personages to the detriment of a poor man, — Pr 24:23+
he listens to the plea of the injured party.
14 17 He does not ignore the orphan's supplication, — Ex 22:21-23 Pr 23:10-11
nor the widow's as she pours out her story.
15 18 Do the widow's tears not run down her cheeks,
as she cries out against the man who caused them?
16 20 The man who with his whole heart serves God[e] will be accepted,
his petitions will carry to the clouds.
17 21 The humble man's prayer pierces the clouds,[f]
until it arrives he is inconsolable,[g] — Jb 16:18+

34 a. In the O.T. God sometimes uses dreams to carry his instructions to man, Gn 28:10-17; 31:10-13,24; 37:5-11; 41:1-36, etc. Cf. Nb 12:6. See also Mt 1:20-23; 2:13,22. But recourse to dreams as an ordinary method of divination is censured by Law and Prophets: Jr 29:8; Qo 5:6; Lv 19:26; Dt 13:2-6; 18:9-14, as also by Ben Sira, though he admits the possibility of dreams of authentically divine origin, v. 6.

b. 'Mirror and' corr.; 'The vision of' Greek and Syr.

c. The dream, like the mirror, only presents an image; or perhaps: the dream reflects only what a man already has in his mind, neither adding anything nor providing any assurance, cf. v. 4.

d. Lit. 'thus the heart of a woman in labour fancies'.

e. Ben Sira contrasts dreams which deceive with the Law and wisdom that do not.

f. This verse is apparently explained by v. 24. The poor man's curse is as effective with the Lord as the rich man's prayer and can neutralise it.

35 a. Ben Sirach is both a firm supporter of liturgical worship and a moralist who insists on the Law's precepts of justice and charity. These two enthusiasms unite at this point: Ben Sira maintains that the observance of the Law is itself a fulfilment of ritual worship.

b. Lit. 'greases the altar'.

c. The Hebr. margin adds 'The man who gives to the poor lends to God; who will repay it but he?' cf. Pr 19:17.

d. 'a judge'; Hebr. 'a God of justice'.

e. Or 'who does a service (for his neighbour)'.

f. Where God dwells, cf. Ps 68:34; 104:3, etc.

g. Lit. 'he is not consoled'; Hebr. 'it does not pause'.

nor will he desist until the Most High takes notice of him, 18
acquits the virtuous and delivers judgement.
And the Lord will not be slow, 19 22
nor will he be dilatory on their behalf,
until he has crushed the loins of the merciless 20
and exacted vengeance on the nations, 23
until he has eliminated the hordes of the arrogant 21
and broken the sceptres of the wicked,[h]
until he has repaid each as his deeds deserve 22 24
and human actions as their intentions merit,
until he has judged the case of his people 23 25
and made them rejoice in his mercy.[i]
Mercy is welcome in time of trouble, 24 26
like rain clouds in time of drought.

Ps 79 **Prayer for the deliverance and restoration of Israel**[a]

Ne 9:32 36 Have mercy on us,[b] Master, Lord of all, and look on us, 1
Ps 79:6 Jr 10:25 cast the fear of yourself over every nation. 2
Raise your hand against the foreign nations 2 3
and let them see your might.
Ezk 28:22; 38:23 As in their sight you have proved yourself holy before us, 3 4
so now in our sight prove yourself great before them.
Dt 32:39 1 K 8:43 1 Ch 17:20 Is 45:14 Let them acknowledge you, just as we have acknowledged 4 5
that there is no God but you, Lord.
Send new portents, do fresh wonders, 5 6
win glory for your hand and your right arm. 7
Ps 79:6 Rouse your fury, pour out your rage, 6 8
destroy the opponent, annihilate the enemy. 9
Hasten the day, remember the oath, 7 10
and let men tell of your mighty deeds.[c]
Let fiery wrath swallow up the survivor, 8 11
and destruction overtake those who use your people badly.
Ne 9:32 Crush the heads of hostile rulers 9 12
who say, 'There is nobody else but us!'
Gather together all the tribes of Jacob, 10 13
restore them their inheritance as in the beginning.[d]
Ex 4:22 Dt 7:6+ Have mercy, Lord, on the people who have invoked your name, 11 14
on Israel whom you have treated as a first-born.
Show compassion on your holy city, 12 15
2 S 5:9+ on Jerusalem the place of your rest.
Fill Zion with songs of your praise, 13 16
and your sanctuary with your glory.[e]
Bear witness to those you created in the beginning,[f] 14 17
and bring about what has been prophesied in your name.
Give those who wait for you their reward, 15 18
and let your prophets be proved worthy of belief.
Grant, Lord, the prayer of your servants,[g] 16
Nb 6:22-27 in accordance with Aaron's blessing on your people, 19
so that all the earth's inhabitants may acknowledge 17
that you are the Lord, the everlasting God.

Discrimination

The stomach takes in all kinds of food 18 20
but some foods are better than others.
As the palate discerns the flavour of game, 19 21
so a shrewd man detects lying words.[h]

20/22 A perverse heart causes sorrow,
an experienced man knows how to pay him back.

Choosing Pr 5:15+

21/23 A woman will accept any husband,
but some daughters are better than others.
22/24 A woman's beauty delights the beholder,
a man likes nothing better.
23/25 If her tongue is kind and gentle, Pr 15:4
her husband has no equal among the sons of men.
24/26 The man who takes a wife has the makings of a fortune,[i]
a helper that suits him,[j] and a pillar to lean on. Gn 2:18
25/27 If a property has no fence, it will be plundered.
When a man has no wife, he is aimless and querulous.[k] Gn 4:12
26/28 Will anyone trust a man carrying weapons[l]
who flits from town to town?
27 So it is with the man who has no nest,
and lodges wherever night overtakes him.

False friends 6:5-17

1 37 Any friend will say, 'I am your friend too', Pr 20:6
but some friends are only friends in name.
2 Is it not a deadly sorrow,
when a comrade or a friend[a] turns enemy?
3 O evil inclination, why were you created,[b] 17:31; 21:11 Gn 3:22; 4:7
to cover the earth with deceit?
4 One sort of comrade takes advantage of his friend's good fortune,[c]
but in time of trouble turns against him.[d]
5 Another sort of comrade shares his friend's hardships out of concern,[e]
when it comes to a fight, he springs to arms.
6 Do not forget the friend who fought your battles, Pr 27:10
do not put him out of mind once you are rich.

Advisers

7/8 Any adviser will offer advice,[f] 6:6
but some are governed by self-interest.
8/9 Beware of a man who offers advice,

h. 'the hordes of the arrogant'; Hebr. 'the sceptre of pride'. 'of the wicked'; Hebr. 'of wickedness'.
i. 'in his mercy'; Hebr. 'through his salvation'.
36 a. This prayer reveals the sentiments of pious Jews about the year 190 just before the Maccabaean revolt. A messianic note, rare in Si, is struck here, as also in the Psalm with which the Hebr. text ends, Si 51:12+.
b. 'Have mercy on us'; Hebr. 'Save us'.
c. Hebr. 'Hasten the end, remember the appointed time. For who is there to say to you: What are you doing?'
d. The hope of 'ingathering', particularly strong during the Exile, remained a characteristic of Judaism long after the exiles had returned. The Jews always regarded their dispersion abroad as a passing and unfortunate phase, to which the coming of the Messiah would put an end.
e. 'Fill...praise'; Hebr. 'Fill Zion with your majesty'. 'sanctuary' corr. following Hebr.; 'people' Greek.
f. The exact sense is uncertain. The author may be meaning Israel as a whole, or the patriarchs, who according to an ancient midrash were among the seven things created before the world, or else created wisdom, the first-fruit of creation (Pr 8:22). Or perhaps he believes that the Messiah or the messianic kingdom 'created before all things' is shortly to appear on earth?
g. 'your servants' several MSS and Hebr.; 'those who pray to you' Text. Rec.
h. 'lying words'; Hebr. 'false food'.
i. Lit. 'enters into a possession'. Alternatively 'has the best of possessions'. Hebr. 'Acquire a wife, the first of acquisitions'.
j. 'a helper that suits him'; Hebr. 'a fortified city'.
k. Hebr. 'without a wife a man is a tramp and a wanderer'.
l. 'a man carrying weapons'; Hebr. 'an armed band'.
37 a. 'a comrade or a friend'; Hebr. 'a friend one loves as oneself'.
b. 'why were you created' corr. following Lat.
c. Hebr. 'The bad friend takes advantage of good cheer'.
d. 'turns against him'; Hebr. 'keeps his distance'.
e. Lit. 'out of concern for his stomach'. Vv. 4-5 contrast two kinds of friend: in danger one runs away, the other remains loyal. In Hebr. v. 5 makes the contrast clearer: 'The good friend fights the enemy and takes up arms against foes'.
f. 'will offer advice'; Hebr. 'wag his finger' (var. 'say: See!').

first find out what he wants himself—
since his advice coincides with his own interest—
in case he has designs on you[g] 10
and tells you, 'You are on the right road', 9 11
but stands well clear to see what will happen to you.[h]
Do not consult a man who looks at you askance, 10 12
conceal your plans from people jealous of you.
Do not consult a woman about her rival, 11
or a coward about war,
a merchant about prices,
Pr 20:14 or a buyer about selling,
a mean man about gratitude,
or a selfish man about kindness, 13
a lazy fellow about any sort of work,
or a casual worker about finishing a job,[i] 14
an idle servant about a major undertaking—
do not rely on these for any advice.
7:34; 9:15 But constantly have recourse to a devout man,[j] 12 15
whom you know to be a keeper of the commandments,
whose soul matches your own, 16
and who, if you go wrong, will be sympathetic.
Finally, stick to the advice your own heart gives you, 13 17
no one can be truer to you than that;
since a man's soul often forewarns him better 14 18
than seven watchmen perched on a watchtower.
Pr 16:9 And besides all this beg the Most High 15 19
to guide your steps in the truth.

True and false wisdom

Reason must be the beginning of every activity, 16 20
reflection must come before any undertaking.
Thoughts are rooted in the heart, 17 21
and this sends out four branches:[k]
Pr 18:21 good and evil, life and death, 18
and always mistress of them all is the tongue.
Think of a clever man who teaches many people, 19 22
but does no good at all to himself.
9:18 Think of a man, a ready enough speaker, yet he is detested 20 23
and will end up by starving,[l]
not having won the favour of the Lord, 21 24
and being destitute of all wisdom.
Think of a man who is wise in his own eyes, 22 25
and the fruits of his understanding are, if you take his word
for it, certain.[m]
The truly wise will instruct his own people, 23 26
the fruits of his understanding are certain.[n]
This wise man will be filled with blessing, 24 27
and those who see him will call him happy.
A man's life lasts a number of days, 25 28
but the days of Israel are beyond counting.
The wise man will earn confidence among his people, 26 29
his name will live for ever.

Moderation

My son, in the course of your life test your constitution, 27 30
and do not allow it what you see is harmful to it;

28/31 for everything does not suit everybody, 1 Co 3:2; 6: 12; 10:23 Heb 5:12
nor does everybody take pleasure in everything.
29/32 Do not be insatiable over any delicacy,
do not be greedy over food,
30/33 for overeating leads to sickness,
and gluttony brings on biliousness.
31/34 Many have died of gluttony;
beware of this and you will prolong your life.

Medicine and illness[a]

1 38 Honour the doctor with the honour that is his due[b]
in return for his services;
for he too has been created by the Lord.
2 Healing itself comes from the Most High,
like a gift from a king.[c]
3 The doctor's learning keeps his head high,
he is regarded with awe by potentates.[d]
4 The Lord has brought medicines into existence from the earth,
and the sensible man will not despise them.
5 Did not a piece of wood once sweeten the water, Ex 15:23-25
thus giving proof of its virtue?[e]
6 He has also given men[f] learning
so that they may glory in his mighty works.
7 He uses them[g] to heal and to relieve pain,
the chemist makes up a mixture from them.
8 Thus there is no end to his activities,[h]
and through him health extends across the world.

9 My son, when you are ill, do not be depressed,
but pray to the Lord and he will heal you.
10 Renounce your faults, keep your hands unsoiled,
and cleanse your heart from all sin.
11 Offer incense and a memorial of fine flour,
and make as rich an offering as you can afford.[i] 35:2-5
12 Then let the doctor take over—the Lord created him too—
and do not let him leave you, for you need him.
13 Sometimes success is in their hands,
14 since they in turn will beseech the Lord
to grant them the grace to relieve
and to heal, that life may be saved.[j]
15 If a man sins in the eyes of his Maker,
may he fall under the care of the doctor.[k]

g. Text uncertain. Hebr. 'why would that profit him?'
h. 'what will happen to you'; Hebr. 'your misfortune'.
i. 'a coward'; Hebr. 'a fighting man'. 'finishing a job'; Hebr. 'the cost of grain'.
j. Corr. following Hebr.; 'but a man who is always frightened' Greek.
k. Following Hebr.; 'As a sign of changes of heart four portions appear' Greek.
l. Vv. 19-20 Hebr. 'Take a man who is wise and acts wisely on behalf of others but on his own is a fool. There is a wise man despised for what he says, he will be deprived of all agreeable food.'
m. Hebr. 'and the fruit of his knowledge is for his body'.
n. 'will instruct his own people'; Hebr. 'who is (wise) for his people'. 'are certain'; Hebr. 'are for them'.

38 a. Possibly some devout Jews thought consulting the doctor showed lack of faith in God. Cf. 2 Ch 16:12. Ben Sira corrects this view.
b. The 'honour' is perhaps the 'honorarium'. Hebr. 'Be friendly with a doctor'.
c. Hebr. 'The doctor has his healing art from the Most High and receives gifts from the king'.
d. Hebr. 'and he stands erect in the presence of great men', cf. Pr 22:29.
e. The Greek suggests that the author is giving a natural explanation of the miracle at Marah. For 'its virtue' Hebr. has 'his (God's) power'.
f. I.e. doctors.
g. The medicines of v. 4.
h. The activities of God do not cease with creation; to men and things he gives a share of his power, thus diffusing benefits to the whole world.
i. Text corr. following Hebr.
j. This passage may have inspired Jm 5:14f, but the advice given by St James is of a different order.
k. I.e. may he fall sick. This does not seem to imply any insult to doctors; moreover it is possible that Hebr.

Mourning[l]

My son, shed tears over a dead man, 16
and intone the lament to show your own deep grief;
bury his body with due ceremonial,
and do not neglect to honour his grave.[m]
Weep bitterly, wail most fervently;[n] 17
observe the mourning the dead man deserves, 18
one day, or two,[o] to avoid comment,
and then be comforted in your sorrow;
for grief can lead to death, 18 19
a grief-stricken heart undermines your strength.
Let grief end with the funeral; 19 20
a life of grief oppresses the mind.[p]
Do not abandon your heart to grief, 20 21
7:36; 28:6 drive it away, bear your own end in mind.[q]
Do not forget, there is no going back; 21 22
you cannot help the dead, and you will harm yourself.
'Remember my doom,[r] since it will be yours too; 22 23
yesterday was my[s] day, today is yours.'
Once the dead man is laid to rest, let his memory rest too, 23 24
do not fret for him, once his spirit departs.

Trades and crafts[t]

11:10 Leisure is what gives the scribe the opportunity to acquire wisdom; 24 25
the man with few business affairs grows wise.
How can the ploughman become wise, 25 26
whose sole ambition is to wield the goad;
driving his oxen, engrossed in their work,
his conversation is of nothing but cattle?
His mind is fixed on the furrows he traces, 26 27
and his evenings pass in fattening his heifers.
So it is with every workman and craftsman, 27 28
toiling day and night;
those who engrave seals,
always trying to think of new designs:
they set their heart on producing a good likeness,
and stay up perfecting the work.
So it is with the blacksmith sitting by his anvil; 28 29
he considers what to do with the pig-iron,
the breath of the fire scorches his skin,
as he contends with the heat of the furnace;
he batters his ear with the din[u] of the hammer, 30
his eyes are fixed on the pattern;
he sets his heart on completing his work, 31
and stays up putting the finishing touches.
So it is with the potter, sitting at his work, 29 32
turning the wheel with his feet;
constantly on the alert over his work,
each flick of the finger premeditated;[v]
he pummels the clay with his arm, 30 33
and puddles it with his feet;
he sets his heart on perfecting the glaze, 34
and stays up cleaning the kiln.
All these put their trust in their hands, 31 35
and each is skilled[w] at his own craft.
A town could not be built without them, 32 36

37 there would be no settling, no travelling.
33 But they are not required at the council,
they do not hold high rank in the assembly.
38 They do not sit on the judicial bench,
and have no grasp of the law.[x]
34 They are not remarkable for culture or sound judgement,
and are not found among the inventors of maxims.[y]
39 But they give solidity to the created world,
while their prayer is concerned with what pertains to their trade.

The scholar

1 39 It is otherwise with the man who devotes his soul — Ps 1:2
to reflecting on the Law of the Most High.
1 He researches into the wisdom of all the Ancients,
he occupies his time with the prophecies.[a]
2 He preserves the discourses of famous men,
he is at home with the niceties of parables.[b]
3 He researches into the hidden sense of proverbs,
he ponders the obscurities of parables.
4 He enters the service of princes,
he is seen in the presence of rulers.
5 He travels in foreign countries,[c]
he has experienced human good and human evil.
5 6 At dawn and with all his heart — Ws 6:14; 16: 28
he resorts to the Lord who made him;
he pleads in the presence of the Most High,
7 he opens his mouth in prayer
and makes entreaty for his sins.
6 8 If it is the will of the great Lord,
he will be filled with the spirit of understanding, — Is 11:2
9 he will shower forth words of wisdom,
and in prayer give thanks to the Lord.
7 10 He will grow upright in purpose and learning,
he will ponder the Lord's hidden mysteries.
8 11 He will display the instruction he has received,
taking his pride in the Law of the Lord's covenant.
9 12 Many will praise his understanding, — 44:12 Ws 8:13
and it will never be forgotten.
13 His memory will not disappear,
generation after generation his name will live. — =44:15

should be preferred: 'A man sins in the eyes of his Maker if he defies the doctor'.

l. With the Jews, as with Orientals generally, the funeral rites were spectacular and governed by detailed rules. For various features, cf. Jr 9:17,18; Am 5:16; Ezk 24:15-24; Mt 9:23; Mk 5:38.

m. Hebr. 'and do not conceal yourself when they breathe their last (?)'.

n. 'Wail most fervently'; Hebr. 'fulfil the mourning rites'.

o. Seven days, according to 22:12; but there may have been various grades of funeral solemnity.

p. 'Let grief...'; var. 'Grief continues with the calamity (?)' 'a life of grief' corr.; 'a poor man's life' Greek. The similar advice of 1 Th 4:13 has a very different reason behind it.

q. Or 'bear the future in mind'.

r. 'my'; var. 'his' or 'the'. The 'doom' or judicial sentence condemning all to die, cf. Gn 2:17; 3:3,4. The text translated here puts these words into the mouth of the dead man.

s. 'my'; Hebr. 'his'.

t. This passage is not unlike an ancient Egyptian text known as the *Satire on Trades*.

u. 'din'; var. 'the iron work'. 'batters'; lit. 'bends' corr.

v. Translation uncertain.

w. Lit. 'wise'. Craftsmanship is an elementary form of wisdom, cf. Ex 35:30–36:1; 1 K 5:20; 7:13-14. Such 'wisdom', however, cannot be compared with that of the scribe, cf. Si 39:1-11.

x. Lit. 'the covenant of judgement', cf. 45:17.

y. 'inventors of maxims' corr.; 'maxims' Greek.

39 a. The terms 'law', 'wisdom', 'prophecies', apparently refer to the three sections of the scriptures, cf. Prologue, 1,8-10,24-25.

b. The scribe is custodian of the scriptures, but also their interpreter to the people, cf. Ezr 7:6+. On the parable or *mashal*, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books.

c. The scribe is often a court official, minister or ambassador.

Nations will proclaim his wisdom, 10 14
the assembly will celebrate his praises.
If he lives long, his name will be more glorious than a thousand others, 11 15
and if he dies, that will satisfy him just as well.[a]

Invitation to praise God

I wish to develop my reflections further, 12 16
they fill me as full as the moon at the full.
Ps 1:3 Listen to me, devout children, and blossom 13 17
like the rose that grows on the bank of a watercourse.
Give off a sweet smell like incense, 14 18
flower like the lily, spread your fragrance abroad, 19
sing a song of praise
blessing the Lord for all his works.
Declare the greatness of his name, 15 20
proclaim his praise
with song and with lyre,
and this is how you must sing his praises:
Ps 33:9; 104:24 Qo 7:10 how wonderful they are, all the works of the Lord! 16 21
All that he orders is promptly carried out.[c]
Qo 3:11 You must not say, 'What is this? Why is that?'
All will be studied in due time.[d]
At his word water stops running and piles up, 17 22
waters are stored at a word from his mouth.[e]
At his bidding, all his pleasure is accomplished, 18 23
no one can diminish his power to save.
The actions of every creature are before him, 19 24
there is no hiding from his eyes;
his gaze stretches from eternity to eternity, 20 25
and nothing can astonish him.
You must not say, 'What is this? Why is that?' 21 26
All things have been created for their proper functions.

As his blessing covers the dry land like a river[h] 22 27
and soaks it like a flood, 28
so wrath is his legacy to the nations,[i] 23 (29)
Gn 19:24-26 Ps 107:34 just as he has turned fresh waters to salt.
His ways are as smooth for devout men, 24
as they are full of obstacles for the wicked.[j]
33:14-15; 40:10 Good things were created from the beginning for good men, 25 30
as evils[k] were for sinners.
The prime needs of mankind for living 26 31
are water and fire, iron and salt,
wheat-flour, milk and honey,
the juice of the grape, oil and clothing.
All these things are good for people who are good, 27 32
just as they turn into bad for sinners.

Some winds were created to punish; 28 33
he has made them the scourge of his anger;[l]
on the day of doom they unleash their force, 34
and appease the anger of him who made them.
Fire and hail, famine and death, 29 35
all these were created to punish.[m]
The teeth of savage animals, scorpions, adders, 30 36
and the avenging sword to destroy the godless,
all these exult in obeying his orders, 31 37

they are ready on earth when he requires,
and when the time comes they will not disobey on his order.

32/38 That is why I was determined from the outset,
I have pondered and I have written it down,[n]
33/39 'All the works of the Lord are good, Qo 7:10
and he will supply every want in due time.
34/40 You must not say, "This is worse than that",
for everything will prove its value in its time.
35/41 So now, sing with all your heart and voice, Ps 145:21
and bless the name of the Lord!'

The wretchedness of man[a]

1 40 Much hardship has been made for every man, Jb 7:1f; 14: 1-2+
a heavy yoke lies on the sons of Adam
from the day they come out of their mother's womb, Jb 1:21+
till the day they return to[b] the mother of them all.[c]
2 What fills them with brooding and their hearts with fear
is dread of the day of death.
3 From the man who sits on a glorious throne
to the wretch on dust and ashes,
4 from the man who wears purple and a crown
to the man clothed in sacking,
all is fury and jealousy, turmoil and unrest,
fear of death, rivalry, strife.
5 And even at night while he rests on his bed Dt 28:65-67 Jb 7:4 Qo 2:23; 8: 16
his sleep only gives a new twist to his worries:[d]
6 scarcely has he lain down to rest,
than in his sleep, as if in broad daylight,[e]
he is shaken by terrible sights
like a man running away from a battle.
7 At the moment of rescue he awakens,
astonished that his fear was imaginary.
8 For all creatures, from men to animals—
and seven times more for sinners—
9 there is death and blood and strife and the sword,
disasters, famine, affliction, plague.

d. Lit. 'that is enough for him' corr.; 'it produces for him (?)' Greek. Difficult text; it seems to mean that if the scribe dies before achieving renown he ought not to regret the work he has done.

e. Hebr. 'they provide for every need in its season'.

f. This verse, found only in the Greek, is in part a doublet of v. 21. It apparently means that premature enquiries about the ordering of this world are idle. Some day either by reward or punishment God will demonstrate the purpose of hitherto uncomprehended phenomena, vv. 21,34. Thus the sage who studies will understand 'in due time'. This passage may have been intended to refute certain pessimistic propositions put forward by Qoheleth.

g. Alluding to the numerous marvels connected with water: creation, Gn 1:9, the Flood, Gn 7:11, the crossing of the Red Sea, Ex 14:21-22, and of the Jordan, Jos 3:16, and possibly also to the mystery of the clouds as inexhaustible reservoirs of water. Cf. Ps 104:6-13.

h. The author is thinking of the beneficial inundations of the Nile. Hebr. has 'like a Nile'.

i. Hebr. 'his wrath dispossessed the nations'.

j. 'his ways are smooth'; Hebr. 'the virtuous man's ways are straight'. 'for the wicked'; Hebr. 'for strangers'.

k. 'evils'; Hebr. 'good and evil'.

l. Following Syr. and some MSS ('he' = the Lord); 'in their anger they scourge violently' Text. Rec.

m. *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* 'It (the lower heaven) holds fire, snow, and ice ready for the day of judgement, in the just punishment of God. For it is there that the spirits of vengeance are, for the punishment of men' (Levi 3:2). Ben Sira, also, sees these scourges as held in reserve but he does not seem to be thinking in terms of eschatology.

n. Solemn preface to the optimistic conclusion: all is willed by God for a specific purpose; all is under control and man has no reason to complain; if he suffers, it is because he deserves to.

40 a. This passage on the wretchedness of man's state contrasts with the preceding chapter; but there is no inconsistency in the thought: misery has its explanation —it is the consequence of sin, v. 10.

b. 'return to' some MSS and Hebr.; 'are buried in' Text. Rec.

c. Cf. Gn 3:19. Hebr. 'mother of all the living', cf. Gn 3:20.

d. The Hebr. and the context suggest that sleep, brings thoughts no less painful. Cf. Qo 2:22,23.

e. 'as if in broad daylight' corr.; 'as if on the day of watching' Greek.

39:25,29 All these were created for the godless, 10
through them came the Flood.[f]
=41:10 Gn 3:19 Ps 146:4 Qo 1:7 All that comes from the earth returns to the earth, 11
what comes from the water returns to the sea.[g]

Various maxims

All bribery and injustice will be blotted out, 12
but good faith will stand for ever.
The wealth of wrong-doers will dry up like a torrent, 13
will crash like a clap of thunder in a downpour.
When he opens his hands he rejoices,[h] 14
by the same token defaulters will come to utter ruin.
23:25 Ws 4:3 The offshoots of the godless will not have many branches, 15
unclean roots only find hard rock.
Jb 8:11-12 The reeds by every lake and river's edge 16
will be pulled up before any other grass.[i]
40:27 Graciousness is like a paradise of blessing, 17
and generosity stands firm for ever.[j]

Comparisons

For the man of private means and the man who works hard, 18
life is pleasant,
better off than either, he who finds a treasure.
Gn 11:4 Children and the building of a city make a man's reputation; 19
Mt 13:44 better than either, the discovery of wisdom.
Cattle and vineyards make you well known;[k]
better valued than either, a perfect wife.
Wine and music cheer the heart; 20
better than either, the love of wisdom.[l]
Flute and harp add sweetness to a song; 21
better than either, a sweet voice.
The eye longs for grace and beauty; 22
better than either, the green of spring corn.
Friend or comrade — it is always well met; 23
better than either, a wife and husband.
Pr 17:17 Brothers and allies are good in times of trouble; 24
29:8+ better than either, generosity to the rescue.
Gold and silver will steady your feet; 25
better valued than either, good advice.
Money and strength make a confident heart; 26
better than either, the fear of the Lord.
With the fear of the Lord a man lacks nothing; 27
with that he need seek no ally.
40:17 The fear of the Lord is like a paradise of blessing, 27 28
it clothes a man with more than glory.

On begging

My son, do not live by begging from others, 28 29
better be dead than a beggar.
The life of a man ever eyeing the table of another 29 30
cannot be reckoned as a life at all.
He defiles his gullet with other people's food;
a man of culture and breeding will never do this.[m] 31
Jb 20:12-14 Begging comes easily to the lips of the shameless man, 30 32
but eventually it will set fire to his belly.

Death

1 41 O death, how bitter it is to remember you — Jb 14:1-2+
for a man at peace among his goods,
2 to a man without worries, who prospers in everything,
and still has the strength to feed himself.[a]

2 3 O death, your sentence is welcome — Jb 3:20f
to a man in want, whose strength is failing,
4 to a man worn out with age, worried about everything,
disaffected and beyond endurance.

3 5 Do not dread death's sentence;[b]
remember those who came before you and those who will come after.
4 This is the sentence passed on all living creatures by the Lord, — Gn 3:19; 6:3
6 so why object to what seems good to the Most High?
Whether your life lasts ten or a hundred or a thousand years,
7 its length will not be held against you in Sheol.[c] — Qo 6:6; 9:10

The fate of the wicked

5 8 Hateful brats, such are the children of sinners, — Ws 3:12
who forgather in the haunts of the godless.[d]
6 9 The inheritance of sinners' children is doomed to perish,
their posterity will endure lasting reproach.
7 10 A godless father will be blamed by his children
for the reproach he has brought on them.
8 11 A bad outlook for you, godless men,
who have forsaken the Law of God Most High.
9 12 When you were born, you were born to be accursed,[e]
and when you die, that curse will be your portion.
10 13 All that comes from the earth returns to the earth, — =40:11
so too the wicked proceed from curse to destruction.[f]
11 14 Men go into mourning for their dead,
but the worthless name of sinners will be blotted out.[g]

12 15 Be careful of your reputation, for it will last you longer — Pr 22:1 Qo 7:1
than a thousand great hoards of gold.
13 16 A good life lasts a certain number of days,
but a good reputation lasts for ever.

A sense of shame

14 17 Keep my instructions and be at peace, my children.

Wisdom hidden away and treasure undisplayed, — =20:30-31 Mt 5:14-16
what use are either of these?
15 18 Better a man who hides his folly
than one who hides his wisdom.

f. 'All these': Hebr. 'Evil'. 'the Flood': Hebr. 'destruction'.
g. Hebr. 'what comes from above returns above', cf. Qo 12:7.
h. Difficult text; possibly referring to the virtuous man whose generosity spreads joy all about him.
i. Hebr. 'have withered before the rain comes'.
j. Hebr. 'Piety will never be shaken and virtue remains for ever'.
k. 'better than either... well known' Hebr. and Syr.; omitted by Greek.
l. 'music'; Hebr. 'strong drink'. 'the love of wisdom'; 'love' Hebr.
m. Hebr. 'It is an inward torture for an intelligent man'.

41 a. Hebr. 'to appreciate luxury'.
b. 'death's sentence'; Hebr. 'death, which is the law'.
c. Where the longest of lives has come to an end and therefore ceased to be matter for envy.
d. Hebr. 'and a godless offspring dwells with sinners'.
e. Hebr. 'If you multiply, it is for misfortune'. The Hebr. then inserts 'if you beget children, it is for sorrow; if you stumble, it is for everlasting joy'.
f. Hebr. 'What is nothingness returns to nothingness; thus the godless man, coming from the void, returns to the void'.
g. Hebr. 'A man's body is a vain thing but a man's name will not be blotted out'.

Now, keep your sense of shame with respect to what I am going to say, 16/19
for not every kind of shame is right to harbour, 20
nor is every situation correctly appraised by all.
Be ashamed, before father and mother, of licentious behaviour, 17/21
and before prince or potentate of telling lies;
of wrong-doing before judge or magistrate, 18/22
and of impiety before the assembly of the people;
of sharp practice before your companion and your friend, 19/23
and of theft before the neighbourhood you live in. 24
Before the truth and covenant of God, 20
be ashamed of leaning elbows on the table,[h]
of making gifts before those who despise them,[i] 21
and of ignoring those who greet you: 25
of gazing at a loose woman 22
and of turning your back on a relation, 26
of misappropriating another's portion or gift, 23
9:8-9 of paying court to another man's wife, 27
of carrying on with his servant-girl 24
—do not go near her bed—
of words of abuse before your friends 25/28
—do not follow up a gift with a taunt—
of repeating and retailing gossip 26/1
and of betraying confidences.
Then you will know what true shame is, 27
and you will find yourself in every man's graces.

42 These are the things you should not be ashamed of,[a] 1
and do not sin from fear of what others think:
of the Law of the Most High and the covenant, 2
of a verdict that acquits the godless,[b]
of keeping strict accounts with a travelling companion, 3
of settling property on your friends,[c]
of being accurate over scales and weights, 4
of making small and large profits,
of gaining from commercial transactions,[d] 5
30:1 of disciplining your children strictly,
33:25,27 of lashing a wicked slave till you draw blood.
With an interfering wife, it is as well to use your seal, 6
and where there are many hands, lock things up.
Whatever stores you issue, do it by number and weight, 7
spendings and takings, put everything in writing.
Pr 10:13; 19:25,29; 26:3 Do not be ashamed to correct a stupid man or a fool, 8
or an old dotard who bickers with young people.
Then you will show yourself really educated
and win the approval of everyone.

The cares of a father over his daughter

7:24 Unknown to her, a daughter keeps her father awake,[e] 9
the worry she gives him drives away his sleep :
in her youth, in case she never marries,
Dt 24:1 married, in case she should be disliked,
as a virgin, in case she should be defiled 10
and found with child in her father's house,
having a husband, in case she goes astray,
married, in case she should be barren.
Your daughter is headstrong? Keep a sharp look-out 11
that she does not make you the laughing-stock of your enemies,

the talk of the town, the object of common gossip,
and put you to public shame.

Women

12 Do not stare at any man for his good looks,
do not sit down with the women;[f]
13 for moth comes out of clothes, Qo 7:26-28
and woman's spite out of woman.
14 A man's spite is preferable to a woman's kindness;
women give rise to shame and reproach.[g]

II. THE GLORY OF GOD

A. IN NATURE

15 Next, I will remind you of the works of the Lord,
and tell of what I have seen.
By the words[h] of the Lord his works come into being Gn 1:3f
and all creation obeys his will.[i]
16 As the sun in shining looks on all things,
so the work of the Lord is full of his glory.
17 The Lord has not granted to the holy ones[j] 45:2
to tell of all his marvels
which the Almighty Lord has solidly constructed
for the universe to stand firm in his glory.[k]
18 He has fathomed the deep and the heart, Pr 15:11
and seen into their devious ways;
for the Most High knows all the knowledge there is,
and has observed the signs of the times.[l]
19 He declares what is past and what will be,
and uncovers the traces of hidden things.
20 Not a thought escapes him, Ps 139:1-4
not a single word is hidden from him.[m]
21 He has imposed an order on the magnificent works of his wisdom,
he is from everlasting to everlasting,
22 nothing can be added to him, nothing taken away, 18:6 Qo 3:14
he needs no one's advice.
22 23 How desirable are all his works, 16:24-29
how dazzling to the eye!
23 24 They all live and last for ever,
whatever the circumstances all obey him.[o]

h. Text uncertain. Possibly only a maxim of common politeness.

i. Text corr. 'before the contempt of receiving and giving' Greek.

42 a. Ben Sira shows how certain actions frowned on by public opinion or by prejudice are nevertheless permissible.

b. The 'godless' perhaps means foreigners, to be treated as justly as Israelites.

c. 'a travelling companion' corr. 'a companion and travellers' Greek. 'of settling...friends': Hebr. 'of discussing property and possessions'.

d. Cf., on the other hand, 26:29 and 27:2. Business dealings are lawful but full of temptation.

e. Hebr. 'a daughter is a deceptive treasure for her father'.

f. Hebr. 'let her not show her beauty to any man, let her not gossip with women'.

g. Ben Sira is stricter than Pr, itself severe on women, cf. Pr 5:15+.

h. Hebr. 'word'. One of the earliest appearances of the doctrine of the creative Word. Cf. 43:26; Gn 1; Ps 33:6; Ws 9:1,2; Jn 1:1+. In wisdom literature as a whole it is rather Wisdom that is spoken of as creative, cf. Pr 8:22+.

i. This line is absent from the Greek (Codex Sinaiticus excepted).

j. I.e. the angels, Jb 5:1+.

k. 'which the Almighty...his glory'; Hebr. 'the Lord has granted his hosts to stand firm before his glory'.

l. The stars are 'signs of the times' not only because they distinguish the seasons, 43:6; Gn 1:14-18, but also because, according to a widespread belief, the future was already written in the heavens, Jr 10:2. Here there may be a more specific reference to the extraordinary signs expected to announce the coming of the Messiah, Mt 24:29-31.

m. Hebr. 'No knowledge is lacking in him, and nothing escapes him'.

n. Text corr., cf. Lat.

o. Text corr., following Hebr.

33:14-15 Qo 3:1-8
All things go in pairs, by opposites, 24
and he has made nothing defective;[p] 25
the one consolidates the excellence of the other, 25
who could ever be sated with gazing at his glory? 26

Ps 19:1-6 **The sun**[a]

Ps 8:3 43 Pride of the heights, shining vault, 1
so, in a glorious spectacle, the sky appears.
The sun, as he emerges, proclaims[b] at his rising, 2
'A thing of wonder is the work of the Most High!'
At his zenith he parches the land, 3
who can withstand his blaze?
A man must blow a furnace to produce any heat, 4
the sun burns the mountains three times as much;
breathing out blasts of fire,
flashing his rays he dazzles the eyes.
Great is the Lord who made him, 5
and whose word speeds him on his course.

The moon

Ps 89:37; 104:19
And then the moon, always punctual, 6
to mark the months and make division of time:
Gn 1:14-18
the moon it is that signals the feasts, 7
a luminary that wanes after her full.[c]
The month derives its name from hers,[d] 8
she waxes wonderfully in her phases,
banner of the hosts on high, 9
shining in the vault of heaven.

The stars

Ba 3:33-35
The glory of the stars makes the beauty of the sky, 9 10
a brilliant decoration to the heights of the Lord.
At the words of the Holy One they stand as he decrees, 10 11
and never grow slack at their watch.

Gn 9:13 Ezk 1:28 **The rainbow**

50:7
See the rainbow and praise its maker, 11 12
so superbly beautiful in its splendour.
Across the sky it forms a glorious arc 12 13
drawn by the hands of the Most High.

The wonders of nature

Jb 38:22f Ps 147:16-18
By his command he sends the snow, 13 14
he speeds the lightning as he orders.
In the same way, his treasuries open 14 15
and the clouds fly out like birds.
In his great might he banks up the clouds, 15 16
and shivers them into fragments of hail.
At sight of him the mountains rock, 16a 17a
Ps 29:8
at the roar of his thunder the earth writhes in labour. 17a 18a
At his will the south wind blows, 16b 17b
or the storm from the north and the whirlwind.[e] 17b 18b
He sprinkles snow like birds alighting, 18 19
it comes down like locusts settling.
The eye marvels at the beauty of its whiteness, 20
and the mind is amazed at its falling.

19 21 Over the earth, like salt, he also pours hoarfrost,
which, when it freezes, bristles like thorns.
20 22 The cold wind blows from the north,
and ice forms on the water,
settling on every watery expanse,
and water puts it on like a breastplate.
21 23 He swallows up the mountains and scorches the desert,[f]
like a fire he consumes the vegetation.
22 24 But the mist heals everything in good time,
after the heat falls the reviving dew.

23 25 By his own resourcefulness he has tamed the abyss, Jb 7:12+ Ps 104:5f
and planted it with islands.
24 26 Those who sail the sea tell of its dangers,[g]
their accounts fill our ears with amazement:
25 27 for there too there are strange and wonderful works,
animals of every kind and huge sea creatures. Ps 104:25f; 107:23f
26 28 Thanks to him all ends well,[h]
and all things hold together by means of his word.

27 29 We could say much more and still fall short;
to put it concisely, 'He is all'.[i]
28 30 Where shall we find sufficient power to glorify him,
since he is the Great One, above all his works, Ps 96:4; 145:3
29 31 the awe-inspiring Lord, stupendously great,
and wonderful in his power?
30 32 Exalt the Lord in your praises
33 as high as you may—still he surpasses you.
34 Exert all your strength when you exalt him,
do not grow tired—you will never come to the end.
31 35 Who has ever seen him to give a description?
Who can glorify him as he deserves?
32 36 Many mysteries remain even greater than these, Jb 5:9
for we have seen only a few of his works, Jb 26:14
33 37 the Lord himself having made all things— 1:9-10; 42:17
and having given wisdom to devout men.

B. IN HISTORY 1 M 2:51-64 Heb 11

Eulogy of the ancestors[a]

1 **44** Next let us praise illustrious men,[b]
our ancestors in their successive generations.
2 The Lord has created an abundance of glory,[c]
and displayed his greatness from earliest times.

p. Hebr. 'All things are different from each other, and there is nothing superfluous'.

43 a. Cf. this lyrical passage with those of Dn 3:52-90 and Ps 19:4f; 136; 145; 148.

b. 'proclaims'; Hebr. 'radiates heat'.

c. The two great Jewish feasts, Passover and Tabernacles, cf. Ex 23:14+, began on the day of full moon (14th of the month) and lasted for 8 days.

d. Either because the same Hebr. word *(yerah)* means 'moon' and 'month', or because the alternative word for 'month' *(hodesh)* means 'newness' (new moon).

e. Following Hebr. order.

f. Hebr. 'He scorches the mountain grass with drought'.

g. 'dangers'; Hebr. 'extent'.

h. Hebr. and some Greek MSS 'Thanks to him his messenger prospers'.

i. Not of course in the pantheistic sense. For Ben Sira, everything comes from God, whose transcendence he constantly asserts (cf., in this passage, v. 28) and everything belongs to him.

44 a. This eulogy shows how a devout Jew of the 2nd century before Christ thought of the history of his people, cf. 1 M 2:51-64.

b. Hebr. 'men of piety' *(hesed)*. The name 'Hasideans' is derived from this expression, 1 M 2:42+.

c. Vv. 2-9 may be either a description of 'human glory' as known outside Israel, with which the author contrasts (vv. 1 and 10f) that of the forefathers of the Jews, or else a general survey of the glories of Israel preluding the more detailed account.

Some wielded authority as kings 3
and were renowned for their strength;
others were intelligent advisers
and uttered prophetic oracles.
Others directed the people[d] by their advice, 4
by their understanding of the popular mind,[e]
and by the wise words of their teaching;[f]
others composed musical melodies, 5
and set down ballads;
others were rich and powerful, 6
living peacefully in their homes.[g]
All these were honoured by their contemporaries, 7
and were the glory of their day.
Qo 2:16 Some of them left a name behind them, 8
so that their praises are still sung.
While others have left no memory, 9
and disappeared as though they had not existed,
they are now as though they had never been,
and so too, their children after them.

But here is a list of generous men 10
whose good works have not been forgotten.[h]
In their descendants there remains 11
a rich inheritance born of them.
39:9 Their descendants stand by the covenants 12
and, thanks to them, so do their children's children.
Their offspring[i] will last for ever, 13
their glory will not fade.
Their bodies have been buried in peace, 14
and their name lives on for all generations.
=39:10 The peoples will proclaim their wisdom, 15
the assembly will celebrate their praises.

Enoch

49:14
Gn 5:24 LXX
Ws 4:10
Heb 11:5 Enoch pleased the Lord and was taken up, 16
an example for the conversion[j] of all generations.

Noah

Gn 6:9 Noah was found perfectly virtuous, 17
Is 6:13 in the time of wrath he became the scion:[k]
↗1 P 3:20
↗2 P 2:5 because of him a remnant was preserved for the earth[l] 18
at the coming of the Flood.[m]
18
Everlasting covenants[n] were made with him 19
Gn 8:21-22; 9:9+ that never again should every living creature perish by flood.

Abraham

Gn 12:2; 17: 4f
Rm 4:1,13-18 Abraham, the great forefather of a host of nations, 19
20
no one was ever his equal in glory.[o]
He observed the Law of the Most High, 20
and entered into a covenant with him.
Gn 17:10+ He confirmed the covenant in his own flesh, 21
Gn 22:1-19
1 M 2:52
Heb 11:17 and proved himself faithful under ordeal.[p]
The Lord therefore promised him on oath 21
22
to bless the nations through his descendants,
Gn 22:18; 12:3; 15:5
Ac 3:25
Ga 3:8-9 to multiply him like the dust on the ground,
to exalt his descendants like the stars, 23

and give them the land for their inheritance,
from sea to sea,
from the River to the ends of the earth. Gn 15:18 Jg 20:1+

Isaac and Jacob

22 To Isaac too, for the sake of Abraham his father, Gn 17:19; 26:3-5
24 he assured •the blessing of all mankind;
23 he caused the covenant to rest on the head of Jacob.
25 He confirmed him in his blessings[q]
26 and gave him the land for his inheritance;
he divided it into portions,
and shared it out among the twelve tribes.

Moses Dt 34:10

1 27 45 From him he produced a generous man
who found favour in the eyes of all mankind,[a]
1 beloved by God and men,
Moses, of blessed memory.
2 He made him the equal of the holy ones in glory 42:17+
and made him strong, to the terror of his enemies.
3 At the word of Moses he made the miracles stop, Ex 8:8f,26f; 9:33; 10:18f
he raised him high in the respect of kings;
he gave him commandments for his people, Ex 19:1f
and showed him something of his glory. Ex 33:20+
4 For his loyalty and gentleness he sanctified him, Nb 12:3
choosing him alone out of all mankind;
5 he allowed him to hear his voice, Ex 19:19f; 20:21; 24:18
and led him into the darkness;
6 he gave him the commandments face to face,[b] Ex 20:1f,22f Dt 4:6-8; 32:47
the law of life and knowledge,
to teach Jacob his ordinances
and Israel his decrees.

Aaron

6 7 He raised up Aaron, a holy man like Moses,
his brother, of the tribe of Levi.
7 8 He made an everlasting covenant with him,
and gave him the priesthood of the people.
He adorned him with impressive vestments,
9 he dressed him in a robe of glory.[c]
8 He clothed him in glorious perfection
and invested him with emblems of authority: Ex 28:6-12, 31-35,42
10 the breeches, the long robe, the ephod.
9 To go round the robe he gave him pomegranates, 50:16

d. 'people': Hebr. 'nations'.
e. 'by their understanding...': Hebr. 'leaders by their studies'.
f. Hebr. adds 'and the makers of proverbs for having kept (the traditions?)'.
g. Hebr. 'living a restful life on their property'.
h. Hebr. 'their hope will not be frustrated', a reading which seems to imply a hope of immortality.
i. 'their offspring': Hebr. 'their memory'.
j. Lit. 'a reason for conversion'. The Hebr. reading 'an example of understanding' possibly alludes to the mysteries which Enoch witnessed and revealed to mankind *(Book of the Secrets of Enoch)*. Lat. 'to bring conversion to the nations'.
k. 'scion' or 'first shoot' following Hebr.; 'an exchange(?)' Greek.
l. The prophetic doctrine of the 'remnant' from which salvation will come after disaster (cf. Is 4:3+) is applied here to the history of Noah.
m. Hebr. 'because of his covenant the Flood ceased'.
n. Hebr. 'by an everlasting sign'.
o. 'no one...': Hebr. 'stained his glory'.
p. On the faith of Abraham, cf. Gn 12:1+; 15:6+; 22:1; Ga 3:6-14; Rm 4:1-25.
q. 'he assured...': Hebr. 'he made him a universal covenant, he settled the covenant on the head of Israel, he made him firm in the blessing' (marginal reading 'he gave him the status of first-born').
45 a. As they have been preserved, these two verses refer to Moses. Possibly they referred originally to Joseph.
b. Hebr. 'he put the commandments into his hand'.
c. Ben Sira's love of liturgical pomp has already been noted. Cf. 35:1-10;50: 1-21.

Ex 28:33-34 and many gold bells all round
to chime at every step, 11
for their sound to be heard in the Temple[d]
as a reminder to the sons of his people;
Ex 28:2-5 and a sacred vestment of gold and purple, violet shade 10 12
and red, the work of an embroiderer;
Ex 28:6+ 1 S 14:41+ the pectoral of judgement, the Urim and Thummim,[e]
of plaited crimson, the work of a craftsman; 13
precious stones cut like seals 11
mounted in gold, the work of a jeweller,
as a reminder with their engraved inscriptions
of the number of the tribes of Israel;
and a golden diadem on his turban, 12 14
Ex 28:36-39 engraved with the seal of consecration;
superb ornamentation, magnificent work,
adornment to delight the eye.
There had never been such lovely things before him, 13 15
and no one else has ever put them on, 16
but only his own sons,
and his descendants for all time.
His sacrifices were to be burnt entirely, 14 17
twice each day and for ever.
Lv 8:1-13 Moses consecrated him 15 18
and anointed him with holy oil;
and this was an everlasting covenant for him, 19
and for his descendants as long as the heavens endure,[f]
that he should preside over worship, act as priest,
and bless his people in the name of the Lord,
35:3,6 Lv 2:2,9,16 who chose him out of all the living 16 20
to offer sacrifice to the Lord,[g]
incense and an appeasing fragrance as a memorial
Lv 16:1+ to make atonement for the people.
He entrusted him with his commandments, 17 21
committed to him the statutes of the Law[h]
to teach Jacob his decrees,
and enlighten Israel on his Law.
Nb 16:1; 17:15 Others joined forces against him, 18 22
they were jealous of him in the wilderness,
Dathan and Abiram and their men,
Korah and his crew in fury and rage.
The Lord saw it and was displeased, 19 23
his raging fury made an end of them;
he overwhelmed them with miracles 24
and consumed them with his flaming fire.
Ps 16:5 And he added to Aaron's glory, 20 25
he gave him an inheritance;
Nb 18:12-13 he allotted him the prime of the first-fruits,[i]
before all else ensured him bread in abundance. 26
Ex 29:28,31f Lv 6:9-11; 7:9-10,32-36 Thus they eat the sacrifices of the Lord 21
which he gave to him and his posterity.
Nb 18:20 But of the people's territory he inherits nothing, 22 27
he alone of all the people has no share,
Ps 16:5+ the Lord is his share and inheritance.

Phinehas

Phinehas son of Eleazar is third in glory 23 28

because of his zeal in the fear of the Lord,
29 because he stood firm when the people revolted, Nb 25:7f
with a staunch and courageous heart;[j]
and in this way atoned for Israel.
24/30 Hence a covenant of peace was sealed with him, Nb 25:11-13
making him governor of both sanctuary[k] and people,
and securing to him and his descendants
the high priestly dignity for ever.
25/31 There was also a covenant with David
son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah,
a royal succession from father to one son exclusively,[l]
but the succession of Aaron passes to all his descendants.[m]
26 May God endow your hearts with wisdom[n]
to judge his people virtuously,
so that the virtues of your ancestors may never fade,
and their glory may pass to all their descendants.

Joshua

1 **46** Mighty in war was Joshua son of Nun, Jos 1:1+
successor to Moses[a] in the prophetic office,
who well deserved his name,[b]
2 and was a great saviour of the Chosen People,
wreaking vengeance on the enemies who opposed him,
and so bringing Israel into its inheritance.
2/3 How splendid he was when he raised his arms
to brandish his sword against cities!
3/4 Who had ever shown such determination as his?
He himself waged the wars of the Lord.[c]
4/5 Was not the sun held back by his hand, Jos 10:10f
and one day drawn out into two?
5/6 He called on God[d] the Most High, 46:16
as he pressed the enemy on every side;
and the great Lord answered him
with hard and violent hailstones.
6/7 He fell on that enemy nation,[e]
and at the Descent he destroyed all resistance; Jos 10:10-15
8 that the nations might acknowledge his warlike prowess
and know that their foe was the Lord.[f]

Caleb

7 For he was a follower of the Mighty One,
9 and in the time of Moses he did devoted service,
he and Caleb son of Jephunneh,
by opposing the whole community, Nb 14:6-10

d. 'Temple'; Hebr. 'Debir' (the 'Holy of Holies').
e. 'the Urim and Thummim'; Hebr. 'the ephod and the girdle'.
f. 'as long as the heavens endure' corr. following Hebr.: 'in the days of heaven' Greek.
g. 'sacrifice to the Lord'; Hebr. 'holocaust and fat-offerings'.
h. Lit. 'the covenants of judgement'. For the translator of Si the 'covenants' always mean the 'statutes'. The high priest evidently had to be an authority on the Law. Cf. Lv 10:11; Dt 33:10.
i. Hebr. 'he gave him offerings for his food'.
j. 'because he stood... heart'; Hebr. 'for his people's sake he held the breach, for his heart urged him on'.
k. 'sanctuary' Hebr.;'the holy ones' Greek.
l. Lit. 'inheritance of the king, of a son from a son only'.
m. Hebr. adds 'And now pray to the good God who crowns you with glory'.
n. Aspiration addressed to the contemporary descendants of Aaron.
46 a. 'Joshua son of Nun'; Greek has 'Jesus son of Naue'. 'successor'; Hebr. 'servant', cf. Ex 33:11.
b. Joshua means 'Yahweh-saves'. Hebr. has 'who was fashioned to be in his time a great salvation for his chosen ones'.
c. 'He himself...' Hebr. and Greek MSS; 'The Lord himself delivered enemies over to him' Text. Rec.
d. 'God' Hebr.; 'the Mighty One' Greek.
e. Text corr., cf. Lat.; 'He hurled war down on that nation' Greek.
f. 'that their foe...' corr., cf. Hebr.; 'that his battle was against (= before?) the Lord' Greek.

by preventing the people from sinning,[g]
and by silencing the mutters of rebellion.
Hence these two alone were preserved 8 10
16:10+ out of six hundred thousand men on the march,
and brought into their inheritance,
into a land where milk and honey flow.
Jos 14:10-11 The Lord gave Caleb the strength— 9 11
which he retained right into old age—
Nb 14:24 Jos 14:12-15 to tread the highlands of the country
which his descendants still hold as their inheritance,
for all the sons of Israel to see 10 12
that it is good to follow the Lord.

The judges

The judges too, each when he was called, 11 13
all men whose hearts were never disloyal,
who never turned their backs on the Lord—
may their memory be blessed! 14
May their bones flower again[h] from the tomb, 12
and may the names of those illustrious men 15
live again in their sons.

1 S 1:1f;2:26 **Samuel**

Samuel was the beloved of his Lord; 13 16
prophet of the Lord, he instituted the kingdom,[i]
1 S 10:1; 16:13 and anointed rulers over his people.
In the Law of the Lord he judged the assembly, 14 17
and the Lord watched over Jacob.
1 S 9:9 By his loyalty he was recognised as a prophet, 15 18
by his words he was known to be a trustworthy seer.
46:5; 47:5 1 S 7:9-10 He called on the Lord, the Mighty One, 16
when his enemies pressed him on every side, 19
by offering a sucking lamb.
And the Lord thundered from heaven, 17
and made his voice heard in a rolling peal; 20
1 S 7:13 he massacred the leaders of the enemy,[j] 18
and all the rulers of the Philistines. 21
1 S 12:3 Before the time of his everlasting rest 19
he bore witness before the Lord and his anointed, 22
'Of no property, not even a pair of sandals,
have I ever deprived a soul'.
Nor did anyone accuse him.
1 S 28:6-25 And after he fell asleep he prophesied again, 20 23
warning the king of his death;
he lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy,
to blot out the wickedness of the people.

Nathan

2 S 7-12 47 After him arose Nathan, 1
to prophesy in the time of David.

David

Lv 4:8 As the fat is set apart from the communion sacrifice, 2
so David was chosen out of all the sons of Israel.
1 S 17:34-37 He played with lions as though with kids, 3
and with bears as though with lambs of the flock.

4 While still a boy, did he not slay the giant, 1 S 17
and relieve the people of their shame,
5 by putting out a hand to sling a stone
which brought down the arrogance of Goliath?
5 6 For he called on the Lord Most High, 46:16
who gave strength to his right arm
to put a mighty warrior to death,
and lift up the horn[a] of his people.
6 7 Hence they gave him credit for ten thousand, 1 S 18:7
and praised him while they blessed the Lord, 2 S 5:1-3
by offering him a crown of glory;
7 for he massacred enemies on every side,
8 he annihilated his foes the Philistines,
and crushed their horn to this very day.[b]
8 9 In all his activities he gave thanks 2 S 23:1
to the Holy One, the Most High, in words of glory;[c]
10 he put all his heart into his songs
out of love for his Maker.
9 11 He placed harps[d] before the altar 1 Ch 16:4f
to make the singing sweeter with their music;
10 12 he gave the feasts their splendour,
the festivals their solemn pomp,
causing the Lord's holy name to be praised
and the sanctuary to resound from dawn.
11 13 The Lord took away his sins, 2 S 12:13,24-25
and exalted his horn for ever;
he gave him a royal[e] covenant, 2 S 7:1+
and a glorious throne in Israel.

Solomon

12 14 A wise son succeeded him, Ws 7:7
who lived spaciously, thanks to him.[f]
13 15 Solomon reigned in a time of peace, 1 K 5:5
Ws 9:8
and God gave him peace all round
so that he could raise a house to his name 1 K 5:17-19
and prepare an everlasting sanctuary. 1 K 6
14 How wise you were in your youth, 1 K 3:4-28; 5:9-14
16 brimming over with understanding like a river!
15 Your mind ranged the earth,
17 you filled it with mysterious sayings.
16 Your name reached the distant islands,
and you were loved for your peace.[g]
17 18 Your songs, your proverbs, your sayings
and your retorts[h] made you the wonder of the world. 1 K 10:1-10

g. Hebr. 'averting vengeance from the assembly'.
h. Lit. 'send out (shoots)', cf. 49:10; Is 66:14. Not so much an explicit witness to the doctrine of the resurrection as an aspiration that the judges may have worthy successors in the days of Ben Sira, who was writing shortly before the Maccabaean revolt.
i. Hebr. 'Beloved by the people and pleasing to his creator was he who was dedicated from his mother's womb, a nazirite of Yahweh in the prophetic function, Samuel judge and priest; by the word of Yahweh he instituted the kingdom and anointed...'
j. 'he massacred': Hebr. 'he subdued'. 'of the enemy' corr., cf. Hebr.; 'the princes of Tyre' Greek.

47 a. Symbol of power.
b. Hebr 'Therefore the girls hailed him with their songs and honoured him on account of the ten thousand. When he had assumed the crown, he fought and subdued the enemies on every side. He built fortresses against the Philistines (corr 'He plundered the towns of the Philistines') and crushed their horn to this very day.'
c. The Psalms, cf. 2 + 23:1.
d. 'harps' following Hebr.; 'cantors' Greek.
e. 'royal' corr., cf. Hebr., Greek MSS, Lat.; 'of kings' Text. Rec.
f. Solomon benefited from the temporal achievements of David; but, on the religious level, it is also to be understood that God favoured Solomon for the sake of David. Cf. vv. 20,22; 1 K 11:12.
g. Allusion to the name of Solomon ('the peaceful one'). Cf. v. 13.
h. 'retorts' (cf. 1 K 10:1-10); Hebr. 'poetry'. 'Your

Ws 7:11 In the name of the Lord God,[i] 18
of him who is called the God of Israel, 19
1 K 10:11f,27 you amassed gold like so much tin, 20
and made silver as common as lead.
1 K 11:1-13 You abandoned your body to women, 19 21
you became the slave of your appetites.[j]
You stained your honour, 20 22
you profaned your stock,[k]
so bringing wrath on your children
and grief on your posterity:[l]
1 K 12 the sovereignty was split in two, 21 23
from Ephraim arose a rebel kingdom.
2 S 7:1+ Ps 89:30-37 But the Lord would not go back on his mercy, 22 24
or undo any of his words,[m]
he would not obliterate the issue of his elect,
nor destroy the stock of the man who loved him;
Is 4:3+ and so he granted a remnant to Jacob, 25
and to David a root springing from him.

Rehoboam

1 K 12 Solomon rested with his ancestors, 23 26
leaving one of his stock as his successor, 27
the stupidest member of the nation, 28
brainless Rehoboam, whose policy drove the nation to rebel.[n]

Jeroboam

K 12:26-33 Next, Jeroboam son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, 24 29
and set Ephraim on the way of evil;
1 K 13:33-34 2 K 17:21-23 from then on their sins multiplied so excessively
as to drive them out of their country; 30
for they tried out every kind of wickedness, 25 31
until vengeance overtook them.

Elijah

Jn 5:35 48 Then the prophet Elijah arose like a fire, 1
his word flaring like a torch.
1 K 17:1; 18: 2;19:10,14, 17 It was he who brought famine on them, 2
and who decimated them in his zeal.
By the word of the Lord, he shut up the heavens, 3
1 K 18:36f 2 K 1:10,12 he also, three times, brought down fire.
How glorious you were in your miracles, Elijah! 4
Has anyone reason to boast as you have?—
1 K 17:17-24 rousing a corpse from death, 5
from Sheol by the word of the Most High;
1 K 21:17-24 2 K 1:16 dragging kings down to destruction, 6
and high dignitaries from their beds;
1 K 19:9-18 hearing reproof[a] on Sinai, 7
and decrees of punishment on Horeb;
anointing kings as avengers, 8
and prophets[b] to succeed you;
2 K 2:1-11 taken up in the whirlwind of fire, 9
in a chariot with fiery horses;[c]
Is 40:3 Mt 17:10 designated in the prophecies of doom 10
to allay God's wrath before the fury breaks,
Ml 3:24 Lk 1:17 *to turn the hearts of fathers towards to their children,*
and to restore the tribes of Jacob,

11 Happy shall they be who see you,
and those who have fallen asleep in love;
12 for we too will have life.[d] 2 K 2:10-12

Elisha

12 13 Elijah was shrouded in the whirlwind,
and Elisha was filled with his spirit; 2 K 2:9f
throughout his life no ruler could shake him,
and no one could subdue him.
13 14 No task was too hard for him,
and even in death his body prophesied.[e]
14 15 In his lifetime he performed wonders,
and in death his works were marvellous.

Infidelity and punishment

15 16 Despite all this the people did not repent,
nor did they give up their sins,
until they were herded out of their country
and scattered all over the earth;
16 17 only a few of the people were left,[f]
with a ruler of the House of David.
18 Some of them did what pleased the Lord,
others piled sin on sin.

Hezekiah

17 19 Hezekiah fortified his city, 2 K 20:20+ 2 Ch 32:5,30 Is 22:11
and laid on a water supply inside it;
with iron he tunnelled through the rock
and constructed cisterns.[g]
18 20 In his days Sennacherib invaded 2 K 18:13–19:37 Is 36-37
and sent Rabshakeh;[h]
he lifted his hand against Zion,
and boasted loudly in his arrogance.
19 21 Then their hearts and hands trembled,
they felt the pangs of a woman in labour,
20 22 but they called on the merciful Lord,
stretching out their hands towards him.
Swiftly the Holy One heard them from heaven,
23 and delivered them by the hand of Isaiah,
21 24 he struck the camp of the Assyrians
and his angel massacred them.

songs'· Sg. On the wisdom and literary activity of Solomon, cf. 1 K 5:9-14.

i. Hebr. 'You were called by the glorious name invoked on Israel'; this possibly alludes to the name given to Solomon at his birth: Jedidiah 'beloved-of-Yahweh', 2 S 12:25.

j. Hebr. 'and became their slave through your body'.

k. 'your stock'; Hebr. 'your bed'.

l. 'and grief...' Hebr.; 'and I am grieved at your folly' Greek.

m. 'words' Hebr.; 'works' Greek.

n. Rehoboam...': Hebr. 'broad in his folly, narrow in his mind'. Apparently a play on words in both readings: Rehoboam (Roboam) explained from *raba* (broad) and *am* (people).

48 a. This 'reproof' is perhaps implicit in the vision of 1 K 19:9-14.

b. 'prophets'; Hebr. 'a prophet'.

c. 'in a chariot... horses'; Hebr. 'and with fiery battalions'.

d. 'they who see you'; Hebr. (corr.) 'he who sees you and (dies?)'. 'have fallen asleep'; var. 'have been adorned'. Text uncertain. After his eulogy of the prophet the author asserts that those who will see Elijah when he returns, as also those who have died 'in love' (in the love of God?) will live for ever. This is a clear expression of the hope of immortality. The Hebr., however, unfortunately defective here perhaps only referred to Elisha who 'saw' Elijah disappear (2 K 2:10,12).

e. After dying the prophet raised a dead man to life, 2 K 13:20-21. But the text is overloaded. Hebr. 'beneath him his body was created'.

f. Hebr. 'of Judah only a remnant was left'.

g. 'and constructed cisterns'; Hebr. 'and sealed up reservoirs in the mountains'.

h. Ben Sira's translator has made a proper name out of *rab shakeh* (the 'chief cupbearer'). Greek here adds 'and departed'.

Isaiah

For Hezekiah did what is pleasing to the Lord, 22/25
and was steadfast[i] in the ways of David his father,
enjoined on him by the prophet Isaiah,
a great man trustworthy in his vision.
2 K 20:4-11 Is 38:4-8 In his days the sun moved back; 23/26
he prolonged the life of the king.
In the power of the spirit he saw the last things, 24/27
he comforted the mourners of Zion,
he revealed the future to the end of time, 25/28
and hidden things long before they happened.[j]

Josiah

49 The memory of Josiah is like blended incense 1
prepared by the perfumer's art;
it is as sweet as honey to all mouths, 2
and like music at a wine feast.
2 K 22-23 He took the right course, of converting the people,[a] 2/3
he rooted out the iniquitous abominations,
he set his heart on the Lord, 3/4
in godless times he upheld the cause of religion.

The last kings and prophets

Apart from David, Hezekiah and Josiah, 4/5
they all heaped wrong on wrong;
since they disregarded the Law of the Most High, 6
the kings of Judah disappeared;[b]
since they gave[c] their strength to others 5/7
and their honour to a foreign nation.[d]
The holy, chosen city was burnt down, 6/8
her streets were left deserted,
Lm 1:4; 2:3 as Jeremiah had predicted;[e] for they had ill-treated him 7/9
Jr 1:5 though consecrated a prophet in his mother's womb
Jr 1:10 *to tear up* and afflict *and destroy*,
but also *to build up and to plant.*

Ezk 1 3;9-1 Ezekiel it was who saw a vision of glory 8/10
which God showed to him above the chariot of the Cherubs,[f]
for he remembered the enemies with torrential rain[g] 9/11
to the advantage of those who follow the right way.

As for the twelve prophets, 10/12
46:12+ may their bones flower again from the tomb,
since they have comforted Jacob
and redeemed him in faith and hope.

Zerubbabel and Joshua

How shall we extol Zerubbabel? 11/13
Hg 2:23 He was like a signet ring on the right hand,
so too was Jeshua son of Jozadak; 12/14
they who in their days built the Temple,
and raised to the Lord a holy people,
destined to everlasting glory.

Nehemiah

Great too is the memory of Nehemiah, 13/15
who rebuilt our walls which lay in ruins,

erected the gates and bars
and rebuilt our houses.

Retrospect

14 16 No one else has ever been created on earth to equal Enoch, 44:16
for he was taken up from earth.
15 17 And no one else ever born has been like Joseph,
the leader of his brothers, the prop of his people;
18 his bones were honoured. Gn 50:25-26
16 19 Shem and Seth were honoured among men,
but above every living creature is Adam.[h] Jb 15:7

Simon the high priest

1 50 It was the High Priest Simon son of Onias[a]
who repaired the Temple during his lifetime
and in his day fortified the sanctuary.
2 He laid the foundations of the double height,
the high buttresses of the Temple precincts.[b]
3 In his day the water cistern was excavated,[c]
a reservoir as huge as the sea.
4 Anxious to save the people from ruin,
he fortified the city against siege.
5 How splendid he was with the people thronging round him,[d]
when he emerged from the curtained shrine,[e] Lv 16
6 like the morning star among the clouds, Lv 16:13
like the moon at the full,[f]
7 like the sun shining on the Temple of the Most High,[g]
8 like the rainbow gleaming against brilliant clouds,
8 like roses in the days of spring,[h]
like lilies by a freshet of water,
like a sprig of frankincense in summer-time,
9 like fire and incense in the censer,[i]
10 like a vessel of beaten gold
encrusted with every kind of precious stone,
10 11 like an olive tree loaded with fruit,
like a cypress soaring to the clouds;
11 when he put on his splendid vestments,
and clothed himself in glorious perfection,
12 when he went up to the holy altar,
and filled the sanctuary precincts with his grandeur;
12 13 when he received the portions from the hands of the priests,
himself standing by the altar hearth,

i. Lit. 'was strong'. Play on the name Hezekiah ('Yahweh-makes-strong').

j. Possibly the oracles on the end of the Exile, Is 40-55, or those of ch. 24-27, or of 61.

49 a. Hebr. 'he was grieved by our going astray'.

b. Hebr. 'the kings of Judah down to the last of them'.

c. Hebr. 'he (God) gave'.

d. Either by relying on foreign alliances or by provoking the punishment of exile.

e. Lit. 'by the hand of Jeremiah'.

f. 'which God...'; Hebr. 'he revealed the aspects (i.e. the shape) of the chariot'.

g. Obscure. Possibly an allusion to the prophecy against Gog, Ezk 38-39, notably 38:22. Hebr. 'he also made mention of Job'.

h. Hebr. 'Shem and Seth and Enoch were honoured; above every living thing (they are?) the glory of man (or: of Adam)'.

50 a. 'son of Onias'; Hebr. 'son of Johanan'. The reference is to Simon II, son of Onias III, about 220-195.

b. The 'double height'(?) and the 'high buttresses' cannot be identified with any certainty. Hebr. 'In his time the wall was built and the dwelling towers (?) of the king's palace'.

c. 'was excavated' corr.; 'was reduced' Greek.

d. 'with the people thronging round him'; Hebr. 'as he looked down from the sanctuary'.

e. Lit. 'from the house of the curtain', i.e. the Debir or Holy of Holies, separated from the Hekal by a curtain, Ex 36:35-38. Here the author is describing the ceremonies of the feast of Atonement, Lv 16.

f. Hebr. adds 'on feast days'.

g. 'on the Temple of the Most High'; Hebr. 'on the royal palace'.

h. Hebr. 'like the flower on the bough at festal times'.

i. 'in the censer'; Hebr. 'for the oblation'.

surrounded by a crowd of his brothers,
like a youthful cedar of Lebanon
as though surrounded by the trunks of palm trees. 14
When all the sons of Aaron in their glory, 13
with the offerings of the Lord in their hands, 15
stood before the whole assembly of Israel,
while he completed the rites at the altars, 14
presenting in due order the offering for the Most High, the Almighty,
reaching out his hand to the cup,[j] 15 16
and pouring a libation of the juice of the grape,
pouring it at the foot of the altar, 17
an appeasing fragrance to the Most High, the King of all,
then the sons of Aaron would shout 16 18
Nb 10:2-10 45:9 and blow their trumpets of beaten metal,
making a mighty sound ring out
Nb 10:10 as a reminder before the Most High;
and immediately the people all together 17 19
would fall on their faces to the ground,
in adoration of their Lord,[k]
the Almighty, God Most High,
and with the cantors chanting their hymns of praise: 18 20
sweet was the melody of all these voices,[l]
as the people pleaded with the Lord Most High,[m] 19 21
and prayed in the presence of the Merciful,
until the service[n] of the Lord was completed
and the ceremony at an end.
Lv 9:22 Then he would come down and raise his hands 20 22
over the whole concourse of the sons of Israel,
Nb 6:23-27 to give them the Lord's blessing from his lips,
being privileged to pronounce his name;[o]
and once again the people would bow low 21 23
to receive the blessing from the Most High.

Exhortation

And now bless the God of all things, 22 24
the doer of great deeds everywhere,
who has exalted our days from the womb
and acted towards us in his mercy.
May he grant us cheerful hearts 23 25
and bring peace in our time,
in Israel for ages on ages.[p]
May his mercy be faithfully with us, 24 26
may he redeem us in our time.[q]

Pr 30:15+ **Numerical proverb**

There are two nations that my soul detests, 25 27
the third is not a nation at all:
the inhabitants of Mount Seir,[r] and the Philistines, 26 28
Ps 60:6 and the stupid people living at Shechem.[s]

Conclusion

Instruction in wisdom and knowledge 27 29
has been committed to writing in this book
by Jesus son of Sira, Eleazar, of Jerusalem,
who has rained down wisdom from his heart.[t]
Happy is he who busies himself with these things,[u] 28 30

and grows wise by taking them to heart.
29 31 If he practises them he will be strong enough for anything,
since the light of the Lord is his path.[v]

APPENDICES

A hymn of thanksgiving

1 **51** I will give thanks to you, Lord and King, Ex 15:2
and praise you, God my saviour,
2 I give thanks to your name;
2 for you have been protector and support to me,
3 and redeemed my body from destruction,[a]
from the snare of the lying tongue, Ps 120:2
from lips that fabricate falsehood;
and in the presence of those around me
you have been my support; you have redeemed me,
3 4 true to the greatness of your mercy and of your name, Ex 34:6 Ps 103:8
from the fangs of those who would devour me,
5 from the hands of those seeking my life, Ps 35:4
from the many ordeals which I have endured,
4 6 from the stifling heat which hemmed me in,
from the heart of a fire which I had not kindled,
5 7 from deep in the belly of Sheol, Nb 16:33+
from the unclean tongue and the lying word—
6 the perjured tongue slandering me to the king.
8 My soul has been close to death,
9 my life had gone down to the brink of Sheol.
7 10 They were surrounding me on every side, there was no one
to support me;
I looked for someone to help—in vain.
8 11 Then I remembered your mercy, Lord, Ps 25:6
and your deeds from earliest times,
12 how you deliver those who wait for you patiently,
and save them from the clutches of their enemies.
9 13 And I sent up my plea from the earth,
I begged to be delivered from death,[b]
10 14 I called on the Lord, the father of my Lord,[c]
'Do not desert me[d] in the days of ordeal,
in the time of my helplessness against the proud.

j. Reference to a libation not described in Lv. Cf. Ex 29:12; Lv 8:15, where blood is used.

k. 'the people'; Hebr. 'all flesh'. 'in adoration of their Lord'; Hebr. 'before the Most High, the Holy One of Israel'.

l. Hebr. 'and over the multitude they prepared its lamp'.

m. Hebr. 'and all the people of the country shouted'.

n. 'service' following Hebr.; 'adornment' Greek.

o. The feast of the Atonement was the only occasion on which the sacrosanct name could be pronounced over the people as a form of blessing.

p. Vv. 22-23 Hebr. 'Now bless Yahweh the God of Israel who works wonders on the earth, who brings man forth from the womb, who acts as his will dictates; may he give wisdom to our heart and may peace reign among us'.

q. Hebr. 'May his mercy be faithfully with Simon, may he fulfil in him the covenant of Phinehas, may it not be withdrawn from him or from his posterity as long as the heavens endure'.

r. 'Seir' corr. following Hebr.; 'Samaria' Greek. Hebr. 'The inhabitants of Seir and of Philistia'.

s. The Samaritans.

t. Hebr. 'Wise instruction and well thought-out proverbs of Simeon, son of Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sira'.

u. Hebr. 'Happy the man who meditates'.

v. Hebr. 'for the fear of Yahweh is life'. Some Greek MSS add 'and to devout men he gives wisdom. Blessed be the Lord for ever. Amen. Amen.'

51 a. Hebr. 'Stronghold of my life, for you have delivered my soul from death, you have saved my flesh from the pit, you have kept my foot from Sheol, you have protected me from the slander of the people and the snare', etc.

b. Hebr. 'and I prayed from the gates of Sheol'.

c. This expression may suggest a Christian interpretation intruded into the Greek text; possibly, however, it is simply an imaginative translation of a corrupt text. But cf. Ps 2:7; 110:1 (LXX). Hebr. 'I cried out: Yahweh, you are a father and the mighty one of my salvation'.

d. 'Do not desert me' corr. following Hebr.; 'not

I will praise your name unceasingly, 15
and gratefully sing its praises.'
And my plea was heard,[e] 11
for you saved me from destruction, 16
you delivered me from that time of evil.
And therefore I will thank you and praise you, 12 17
and bless the name of the Lord.[f]

A poem on the quest for wisdom[g]

6:18; 15:2f; 34:9-12 Ws 8:2
When I was still a youth, before I went travelling, 13 18
in my prayers I asked outright for wisdom.
Outside the sanctuary I would pray for her, 14 19
and to the last I will continue to seek her.
From her blossoming to the ripening of her grape 15
my heart has taken its delight in her. 20
Ps 25:5; 26:3
My foot has pursued a straight path,
I have been following her steps ever since my youth.
By bowing my ear a little I have received her, 16 21
and have found much instruction. 22
Thanks to her I have advanced; 17
the glory be to him who has given me wisdom![h] 23
For I am determined to put her into practice, 18 24
I have earnestly pursued what is good, I will not be put to shame.[i]
My soul has fought[j] to possess her, 19 25
I have been scrupulous in keeping the Law;
I have stretched out my hands to heaven 26
and bewailed my ignorance of her;
I have directed my soul towards her, 20 27
and in purity have found her;
having my heart fixed on her from the outset, 28
I shall never be deserted;[k]
my very core having yearned to discover her, 21 29
I have now acquired a good possession.
In reward the Lord has given me a tongue 22 30
with which I shall sing his praises.

Ws 6:23
Come close to me, you uninstructed, 23 31
take your place in my school.
Why complain about lacking these things 24 32
Am 8:11
when your souls are so thirsty for them?
I have opened my mouth and spoken: 25 33
Pr 4:5,7 Is 55:1
'Buy her without money,
Rm 10:8
put your necks under her yoke, 26 34
and let your souls receive instruction;[l]
Dt 30:11-14
she is not far to seek.[m]
See for yourselves: how slight my efforts have been 27 35
to win so much peace.
Pr 16:16 Mt 13:44-46
Buy instruction with a large sum of silver,[n] 28 36
thanks to her you will gain much gold.
May your souls rejoice in the mercy of the Lord, 29 37
may you never be ashamed of praising him.
Do your work before the appointed time 30 38
and he in his time will give you your reward.'[o]

[Subscript:][p] Wisdom of Jesus son of Sira.

to desert me' Greek.

51 e. Hebr. 'Then God heard my voice and gave ear to my prayers'.

f. The Hebr. here inserts a psalm of praise which resembles Ps 136 and the *Shemoneh Esreh* (the 'eighteen' prayers recited daily by Jews) cf. also Si 36:1-17:

'Praise Yahweh, for his love is everlasting.
Praise the God of praise, for his love is everlasting.
Praise the keeper of Israel, for his love is everlasting.
Praise the creator of the universe, for his love is everlasting.
Praise him who redeems Israel, for his love is everlasting.
Praise him who gathers the dispersed of Israel, for his love is everlasting.
Praise him who built his city and his Temple, for his love is everlasting.
Praise him who makes the horn of the House of David flourish, for his love is everlasting.
Praise him who has chosen the sons of Zadok as his priests, for his love is everlasting.
Praise the buckler of Abraham, for his love is everlasting.
Praise the rock of Israel, for his love is everlasting.
Praise the Mighty One of Jacob, for his love is everlasting.
Praise him who has chosen Zion, for his love is everlasting.
Praise the king of kings of kings, for his love is everlasting.
He raises the horn of his people and the praise of all his faithful,
the sons of Israel, the people close to him.
Alleluia.'

g. This is an alphabetical poem, cf. Pr 31:10+, in the Hebr. the text of which is unfortunately in a poor state of preservation.

h. Hebr. 'Her yoke was an honour for me, to him who instructs me I will give thanks'.

i. Hebr. 'and I will never leave her once I have found her'.

j. 'has fought'; Hebr. 'has embraced her'. For the following lines Hebr. has 'and I have not averted my face from her; my hand opened her gates, I went in(?) and gazed on her'.

k. Hebr. 'and so I shall not desert her'.

l. 'instruction'; Hebr. 'the burden'.

m. Hebr. adds 'and the man who gives his soul to her will find her'.

n. Text probably corrupt.

o. Hebr. adds 'Blessed be Yahweh for ever, and may his name be praised from generation to generation'.

p. Hebr. 'Thus far the words of Simeon son of Jesus, called Ben Sira. Wisdom of Simeon, son of Jesus, son of Eleazar, son of Sira. May the name of Yahweh be blessed from now and for ever.'

THE PROPHETS

INTRODUCTION TO
THE PROPHETS

The Hebrew Bible groups the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and that of the Twelve Minor prophets under the title of 'Later Prophets'; this collection it puts after the Joshua-Kings group which it entitles 'Earlier Prophets'. The Greek Bible puts the prophetic books after the Psalms and the Wisdom Books (the 'Writings' or 'Hagiographa') arranging them differently from the Hebrew and adding to them Lamentations and Daniel (which the Hebrew Bible places towards the end of its catalogue); it also contains additional material not written, or not preserved, in Hebrew, including the Book of Baruch (after Jeremiah), the Letter of Jeremiah (after Lamentations), and the additions to the Book of Daniel. The Latin Vulgate has substantially adopted this arrangement but has followed the Hebrew in putting the minor after the four major prophets, and has appended the Letter of Jeremiah to the Book of Baruch which has been placed after Lamentations.

The nature of prophecy

To a greater or lesser degree and in varying forms, the great religions of antiquity always had their 'inspired' men who claimed to be speaking in the name of the god. This was particularly true of Israel's neighbours: texts from the second millenium B.C. tell of prophetic activity at Mari on the Euphrates and at Byblos in Phoenicia. More detailed evidence comes from the Bible itself which speaks of the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal summoned by Jezebel, a native of Tyre, and discomfited by Elijah on Mt Carmel, 1 K 18:19-40; and the Bible goes on to speak of the four hundred prophets consulted by Ahab, 1 K 22:5-12. Like the former, these were a group of wild ecstatics, though they claimed to speak in the name of Yahweh. The claim was false, but evidently contemporary Yahwism recognised that such an institution was not in itself illegitimate. We find groups of 'inspired' men in company with Samuel, 1 S 10:5; 19:20, and in the time of Elijah, 1 K 18:4, prophetic confraternities were in touch with Elisha, 2 K 2:3-18; 4:38f; 6:1f; 9:1; this is the last we hear of them save for the allusion in Am 7:14. Under the influence of music, 1 S 10:5, they would either go into a collective ecstasy that also affected their audience, 1 S 10:10; 19:20-24, or perform symbolic mimes, 1 K 22:11.

Elisha himself on one occasion resorted to music before prophesying, 2 K 3:15. More common with the prophets was the symbolic action; thus Ahijah of Shiloh, 1 K 11:29f, but also Isaiah, Is 20:2-4, frequently Jeremiah, Jr 13:1f; 19:1f; 27:2f, notably Ezekiel, 4:1-5:4; 12:17,18; 21:23f; 37:15f. During these performances, or on other occasions, their behaviour was at times extravagant and their psychological states abnormal, but these things were only incidental to the proper work of those prophets whose actions and words

the Bible preserves for us. In this they are sharply distinguished from the ecstatics of the ancient prophetic confraternities.

Nevertheless, they are called by the same name, *nabi*. Doubtless the derived verb sometimes means 'to be beside oneself', 1 S 18:10 and elsewhere, from the way in which certain 'prophets' behaved, but this secondary use does not affect the original meaning of the noun itself. It is more probable that this noun is connected with a root that means 'to call, to proclaim'. The *nabi* is therefore either 'he who is called' or 'he who proclaims'; these two meanings together describe the essence of prophecy in Israel. The prophet is the bearer and interpreter of the word of God. This is succinctly expressed in two parallel passages: in Ex 4:15-16, Aaron is the interpreter of Moses, Aaron the 'mouth' of Moses, Moses 'the god who inspired him'; in Ex 7:1, Moses is to be 'a god for Pharaoh', and Aaron his 'prophet' (*nabi*). We are reminded of the words of Yahweh to Jeremiah: 'I am putting my words into your mouth', Jr 1:9. The prophets are aware that their message is from God, introducing it with the words 'Yahweh says this', 'Word of Yahweh', 'Oracle of Yahweh'.

This word compels them and they must speak it: 'The Lord Yahweh speaks: who can refuse to prophesy?' Amos cries, Am 3:8, and Jeremiah struggles vainly in its grip, Jr 20:7-10.

At a point in their lives each received an irresistible divine call, Am 7:15; Is 6, cf. especially Jr 1:4-10, and was chosen as God's envoy, Is 6:8; the price of attempting to elude this vocation is stated in the early part of the story of Jonah. These men were sent to proclaim God's demands and to be 'signs' of this divine will in their own persons. For it is not only the words they speak and the actions they perform that tell of God, but their whole lives. Hosea's unhappy marriage is a symbol, Ho 1-3; Isaiah walks naked for a portent, Is 20:3, and he with his children are 'signs and portents', Is 8:18; the life of Jeremiah is itself a lesson, Jr 16; Ezekiel is 'a sign for the House of Israel' when he carries out the strange commands of God, Ezk 4:3; 12:6,11; 24:24.

The divine message comes to them in various ways: by vision as in Is 6, Ezk 1,2,8, etc., Dn 8-12, Zc 1-6 (but rarely by night, cf. Nb 12:6; cf. Dn 7; Zc 1:8f), by hearing, but most often by internal inspiration (in this sense we are usually to understand the formulae: 'The word of Yahweh came to me', 'Word of Yahweh to...'), sometimes unexpectedly, sometimes occasioned by some quite ordinary circumstance like the sight of an almond branch, Jr 1:11, of two baskets of figs, Jr 24, or a visit to the potter's workshop, Jr 18:1-4. Equally various are the methods the prophets use to convey their message: lyrical fragments, prose narratives, in parable or direct speech, curt oracular style or the various literary forms of exhortation, diatribe, sermon, proverb, formal psalms, love songs, satire, funeral lament, etc.

This variety in both reception and transmission of the divine message is in large part due to the individual temperament and natural talents of each prophet. Yet beneath this variety there is something all have in common: the genuine prophet is fully aware that he is a mouthpiece, no more; his words though his own are not his own. He has no doubt that the word of God has come to him and that he must pass it on to others. The source of this conviction is a mysterious, we may call it mystical, experience of a direct contact with God. As we have said, the divine seizure often provokes 'abnormal' manifestations but, as with the great mystics, these are incidental. It is important to

notice that the prophet, like the mystic, is raised to a 'supranormal' psychological state by this divine intervention. To deny this would be to reduce the prophet to the rank of poet or to credit him with the illusions of misguided visionaries.

The prophet rarely addresses his message to a single person, Is 22:15f, or, if he does so, it is with others in view, Jr 20:6; Am 7:17. The king, responsible for the whole nation, is an exception. Thus Nathan in the case of David, Elijah in that of Ahab, Isaiah of Ahaz and Hezekiah, Jeremiah of Zedekiah; after the return from exile the high priest, leader of the community, is also the recipient of the prophetic message, Zc 3. In every description of a prophet's call, it is made clear that his mission is to the nation, Am 7:15; Is 6:9; Ezk 2:3, or, in the case of Jeremiah, to all the nations.

The prophet's message relates to both present and future. His mission is to the men of his own time; to them he communicates the will of God. But in so far as he declares the mind of God he stands beyond time and his preaching is supported and continued by the fulfilment of the predictions he makes. At times he foretells some event in the near future the realisation of which will vindicate his words and his divine mission, 1 S 10:1f; Is 7:14; Jr 28:15f; 44:29-30; at times he tells of punishment to come in retribution for the crimes against which he thunders, or of prosperity in reward for the repentance for which he pleads. Prophets of the later period look still further ahead to the final triumph of God, though here too there is always a lesson for the present. Since the prophet, however, is an instrument of God and no more, his message may exceed the bounds of its historical context and even of his own appreciation; the message may remain veiled in mystery until the future explains its significance by fulfilling it, as in the case of the messianic prophecies.

There are two aspects to the message, threat and consolation. Jeremiah was sent 'to tear up and to knock down, to build up and to plant'. And indeed the message often makes bitter hearing, a tissue of menaces and reproaches, so much so that severity comes to be a sign that a prophet is genuine, Jr 28:8-9, cf. Jr 26:16-19; 1 K 22:8. This is because the true prophet is haunted by the idea of sin, the obstacle to the will of God. The prospects of salvation, however, are never forgotten. The Book of Consolation, Is 40-55, is a peak of prophecy; nor is there any justification for questioning the authenticity of passages in the older prophets which speak of future happiness, passages such as we find in Am 9:8-15; Ho 2:16-25; 11:8-11; 14:2-9. In God's dealings with his people, pardon and punishment are complementary.

Though the prophet is sent to the people of Israel, his vision, like the strong arm of God which is his theme, reaches more distant horizons. In the major prophets there are groups of oracles against the nations, Is 13-23; Jr 46-51; Ezk 25-32; the Book of Amos opens with sentence pronounced on Israel's neighbours; Obadiah delivers an oracle against Edom; Nahum is one long oracle against Nineveh.

The prophet himself knows that he speaks in God's name, but what of his hearers? Spurious prophets appear more than once in the Bible. Such prophets may be sincere but deluded, or they may be deliberate frauds; they are not distinguished from the true prophet by their behaviour. They succeed in duping the people, and the genuine prophets are forced to denounce them; thus Micaiah ben Imlah denounces the prophets of Ahab, 1 K 22:8f, Jeremiah attacks

Hananiah, Jr 28, and all spurious prophets in general, Jr 23, Ezekiel condemns prophets and prophetesses in Israel, Ezk 13. How are men to know if a message is from God? How recognise the genuine prophet? The Old Testament offers two criteria: the fulfilment of a prophecy, Jr 28:9; Dt 18:22; and cf. 1 S 10:1f; Is 7:14; Jr 28:15f; 44:29-30, but also, and of more importance, the agreement of the prophet's teaching with Yahwistic doctrine, Jr 23:22; Dt 13:1-6.

The texts we have quoted from Deuteronomy show that prophecy was an officially recognised institution of Israelite religion. The prophets were on occasion associated with the priests, Jr 8:1; 23:11; 26:7f, etc.; Zc 7:3, etc., and Jeremiah tells us that in the Temple at Jerusalem there was a room 'of Benjohanan, a man of God', probably a prophet. From these indications and from similarities between some prophetic messages and liturgical compositions, certain recent scholars have inferred that the prophets, even the most notable among them, were attached to the Temple and played an official part in its worship. This hypothesis goes far beyond the evidence of the texts on which it is built; these are sufficiently explained by some looser connection between the prophets and the main centres of Israelite worship, as also by the influence of the liturgy on certain of the prophets' oracles, in particular those of Habakkuk, Zechariah and Joel.

The nature of the prophetic function has to be deduced from a variety of facts and of texts, but from these emerges this fundamental idea: the prophet is one who has an immediate experience of God; he is one to whom the holiness and will of God have been revealed; he contemplates present and future through the eyes of God; he is sent to remind men of their duty to God and to bring them back to obedience and love. Prophecy thus understood is a thing peculiar to Israel, a providential instrument of God for the guidance of his chosen people.

History of the prophetic movement

Given this definition of the prophet's nature and function, it is not surprising that Moses is accounted the father of them all, Dt 18:5,18, and their most distinguished representative, Nb 12:6-8; Dt 34:10-12, for he spoke with God face to face and conveyed his Law to the chosen people. His privileges did not die with him and 'the spirit dwells' in Joshua, his successor, Nb 27:18, cf. Dt 34:9. In the period of the Judges we meet Deborah the prophetess, Jg 4-5, and the unnamed prophet of Jg 6:8, and later Samuel himself, prophet and seer, 1 S 3:20; 9:9; cf. 2 Ch 35:18. Subsequently the prophetic spirit is found diffused among the groups of visionaries whose eccentric behaviour has already been mentioned, 1 S 10:5; 19:20, after whom come the more sober confraternities, the 'sons of the prophets', 2 K 2, etc.; even after the return from exile we still hear of 'prophets' spoken of in the plural, Zc 7:3. Nothing is known of the influence of these confraternities on the religious life of the nation, but other prophets appear, not of their number, whose influence is considerable: thus Gad, prophet of David, 1 S 22:5; 2 S 24:11, and Nathan, under the same king, 2 S 7:2f; 12:1f; 1 K 1:11f; so also Ahijah under Jeroboam, 1 K 11:29f; 14:2f, Jehu son of Hanani under Baasha, 1 K 16:7, Elijah and Elisha under Ahab and his successors, 1 K 17 to 2 K 13 *passim*, Jonah under Jeroboam II, 2 K 14:25, the prophetess Huldah under Josiah, 2 K 22:14f, Uriah under Jehoiakim, Jr 26:20. To this list the Books of Chronicles add Shemaiah under Rehoboam, 2 Ch 12:5f, Iddo under Rehoboam and under Abijah, 2 Ch 12:15; 13:22, Azariah under

Asa, 2 Ch 15:1f, Oded under Ahaz, 2 Ch 28:9f, and a few others whose names are not given.

Most of these prophets are barely more than mentioned, but we know a little more about a few of them. Nathan is the prophet who assures David of the permanence of his divinely favoured dynasty—the first of a series of prophecies, becoming clearer as time goes on, of the Messiah, son of David, 2 S 7:1-17. This same prophet reproves David for his adultery with Bathsheba but, on his repentance, assures him of God's forgiveness, 2 S 12:1-24. Elijah and Elisha we know relatively well, thanks to the narratives in the Books of Kings. Elijah appears as the champion of the true God at a time when imported pagan cults are threatening the religion of Yahweh; on the summit of Carmel he wins a signal victory over the prophets of Baal, 1 K 18. His meeting with God at Horeb, the mountain of the covenant, shows how closely his own work is related to that of Moses, 1 K 19. He is the champion of the true faith indeed but also of sound morals; he sternly pronounces God's judgement on Ahab who has murdered Naboth for the sake of his vineyard, 1 K 21. An aura surrounds this figure whose disappearance is so mysteriously described, 2 K 2:1-18, and in Jewish tradition Elijah has grown more important with the passage of time. Unlike him, Elisha the hermit-prophet, plays a prominent part in contemporary affairs: in the Moabite war, 2 K 3, in the wars against the Syrians, 2 K 6-7, in Hazael's usurpation at Damascus, 2 K 8:7-15, and Jehu's usurpation in Israel, 2 K 9:1-3. He is consulted by the powerful, by Jehoash of Israel, 2 K 13:14-18, Ben-hadad of Damascus, 2 K 8:7-8, Naaman the Syrian, 2 K 5. He is also connected with the confraternities of the 'sons of the prophets', who related marvellous tales about him, 2 K 4:1-7,38-44; 6:1-7.

Not unnaturally most of our information is about the prophets in the scriptural canon. Each of these will be treated separately when the books bearing their names are discussed; meanwhile we may indicate their relationship to the whole prophetic movement. The ministry of Amos is dated in the mid-8th century, about fifty years after the death of Elisha, and the great age of prophecy (less than two centuries) continues until the Exile; the period is dominated by the two great figures of Isaiah and Jeremiah, though to the same epoch belong Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah and Habakkuk. The end of the ministry of Jeremiah coincides with the beginning of that of Ezekiel, the prophet of the Exile. But with Ezekiel the atmosphere changes: spontaneity and verve decline, the visions are on the grand scale and very involved, their description is meticulous, and interest in the 'latter days' increases; in short, apocalyptic literary form is beginning to make its appearance. In this period, even so, the great Isaian tradition is continued, with elaborations, in Is 40-55 (the 'Book of Consolation'). Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets of the Return, are more restricted in their outlook: they are entirely concerned with the rebuilding of the Temple. After these comes Malachi to point out the defects of the newly established community. The short Book of Jonah follows; adapting the ancient and sacred texts to teach its new lesson, it heralds the literary form called 'midrash'. In Joel and in the second part of Zechariah we re-encounter the apocalyptic literary fashion set by Ezekiel; so too in Daniel, where images of past and future come together in one great vision that transcends time, a vision of the destruction of evil and of the coming of the kingdom of God. At this point, it seems, the high inspiration of the prophets is exhausted and we begin

to hear of the 'prophets of old', Dn 9:6,10, and cf., even before, Zc 7:7,12, while Zc 13:2-6 foresees the end of a prophetic office discredited by prophets who have proved spurious. But an outpouring of the spirit is promised for messianic times in Jl 3:1-5, and the promise is fulfilled at Pentecost, cf. Ac 2:16f; since this was the true beginning of the new age initiated by the preaching of the Baptist, the last of the prophets of the old Law, 'a prophet and more than a prophet', Mt 11:9; Lk 7:26.

The teaching of the prophets

The prophets played an important part in the religious development of Israel. They strove to keep the nation faithful to the true religion of Yahweh but, additionally, were the instruments especially chosen by God to further divine revelation. In this multiple activity each prophet made his own characteristic contribution to the doctrinal structure. These contributions were complementary, continuing to assert the three dominant features of Old Testament theology: monotheism, morality, messianism.

Monotheism: this was no new thing to the prophets. When Amos, earliest of the canonical prophets, describes Yahweh as the only God, lord of nature, master of men and their destinies, he is simply recalling old truths in strong support of his threats. But the teaching and implications of this ancient faith emerge ever more clearly. Because the Sinaitic revelation of the one God had been associated with the idea of choice and covenant, Yahweh might well appear as a God exclusive to Israel, tied to the land and its shrines. The prophets do indeed insist on the bond between Yahweh and his chosen people, but they also show how the fortunes of other nations are in his hands, Am 9:7. He sits as judge over smallest states as over widest empires, Am 1-2 (cf. also all the 'prophecies against the nations'), he grants them power and withdraws it, Jr 27:5-8, he uses them as instruments and weapons of his vengeance, Am 6:11; Is 7:18-19; 10:6; Jr 5:15-17, but drops them when he pleases, Is 10:12. The land of Israel is Yahweh's possession, Jr 7:7, the Temple his home, Is 6; Jr 7:10-11, but the prophets foretell destruction for the Temple, Mi 3:12; Jr 7:12-14; 26, and Ezekiel foresees the glory of Yahweh deserting Jerusalem, Ezk 10:18-22; 11:22-23.

By the side of Yahweh, lord of all the earth, there is no place for any other gods. When pagan cults, and compromises with them, threaten the faith of Israel, the prophets assert the impotence of false gods and the worthlessness of idols, Ho 2:7-15; Jr 2:5-13,27-28; 5:7; 16:20. During the Exile, when the hopes of the nation collapse and the power of Yahweh may have seemed defeated, the indictment of idols becomes more biting as well as more reasoned, Is 40:19-20; 41:6-7,21-24; 44:9-20; 46:1-7; cf. Jr 10:1-16, and at a later date the Letter of Jeremiah, Ba 6, and Dn 14; while the assertion of monotheism grows all the more vigorous, Is 44:6-8; 46:1-7,9.

This one God is transcendent, an attribute for which the favourite expression of the prophets is 'holy'; this is a recurrent theme in the preaching of Isaiah (Is 6 and passim: 1:4; 5:19,24; 10:17,20, etc.), but also cf. Ho 11:9; Is 40:25; 41:14,16,20, etc., Jr 50:29; 51:5; Hab 1:12; 3:3. He is wrapped in mystery, Is 6; Ezk 1, and is infinitely above the 'sons of men' (Ezekiel's continually recurring phrase emphasising the distance between the prophet and the God

who speaks to him). And yet he is near; his kindness makes him so; and it is more than kindness, for Hosea and Jeremiah present it in allegory as wedded love between Yahweh and Israel, Ho 2; Jr 2:2-7; 3:6-8, an allegory which Ezekiel draws out at length, Ezk 16 and 23.

Morality: God is pure holiness, man a thing unclean, Is 6:5, a conviction which gives the prophets a sharp appreciation of sin. This entirely moral outlook is no more an innovation than monotheism; it is implicit in the ancient Decalogue, it lies behind Nathan's rebuke of David, 2 S 12, and Elijah's rebuke of Ahab, 1 K 21. But in our canonical prophets it becomes a repeated theme: sin is what divides man from God, Is 59:2, since sin is an offence against the God of Justice (Amos), the God of Love (Hosea), the God of Holiness (Isaiah). It may be said that sin is central to the vision of Jeremiah; it infects the entire nation, corrupting it, as it seems, beyond hope, Jr 13:23. Wickedness is rife and invites the vengeance of God, the great judgement of 'the day of Yahweh', Is 2:6-22; 5:18-20; Ho 5:9-14; Jl 2:1-2; Zp 1:14-18, so surely that for Jeremiah a criterion of genuine prophecy is that it should foretell disaster, Jr 28:8-9. As the sin is national and collective, so too must be the punishment; even so, the idea of individual punishment also makes its appearance in Jr 31:29-30 (cf. Dt 24:16) and is confirmed in Ezk 18, cf. 33:10-20.

Parallel with this runs a deepening appreciation of what religion demands. If a man is to escape punishment for his sins, he must 'seek God', Am 5:4; Jr 50:4; Zp 2:3, and this means, as Zephaniah explains, observing God's commandments, pursuing what is right, practising humility, cf. Is 1:17; Am 5:24; Ho 10:12; Mi 6:8. God asks for a religion of the heart, and Jeremiah declares this to be a condition of the covenant that is to come, Jr 31:31-34. Religion and external worship must live by this spirit; the prophets attack all ritual practice not related to moral conduct, Is 1:11-17; Jr 6:20; Ho 6:6; Mi 6:6-8.

Messianism: God, however, does not make the punishment of sin an end in itself. He does not want his people to perish utterly; they may repeatedly betray him—he still does not forsake his promise. A 'remnant' will be allowed to survive, Is 4:3+. This idea makes its appearance in Amos, 5:15; in the subsequent prophets it is developed and further defined. There is in the prophetic mind no perspective to distinguish God's imminent punitive intervention from his remote and final judgement; hence the 'remnant' is at one and the same time those who survive the immediate peril and those who are to win final salvation. The course of history itself will distinguish these perspectives. Crisis succeeds crisis and the survivors of each successive crisis are the 'remnant': they are the population of Israel suffered to remain after the fall of Samaria, Am 5:15, or of Judah after Sennacherib's invasion, Is 37:31-32; they are the exiles in Babylon after the fall of Jerusalem. Jr 24:8; they are also those who return to Palestine after the Exile, Zc 8:6,11,12; Ezr 9:8,13-15. But whatever the crisis, these survivors are always considered as the promising shoot, the nucleus, of a sacred nation, divinely assured of its great future, Is 11:10; 37:31; Mi 4:7; 5:6-7; Ezk 37:12-14; Zc 8:11-13.

In this future age there will be such happiness as the chosen people have never known; those of Israel and of Judah who have been scattered among the nations will return to a Land of Promise, Is 11:12-13; Jr 30-31, astonishingly

fertile, Is 30:23-26; 32:15-17, and the people of God will take vengeance on their enemies, Mi 4:11-13; 5:6-8. Material prosperity and power do not, however, lie at the heart of the prophetic hope; they are only concomitants of the coming of the kingdom of God, for this, the essential hope, implies a profoundly spiritual outlook: virtue and holiness, Is 29:19-24, a new mode of life and divine forgiveness, Jr 31:31-34, true knowledge of God, Is 2:3; 11:9; Jr 31:34, peace and joy, Is 2:4; 9:6; 11:6-8; 29:19.

To establish his kingdom on earth and to rule it, Yahweh the King will have his vicegerent, his Messiah, anointed (as the word means) to royal dignity. Foreseeing his choice, God, speaking through the prophet Nathan, promised David that his dynasty would endure, 2 S 7. Of this Davidic line would come the Messiah, Is 11:1; Jr 23:5-33:15. As the messianic expectation grew, an intense significance was found in the prophecies in which the prophets had expressed their own hopes: the noblest titles conceivable would be his, Is 9:5, and the spirit of Yahweh with its great sum of gifts would rest on him, Is 11:1-5. Isaiah, 7:14, calls him *Immanuel* ('God-with-us'), and Jeremiah, 23:6, *Yahweh sidqenu* ('Yahweh-is-our-righteousness'); the two titles sum up the messianic hope in its purest form. Any pointers to the identity of the Messiah were collected and remembered: he would originate in Bethlehem Ephratha, Mi 5:1, and would be preceded by a messenger, Ml 3:1.

This great hope survived the collapse of pretentions to political domination and the hard lesson of the Exile. Henceforth, the prophets begin to speak of the second David not so much as a mighty king, but rather as a mediator or as a shepherd, Ex 34:23f, meek and humble, Zc 9:9. Of especial significance is the appearance in the second half of Isaiah of the servant of Yahweh; this figure is not given the name Messiah, but he is represented as the teacher of his people and a light to the nations, a gentle preacher of the law of God, despised and rejected by his own, yet winning their salvation at the sacrifice of his own life, Is 42:1-7; 49:1-9; 50:4-9, and especially 52:13–53:12. The prophet Daniel, however, sees someone like a son of man coming on the clouds to receive dominion over all the nations, a kingdom never to fail, Dn 7, from the hand of God.

This messianic expectation runs throughout the history and sustains the faith of Israel. It was, however, expressed in terms that remained mysterious until the coming of the one who gave full realisation to the prophecies and resolved their apparent contradictions in himself, i.e., Jesus called the Christ (that is to say, the Messiah), descended from David, born in Bethlehem, the peaceful king of Zechariah, the suffering servant of Isaiah, the child Immanuel foretold by Isaiah, the Son of Man from the heavens foreseen by Daniel. The New Testament applies all these prophetic texts to Jesus and they now mean infinitely more to Christians than to those who first heard them pronounced.

The books of the prophets

The prophets after whom the canonical books are named are commonly called 'writing prophets'. The term is unfortunate. From what has been said of the prophetic function it is evident that the prophet was not a writer; he was first and foremost a speaker, a preacher. His message was originally a spoken one, and the question arises: how did it become a written book?

The contents of these books are of three different kinds: 1. There are the 'prophetic sayings'; these are 'oracles', spoken either by God or by the prophet

in God's name or else they are poetic passages conveying some teaching, prediction, threat, promise, etc.; 2. Narratives told in the first person: here the prophet relates his own experiences, and principally his own vocation; 3. Narratives in the third person: these recount events in the prophet's life or the conditions in which he worked. These three *genres* are not mutually exclusive; indeed, narrative sections frequently include either oracle or discourse.

The passages in the third person point to an author other than the prophet. There is clear proof of this in the Book of Jeremiah. The prophet has dictated to Baruch, Jr 36:4, all the words that he has uttered in God's name over a period of twenty-three years, cf. Jr 25:3. When this collection was burned by King Jehoiakim, Jr 36:23, a fresh scroll was written by the same Baruch, Jr 36:32. The account of all this could have come only from Baruch himself; to him we must also attribute the biographical narratives that follow, Jr 37-44, though they close with a message of comfort for Baruch from Jeremiah, Jr 45:1-5. A remark is also made to the effect that Baruch's second scroll, Jr 36:32, contained 'many similar words in addition' (added by Baruch or by others).

Similar circumstances may lie behind the composition of other prophetic books. Probably the prophets themselves either wrote or dictated a part of their prophecies or an account of their experiences, cf. Is 8:1; 30:8; Jr 30:2; 51:60; Ezk 43:11; Hab 2:2. Some part of this prophetic legacy may have been faithfully preserved by the oral tradition of the prophets' followers or by disciples of these latter (that Isaiah had disciples would appear from Is 8:16). These same groups would have treasured recollections of the prophet's life as well as of his oracles: thus, for example, the traditions about Isaiah incorporated in the Books of Kings, 2 K 18-20, and carried over from there into the Book of Isaiah, Is 36-39; so also the account of the conflict between Amos and Amaziah, Am 7:10-17.

From these various units collections were formed: related oracles and passages either dealing with the same subject (e.g. the passages against the nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) or else weighing threat of punishment against promise of salvation (as in Micah) were drawn together. All these became the subject of reading and meditation and helped to keep alive for new generations the spirit of the prophets who had gone before. Thus Jeremiah's contemporaries quote one of the prophecies of Micah, Jr 26:17-18, and reference is often made to the former prophets, Jr 28:8, a reference that becomes a recurrent formula in Jr 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; etc., and cf. Zc 1:4-6; 7:7,12; Dn 9:6,10; Ezr 9:11. The books of the prophets were kept alive by groups of the devout who found in them the food for their faith and devotion; indeed, as in the case of Baruch's scroll, Jr 36:32, 'many similar words were added', under divine inspiration, either to adapt the books to the spiritual needs of a new generation or to improve them. Sometimes, as we shall see when we deal with the Books of Isaiah and Zechariah, these additions could be considerable. By making such alterations, the heirs of the prophets considered that they were at once preserving and maturing the treasure received from their masters.

In the Hebrew Bible and in the Greek and Latin versions, as in this edition, the books of the four major prophets appear in chronological order. The arrangement of the twelve minor prophets is more arbitrary, but we shall discuss them here in order of composition, in so far as this can be established.

Isaiah

The prophet Isaiah was born in about 765 B.C. In the year of King Uzziah's death, 740, he received his prophetic vocation while in the Temple of Jerusalem: his mission was to proclaim the fall of Israel and of Judah, the punishment of the nation's infidelity, 6:1-13. His earliest pronouncements, ch. 1-5, for the most part belong to the following years until the beginning of the reign of Ahaz in 736. Rezin, king of Damascus, and Pekah, king of Israel, tried to persuade the young king of Judah to form an alliance against Tiglath-pileser III, king of Assyria. Ahaz refused and, when war was declared, appealed to Assyria. Isaiah tried in vain to discourage a policy so based on human expediency; as the pledge of God's intentions he foretold the mysterious birth of Immanuel and made the first of his messianic prophecies. Most of the oracles contained in ch. 6-12 (the 'Book of Immanuel'), belong to this period. The appeal of Ahaz to Tiglath-pileser put Judah under Assyrian protection and hastened the fall of the Northern Kingdom, part of the territory of which was annexed by Assyria in 734; by 721 Samaria itself had fallen. In Judah, Hezekiah who succeeded Ahaz (716) was a devout man, bent on reform. There was a resumption, however, of political intrigue, this time for Egyptian support against Assyria. Isaiah, true to his principles, pleaded for trust in God, not in a military alliance. In this period just before and after the fall of Samaria, Isaiah delivered most of the oracles of ch. 28-32, and also the oracles against the nations 14:24-23:18. Hezekiah allowed himself to be drawn into an anti-Assyrian revolt and Sennacherib, in 701, devastated Palestine. The king of Judah resolved to defend Jerusalem; Isaiah supported his decision, assuring him of God's help, and the capital, in fact, was saved. The details are recorded in ch. 36-39, parallel to 2 K 18-20, and bring the first part of the book to a close. We know nothing of Isaiah's career after 700. According to Jewish tradition he was martyred under Manasseh.

The prominent part played by Isaiah in his country's affairs made him a national figure, but he was also a poet of genius. Brilliance of style and freshness of imagery make his work pre-eminent in the literature of the Bible; he wrote a concise, majestic and harmonious prose unsurpassed by any of the biblical writers who were to follow him. But his greatness lies above all in the religious order. The vision in the Temple at the time of his vocation, a revelation of the transcendence of God and the unworthiness of man, left a lasting mark on the prophet. His monotheism has a note of exultation in it but also of awe: God is the Holy, the Strong, the Mighty One, the King. Man is a creature defiled by sin for which God demands reparation. For God insists on justice between men and sincerity in divine worship. God looks for faithfulness and Isaiah is the prophet of faith; in times of crisis all he prescribes is trust in God and in no one else; by this alone will salvation be won. He knows clearly how hard the test will be, but his hope is that a 'remnant' will be spared, with the Messiah for its king. Isaiah is the greatest of the messianic prophets. The Messiah he foretells is a descendant of David who will establish peace and justice on earth and propagate the knowledge of God, 2:1-5; 7:10-17; 9:1-6; 11:1-9; 28:16-17.

A religious genius of this quality inevitably made an impression on his period and secured a following. The prose passages in the third person which conclude the first part of the book, ch. 36-39, are the work of Isaiah's disciples. From time to time the prophet's spiritual descendants made further additions

to his own work and in particular they inserted the oracles against Babylon, ch. 13-14, the apocalypse of ch. 24-27, and the poems of ch. 33-35.

The second part of the book, ch. 40-55, is of a very different kind, and modern criticism does not admit it to be the work of the 8th century prophet. The Biblical Commission, on 28th June 1908, warned Catholic exegetes against this view, opposed as it is to ancient traditional opinion and setting bounds, it might seem, to the free range of prophetic inspiration. The Commission asserted that the arguments so far adduced were not strong enough to dismiss the Isaian authorship of these chapters. It was a cautionary measure, not forbidding further inquiry. Subsequent investigations have now added weight to the earlier arguments, and a growing number of Catholic interpreters now hold that these chapters are a later addition; not merely because the name of Isaiah is never mentioned but because the historical setting itself is about two centuries after his time: Jerusalem has fallen, the nation is in exile in Babylonia, Cyrus the liberator is already on the horizon. The oracles in the first part of the book were for the most part threatening, and alluded constantly to events under Ahaz and Hezekiah; the oracles of the second part are consoling and remote from this historical context. The style is still very fine, but is different; more rhetorical, diffuse, repetitive. The thought has also developed, and is more theologically expressed. Monotheism is not merely affirmed, but expounded; the impotence of the false gods is used as an argument for their insignificance. Emphasis is laid on the fathomless wisdom and providence of God. For the first time religious universalism receives clear expression.

Almighty God could, of course, have conveyed the prophet into the distant future, severing him from his own time, transforming his imagery and cast of thought. This would mean, however, a duplication of the author's personality and a disregard for his contemporaries—to whom, after all, he was sent—for which the Bible provides no parallel. It is therefore highly probable that ch. 40-55 are the work of an unnamed writer at the end of the exilic period, a disciple of Isaiah and like him a prophet of the first order. The collection is introduced, ch. 40, by a prefatory poem which epitomises this prophet's mission: 'Be comforted, be comforted, my people', cf. Si 48:24. The book is known as 'the Book of the Consolation of Israel'.

Embedded in this book are four lyrical passages, the 'Songs of the Servant of Yahweh', 42:1-7; 49:1-9; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12. They depict a perfect disciple of Yahweh; he proclaims the true faith and suffers to atone for the sins of his people, but God exalts him in the end. In all of this, the Christian tradition sees a foreshadowing of the true Servant of God, of the life and redeeming death of Jesus.

The last section of the book, ch. 56-66, is composite. Ch. 57 may be pre-exilic but ch. 56, 58, 66 read as if the exiles were home again. Ch. 63-65 are markedly apocalyptic in tone. The ideas and style of ch. 60-62 bring them very close to ch. 40-55, and the whole third section reads very much like a sequel of the second, confirming traditional matter and composed by disciples of the prophet-comforter of the exilic period. This is the final production of the Isaian school extending the ministry of the great prophet of the 8th century.

Jeremiah

In about 646 B.C., just over a century after Isaiah, Jeremiah was born of a

priestly family living in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. His life and character are better known to us than those of any other prophet, thanks to the biographical narratives in the third person scattered throughout his book, the chronological sequence of which is as follows: 19:2-20:6; 26; 36; 45; 28-29; 51:59-64; 34:8-22; 37-44; and the autobiographical passages, prose or verse, known as the 'Confessions of Jeremiah': 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18. Called by God as a young man in 626 B.C., the thirteenth year of Josiah, 1:2, he lived through the tragic years preceding and succeeding the ruin of the kingdom of Judah. Hopes had been raised by Josiah's religious reforms and his rallying of the nation, but these were destroyed by the death of the king at Megiddo in 609 and the disruption of the balance of power in that ancient world by the fall of Nineveh in 612 and the expansion of the Chaldaean empire. From 605 onwards Nebuchadnezzar imposed his will on Palestine; Judah rebelled, encouraged by the persistent intrigues of Egypt, and in 598 Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and deported a number of its population. A second revolt recalled the Chaldaean armies and in 587 Jerusalem was captured, its Temple burnt and more of its inhabitants deported. Jeremiah lived throughout these catastrophic events, preaching, threatening, prophesying disaster, vainly admonishing the worthless Davidic kings one after the other; by the war party he was dubbed a defeatist, persecuted and imprisoned. When Jerusalem fell, Jeremiah remained in Palestine with his friend Gedaliah whom the Chaldaeans had appointed governor; the prophet could see, however, that all hopes for the future lay in those who had been exiled. When Gedaliah was assassinated, a party of Jews, fearing reprisals, fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them. It is probable that he died there.

The prophet's own inner conflicts were as dramatic as the events in which he played a part. Of an affectionate and gentle disposition, he was nevertheless called 'to tear up and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow', 1:10, and disaster was the keynote of his message, 20:8. This man of peace was for ever at war, with his own people, with kings, priests, false prophets, the nation itself, 'a man of strife and of dissension for all the land', 15:10: He was tortured by a duty he could not refuse, 20:9. In prayer he referred to his anguish repeatedly: 'Why is my suffering continual?', 15:18; and cf. the passage that anticipates Job's 'cursed be the day when I was born', 20:14f.

All this suffering purified his soul of everything unworthy and made it open to God. Before expressing it in his prophecy of the new covenant, 31:31-34, Jeremiah practised a really inward and heartfelt religion; this is what makes him near and dear to Christians. This personal religion led him to rethink traditional teaching: God examines the heart, 11:20, and rewards each according to his works, 31:29-30; friendship with God, 2:2, is broken by sin which is the consequence of a perverted will, 4:4; 17:9; 18:12. His warm religion makes Jeremiah not unlike Hosea, who influenced him; his conception of the Law as an 'inward' force, his respect for the function of love in true religion, his concern for the person as an individual, all make the Book of Jeremiah rather like Deuteronomy. They have some phrases in common because of a mutual influence at the time when the two books were edited; this borrowing is justified, since the spirit and doctrine of the books is the same; Jeremiah was familiar with the first edition of Deuteronomy and supported the religious reform inspired by deuteronomic principles.

During his lifetime Jeremiah was a failure; after his death he grew steadily in stature. His doctrine of a new covenant written in the heart made him the father of all that was best in Judaism. His influence may be seen in Ezekiel, in the second part of Isaiah and in several of the Psalms. In the Maccabaean period he was considered a protector of the nation, 2 M 2:1-8; 15:12-16. By maintaining the primacy of the things of the spirit and by showing how intimate man's contact with God must be, Jeremiah paved the way for the new covenant of Christian times; his life of renunciation and of suffering in the service of God, which may well have contributed to the portrait of the servant in Is 53, makes Jeremiah an antetype of Christ.

That Jeremiah's influence persisted shows that his words must often have been studied, meditated and interpreted. This contribution of the prophet's spiritual children can be seen in the construction of the book. This clearly was not written at one sitting. The Greek translation represents an edition considerably shorter than the Hebrew text and puts the oracles against the nations after 25:13 (which must have been their original position), whereas the Hebrew relegates them to the end of the book, ch. 46-51. These prophecies against the nations do not seem to have all been written by Jeremiah himself; the oracles against Babylon, at least, date from the end of the Exile, ch. 50-51. Ch. 52 is included as an historical appendix; it is parallel to 2 K 24:18-25:30. Other, shorter, supplementary passages have also been inserted into the body of the book; they witness to the use made of it by the exiles in Babylon and the post-exilic community, and to the respect in which it was then held. The many duplicate passages are also proofs of editorial activity. Lastly, the numerous indications of time are not in sequence. The book as we have it now is in a state of disorder, the outcome of a protracted compilation, the stages of which are very hard to sort out.

Ch. 36, however, gives some very useful data: in 605 Jeremiah dictated to Baruch the oracles he had made since the beginning of his ministry in 626, 36:2. This scroll, burnt by Jehoiakim, was rewritten and supplemented, 36:32. We can do no more than conjecture what this collection contained. It appears to have had 25:1-12 for introduction, and it assembled the pre-605 passages which are now in ch. 1-18; but, according to 36:2, it also contained certain ancient oracles against the nations referred to in 25:13-18. In the same sections, the supplements later added are passages dating from after 605 and further oracles against the nations. Into those were inserted the pages of 'Confessions' (described in detail above). Two small booklets were added, one on the kings, 21:11-23:8, the other on the prophets, 23:9-40, which may originally have been distinct.

In this way we are able to identify two sections of the book: one containing threats against Judah and Jerusalem, 1:1-25:13, the other containing prophecies against the nations, 25:13-18 and ch. 46-51. Ch. 26-35 make up a third section; this is a collection, out of order, of rather more cheerful passages. Nearly all of these are in prose and are mostly drawn from a biography of Jeremiah for which, it is supposed, Baruch was responsible. Exception must be made of ch. 30-31, a small book of consolation, written in verse form. The fourth section, ch. 36-44, is in prose; it continues the biography of Jeremiah and describes his sufferings during and after the siege of Jerusalem. It ends with 45:1-5 which may be considered as the signature of Baruch.

Lamentations

The Hebrew Bible groups this short book with the 'Writings' (Hagiographa). The Greek Bible and the Vulgate put it immediately after Jeremiah entitling it 'The Lamentations of Jeremiah'. This tradition of authorship is based on 2 Ch 35:25 and supported by the poems themselves, the subject-matter of which reflects the times of the prophet. Even so, it is difficult to credit Jeremiah with the book. The Jeremiah we know from his authentic oracles could never have said that the voice of prophecy was silenced, 2:9; nor could he have praised Zedekiah, 4:20, or put his trust in Egyptian help, 4:17. His spontaneity would have burst through the artificial literary curbs we find in these alphabetical poems: in the first four it is each strophe which begins with a different letter and in the fifth it is each of the twenty-two verses.

Ch. 1, 2 and 4 are written in the form of a dirge for the dead, ch. 3 is an individual lament, ch. 5 ('Prayer of Jeremiah' in the Vulgate) a collective one. They were written in Palestine after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 and they were probably used in the liturgy which, according to Jr 41:5, was still performed on the site of the Temple. With great pathos, the author (or authors) describes the mourning of city and people; but from this darkness shines a ray of unconquerable trust in God and of wholehearted repentance, which makes the short book of lasting value. The Jews chant it on the great fast commemorating the events of 587; it is used by Christians in the Holy Week liturgy to recall what happened on Calvary.

Baruch

The Book of Baruch is one of the deuterocanonical books not found in the Hebrew Bible. The Greek Bible puts it between Jeremiah and Lamentations; the Vulgate immediately after Lamentations. According to its introduction, 1:1-14, it was written in Babylon by Baruch after the deportation and sent to Jerusalem to be read at liturgical gatherings. It contains: a prayer acknowledging guilt but expressing hope, 1:15–3:8; a 'wisdom' poem, 3:9-4:4, in which wisdom is identified with the Law; a prophetic passage, 4:5-5:9, in which a personified Jerusalem speaks to the exiles and the prophet consoles her with a reminder of messianic hopes. The three sections, 1:15-3:8, 3:9-4:4, 4:5-5:9, probably had a Hebrew origin, now lost. Their date is hard to fix; they may be as late as the 2nd or 1st century B.C.

In the Greek Bible, Lamentations separates the Letter of Jeremiah from Baruch, but the Vulgate adds the Letter (with a separate title) to Baruch, ch. 6. The Letter is an apologetic argument against idolatry; its style undistinguished, it develops themes already used in Jr 10:1-16; Is 44:9-20. The idolatry here attacked is late Babylonian. The Letter, apparently written in Hebrew, is of the Greek period; more precise dating is not possible. It is alluded to, seemingly, in 2 M 2:1-3.

This collection, grouped under the name of Baruch, gives us valuable information about the Jewish communities in the Dispersion and the ways by which their religious life was sustained: contact with Jerusalem, prayer, devotion to the Law, thirst for retribution, messianic hope. Like Lamentations, it also testifies to the enduring reputation of Jeremiah, both short books being assigned to the prophet and his disciple.

Ezekiel

The Book of Ezekiel, unlike that of Jeremiah, appears to be a well-constructed whole. After the introduction, ch. 1-3, in which the prophet receives his mission from God, the body of the book is divided clearly into four sections: 1. Ch. 4-24, consisting almost exclusively of reproaches and threats addressed to the Israelites before the siege of Jerusalem; 2. Ch. 25-32, of oracles against the nations, in which the prophet widens his anathema to include those who have influenced the faithless Israelites and urged them on; 3. Ch. 33-39, of comfort for the nation during and after the siege, with a promise of a brighter future; 4. Ch. 40-48, of provisions for the political and religious constitution of the future community, once re-established in Palestine.

Beneath this systematic arrangement nevertheless there are noteworthy irregularities. There are numerous duplicate passages, e.g. 3:17-21 = 33:7-9; 18:25-29 = 33:17-20, etc. References to Ezekiel's being struck dumb by God, 3:26+; 24:27+; 33:22, are separated by protracted discourses. The vision of the chariot of God, 1:4-3:15, is interrupted by the vision of the book, 2:1-3:9. In the same way, the description of the sins of Jerusalem, 11:1-21, is a continuation of ch. 8 and clearly interrupts the account of the chariot's departure which begins at 10:18-22 and continues in 11:22. Nor are the dates of ch. 26-33 in sequence. An author writing the book as one consistent whole could hardly be responsible for these irregularities; it is much more likely that they are the result of disciples' combining and supplementing the documents or recollections at their disposal. To some extent, therefore, the Book of Ezekiel has undergone the same treatment as other prophetic books. The consistency both of style and of teaching, however, is proof of the fidelity of the prophet's disciples to his own mind and, for the most part, to his actual words.

The question, however, arises, whether the disciples' editorial work has not changed the perspective of the book in one important respect. As the text stands, Ezekiel's whole ministry is among the exiles in Babylon between 593 and 571, the first and last dates indicated, 1:2 and 29:17. In these circumstances, it is surprising that the oracles of the first section seem to be addressed to people living in Jerusalem, and that Ezekiel at times gives the impression that he is actually present in the capital, cf. especially 11:13. Hence the recent hypothesis of a twofold ministry: Ezekiel remaining in Palestine and preaching there until the fall of Jerusalem in 587 and only joining the Babylonian exiles after this event. The vision of the scroll in 2:1-3:9 would indicate the prophet's divine vocation in Palestine, and that of the chariot, 1:4-28 and 3:10-15, would indicate his arrival among the exiles. The transfer of this vision of the chariot to the beginning of the book from its third section has thus, it is maintained, altered the whole focus. This hypothesis helps to solve some difficulties but creates others. It demands substantial rearrangements of text; it has to be postulated that even during his 'Palestinian' ministry Ezekiel usually lived outside Jerusalem, since he is 'transported' thither in 8:3; finally, it would be odd for neither Ezekiel nor Jeremiah to refer to each other's activity if they were preaching together in the capital. Moreover, the objections against the older view are not unanswerable; reproaches addressed to the people of Jerusalem were useful lessons for the exiles; and as far as Ezekiel's apparent presence in Jerusalem is concerned, he was transported thither, 'in visions' as the text expressly says,

8:3, and thence 'in vision' brought back, 11:24. The not unattractive hypothesis of a twofold ministry remains, therefore, uncertain.

In either case, the same imposing figure emerges from the book. Ezekiel was a priest, 1:3. The Temple was his ruling interest; whether the Temple of the present defiled by impure rites, ch. 8, and deserted by the glory of Yahweh, ch. 10, or the Temple of the future, the plan of which he describes in meticulous detail, ch. 40-42, and to which he sees God returning, ch. 43. For those days to come, he defines the function of the Temple ministers, the details of public worship, the sacred calendar, ch. 44-46. He holds the Law in veneration, and the accusation of 'profaning the sabbaths' is the constant refrain of his indictment of Israel, ch. 20. He detests legal impurity, 4:14; 44:7, and is scrupulous in distinguishing the sacred from the profane, 45:1-6; 48:9f. As a priest he was responsible for deciding cases of law and morals, hence the casuistic tendency of his teaching, ch. 18. His outlook and vocabulary are akin to the Law of Holiness in Lv 17-26; this he knew and meditated, but he goes beyond it and paves the way for the final codification of the Pentateuch. His work belongs to the 'priestly' tradition just as that of Jeremiah belongs to the 'deuteronomic'.

But this priest is also a prophet of action. More than any other he resorts to symbolic gestures. He mimes the siege of Jerusalem, 4:1–5:4, the departure of the exiles, 12:1-7, the king of Babylon at the parting of the ways, 21:23f, the union of Judah and Israel, 37:15f. Even in his own personal trials sent him by God he is a 'sign' to Israel, 24:24, as Hosea and Isaiah and Jeremiah had been. The elaborateness of his symbolic actions is in marked contrast to the simplicity of those of his predecessors.

Ezekiel is primarily a visionary. His book contains only four formal visions but these occupy a substantial part of it: ch. 1-3; 8-11; 37; 40-48. They admit us to a fantastic world: the four living creatures of Yahweh's chariot, the monstrous performance of worship in the Temple with its swarms of beasts and of idols, the dry bones that come to life, the blueprint of a future temple from which an imaginary river flows through a geographic Utopia. This lively imagination he also applied to his allegories: Oholah and Oholibah, ch. 23; the Shipwreck of Tyre, ch. 27; Pharaoh the Crocodile, ch. 29 and 32; the Giant Tree, ch. 31; the Descent into Hell, ch. 32.

In contrast to this gift of pictorial imagination, and possibly as the price paid for it (as though the eye had robbed the tongue of power), Ezekiel's style is monotonous and without colour, frigid, feeble, astonishingly poor when compared with the classics of prophecy: the strong simplicity of Isaiah and the compelling warmth of Jeremiah. The art of Ezekiel excels by its evocation of size and depth, projecting an atmosphere of awe before the mysteries of God.

Ezekiel therefore, though having much in common with his predecessors, breaks new ground. This is also true of his doctrine. He makes no appeal to the past history of his people. Recalls to the promises made to the patriarchs and to the Sinaitic covenant occur occasionally, but even if God has so far preserved a nation that was defiled from birth, 16:3f, this is not to fulfil the promises but to vindicate the honour of his name, ch. 20. Similarly, the substitution of an everlasting covenant for the old one, 16:60; 37:26f, is not described as a reward for the people's 'return' to God but rather as an act of pure benevolence, what theologians call prevenient grace; it is after this, not before, that repentance comes, 16:62-63. The Messiah of Ezekiel, of whom little is said, is no longer

a glorious king; true, he is to be a new David, but as 'shepherd' of his people, 34:23; 37:24, a 'ruler' rather than a king, 34:24; for such a king would be out of place in Ezekiel's vision of a future where God is king, 45:7f. The prophet also breaks with tradition when he asserts the principle of individual and not collective retribution, ch. 18; cf. 33. This theological solution to the problem of sin will prove to be a temporary one, and will yield eventually to the pressure of facts and gradually lead to the idea of retribution in another world. Ezekiel breaks too, as Jeremiah does, with the tradition that God is inseparable from his Temple—this despite Ezekiel's own priesthood and affection for the sanctuary. Priest and prophet, often divided in Israel, are united in him; ritual remains, but derives its value from the dispositions of the participants. Ezekiel's entire teaching centres on inner conversion: men must achieve a new heart and a new spirit, 18:31, or rather God will himself bestow 'another', a 'new' heart, and infuse a 'new' spirit, 11:19; 36:26. Here, as with the free divine gift that precedes repentance, we are very near to the theology of grace later developed by St John and St Paul.

The elements of Israelite religion are thus all raised to a high spiritual level; this is Ezekiel's great contribution. He is called 'the father of Judaism', often only with reference to his separation of sacred from profane, to his concern for legal purity and for ritual detail, which anticipates Pharisaism. This is quite unjust. Like Jeremiah, yet in his own way, Ezekiel initiates a tradition of unworldly spirituality persisting through Judaism and emerging in the New Testament. Jesus is the Good Shepherd foretold by Ezekiel, and the founder of the worship 'in spirit' that Ezekiel had preached.

Ezekiel, in another mood, stands at the source of the apocalyptic tradition. His elaborate visions prepare us for those of Daniel, and it is not surprising that his influence is so often perceptible in the Book of Revelation.

Daniel

In subject-matter the Book of Daniel falls into two parts. Ch. 1-6 are narratives: Daniel and his three companions in the service of Nebuchadnezzar, 1; Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the composite statue, 2; adoration of the golden effigy, and Daniel's three friends in the furnace, 3; Nebuchadnezzar's madness, 4; Belshazzar's banquet, 5; Daniel in the lions' den, 6. From all these trials, in which the reputation and even the life of Daniel or of his companions is at stake, they emerge victorious and the pagans give glory to the God who has saved them. The action takes place in Babylon in the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, of his 'son' Belshazzar, and of 'Darius the Mede', Belshazzar's successor. Ch. 7-12 are visions granted to Daniel: the Four Beasts, 7; the Goat and the Ram, 8; the Seventy Weeks, 9; the great vision of the Time of Wrath and of the End, 10-12. They are assigned to the reigns of Belshazzar, Darius the Mede and Cyrus king of Persia, and located in Babylonia.

From the existence of these two sections some have deduced two distinct documents of different periods combined by an editor. But there are other indications which are against such a distinction. The narratives are indeed in the third person, while the visions are described by Daniel himself; but the first vision, ch. 7, has its introduction and conclusion in the third person. The beginning of the book is in Hebrew but in 2:4 there is a sudden change to Aramaic which continues to the end of ch. 7 and so into the vision section;

the remaining chapters are in Hebrew. Many explanations of this duality of language have been offered, none satisfactory. There is no correspondence, therefore, between the division established by subject-matter (narratives, visions) and the division on the ground of style (first and third person) or of language (Hebrew, Aramaic). On the other hand ch. 7 has its commentary in ch. 8, but is parallel to ch. 2; its Aramaic is indeed the same as in 2-4, but certain of its stylistic characteristics recur in 8-12, though these chapters are in Hebrew. This ch. 7, therefore, links the book's two sections and proves that it is in fact an integral composition. Also, Belshazzar and Darius the Mede both appear in each section of the book, so the historical problem is present as much in one section as in the other. Lastly, the literary devices and habits of thought are consistent throughout the book, which is the strongest argument for its unity.

The date of composition is decided by clear evidence given in ch. 11. The wars between the Seleucids and Ptolemies and a portion of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes are described with a wealth of detail quite unnecessary for the author's purpose. This account bears no resemblance to any of the Old Testament prophecies and, despite its prophetic style, refers to events already past. But from 11:40 onwards the tone changes and the 'Time of the End' is foretold in a way that is reminiscent of the other prophets. The book must therefore have been written during the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes and before his death, even before the success of the Maccabaean revolt; that is to say between 167 and 164.

There is nothing in the rest of the book to contradict this dating. The narratives of the first section are set in the Chaldaean period, but there are indications that the author is writing a short time after the events. Belshazzar was the son of Nabonid and not, as the book says, of Nebuchadnezzar; nor was he ever king. Darius the Mede is unknown to historians, nor is there room for him between the last Chaldaean king and Cyrus the Persian who had already conquered the Medes. The neo-Babylonian background is described in words of Persian origin; the instruments in Nebuchadnezzar's orchestra are given names transliterated from the Greek. The dates given in the book agree neither among themselves nor with history as we know it, and they seem to have been placed at the chapter heads without much care for chronology. It seems therefore that ancient traditions, the extent of which is hard to determine, have provided the material for a much later work.

The late composition of the book explains its position in the Hebrew Bible. It was admitted after the canon of the Prophets had already been fixed, and placed between Esther and Ezra among the varied group of 'other writings' forming the last section of the Hebrew canon. The Greek and Latin Bibles put it among the Prophets and add certain deuterocanonical sections, namely, the Psalm of Azariah and the Canticle of the Three Youths, 3:24-90; the story of Susanna illustrating the shrewdness of the young Daniel, ch. 13; and the stories of Bel and the sacred serpent, which are satires on idolatry, ch. 14.

The aim of this book was to sustain faith and hope among the Jews persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes. Daniel and his companions had been similarly tempted: to desert the Law, ch. 1, and to commit idolatry, ch. 3 and 6. From these trials they emerged victorious, and the persecutors were forced to acknowledge the power of the true God. The contemporary persecutor is painted in

darker colours, but when the wrath of God is satisfied, 8:19; 11:36, the time of the end will come, 8:17; 11:40, when the persecutor will be destroyed, 8:25; 11:45. This will mean the end of sorrows and of sin and the coming of the kingdom of the saints, ruled over by a 'Son of Man' whose reign will endure for ever, ch. 7.

This expectation of the end, this hope of the kingdom, runs through the whole book, 2:44; 3:33 (*100*); 4:31; 7:14. God will bring it to fulfilment after a lapse of time fixed by him, but long enough to embrace the whole of human history. The various stages of the world's history become stages in the operation of God's eternal purpose, so that these world-stages, past, present, future, themselves become prophetic of a further future since all are contemplated through the eyes of God 'who controls times and seasons', 2:21. By this double vision, at once in time and transcending time, the author reveals the prophetic significance of history. The secret of God, 2:18, etc.; 4:6, is revealed by mysterious intermediaries who are the messengers and agents of the Most High. The doctrine of angels is asserted in the Book of Daniel, as in Ezekiel and particularly in Tobit. The revelation concerns the hidden plan of God for his people and for the nations. It concerns both peoples and individuals. An important passage on the resurrection proclaims the rising of the dead either to eternal life or to eternal punishment, 12:2. The expected kingdom will include all nations, 7:14, and will have no end; it will be a kingdom of saints, 7:18, the kingdom of God, 3:33 (*100*); 4:31, the kingdom of the Son of Man to whom all power is given, 7:14.

This is the last expression of messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. The coming of the kingdom will be the central theme of the Synoptic Gospels, and Jesus, king of the kingdom, will call himself 'Son of Man', thus clearly asserting that he has come to fulfil the prophecies of the Book of Daniel.

This 'sealed book', 12:4, with its revelation of a divine secret, its angelic commentators, its message for generations to come, its deliberately enigmatic style, is the first mature apocalypse, a literary form found already developing in Ezekiel and later to flower in Jewish literature. The New Testament counterpart to the Book of Daniel is the Book of Revelation, but in this the seals of the closed book are broken, Rv 5-6, its words are secret no longer since 'the time is at hand', Rv 22:10, and the coming of the Lord is expected, Rv 22:20; 1 Co 16:22.

The Twelve Minor Prophets

The last book in the Hebrew canon of the Prophets is simply called 'The Twelve', being a collection of twelve short books attributed to different prophets. Its title in the Greek Bible is 'Dodekapropheton'. The Church knows it as 'The Minor Prophets', not because the collection is of less importance than the 'major' prophets but because the books are shorter. These books already formed a collection when Ecclesiasticus was being written, Si 49:10. The Hebrew Bible, followed by the Vulgate, arranges these short books in the historical order assigned to them by tradition. The order is somewhat different in the Greek Bible which, moreover, places them before the major prophets.

In this edition the books will be found in the traditional order observed by the Vulgate (and the Hebrew), but in this Introduction they will be treated in what is most probably their true historical order.

Amos

Amos was a shepherd of Tekoa on the edge of the desert of Judah, 1:1; belonging to no prophetic confraternity, he was divinely called from his flock and sent to prophesy to Israel, 7:14. After a brief ministry mainly, perhaps exclusively, concerned with the schismatic shrine at Bethel, 7:10f, he was expelled from Israel and returned to his former occupation.

He preached under Jeroboam II, 783-743, by material standards a glorious reign during which the Northern Kingdom expanded and grew wealthy, but during which the rich exploited the poor, and fine liturgical show disguised the lack of sound religion. A true son of the desert, rough, direct, proud, rich in the images natural to the desert dwellers, Amos in the name of God condemned corrupt city life, social injustice, the deceitful consolations of insincere ceremonial, 5:21-22. Yahweh, sovereign lord of all the world, punisher of nations, ch. 1-2, would severely punish Israel, who, being chosen by God, should practise a morality stricter than that of others, 3:2. The 'day of Yahweh' (the phrase occurs here for the first time in the Bible) will be one of darkness and not light, 5:18f; to wreak his dreadful vengeance, 6:8f, God summons a nation, 6:14, Assyria, which, though not named, is always in the prophet's mind. Yet Amos kindles a spark of hope; he looks forward to the salvation of those who stay faithful, the 'remnant' of Joseph, 5:15 (the first use of this expression by a prophet). This profound doctrine of God, all-powerful and universal lord, defender of justice, is formulated without the slightest hesitation; the prophet never once gives the impression of innovating: his preaching is merely a reminder, a sharp one, of the demands of pure Yahwism.

The book has reached us in some disorder; the prose narrative, 7:10-17, in particular, separating two visions, would be better placed at the end of the oracles. Certain short passages leave us in doubt about their authorship. The doxologies, 4:13; 5:8-9; 9:5-6, may have been added for liturgical recitation. The brief oracle on Judah, 2:4-5, is possibly from a different author. Further doubts have been raised by 9:8b-10 and especially by 9:11-15. There are no solid grounds for suspecting the former, but it is possible that 9:11-15 are an addition. No argument should be based on the promises of salvation which the latter passage contains, since from early times such promises had always been features of the prophets' preaching, cf. Amos in 5:15 and his contemporary Hosea. But the references to the collapsing (or already ruined) hut of David, to vengeance on Edom, and to a reinstatement or return of Israel, seem to indicate a later period, either after the Assyrian victories of 734-732, or after the fall of Jerusalem.

Hosea

Hosea, a native of the Northern Kingdom, was a contemporary of Amos, since his ministry began under Jeroboam II, though it continued through the reigns of his successors; Hosea may even have lived to see the fall of Samaria in 721. It was a sombre period for Israel with the victorious advance of Assyria, 734-732, internal rebellions (four kings assassinated in fifteen years), religious and moral corruption.

Of Hosea's life during those turbulent times we know nothing beyond his own domestic troubles, ch. 1-3, but these were to condition his ministry as

a prophet. The interpretation of these opening chapters is much disputed, but the following seems most probable: Hosea has married a wife whom he loves but who deserts him; his love remains however, and, having put her to the test, he takes her back. The prophet's sad experience becomes a symbol of Yahweh's dealings with his people. Ch. 2 draws the moral and at the same time provides the key to the whole book. Israel, the bride of God, has become a faithless harlot, has aroused the anger and jealousy of her divine husband. God's love remains; he will punish her, but only to bring her back and restore her to the joys of their first love.

For the first time, God's relationship with Israel is described in terms of marriage, a figure most boldly chosen and passionately expressed by a prophet at once affectionate and fiery. The underlying theme of all his preaching is divine love misunderstood by the people on whom it is lavished. Once the few golden days in the wilderness were over, Israel played false to her loving God. Hosea indicts the ruling classes most sternly. The kings, chosen in defiance of God's will, have toyed with human policies, degrading God's chosen people to the level of the other nations. The priests, ignorant and avaricious, are leading the people to their ruin. Like Amos, Hosea attacks injustice and violence, but he is more insistent on the evils of apostasy. The worship of Yahweh at Bethel is idolatrous worship; Yahweh is coupled with Baal and Astarte in the licentious rites of the high places. Now Yahweh is a jealous God, demanding an undivided heart: 'What I want is love, not sacrifice; knowledge of God, not holocausts', 6:6. Punishment is therefore sure to come; yet God punishes only to save. Israel stripped and shamed will come to remember the days of her faithfulness; Yahweh will welcome his repentant people back; happiness and peace will return.

For some time scholars tried to remove from Hosea all prophecies of happiness and all that concerned Judah. More sober conclusions are being urged today. Hosea's message would be completely distorted were he to be represented as a prophet only of disaster, while his allusions to Judah, if not required by the context, are quite understandable if Hosea continued to preach after the fall of Samaria. This, however, does not exclude the possibility of brief additions, e.g. 1:7; 2:1-3; 14:10.

The Book of Hosea has had a profound influence on the Old Testament; there are echoes of Hosea in the exhortations of later prophets to a religion of the heart, with God's love as its motive force. It is not surprising that the New Testament quotes Hosea or, not infrequently, imitates him. The wedding imagery of God's love for his people is taken up by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the second part of Isaiah and the Song of Songs. The New Testament and the early Christian community apply it to the union between Christ and his Church. Christian mysticism has extended the application to the individual soul.

Micah

The prophet Micah (not to be confused with Micaiah ben Imlah who lived in the reign of Ahab, 1 K 22) was a Judaean, a native of Moresheth to the west of Hebron. He exercised his ministry under kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, that is to say, before and after the fall of Samaria in 721. He was therefore a contemporary of Hosea and for a longer period of Isaiah. Being of peasant extraction he has much in common with Amos: suspicion of city life,

concrete and at times coarse expression, a taste for swift strokes of imagery and for play on words.

The book falls into four parts, threat alternating with promise: 1:2–3:12, arraignment of Israel; 4:1-5:14, promises to Zion; 6:1-7:7, Israel arraigned for the second time; 7:8-20, hopes. The contrast between the promises to Zion and the threats that precede and follow is altogether too violent, and this symmetrical arrangement must be due to editorial work. It is hard to determine the extent of this editorial adjustment, performed by those who cherished the prophet's memory. Scholars are agreed that 7:8-20 clearly belongs to the period of return from exile. To this period also are best assigned the oracle of 2:12-13, out of place among the threats, and the prophecies of 4:6-7; 5:6-7. But 4:1-5 is found almost identically in Is 2:2-5 and in neither context does it seem original. These possible additions, however, do not justify the excision of all promises for the future from the authentic message of Micah. They are a recurrent theme of all prophetic preaching, and the promises of Micah are in harmony with the hopes expressed by his contemporary, Isaiah.

Of the life of Micah and the circumstances of his call we know nothing. He was, however, keenly aware that God had called him to the office of prophet, and this makes him fearless in prophesying disaster, as the false prophets are not, 2:6-11; 3:5-8. He is the bearer of God's message, which is at first a message of condemnation. Yahweh tries his people, 1:2; 6:1f, and finds them guilty; their religion and above all their morals are corrupt. Micah scourges the moneyed capitalist, the inexorable usurer, the swindling tradesman, families divided by rivalry, avaricious priests and prophets, tyrants, venal judges. These are the very antithesis of the divine ideal: 'to deal justly, to love tenderly, to walk humbly with God', 6:8, an admirable formula summing up the spiritual demands of the prophets, and most particularly Hosea. God has decreed punishment: he will come to judge and to punish his people in a world upheaval, 1:3-4; Samaria will be destroyed, 1:6-7, and the towns of the lowlands where Micah lives, 1:8-15; even Jerusalem, will be a heap of ruins, 3:12.

But the prophet is not without hope, 7:7. This is affirmed in ch. 4-5 where the messianic doctrine of the remnant is developed, 4:7; 5:2, a doctrine touched on by Amos; these chapters foretell the birth in Bethlehem of a peaceful king who will pasture the flock of Yahweh, 5:1-5.

The influence of Micah was persistent; the contemporaries of Jeremiah knew and quoted one of his oracles against Jerusalem, Jr 26:18. The New Testament particularly seizes on Micah's text concerning the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem Ephrathah, Mt 2:6; Jn 7:42.

Zephaniah

According to the title of this short book, the prophet Zephaniah worked in the reign of Josiah, 640-609. His attacks on alien manners, 1:8, and on the worship of false gods, 1:4-5, his rebuke of court officials, 1:8, his silence about the king, all point to a period before the religious reform, during the minority of Josiah, between 640 and 630, thus immediately before the beginning of the ministry of Jeremiah. Judah, robbed of part of its territory by Sennacherib, has experienced Assyrian rule, and the wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon have favoured religious disorders. The increasing weakness of Assyria now raises hopes of national recovery accompanied by religious reform.

The book falls into four short sections: the day of Yahweh, 1:2-2:3; oracles against the nations 2:4-15; against Jerusalem, 3:1-8; promises, 3:9-20. Unjustifiable attempts have been made to exclude certain oracles against the nations and all the promises of the fourth section. Suffice it to admit that the prophecies of pagan conversion, 2:11 and 3:9-10, alien to the context, seem to be inspired by the Book of Consolation, Is 40-55, and that the concluding verses, 3:18b-20, are best understood against the background of the Exile.

The message of Zephaniah is, in brief, a prophecy of the day of Yahweh (see Amos), of a catastrophe affecting not only Judah but also the nations. Judah is condemned for religious and moral corruption springing from pride and rebelliousness, 3:1,11. Zephaniah has a deep appreciation of sin (an anticipation of Jeremiah); it is an offence against the person of the living God. The punishing of the nations should serve as a warning, 3:7, to reduce God's people to obedience and humility, 2:3; salvation is promised to only a humble and submissive 'remnant', 3:12-13. This is as far as the messianism of Zephaniah goes, but it is enough to reveal the spiritual nature of the promises he makes.

The short book of Zephaniah has had a restricted influence and is only once used in the New Testament, Mt 13:41. But the description of the day of Yahweh, 1:14-18, inspired the description by Joel, and, in the Middle Ages, the opening words of the *Dies Irae.*

Nahum

The Book of Nahum opens with a psalm on the wrath of Yahweh against the wicked and with short prophetic passages contrasting the punishment of Assyria with the salvation of Judah, 1:2-2:3. But its main theme, stated in the heading of the book, is the destruction of Nineveh, which Nahum foretells and describes with a power that reveals him as one of the great poets of Israel, 2:4-3:19. There is no reason to deny his authorship to the opening psalm and oracles, which form an excellent prologue to this terrifying picture. The prophecy is dated shortly before the capture of Nineveh in 612.

The book pulsates with the hatred of Israel against the people of Assyria, the traditional enemy, and also with the hopes that the fall of Assyria arouses. But through this violent nationalism, where there is no anticipation of the gospel whatever, or even of the worldwide outlook of the second part of Isaiah, run the ideals of justice and faith; the fall of Nineveh is a judgement of God, who punishes those who oppose his holy purpose, 1:11; 2:1, the oppressors of Israel, 1:12-13, and of all the nations, 3:1-7.

The Book of Nahum must have raised the human hopes of Israel in 612, but the joy was short-lived: the fall of Jerusalem followed close on the fall of Nineveh. After this, the scope of the message grows wider and deeper; Is 52:7 borrows the image of Na 2:1 to apply it to a universal and more spiritual salvation.

Habakkuk

The short Book of Habakkuk is very carefully constructed. It opens with a dialogue between the prophet and his God; twice the prophet complains, twice the divine oracle answers, 1:2-2:4. The second oracle calls down five curses on the wicked oppressor, 2:5-20. Next, in a psalm, the prophet celebrates the final triumph of God, ch. 3. The authorship of this last chapter has been

disputed, but without it the composition would lose its symmetry. The musical instructions that precede, punctuate and follow the psalm merely prove that it was used liturgically. That the whole book was so used is doubtful; the liturgical quality of its style was probably more imitative than functional.

The historical context of the prophecy and the identification of the oppressor are both doubtful. The Assyrians, the Chaldaeans, and even Jehoiakim, king of Judah, have been suggested. It seems most likely that the book refers throughout to the Chaldaeans, named in 1:6. God has made use of them to punish his people but they in their turn will be punished for their excessive cruelty, since Yahweh is on the march to save his people; the prophet awaits this intervention with an anxiety that finally gives way to joy. If this interpretation is correct, the book should be dated between the battle of Carchemish in 605 (which made Nebuchadnezzar master of the Middle East) and the first siege of Jerusalem in 597. Thus Habakkuk would be very little later than Nahum and, like him, a contemporary of Jeremiah.

Habakkuk sounds a note new to the teaching of the prophets; he has the temerity to demand an account from God of his ordering of the world. Judah indeed has sinned, but why should a God of holiness, 1:12, with eyes too pure to look at evil, 1:13, choose the savage Chaldaeans to wreak his vengeance? Why must the bad be punished by the worse? Why should he appear to strengthen the arm of injustice? This is the problem of evil posed at international level and Habakkuk's dismay is felt by many people today. To them as to him comes the divine answer: by paradoxical ways almighty God prepares the final triumph of justice; trusting in God, the virtuous man's life will be secure, cf. 2:4, a precious maxim of Habakkuk's which St Paul will later incorporate into his teaching on faith, Rm 1:17; Ga 3:11; Heb 10:38.

Haggai

The last, the post-exilic, period of prophecy opens with Haggai. The change is striking. Before the Exile the watchword of the prophets was Punishment. During the Exile it became Consolation. Now it is Restoration. Haggai appears at a critical moment in the development of Judaism; the birth of the new Palestinian community. His short exhortations are precisely dated, August and September of 520. The first Jews to return from Babylonia to rebuild the Temple were quickly discouraged. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred them to new efforts and urged Zerubbabel the governor and the High Priest Joshua to resume work on the Temple; this was done in September, 520, 1:15; cf. Ezr 5:1.

The four brief discourses composing this book are entirely concerned with this. Since the Temple is still in ruins Yahweh has destroyed the harvests; its rebuilding will usher in an age of prosperity. However unimposing, this new Temple will dim the glory of the old; and power is promised to Zerubbabel, the chosen of God. This Temple, therefore, and this descendant of David become the focus of a messianic hope that will be more clearly expressed in Zechariah.

Zechariah

The Book of Zechariah consists of two distinct parts: ch. 1-8; 9-14. The introduction is dated October-November, 520, two months after the first

prophecy of Haggai. The body of the first part of the book contains eight of the prophet's visions beginning in February, 519, 1:7-6:8; these are followed by the symbolic crowning of Zerubbabel, 6:9-14. (The scribes later substituted the name of the High Priest Joshua at a time when political power lay with the priesthood.) Ch. 7 is a brief survey of the history of Israel, while ch. 8 looks forward to the messianic age; both originate from the question of the Fast, proposed in November, 518.

There is no doubt about the authorship of this amply dated and homogenous section. Like Haggai, Zechariah was preoccupied with the rebuilding of the Temple but, more than Haggai, with the national restoration and the irreproachable moral conduct it required. This restoration is expected to inaugurate a messianic era in which the priesthood, represented by Joshua, will be held in increasing honour, 3:1-7, but the sovereign power will be wielded by the 'Branch', 3:8, a messianic title which 6:12 applies to Zerubbabel. The two Anointed Ones, 4:14, will rule in perfect harmony, 6:13. In this way Zechariah revives the royal messianism of earlier days but combines it with the priestly interests of Ezekiel, whose influence is discernible in many other ways such as the prominent part played by visions, the apocalyptic approach, the concern for purity. These, and the intervention of angels, anticipate the Book of Daniel.

The second part, ch. 9-14, which, moreover, has a new heading, 9:1, is entirely different. Its sections are without date or name. We hear no more of Zechariah, of Joshua, of Zerubbabel or of the building of the Temple. The style is less original and use is frequently made of earlier books, particularly of Dt, Ezk, and Jb. The historical background changes too; Assyria and Egypt appear as names symbolic of all oppressors, but so also do the sons of Javan, that is to say the Greeks, 9:13. This part of the book cannot have taken final form before the conquest of Alexander; it dates from the last decades of the 4th century. It is a disorderly collection of possibly ancient passages with paragraphs on the 'shepherds' of the people, notably 10:2-3; 11:4-14; 13:7-9, and an apocalypse on the Jerusalem of the latter days, ch. 12 and 14.

This part of the book is of particular interest for messianic teaching which, however, is not presented systematically: the recovery of the House of David, ch. 12 *passim*, the expectation of a humble and gentle Messiah, 9:9-10, but also an obscure prophecy about someone who is 'pierced', 12:10; and an armed theocracy, 10:3-11:3, which nevertheless is a liturgical community as in Ezekiel. These elements are reconciled in the person of Christ and the New Testament often quotes these chapters of Zechariah or at least alludes to them, Mt 21:4-5; 27:9 (combined with Jeremiah); 26:31 = Mk 14:27; Jn 19:37.

Malachi

This book is probably anonymous, since 'Malachi' means 'my messenger' and seems to have been taken from 3:1. It is composed of six passages similar in construction: Yahweh, or his prophet, makes a statement; this is disputed by priests or people, then developed in a discourse in which threat and promise of salvation appear side by side. There are two main themes: the failures of priests, 1:6–2:9, and of people, 3:6-12, in their religious duties; the scandal of mixed marriage and divorce, 2:10-16. The prophet foretells the day of Yahweh which will purify the priesthood, consume the wicked, and secure the triumph of the virtuous, 3:1-5,13-21. Vv. 22-23 of ch. 3 are an addition.

The contents of this book make it possible to date it; it is later than the renewal of worship in the new Temple, 516, and before the prohibition of mixed marriage under Nehemiah, 445, probably fairly near this second date. The enthusiasm aroused by Haggai and Zechariah has subsided, and the community is content to drift. In tones that recall Deuteronomy and also Ezekiel, the prophet cries that God is not to be deceived but demands sincere religion and purity. The prophet expects the advent of the angel of the covenant heralded by a mysterious messenger, 3:1, in whom Mt 11:10, (cf. Lk 7:27 and Mk 1:2) sees John the Baptist, the precursor. In this messianic era the moral order will be restored, 3:5, as also true religion, 3:4, culminating in a perfect sacrifice offered to God by all the nations, 1:11.

Obadiah

This shortest (21 verses) of the prophetic books is full of problems; interpreters dispute its unity, its literary form, its date (some putting it as early as the 9th century B.C., others as late as the Greek period). To add to the difficulty, nearly half the book, vv. 2-10, has a doublet in Jr 49:7-22; that Jeremiah was originally responsible for this passage is, however, disputed, and the two texts as we have them now seem to be independent. It is generally agreed that the prophecy of Obadiah functions on two levels, the one immediate (the punishment of Edom), the other remote (the triumph of Israel on the day of Yahweh). The book has affinities with the maledictions against Edom, current after 587, in Ps 137:7; Lm 4:21-22; Ezk 25:12f; 35:1f; Ml 1:2; and Jr 49:7f: the Edomites had taken advantage of the destruction of Jerusalem to invade southern Judah. In 312, Edom was conquered by the Nabataeans. The prophecy of Obadiah is to be placed between these two dates, some time in the 5th century.

This passionate appeal for national vengeance is in sharp contrast to the internationalism of the second part of Isaiah, for instance. But it is also a tribute to the terrible justice and power of Yahweh, and must not be isolated from the whole prophetic movement, of which it represents no more than a fleeting moment and the most old-fashioned approach.

Joel

The Book of Joel falls naturally into two parts. In the first, an invasion of locusts lays Judah waste; this calls for a religious ceremony of lamentation and prayer; to this Yahweh replies by promising the cessation of the plague and the return of prosperity, 1:2-2:27. The second part describes in apocalyptic style the judgement on the nations and the final triumph of Yahweh and of Israel, ch. 3-4. The unity of the two parts is demonstrated by reference to the day of Yahweh, the actual theme of ch. 3-4 but mentioned already in 1:15; 2:1-2,10-11. As the book stands, the plague of locusts is the sign that heralds the great judgement of God. It may be that this connection between the parts existed in the original text, but it is also possible that ch. 3-4 were added by another inspired author. The two parts are in any case of much the same date, since they suppose the same conditions, those of the post-exilic community, namely, no king, prominence given to public worship, borrowings from earlier prophets, especially Ezekiel and Obadiah who is quoted in 3:5. The book must have been written about 400 B.C.

Joel's contribution is to prophesy the outpouring of the Spirit on all God's

people in the messianic age, 3:1-5. This will be fulfilled with the coming of the Spirit on the apostles of Christ, and St Peter quotes the entire passage, Ac 2:16-21; Joel is the prophet of Pentecost. He is also the prophet of penance, and his exhortations to fasting and prayer, either borrowed from the Temple ceremonial or modelled on it, later found a natural place in the Lenten liturgy of the Church.

Jonah

Unlike the other prophetic books, this short work is entirely narrative. It tells the story of a disobedient prophet who first struggles to evade his divine mission and then complains to God that his mission has, against his expectations, been successful. The hero of this droll adventure is a prophet mentioned in 2 K 14:25, who lived in the reign of Jeroboam II. The book, however, does not claim to be his work and certainly cannot be by him. The 'great city' of Nineveh, destroyed in 612, is no more than a distant memory; thought and phrase are borrowed from Jeremiah and Ezekiel; the language of the book is late. All points to a date after the Exile, somewhere in the 5th century. The psalm, 2:3-10, which is of a different literary form, and which has no connection either with the plight of Jonah or with the doctrine of the book, is very probably an interpolation.

This late date is warning enough against any interpretation of the book as history. This is excluded by other arguments as well. There is no trace in Assyrian or biblical documents of a conversion of the king of Nineveh with all his people to the God of Israel. And, though God is indeed master of nature, the successive prodigies here narrated read like a succession of practical jokes played by God on his prophet: the sudden storm, the choice of Jonah by lot, the great fish, the plant growing in a night and withering in an hour; while the whole story is told with undisguised irony quite alien to the writing of history.

The book is intended to amuse and instruct; it is a didactic work, and its doctrine marks one of the peaks of the Old Testament. It rejects a too rigid interpretation of prophecy, asserting that even the most uncompromising of threats is an expression of the merciful will of God, who pardons at the first sign of repentance. Rejecting, too, the narrow racialism into which the post-exilic community was tempted to withdraw, it proclaims an astonishingly broadminded catholicity. All the characters of this story are likeable, the pagan sailors, the king, the populace, even the animals of Nineveh, all except the only Israelite on the stage—and he a prophet! But God is merciful to all, even to rebellious Jonah. The lesson of humility and sincere repentance comes to the Chosen People from their bitterest foes.

We are on the threshold of the gospel. In Mt 12:41 and Lk 11:29-32 Jesus will cite the conversion of the Ninevites as an example of repentance, and Mt 12:40 sees Jonah inside the great fish as a prefiguring of Christ in the tomb. This use of the story of Jonah should not be invoked as a proof of its history. Jesus employs the Old Testament story as Christian preachers use the New Testament parables; the intention is the same: to teach by means of well-known illustrations, without implying any opinion as to the historical reality of the facts.

ISAIAH

I. THE FIRST PART OF ISAIAH

A. ORACLES BEFORE THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITE WAR

Title

Mi 1:1 1 The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which 1
he saw in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.[a]

Against a thoughtless people[b]

48:8
Dt 4:26; 32: 1+.5.18
Mi 1:2
Ac 13:16 Listen, you heavens; earth, attend 2
for Yahweh is speaking,
'I reared sons, I brought them up,
Dt 32:5-6,10
Ba 4:8 but they have rebelled against me.
Jr 8:7 The ox knows its owner 3
Lk 2:16 and the ass its master's crib,
Israel knows nothing,
my people understands nothing.'

The punishment of Judah[c]

A sinful nation, a people weighed down with guilt, 4
30:9 a breed of wrong-doers, perverted sons.
Lv 17:1+
Jr 2:13 They have abandoned Yahweh, despised the Holy One of Israel,
they have turned away from him.

Lv 26:14-33
Jr 5:3
Am 4:6-13 Where shall I strike you next, 5
since you heap one betrayal on another?
Ps 38:3 The whole head is sick, the whole heart grown faint;
from the sole of the foot to the head there is not a sound spot:[d] 6
wounds, bruises, open sores
Jr 30:12-14
Lk 10:34 not dressed, not bandaged,
not soothed with oil.

Your land is desolate, your towns burnt down, 7
your fields—strangers lay them waste before your eyes;
Gn 19:1+ all is desolation, as after the fall of Sodom.[e]

The daughter of Zion[f] is left 8
like a shanty in a vineyard,
like a shed in a melon patch,
like a besieged city.
4:3+
Rm 9:29
Gn 18:16-33;
19:1-29 Had Yahweh not left us a few survivors, 9
we should be like Sodom,
we should now be like Gomorrah.

29:13-14 **Against religious hypocrisy**[g]

Hear the word of Yahweh, 10

you rulers of Sodom;
listen to the command of our God,
you people of Gomorrah. Dt 32:32

11 'What are your endless sacrifices to me? Am 5:21+
says Yahweh.
I am sick of holocausts of rams
and the fat of calves.
The blood of bulls[h] and of goats revolts me.
12 When you come to present yourselves before me,
who asked you to trample over my courts?
13 Bring me your worthless offerings no more, Lm 2:6 Ho 2:13
the smoke of them fills me with disgust.
New Moons, sabbaths, assemblies—
I cannot endure festival and solemnity.[i]
14 Your New Moons and your pilgrimages
I hate with all my soul.
They lie heavy on me,
I am tired of bearing them.
15 When you stretch out your hands Jn 9:31
I turn my eyes away.
You may multiply your prayers, Jr 14:12 Mi 3:4
I shall not listen.
Your hands are covered with blood,[j] 59:2-3 Jr 2:34
16 wash, make yourselves clean.

'Take your wrong-doing out of my sight. Am 5:14-15
Cease to do evil. Jr 7:5
17 Learn to do good, 10:2 Zc 7:9
search for justice,
help the oppressed,[k]
be just to the orphan, Ex 22:21-22+
plead for the widow.

18 'Come now, let us talk this over, 43:26
says Yahweh.
Though your sins are like scarlet, Ps 32:1; 51:7
they shall be as white as snow; Jb 9:30
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.

19 'If you are willing to obey, Lv 26:3-12 Dt 28:1-14
you shall eat the good things of the earth.
20 But if you persist in rebellion, Lv 26:14-39 Dt 28:15f
the sword[l] shall eat you instead.'
The mouth of Yahweh has spoken. =40:5; 58:14 ||Mi 4:4

1 a. This title must have been added as an introduction to the collection of oracles in ch. 1-12. Several of these, however, refer to Samaria and Assyria.

b. This stanza is either an independent passage summarising the habitual theme of Isaiah's earliest preaching, or forms the beginning of the following poem.

c. This poem which, like 6:12, describes a country laid waste and Jerusalem besieged, must be dated to one of the two sieges undergone by the city in the days of Isaiah, either in 701, or more probably 735.

d. In their literal sense these verses speak of a Judah punished for its sins. The liturgy of the Church applies them to the suffering Messiah.

e. 'of Sodom' corr.; 'of aliens' Hebr.

f. Jerusalem.

g. An oracle presumably uttered in the Temple at the beginning of Isaiah's ministry, and before 735, since its conclusion envisages the possibility of escape from punishment for the populace. Like Am 5:21+, Isaiah castigates ritual divorced from morality.

h. Hebr. adds 'and of lambs'.

i. 'festival and solemnity' Greek; 'iniquity and solemnity' Hebr.

j. Of sacrificial victims, but also of innocent men.

k. 'help the oppressed' versions.

l. The sword of the invader.

Lament for Jerusalem[m]

Jr 2:20 Ezk 16:23
1:26
What a harlot she has become, 21
the faithful city,[n]
Zion,[o] that was all justice!
Once integrity lived there,
but now assassins.

Jr 6:29 Ezk 22:18
Your silver has turned into dross, 22
your wine is watered.
Your princes are rebels, 23
accomplices of thieves.

Pr 17:23 Mi 3:11
10:2
All are greedy for profit
and chase after bribes.
They show no justice to the orphan,
the cause of the widow is never heard.

Therefore—it is the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks, 24
the Mighty One of Israel,
'Ah, I will outdo my enemies,
avenge myself on my foes.

'I will turn my hand against you, 25
48:10 Zc 13:9
I will smelt away your dross in the furnace,[p]
I will remove all your base metal from you.

'I will restore your judges as of old, 26
your counsellors as in bygone days.
1:21; 54:14; 60:17; 62:4; 65:15, 18
Then you will be called City of Integrity,[q]
Faithful City.'[r]

Ps 118:20 Jr 3:17 Zc 8:3
Zion will be redeemed by justice, 27
and her penitents by integrity.
Rebels and sinners together will be shattered, 28
and those who abandon Yahweh will perish.

Against tree worship[s]

Yes, you[t] will be ashamed of the terebinths 29
which give you such pleasure;
you will blush for the gardens
that charm you.
Since you will be like a terebinth 30
with faded leaves,
like a garden
without water.
The man of high estate will be tinder, 31
his handiwork a spark.
Both will burn together
and no one put them out.

Everlasting peace[a]

2 The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem[b] 1

||Mi 4:1-3 Ac 2:17
In the days to come 2
the mountain of the Temple of Yahweh
shall tower above the mountains
and be lifted higher than the hills.
56:6-8; 60:11-14 1 K 8:41 Tb 13:11
All the nations will stream to it,
peoples without number will come to it; and they will say: 3

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh,
to the Temple of the God of Jacob
that he may teach us his ways
so that we may walk in his paths;
since the Law will go out from Zion,
and the oracle of Yahweh[c] from Jerusalem'.

Ps 47:9; 87▲ Ws 18:4▲ Zc 8:20f;▲ 14:16▲

Lk 24:47 Jn 4:22

4 He[d] will wield authority over the nations
and adjudicate between many peoples;
these will hammer their swords into ploughshares,
their spears into sickles.
Nation will not lift sword against nation,
there will be no more training for war.

9:6; 11:6-9+

Ps 46:9 Ho 2:20 Jl 4:9-11 Zc 9:9-10

5 O House of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of Yahweh.

60:1-3 Ws 18:4 Mi 4:5

The coming of Yahweh[e]

6 Yes, you have cast off your people,
the House of Jacob;
the land is full of soothsayers,[f]
full of sorcerers like the Philistines;
they clap foreigners by the hand.[g]

Dt 18:14

7 His land is full of silver and gold
and treasures beyond counting;
his land is full of horses
and chariots without number;

Dt 17:16-17 Ps 20:7

8 his land is full of idols...
They bow down before the work of their hands,
before the thing their fingers have made.

9 The mortal will be humbled, man brought low;
do not forgive them.[h]

=5:15

10 Get among the rocks,
hide in the dust,
at the sight of the terror of Yahweh,
at the brilliance of his majesty,

2:19; 24:18 Ho 10:8 ≠2 Th 1:9 Rv 6:15

m. The beginning of this poem is in the *qinah* (lament) rhythm which has uneven lines (3+2 stresses or 4+3).

n. Cf. v. 26. Isaiah is thinking of the faithful Jerusalem in the days of David and Solomon.

o. 'Zion' Greek.

p. 'in the furnace' corr.

q. For Isaiah, as for Amos, 'integrity' (*sidqathah*, 'righteousness') is, in its more immediate sense, judicial equity; but it has also the deeper sense of a 'justness' characterising a dispensation in which Yahweh the king grants his subjects some share in his own sanctity, cf. 5:16+.

r. Fresh names conferred on the Jerusalem of the future. A thing's name reveals what it is, cf. Ex 3:14+, or what it is destined to be. The ancient narratives of Israel often related names (of persons or places) to supernatural events: Abraham, Gn 17:5; Isaac, Gn 21:6; Israel, Gn 32:29; Bethel, Gn 28:17, etc. The prophets imitate and develop this device. The names they give to a city (as here, and in Ezk 48:35) or to a person, Ho 1:4,6,9; 2:1-3,25; Is 7:14 (cf. 8:10); 8:1-4; 7:3 (cf. 10:21); 9:5; see also Is 60:14+, are prophetic names: once given, they remain (as a blessing or as a curse), and reveal the person's destiny or rather commit him to it; they constitute a sign, Is 8:18; Zc 3:8, more efficacious even than a symbolic gesture, cf. Introduction to the Prophets and Is 20:4+.

s. One of the rare oracles in which Isaiah attacks pagan practice; possibly he has Samaria in mind.

t. 'you' corr.; 'we' Hebr.

2 a. The beginning of this oracle is found also in Mi but is reminiscent of Is 9:6 and 11:6-9. It expresses the same devotion for Jerusalem, the favoured home of the Word, cf. 2 S 5:9+, but at the same time its perspective goes far beyond the frontiers of Palestine. If Isaiah is the author, the passage belongs to the messianic oracles of ch. 9 and 11.

b. This new title must have been inserted to introduce a small collection of oracles, probably the group of ch. 2-5.

c. The reference, it seems, is not simply to the Mosaic Law and to some oracular instrument like the ancient ephod, 1 S 2:28+, but to an individual, a prophet preaching the doctrine of Yahweh.

d. Yahweh.

e. This oracle, announcing a striking intervention by God, must be dated near the beginning of Isaiah's ministry, between 740 and 736. It seems to refer particularly to Samaria, at that time prosperous.

f. 'of soothsayers' corr. Divination was practised in Palestine, as throughout the East, cf. Ex 22:17; Lv 19:31; 20:27; Dt 18:10-11 and 1 S 28:3,9; Is 8:19.

g. 'by the hand' corr. A gesture of friendship, or else a magic rite: the text is obscure.

h. 'do not forgive them': possibly a gloss.

when he arises
to make the earth quake.[i]

Jb 22:29
2 Co 10:5
2 Th 1:10
Human pride will lower its eyes, 11
the arrogance of men will be humbled.
Yahweh alone shall be exalted,
on that day.
Jr 3:23
Yes, that will be the day of Yahweh Sabaoth 12
against all pride and arrogance,
against all that is great, to bring it down,
Ps 37:35
against all the cedars of Lebanon[j] 13
and all the oaks of Bashan,
against all the high mountains 14
and all the soaring hills,
against all the lofty towers 15
and all the sheer walls,
23:1
Ps 48:7+
against all the ships of Tarshish 16
and all things of price...

Human pride will be humbled, 17
the arrogance of men will be brought low.
Yahweh alone will be exalted,
on that day,
Ws 14:11
Jr 10:11,15
Ezk 6:6
and all idols thrown down. 18

2:10+
Rv 6:15
Go into the hollows of the rocks, 19
into the caverns of the earth,
at the sight of the terror of Yahweh,
at the brilliance of his majesty,
when he arises
to make the earth quake.

31:7
That day man will fling to moles and bats the idols of silver and the idols of 20
gold that he made for worship,[k]

and go into the crevices of the rocks 21
and the rifts of the crag,
at the sight of the terror of Yahweh,
at the brilliance of his majesty,
when he arises
to make the earth quake.

Ps 146:4
Jr 17:5
Trust no more in man, 22
Gn 2:7;6:3
Jb 34:14
he has but a breath in his nostrils.
How much is he worth?[l]

Anarchy in Jerusalem[a]

3 Yes, see how the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth 1
is taking from Jerusalem and Judah
support of every kind
(support of bread and support of water):
hero, man-at-arms, judge, prophet, 2
diviner, elder, •captain, noble, 3
counsellor, sorcerer, soothsayer.
Qo 10:16
'I give them boys for princes, 4
raw lads to rule over them.'

The people bully each other, 5
neighbour and neighbour;

a youth can insult his elder,
a lout abuse a noble,
6 so that everyone tries to catch his brother
in their father's house, to say,
'You have a cloak, so you be leader,
and rule this heap of ruins'.

7 When that day comes the other will protest,
'I am no doctor,
in my house is neither bread nor cloak;
do not make me leader of the people'.
8 Yes, Jerusalem is falling into ruins
and Judah is in collapse,
since their words and their deeds affront the Lord,
insulting his glory.

9 Their insolent airs bear witness against them,
they parade their sin like Sodom. Gn 18:20-21; 19:4-11
To their own undoing, they do not hide it,
they are preparing their own downfall.

10 Tell them, 'Happy is the virtuous man,
for he will feed on the fruit of his deeds;
11 woe to the wicked, evil is on him,[b] 2 S 3:39
he will be treated as his actions deserve'.

12 O my people, oppressed by a lad, 56:10
ruled by women.[c]
O my people, your rulers mislead you
and destroy the road you walk on.

13 Yahweh rises from his judgement seat, Ps 82:1; Ho 4:1-5; Mi 6:1-5
he stands up to arraign his people.[d]
14 Yahweh calls to judgement 10:2
the elders and the princes of his people:

'You are the ones who destroy the vineyard 5:1-7
and conceal what you have stolen from the poor.
15 By what right do you crush my people
and grind the faces of the poor?' Am 2:7
It is the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks.

A warning to the women of Jerusalem

16 Yahweh said: Because of the haughtiness 32:9-14; Jr 4:30; Am 4:1-3; 1 Tm 2:9; 1 P 3:3-4
of the daughters of Zion,
the way they walk with their heads held high
and enticing eyes,
the way they mince along,
tinkling the bangles on their feet,
17 the Lord will give the daughters of Zion itching heads Jr 2:16
and uncover their nakedness.

i. Following Greek; the verse is missing from Hebr. It refers to the 'day of Yahweh', cf. Am 5:18+, and the terms describing it are borrowed from divine interventions in the history of Israel (Red Sea, Sinai, etc., cf. Ex 13:21+ and Ex 19:16+) or in the phenomena of nature (storm, earthquake), cf. Am 8:9+.

j. Hebr. adds 'lofty and high'.

k. Probably a gloss, followed (v. 21) by a partial duplication of the refrain.

l. V. 22 is missing from the Greek.

3 a. This oracle is usually assigned to the beginning of the reign of Ahaz, about 735.

b. 'on him' added conj.

c. 'a lad' corr. Possibly alluding to the youthful king and the ladies of the court.

d. 'his people' Greek and Syr.; 'the peoples' Hebr.

That day the Lord will take away the ankle ornaments, tiaras, pendants 18
and bracelets, the veils, •headbands, foot chains and belts, the scent bottles and 19 20
amulets, •signet rings and nose rings, •the expensive dresses, mantles, cloaks 21 22
and purses, •the mirrors, linen garments, turbans and mantillas. 23

Am 8:10 Instead of scent, a stink; 24
instead of belt, a rope;
instead of hair elaborately done, a shaven scalp,
and instead of gorgeous dress, a sack;
and brand marks instead of beauty.

The widows of Jerusalem[e]

Your men will fall by the sword, 25
your heroes in the fight.
Lm 1:4 The gates will moan and mourn; 26
you will sit on the ground desolate.
4 And seven women will fight 1
over a single man that day:[a]
'We will eat our own food,
and wear our own clothing,' they will say
'let us just bear your name;
take our disgrace away'.

The remnant of Jerusalem[b]

Jr 23:5-6; 33:15 Zc 3:8; 6:12 That day, the branch of Yahweh 2
shall be beauty and glory,
and the fruit of the earth[c]
shall be the pride and adornment
of Israel's survivors.
1:9 Ezr 9:8 52:1; 60:21 Zc 3:13 Those who are left of Zion 3
and remain of Jerusalem
shall be called holy
Ps 65:9; 87:6 Si 47:22 Jr 40:11 Dn 12:1+ Rm 11:5 and those left in Jerusalem, noted down for survival.[d]

The future restoration[e]

When the Lord has washed away 4
the filth of the daughter[f] of Zion
and cleansed Jerusalem of the blood shed in her
with the blast of judgement and the blast of destruction,
Jl 4:17-21 Yahweh will come and rest[g] 5
on the whole stretch of Mount Zion
49:10 and on those who are gathered there,
Ex 13:21-22+ a cloud by day, and smoke,
and by night the brightness of a flaring fire.
Ex 24:16+ Rv 7:15-16; 21:3-4 For, over all, the glory of Yahweh[h]
will be a canopy •and a tent 6
to give shade by day from the heat,
25:4-5 refuge and shelter from the storm and the rain.

The song of the vineyard[a]

3:14; 27:2-5 Ps 80:8-18 Jr 2:21; 5:10; 6:9; 8:13; 12:10 Ezk 15:1-8; 17:3-10; 19:10-14 Ho 10:1 Jl 1:7 Na 2:3 Mt 21:18-19+; 33- 5 Let me sing to my friend 1
the song of his love[b] for his vineyard.
My friend had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
He dug the soil, cleared it of stones, 2
and planted choice vines[c] in it.

In the middle he built a tower,
he dug a press there too.
He expected it to yield grapes,
but sour grapes were all that it gave.

3 And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
I ask you to judge
between my vineyard and me.
4 What could I have done for my vineyard
that I have not done?
I expected it to yield grapes.
Why did it yield sour grapes instead?

5 Very well, I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on,
and knock down its wall for it to be trampled on.
6 I will lay it waste, unpruned, undug;
overgrown by the briar and the thorn.
I will command the clouds
to rain no rain on it.
7 Yes, the vineyard of Yahweh Sabaoth
is the House of Israel,
and the men of Judah
that chosen plant.
He expected justice, but found bloodshed,
integrity, but only a cry of distress.

44+▲ Mk 12:1▲ Jn 15:1-2▲
Mi 6:1-5
Jr 2:4-7
Ho 2:14
32:13
2 S 1:21

Curses[d]

8 Woe to those who add house to house
and join field to field
until everywhere belongs to them
and they are the sole inhabitants of the land.
9 Yahweh Sabaoth has sworn this[e] in my hearing,
'Many houses shall be brought to ruin,

1 K 21:1 Jr 22:13-19 Ezk 7:5-26 Am 6:1-7 Mi 2:1-5 Hab 2:6-20 Mt 23 Lk 6:24-26

e. Spoken either at the first or second siege of Jerusalem, in 735 or 701.

4 a. The army has therefore been wiped out or captured. To escape the disgrace of spinsterhood or barrenness the women volunteer to join the harem of the survivors.

b. A poem belonging to the group of messianic oracles in ch. 9 and 11.

c. The 'branch' and the 'fruit of the earth' mean either the Messiah or else the 'remnant' of Israel (see following note), compared to a tree springing up again in Palestinian soil.

d. Faithless Israel will be punished, but because God loves his people a small 'remnant' will escape the invader's sword. This idea, already familiar to Amos, 3:12; 5:15; 9:8-10, is taken up by Isaiah, 4:2-3, 6:13; 7:3 and 10:19-21; 28:5-6; 37:4 (=2 K 19:4); 37:31-32, cf. Mi 4:7; 5:2; Zp 2:7,9; 3:12; Jr 3:14; 5:18; Ezk 5:3. This purified and henceforth faithful remnant left in Jerusalem will once again become a powerful nation. After the disaster of 587 a new conception appears: the remnant will be found among the exiles, Ezk 12:16; Ba 2:13; in exile they will turn to God, Ezk 6:8-10; cf. Dt 30:1-2, and God will then gather them together with a view to the messianic restoration, Jr 23:3; 31:7; 50:20; Ezk 20:37; Is 11:11,16; Mi 2:12-13. Back from exile this remnant, again unfaithful, will be further reduced in number and purified, Zc 1:3; 8:11; Hg 1:12; Ob 17=Jl 3:5; Zc 13:8-9; 14:2. In the event, Christ proves to be the true 'Branch' of the new and sanctified Israel, Is 11:1,10; cf. 4:2; Jr 23:3-6. Unlike Israel, the pagan nations will have no 'remnant', Is 14:22,30; 15:9; 16:14; Am 1:8; Ezk 21:37; Ob 18.

e. This continuation of the poem seems to have been added at the time of the exile and to allude, v. 4, to the fall of Jerusalem in 587.

f. 'daughter' corr.; 'daughters' Hebr.

g. 'come and rest' Greek; 'create' Hebr.

h. 'of Yahweh' added, with one Greek MS.

5 a. A poem composed by Isaiah at the beginning of his ministry, the occasion probably being the festivities of grape harvest. The idea of Israel as a vine, chosen and afterwards rejected, has been already touched upon by Hosea, 10:1, and will be taken up by Jeremiah, 2:21; 5:10; 6:9; 12:10, and by Ezekiel, 15:1-8; 17:3-10; 19:10-14. Cf. Ps 80:8-18; Is 27:2-5. Jesus later gives it a new emphasis in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, Mt 21:33-44p (cf. also the withered fig tree, Mt 21:18-19p). In Jn 15:1-2 he unfolds the mystery of the 'true' vine. There are other aspects of the vine theme in Dt 32:32-33 and Si 24:17.

b. 'of his love' corr.; 'of my friend' Hebr.

c. In Hebr. 'of *soreq*', probably a vine of fine-quality red grapes.

d. This poem also must belong to the first days of Isaiah's ministry. Some scholars add the malediction of 10:1-4 to these six.

e. 'this has sworn' corr.

great and fine, but left untenanted;
7:23 ten acres of vineyard will yield only one barrel, 10
ten bushel of seed will yield only one bushel'.[f]

22:13; 28:1. 7-8; 56:12 1 K 16:9 Ws 2:7-9 Jl 1:5 Am 4:1 Mi 2:11 Woe to those who from early morning 11
chase after strong drink,
and stay up late at night
inflamed with wine.
Jb 21:12 Nothing but harp and lyre, 12
tambourine and flute,
and wine for their drinking bouts.

Never a thought for the works of Yahweh,
Ps 28:5 never a glance for what his hands have done.
Tb 14:4 My people will go into exile, 13
for want of perception;
her dignitaries dying of hunger,
her populace parched with thirst.

Ps 55:15 Hab 2:5 [g]...Yes, Sheol opens wide his throat 14
and gapes with measureless jaw
to swallow up her thronging nobility[h]
as they are shouting for joy.
The mortal humbled, man brought low, 15
=2:9,11 proud eyes will be cast down.
Yahweh Sabaoth will increase his glory by his sentence, 16
1:26+; 6: 3+ the holy God will display his holiness[i] by his integrity.
7:25 Lambs will graze as at pasture, 17
fatlings and kids[j] *browse in the ruins.*

Woe to those who draw down punishment on themselves 18
with an ox's halter,[k]
and sin
as with a chariot's traces:
2 P 3:4 and to those who say, 'Quick! Let him hurry his work[l] 19
so that we can see it;
these plans of the Holy One of Israel,
let them happen and come true
so that we can know what they are.'

32:5 Pr 17:15 Mi 3:2 Mt 23:13 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, 20
who substitute darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who substitute bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter.

Jn 9:40-41 Rm 1:21-22 Woe to those who think themselves wise 21
and believe themselves cunning.
Si 31:25 Woe to the heroes of drinking bouts, 22
to the champions at preparing strong drinks.
10:2 Mi 3:2 Woe to those who for a bribe acquit the guilty 23
and cheat the good man of his due.
Ex 15:7 Ps 83:14 For this, as stubble is prey for the flames 24
and as straw vanishes in the fire,
so their root will rot,
their blossom be carried off like dust,
Am 2:4 for rejecting the Law of Yahweh Sabaoth,
and despising the word of the Holy One of Israel.

The anger of Yahweh[m]

25 So, Yahweh aflame with anger against his people — 9:12
has raised his hand to strike them;
he has killed the princes,[n] their corpses lie
like dung in the streets.
Yet his anger is not spent, — 9:11,16,20; 10:4
still his hand is raised to strike.

The Assyrian invasion[o]

26 He hoists a signal for a distant nation, — Dt 28:49 Jr 5:15-17; 6:22-30 Na 2:2
he whistles it up from the ends of the earth;
and look, it comes, swiftly, promptly.

27 None of them faint or weary,
none sleeping or drowsy,
none of them with belt loose,
none with sandal-straps broken.

28 Its arrows are sharpened,
its bows all bent,
the hoofs of its horses are like flint,
its chariot-wheels like tornadoes.

29 Its roar is the roar of a lioness, — Ho 5:14 Am 3:12
like a lion cub it roars,
it growls and seizes its prey,
it bears it off, and no one can snatch it back.

30 Growling against it,[p] that day,
like the growling of the sea.
Only look at the country: darkness and distress, — 8:20-22
and the light flickers out in shadows.

B. THE BOOK OF IMMANUEL

The call of Isaiah[a]

1 6 In the year of King Uzziah's death[b] I saw the Lord Yahweh seated on a high — 1 K 22:19 Jb 13:11
2 throne; his train filled the sanctuary;[d] •above him stood seraphs,[e] each one — Rv 4:2,8
with six wings: two to cover its face,[f] two to cover its feet[g] and two for flying. — Ezk 1:11; 10:21

f. 'barrel... bushel' lit. '*bath*. a *homer* of seed will only yield one *ephah*'.

g. Vv. 14-16 are out of place and should probably be read with 2:6-22.

h. Populace of an unnamed city, possibly Samaria.

i. The 'holiness' of God, cf. 6:3+, 'separates' him from all created things: since he transcends them they cannot contaminate him. But this transcendent sanctity of God can affect man to whom it appears under the form of 'justice' (1:26+), and thereby emphasises its moral nature: God rewards good and punishes evil; this is God's 'judgement'. God's lovingkindness does not clash with his 'justice', on the contrary it is part of it, since God's kindness in forgiving Israel and the repentant sinner comes from his faithfulness to what he has promised, Mi 7:9; Ps 51:14. See also 1:26+; 4:3; cf. Mt 5:48.

j. 'kids' corr.

k. 'ox's' corr.; 'of impiety' Hebr.

l. I.e. the 'day of Yahweh' wrongly regarded as the day of Israel's triumph as a nation; cf. Am 5:18+.

m. Many hold that this fragment belongs to the long poem of 9:7–10:4, the refrain of which occurs here also.

n. 'he has killed the princes' corr.; 'the mountains shook' Hebr.

o. This poem may refer to one of the great Assyrian invasions in the days of Isaiah: those of Tiglath-pileser III in 735 or 732, of Shalmaneser in 722, of Sargon in 711, or of Sennacherib in 701.

p. 'it' here could mean not the invader but the people of Judah and Israel.

6 a. The more natural place for the vision would have been at the beginning of the book, but it aptly introduces the 'Book of Immanuel' which assembles the oracles relating to the Syro-Ephraimite war when the threats of vv. 11-13 came true.

b. Usually dated 740 B.C.

c. 'Yahweh' restored in accordance with several Hebr. MSS

d. The Hekal, the chamber leading into the Debir or 'Holy of Holies', cf. 1 K 6:1-38.

e. Heavenly beings which Isaiah is the first to associate with Yahweh. Their name means 'burning ones' (cf. the 'burning' serpents of Nb 21:6+; Dt 8:15, and the flying dragons of Is 14:29; 30:6). They are perhaps the same as the cherubs on the ark of the covenant, Ex 25:18+.

f. For fear of seeing Yahweh, cf. Ex 33:20+.

g. Euphemism for sexual organs.

And they cried out one to another in this way, 3
Ps 22:3 ↗Rv 4:8 'Holy, holy, holy[h] is Yahweh Sabaoth.
Nb 14:21 His glory fills the whole earth.'

Ex 19:16+; 40:34-35 1 K 8:10-12 ↗Jn 12:41 Rv 15:8 The foundations of the threshold shook with the voice of the one who cried out, 4
and the Temple was filled with smoke.[i] •I said: 5

'What a wretched state I am in! I am lost,
for I am a man of unclean lips
and I live among a people of unclean lips,
Ex 33:20+ Lv 16:16-17 and my eyes have looked at the King, Yahweh Sabaoth.'

Jr 1:9 Dn 10:16 Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding in his hand a live coal which he 6
Zc 3:6 had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. •With this he touched my mouth 7
and said:

'See now, this has touched your lips,
your sin is taken away,
your iniquity is purged'.[j]

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: 8

'Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?'

Ex 4:10-13 Jr 1:6 I answered, 'Here I am, send me'.[k] •He said: 9

42:18 ↗Mt 13:14-15p ↗Mk 4:12 ↗Lk 8:10 ↗Jn 12:40 ↗Ac 28:26-27 2 Th 2:11-12 'Go, and say to this people,
"Hear and hear again, but do not understand;
see and see again, but do not perceive".
Make the heart of this people gross, 10
its ears dull;
shut its eyes,
so that it will not see with its eyes,
hear with its ears,
understand with its heart,
and be converted and healed.'[l]

Then I said, 'Until when, Lord?'[m] He answered: 11

'Until towns have been laid waste and deserted,
houses left untenanted,
countryside made desolate,[n]
and Yahweh drives the people out. 12
There will be a great emptiness in the country
and, though a tenth of the people remain, 13
it will be stripped like a terebinth
of which, once felled, only the stock remains.
Jb 14:7 Si 44:17 The stock is a holy seed.'[o]

2Ch28:5,16 **The first warning to Ahaz**

8:6 2K16:5-9 7 In the reign of Ahaz son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Razon[a] the 1
king of Aram went up against Jerusalem with Pekah son of Remaliah, king
of Israel, to lay siege to it; but he was unable to capture it.

The news was brought to the House of David. 'Aram' they said 'has reached 2
Ephraim.' Then the heart of the king and the hearts of the people shuddered
as the trees of the forest shudder in front of the wind. •Yahweh said to Isaiah, 3
8:18 10:20-21 'Go with your son Shear-jashub,[b] and meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of
36:2 2 K 20:20+ the upper pool on the Fuller's Field road, •and say to him: 4

2 Ch 15:7 "Pay attention, keep calm, have no fear,
do not let your heart sink
because of these two smouldering stumps of firebrands,[c]

5 or because Aram, Ephraim and the son of Remaliah
have plotted to ruin you, and have said:
6 Let us invade Judah and terrorise it
and seize it for ourselves,
and set up a king there,
the son of Tabeel.[d]
7 The Lord Yahweh says this:
It shall not come true; it shall not be.
8a The capital of Aram is Damascus,
the head of Damascus, Razon;
9a the capital of Ephraim, Samaria,
the head of Samaria, the son of Remaliah.[e]
8b Six or five years more[f]
and a shattered Ephraim shall no longer be a people.
9b But if you do not stand[g] by me, 28:16; 30:15 2 Ch 20:20 Jr 7:28 Mi 6:8
you will not stand at all." '

The second warning to Ahaz. The sign of Immanuel

10 11 Once again Yahweh spoke to Ahaz and said, •'Ask Yahweh your God for
a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights
12 above'. •'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put Yahweh to the test.' Dt 6:16
13 Then he said:

Listen now, House of David:
are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men
without trying the patience of my God, too?
14 The Lord himself, therefore,
will give you a sign.[h]
It is this: the maiden[i] is with child Mi 5:2 ↗ Mt 1:23

h. The holiness of God, cf. Lv 17:1+, is a central theme of Isaiah's preaching; he frequently calls Yahweh 'the Holy One of Israel', 1:4; 5:19,24; 10:17,20; 41:14, 16,20, etc. This divine sanctity requires man himself to be sanctified, i.e. separated from everything profane, Lv 17:1+, purified from sin, Is 6:5-7, sharing in the 'justice' of God, cf. 1:26+; 5:16+.

i. The equivalent of the cloud on Sinai

j. The live coal is holy because Yahweh has sanctified the altar from which it is taken. Fire is normally associated with Yahweh in the theophanies of Sinai, Ex 19:18; Dt 4:11-12,15,33,36. This is a destroying fire, Ex 24:17; Nb 11:1-3, but here it is purifying, cf. Is 1:25; Mt 3:11+.

k. The readiness of Isaiah recalls the faith of Abraham, Gn 12:1-4, and is in contrast to the hesitation of Moses, Ex 4:10-12, and especially of Jeremiah, Jr 1:6.

l. This verse reappears in the gospels, cf. Mt 13: 13+; characteristically semitic in form, it does not mean that the obstinacy of the people is directly willed by God, but that God has foreseen it and incorporated it into his plan; hence it must not dismay the prophet.

m. The question suggests that there is hope for conversion. The answer, though not excluding that possibility, emphasises the magnitude of the punishment which only a 'remnant', cf. 4:3+, will survive.

n. 'countryside left desolate' Greek and Lat.

o. The text is corrupt and overloaded. The last line is absent from the Greek.

7 a. 'Rezin' Hebr., but according to Greek and the Assyrian inscriptions the form is Razon.

b. This prophetic name, cf. 1:26+, means 'A remnant will return', i.e. will be converted to Yahweh and thus escape punishment, cf. 4:3+. See 10:21-22.

c. Contemptuous reference to the kings of Damascus and of Israel: they are already extinguished, only the smoke remains. A gloss adds 'by reason of the fierce anger of Razon, of Aram, and of the son of Remaliah'. The Greek differs substantially.

d. Probably an Aramaean of the Damascene court.

e. 'capital' and 'head' here render the same Hebr. word *rosh*. The two verses are ironical: Damascus and Samaria have only men for leaders, the real king of Jerusalem is Yahweh.

f. 'six or five' corr.; 'sixty-five' Hebr. Samaria fell in 722.

g. Or 'if you do not believe': what Isaiah asks of Ahaz is an act of faith. In the prophets, faith is not so much a theoretical belief in the existence and uniqueness of God as an attitude of confidence based on God's choice of Israel: he has chosen Israel, he is Israel's God, Dt 7:6+, he alone has the power to save his people. This unconditional trust, a guarantee of salvation, Is 28:16, excludes all reliance not only on men but still more on false gods, Is 30:15; Jr 17:5; Ps 52:7.

h. The prophecy of Immanuel is one of the outstanding 'royal Messiah' texts of Isaiah. Many interpreters identify the proffered 'sign' with the birth of the future king Hezekiah, son of Ahaz. The hopes of Israel had rested, since Nathan's prophecy, 2 S 7:1+, on the permanence of the Davidic dynasty. But the solemnity of the oracle and the symbolic name given to the child show that the prophet sees more in this royal birth than dynastic continuity, namely a decisive intervention by God, towards the final establishment of the messianic kingdom spoken of in 9:1-6 and 11:1-9. Thus the prophecy of Immanuel goes beyond the person of Hezekiah; the evangelists, Mt 1:23 quoting Is 7:14, Mt 4:15-16 quoting Is 8:23–9:1, cf. Jn 1:5, followed by the whole Christian tradition, see in it a hidden prophecy of the birth of Christ. In its immediate application, however, the 'sign' is twofold: it foretells the deliverance of the capital and dynastic continuity, but also the disasters to be sustained both by Judah and by her enemies.

i. The Greek version reads 'the virgin', being more explicit than the Hebr. which uses *almah*, meaning either a young girl or a young recently married, woman.

and will soon give birth to a son
8:8,10; 9:5+ Ps 46:7 Lk 1:31 whom she will call[j] Immanuel.[k]
On curds and honey[l] will he feed 15
7:22 until he knows how to refuse evil
and choose good.
8:4 Dt 1:39 1 K 3:9 For before this child knows how to refuse evil 16
and choose good,
the land whose two kings terrify you
will be deserted.
Yahweh will bring times for you 17
and your people and your father's House,
such as have not come
since Ephraim broke away from Judah
(the king of Assyria).
That day Yahweh will whistle up mosquitoes 18
from the Delta of the Egyptian Niles,
and bees from the land of Assyria,
to come and settle 19
on the steep ravine, on the rocky cleft,
on the thorn bush and on every pasture.[m]
Jr 2:16 On that day the Lord will shave 20
with a blade hired from beyond the River[n]
(the king of Assyria),
the head and hairs of the body,
and take off the beard, too.
That day each man will raise 21
one heifer and two sheep,
and because of the abundance of milk they give,[o] 22
all who are left in the country[p]
7:15 will feed on curds and honey.
5:10 That day, where a thousand vines used to be, 23
worth one thousand pieces of silver,
all will be briar and thorn.
Men will enter it with arrows and bow, 24
since the whole country will revert to briar and thorn.
On any hillside hoed with the hoe 25
no one will come
5:17 for fear of briars and thorns;
it will be pasture for cattle and grazing for sheep.

The birth of a son to Isaiah

Hab 2:2 8 Yahweh said to me, 'Take a large seal[q] and scratch on it in ordinary writing 1
2 K 16:10-16; 18:2 MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ.[b] •Then find me[c] reliable witnesses, Uriah the 2
priest and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah.'
I went to the prophetess, she conceived and gave birth to a son. Yahweh 3
said to me, 'Call him Maher-shalal-hash-baz,[d] •for before the child knows how 4
7:16; 8:18 to say father or mother, the wealth of Damascus and the booty of Samaria
will be carried off before the king of Assyria'.

Shiloah and the Euphrates

Yahweh spoke to me again and said: 5
Jn 9:7 Because this people has refused the waters of Shiloah[e] 6
which flow in tranquillity,
7:1-2 and trembles[f] before Razon
and the son of Remaliah,
the Lord will bring up against you 7

the mighty and deep waters of the River
(the king of Assyria and all his glory),[g]
and it will overflow out of its bed
bursting all its banks;
8 it will inundate Judah, flow over, pour out,
flooding it up to the neck,
and its wings will be spread
over the whole breadth of your country, O Immanuel. 7:14 Rv 21:3

Jr 46:7-8 Rv 12:15+

Terror for the invaders

9 Know[h] this, peoples, you will be crushed;
listen, far-off nations, Pr 21:30
arm yourselves, yet you will be crushed.
10 Devise a plan, it is thwarted;
put forward an argument, there is no substance in it,
for God is with us.[i] 7:14; 41:10; 43:5 2 Ch 20:17 Ps 46:7

Yahweh a stone in the way

11 Yes, Yahweh spoke to me like this
when his hand seized hold of me
to turn me from walking in the path
that this people follows.
12 Do not call conspiracy
all that this people calls conspiracy;
do not fear what they fear, ↗1 P 3:14
do not be afraid of them.
13 It is Yahweh Sabaoth,
whom you must hold in veneration,
him you must fear,
him you must dread.
14 He is the sanctuary and the stumbling-stone[j] Rm 9:32-33 1 P 2:8
and the rock that brings down
the two Houses of Israel;
a trap and a snare
for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
15 By it many will be brought down,
many fall and be broken,
be trapped and made captive.

This LXX reading is, however, an important witness to an early Jewish interpretation, an interpretation adopted by the evangelist: Mt 1:23 accepts the text as a prophecy of the virginal conception of Jesus.

j. 'she'; 'thou' some Hebr. and Greek MSS; 'he will be called' Vulg.

k. Immanuel means 'God-with-us', cf. 8:8,10; Ps 46:7,11. It is a prophetic name, cf. Is 1:26+.

l. On the significance of this food, see v. 22 with note.

m. Isaiah is therefore predicting a struggle between Egypt and Assyria in the land of Judah.

n. The ravaging armies of Assyria as instrument of God. The river is the Euphrates.

o. Hebr. adds 'he will eat curds', a gloss absent from Greek.

p. War will ruin the harvests; those who survive will have to revert to a pastoral existence and live on curds. But the abundance of this simple food, recalling in these times of distress the 'milk and honey' of the Promised Land, Ex 3:8+, shows that the survivors as well as Immanuel, v. 15, will regard this food as a privilege.

8 a. The cylindrical seal of the Assyrians and Babylonians.

b. I.e. 'Speedy-spoil-quick-booty'. A proper name, cf. v. 3.

c. 'find me' versions; 'I found' Hebr.

d. The third symbolic name used by Isaiah, cf. 1:26+. Like Shear-jashub and Immanuel, this child is a sign of the confederates' defeat. Cf. the names given by Hosea to his children, Ho 1:4,6,9; 2:1-3,25.

e. Jerusalem's only spring, cf. 2 K 20:20+. It symbolises the hidden protection of God, the true source of confidence.

f. 'trembles (lit. 'melts') before' corr.; 'rejoices' Hebr.

g. Whom Ahaz had shortsightedly called to his assistance, 2 K 16:7-9. An explanatory gloss. The 'River' is the Euphrates.

h. 'Know' Greek; 'Be provoked' Hebr.

i. The meaning of the name Immanuel.

j. 'the sanctuary and'; possibly a scribal error, cf. Targ.

Isaiah addresses his disciples

I bind up this testimony, 16
I seal this revelation,
in the heart of my disciples.
I wait for Yahweh 17
who hides his face from the House of Jacob;
in him I hope.
1:26+; 7:3; 8:3-4 Ezk 12:6 Zc 3:8 ✗ Heb 2:13 I and the children whom Yahweh has given me 18
are signs and portents in Israel
from Yahweh Sabaoth
who dwells on Mount Zion.
1 S 28:3+ And should men say to you, 'Consult ghosts 19
and wizards that whisper and mutter' —
by all means a people must consult its gods
and, on behalf of the living, consult the dead.[k]

To obtain a revelation and a testimony, 20
without doubt this is how they will talk,
5:30 since there is no dawn for them.[l]

Wandering in the night[m]

Distressed and starving he will wander through the country 21
and, starving, he will become frenzied,
blaspheming his king and his God;
turning his gaze upward,
then down to the earth, 22
he will find only distress and darkness,
the blackness of anguish,
Rv 16:10 and will see nothing but night.
Is not all blackness where anguish is?[n] 23

Epiphany

In days past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but 1
✗ Mt 4:13-16 in days to come he will confer glory on the Way of the Sea on the far side of
Jordan, province of the nations.[o]

9 The people that walked in darkness 1
60:2 Tb 13:11 Lk 1:79 Jn 8:12+ has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
Ps 126 You have made their gladness greater,[a] 2
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

10:25-26; 14:25 Jr 30:8 Na 1:13 For the yoke that was weighing on him, 3
the bar[b] across his shoulders, 4
the rod of his oppressor,
Jg 7:15-25 Ps 83:9 these you break as on the day of Midian.

For all the footgear of battle, 4
every cloak rolled in blood, 5
is burnt,
and consumed by fire.

7:14+; 11:2 Gn 3:15; 49:10 Nb 24:7,17 For there is a child born for us, 5
a son given to us 6

and dominion is laid on his shoulders; 2 S 7:12-▲ 16▲ Mi 5:1-3▲ Zc 9:9▲ Ep 2:14▲
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.[c]
6/7 Wide[d] is his dominion
in a peace that has no end, Lk 2:14
for the throne of David
and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure 2:4
in justice and integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever, Lk 1:32-33
the jealous love of Yahweh Sabaoth will do this.

The vengeance of Yahweh[e]

7/8 The Lord hurls a word against Jacob, 55:10-11
it falls on Israel.
8/9 All the people of Ephraim and all the inhabitants of Samaria know it.
In their pride they have said,
speaking in the arrogance of their heart,
9/10 'The bricks have fallen down, then we will build with dressed stone;
the sycamores have been cut down, we will put cedars in their place'.
10/11 But Yahweh is marshalling his people's[f] enemies against them,
he is stirring up their foes:
11/12 to the east, Aram, to the west, the Philistines Ps 14:4 Pr 30:14 Jr 10:25 Mi 3:3 Hab 1:13
devour Israel with gaping jaw.
Yet his anger is not spent,
still his hand is raised to strike.

12/13 But the people have not come back to him who struck them, 5:25+ Jr 5:3-6 Ho 7:10-15 Am 4:6-11+
they have not come looking for Yahweh Sabaoth;
13/14 hence Yahweh has cut head and tail from Israel,
palm branch and reed in a single day.
14/15 (The 'head' is the elder and the man of rank;
the 'tail', the prophet with lying vision.)
15/16 This people's leaders have taken the wrong turning, 56:10
and those who are led are lost.
16/17 And so the Lord will not spare[g] their young men,
will have no pity for their orphans and widows.
Since the whole people is godless and evil,
its speech is madness.
Yet his anger is not spent, 5:25+
still his hand is raised to strike.

k. The retort is probably ironical. Isaiah gibes at his compatriots who would rather consult necromancers than himself.

l. Interpretation uncertain. Possibly the last line belongs to what follows.

m. Image of a man driven from home by war. This passage, which has perhaps been curtailed, is apparently out of context.

n. This last line seems to be a gloss.

o. These few lines in prose, probably written later, introduce the poetic oracle spoken, apparently, at the time of the Galilean deportation following the campaign of Tiglath-pileser III in 732. It foretells the 'day of Yahweh' which will bring the deliverance of the deported and the peaceful empire of a child of a royal line, probably Immanuel, cf. 7:14+. The coming of Christ to Galilee gave the prophecy its full realisation.

9 a. 'their gladness' corr.; 'the nation' Hebr.

b. 'the bar' corr.; 'the rod (that beat)' Hebr.

c. A prophetic proper name, cf. 1:26+. The child possesses to a supreme degree the qualities of all the great figures of his race: the wisdom of Solomon, the valour of David, the virtues of Moses and the patriarchs. Cf. 11:2. Christian tradition and the Christmas liturgy apply these titles to Christ, presenting him as the true Immanuel.

d. 'Wide' Greek and Targ.

e. A poem against Samaria and the Northern Kingdom, delivered at a time of hostilities between Israel and Judah, either in 739 when the war was brewing (against Ahaz), or else in 734 when the war was over and the Northern Kingdom was torn by intrigues occasioned by Assyrian domination.

f. Hebr. reads 'the enemies of Razon'.

g. 'will not spare' DSIa (this abbreviation stands for one of the Isaiah MSS found at Qumran in 1947); 'does not favour' Hebr.

42:25 Ezk 21:3
Yes, wickedness burns like a fire: 17
it consumes briar and thorn, 18
it sets the forest thickets alight
and columns of smoke go rolling upwards.
The land is set aflame by the wrath of Yahweh Sabaoth 18 19
and the people are food for the fire.
Not one spares his brother,
49:26 each devours the flesh of his neighbour.[h] 19b
On the right side they carve and still are hungry,
on the left they devour and are not satisfied.
Manasseh devours[i] Ephraim, Ephraim Manasseh, 19a 20
and both hurl themselves on Judah.
5:25+ Yet his anger is not spent, 21
still his hand is raised to strike.

Lv 19:35 10 Woe to the legislators of infamous laws, 1
to those who issue tyrannical decrees,
1:17,23; 3:14; 5:23; 28:6 Ex 22:21+ who refuse justice to the unfortunate 2
and cheat the poor among my people of their rights,
who make widows their prey
and rob the orphan.
Jr 5:31 1 P 2:12 What will you do on the day of punishment, 3
when, from far off, destruction comes?
To whom will you run for help?
Where will you leave your riches?
Nothing for it but to crouch with the captives 4
and to fall with the slain.
5:25+ Yet his anger is not spent,
still his hand is raised to strike.

Against a king of Assyria[a]

14:24-27 2 K 19:6 Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger, 5
the club brandished by me in my fury![b]
47:6 Zc 1:15 I sent him against a godless nation; 6
I gave him commission against a people that provokes me,
to pillage and to plunder freely
and to stamp down like the mud in the streets.
But he did not intend this, 7
his heart did not plan it so.
No, in his heart was to destroy,
to go on cutting nations to pieces without limit.
36:18-20 He said, 'Are not my officers all kings? 8
Is not Calno like Carchemish, 9
Hamath like Arpad,[c]
Samaria like Damascus?
As my hand has reached out to the kingdoms of the idols, 10
richer in sculptured images than Jerusalem and Samaria,
as I have dealt with Samaria and her idols, 11
shall I not treat Jerusalem and her images the same?'

When the Lord has completed all his work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, 12
Dt 32:27 he will punish what comes from the king of Assyria's boastful heart, and his arrogant insolence.[d]
For he has said: 13

Dt 8:17+ Jg 7:2 Hab 1:11 'By the strength of my own arm I have done this
and by my own intelligence, for understanding is mine;

I have pushed back the frontiers of peoples
and plundered their treasures.
I have brought their inhabitants down to the dust.[e]
14 As if they were a bird's nest, my hand has seized
the riches of the peoples.
As people pick up deserted eggs
I have picked up the whole earth,
with not a wing fluttering,
not a beak opening, not a chirp.'

15 Does the axe claim more credit than the man who wields it, 45:9 Rm 9:20-21
or the saw more strength than the man who handles it?
It would be like the cudgel controlling the man who raises it,
or the club moving what is not made of wood!
16 [f]And so Yahweh Sabaoth is going to send
a wasting sickness on his stout warriors;
beneath his plenty, a burning will burn
like a consuming fire.
17 The light of Israel will become a fire Ps 27:1; 83:14
and its Holy One a flame Ezk 21:3
burning and devouring thorns 37:36
and briars in a single day.
18 He will destroy the luxuriance of his forest
and his orchard, soul and body too;
that will be like a sick man passing away;
19 the remnant of his forest trees will be so easy to count
that a child could make the list.

The name Shear-jashub[g] 7:3

20 That day,
the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the House of Jacob
will stop relying on the man who strikes them 2 Ch 28:22
and will truly rely on Yahweh,
the Holy One of Israel.
21 A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, 4:3+
to the mighty God.

A prophecy of destruction

22 Israel, your people may be like the sand on the seashore, but only a remnant ↗ Rm 9:27
will return. A destruction has been decreed that will bring inexhaustible integrity. Rm 5:20-21
23 Yes, throughout the country the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth will carry out the
destruction he has decreed.

Oracle[h] 14:24-27; 30:27-33; 31:4-9; 37:22-29

24 And so Yahweh[i] Sabaoth says this:
My people who live in Zion,

h. 'of his neighbour' versions; 'of his arm' Hebr.
i. 'devours' DSIa and Greek.

10 a Probably referring to Sennacherib at the time of his invasion in 701.
b. 'brandished' corr.; 'in their hand' Hebr.
c. Calno: a town in northern Syria, captured by Tiglath-pileser III in 738. Carchemish: a Hittite town taken by Sargon in 717. Hamath, a Syrian town on the Orontes, captured by Sargon in 720. Arpad, near Aleppo, captured in 728.
d. 'he will' Greek; 'I shall' Hebr. This prose verse seems to have been interpolated.
e. 'to the dust' corr.; 'like a mighty one' Hebr.
f. Some think that the following lines are the fragment of an oracle concerned with the people of Judah and not with the king of Assyria.
g. This short oracle explaining the name of Isaiah's elder son, 7:3, cf. 1:26+, may date to the beginning of the prophet's ministry.
h. Delivered by Isaiah in 701, during Sennacherib's attempt to capture Jerusalem.
i. Hebr. inserts 'the Lord'.

do not be afraid of Assyria who strikes you with the club
and lifts up the rod against you.[j]

A little longer, a very little, 25
and fury will come to an end,
my anger will destroy them.
9:3 Yahweh Sabaoth will whirl the whip against him,[k] 26
Jg 7:25 Ps 83:9 like the time he struck Midian at the Rock of Oreb,
Ex 14:16 like the time he stretched out his rod against the sea
and raised it over the road from Egypt.
That day, 27
his burden will fall from your shoulder,
his yoke will cease to weigh on your neck.

Mi 1:10-15 **The invader**[l]

Jg 20:45-47 He advances from the district of Rimmon,[m]
Jos 7-8 he reaches Aiath, 28
1 S 14:2 he passes through Migron,
1 S 14:5 he leaves his baggage train at Michmash.
They file through the defile, 29
1 S 14:2,16 they bivouac at Geba.
1 S 1:19 Ramah quakes,
1 S 15:34 Gibeah of Saul takes flight.
Bath-gallim, cry aloud! 30
Laishah, hear her!
Jr 1:1 Anathoth, answer her![n]
Madmenah is running away, 31
the inhabitants of Gebim are fleeing.
1 S 21:2 This very day he will halt at Nob. 32
He will shake his fist against the mount of the daughter of Zion,
against the hill of Jerusalem.
See, the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth 33
hews down the boughs with a crash.
The topmost heights are cut off,
the proudest are brought down.
The forest thickets fall beneath the axe. 34
Lebanon and its splendours[o] collapse.

Ps 72 **The coming of the virtuous king**[a]

42:1-12 Jr 23:5+ ↗ Rm 15:12 ↗ Rv 22:16 **11** A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse, 1
a scion thrusts from his roots:
Mt 3:16+ on him the spirit of Yahweh rests,[b] 2
a spirit of wisdom and insight,
9:5 a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh.[c]
(The fear of Yahweh is his breath.)
32:1 Jn 7:24 He does not judge by appearances, 3
he gives no verdict on hearsay,
Jb 29:12 Pr 29:4 Ws 11:20 ↗ Rv 19:11 2 Th 2:8 Rv 19:15 but judges the wretched with integrity, 4
and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land.
His word is a rod that strikes the ruthless,[d]
his sentences bring death to the wicked.

Ep 6:14 Integrity is the loincloth[e] round his waist, 5
faithfulness the belt about his hips.

65:25 Jb 5:23 Lk 1:79 1 Th 5:23 The wolf lives with the lamb,[f] 6
the panther lies down with the kid,

calf and lion cub feed[g] together
with a little boy to lead them.
7 The cow and the bear make friends,[h]
their young lie down together.
The lion eats straw like the ox. 65:25
8 The infant plays over the cobra's hole; Ps 91:13
into the viper's lair
the young child puts his hand.
9 They do no hurt, no harm,
on all my holy mountain,
for the country is filled with the knowledge of Yahweh 40:5 Nb 14:21 Si 24:31 Jr 31:23, 33-34
as the waters swell the sea. ↗ Hab 2:14

The return of the exiles[i]

10 That day, the root of Jesse ↗ Rm 15:12 Rv 5:5
shall stand as a signal to the peoples. ↗ Rv 22:16
It will be sought out by the nations
and its home will be glorious.
11 That day, the Lord will raise his hand once more Ex 15:16
to ransom the remnant of his people,
left over from the exile of Assyria, of Egypt,
of Pathros, of Cush, of Elam,
of Shinar, of Hamath, of the islands of the sea.[j]
12 He will hoist a signal for the nations
and assemble the outcasts of Israel; Ps 147:2
he will bring back the scattered people of Judah
from the four corners of the earth.
13 Then Ephraim's jealousy will come to an end Ps 60:7 Jr 3:18+
and Judah's enemies be put down;
Ephraim will no longer be jealous of Judah

j. The text adds 'over the road from Egypt', cf. v. 26.
k. The Assyrian.
l. Description of an Assyrian invasion, probably that of Sennacherib in 701. As in Mi 1:10-15, this is not the actual path of the invading armies but an imaginary march on Jerusalem from the N. The names of towns have been selected with a view to the plays on words or because they recall past battles.
m. Line corr.
n. 'answer her' corr.
o. 'its splendours' with Greek (?).

11 a. A messianic poem describing in some detail the salient characteristics of the coming Messiah: of Davidic stock: v. 1, he will be filled with the spirit of the prophets, v. 2, will establish among men that 'integrity' which is the reflection of God's sanctity on earth vv. 3f, cf. 1:26+ and 5:16+; he will restore the peace of Eden, vv. 6-8, which is the fruit of knowledge of God, v. 9.

b. The 'spirit of Yahweh' or 'holy spirit of Yahweh', 42:1; 61:1f; 63:10-13; Ps 51:11; Ws 1:5; 9:17, his 'breath' ('breath' and 'spirit' translate the same word, *ruah*), is found active throughout biblical history. Before creation it rests on the abyss, Gn 1:1, and to it all creatures owe life, Ps 104:29-30; 33:6; Gn 2:7, cf. Ezk 37:5-6,9-10. It inspires the Judges, Jg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29, and Saul, 1 S 11:6. It gives craftsmen their skill, Ex 31:3; 35:31, judges their discretion, Nb 11:17, Joseph his wisdom, Gn 41:38. But especially it inspires the prophets, Nb 11:17 (Moses), 25-26; 24:2; 1 S 10:6, 10; 19:20; 2 S 23:2 (David); 2 K 2:9 (Elijah); Mi 3:8; Is 48:16; 61:1; Zc 7:12; 2 Ch 15:1; 20:14; 24:20, whereas false prophets follow their own spirit, Ezk 13:3, cf. also Dn 4:5,15; 5:11-12,14. This text teaches that this spirit of the prophets will be bestowed on the Messiah; Jl 3:1-2 later foretells that in the messianic era it will be poured out on all men, cf. Ac 2:16-17. Like the doctrine of wisdom, cf: Pr 8:22+; Ws 7:22+, the doctrine of the Spirit is to achieve its perfect expression in the New Testament, cf. Jn 1:33+; 14:16+ and 26+; Ac 1:8+; 2+; Rm 5:5+.

c. The prophetic spirit confers on the Messiah the outstanding virtues of his great ancestors: the wisdom and insight of Solomon, the heroism and prudence of David, the knowledge and fear of God characteristic of patriarch and prophet, of Moses, of Jacob, of Abraham. Cf. 9:5. The list of these qualities as given in LXX and Vulg. (these add 'piety', a repetition of the 'fear of Yahweh'), has become the Christian 'seven gifts of the Holy Spirit'.

d. 'the ruthless' corr.; 'the earth' Hebr.
e. 'the loincloth' versions.
f. Man's rebellion against God, Gn 3 had broken the harmony between man and nature, Gn 3:17-19, and between man and man, Gn 4. The prophets foretell war and oppression as the punishment for the sins of Israel. The messianic era, however, with its forgiveness of sin, *its reconciliation with God, its reign of justice*, will establish the peace that results from these: it will pay to till the land, Am 9:13-14; Ho 2:20,23-24; weapons of war will all be set aside, Is 2:4; 9:4; Mi 4:3-4; 5:9-10; Zc 9:10; there will be lasting peace, Is 9:6; 32:17; 60:17-18; Zp 3:13; Zc 3:10; Jl 4:17. The new covenant is a covenant of peace, Ezk 34:25; 37:26. The messianic kingdom is a kingdom of peace, Zc 9:8-10; Ps 72:3,7. Here the messianic age is symbolically described as a return to the peace of Eden.

g. 'feed' corr.
h. 'make friends' corr.
i. This poem belongs to the series on the return from the Babylonian Exile.
j. The lands of the Diaspora after the destruction of Jerusalem.

nor Judah any longer the enemy of Ephraim.
They will sweep down westwards on the Philistine slopes, 14
together they will pillage the sons of the East,
Ps 60:8 extend their sway over Edom and Moab,
Jr 49:2 and make the Ammonites their subjects.
And Yahweh will dry up the gulf of the Sea of Egypt 15
with the heat of his breath,
and stretch out his hand over the River,[k]
and divide it into seven streams,
for men to cross dry-shod,
to make a pathway for the remnant of his people 16
left over from the exile of Assyria,
as there was for Israel
Ex 14:22 when it came up out of Egypt.

Two hymns of thanksgiving[a]

12 That day, you[b] will say: 1
I give thanks to you, Yahweh,
you were angry with me
but your anger is appeased
and you have given me consolation.
See now, he is the God of my salvation 2
I have trust now and no fear,
||Ex 15:2 Ps 118:14 for Yahweh is my strength, my song,
he is my salvation.
55:1 Jn 4:1+ And you will draw water joyfully 3
from the springs of salvation.

That day, you will say: 4
||Ps 105:1 Give thanks to Yahweh,
call his name aloud.
Proclaim his deeds to the people,
declare his name sublime.
Sing of Yahweh, for he has done marvellous things, 5
let them be made known to the whole world.
Zp 3:14 Cry out for joy and gladness, 6
you dwellers in Zion,
for great in the midst of you
is the Holy One of Israel.

C. ORACLES ON FOREIGN NATIONS

Against Babylon[a]

21:1-10; 47:1-15 Jr 50-51 Rv 17-18 13 Oracle on Babylon, seen by Isaiah son of Amoz. 1

On a bare hill hoist a signal, 2
sound the war cry.[b]
Beckon them[c] to come
to the Nobles' Gate.[d]
I, for my part, issue orders 3
to my sacred warriors,
I summon my knights to serve my anger,
my proud champions.
Listen! A rumbling in the mountains 4
like a great crowd.
Listen! The din of kingdoms,

of nations mustering.
It is Yahweh Sabaoth
marshalling the troops for battle.
5 They come from a distant country,
from the far horizons,
Yahweh and the instruments of his fury
to lay the whole earth waste.
6 Howl! For the day of Yahweh is near, Ezk 30:2-3 ↗Jl 1:15 Am 5:18+
bringing devastation from Shaddai.
7 At this, every arm falls limp... Na 2:11
The heart of each man fails him,
8 they are terrified,
pangs and pains seize them, 21:3; 26:17 Jr 4:31+
they writhe like a woman in labour.
They look at one another Jl 2:6
with feverish faces.
9 The day of Yahweh is coming, merciless, Mt 24:29
with wrath and fierce anger,
to reduce the earth to desert
and root out the sinners from it.
10 For the stars of the sky and Orion Jb 9:5-7 Am 8:9+
shall not let their light shine;
the sun shall be dark when it rises,
and the moon not shed her light.
11 I will punish the world for its evil-doing,
and the wicked for their crimes,
to put an end to the pride of arrogant men
and humble the pride of despots.
12 I will make men scarcer than pure gold,
human life scarcer than the gold of Ophir.
13 This is why I am going to shake the heavens— Jb 9:5
and make the earth reel from its place,
before the wrath of Yahweh Sabaoth,
the day when his anger flares.
14 Then like a startled gazelle,
like sheep that no one shepherds,
each man will return to his people,
each take flight to his native land.
15 All those caught are slaughtered, Jr 51:20-23
all those captured fall by the sword,
16 their babies are dashed to pieces before their eyes, Ho 10:14+
their houses plundered,
their wives raped.
17 See now, I stir up against them the Medes, Jr 51:11
who think nothing of silver,
who take no pleasure in gold.
18 The baby boys all cut to pieces,
the baby girls all crushed.[e]
They have no mercy on the fruit of the womb,
no pity in their eyes for children.

k. The Euphrates. 'Yahweh will dry up' corr.: 'he will curse' Hebr.

12 a. Two psalms, or two strophes of one psalm, vv. 1-3, 4-6, of uncertain date and origin.
b. Israel.

13 a. Despite the heading, which must be an addition, this poem probably dates from the Babylonian Exile, like the second part of Is. It is a lament or *qinah*, cf. 1:21+.
b. 'war cry' corr.; 'the cry to them' Hebr.
c. The Persian conquerors.
d. Probably the name of a city gate of Babylon.
e. Text corr.; Hebr. corrupt.

Babylon, that pearl of kingdoms, 19
the jewel and boast of Chaldaeans,
like Sodom and Gomorrah
shall be overthrown by God.
34:10-17 Never more will anyone live there or be born there 20
from generation to generation.
No Arab will pitch his tent there,
not shepherds feed their flocks,
Lv 16:22 But beasts of the desert will lie there, 21
and owls fill its houses.
Ostriches will make their home there
Lv 17:7+ and satyrs have their dances there.
Hyenas will call to each other in its keeps,[f] 22
jackals in the luxury of its palaces...
Its time is almost up,
its days will not last long.

The return from the Exile[a]

61:5 14 Yes, Yahweh will have pity on Jacob, he will choose Israel once more 1
and settle them in their own country. The foreigner will join them and
attach himself to the House of Jacob. •Nations will take them and lead them 2
to the place they came from, and the House of Israel will adopt them in the land
Zp 2:9 Zc 2:13 of Yahweh as slaves and slave-girls. They will capture those who captured them
and master their oppressors.

A satire on the death of a tyrant[b]

The day Yahweh gives you rest after your suffering and torment and the 3
Hab 2:6 grim servitude to which you were forcibly enslaved, •you are to recite this satire 4
on the king of Babylon:

Jr 50:23-24 Rv 18:9-19 What was the end of the tyrant?
What was the end of his arrogance?[c]
Yahweh has broken the staff of the wicked 5
and the sceptre of tyrants—
which angrily thrashed the peoples 6
with blow after blow,
which furiously tyrannised over the nations,
persecuting without respite.
Jr 51:48 Rv 18:20; 19.1-2 The whole earth is at rest, it is calm, 7
shouting for joy.
The cypresses, the cedars of Lebanon 8
rejoice at your fate,
'Now that you have been laid low,
no one comes up to fell us'.[d]
Nb 16:33+ Ezk 32:18-32 On your account Sheol beneath us 9
is astir to greet your arrival.
Jb 3:14 To honour you he rouses the ghosts
of all the rulers of the world.
He makes all the kings of the nations
get up from their thrones.
Each has something to say 10
and what they will say to you is this,
'So you too have been brought to nothing, like ourselves.
You, too, have become like us.
Your magnificence has been flung down to Sheol 11
with the music of your harps;

underneath you a bed of maggots,
and over you a blanket of worms.
12 How did you come to fall from the heavens,
Daystar, son of Dawn?[e]
How did you come to be thrown to the ground,
you who enslaved the nations?
13 You who used to think to yourself,
"I will climb up to the heavens;
and higher than the stars of God
I will set my throne.
I will sit on the Mount of Assembly
in the recesses of the north.
14 I will climb to the top of thunderclouds,
I will rival the Most High."
15 What! Now you have fallen to Sheol
to the very bottom of the abyss!'

16 All who see you will gaze at you,
will stare at you,
'Is this the man who made the earth tremble,
and overthrew kingdoms,
17 who made the world a desert
and levelled cities,
who never to his captives
opened the prison gates?'
18 All the kings of the nations lie honourably,
each in his tomb.
19 But you, you have been expelled from your grave
like loathsome dung,[f]
buried under the slaughtered,
under those cut down by the sword,
and thrown on the stones of the ditch
like a mangled carcase.

20 You are never going to rejoin them in the grave,
for you have brought your country to ruin
and destroyed your people.
The offspring of the wicked
will leave no name behind them.
21 Start slaughtering the sons
for the guilt of their fathers!
Never again must they rise to conquer the earth
and spread across the face of the world.

Si 10:11
Lk 10:18
Gn 11:9
Lk 10:18
Jn 12:31
Rv 2:28; 8:10; 9:1; 12:9
Ps 37:35; 48:2+
Jr 50:29; 51:53
Ezk 28:14
Ob 3
Hab 2:9
Mt 11:23
Lk 10:15
Gn 3:5
Ezk 28:2
Dn 11:36
2 Th 2:4
Dn 10:13+
Na 1:14
Jr 22:19
Hab 2:10
Ps 109:12-13

Oracle against Babylon[g]

22 I will rise against them—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks—and wipe out name and remnant from Babylon. No offspring, no posterity—it is Yahweh

4:3+
Ps 137:8

f. 'keeps' corr.

14 a. This oracle refers to the return from exile and the conversion of the heathen nations, and belongs to the cycle of the 'Book of the Consolation of Israel', Is 40-55.

b. This *mashal* (cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books) satirises a fallen tyrant; some think it was written by Isaiah himself to celebrate the death either of Sargon II or of Sennacherib and supplemented in the exilic period by a few introductory lines applying it to a king of Babylon. Many others hold, however, that the poem was directly written against Nebuchadnezzar or Nabonidus.

c. 'his arrogance' versions and DSIa; 'the oppression' Hebr.

d. For building palaces.

e. This section of the poem contains several expressions common in Phoenician mythology: the 'mount of assembly' of the gods; the 'Most High' is a name of Yahweh but also of the Phoenician Baal. The Fathers identified the fall of the Morning Star (Vulg. 'Lucifer') with that of the prince of the demons represented and symbolised by the pagan tyrant.

f. 'dung' following Greek; 'like a branch' Hebr.

g. These few lines also belong to the poems against Babylon in the second part of Is.

who speaks. •I will turn it into marshland, into a place for hedgehogs. I will sweep it with the broom of destruction—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks. 23

10:24+ **Assyria will be destroyed**[h]

10:5 Yahweh Sabaoth has sworn it, saying: Yes, 24
what I have planned shall happen,
what I have decided shall be fulfilled—

to break Assyria in my country, 25
to crush him on my mountains.
9:3 His yoke will slip from them,
his burden from their shoulder.

This is the decision taken 26
against the whole world;
this, the hand stretched out
against all the nations.

When Yahweh Sabaoth has made a decision, 27
who would dare cancel it?
When he stretches out his hand,
who can make him withdraw it?

A warning to the Philistines

Zp 2:4 In the year Ahaz died[i] this oracle was pronounced: 28

Do not rejoice, whole country of Philistia, 29
because the rod that beat you has broken,
since the serpent's stock can still produce a basilisk
30:6 and the offspring of that will be a flying dragon.[j]

But the poor are going to feed in my pastures 30
and beggars rest in safety,
while I let your posterity die out through hunger,
killing off any that survive.[k]

Howl, Gate; cry, City; 31
shudder, whole country of Philistia!
20:1 For a smoke is coming from the north,[l]
Jr 1:13f and there are no deserters in those battalions.

What reply will be given then 32
to the messengers of that nation?
'Yahweh has laid the foundations of Zion,
and there the poor of his people shall find refuge.'[m]

Lament for Moab[a]

||Jr 48 Ezk 25:8-11 Am 2:1-3 Zp 2:8 15 Oracle on Moab: 1

The night when Ar was ravaged
Moab collapsed.[b]
The night when Kir was ravaged
Moab collapsed.

People climb to the temple of Dibon,[c] 2
climb high places to weep;
on Nebo and in Medeba
Moab laments.

||Jr 48:37-38 Every head shaven,
every beard clipped;

3 they wear sackcloth in the streets,
and wail[d] on the housetops.

All in the squares are lamenting
and bursting into tears.
4 Heshbon and Elealeh are howling, Nb 21:23 ‖Jr 48:34
their noise can be heard as far as Jahaz.
That is why the loins of Moab are shivering,[e]
why its soul is shuddering;
5 why the heart of Moab is groaning, ‖Jr 48:5,36
why its fugitives are as far afield as Zoar (Eglath Shelishiyah).[f] Gn 19:22 ‖Jr 48:34

Ah, slopes of Luhith,
they climb them weeping.
On the road to Horonaim
they utter heartrending cries.

6 Ah, the waters of Nimrim
are a waste land,
the grass dried up, the turf all withered,
nothing green any more.

7 That is why they are busily preparing...
And they transport their possessions
across the wadi of the Willows.

8 Ah, the shrieking rings round
the whole territory of Moab;
its wailing resounds right to Eglaim,
echoes as far as Beer-elim.

9 Ah, the waters of Dibon are swollen with blood,
and worse disasters are still in store for Dibon,
a lion to pounce on anyone who escapes from Moab,
and on the few survivors of that country.

The Moabites take refuge in Judah

1 16 Send lambs 2 Ch 17:11
to the king of the country
from Sela, by way of the desert,
to the mountain of the daughter of Zion.[a]

2 Flying backwards and forwards
like bewildered nestlings,

h. Oracle of Isaiah probably delivered in 701, at the time of Sennacherib's invasion.

i. It seems from this dating that an editor may have wanted to apply the epithets used by Isaiah to the king of Judah: serpent, adder, dragon. But the 'rod that beat' Philistia must have been Sargon II (died 705).

j. The 'dragon' *(saraph)* is the 'burning serpent' of Nb 21:6,8; Dt 8:15. The Philistines had nothing to gain, therefore, from the death of the Assyrian prince. They would have even more to fear from his successors.

k. 'my pastures' 'your posterity': corr. 'killing' lit. 'I shall kill' Latin and DSIa; 'he will kill' Hebr.

l. Assyrian armies invaded from the N. Later, in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, enemies are always represented as coming from the N.

m. The reply asserts that Zion is inviolable and a city of refuge in time of war.

15 a. Composed by Isaiah probably during one of the Assyrian campaigns which ravaged Moab. The poem is in the *qinah* rhythm. 1:21+.

b. The Hebr. divides the text differently. Ar-moab, about 14 m. N. of the Arnon. Kir-moab (or Korha), capital of Moab, on the site of the present Kerak.

c. 'to the temple of Dibon' corr.

d. 'and wail' added, following Jr 48:38. Vv. 2f mention the traditional gestures of mourning.

e. 'loins are shivering' following Greek and Syr.

f. 'the heart of Moab' following Greek; 'my heart on Moab' Hebr. 'its fugitives' corr. 'Eglath Shelishiyah' is a gloss.

16 a. Text very uncertain, lit. 'Send a lamb, ruler of the country (or: the lamb of the ruler of the country) from Sela ('the Rock', i.e. Petra) towards the desert (or: by way of the desert) to the mountain of the daughter of Zion'. Isaiah is apparently inviting the refugees from Moab to render homage to the king of Judah and secure his protection. The Vulg. interpretation 'Send, O Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the earth, from the Rock of the desert to the mountain of the daughter of Zion' makes the text messianic.

such are the daughters of Moab
at the ford of the Arnon.

'Advise us what to do, 3
decide for us.[b]

'Spread your shadow as if it were night
at the height of noon.
Hide those who have been driven out,
do not let the refugee be seen.

'Let those who have been driven out of Moab 4
stay with you;
be their refuge
against the destroyer.'[c]

Once the oppression is over,
and the destroyer is no more,
and those now trampling the country underfoot have gone away,
Pr 20:28 the throne will be made secure in gentleness, 5
and on it there will sit in all fidelity,
within the tent of David,
a judge careful for justice
and eager for integrity.

||Jr 48:29-33 **Lament for Moab**

We have heard of the pride of Moab, 6
an excessive pride—
of his conceit, his pride, his arrogance;
his pretensions are empty.

And so the Moabites must mourn for Moab, 7
all of them lamenting together.
For the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth
they[d] mourn, in their utter bewilderment.

For blighted are the fields of Heshbon, 8
and the vine of Sibmah
whose clusters proved too strong
for the overlords of the nations;

it once reached all the way to Jazer,
had even wound its way into the desert,
and its shoots had spread
even beyond the sea.

And so I weep, as Jazer weeps, 9
for the vine of Sibmah.
I water you with my tears,
Heshbon and Elealeh.

For over your fruit and your vintage
a cheer[e] has been heard;
joy and gladness 10
have vanished from the orchards.

Jl 1:12 No more revelry in the vineyards,
no more happy shouting;
no more wine trodden out in the presses,
the shouting[f] all silenced.

11 And so for Moab my whole being
quivers like lyre strings,
my inmost self, for Kir-hareseth.

12 In vain may Moab go
to wear himself out at high places,
to come and pray in his temple;
he can do nothing.

Oracle on Moab[g]

13 14 Such was the sentence once pronounced against Moab by Yahweh. •Now Yahweh proclaims, 'Within three years, as a wage-earner reckons them, the glorious power of Moab, despite his teeming population, will cease to command respect, and what remains of him will be slight, feeble, impotent'. 21:16 4:3+

Oracle on Damascus[a]

1 17 Oracle against Damascus: Jr 49:23-27 Am 1:3-5

Damascus is going to cease to be a city,
she will become a heap of ruins.
2 Her towns,[b] abandoned for ever,[c]
will be pastures for flocks.
There they will rest with no one to frighten them away.
3 Ephraim[d] will lose his defences
and Damascus her sovereignty;
the remnant of Aram will be treated 4:3+
in the same way as the glory of the Israelites.
It is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks.

4 That day,[e] the glory of Jacob will be diminished,
from being fat he will grow lean;
5 as when a reaper[f] hugs an armful of standing corn Jl 4:13
and slices off the ears,
or when they glean the ears in the Valley of Rephaim: Jos 15:8; 17:16
6 nothing remains but gleanings;
or when an olive tree is beaten: 24:13
two or three berries left on the topmost bough,
four or five on the branches of the tree.
It is Yahweh, the God of Israel, who speaks.

An end to idolatry

7 8 That day, man will look to his creator and his eyes will turn to the Holy One of Israel. •He will no longer look after the altars, his own handiwork, nor gaze at what his hands have made: the sacred poles and the solar pillars. 27:9 Ex 34:13+ Rv 9:20

Against the gardens of Adonis[g]

9 That day, your cities will be abandoned

b. These words begin the oracle. In the name of God the prophet will next ask Judah to welcome the Moabites, their hereditary enemies.
c. 'those who have been driven out of Moab' versions. 'the destroyer' Syr.
d. 'they' corr.; 'you' Hebr.
e. The war cry.
f. The joyful shouts of the grape-gatherers.

g. Probably a summary of an oracle of Isaiah delivered 3 years before the invasion of Moab.

17 a. Oracle delivered before 732, date of Tiglath-pileser III's capture of Damascus, capital of the Aramaean kingdom.
b. Towns of the Aramaean kingdom.
c. Following Greek. Hebr. 'the towns of Aroer will be abandoned'.
d. Ephraim, i.e. the kingdom of Israel, had been allied with Damascus against Judah. Hoshea, the new king of Samaria, resumed intrigues against Assyria.
e. This second part of the oracle refers to the kingdom of Israel. It was to be fulfilled in 722 by the fall of Samaria.
f. 'a reaper' corr.
g. The gardens of Adonis, god of Spring, were planted with early flowers.

as were those of the Amorites and the Hivites[h]
in the path of the children of Israel.
They will be a desert
because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, 10
44:8 Dt 32:4,18 and failed to keep in remembrance the Rock of your strength.
For you are planting plants for Adonis,[i]
you put in sprigs of foreign gods,
you make them flower the same day as you plant them, 11
as soon as it is light your seedlings blossom,
but all that you pick will vanish on the day of trouble,
and the evil will be incurable.

The upsurge of the nations[j]

Jl 4:14 Vast hordes thundering, 12
Ps 65:7 with thunder like thundering seas,
the roaring of nations roaring
like the roar of mighty waters.
(Nations roaring like the roar of many waters.) 13
40:24 He rebukes them
and far away they flee, driven off
Ps 83:13 like chaff on the mountains before the wind,
like an eddy of dust before the storm.

At evening all was terror; 14
Ps 46:6 before morning comes they are no more.
Such was the lot of our plunderers,
such, the fate of our despoilers.

Zp 2:12 **Oracle against Cush[a]**

18 Country of whirring wings[b] 1
beyond the rivers of Cush,
who send ambassadors by sea, 2
in papyrus skiffs over the waters.

Go, swift messengers[c]
to a people tall and bronzed,
to a nation always[d] feared,
a people mighty and masterful,
in the country criss-crossed with rivers.

All you who inhabit the world, 3
you who people the earth,
the signal is being hoisted on the mountains, look!
Jl 2:1+ The horn is being sounded, listen!

For thus Yahweh speaks to me: 4
From where I am[e] I gaze, untroubled,
like the clear heat produced by light,
like a dewy mist in the heat of harvest.

For, before the vintage,[f] once the flowering is over 5
and blossom turns into ripening grape,
the tendrils are cut back with a pruning knife,
the shoots taken off, cut away.

They[g] will all be abandoned together 6
to the birds of prey in the mountains
and to the beasts of the earth.
The birds of prey will summer on them,
and all the beasts of the earth winter on them.

7 At that time, offerings will be brought to Yahweh Sabaoth on behalf of the tall and bronzed nation, on behalf of[h] the nation always feared, on behalf of the mighty and masterful people in the country criss-crossed with rivers, to the place where the name of Yahweh Sabaoth dwells, on Mount Zion. Tb 14:6 Ps 68:31

Against Egypt[a] Jr 46 Ezk 29-32

1 19 Oracle against Egypt:

See! Yahweh, riding a swift cloud, Ps 68:4
comes to Egypt.
The idols of Egypt tremble before him,
and the hearts of the Egyptians sink within them.

2 I will stir up the Egyptians against each other 2 Ch 15:6 Lk 21:10
and they shall fight every man against his brother,
friend against friend, city against city,
kingdom against kingdom.

3 Egypt is going to be demoralised,
for I shall confound all their wits.
They will consult idols and wizards,
necromancers and sorcerers.

4 I mean to hand the Egyptians over
to a hard master;
a cruel king will rule them.
It is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks.

5 [b]The waters will ebb from the Nile, Jb 14:11
the river bed be parched and dry,
6 the canals grow foul,
the Niles of Egypt sink and dry up.

Rush and reed will droop,
7 the plants on the banks of the Nile;
all the Nile vegetation will dry up,
blow away, and be seen no more.

8 The fishermen will groan,
all who cast hook in the Nile will mourn;
those who throw nets on the waters
will lament.

9 The flax workers will be baffled,
the carders[c] too, and weavers of white cloth.
10 The weavers will be dismayed
and all the workmen dejected.

h. Following Greek. Isaiah is rebuking his compatriots for adopting the rites of pagan peoples defeated long ago by Yahweh.

i. Lit. 'of delight'.

j. An oracle perhaps delivered in 701 at the time of Sennacherib's great invasion of Palestine. The invasion suggests the primordial chaos of waters overcome in the beginning by Yahweh the creator, cf. Jb 7:12+.

18 a. Cush, the ancient name of Ethiopia, here indicates Egypt which in the days of Isaiah was governed by Pharaohs of Nubian origin.

b. Of the mosquitoes which swarm there.

c. Pharaoh's envoys whom the prophet invites to go home and stop intriguing for an anti-Assyrian alliance.

d. Or 'everywhere'.

e. I.e. heaven.

f. 'the vintage' corr.; 'the harvest' Hebr.

g. The conquered, thrown aside like lopped off vine branches: probably the Egyptians and Nubians killed in battle against the Assyrians.

h. 'on behalf of' with Greek.

19 a. Isaiah must have preached against Egypt principally between 718 and 701 when Sibo, envoy of the Pharaoh Tephnakt, was attempting to rally the Near East against Assyria.

b. Vv. 5-10 foretell a new plague for Egypt: the Nile is to dry up, to the ruin of the fishing and weaving business.

c. 'the carders' corr.

The princes of Zoan[d] are utter fools, 11
and Pharaoh's wisest counsellors are stupid;
how can you say to Pharaoh,
Ob 8 'I am a disciple of the sages,
a disciple of bygone kings'?[e]

1 Co 1:20 Where are these sages of yours? 12
Let them come forward now,
let them explain to you[f]
what Yahweh Sabaoth has decided
to do with Egypt.

The princes of Zoan are fools, 13
the princes of Noph,[g] self-deceivers;
Egypt is led astray
by the governors of her provinces.

1 S 16:14+ 1 K 22:19-23 Is 29:10 On them Yahweh has poured out 14
a spirit of giddiness.
They have Egypt slithering in all she undertakes
as a drunkard slithers in his vomit.

And Egypt will never succeed in anything 15
9:13 undertaken by head or by tail, by palm or reed.

The conversion of Egypt and Assyria[h]

Jr 51:30 Na 3:13 That day,[i] the Egyptians will become like women, fearful, terrified, when they 16
see the uplifted hand that Yahweh Sabaoth will raise against them. •The land of 17
Judah will become the terror of Egypt. Whenever Egypt is reminded of this,
she will be terrified, because of the fate Yahweh Sabaoth has prepared for her.
That day, in the land of Egypt there will be five towns speaking the language 18
of Canaan and swearing oaths in the name of Yahweh Sabaoth; Ir Haheres[j]
will be one of them. •That day, there will be an altar to Yahweh in the centre 19
of the land of Egypt and, close to the frontier, a pillar to Yahweh, •which will 20
be both sign and witness of Yahweh Sabaoth in the land of Egypt. When in
oppression the Egyptians cry to Yahweh he will send them a saviour to protect
and deliver them. •Yahweh will reveal himself to them, and that day the Egyptians 21
will acknowledge Yahweh and worship him with sacrifices and offerings. They
Dt 32:39 Tb 14:6 will make vows to Yahweh and perform them. •Then, though Yahweh has 22
struck the Egyptians harshly, he will heal them. They will turn to Yahweh who
will listen to them and heal them. •That day, there will be a road from Egypt to 23
Assyria. Assyria will have access to Egypt and Egypt have access to Assyria.
Egypt will serve Assyria.[k]

That day, Israel, making the third with Egypt and Assyria, will be blessed 24
in the centre of the world. •Yahweh Sabaoth will give his blessing in the words, 25
'Blessed be my people Egypt, Assyria my creation, and Israel my heritage'.

Prophecy of the capture of Ashdod[a]

2 K 18:17 20 The year the cupbearer-in-chief, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to 1
Ashdod and stormed and captured it:[b] •at that time Yahweh had spoken 2
Mi 1:8 through Isaiah son of Amoz. He had said to him, 'Go and undo the sackcloth
round your waist and take the sandals off your feet'. The latter had done so, and
walked about, naked and barefoot. •Yahweh then said, 'As my servant Isaiah has 3
been walking about naked and barefoot for the last three years—a sign and portent
2 S 10:4 for Egypt and Cush—•so will the king of Assyria lead away captives from 4
Egypt and exiles from Cush, young and old, naked and barefoot, their buttocks
30:3-7 bared, to the shame of Egypt.[c] •You will be frightened and ashamed about 5
Cush in which you trusted, and about Egypt of which you boasted. •And the 6

inhabitants of this coast will say, "Look what has happened to those in whom we trusted and to whom we fled for help and safety from the king of Assyria! And now, how are we going to escape?" '

The fall of Babylon[a] 13-14; 47: 1-15 Jr 50-51 Rv 17-18

1 21 Oracle on the maritime plain:[b]

As whirlwinds
sweeping over the Negeb
come from the desert,
from a land of horror
2 —a harsh vision has been shown me— Rv 17-3
the plunderer plunders,
the destroyer destroys.

'Go up, Elam,
lay siege, Media.[c]
I am putting an end
to groaning.'

3 This is why my loins
are wracked with shuddering;
I am seized with pains 13:8
like the pains of a woman in labour;
I am too distressed to hear,
too afraid to see.

4 My heart flutters,
dread makes me tremble,
the twilight I longed for
has become my horror.

5 They spread the table, Dn 5
cover it with a cloth;
they eat, they drink...[d]
Up, captains,
grease the shield! 2 S 1:21

6 For this is what the Lord has said to me,
'Go and post the watchman, Ezk 3:16
and let him report what he sees.

7 'If he sees cavalry,
horsemen two by two,

d. Tanis, a city of the Nile delta.

e. The Egyptian sages were renowned. Many wisdom works were issued under the name of former Pharaohs.

f. 'explain to you' Greek; 'know' Hebr.

g. Memphis.

h. A passage much later than the foregoing. It dates perhaps from the time when Jewish settlers began to establish themselves in the Delta. Cf. Jr 43:1f. The wide scope of its ending is remarkable and resembles that of the Book of the Consolation of Israel. Yahweh reverses the situation at the Exodus and becomes the liberator of an oppressed Egypt, which he now calls 'my people'. When his 'day' comes, Egypt and Assyria and Israel, traditional foes, will be reconciled under his blessing.

i. Implied allusion to the 'day of Yahweh'.

j. The town has been variously identified and many corrections of the name have been suggested. The LXX reads 'city Asedek' (i.e. 'City of integrity').

k. Probably to be corrected to 'will serve Yahweh'.

20 a. Ashdod, a Philistine town incited to rebellion by Egypt, was captured by Sargon II in 711. The passage that follows is the work of the prophet's biographer.

b. This verse is only a heading. The 'cupbearer-in-chief', cf. 2 K 18:17, is here the Assyrian commander-in-chief.

c. Isaiah did not have to stay naked all the time for three years, but only when he preached; he thus publicly enacted the approaching capture of the Egyptian troops. On these symbolic gestures, cf. Introduction to the Prophets and Jr 18:1+.

21 a. This oracle probably dates from the Exile, unless it refers to the fall of Babylon to Sargon in 710.

b. This expression doubtless stands for *mat tamti* the Assyrian term for Babylonia.

c. Elam is the name for the ancient inhabitants of the high plateaux from which the Persians originated. The Medes had been vassals of Cyrus before the capture of Babylon.

d. According to a tradition found in Dn 5 and in Herodotus, on the night when Babylon fell an orgy was taking place there.

men mounted on donkeys,
men mounted on camels,
let him observe,
closely observe.'

Ezk 3:16 The look-out[e] shouts, 8
'On a watchtower, Lord,
I stand all day;
and at my post
I keep guard all night'.

Look, here come the cavalry, 9
horsemen two by two.
They spoke to me; they said,
Rv 14:8; 18:2 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon,
and all the images of her gods
are shattered on the ground'.

You who are threshed, 10
you who are winnowed,[f]
what I have learnt
from Yahweh Sabaoth,
from the God of Israel,
I am telling you now.

Answer to the Edomites[g]

Oracle on Edom:[h] 11

Someone shouts to me from Seir,
Ps 130:6-7; Ezk 3:16 'Watchman, what time of night?
Watchman, what time of night?'

The watchman answers, 12
'Morning is coming, then night[i] again.
If you want to, why not ask,
turn round, come back?'

Oracle on the Arabs

Oracle in the wastelands. 13

You who pass the night in the scrublands, in the wastelands,
Gn 10:7; 25:3; Jr 49:8; Ezk 25:13 you caravans of Dedanites,[j]
bring water
for the thirsty. 14
Jb 6:19 You inhabitants of Tema[k]
go and meet the fugitive
and give him bread;
since these are fleeing from the swords, 15
from biting swords,
from bent bows,
from the stress of battle.

Against Kedar[l]

16:14 Yes, the Lord said this to me, 'In one year's time as a wage-earner reckons 16
it, all the glorious power of Kedar will be finished. •Of the bowmen, of the 17
Jr 49:28f hardiest sons of Kedar, hardly any will be left, for Yahweh God of Israel has decreed this.'

Against untimely rejoicing in Jerusalem[a]

22 Oracle against the Valley of Hinnom:[b] 1

What is the matter now that you are all climbing

with one accord to the housetops,
2 you the uproarious, the boisterous town, the joyful city?
Your slain were not slain by the sword,
your dead have not fallen in battle;
3 your rulers have all fled away
and been captured before bending their bows;
and the bravest[c] among you have been taken prisoner,
they have fled far away.
4 That is why I say, 'Turn your eyes away from me,
let me weep bitterly;
do not try to comfort me
over the destruction of the daughter of my people'.[d]

5 For this, a day of panic and rout,[e]
is from the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth.
In the Valley of Hinnom a wall is thrown down,
they are shouting for help on the mountains.
6 Elam takes up his quiver,
Aram mounts his horse[f]
and Kir[g] fetches out his shield.
7 Your fairest valleys
are filled with chariots
and the horsemen take up positions at the gates;
8 thus falls the defence of Judah.

Against military preparations[h]

You turned your gaze that day
to the armoury of the House of the Forest. 1 K 7:2-5
9 You saw how many breaches there were
in the Citadel of David. 2 S 5:9+
You collected the waters 2 K 20:20+
of the lower pool. 2 Ch 32:4
10 You counted
the houses of Jerusalem,
and you pulled down houses
to strengthen the wall.
11 In the middle you made a reservoir between the two walls
for the waters of the old pool.
But you had no thought for the Maker, Si 48:17
no eyes for him who shaped everything long ago.
12 The Lord Yahweh Sabaoth called you
that day

e. 'The look-out' corr.; 'A lion' Hebr.

f. Lit. 'O my threshed one of the threshing-floor, O son of my threshing-floor'. This refers to the Jewish people exiled in Babylon.

g. In 711 the Edomites had been allied with the Philistines against Sargon; defeated by the Assyrians, they are here presented as asking Isaiah how long their subjection is to last.

h. 'Edom' Greek; 'Dumah' Hebr.

i. I.e. deliverance followed by renewed oppression if the Edomites are not converted.

j. A tribe of Bedouin associated with Sheba, cf. 1 K 10:1+. Isaiah asks the people of Tema to help their fugitives.

k. Country lying to the N.E. of Arabia. According to Gn 25:15 its inhabitants were descended from Ishmael.

l. A tribe of wandering Arabs.

22 a. Presumably 705, the year of the first victory of Hezekiah over the allies of Assyria before the invasion of Sennacherib. The prophet castigates the people's reckless celebrations and foretells disaster.

b. 'of Hinnom' corr.; 'of vision' Hebr.; 'of Zion' Greek. So also in v. 5. This valley bordered Jerusalem on the S.W.

c. 'the bravest' Greek.

d. Jerusalem.

e. Hebr. adds 'and of confusion'.

f. Line corr.; 'with the chariots of men' Hebr. The defeated Aramaeans provided soldiers for the armies of Sennacherib.

g. Unidentified.

h. Shortly before Sennacherib's invasion, Hezekiah undertook the defensive fortification of Jerusalem, see 2 K 14:13+ and 2 K 20:20+.

Mi 1:16 to weep and mourn,
to shave your heads, to put on sackcloth;
instead, there is joy and amusement, 13
killing of oxen, slaughtering of sheep,[i]
eating of meat, drinking of wine,
5:11+ Ws 2:6-9 'Let us eat and drink,
↗1 Co 15:32 for tomorrow we may be dead'.
My ears have had this revelation 14
from Yahweh Sabaoth:
'Most certainly this sin will not be atoned for,
until you die'
says the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth.

Against Shebna

Thus says the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth: 15
36:3,11,22 2 K 18:18, 26,37 Now go to this steward,
to Shebna, the master of the palace,
who is hewing a tomb for himself high up, 16
carving out a room for himself in the rock,
'What right have you here, and what relatives have you here
for you to hew yourself a tomb in this place?'[j]
See, Yahweh hurls you down, 17
down with a single throw;
then with a strong grip he grips you,
and he winds you up into a ball 18
and hurls you into an immense country.
There you will die,
and there will be sent the chariots you were so proud of,
you, the disgrace of your master's palace.'

Another oracle against Shebna

I dismiss you from your office, 19
I[k] remove you from your post,
and the same day I call on my servant 20
36:3,11,22 2 K 18:18, 26,37 Eliakim son of Hilkiah.
I invest him with your robe, 21
gird him with your sash,
entrust him with your authority;
and he shall be a father
to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
and to the House of Judah.
Mt 16:19 ↗Rv 3:7 I place the key of the House of David 22
on his shoulder;
Jb 12:14 should he open, no one shall close,
should he close, no one shall open.
I drive him like a peg 23
into a firm place;
he will become a throne of glory
for his father's house.[l]

The calamity of the family of Eliakim[m]

On it they will hang all the glory of his father's house, offspring and issue, 24
all the least of vessels from cups to pitchers. •That day—it is Yahweh Sabaoth 25
who speaks—the peg driven into a firm place will give way. It will be torn out
Jl 4:8 and will fall. And the whole load hanging on it will be shattered, for Yahweh
has spoken.

On Tyre and Sidon[a]

1 23 Oracle on Tyre:

Howl, ships of Tarshish,[b]
for your fortress[c] has been destroyed.
They learn the news
on their way from the land of Kittim.[d]
2 Be struck dumb, you inhabitants of the coast,
you merchants of Sidon,
whose goods[e] travelled over the sea,
3 over wide oceans.
The grain of Nile, the harvest of the river,
formed her revenues,
as she marketed it throughout the world.
4 Blush, Sidon,
for thus speaks the sea,[f]
'I have not laboured nor given birth,
not reared young men
nor brought up young girls'.[g]
5 When the Egyptians learn the fate of Tyre,
they will be appalled.
6 Take ship for Tarshish,[h] howl,
you inhabitants of the coast.
7 Is this your joyful city
founded far back in the past?
Whose footsteps led her abroad
to found her own colonies?
8 Who took this decision
against imperial Tyre,[i]
whose traders were princes,
whose merchants, the great ones of the world?
9 Yahweh Sabaoth took this decision
to humble the pride of all her beauty
and humiliate the great ones of the world.
10 Till the soil,[j] daughter of Tarshish,
the harbour[k] is no more.
11 He has stretched his hand over the sea
to overthrow its kingdoms;
Yahweh has ordained the destruction
of the fortresses of Canaan.
12 He has said: Rejoice no more,
ravished one,

Ezk 26-28
Am 1:9-10
Zc 9:2-4
2:16+
Ps 48:7+
↗ Rv 18:23

i. Probably for sacrifices or banquets to celebrate a victory of Hezekiah or the inauguration of the fortifications.
j. The distichs of this verse have been inverted.
k. 'I' versions; 'he' Hebr.
l. With Rv 3:7 the Fathers see in Eliakim a foreshadowing of the Messiah. In the antiphon *O clavis* the liturgy uses v. 22 (=Rv 3:7) in this messianic sense.
m. This prose supplement refers to the Exile when the family of Eliakim sank into oblivion.

23 a. The following passage apparently combines two poems: the first against Sidon, vv. 1-4 and 12-14, the second against Tyre, vv. 5-11. The first must have been delivered by Isaiah shortly before 701 when Luli, king of Sidon, fled to Cyprus and was assassinated there. The oracle against Tyre was added later.
b. Tarshish (Tartessos in Spain) stands for 'the ends of the earth'. 'Ships of Tarshish' are heavy-draft vessels.
c. 'your fortress' corr.; 'your houses' Hebr.
d. Cyprus.
e. 'goods' corr.
f. The text adds 'the fortress of the sea, saying', a gloss.
g. Sailors were called 'sons of the sea': the sea mourns for them.
h. Flee to the ends of the earth.
i. 'imperial' lit. 'crowned' versions; 'bestower of crowns' Hebr.
j. 'Till the soil' Greek; 'Overflow the land like the Nile' Hebr.
k. 'the harbour' corr.; 'the girdle' Hebr.

virgin daughter of Sidon.
Get up and take ship for Kittim;
no respite for you there, either.
Look at the land of Kittim...[l] 13
They[m] have set up towers.
They have demolished its bastions
and reduced it to ruins.
Howl, ships of Tarshish, 14
for your fortress has been destroyed.

The subjection of Tyre

Jr 25:11-12 That day, Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years.[n] But in the reign of another 15
king,[o] at the end of the seventy years, Tyre will become like the whore in the song:

Take your lyre, walk the town, 16
forgotten whore.
Play your sweetest, sing your songs again,
to make them remember you.

At the end of the seventy years Yahweh will visit[p] Tyre. Once again she will 17
Rv 17:2 begin to receive the pay for her whoring. She will play the whore with all the
kingdoms on the surface of the earth. •But her profits and wages will be dedicated 18
to Yahweh and not stored or hoarded. Her profits will go to buy abundant food
and splendid clothes for those who live in the presence of Yahweh.

D. APOCALYPSE[q]

The sentence[b]

24 See how Yahweh lays the earth waste, 1
makes it a desert, buckles its surface,
scatters its inhabitants,
priest and people alike, master and slave, 2
mistress and maid, seller and buyer,
lender and borrower, creditor and debtor.
Ravaged, ravaged the earth, 3
despoiled, despoiled,
as Yahweh has said.
Ho 4:3+ The earth is mourning, withering, 4
the world is pining, withering,
the heavens are pining away with the earth.[c]
The earth is defiled 5
under its inhabitants' feet,
for they have transgressed the law, violated the precept,
Gn 9:16 broken the everlasting covenant.[d]
So a curse consumes the earth 6
and its inhabitants suffer the penalty,
that is why the inhabitants of the earth are burnt up
and few men are left.

The city in ruins

The wine is mourning, the vine is pining away, 7
all glad hearts are sighing.
Ps 137:2 The merry tambourines are silent, 8
Jr 7:34;16:9; 25:10 the sound of revelling is over,
Ezk 26:13 Rv 18:22 the merry lyre is silent.

9 They no longer sing over their wine,
the drunkard finds strong drink revolting.
10 The city of emptiness[e] is in ruins,
the entrance to every house is shut.
11 There is lamentation in the streets: no wine,
joy quite gone,[f]
gladness banished from the country.
12 Nothing but rubble in the city,
the gate smashed to pieces;
13 and so it will be on earth,
among the peoples,
as at the beating of the olive trees, 17:6
as at the gleaning of the grapes
when the grape harvest is over. Si 33:16

14 They[g] lift up their voices, singing for joy;
they acclaim the majesty of Yahweh from the sea.
15 Therefore in the islands they give glory[h] to Yahweh, 2 Th 1:12
in the islands of the sea, to the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel.
16 From remotest earth we hear songs, 'Honour to the upright one'.

But 'Enough, enough!'[i] I say.
'Woe to the traitors[j] who betray,
to the traitors who treacherously betray!'
17 Terror, the pit, the snare Jr 48:43-44
for you, inhabitants of the earth:
18 the man who runs away at the cry of terror 2 K 7:2 Ps 46:2f
shall fall into the pit, Jb 24:18
and the man who climbs out of the pit
shall be caught in the snare.

Continuation of the poem on the sentence 2:10+

Yes, the sluicegates above will open, Gn 7:11 Am 8:9+
and the foundations of the earth will rock.
19 The earth will split into fragments,
the earth will be riven and rent.
The earth will shiver and shake,
20 the earth will stagger like a drunkard, Ps 60:2
sway like a shanty;
so heavy will be its sin on it, it will fall
never to rise again.
21 That day, Yahweh will punish
above, the armies of the sky,[k]

l. 'Kittim' corr.; 'Chaldaeans' Hebr., which adds 'They were not a people; Assyria founded it for the beasts of the desert', a corrupt text.

m. Presumably referring to Sennacherib.

n. Presumably a symbolic figure indicating a long period.

o. 'of another king' corr.; 'of one king' Hebr.

p. Yahweh 'visits' nations to punish, test, or bless them.

24 a. Ch. 24-27 see beyond the immediate events to the final judgement of God; of this they give a poetic description interspersed with supplicatory and thanksgiving psalms. Though not all of the distinctive qualities are present, these chapters anticipate the apocalyptic literature which will be fully developed in Dn, Zc 9-14, and the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*. This is probably the latest section of Is.

b. The final judgement of all mankind.

c. 'the heavens with' corr.

d. Not, it seems, the covenant with Abraham or the Mosaic covenant, but God's covenant with the whole of mankind analogous to the covenant with Noah according to the 'Priestly' tradition in Genesis, Gn 9:9+. Once this covenant is violated, judgement follows like a second Flood, v. 6.

e. Unidentified. It may be Babylon (destroyed by Xerxes I in 485), Tyre, Samaria, or some Persian or eastern capital; or possibly the symbolic city of evil, as opposed to Jerusalem the city of God.

f. 'gone' versions.

g. The Jews who have been saved and the dwellers in the 'islands' (the distant countries) now converted to Yahweh.

h. Text corr.; 'in the lights, give glory to' Hebr.

i. Translation uncertain.

j. Following Targum; 'woe is me, the traitors' Hebr.

k. The stars, regarded as deities in the semitic pagan world.

below, the kings of the earth;
they will be herded together, 22
shut up in a dungeon,
confined in a prison
and, after long years, punished.
The moon will hide her face, the sun be ashamed, 23
Ex 24:9-11. 16+ Ps 47:4 ✗ Rv 4:4; 10-11 for Yahweh Sabaoth will be king
on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem,
and his glory will shine in the presence of his elders.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Ps 31:14 25 Yahweh, you are my God, 1
I extol you, I praise your name;
for you have carried out your excellent design,
long planned, trustworthy, true.
For you have made the town a heap of stones, 2
the fortified city a ruin.
The citadel of the proud is a city no longer,
it will never be rebuilt.
Hence a mighty people gives you glory, 3
the city of pitiless nations holds you in awe;
for you are a refuge for the poor, 3
a refuge for the needy in distress,
4:5-6; 49:10 Ps 121:5-6 Rv 7:15-16 a shelter from the storm,
a shade from the heat;
while the breath of pitiless men
is like the winter[a] storm.
Like drought in a dry land 5
you will repress the clamour of the proud;
like heat by the shadow of a cloud
the singing of the despots will be subdued.

Mt 8:11 **The messianic banquet**[b]

On this mountain,[c] 6
Yahweh Sabaoth will prepare for all peoples
a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines,
Jn 6:51.54 of food rich and juicy, of fine strained wines.
On this mountain he will remove 7
the mourning veil covering all peoples,
and the shroud enwrapping all nations,
Ho 13:14 1 Co 15:54-55 he will destroy Death for ever. 8
Ps 116:8; 126:5 1 Co 15:26 ✗ Rv 7:17; 21:4 *35:10* The Lord Yahweh will wipe away
the tears from every cheek;
he will take away his people's shame
everywhere on earth,
for Yahweh has said so.
That day, it will be said: See, this is our God 9
in whom we hoped for salvation;
Gn 49:18 Yahweh is the one in whom we hoped.
We exult and we rejoice
that he has saved us;
for the hand of Yahweh 10
rests on this mountain.
Moab[d] is trodden down where he stands
as straw is trodden in the dung pit;
and there he stretches out his hands 11

like a swimmer stretching out his hands to swim.
But Yahweh curbs his pride
and whatever his hands attempt.
12 Your arrogant, lofty walls
he destroys, he overthrows,
he flings them in the dust.

Song of victory

1 26 That day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah:
We have a strong city; 60:18 Ps 48:12-13
to guard us he has set
wall and rampart about us. Ps 31:21
2 Open the gates! Let the upright nation come in, Ps 118:19-20
she, the faithful one
3 whose mind is steadfast, who keeps the peace,[a]
because she trusts in you.
4 Trust in Yahweh for ever,
for Yahweh is the everlasting Rock; Dt 32:4 Ps 62:7
5 he has brought low those who lived high up
in the steep citadel;
he brings it down, brings it down to the ground,
flings it down in the dust:
6 the feet of the lowly, the footsteps of the poor
trample on it.

A psalm[b]

7 The path of the upright man is straight, Jb 3:23 Ps 5:8
you smooth the way of the upright.
8 Following the path of your judgements,
we hoped in you, Yahweh,
your name, your memory are all my soul desires.
9 At night my soul longs for you Ps 42:1; 130: 6-7
and my spirit in me seeks for you;
when your judgements appear on earth
the inhabitants of the world learn the meaning of integrity.
10 If favour is shown to the wicked,
he does not learn the meaning of integrity.
He does evil in the land of uprightness,
he fails to see the majesty of Yahweh.
11 Yahweh, your hand is raised,
but they do not see it.
Let them see your jealous love for this people and be ashamed, Mi 7:16
let the fire prepared for your enemies consume them. Ps 106:18 Heb 10:27
12 Yahweh, you are giving us peace,
since you treat us
as our deeds deserve.
13 Yahweh our God,
other lords than you have ruled us,

25 a. 'winter' corr.; 'against the wall' Hebr.
b. The comforting aspect of the judgement presented in the imagery of a banquet, anticipating the gospel parable, Mt 22:2-10p.
c. Zion.
d. Vv. 10-12, on Moab, are apparently a later addition.

26 a. 'who keeps the peace' corr.
b. Prayer for judgement to come soon. Cf. Rv 22:20.

2 Tm 2:19 but we acknowledge no one other than you,
no other name than yours.

The dead will not come to life, 14
their ghosts will not rise,
for you have punished them, annihilated them,
and wiped out their memory.

54:3 Enlarge the nation, Yahweh, enlarge it, 15
to the nation grant glory,
extend all the frontiers of the country.

Ps 77:2; 78:34-35 Distressed, we search for you, Yahweh; 16
the misery of oppression was your punishment for us.[e]

13:8+; 37:3 Ho 13:13 Jn 16:21 As a woman with child near her time 17
writhes and cries out in her pangs,

so are we, Yahweh, in your presence:
we have conceived, we writhe 18
as if we were giving birth;
we have not given the spirit of salvation to the earth,[d]
no more inhabitants of the world are born.

Ezk 37+ Ho 13:14 Mt 11:5 Lk 7:22 Your dead will come to life, 19
their[e] corpses will rise;
Ep 5:14 awake, exult,
all you who lie in the dust,
Ho 14:6 for your[f] dew is a radiant dew
and the land of ghosts will give birth.[g]

Oracle[h]

✓ Mt 6:6 Go into your rooms, my people, 20
shut your doors behind you.
Jb 14:13-15 Heb 10:37 Hide yourselves a little while
until the wrath has passed.

Mi 1:3 For, see, Yahweh will soon come out of his dwelling, 21
✓ Rv 3:10; 6:10 to punish all the inhabitants of earth for their crimes.
Gn 37:26 Jb 16:18+ The earth will reveal its blood
and no longer hide its slain.

Ps 72:9 **27** That day, Yahweh will punish, 1
with his hard sword, massive and strong,
Jb 3:8+; 26:13 Leviathan the fleeing serpent,
Leviathan the twisting serpent;[a]
Jb 40:25f Ps 74:14 he will kill the sea-dragon.

5:1-7+ **The vineyard of Yahweh**[b]

That day, 2
sing of the delightful[c] vineyard!
I, Yahweh, am its keeper; 3
every moment I water it
for fear its leaves should fall;[d]
night and day I watch over it.

I am angry no longer. 4
If thorns and briars come
I will declare war on them,
I will burn them every one.
Or if they would shelter under my protection, 5

let them make their peace with me,
let them make their peace with me.

Pardon for Jacob; punishment for the oppressor

6 In the days to come,[e] Jacob will put out shoots, Ps 72:16 Ho 14:7
Israel will bud and blossom
and fill the whole world with fruit.
7 Has he beaten her as he beat those who beat her?
Has he murdered her as he murdered those who murdered her?[f]
8 You have punished it[g] with expulsion[h] and exile;
he pursued it with a blast as fierce as the wind from the east.
9 Now here is how Jacob's guilt will be atoned for, Rm 11:27
here is the ransom for its sin:
he treats all the altar stones
like lumps of chalk that are ground to powder.
Sacred poles and solar pillars stand no longer, 17:8 Ex 34:13+
10 for the fortified city is abandoned now,
it lies deserted,
forsaken as a wilderness,
There the herd grazes,
there it rests and browses on the branches.
11 The boughs are dry and broken,
women come and use them for firewood;
for this is a nation without understanding
and so its Maker will have no pity for it,
he that shaped it will show it no favour.

Oracle

12 That day, Yahweh will start his threshing
from the course of the River to the wadi of Egypt,
and you will be gathered one by one,
sons of Israel.
13 That day, the great trumpet will be sounded, Jl 2:1+
and those lost in the land of Assyria will come,
and those exiled to the land of Egypt,
and they will worship Yahweh
on the holy mountain, in Jerusalem.

E. POEMS ON ISRAEL AND JUDAH

A warning to Samaria[a] Mi 1:2

1 28 Woe to the haughty crown of Ephraim's drunkards, 5:11-13+ Am 6:8
to the fading flower of its proud splendour
overlooking the lush valley,
to those prostrated by wine! Si 21:35
2 See, a strong and mighty one, sent by the Lord,

c. This verse translated following Greek.
d. Hebr. joins 'the spirit' with the preceding line and reads 'we were giving birth to wind (or 'spirit'), we have not given salvation to the earth'.
e. 'their' Syr., Targ.: 'my' Hebr.
f. 'your' singular.
g. A prophecy of resurrection (2 M 7:9+) according to some, of Israel's national revival (cf. Ezk 37) according to others.
h. Yahweh's reply to the foregoing psalm.
27 a. 'Leviathan the fleeing and twisting serpent', cf. Jb 3:8+, appears in the Ras Shamra texts.
b. Israel. This poem is a pendant to Is 5:1-7.
c. 'delightful' corr.; 'of wine' Hebr.
d. 'for fear its leaves should fall' corr.; 'lest anyone harm it' Hebr.
e. 'In the days to come'; 'Those to come' Hebr.
f. I.e. Yahweh has punished Israel less severely than he punished the oppressors of his people.
g. The capital of the oppressors.
h. Meaning doubtful.
28 a. Oracle delivered before the fall of Samaria (722).

Am 1:14 like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest,[b]
like a storm of torrential, overflowing waters;
with his hand he throws them to the ground.
There will be trampled underfoot 3
the haughty crown of Ephraim's drunkards,
and the faded flower of its proud splendour 4
overlooking the lush valley.
Just like a fig before summer comes:
whoever notices it, picks it,
no sooner in the hand than swallowed.

That day, Yahweh Sabaoth 5
will be a crown of glory
and a diadem of splendour
4:3+ for the remnant of his people,
11:2-4+ a spirit of justice 6
for him who sits in judgement,
and a spirit of courage
for him who thrusts back the attacker to the gate.

Against the priests and the false prophets[c]

5:11-13+; 56:12 These, too, are reeling with wine, 7
staggering from strong drink.
Priest and prophet are reeling
from strong drink,
they are muddled with wine;
strong drink makes them stagger,
they totter when they are having visions,
they stumble when they are giving judgement.
Yes, all the tables are covered with vomit, 8
not a place left clean.

Ezk 3:5 'Who does he think he is lecturing? 9
Who does he think his message is for?
Babies just weaned?
Babies just taken from the breast?
With his 10
sav lasav, sav lasav,
kav lakav, kav lakav,
zeer sham, zeer sham!'[d]

33:19 Jr 5:15 ↗1 Co 14:21 Yes, certainly with stammering lips 11
and in a foreign language,[e]
he will talk to this nation,
he who once told them: Here is rest; 12
let the weary rest.
Here is repose.
—But they would not listen.
That is why Yahweh now says: 13
kav lakav, kav lakav,
sav lasav, sav lasav,
zeer sham, zeer sham.
So that when they walk they may fall over backwards
and be broken, snared and made captive.

Against evil counsellors[f]

Listen to the word of Yahweh, 14
you scoffers,

rulers of this people
in Jerusalem.
15 You say, 'We have made
a covenant with Mot,[g]
and with Sheol
we have made a pact.[h]
The destructive whip, as it goes by,
will not catch us,
for we have made lies our refuge,
and falsehood our shelter.'

↗ Ws 1:16
Si 14:12

Jr 5:12
Am 9:10

28:17

Oracle[i]

16 That is why the Lord Yahweh says this:
See how I lay in Zion
a stone of witness,
a precious cornerstone, a foundation stone:
The believer shall not stumble.[j]
17 And I will make justice the measure,
integrity the plumb-line.

Ps 118:22-23
↗ Mt 21:42; 16:18
Rm 9:32-33
1 Co 3:11
Ep 2:20
1 P 2:6
7:9+
Rm 10:11

1:26+

Continuation of the poem against evil counsellors

But hail will sweep away the refuge of lies
and floods overwhelm the shelter;
18 your covenant with Mot will be broken[k]
and your pact with Sheol annulled.
When the destructive whip goes by
it will crush you;
19 each time it goes by,
it will seize you.
It will go by, morning after morning,
both day and night;
what panic there would be
if you were to understand what it meant!
20 The bed is too short to stretch in,
the blanket too narrow for covering.[l]
21 Yes, as Yahweh did on Mount Perazim, he is going to rise,
as he did in the Valley of Gibeon he is going to stir himself
to do the deed, his extraordinary deed,
to work the work, his mysterious work.

28:15
Jos 10:11
Jb 38:23

2 S 5:17-25
Jos 10:10

22 Stop scoffing, then,
or your bonds will be tightened further;
for I have listened to the warrant of destruction
issued against the whole country
by the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth.

b. The armies of Sargon.

c. Oracle against participants in sacred banquets, who ridiculed Isaiah.

d. Mimicking Isaiah's preaching, which they consider unintelligible, with words chosen for their sound-value and recalling the babbling of a child. If the words are to be translated at all, they will read 'order on order, order on order, rule on rule, rule on rule, a little here, a little there'.

e. The languages spoken by the Assyrian troops who were of various nationalities. Isaiah's hearers have refused to understand him, yet through him Yahweh was speaking a message of peace; therefore God will make them hear another unintelligible message, the language of a conqueror.

f. Referring to the counsellors at the court of Judah, either under Ahaz or when Hezekiah considered joining the anti-Assyrian coalition.

g. 'Mot' corr.; 'death' Hebr. Mot was the Phoenician god of wheat, germination, and the underworld. In the Egyptian pantheon he is Osiris.

h. 'made a pact' versions; 'in vision' Hebr.

i. This oracle interrupts the poem in which it has been inserted and which is resumed in v. 17c.

j. 'stumble' corr.; 'hasten' Hebr.; 'be ashamed' Greek. This sentence is the proper name of the foundation stone of the new Jerusalem, cf. 1:26+.

k. 'broken' corr.

l. Proverbial description of a difficult situation.

The parable of the farmer[m]

Listen closely to my words, 23
be attentive and understand what I am saying.
Does the ploughman[n] do nothing but plough 24
and turn the soil and harrow it?
Will he not, after he has levelled it, 25
scatter fennel, sow cummin,
put in wheat and barley[o]
and, on the edges, spelt?
He has been taught this discipline 26
by his God who instructs him.

41:15 For fennel must not be crushed, 27
nor a drag be rolled over cummin;[p]
fennel must be beaten with a stick,
and cummin with a flail.
Does a man crush wheat? No; 28
he does not thresh it endlessly.
When he has rolled the drag over it
he winnows it[q] without crushing it.
This too comes from Yahweh Sabaoth, 29
whose advice is always admirable,
whose deeds are very great.

33:7; 36: 1-2; 37:33-37 **Oracle on Ariel**[a]

29 Woe, Ariel, Ariel, 1
city where David encamped.
Let a year or two pass,
let the feasts make their full round
then I will lay siege to Ariel, 2
and there will be moaning and bemoaning.

You[b] will be an Ariel for me,
2 S 5:6-9 like David[c] I will encamp against you, 3
↗ Lk 19:43 I will blockade you with palisades,
and mount siege-works against you.

Thrown down—you will speak from the ground, 4
your words will come muffled by dust.
Your voice will rise from the earth like a ghost's,
you will speak from the dust in a whisper.

Suddenly, unexpectedly,[d] 5c
you shall be visited by Yahweh Sabaoth 6
Ex 13:22+; 19:16+ with thunder, earthquake, mighty din,
hurricane, tempest, flame of devouring fire.

Ps 83:13-14 Ws 5:14 The horde of your enemies shall be scattered like fine dust, 5ab
the tyrant horde like flying chaff;
the horde of all the nations at war with Ariel
shall vanish like a dream, like a vision at night. 7

And all those fighting against her,
the entrenchments besieging her,[e]
Jb 28:8 shall be like the hungry man who dreams he eats, 8
and wakes with an empty belly,

like the thirsty man who dreams he drinks
and wakes exhausted, his throat parched;

so shall it be with the horde of all the nations
making war on Mount Zion.

9 Be stupefied and stunned,[f] Ps 107:27 Hab 1:5
go blind, unseeing,
drunk but not on wine,
staggering but not through liquor.

10 For on you has Yahweh poured
a spirit of lethargy, 19:14 Dt 29:3
he has closed your eyes (the prophets), 1 S 16:14+
he has veiled your heads (the seers). ↗ Rm 11:8

Secrecy of the revelation[g]

11 For you every vision has become like the words of a sealed book. You give Rv 5:1-3
it to someone able to read and say, 'Read that'. He replies, 'I cannot, because
12 the book is sealed'. •Or else you give the book to someone who cannot read,
and say, 'Read that'. He replies, 'I cannot read'.

Oracle[h] 1:10-20+

13 Yahweh[i] has said: Because this people
approaches me only in words, Am 5:21+ Mt 7:21; ↗ 15:8-9
honours me only with lip-service
while its heart is far from me, Ps 78:36
and my religion, as far as it is concerned,
is nothing but human commandment, a lesson memorised, Col 2:22
14 very well, I shall have to go on
being prodigal of prodigious prodigies with this people. Ezk 7:26
The wisdom of its sages shall decay, ↗ 1 Co 1:19
the intelligence of its intelligent men shall be shrouded. Ob 8

Against evil counsellors[j]

15 Woe to those who hide from Yahweh
to conceal their plans,
who scheme in the dark
and say, 'Who can see us? Who can recognise us?' Jb 22:13 Ps 10:4 Ezk 8:12 *Ws 12:12; 15:7* Si 33:13 Is 45:9; 64:7 Jr 18:1-6; 19:1-13 ↗ Rm 9:20-21 2 Tm 2:20
16 What perversity this is!
Is the potter no better than the clay?
Can something that was made say of its maker,
'He did not make me'?
Or a pot say of the potter,
'He is a fool'?[k]

17 In a short time, a very short time,[l]
shall not Lebanon become fertile land

m. The wisdom of the countryman, itself an emanation of divine wisdom, is an image of Yahweh's prudent treatment of his people.

n. The text reads 'he who ploughs for sowing'.

o. 'wheat and barley' Greek; Hebr. adds two probably synonymous words.

p. The sledge with sharp wheels or stones for threshing wheat.

q. 'he winnows it' corr.

29 a. This oracle may be dated from the period immediately preceding the siege and deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 which the prophet foretells. Ariel, 'lion-of-God', is a symbolic name given by Isaiah to Jerusalem, cf. 1:26+.

b. 'You' corr.; 'She' Hebr.

c. 'Like David' following Greek; 'Round about' Hebr.

d. For 5ab see after 6.

e. 'besieging her' corr.

f. These verses are addressed to the incredulous Judaeans.

g. Probably an addition explanatory of v. 10.

h. Oracle, difficult to date, against hypocritical worship.

i. 'Yahweh' several MSS; 'the Lord' Text. Rec.

j. Oracle presumably delivered in the same circumstances as 28:14-22. It seems, however, to refer to Samaria.

k. The ancient story of creation, Gn 2:7, had already pictured Yahweh as a potter, shaping man from the earth. The prophets after Isaiah frequently use this figure to show that man is a dependent and fragile thing in the hands of God; so also St Paul.

l. Vv. 17-18 and 21 seem to be later additions.

and fertile land turn into forest?
Lk 1:46 The deaf, that day, 18
will hear the words of a book
and, after shadow and darkness,
the eyes of the blind will see.

1 S 2:5f+ But the lowly will rejoice in Yahweh even more 19
6:3+ and the poorest exult in the Holy One of Israel;
for tyrants shall no more, and scoffers vanish, 20
and all be destroyed who are disposed to do evil:

those who gossip to incriminate others, 21
those who try at the gate to trip the arbitrator
and get the upright man's case dismissed for groundless reasons.

Therefore Yahweh speaks, 22
the God of the House of Jacob,
41:8; 51:2 Abraham's redeemer:
No longer shall Jacob be ashamed,
no more shall his face grow pale,
for he shall see[m] what my hands have done in his midst, 23
he shall hold my name holy.
They will hallow the Holy One of Jacob,
stand in awe of the God of Israel.
Erring spirits will learn wisdom 24
and murmurers accept instruction.

Ezk 16:26 **Against the embassy to Egypt**[a]

31:1 2 K 18:21 30 Woe to those rebellious sons! 1
—it is Yahweh who speaks.
They carry out plans that are not mine
Jr 2:18 and make alliances not inspired by me,
and so add
sin to sin.
They have left for Egypt, 2
without consulting me,
to take refuge in Pharaoh's protection,
to shelter in Egypt's shadow.
20:5; 36:5-9 Pharaoh's protection will be your shame, 3
the shelter of Egypt's shadow your confounding.
For his ministers have gone to Zoan, 4
his ambassadors have already reached Hanes.[b]
All are carrying gifts[c] 5
to a nation that will be of no use to them,
that will bring them neither aid, nor help,
nothing but shame and disgrace.

A second oracle against the embassy

Oracle on the beasts of the Negeb. 6

Nb 21:4-9 Dt 8:14-15 Through the land of distress and of anguish,
of lioness and roaring[d] lion,
14:29+ of viper and flying serpent,

they bear their riches on donkeys' backs,
their treasures on camels' humps,
to a nation that is of no use to them,

to Egypt who will prove futile and empty to them; 7

and so I call her
Rahab-do-nothing.[e] 51:9

The testament of Isaiah[f]

8 Now go and inscribe this on a tablet,[g]
write it in a book,
that it may serve in the time to come
as a witness for ever:[h]

9 This is a rebellious people, 1:2-4
they are lying sons,
sons who will not listen
to Yahweh's orders.

10 To the seers they say, 32:3
'See no visions';
to the prophets, 1 K 22:8-27 Jr 11:21 Am 2:12; 7:13 Mi 2:6
'Do not prophesy the truth to us,
'tell us flattering things;
have illusory visions;
11 turn aside from the way, leave the path,
take the Holy One out of our sight'.

12 So the Holy One of Israel says:
Since you reject this warning
and prefer to trust in wile[i] and guile Ps 62:10
and to rely on these,
13 then your guilt will prove
to be for you
a breach on the point of collapse,
the bulge at the top of the city wall
which suddenly and all at once
comes crashing down,
14 irretrievably shattered,
smashed like an earthenware pot
—so that of the fragments not one shard remains big enough to carry
a cinder from the hearth or scoop water from the cistern.

15 For thus says the Lord Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel: 6:3+
Your salvation lay in conversion and tranquillity, 7:9+ Ps 131:2 Mi 6:8
your strength, in complete trust;
and you would have none of it. Ex 14:14

16 'No,' you said 'we will flee on horses.' Ho 1:7+
So be it, flee then!
And you add, 'In swift chariots'.
So be it, your pursuers will be swift too.

17 A thousand will flee[j] at the threat of one Dt 32:30
and when five threaten you will flee,

m. Hebr. here adds a gloss 'his children'.

30 a. Oracle delivered when an embassy from Hezekiah was leaving to ask the pharaoh for Egyptian help against the Assyrians (about 703-702).

b. Zoan (Tanis) and Hanes (Anusis), two cities of the Delta.

c. 'are carrying' corr. of a doubtful text.

d. 'roaring' corr.

e. 'do-nothing' corr. A symbolic name, cf. 1:26+, also ironical, conferred on Egypt by Isaiah. Rahab a name often given to Egypt is also the name of a mythical monster, cf. Jb 9:13; 26:12, like Leviathan, Jb 3:8d. The sense seems to be that Egypt has only a façade of military power.

f. This oracle repeats all Isaiah's complaints against his compatriots.

g. Hebr. adds 'before them'.

h. 'witness' versions.

i. 'wile' corr.

j. 'will flee' corr.

until what is left of you will be
like a flagstaff on a mountain top,
like a signal on a hill.

54:8 But Yahweh is waiting to be gracious to you, 18
to rise and take pity on you,
for Yahweh is a just God;
49:23 Ps 2:1; 130:7 Lm 3:25 happy are all who hope in him.

The coming prosperity[k]

Yes, people of Zion, you will live in Jerusalem and weep no more. He will 19
be gracious to you when he hears your cry; when he hears he will answer. •When 20
the Lord has given you the bread of suffering and the water of distress, he who
is your teacher will hide no longer, and you will see your teacher with your own
eyes. •Whether you turn to right or left, your ears will hear these words 21
behind you, 'This is the way, follow it'. •You will regard your silvered idols 22
and gilded images as unclean. You will throw them away like the polluted things
Ps 65:9 they are, shouting after them, 'Good riddance!' •He will send rain for the seed 23
you sow in the ground, and the bread that the ground provides will be rich and
nourishing. Your cattle will graze, that day, in wide pastures. •Oxen and donkeys 24
that till the ground will eat a salted fodder, winnowed with shovel and fork.
Ps 65:9 Jl 4:18 On every lofty mountain, on every high hill there will be streams and watercourses, 25
on the day of the great slaughter when the strongholds fall. •Then moonlight will 26
be bright as sunlight and sunlight itself be seven times brighter—like the light
of seven days in one—on the day Yahweh dresses the wound of his people and
heals the bruises his blows have left.

Assyria will be sacrificed[l]

10:24 See, the name of Yahweh comes from afar, 27
blazing is his anger, heavy his exaction.
His lips brim with fury,
his tongue is like a devouring fire.
Ws 5:23 His breath is like a river in spate 28
coming up to the neck.
He comes to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction,
to put the bit of his bridle between the jaws of the nations.[m]
Ex 19:16+ Jb 38:23 Ps 29:1+ Yahweh will make his majestic voice be heard 30
and display his arm falling to strike,
in the ferocity of his anger, in the glare of a devouring fire,
Jos 10:11 in cloudburst, downpour, hailstones.

For at the voice of Yahweh Assyria will be battered 31
and beaten with the rod.
Each time he will feel the punishing rod[n] 32a
that Yahweh will lay on him.

Ps 134:2 The song you sing will be like that on a festal night 29
when hearts are gay,[o]
or when to the sound of flute men make
a pilgrimage to the mountain of Yahweh,
to the rock of Israel,
with music of tambourine and harp 32b
and with dancing...[p]
For in Topheth there has been prepared beforehand,[q] 33
yes, made ready for Molech,
a pit deep and wide
with straw and wood in plenty.[r]

The breath of Yahweh, like a stream of brimstone,
will set fire to it.

Against Egypt[a] Ezk 16:26

1 31 Woe to those who go down to Egypt 30:1-7 2 K 18:21
to seek help there,
who build their hopes on cavalry, Ho 1:7+
who rely on the number of chariots Ho 10:13
and on the strength of mounted men,
but never look to the Holy One of Israel 6:3+
nor consult Yahweh.

2 Yet he too is skilled in working disaster,
and he has not gone back on his word;
he will rise against the house of the wicked,
and against the protectors of evil men.

3 The Egyptian is a man, not a god, 2 Ch 32:8 Ezk 28:9
his horses are flesh, not spirit;
Yahweh will stretch out his hand Ex 14:26
to make the protector stumble;
the protected will fall
and all will perish together.

Yahweh wages war against Assyria[b]

4 Yes, this is what Yahweh has said to me:
As a lion or lion cub
growls over its prey,
and even when a whole band of shepherds
gathers against him,
he is not frightened by their shouting
or alarmed by the noise they make,
just so will Yahweh Sabaoth descend to fight 10:24
on Mount Zion and on its hill.
5 Like hovering birds Dt 32:11 Ps 36:7
so will Yahweh Sabaoth protect Jerusalem,
he will protect it, rescue it,
spare it and save it.
6 Come back to the one you have so wickedly betrayed,
sons of Israel.

7 Yes, that day, every one of you will throw away the silver idols and gold 2:20
idols which you have made with your guilty hands.

8 Assyria will fall by a sword that is not man's,
will be devoured by a sword that is more than human,
he will flee before the sword
and his young warriors will be enslaved.
9 In his terror he will abandon his rock,
and his panic-stricken leaders desert their standard.

k. This prose oracle seems to date from the Exile.
l. Oracle delivered by Isaiah probably when Sennacherib was threatening Jerusalem.
m. 'of his bridle' corr. V. 29 is put between 32a and 32b.
n. 'punishing' with some MSS.
o. Possibly an allusion to Passover, cf. Ex 12:1+.
p. 'with dancing' corr. What follows is unintelligible 'shaking, and he will fight'.
q. 'beforehand' corr. Topheth was where human sacrifice was offered 'to Molech', cf. Lv 18:21+.
r. 'pit' translation doubtful. 'straw' corr.

31 a. Oracle delivered probably in the same circumstances as 30:1-7.
b. This oracle apparently refers to Sennacherib.

It is Yahweh who speaks, whose fire is in Zion,
and his furnace in Jerusalem.

The integrity of the king

11:3-4 Jr 23:5-6 32 A king reigns by integrity 1
and princes rule by law;
each is like a shelter from the wind, 2
a refuge from the storm,
like streams of water in dry places,
like the shade of a great rock in a thirsty land.
30:10+ The eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, 3
the ears of those who hear will be alert,
the heart of the hasty will learn to judge, 4
the tongue of stammerers will speak clearly,
5:20 the fool will no more be called noble, 5
nor the villain be styled honourable.

Contrasts between fool and noble[a]

Ps 14:1 Qo 10:13 For the fool speaks folly, 6
and his heart meditates[b] wickedness,
that he may practise godlessness
and speak wild words about Yahweh,
and leave the hungry man's craving unsatisfied,
and refuse drink to the thirsty.

And the villain—his villainies are evil; 7
he devises wicked plots
Ps 10:2,7-11 to ruin the poor with lies
even when the cause of these lowly ones is just;
but the noble man plans only noble things 8
and bears himself nobly.

A warning to idle women[c]

3:16-24 Am 4:1-3 Stand up, you idle women, 9
listen to my words;
you over-confident daughters,
pay attention to what I say.

Within one year and a few days 10
you will tremble, you over-confident women;
the grape harvest will be over,
gathering will not come again.

Shudder, you idle women, 11
tremble, you over-confident women;
strip, undress,
put sackcloth round your waists.

Beat[d] your breasts, 12
for the pleasant fields,
for the fruitful vine,
for the soil of my people 13
5:6 where thorns and briars grow,
for all the happy houses,
for the gay city.

Since the palace has been abandoned 14
and the noisy city deserted,

Ophel and Keep become
caverns for ever,
the playground of wild asses
and the pasture of flocks.

Salvation from Yahweh[e] 11:2-9

15 Once more there will be poured on us
the spirit from above;
then shall the wilderness be fertile land
and fertile land become forest.

16 In the wilderness justice will come to live
and integrity in the fertile land;
17 integrity will bring peace, 11:6+
justice give lasting security.[f]

18 My people will live in a peaceful home,
in safe houses,
in quiet dwellings
19 —the forest shall be beaten down and the city laid low.[g]
20 Happy will you be, sowing by every stream,
letting ox and donkey roam free.

Psalm of hope in Yahweh[a]

1 33 Woe to you, ravager never ravaged,
plunderer never plundered!
When your ravaging is over, you shall be ravaged; Pr 22:23 Jr 30:16 Hab 2:8
when your plundering is done, you shall be plundered.

2 Yahweh, have pity on us,
we hope in you. Ps 32:10; 33:22
Be our[b] strong arm each morning,
our salvation in time of distress. Ps 46:1

3 At the sound of your threat peoples flee,
when you rise nations scatter, Nb 10:35 Ps 68:1
4 they gather loot as the grasshopper gathers, *Ps 46:6; 48:4; 7*
they leap on it as locusts leap.

5 Yahweh is exalted, for he is enthroned above, Ps 57:5; 83:18; 97:9
and fills Zion with justice and integrity.

6 Your continuance is assured;
wisdom and knowledge are riches that save,
the fear of Yahweh is his treasure.

The intervention of Yahweh[c]

7 Look, Ariel is lamenting[d] in the streets, 29:1
the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.

8 The highways are deserted, Jg 5:6
no travellers use the roads.

32 a. Poem in the wisdom style in the manner of Pr.
b. 'meditates' corr.; 'does' Hebr.
c. A warning for the women, issued in 702 before Sennacherib's invasion.
d. 'Beat' corr. Gesture of mourning.
e. This poem belongs to the cycle of 'oracles of the return from exile'.
f. Line corr. Hebr. 'and the fruit of integrity is living in peace, and lasting security'.
g. The line has been added. 'felled' corr.
33 a. It is difficult to identify the precise historical background of this psalm.
b. 'our' MSS and versions; 'their' Hebr.
c. Some associate this poem with Sennacherib's arrival outside the walls of Jerusalem; others consider it a poem of the return from exile.
d. 'Ariel is lamenting' corr.; 'their brave men cry' Hebr.

Treaties are broken, witnesses[e] despised,
there is respect for no one.

Am 1:2 The land mourns, it pines away, 9
Lebanon is withered with shame,
Sharon is a desert,
Bashan and Carmel are stripped bare.

Ps 12 'Now I stand up,' says Yahweh 10
'now I rise to my full height.
You have conceived chaff, you will give birth to straw, 11
my[f] breath shall devour you like fire.

'The peoples will be reduced to lime, 12
like cut thorns they will be burnt in the fire.
You who are far away, listen to what I have done, 13
and you who are near, realise my strength.'

Sinners in Zion are struck with horror 14
and fear seizes on the godless.
Dt 4:24 Heb 12:29 Which of us can live with this devouring fire,
which of us exist in everlasting flames?

Ps 15 —He who acts with integrity, 15
who speaks sincerely
and rejects extortionate profit,
who waves away bribes from his hands,
shuts suggestions of murder out of his ears
and closes his eyes against crime;

this man will dwell in the heights, 16
he will find refuge in a citadel built on rock,
bread will be given him, he shall not want for water.

The glorious future[g]

Your eyes are going to look on a king in his beauty, 17
they will see an immense country;
your heart will look back on its fears: 18
1 Co 1:20 where is he who counted,
where is he who weighed out,
where is he who counted the precious stones?[h]
You will no longer see the overweening people, 19
28:11 Dt 28:49 Ezk 3:5 the people of obscure, unintelligible speech,
of barbarous, senseless tongue.
Ps 46; 48: 12 Look on Zion, city of our feasts, 20
your eyes will see Jerusalem
as a home that is secure,
54:2 a tent not to be moved:
its pegs not pulled out,
not one of its ropes broken.

There Yahweh is princely to us, 21
on the banks of broad-spreading rivers,[i]
where there rows no galley,
there passes no majestic ship:
its tackle hangs loose, 23a
it supports the mast no longer,
it does not hoist the pennon.[j]
For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh our lawgiver, 22
Yahweh our King and our saviour.

23b Then immense booty shall be shared out,
even the lame fall to plundering,
24 no one living there shall say, 'I am sickly';
the people who live there will be forgiven all their faults.

The end of Edom[a] 63:1-6 Jr 49:7-22 Ezk 25:12 Am 1:11

1 34 Come near and listen, all you races,
pay attention all you nations,
listen, earth and all that you hold,
world and all that comes from you.

2 Yahweh is angry with all the nations,
enraged with all their hordes.
He has vowed them to destruction, Am 4:10
and marked them down for slaughter.

3 Their dead are thrown into the streets, Jl 2:20
a stench comes up from their corpses,
the mountains run with their blood,
4 the armies of heaven rot.

The heavens are rolled up like a scroll Mt 24:29 2 P 3:12
and their armies all drop like leaves, ↗ Rv 6:14
like vine leaves falling,
like falling fig leaves.

5 For my sword has drunk deep in the heavens...
See now how it slashes through Edom,
through the people I have condemned to be punished.

6 The sword of Yahweh is gorged with blood,
it is glutted with fat,
the blood of lambs and goats,
the fat of the saddle of rams.

For Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah, 63:1
a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
7 But instead of wild oxen, nations fall,
in place of bulls, a race of mighty men.[b]

Their land is drenched with blood,
its dust is sodden with fat,
8 for this is the day of Yahweh's vengeance,
the year of revenge for the defender[c] of Zion.

9 Its streams turn into pitch, Gn 19:24-28 ↗ Rv 14:10-11 *Jb 18:15*
its dust into brimstone,
its land becomes blazing pitch... Ba 4:35

10 Never quenched night or day, Dt 32:39
its smoke goes up for ever, Rv 19:3
it shall lie waste age after age, Ba 4:35
no one will pass through it.

11 It will be the haunt of pelican and hedgehog, 13:20-22 Lv 16:22
the owl and the raven will live there;

e. 'witnesses' DSIa; 'towns' Hebr.
f. 'my' corr.; 'your' Hebr.
g. Poem usually assigned to the Persian period.
h. 'precious stones' corr.; 'towers' Hebr.
i. Hebr. adds 'and the streams': text uncertain.
j. Allusion to Egypt or to some other sea power which will no longer threaten Zion.

34 a. This apocalyptic poem on the end of Edom belongs to the cycle of anti-Babylonian compositions: it is seemingly later than ch. 40-66 on which the author draws. It perhaps forms a whole with ch. 35+.
b. 'nations', 'a race': corr.
c. 'defender' corr.

2 K 21: 13 Lm 2:8
over it Yahweh will stretch the measuring line of chaos
and the plumb-line of emptiness.

13:21+ Lv 17:7 Rv 18:2
The satyrs will make their home there, 12
its nobles will be no more,[d]
kings will not be proclaimed there,
all its princes will be brought to nothing.

Thorns will grow in the palaces there, 13
thistles and nettles in its fortresses,
Ps 44:19 Lm 5:18
it will be a lair for jackals,
a lodging for ostriches.

Wild cats will meet hyenas there, 14
the satyrs will call to each other,
Jb 18: 15+ Ba 4:35
there too will Lilith take cover
seeking rest.

The viper will nest and lay eggs there, 16
will brood and hatch its eggs;[e]
kites will gather there
and make it their meeting place. 16c

Search in the book of Yahweh,[f] and read, 16ab
not one of these is missing;
for his[g] mouth has ordained it,
and his spirit has brought them together.

He has drawn lots for the share of each, 17
his hand has divided the land with the line.
They shall possess it for ever,
and live there age after age.

The judgement of God[a]

41:19 **35** Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult, 1
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,
let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil, 2
let it rejoice and sing for joy.

60:13
The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
they shall see the glory of Yahweh,
the splendour of our God.

40:29-31 Heb 12: 12
Strengthen all weary hands, 3
steady all trembling knees
and say to all faint hearts, 4
'Courage! Do not be afraid.

40:10
'Look, your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'

↗ Mt 11: 5 ↗ Lk 7: 22
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, 5
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
↗ Ac 3:8
then the lame shall leap like a deer 6
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy;

41:18; 43:20; 48:21 Jn 4:1+
for water gushes in the desert,
streams in the wasteland,

7 the scorched earth becomes a lake,
the parched land springs of water.

The lairs where the jackals used to live
become thickets of reed and papyrus...

8 And through it will run a highway undefiled[b] 40:3-5; 43:1 Tb 14:5 Ps 107:7
which shall be called the Sacred Way;
the unclean may not travel by it,[c] Rv 21:27
nor fools stray along it.

9 No lion will be there
nor any fierce beast roam about it,[d]
but the redeemed will walk there,
10 for those Yahweh has ransomed shall return.

They will come to Zion shouting for joy, 25:8; =51:11 Ps 126 Zc 8:19
everlasting joy on their faces;
joy and gladness will go with them
and sorrow and lament be ended. Rv 21:4

APPENDIX[a]

Sennacherib's invasion Si 48:18

1 2 36 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified towns of Judah and captured them. •From Lachish 29:1; ‖37:10f ‖2K 18:13-37 ‖2Ch 32:9
the king of Assyria sent the cupbearer-in-chief with a large force to King Hezekiah 2 K 18:17
in Jerusalem. The cupbearer-in-chief took up a position near the conduit of the
3 upper pool on the road to the Fuller's Field. •The master of the palace, Eliakim 7:3; 22:15, 20
son of Hilkiah, Shebna the secretary and the herald Joah son of Asaph went
4 out to him. •The cupbearer-in-chief said to them, 'Say to Hezekiah, "The great
5 king, the king of Assyria, says to you: What makes you so confident? •Do you think[b] empty words are as good as strategy and military strength? Who are you
6 relying on, to dare to rebel against me? •We know you are relying on that broken 30:3 Ezk 29:6
reed—Egypt—which pricks and pierces the hand of the man who leans on it.
7 — That is what Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is like to all who rely on him.— •You
may say to me: We rely on Yahweh our God, but are they not his high places
and altars that Hezekiah has suppressed, saying to the people of Judah and
8 Jerusalem: Here is the altar before which you must worship? •Come, make
a wager with my lord the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses
9 if you can find horsemen to ride them. •How could you repulse a single one[c]
of the least of my master's servants? And yet you have relied on Egypt for chariots
10 and horsemen. •And lastly, have I come up against this country to lay it waste
without warrant from Yahweh? Yahweh himself said to me: March against
this country and lay it waste." '
11 Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to the cupbearer-in-chief, 'Please speak to 22:15,20
your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the
12 Judaean language within earshot of the people on the ramparts'. •But the
cupbearer-in-chief said, 'Do you think my lord sent me here to say these things
to your master or to you? On the contrary, it was to the people sitting on the

d. Following Greek.
e. 'hatch its eggs' corr.
f. Probably Is. Cf. 13:20-22.
g. 'his' DSIa; 'my' Hebr.

35 a. Poem of the return from exile, associated with the second part of Is.

b. 'undefiled' following Greek.
c. Hebr. adds 'it will be for those when he is to go that way'.
d. The text adds 'it will not be found'.

36 a. Ch. 36-39, with the exception of 38:9-20, are repeated from 2 K 18:13–20:19, though with some variants.
b. 'Do you think' with some MSS and 2 K 18:34; 'I told you' Text. Rec.
c. 'a single one' conj.; 'a single governor' Hebr.

ramparts who, like you, are doomed to eat their own dung and drink their own urine.'

Then the cupbearer-in-chief stood erect and, shouting loudly in the Judaean 13
language, called out, 'Listen to the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.
The king says to you: "Do not let Hezekiah delude you! He will be powerless 14
to save you. •Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to rely on Yahweh by saying: 15
Yahweh is sure to save us; this city will not fall into the power of the king of
Assyria." •Do not listen to Hezekiah, for the king of Assyria says: Make 16
peace with me, •surrender to me, and every one of you will eat the fruit of his 17
own vine and of his own fig tree and drink the water of his own cistern until
I come and deport you to a country like your own, a land of corn and good wine,
a land of bread and of vineyards. •Do not let Hezekiah delude you by saying: 18
Jdt 6:2 Yahweh will save you. Has any god of any nation saved his country from
10:9 the power of the king of Assyria? •Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? 19
Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Where are the gods of the land of Samaria?[d]
Did they save Samaria from me? •Tell me which of all the gods of these countries 20
have saved their countries from my hands, for Yahweh to be able to save
Jerusalem?"

They kept silence and said nothing in reply, since this was the king's order: 21
22:15,20 'Do not answer him' he had said. •The master of the palace, Eliakim son of 22
Hilkiah, Shebna the secretary and the herald Joah son of Asaph, with their
garments torn, went to Hezekiah and reported what the cupbearer-in-chief
had said.

||2 K 19:1-7 **The prophet Isaiah is consulted**

37 On hearing this, King Hezekiah tore his garments, covered himself with 1
sackcloth and went to the Temple of Yahweh. •He sent the master of the 2
palace, Eliakim, Shebna the secretary and the elders of the priests, covered
in sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. •They said to him, 'This is 3
what Hezekiah says, "Today is a day of suffering, of punishment, of disgrace.
Ho 13:13+ Children come to birth and there is no strength to bring them forth. •May Yahweh 4
your God hear the words of the cupbearer-in-chief whom his master, the king
1 S 17:26 Jdt 6:2 of Assyria, has sent to insult the living God, and may Yahweh your God punish
4:3+ the words he has heard! Offer your prayer for the remnant that is left."'

When the ministers of King Hezekiah had come to Isaiah, •he replied, 'Say 5 6
to your master, "Yahweh says this: Do not be afraid of the words you have
heard or the blasphemies the minions of the king of Assyria have uttered against
me. •I am going to put a spirit in him, and when he hears a rumour he will 7
return to his own country and in that country I will bring him down with the
sword." '

The cupbearer returns to his master

||2 K 19:8-9 The cupbearer went back and rejoined the king of Assyria at Libnah, which he 8
was attacking. The cupbearer had already learnt that the king of Assyria had left
Lachish, •since he had received this news about Tirhakah king of Cush: 'He has 9
set out to fight you'.

||2 K 19:9-19 **Second account of Sennacherib's activities**

||36:1 Sennacherib sent messengers to Hezekiah again,[a] saying, •'Tell this to 10
Hezekiah king of Judah, "Do not let your God on whom you are relying deceive
you when he says: Jerusalem shall not fall into the power of the king of Assyria.
You have learnt by now what the kings of Assyria have done to every country, 11
putting them all under the ban. Are you likely to be spared? •What power to 12
help did the gods have of those nations my fathers destroyed, Gozen, Haran,
Rezeph and the Edenites who were in Tel Basar?[b] •Where are the king of 13
Hamath, the king of Arpad,[c] the kings of Sepharvaim, of Hena, of Ivvah?" '

14 Hezekiah took the letter from the hands of the messengers and read it; he
then went up to the Temple of Yahweh and spread it out before Yahweh.
15 Hezekiah said this prayer in the presence of Yahweh, •'Yahweh Sabaoth, God 2 Ch 32:20
16 of Israel, enthroned on the cherubs, you alone are God of all the kingdoms Jdt 6:2
of the earth, you have made heaven and earth.

17 'Give ear, Yahweh, and listen. Dn 9:18
Open your eyes, Yahweh, and see.
Hear the words of Sennacherib
who has sent to insult the living God. 1 S 17:26

18 'It is true, Yahweh, that the kings of Assyria have exterminated all the nations[d]
19 and their countries, •they have thrown their gods on the fire, for these were
not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone, and hence they have
20 destroyed them. •But now, Yahweh our God, save us from his hand, and let
all the kingdoms of the earth know that you alone are God,[e] Yahweh.'

Isaiah intervenes ||2 K 19:20-28

21 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah. 'This' he said 'is what Yahweh,
the God of Israel, says in answer to the prayer you have addressed to me about
22 Sennacherib king of Assyria. •Here is the oracle that Yahweh has pronounced 10:24
against him:

23 "She despises you, she scorns you,
the virgin, daughter of Zion;
she tosses her head behind you,
the daughter of Jerusalem.
Whom have you insulted, whom did you blaspheme?
Against whom raised your voice
and lifted your insolent eyes?
Against the Holy One of Israel.
24 Through your minions you have insulted the Lord;
you have said: With my many chariots
I have climbed the tops of mountains,
the utmost peaks of Lebanon.
I have felled its tall forest of cedars,
its finest cypresses.
I have reached its furthest recesses,
its forest garden.
25 Yes I have dug wells and drunk
of alien waters;[f]
I have put down my feet, and have dried up
all the rivers of Egypt.

26 "Do you hear? Long ago
I planned for it,
from days of old I designed it,
now I carry it out.
Your part was to bring down in heaps of ruins
fortified cities.
27 Their inhabitants, hands feeble,
dismayed, discomfited,
were like plants of the field,

d. 'Where are the gods of the land of Samaria' inserted, following 2 K 18:34.
37 a. 'again' corr. following 2 K 19:9; 'He heard and' Hebr.
b. 'Tel Basar' corr.; 'Telassar' Hebr.
c. A gloss adds 'a king for each town.
d. 'the nations' corr. following the Greek of 2 K 19:17; 'the lands' Hebr.
e. 'God' added, following 2 K 19:19.
f. 'alien' following 2 K 19:24.

like tender grass,
Ps 129:6 like grass of housetop and meadow,
under the east wind.
I know whenever you rise[g] •and whenever you sit, 28
your going out, your coming in.
Because you have raved against me 29
and your insolence has come to my ears,
I will put my ring through your nostrils,
my bit between your lips,
to make you return by the road
on which you came.

||2 K 19:29-31 **A sign for Hezekiah**

"This shall be the sign for you: 30
This year will be eaten the self-sown grain,
next year what sprouts in the fallow,
but in the third year sow and reap,
plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
The surviving remnant of the House of Judah shall bring forth 31
new roots below and fruits above.
For a remnant shall go out from Jerusalem, 32
and survivors from Mount Zion.
The jealous love of Yahweh Sabaoth will accomplish this.

||2 K 19:32-34 **An oracle on Assyria**

29:1 'This, then, is what Yahweh says about the king of Assyria: 33
"He will not enter this city,
he will let fly no arrow against it,
confront it with no shield,
throw up no earthwork against it.
By the road that he came on he will return; 34
he shall not enter this city. It is Yahweh who speaks.
I will protect this city and save it 35
for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."'

||2 K 19:35-37 **Sennacherib is punished**

10:17
2 Ch 32:21
2 M 8:19 That same night the angel of Yahweh went out and struck down a hundred 36
and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. In the early morning, when
it was time to get up, there they lay, so many corpses.

Sennacherib struck camp and left; he returned home and stayed in Nineveh. 37
One day when he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons 38
Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and escaped into
the land of Ararat. His son Esarhaddon succeeded him.

||2 K 20:1-11 **The illness and cure of Hezekiah**

2 Ch 32:24
Ps 21:4 38 In those days Hezekiah fell ill and was at the point of death. The prophet 1
Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, 'Yahweh says this, "Put your
affairs in order, for you are going to die, you will not live"'. •Hezekiah turned 2
his face to the wall and addressed this prayer to Yahweh, •'Ah, Yahweh, remem- 3
ber, I beg you, how I have behaved faithfully and with sincerity of heart in your
presence and done what is right in your eyes'. And Hezekiah shed many tears.

Si 48:23 Then the word of Yahweh came to Isaiah, •'Go and say to Hezekiah, 4 5
"Yahweh, the God of David your ancestor, says this: I have heard your prayer
and seen your tears. I will cure you; in three days' time you shall go up to the
Temple of Yahweh.[a] I will add fifteen years to your life. •I will save you from the 6
hands of the king of Assyria, I will protect this city."'

21 'Bring a fig poultice,' Isaiah said 'apply it to the ulcer and he will recover.'
22 Hezekiah said, 'What is the sign to tell me that I shall be going up to the Temple
7 of Yahweh?' •'Here' Isaiah replied[b] 'is the sign from Yahweh that he will do
8 what he has said. •Look, I shall make the shadow cast by the declining sun
go back ten steps on the steps of Ahaz.' And the sun went back the ten steps
by which it had declined.

The canticle of Hezekiah[c] Ps 116

9 Canticle[d] of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery.

10 I said: In the noon of my life
I have to depart
for the gates of Sheol,
I am deprived of the rest of my years.

11 I said: I shall never see Yahweh again Ps 27:13; 116:9
in the land of the living,
never again look on any man
of those who inhabit the earth.[e]

12 My tent is pulled up, and thrown away Ws 9:15; 2 Co 5:1-4; 2 P 1:13-14
like the tent of a shepherd;
like a weaver you roll up[f] my life Jb 7:6
to cut it from the loom.

From dawn to night you are compassing my end, Jb 4:20
13 I cry aloud[g] until the morning; Ps 90:5-6
like a lion he crushes all my bones, Jb 10:16
from dawn to night you are compassing my end.

14 I am twittering like a swallow,[h]
I am moaning like a dove, Ps 69:3
my eyes turn to the heights,[i] Ps 121:1
take care[j] of me, be my safeguard.

15 What can I say? Of what can I speak to him?[k]
It is he who is at work;
I will give glory to you[l] all the years of my life
for my sufferings.

16 Lord, my heart will live for you,
my spirit will live for you alone.[m]
You will cure me and give me life,
17 my suffering will turn to health.

It is you who have kept my soul Ps 103:3-4
from the pit of nothingness,
you have thrust all my sins
behind your back.

18 For Sheol does not praise you, Est 4:17h; Ps 6:5+; 30:9; 88:10; 115:17; Si 17:27; Ba 2:17
Death does not extol you;

g. 'under the east wind. I know whenever you rise' DSIa, cf. 2 K; 'before the shoot (?)' Hebr.

38 a. Text completed, following 2 K 20:5.

b. 'Isaiah replied' added following 2 K 20:9.

c. This canticle, not found in the parallel narrative of 2 K, is alien to the present context. It appears to be a psalm of the post-exilic period. The state of the text is poor.

d. 'Canticle' corr.; 'A writing' Hebr.

e. 'the earth' corr., cf. Ps 49:1.

f. 'you roll up' corr.; 'he rolls up' Hebr.

g. 'I cry aloud' corr., cf. Targ.; 'I composed myself (?)' Hebr.

h. Hebr. adds 'a crane'.

i. 'turn' corr. Hebr. adds 'Lord'.

j. 'take care' versions; 'Lord, I amin distress' Hebr.

k. 'Of what can I speak to him' DSIa and Targ.; 'he will speak to me' Hebr.

l. 'I will give glory to you' Greek; 'I will walk' Hebr.

m. Verse corr. following Greek. Hebr. unintelligible.

those who go down to the pit do not go on trusting
in your faithfulness.

Ps 118:17; 119:175 The living, the living are the ones who praise you, 19
as I do today.
Dt 4:9 Fathers tell their sons
about your faithfulness.

Yahweh, come to my help 20
and we will make our harps resound
all the days of our life
in front of the Temple of Yahweh.[n]

‖2 K 20:12-19 **The Babylonian embassy**

‖2 Ch 32:26 39 At that time, the king of Babylon, Merodach-baladan son of Baladan, sent 1
letters and a gift to Hezekiah, for he had heard of his illness and recovery.
‖2 Ch 32:27 Hezekiah was delighted at this and showed the messengers his treasure-house, 2
the silver, gold, spices, precious oil, his armoury too, and everything there was
in his storehouses. There was nothing Hezekiah did not show them in his palace
or in his whole domain.

Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked him, 'What have 3
these men said, and where have they come from?' Hezekiah answered, 'They
have come from a faraway country, from Babylon'. •Isaiah said, 'What have 4
they seen in your palace?' 'They have seen everything in my palace' Hezekiah
answered. 'There is nothing in my storehouses that I have not shown them.'

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Listen to the word of Yahweh Sabaoth, •"The 5 6
days are coming when everything in your palace, everything that your ancestors
Ps 62:9 have amassed until now, will be carried off to Babylon. Not a thing will be left"
says Yahweh. •"Sons sprung from you, sons begotten by you, will be chosen 7
to be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."' •Hezekiah said to Isaiah, 8
'This word of Yahweh that you announce is reassuring', for he was thinking,
'There is going to be peace and security during my own lifetime.'

II. THE BOOK OF THE CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL[a]

The calling of the prophet[b]

49:13; 52:7-12 Ba 4:27 Lk 2:25 40 'Console my people, console them' 1
says your God.
'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem 2
and call to her
Lm 4:22 Zp 3:15 that her time of service is ended,
that her sin is atoned for,
that she has received from the hand of Yahweh
double punishment for all her crimes.'

35:8; 49:11 Si 48:10 Jr 31:9,21 Ba 5:7 Ml 3:1,23-24 ↗Mt 3:3p ↗Mk 1:3 ↗Lk 3:4-6 ↗Jn 1:23 A voice[c] cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness 3
a way for Yahweh.
Make a straight highway for our God
across the desert.[d]
Let every valley be filled in, 4
45:2 Ezk 21:31 ↗Lk 3:4-6 every mountain and hill be laid low,[e]
let every cliff become a plain,
and the ridges a valley;
11:9 58:8; 60:1 Ex 24:16+ then the glory of Yahweh shall be revealed 5
and all mankind shall see it;
1:20; 58:14 for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.'

6 A voice commands: 'Cry!'
and I answered,[f] 'What shall I cry?'[g]
—'All flesh is grass
and its beauty like the wild flower's.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades 51:2
when the breath of Yahweh blows on them. Jb 14:2
(The grass is without doubt the people.) Ps 37:2;39:6; 90:5
8 The grass withers, the flower fades, ↗Jm 1:10-11
but the word of our God remains for ever.' ↗1 P 1:24-25
Ps 119:89
Mt 24:35
Jn 1:1+
1 Jn 2:17

Prophecy of the theophany

9 Go up on a high mountain,[h]
joyful messenger to Zion.
Shout with a loud voice,
joyful messenger to Jerusalem.
Shout without fear,
say to the towns of Judah,
'Here is your God'.

10 Here is the Lord Yahweh comin with power,[i] 35:4
his arm subduing all things to him.
The prize of his victory is with him, =62:11
his trophies all go before him.
11 He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, Dt 32:11+
gathering lambs in his arms, Ezk 34:1+;16
holding them against his breast Lk 15:5
and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

The majesty of God

12 Who was it measured the water of the sea in the hollow of his hand 2 M 9:8
and calculated the dimensions of the heavens, Jb 28:23-27;38:4-5
gauged the whole earth[j] to the bushel, Pr 30:4
weighed the mountains in scales, Ws 11:20
the hills in a balance?

13 Who could have advised the spirit of Yahweh, Jb 15:8; 21:22; 36:22-26; 38:2-21
what counsellor could have instructed him? Pr 8:22-31
14 Whom has he consulted to enlighten him, Jr 23:18
and to learn the path of justice[k] ↗Rm 11:34
and discover the most skilful ways? ↗1 Co 2:16

n. Vv. 21-22 have been transposed; see between vv. 6 and 7.

40 a. See Introduction to the Prophets.

b. This opening poem plays the same part in the Book of Consolation as the narrative of the prophet's call plays in the other prophetic collections. In the author's usual mysterious manner it describes a divine manifestation. The 'voice' of Yahweh vv. 3 and 6, here takes the place of the theophany found in Is 6 and in Ezk 1-3, indicating a more developed consciousness of God's transcendence. This calling-poem sums up the message of the book: the 'consolation', v. 1, of Israel in Babylon with a prophecy of a return accomplished by the creative word of God.

c. The voice of Yahweh addressing the prophet. The evangelists quote this text in its LXX form: 'A voice of one who cries in the wilderness...'; for them this is the voice of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah.

d. The Exodus is to be repeated: Yahweh will lead his people back to Palestine. The wonders of the Exodus have already been recalled by Isaiah, 10:25-27, as an earnest of God's protection. The prophets of the Exile elaborate this theme. As of old, God will come to save his people, Jr 16:14-15; 31:2; Is 46:3-4 and 63:9 (repeating Ex 19:4). The miracles of the first Exodus, Mi 7:14-15, the crossing of the Red Sea, Is 11:15-16; 43:16-21; 51:10; 63:11-13, the water from the rock, 48:21, the bright cloud, 52:12, cf. 4:5-6, the desert march, 40:3f, cf. Ba 5:7-9, become both type and guarantee of the second, from Babylon to Jerusalem. On the theme of the Exodus see also Ho 2:16+.

e. Mountains symbolise the arrogance of the great; the reduction of these has already been foretold in Is 2:12-15 as a sign of the 'day of Yahweh'.

f. 'I answered' versions; 'he answers' Hebr.

g. With this dialogue between Yahweh and the prophet about his mission, compare Is 6:8-13; Jr 1:4-8; Ezk 2:3-7; Ex 3:1–4:17.

h. To make himself audible throughout the world.

i. 'with power' following versions.

j. Sea, sky, land: the three constituents of the world.

k. Hebr. adds 'and to teach knowledge', absent from Greek.

Si 10:16-17
Ps 2:4-5; 62:9
Ws 11:22
See, the nations are like a drop on the pail's rim, 15
they count as a grain of dust on the scales.
See, the islands weigh no more than fine powder.
Lebanon is not enough for the fires 16
nor its beasts for the holocaust.
Ps 62:9; 96:5
Dn 4:32
All the nations are as nothing in his presence, 17
for him they count as nothingness and emptiness.

Jr 10:6
Ac 17:29
Ws 13:10
To whom could you liken God? 18
What image could you contrive of him?

41:6-7; 44: 9-20
Ps 115:3-8
Jr 10:1-16; 51:15-19
A craftsman casts the figure, 19
a goldsmith plates it with gold
and casts[l] silver chains for it.
2 K 19:18
Ws 13:11-19
Si 30:19
Jr 16:20
Ba 6
Dn 5:23
Hab 2:19
For it a clever sculptor seeks 20c
precious palm wood, 20a
selects wood that will not decay 20b
to set up a sturdy image.[m] 20d

Did you not know, 21
had you not heard?
Was it not told you from the beginning?
Est 4:17c
Have you not understood how the earth was founded?
Dn 4:32
He lives above the circle of the earth, 22
its inhabitants look like grasshoppers.
44:24
Jb 9:8
Ps 104:2
He has stretched out the heavens like a cloth,
spread them like a tent for men to live in.
41:2
Jb 34:18-19
Ps 2:2-5
He reduces princes to nothing, 23
he annihilates the rulers of the world.
17:13-14
Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, 24
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
than he blows on them. Then they wither
and the storm carries them off like straw.

6:3+
41:14
'To whom could you liken me 25
and who could be my equal?' says the Holy One.[n]
Gn 15:5
Jb 22:12
Lift your eyes and look. 26
Who made these stars
1 S 1:3+
Rm 1:21
Ps 147:4
Ba 3:34-35
if not he who drills them like an army,
calling each one by name?
So mighty is his power, so great his strength,
that not one fails to answer.

The might of Providence

49:14-16
How can you say, Jacob, 27
how can you insist, Israel,
'My destiny is hidden from Yahweh,
my rights are ignored by my God'?
Did you not know? 28
Had you not heard?

Gn 21:33
Yahweh is an everlasting God,
he created the boundaries of the earth.
He does not grow tired or weary,
Ps 147:5
↗ Rm 11:34
35:3
1 S 2:4
Ps 138:3
2 Co 12:9
his understanding is beyond fathoming.
He gives strength to the wearied, 29
he strengthens the powerless.

30 Young men may grow tired and weary, Ps 20:8
youths may stumble,
31 but those who hope in Yahweh renew their strength, Ps 103:5
they put out wings like eagles. Rv 12:14
They run and do not grow weary, Ps 23:2
walk and never tire.

The calling of Cyrus[a] 45:1-8

1 41 Islands, keep silence before me, 49:1
let the people renew their strength.
Let them come foward and speak,
let us appear together for judgement.

2 'Who roused from the east 46:11
him that victory hails at every step?[b]
Who presents him with nations,
subdues kings to him? 40:23

'His sword makes dust of them
and his bow scatters them like straw.[c]
3 He pursues them and advances unhindered,
his feet scarcely touching the road.[d]

4 'Who is the author of this deed
if not he who calls[e] the generations from the beginning?
I, Yahweh, who am the first 44:6+
and shall be with the last.'[f] Dt 32:39
Rv 22:13

5 The islands see him and take fright,
the limits of the earth tremble:
they approach, they are here.

6 Men help one another, 40:19-20
they say to each other, 'Take heart!'
7 The craftsman encourages the goldsmith,
the man who beats out with the hammer encourages[g] the man who strikes the anvil.
Of the soldering he says, 'It is sound',
and fastens the idol with nails
to keep it steady.[h]

God is with Israel 43:1-7

8 You, Israel, my servant,[i] 29:22; 45:4
Dt 7:6+
2 Ch 20:7
Ps 136:22
Jr 30:10
✓ Jm 2:23

l. 'and casts' corr.

m. These seven lines are an interpolation, like 41:6-7 which are related. Polemic against pagan gods, cf. 41:21+; 42:8+, and allusions to the making of idols, cf. 42:17; 45:16,20; 46:5-7, are frequent in the second part of Is. The latter theme is developed in two short satirical passages (vv. 19-20 with 41:6-7, and 44:9-20) which seem to be later insertions, these passages are reminiscent of Jr 10:1-16.

n. The author of the Book of Consolation adopts this name used to describe God in the first part of Is, cf. 6:3+.

41 a. Cyrus, the future liberator of the people of Judah exiled in Babylon, plays a prominent part in the Book of Consolation. Yahweh establishes him, not to punish (like a Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar), but to set free. An ancient Jewish tradition applied this passage to the call of Abraham. St Jerome (who in v. 2 translates 'who has aroused the Just One from the East') applied it to the Messiah, who would once for all bring deliverance. Cyrus who is later called 'the anointed of Yahweh', 45:1+, is in any case a foreshadowing of the Messiah.

b. The Hebr. word here rendered 'victory' (as in other passages of the Book of Consolation) is usually translated 'righteousness', 'integrity', 'justice'. In the present context it suggests a victory associated with the restoration of the world order willed by God. DSIa and versions have 'Who has aroused victory (Vulg.: the Just One) from the East and has hailed it...'

c. 'makes dust of them', 'scatters them' corr.

d. Image of the speed with which Cyrus sweeps to victory.

e. By his creative word, cf. Gn 1.

f. I.e. Yahweh is eternal.

g. 'encourages' corr.

h. Vv. 6-7 are an interpolation belonging to 40:19-20.

i. The second part of Is frequently represents the covenant by the image of a 'servant' whom God has chosen and set aside (from the surrounding peoples

Jacob whom I have chosen,
descendant of Abraham my friend.

9 You whom I brought from the confines of the earth
and called from the ends of the world;
you to whom I said, 'You are my servant,
I have chosen you, not rejected you',

8:10+ Est 4:17b
10 do not be afraid, for I am with you;
stop being anxious and watchful, for I am your God.
I give you strength, I bring you help,
I uphold you with my victorious right hand.

45:24
11 Yes, all those who raged against you,
shall be put to shame and confusion;
they who fought against you
shall be destroyed, and perish.

12 You will seek but never find them,
those enemies of yours.
They shall be destroyed and brought to nothing,
those who made war on you.

13 For I, Yahweh, your God,
I am holding you by the right hand;
I tell you, 'Do not be afraid,
I will help you'.

14 Do not be afraid, Jacob, poor worm,
Israel, puny mite.[j]
I will help you—it is Yahweh who speaks—
6:3+; 40:25; 43:1; 49:7, 26; 63:16
the Holy One of Israel is your redeemer.[k]

28:27
15 See, I turn you into a threshing-sled,
new, with doubled teeth;
you shall thresh and crush the mountains,
and turn the hills to chaff.

Mt 3:12
16 You shall winnow them and the wind will blow them away,
the gale will scatter them.
But you yourself will rejoice in Yahweh,
and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

Miracles of the new Exodus[l]

17 The poor and needy ask for water, and there is none,
their tongue is parched with thirst.
Zc 10:6
I, Yahweh, will answer them,
I, the God of Israel, will not abandon them.

35:6-7; 43:20; 48:21
18 I will make rivers well up on barren heights,
and fountains in the midst of valleys;
Ps 107:35; 114:8
turn the wilderness into a lake,
and dry ground into waterspring.

35:1; 55:13 Ba 5:8
19 In the wilderness I will put cedar trees,
acacias, myrtles, olives.
In the desert I will plant juniper,
plane tree and cypress side by side;

20 so that men may see and know,
may all observe and understand
that the hand of Yahweh has done this,
that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Yahweh is the only God[m]

21 'Produce your defence', says Yahweh — 43:8-13; 44:6-11
'present your case' says Jacob's king.
22 'Let them come foward and tell us — 45:21
what is going to happen next.
What could they tell us of the past[n]
to make it worth our notice?
Or will you discourse to us of future things
and let us know their outcome?
23 Tell us what is to happen in the future,
and so convince us you are gods.
Do something at least[o]
so that we can note it and all see it.
24 No, you are nothing and your works are nothingness;[p] — 41:29
to choose you would be an outrage.'

Yahweh foretells victory for Cyrus

25 I roused him from the north to come,
from the rising sun I summoned him by name.[q]
He has trampled[r] the satraps like mortar,
like a potter treading clay.
26 Who predicted this from the beginning so we might know it, — 46:10
who foretold it long ago so we might say, 'It is right'?
No one predicted it,
no, no one proclaimed it,
no, no one heard you speak.
27 I had said in Zion beforehand, 'Here they come!'[s]
I had sent a bearer of good news to Jerusalem.
28 I looked, but there was no one,
there was not a single counsellor among them
who, if I asked, could give an answer.
29 Taken altogether they are nothing;[t] — 41:24
their works are nothingness,
their images wind and emptiness.

First song of the servant of Yahweh:[a] **part one** — Mt 12:18-21

1 42 Here is my servant[b] whom I uphold, — 11:1-10; 44:3; 61:1; Ps 89:21; Mt 3:16+; Lk 2:25; Jn 1:32-34
my chosen one in whom my soul delights.

of the Diaspora, v. 9) to be his witness before all nations, 43:10. This 'servant', Israel, has proved unfaithful, 42:19, but Yahweh will forgive and save, 44:1f; 45:8; 48:20. In the 'songs of the servant' the term has a different significance, cf. 42:1+.

j. Line corr.; 'men of Israel' Hebr.

k. The 'redeemer', *goel*, is primarily the avenger of blood, Nb 35:19+, also the one who pays off a man's debt and frees him from prison, the close relative whose duty it is to protect the widow, Rt 2:20+. The word is used of God as avenger and liberator of his people. In this sense it is frequent in Ps, Ps 19:14+, and in the second part of Is, 43:14; 44:6.24; 47:4; 48:17; 59:20; cf. Jr 50:34. Finally the N.T. and Christian theology apply it to Jesus who delivers from sin.

l. The new Exodus, cf. 40:3+, is more marvellous than the old. Yahweh gave water to his people in the wilderness; now the wilderness itself is watered and God's abounding favour makes it a new Eden. This symbolic fertility is characteristic of the messianic era, cf. Is 11:6+, of which the return from exile is itself a presage, cf. Ezk 47:1-12.

m. The early prophets, like the ancient laws, condemned the worship of foreign gods; they regard them as 'nothingness'. This monotheism finds expression, from the Exile onwards, in formal arguments against their existence; here the argument is from their helplessness to predict or influence world-events: Yahweh alone, vv. 25f, has foretold and effected the victory of Cyrus; cf. 44:7; 45:21; 48:5. Polemic against false gods, mere man-made idols, cf. 40:20+, later becomes a common theme of Jewish literature, cf. Ba 6:1-72.

n. 'come forward' versions, 'what could they tell' corr.; 'Let them tell' Hebr.

o. Lit. 'good or evil', a Hebraism.

p. 'nothing', cf. v. 29, 'nothingness' corr.

q. 'I summoned him by name' corr.; 'he summons me by my name' Hebr.

r. 'He has trampled' corr.

s. 'I had said: Here they come' text uncertain (lit. 'Here they are, here they are').

t. 'nothing' Targ.

42 a. The Book of Consolation often speaks of Israel as a 'servant of Yahweh', chosen, set apart, saved, to

I have endowed him with my spirit[c]
that he may bring true justice to the nations.

He does not cry out or shout aloud, 2
or make his voice heard in the streets.
Zc 11:16 2 Tm 2:24 He does not break the crushed reed, 3
nor quench the wavering flame.

Jn 8:45 Faithfully he brings true justice;
14:6 he will neither waver, nor be crushed[d] 4
until true justice is established on earth,
for the islands are awaiting his law.

Part two

Thus says God, Yahweh, 5
Jb 9:8 Ps 24:1-2 Zc 12:1 Ac 17:24 he who created the heavens and spread them out,
who gave shape to the earth and what comes from it,
who gave breath to its people
and life to the creatures that move in it:

I, Yahweh, have called you to serve the cause of right; 6
I have taken you by the hand and formed[e] you;
49:8 Lk 2:31-32 Jn 8:12+ I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations,

Jn 9 to open the eyes of the blind, 7
49:9 Jn 8:32 Ps 107:10 Lk 1:79 Ac 26:18 to free captives from prison,
and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

48:11 Dt 32:27.39 Ps 83:18 Jr 10:6; 16:20 Jl 2:27 My name is Yahweh,[f] 8
I will not yield my glory to another,
nor my honour to idols.

See how former predictions have come true. 9
Fresh things I now foretell;
48:5 before they appear I tell you of them.

Hymn of triumph[g]

Ps 96:1 Rv 5:9; 14:3 Sing a new hymn to Yahweh! 10
Let his praise resound from the ends of the earth,
let the sea and all that it holds sing his praises,[h]
the islands and those who inhabit them.

Let the desert and its cities raise their voice, 11
the camp where Kedar lives.
Let the inhabitants of Sela cry aloud
and shout from the mountain tops.
Let them give glory to Yahweh 12
and let the people of the islands voice his praise.

Nb 10:35 Jg 5:4 Zp 1:14 Yahweh advances like a hero, 13
his fury is stirred like a warrior's.
Ps 60:6 He gives the war shout, raises the hue and cry,
marches valiantly against his foes.

'From the beginning[i] I have been silent, 14
I have kept quiet, held myself in check.
I groan like a woman in labour,
I suffocate, I stifle.

15 'I will turn mountain and hill to desert, — 44:27; 50:2 Ps 107:33
wither all their greenery,
turn rivers to pools[j]
and dry up lakes.

16 'But I will make the blind[k] walk along the road[l] — 42:19+
and lead them along paths.
I will turn darkness into light before them — 50:10 Ps 107:14 Ac 26:18
and rocky places into level tracks.

'These things I will do,
and not leave them undone.'

17 All who trust in idols
shall withdraw in shame,
all those who say to images of cast metal,
'You are our gods'.

The blinding of the people[m] — 6:9-10

18 Listen, you deaf! — 43:8
Look and see, you blind!

19 Who so blind as my servant, — 41:8+; 42:16 Mt 13:9-15
so deaf as the messenger I send?
(Who so blind as my envoy,
so deaf as the servant of Yahweh?)

20 You have seen many things but not observed them;
your ears are open but you do not hear.

21 It is Yahweh's will, for the sake of his integrity,
to make his Law great and glorious.

22 But this is a people all pillaged and plundered,
trapped in caves,[n]
hidden in dungeons. — Ps 107:10

be God's witness before the nations, cf. 41:8+. But the four 'songs of the servant of Yahweh', 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13–53:12, present a mysterious 'servant' who in some ways is like the servant-Israel of the other passages (a gloss in 49:3 actually identifies him with Israel); in 49:5-6 however he is distinguished from this servant-Israel and contrasted with him by other qualities which show that this mysterious servant is a particular individual. Called by Yahweh while still in his mother's womb, 49:1,5 (cf. Jr 1:5) 'formed' by him, 42:6; 49:5, filled with his spirit, 42:1, the servant is a 'disciple' and Yahweh has opened his ears, 50:4-5, so that, by establishing justice on earth, 42:1,3, he may instruct mankind, 42:4; 50:4, sort them and judge them by his word, 50:10-11. He performs his task gently and without display, 42:2-3; even appears to fail in it, 49:4. He accepts outrage and contempt, 50:5-6; 52:14; 53:2-3; he does not succumb because Yahweh sustains him, 42:4; 49:5; 50:7,9. The fourth song, some details of which may have been inspired by the life of Jeremiah (cf. also Ps 22), considers the suffering of this servant: like Job he is innocent, 53:9, but treated as an evil-doer whom God has punished, 53:4,12, condemned to a shameful death, 53:8-9. In fact however all this is his own free offering for sinners whose guilt he takes on himself and for whom he intercedes, 53:4-5,8,11-12; and by a hitherto undreamed-of act of power, 52:15–53:1, from this atoning suffering Yahweh brings the salvation of all men, 53:6,10-12. Therefore the servant will grow great, 52:13; he 'will see a posterity', 53:10, and hordes of the redeemed will be his, 53:12. He will not only 'gather' Israel, 49:5-6, but he will be the light of the nations, 42:6; 49:6, cf. 50:10. The New Testament, cf. Mt 3:17+; Lk 4:17-21; Ac 3:13+; 8:32-33, sees Jesus as this servant; in his person the attributes of the King-Messiah, Son of David, 2 S 7:1+; Is 7:14+, are united with those of the suffering servant.

b. Yahweh is speaking. He designates and consecrates the servant.

c. The spirit of the prophets, cf. Is 11:2+, the outpouring of which is the clearest sign of the messianic age, Jl 3:1-5, cf. Ac 2:16-21.

d. 'nor be crushed' Greek and Targ.; 'he will not run.' Hebr. The servant is contrasted with the lamp-flame and the reed of v. 3.

e. In Hebr. the same word as in Gn 2:7 to describe Yahweh, 'modelling' the body of the first man.

f. The name revealed to Moses. Ex 3:14+, of the one who alone exists. There is no other God, cf. Is 40:25; 43:10-12; 44:6-8; 45:3,5-6,14-14,18,20-22; 46:5,7,9; 48:11; cf. 41:21-29. He is the creator of all things, 40:12f,21f,28. 42:5; 43:1; 44:24; 45:9-12, 48:13; 51:13; 54:5, eternal, 41:4; 44:6; 48:12, 'the God of the whole earth', 54:5. He 'yields his glory to no other', 42:8 and 48:11. The exultant monotheism of the Book of Consolation thus resumes the earlier theme of the 'jealousy' of Yahweh, Dt 4:4+; cf. Ex 20:3, reinforcing it with an explicit assertion of the transcendence of God.

g. Lyric celebrating the victory of Yahweh, in the manner of the hymns of the Psalter.

h. 'let the sea sing his praises' corr.; 'those who go down to the sea' Hebr.

i. Yahweh is speaking.

j. 'pools' corr.; 'islands' Hebr.

k. The Israelites whom Isaiah had stigmatised as 'blind', cf. 6:9-10. See also v. 19.

l. Hebr. adds 'which they do not know'. So also in the following line.

m. Isaiah was sent to blind the people, 6:9-10, cf. 48:4+; this oracle is now addressed to the blinded; vv. 21 and 24b may be interpolations.

n. 'trapped in caves' corr.; 'they trap young people' Hebr.

2

They are looted, with no one to rescue them,
robbed, with no one to say, 'Give it back!'
Which of you listening to this, 23
will pay attention and mark it, against the time to come?

Who handed Jacob over to the robber,° 24
Israel to the pillagers?
Was it not Yahweh? We had sinned against him,
we had refused to follow his ways
or obey his Law.

On him he poured out the blaze of his anger 25
and the furies of war.
9:17-18 Am 4:6+ It enveloped him in flames and he did not notice,
it burned him up, and he gave it no thought.

The liberation of Israel

44:2 43 But now, thus says Yahweh, 1
who created you, Jacob,
who formed you, Israel:

41:14+ Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you;
41:8 I have called you by your name, you are mine.
Ps 91; 107:30 Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you; 2
or through rivers, they will not swallow you up.
Ps 66:12 ↗1 Co 3:15 Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched
and the flames will not burn you.
For I am Yahweh, your God, 3
the Holy One of Israel, your saviour.

I give Egypt for your ransom,
1 K 10:1+ and exchange Cush and Seba for you.
Ps 116:15 Because you are precious in my eyes, 4
because you are honoured and I love you,
I give men in exchange for you,
peoples in return for your life.
8:10+ Rv 3:9 Do not be afraid, for I am with you. 5

I will bring your offspring from the east,
Dt 30:5 Ps 107:3 and gather you from the west.
To the north I will say, 'Give them up' 6
and to the south, 'Do not hold them'.
2 Co 6:18 Bring back my sons from far away,
my daughters from the end of the earth,
all those who bear my name, 7
whom I have created for my glory,
whom I have formed, whom I have made.

Yahweh alone is God

41:21-29; 42:18+; 44:6-11 Bring forward the people that is blind, yet has eyes, 8
that is deaf and yet has ears.
Let all the nations muster 9
and assemble with every race.
45:21 Which of them ever declared this
or foretold this in the past?
Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right,
let men hear them so that they may say, 'It is true'.
Ac 1:8+ You yourselves are my witnesses—it is Yahweh who speaks— 10

my servants[a] whom I have chosen,
that men may know[b] and believe me
and understand that it is I.
No god was formed before me,
nor will be after me.
11 I, I am Yahweh,
there is no other saviour but me.
12 It is I who have spoken, have saved, have made the proclamation,
not any strangers among you.
You are my witnesses—it is Yahweh who speaks—
13 and I, I am your God, •I am he from eternity.
No one can deliver from my hand,
I act and no one can reverse it.[c]

41:8+
Jn 15:16
Jn 8:24,28+
44:6+,7
Dt 4:35; 32:39
Ps 100:3
Dt 32:12
Ho 13:4
Ac 4:12
42:8+
Ps 100:3
Jn 10:29

Babylon will be destroyed

14 Thus says Yahweh,
your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:

For your sake I send an army against Babylon;
I will knock down the prison bars[d]
and the Chaldaeans will break into laments.[e]
15 I am Yahweh, your Holy One,
the creator of Israel, your king.

41:14+
6:3+
Lv 7:1+

Miracles of the new Exodus

16 Thus says Yahweh,
who made a way through the sea,
a path in the great waters;
17 who put chariots and horse in the field
and a powerful army,[f]
which lay there never to rise again,
snuffed out, put out like a wick:

40:3+
Ex 14:21-29
Ws 14:3
Hab 3:15

18 No need to recall the past,[g]
no need to think about what was done before.
19 See, I am doing a new deed,
even now it comes to light; can you not see it?
Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness,
paths[h] in the wilds.

↗2 Co 5:17
Rv 14:3; ↗21:5
35:8
Ps 107:7

20 The wild beasts will honour me,
jackals and ostriches,
because I am puting water in the wilderness[i]
(rivers in the wild)
to give my chosen people drink.
21 The people I have formed for myself
will sing my praises.

Ps 148:10
35:6-7; 41:18
Ex 17:1-7
1 P 2:9-10

The ingratitude of Israel[j]

22 Jacob, you have not invoked me,

o. Nebuchadnezzar or Nabonidus.

43 a. 'my servants' corr.; 'my servant' Hebr.
b. 'that men may know, etc.' corr.; 'that you may know, etc.' Hebr.
c. 'from eternity' versions; 'from this day' Hebr. Note the affinity of vv. 10-13 with the Law of Holiness, Lv 17:1+.
d. 'the prison bars' corr.
e. 'break into laments' corr.; 'on the ships their shouts of joy' Hebr.
f. The chariots, horses and army of Pharaoh, Ex 14:6f.
g. The miracles of the first Exodus, which will be surpassed by those of the second.
h. 'paths' DSIa; 'rivers' Text, Rec.
i. The Syrian desert which must be crossed by those returning from Babylon.
j. This oracle, in which Yahweh complains that Israel has failed to worship strictly, is in conflict with Is 1:11f, but pursues the teaching of the early prophets on God's free choice of Israel, cf. Dt 7:6+.

you have not troubled yourself,[k] Israel, on my behalf.
You have not brought me your sheep for holocausts, 23
nor honoured me with sacrifices.
I have never burdened you with oblations,
nor troubled you for incense.[l]
You have spent no money on fragrant cane[m] for me, 24
you have not filled me with the fat of your sacrifices.
Instead you have burdened me with your sins,
troubled me with your iniquities.
I it is, I it is, who must blot out everything[n] 25
and not remember your sins.

1:18 Cast your mind back,[o] let us judge this together; 26
Gn 27:36 Jr 9:3 Ho 12:4 state your own case and prove your innocence.
Your first father[p] sinned, 27
your mediators[q] have rebelled against me.
Your princes have profaned my sanctuary.[r] 28
So I have handed Jacob over to the ban,
and Israel to insults.

The blessing for Israel

41:8+ **44** But now listen, Jacob my servant, 1
Israel whom I have chosen. 2
43:1; 44:24 Ps 22:9 Thus says Yahweh who made you,
who formed you from the womb, who is your help:
Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant,
Dt 32:15; 33:5,26 Jeshurun[a] whom I have chosen.

55:13 For I will pour out water on the thirsty soil, 3
streams on the dry ground.
||2+; 42:1+ I will pour my spirit on your descendants,
my blessing on your children.
They shall grow like grass where there is plenty of water,[b] 4
like poplars by running streams.

Rv 7:3 One man will say, 'I belong to Yahweh', 5
another will call himself by Jacob's name.
On his hand[c] another will write 'Yahweh'
and be surnamed 'Israel'.[d]

Monotheism without compromise

41:4,14+. 21-29; 42: 8+; 43:8-13; 45:5; 48:12 Thus[e] says Israel's king 6
and his redeemer, Yahweh Sabaoth:
Rv 1:8,17; 21:6; 22:13 I am the first and the last;
there is no other God besides me.
43:10; 46:5 Dt 32:39 Dn 10:13+ Who is like me? Let him stand up and speak, 7
Jdt 9:5 let him show himself and argue it out before me.
Who from the very beginning foretold the future?
Let them tell us what is yet to come.[f]
Have no fear, do not be afraid: 8
45:21 have I not told you and revealed it long ago?
17:10 Dt 32:4 Ps 18:32 You are my witnesses, is there any other God besides me?
There is no Rock; I know of none.

Jr 2:27-28; 10:1-16 **A satire on idolatry**[g]

40:19 Ps 115:4 They are all makers of idols; they are nothing and the works they prize are 9
useless. Their servants[h] see nothing, they understand nothing, and so they will

10 be put to shame. •Who ever fashioned a god or cast an image without hope of
11 gain? •Watch how its devotees will be put to shame, how its sculptors will blush.[i] Let them all come together, let them appear in court. They will be both terrified and ashamed.

12 The blacksmith[j] works on it over the fire and beats it into shape with a hammer. He works on it with his strong arm till he is hungry and tired; drinking no water, he is exhausted.[k]

13 The wood carver takes his measurements, outlines the image with chalk, carves it with chisels, following the outline with dividers. He shapes it to human
14 proportions, and gives it a human face, for it to live in a temple. •He cut down a cedar, or else took a cypress or an oak which he selected from the trees in the
15 forest, or maybe he planted a cedar and the rain made it grow. •For the common man it is so much fuel; he uses it to warm himself, he also burns it to bake his Ws 13:11-19 bread. But this fellow makes a god of it and worships it; he makes an idol of it
16 and bows down before it. •Half of it he burns in the fire, on the live embers[l] he roasts meat, eats it and is replete. He warms himself too. 'Ah!' says he 'I am
17 warm; I have a fire here!' •With the rest he makes his god, his idol; he bows down before it and worships it and prays to it. 'Save me,' he says 'because you Ws 13:17 are my god.'

18 They know nothing, understand nothing. Their eyes are shut to all seeing,
19 their heart to all reason. •They never think, they lack the knowledge and wit to say, 'I burned half of it on the fire, I baked bread on the live embers, I roasted meat and ate it, and am I to make some abomination of what remains? Am I to bow down before a block of wood?'

20 A man who hankers after ashes[m] has a deluded heart and is led astray. He Ws 15:10 will never free his soul, or say, 'What I have in my hand is nothing but a lie!'

Oracle

21 Remember these things,[n] Jacob, 46:8
and that you are my servant, Israel. 41:8+
I have formed you, you are my servant;
Israel, I will not forget you. 49:14-16 Ps 136:22

22 I have dispelled your faults like a cloud,
your sins like a mist.
Come back to me, for I have redeemed you.

Song of joy

23 Shout for joy, you heavens, for Yahweh has been at work! Ps 65:13; 148:9
Shout aloud, you earth below! Rv 18:20

k. With Greek and Lat.; Hebr. 'you have troubled yourself'.

l. The Law did indeed impose these duties but the latter did not constitute the essential part of religion. The ancient legislative texts, the Code of the Covenant and Dt, lay no great emphasis on ritual, while the prophets give justice and charity pride of place.

m. An aromatic reed used in Eastern religious observances.

n. 'blot out everything' following some MSS and Vulg.; 'blot out your sins for my own sake' Hebr.

o. 'Cast your mind back' corr.; 'Remind me' Hebr.

p. Jacob. Alluding to Gn 27:1-29 and possibly Gn 30:25-43; 32:2-23.

q. The prophets, intermediaries between the nation and God.

r. Following Greek. Hebr. 'I profaned the princes of the sanctuary'.

44 a. This name for Israel, of uncertain meaning, appears only here and in Dt 32 and 33. The versions substitute 'Israel' here.

b. 'like grass where there is plenty of water' Greek and Syr.

c. As the devotees of some religions tattooed the name of their god on their skin. Cf. Rv 13:16.

d. 'call himself' Symmachus. 'be surnamed' Targ. and Syr.

e. Hebr. inserts 'Yahweh', absent from Greek.

f. These two lines corr. Hebr. 'since my establishing of an eternal people, and things to come have been revealed to them'.

g. This prose passage is apparently an interpolation.

h. 'servants' corr.; 'witnesses' Hebr.

i. 'will blush' corr.; 'are men' Hebr.

j. Hebr. adds 'an axe'.

k. Referring perhaps to a fast observed by the craftsman while making the idol.

l. 'on the live embers' Greek and Syr.

m. Ashes, like dust, symbolise impermanent things.

n. I.e. the futility of idols, if this oracle belongs to the foregoing. If it is independent, it refers to the election of Israel.

Shout for joy, you mountains,
and you, forest and all your trees!
For Yahweh has redeemed Jacob
and displayed his glory in Israel.

The might of Yahweh

Thus says Yahweh, your redeemer, 24
44:2 Ps 22:9 he who formed you in the womb:
I, myself, Yahweh, made all things,
40:22 I alone spread out the heavens.
When I gave the earth shape, did anyone help me?

I am he who foils the omens of wizards[o] 25
1 Co 1:20 and makes fools of diviners,
who makes sages recant
and shows the nonsense of their knowledge,
who confirms the word of my servant 26
and makes the plans of my envoys succeed.

Tb 13:10 I am he who says of Jerusalem, 'Let her be inhabited',
Ps 69:35 of the towns of Judah, 'Let them be rebuilt',
and I will raise their ruins once more.
Ps 66:6 I am he who says to the ocean, 'Be dry. 27
42:15 I will dry up your rivers.'

Ac 13:22 I am he who says of Cyrus, 'My shepherd— 28
he will fulfil my whole purpose,
Tb 13:10 saying[p] of Jerusalem, "Let her be rebuilt",
and of the Temple, "Let your foundation be laid" '.

44:1-5 **Oracle in favour of Cyrus**[a]

Ezr 1:2 45 Thus says Yahweh to his anointed, to Cyrus, 1
whom he has taken by his right hand
to subdue nations before him
and strip the loins of kings,[b]
to force gateways before him
that their gates be closed no more:

40:4 I will go before you 2
levelling the heights.
I will shatter the bronze gateways,
Ps 107:16 smash the iron bars.
Col 2:3 I will give you the hidden treasures, 3
the secret hoards,
that you may know that I am Yahweh,
the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.

41:8+ 105:6 It is for the sake of my servant Jacob, 4
of Israel my chosen one,
that I have called you by your name,
Ps 68:31 conferring a title though you do not know me.
44:6+ 2 S 7:22 I am Yahweh, unrivalled; 5
1 S 5:3 there is no other God besides me.
Though you do not know me, I arm you
that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun 6
Dt 32:21 that, apart from me, all is nothing.

Oracle of salvation[c]

I am Yahweh, unrivalled,
Am 3:6; 4:13 I form the light and create the dark. 7

I make good fortune and create calamity,
it is I, Yahweh, who do all this. Jb 1:21 Si 11:14 Lm 3:38

8 Send victory[d] like a dew, you heavens, Dt 32:2 Ps 72:3,6; 85:10-11
and let the clouds rain it down.
Let the earth open
for salvation to spring up. 51:5; 56:1; 61:11
Let deliverance, too, bud forth[e]
which I, Yahweh, shall create.

The supreme power of Yahweh

9 Can it argue[f] with the man who fashioned it, 10:15; 29:16+ Rm 9:21
one vessel among earthen vessels?
Does the clay say to its fashioner,[g] 'What are you making?', Dn 4:32
does the thing he shaped say, 'You have no skill'?
10 Woe to him who says to a father, 'What have you begotten?'
or to a woman, 'To what have you given birth?'

11 Thus says Yahweh,
the Holy One, he who fashions Israel:
Is it for you to question me about my children
and to dictate to me what my hands should do?
12 I it was who made the earth, 46:11
and created man who is on it.
I it was who spread out the heavens with my hands
and now give orders to their whole array.
13 I it was who roused him[h] to victory,
I levelled the way for him.
He will rebuild my city,
will bring my exiles back
without ransom or indemnity,
so says Yahweh Sabaoth.

The heathen will rally to Yahweh[i]

14 Thus says Yahweh:
The peasants of Egypt and the traders of Cush,[j]
and the tall men of Seba, 1 K 10:1+
will submit to you and be yours;
they will follow you in chains.
They will bow down before you,
they will pray to you:
'With you alone is God, and he has no rival;
there is no other god'. Ws 16:7 Si 36:4

o. 'wizards' corr.; 'babblers' Hebr.

p. Or, following the versions 'I it is who say'.

45 a. This oracle resumes the theme of the call of Cyrus, cf. 41:1-5. It goes further, however, calling Cyrus 'the anointed of Yahweh', a title originally reserved to the king of Israel, 1 S 9:26+, and later becoming a messianic title ('anointed' is the English equivalent of *mashiah*, 'Messiah', in the Greek *christos*). Cyrus is 'summoned by name', vv. 3 and 4, by Yahweh who is unknown to him, vv. 4 and 5, with the same call, a creative force, received by the prophets and kings.

b. They are rendered powerless; the weapons fall from their belts.

c. The first two verses of this oracle may belong to the foregoing poem.

d. The Hebrew word *sedeq* here rendered 'victory' is usually translated 'integrity', 'righteousness', 'justice' (Vulg. 'the Just One'); so also *sedaqah*, 'deliverance', at the end of the verse. The Vulg. translation, which individualises the messianic hope in v. 8, is used in the *Rorate coeli* of the Advent liturgy.

e. The first part of Is has already compared the messianic prince with a branch from the Davidic stock, 6:13; 11:1. 'Branch' is a messianic title in Jr 23:5; 33:15; Zc 3:8; 6:12, and cf. the earlier text, Is 4:2+.

f. 'Can it argue' corr.; 'Woe to him who argues' Hebr.

g. As Yahweh 'fashioned' or 'modelled' the body of Adam, Gn 2:7.

h. Cyrus.

i. This world-view, foreseeing a future gathering of the nations round Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel, is already found in Is 2:2-4 (= Mi 4:1-3); Jr 12:15-16; 16:19-21; Zp 3:9-10. It is one of the key ideas of the Book of Consolation, Is 42:1-4,6; 45:14-16,20-25; 49:6; 55:3-5; cf. 60. It reappears after the Exile, cf. Zc 2:15; 8:20-23; 14:9,16. See also Ps 87 and Jon.

j. 'The peasants... and the traders' corr., cf. Syr.

Jr 3:17
1 Co 14:25
Rv 3:9

Truly, God is hidden with you,[k] 15
the God of Israel, the saviour.
Those who opposed[l] you will be disgraced and humiliated; 16
the makers of idols will go away confounded.

Ps 62:7
Ws 19:22

Israel will be saved by Yahweh, 17
saved everlastingly.
You will never be disgraced or humiliated
for ever and ever.

Evidence of the work of Yahweh[m]

Yes, thus says Yahweh, 18
creator of the heavens,
who is God,
who formed the earth and made it,
who set it firm,
created it no chaos,
but a place to be lived in:

'I am Yahweh, unrivalled,

48:16
Dt 30:11-14
Jn 18:20
Ac 26:26

I have not spoken in secret 19
in some corner of a darkened land.
I have not said to Jacob's descendants,
"Seek me in chaos".[n]
I, Yahweh, speak with directness
I express myself with clarity.'

Yahweh is the God of all[o]

Assemble, come, gather together, 20
survivors of the nations.

1 S 5:3

They are ignorant, those who carry about
their idol of wood,
those who pray to a god
that cannot save.
Speak up, present your case, 21
consult with each other.

41:22; 43:
9-12; 46:
10; 48:5

'Who foretold this
and revealed it in the past?[p]

Ps 18:31

Am I not Yahweh?

Is 44:8

There is no other god besides me,
a God of integrity and a saviour;
there is none apart from me.
Turn to me and be saved, 22

Ps 22:27
Zc 2:15

all the ends of the earth,
for I am God unrivalled.

'By my own self I swear it; 23
what comes from my mouth is truth,
a word irrevocable:

↗Rm 14:11
Ph 2:10-11

before me every knee shall bend,
by me every tongue shall swear,
saying,[q] "From Yahweh alone 24
come victory and strength".

41:11

To him shall come, ashamed,
all who raged against him.

Ws 19:22

Victorious and glorious through Yahweh shall be 2
all the descendants of Israel.' 5

The fall of Bel[a]

1 46 Bel is crouching. Nebo cringing.[b] Jr 46:15; 50:2
Their idols are being loaded on animals, on beasts of burden,
carried off like bundles[c] on weary beasts.
2 They are cringing and crouching together,
powerless to save the ones who carry them,[d]
as they themselves go off into captivity.

3 'Listen to me, House of Jacob,
all you who remain of the House of Israel,
you who have been carried since birth, 63:9
whom I have carried since the time you were born. Ex 19:4; Ps 22:10; 68:19; 71:17

4 'In your old age I shall be still the same,
when your hair is grey I shall still support you.
I have already done so, I have carried you,
I shall still support and deliver you.'

Yahweh is without equal

5 To whom can you compare me, equate me, 44:7
to whom claim I am similar, or comparable?
6 These prodigals weigh out gold from their purses 40:20+
and silver on the scales.
They engage a goldsmith to make a god
then worship and prostrate themselves before it.
7 They lift it on their shoulders and carry it, Ba 6:25
and put it where it is meant to stand. Ws 13:15
It never moves from the spot.
You may invoke it, it never replies,
It never saves anyone in trouble.

Yahweh is lord of the future

8 Remember this[e] and be dismayed,[f] 44:21
stir your memories again, you sinners,
9 remember things long past.
I am God unrivalled Jdt 9:6
God who has no like.
10 From the beginning I foretold the future, 41:26-27; 45:21+
and predicted beforehand what is to be.

I say: My purpose shall last; Ps 33:11
I will do whatever I choose. Ep 1:11
11 I call a bird of prey[g] from the east, 41:2,5; 45:13
my man of destiny from a far country.
No sooner is it said than done,
no sooner planned than performed.
12 Listen to me, faint hearts,[h]

k. 'God is hidden with you' corr.; 'you are a hidden God' Hebr.
l. 'Those who opposed' following Greek.
m. Though Yahweh does not intervene visibly on behalf of his people during the Exile as in the past, he nonetheless remains the creator of a universe that manifests him to all men.
n. The universe as it was before God imposed order on it, Gn 1:2.
o. The wide sweep of the messianic hope, 45:14+, has never before been more clearly expressed than in this oracle.
p. Yahweh alone foresees and foretells; the argument is used several times in the Book of Consolation, cf. 41:21+.
q. 'saying' versions.

46 a. The Babylonians, defeated by Cyrus, flee, carrying their gods; for Israel the reverse is true, Yahweh the saviour 'carries' Israel.
b. Bel is the sky-god of the Assyro-Babylonian pantheon. Nebo (or Nabu) is the Babylonian god of scribes and wisdom.
c. 'carried off like bundles' corr.
d. 'who carry them' following Syr.
e. The whole past history of Israel.
f. 'be dismayed' following Syr.
g. Cyrus.
h. 'faint hearts' corr. following Greek.

who feel far from victory.
56:1 Lk 2:30 I bring my victory near, already it is close, 13
my salvation will not be late.
I will give salvation to Zion,
my glory shall be for Israel.

13+; 21:1 Ps 137:8 **Lament for Babylon**[a]

47 Down with you! Sit in the dust, 1
virgin, daughter of Babylon.[b]
Sit on the ground, dethroned,
daughter of the Chaldaeans.
Never again will you be called
tender and delicate.
Take the millstones, grind the meal.[c] 2
Remove your veil,
tie up your skirt, uncover your legs.
Wade through rivers.
Jr 13:22 Lm 1:8 Ho 2:5 Let your nakedness be seen, 3
and your shame exposed.
I am going to take vengeance
and no one can stop me.[d]

41:14+ Our redeemer, Yahweh Sabaoth his name, 4
the Holy One of Israel, says:[e]
Sit in silence and creep into shadows, 5
daughter of the Chaldaeans,
for you will no longer be called
sovereign lady of the kingdoms.

10:6 Zc 1:15 I was angry with my people, 6
I had profaned my heritage.
I had surrendered it into your hands,
but you showed them no mercy.
On the aged you laid
your crushing yoke.
You said, 'For ever 7
I shall be sovereign lady'.[f]
Dt 32:28-29 You never took these things to heart
or pondered on their outcome.

So listen now, voluptuous woman, 8
lolling at ease
and saying to yourself,
||Zp 2:15 ✗Rv 18:7-8 'I, and none besides me.[g]
I shall never be widowed,
never know loss of children.'
Yet both these things shall happen to you 9
both suddenly and on the same day.
Loss of children, widowhood, at once
will come to you;
✗Rv 18:23 in spite of all your witchcraft
and the power of all your spells.

You were bold in your wickedness and said, 10
'There is no one to see me'.
That wisdom and knowledge of yours
led you astray.
You said to yourself,

'I, and none besides me'.
11 A calamity shall fall on you — Ps 35:
which you will not be able to charm away,[h]
a disaster shall overtake you
which you will not be able to avert,
unforeseen ruin
will suddenly descend on you.

12 Keep to your spells then,
and all your sorceries,
for which you have worn yourself out since your youth.
Do you think they will help you?
Do you think they will make anyone nervous?
13 You have spent weary hours with your many advisers.[i]
Let them come forward now
and save you, these who analyse the heavens,
who study the stars
and announce month by month
what will happen to you next.

14 Oh, they will be like wisps of straw
and the fire will burn them.
They will not save their lives
from the power of the flame.
No embers these, for baking,
no fireside to sit by.
15 This is what your wizards will be for you,
those men for whom you have worn yourself out since your youth.
They will all go off, each his own way,
powerless to save you.

Yahweh acts alone and is sole master of the future

1 48 Listen to this, House of Jacob,
you who bear the name of Israel, — Rm 2:17
and have sprung from the seed of Judah;
you who swear by the name of Yahweh — Jr 5:2
and invoke the God of Israel
though not in good faith or uprightness— — Am 5:21+
2 calling yourselves after the holy city
and bolstering yourselves on the God of Israel,
whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth.

3 Things now past I once revealed long ago,
they went out from my mouth and I proclaimed them;
then suddenly I acted and they happened.
4 For I knew you to be obstinate,
your neck an iron bar, — Ex 32:9+ Zc 7:11
your forehead bronze.[a]

47 a. The poem is a *qinah*, or lament with uneven lines, cf. 1:21+; there are six strophes, each of six verses (with glosses, vv. 4 and 7b, and one incomplete verse, v. 12).
b. The personified city.
c. Slaves' work.
d. 'can stop me' corr. following Greek.
e. 'says' added with Greek.
f. Hebr. adds 'of eternity', absent from Greek.
g. Babylon in its folly has aspired to rival Yahweh himself, cf. 42:8+.

h. 'which you will not be able to charm away' corr., cf. Targ.; 'whose rising you will not know' Hebr.
i. 'many advisers' corr.; 'advice' Hebr.

48 a. The hardening of Israel is a familiar theme of the prophets and the historical books. Israel has 'stiffened his neck', Ex 32:9; Dt 9:13+; 2 K 17:14; Jr 7:26+, has made himself blind and deaf, Is 6:9-10+; 42:19-20; 43:8, by refusing to serve God, by breaking the yoke of his Law, Jr 2:20; 5:5; his punishment is to bend his neck to the yoke of a foreign nation, Dt 28:48; cf. Jr 27:8,11; 28; 30:8; Is 9:3; 10:27. But Yahweh, true to himself, has not rejected his people, vv. 9-11, and the light of his salvation will pierce the eyes of the blind who had rebelled, 42:7,16,18; 43:8f.

42:9; 45:21 And so I revealed things beforehand, 5
before they happened I announced them to you,
so that you could not say, 'My idol was the one that performed them,
it was my carved image, my image of cast metal, that decreed them'.
You have heard and seen all this, 6
will you not admit it?

Now I am revealing new things to you,
things hidden and unknown[b] to you,
created just now, this very moment, 7
of these things you have heard nothing until now[c],
so that you cannot say, 'Oh yes, I knew all this'.

You had never heard, 8
you did not know,
I had not opened your ear beforehand;
for I knew how treacherous you were,
1:2+ and that you have deserved the name of rebel from your birth.

Ps 78:38 For the sake of my name I deferred my anger, 9
for the sake of my honour I curbed it; I did not destroy you.
1:25 And now I have put you in the fire like silver,[d] 10
Ps 66:10 Zc 13:9 I have tested you in the furnace of distress.
Dt 32:27 Ezk 36:22 For my sake and my sake only have I acted— 11
is my name[e] to be profaned?
42:8 Never will I yield my glory to another.

Cyrus is the beloved of Yahweh

Listen to me, Jacob, 12
Israel whom I have called:
44:6+ Rv 1:17; 2:8 I am the first,
I am also the last.
My hand laid the foundations of earth 13
and my right hand spread out the heavens.
Ps 33:9 Rm 4:17 I summon them
and they all come forward together.
Assemble, all of you, and listen; 14
which of them[f] has foretold this?
'My beloved[g] will perform my pleasure[h]
with Babylon and the offspring of the Chaldaeans.'
I, yes I myself, have spoken and summoned him, 15
brought him and prospered[i] his plans.
Come near and listen to this: 16
45:19 Jn 18:20 from the beginning I have never spoken to you obscurely,
and all the time these things have been happening, I have been present.
—And now the Lord Yahweh, with his spirit,
sends me.[j]

What Yahweh had intended for Israel[k]

41:14+ Thus says Yahweh, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: 17
I, Yahweh, your God, teach you what is good for you,
I lead you in the way that you must go.
Ps 81:13 Ba 3:13 If only you had been alert to my commandments, 18
your happiness would have been like a river,
your integrity like the waves of the sea.
Gn 15:5; 22:17 Your children would have been numbered like the sand, 19
your descendants as many as its grains.
Never would your name[l] have been cut off or blotted out before me.

A song of departure from Babylon

20 Go away from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldaeans! — Jr 50:8; 51:6, 45
Declare this with cries of joy and proclaim it, — Zc 2:10
send it out to the ends of the earth. — Rv 18:4
Say, 'Yahweh has redeemed his servant Jacob'. — 41:8+

21 Those he led through the deserts never went thirsty; — 35:6; 40:3+; 41:18
he made water spring for them from the rock, — Ps 78:15-16
he split the rock and water flowed. — *Ex 17:1-7*

22 There is no happiness, says Yahweh, for the wicked.[m] — 57:21

Second song of the servant of Yahweh[a] — 42:1+

1 **49** Islands, listen to me, — 41:1
pay attention, remotest peoples.
Yahweh called me before I was born, — Ps 2:7 Jr 1:5
from my mother's womb he pronounced my name. — Ga 1:15

2 He made my mouth a sharp sword, — Heb 4:12 Rv 1:16; 19:15
and hid me in the shadow of his hand.
He made me into a sharpened arrow, — Dt 32:34,41
and concealed me in his quiver.

3 He said to me, 'You are my servant (Israel)[b] — ↗ Mt 3:17+ 2 Th 1:10
in whom I shall be glorified';

4 while I was thinking, 'I have toiled in vain, — 53:10-12
I have exhausted myself for nothing';

and all the while my cause was with Yahweh, — Jn 17:5 Ph 2:8-11
my reward with my God.

5b I was honoured in the eyes of Yahweh,
my God was my strength.

5a And now Yahweh has spoken,
he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, — Jr 1:5
to bring Jacob back to him,
to gather Israel to him:[c]

6 'It is not enough for you to be my servant,
to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel;
I will make you the light of the nations — Tb 13:11 Ps 2:8
so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth'. — ↗ Lk 2:32 ↗ Ac 13:47

The marvellous epic of the return

7 Thus says Yahweh,
the redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, — 41:14+
to him whose life is despised, whom the nations loathe,[d]
to the slave of despots:
Kings will stand up when they see you, — 60:10
and princes will bow,

b. This is the message of deliverance of the Book of Consolation.
c. 'until now' with Greek and Lat.
d. 'like silver' corr.; 'not with silver' Hebr. 'I have tested' corr.; 'chosen' Hebr.
e. 'my name' with Greek and Lat.
f. The false gods, cf. 41:21+.
g. Cyrus.
h. With DSIa, cf. Greek; 'Yahweh is his beloved, he will do what he pleases' Hebr.
i. 'prospered' versions; 'he has prospered' Hebr.
j. As the text stands, this is the reply of Cyrus.
k. A mournful reminder of what God had in mind for a faithful Israel. The promises are those made by Yahweh to Abraham, Gn 13:16; 17:6f; 22:17, and echoed throughout the Bible, especially in Dt and by the prophets, cf. 1 K 4:20; Ho 2:1.
l. 'your name' following Greek.
m. This verse may be a gloss.

49 a. Some reckon v. 7 or 7-9a as part of this song.
b. This identification of the servant, hard to reconcile with vv. 5,6, cf. 42:1+, is probably a gloss suggested by 44:21.
c. 'gather to him' following some MSS and Syr.
d. Line corr., cf. DSIa.

for the sake of Yahweh who has been faithful,
the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you.

Thus says Yahweh: 8
Ps 69:13 ↗2 Co 6:2 At the favourable time I will answer you,
on the day of salvation I will help you.
=42:6 (I have formed you and have appointed you
as covenant of the people.)
I will restore the land
and assign you the estates that lie waste.
42:7 Ps 107:14; 146:7 I will say to the prisoners, 'Come out', 9
to those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves'.

Jn 10:9 On every roadway they will graze,
and each bare height shall be[e] their pasture.
Ps 107:5,8,9 ↗Rv 7:16 They will never hunger or thirst, 10
4:5-6; 25:4-5 Ps 121:6 scorching wind and sun shall never plague them;
for he who pities them will lead them
Jn 4:1+ and guide them to springs of water.
I will make a highway of all the mountains,[f] 11
40:3-4 and the high roads shall be banked up.

Some are on their way from afar, 12
Ps 107:3 others from the north and the west,
others from the land of Sinim.[g]
Shout for joy, you heavens; exult, you earth! 13
You mountains, break into happy cries!
40:1 For Yahweh consoles his people
and takes pity on those who are afflicted.

40: 27; 54:6, 8+ Ps 22:1; 77:9 Jr 31:20 For Zion was saying, 'Yahweh has abandoned me, 14
the Lord has forgotten me'.
Ho 11:8-9 63:15 Ps 27:10 Does a woman forget her baby at the breast, 15
or fail to cherish the son of her womb?
Yet even if these forget,
44:21 I will never[h] forget you.

See, I have branded you on the palms of my hands, 16
60: 0 Your ramparts are always under my eye.
Your rebuilders[i] make haste, 17
and your destroyers and despoilers depart.

Look round about you, look, 18
60:4 Rm 14:11 all are assembling, coming to you.
By my life—it is Yahweh who speaks—
you will wear these as your jewels,
they will adorn you as brides are adorned;
Zc 2:8 for your desolate places and your ruins 19
and your devastated country
will now be too small for all your inhabitants,
now that your devourers are far away.
Once more they will speak in your hearing, 20
those sons you thought were lost,
54:1-3 'This place is too small for me,
give me more space to live in'.
You will then say in your heart, 21
65:23 Ps 107:38 Jr 31:27 Zc 2:8 'Who has borne me these?
I was childless and barren,[f]
who has brought these up?

I was left all alone,
and now, where do these come from?'
22 Thus speaks the Lord Yahweh:
I beckon to the nations
and hoist my signal for the peoples.[k] 62:10
They will bring back your sons in the cloak,[l] 60:4,9 Ba 5:6
they will take your daughters on their shoulders.
23 Kings will be your fosterfathers, 60:16
their queens your nursing mothers.
They will fall prostrate before you, faces to the ground, 60:14 Ps 72:10
and lick the dust at your feet. Mt 2:11
You shall then know that I am Yahweh;
and that those who hope in me will not be put to shame. 30:18 Ps 25:3

24 Can spoil be snatched from heroes,
or captives escape from a soldier?[m]
25 Yes, thus says Yahweh:
The hero's captive will be snatched away, Jr 31:11 Mt 12:29 Lk 11:21-22p
the soldier's spoil escape.
I myself will fight with those who fight you,
and I myself will save your children.
26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh,[n] 9:19 Rv 16:6
they shall get as drunk on their own blood as on new wine.
Then all mankind shall know 60:16
that I, Yahweh, am your saviour
and that your redeemer is the Mighty One of Jacob. 41:14+

The offer of salvation remains open

1 50 Thus says Yahweh:
Where is your mother's writ of divorce Jr 3:6-8 Ho 2:4-9
by which I dismissed her?[a] *Dt 24:1-4*
Or to which of my creditors 52:3
have I sold you?
You were sold for your own crimes, Ba 4:6
for your own faults your mother was dismissed.

2 Why did I find no one when I came? Rv 3:20
Why did no one answer when I called? 65:12; 66:4 Jr 7:13
Is my hand too short to redeem? 59:1 Nb 11:23
Have I not strength to save? 42:15 Ps 66:6; 106:9; 107:33
With one threat I can dry the sea, Na 1:4
and turn rivers to desert;
so that their fish shrivel up for want of water
and die of thirst.
3 I dress the heavens in black,
make sackcloth their covering.[b]

e. 'each' with Greek. The exiles on their way home like sheep returning to the fold.

f. 'the mountains' Greek, Syr., Targ.; 'my mountains' Hebr.

g. Syene (Assuan) in S. Egypt.

h. Admirable summing up of the message of Hosea, Jeremiah, and the Deuteronomist, who had already affirmed this unfailing love of Yahweh for Israel. Cf. 54:8+.

i. 'Your rebuilders' following versions and DSIa; 'your sons' Hebr.

j. Hebr. adds 'exiled and put aside', absent from Greek.

k. In 5:26 this signal called in the invader, now it proclaims salvation.

l. As babies are tenderly carried.

m. 'soldier' versions and DSIa, cf. v. 25.

n. I.e. they will kill one another.

50 a. On Israel, the faithless wife, cf. Ho 2:4-9+. Here the prophet emphasises that there has been no formal repudiation of Israel, cf. Dt 24:1-4; the marriage between Israel and Yahweh has therefore not been dissolved.

b. The dark sky heralding the storm in which the theophanies occur, cf. Ex 13:22+; 19:16+. The passage refers to portents of the judgement.

42:1+ **Third song of the servant of Yahweh**

a. The servant speaks

The Lord Yahweh has given me 4
Jn 3:11 + a disciple's tongue.
So that I may know how to reply to[c] the wearied
he provides me with speech.
Each morning he wakes me to hear,
to listen like a disciple.
Ps 40:6 The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear.[d] 5

52:13–53:12 For my part, I made no resistance,
neither did I turn away.
I offered my back to those who struck me, 6
Lm 3:30 my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;
Mt 26:67; 27:30p I did not cover my face
against insult and spittle.[e]

The Lord Yahweh comes to my help, 7
so that I am untouched by the insults.
Ezk 3:8-9 So, too, I set my face like flint;
Ps 25:3 I know I shall not be shamed.

↗ Rm 8:31-33 My vindicator is here at hand. Does anyone start proceedings 8
against me?
Then let us go to court together.
Who thinks he has a case against me?
Let him approach me.

The Lord Yahweh is coming to my help, 9
who dare condemn me?
51:8 They shall all go to pieces like a garment
Jb 13:28 devoured by moths.
Ho 5:12

b. Exhortation to follow the servant

Ex 23:20-21 Let anyone who fears Yahweh among you 10
Jn 3:11+ listen to the voice of his servant!
42:16 Whoever walks in darkness,[f]
Ps 23:4 and has no light shining for him,
let him trust in the name of Yahweh,
let him lean on his God.

Ps 7:13 But you, you are all setting light to a fire, 11
and fanning[g] embers.
Then in with you to the flames of your fire,
to the embers that you are lighting.
So will my hand deal with you
and you shall lie down in torments.

The salvation of the sons of Abraham

↗ Mt 5:6; 6:33 51 Listen to me, you who pursue integrity, 1
who seek Yahweh.
Consider the rock you were hewn from,
the quarry from which you were cut.
Ps 105:6 Consider Abraham your father 2
and Sarah who gave you birth.
29:22 For he was all alone when I called him,
Gn 12:1-3 but I blessed and increased him.[a]
Ezk 33:24

3 Yes, Yahweh has pity on Zion,
has pity on all her ruins;
turns her desolation into an Eden, Gn 2:8-17 Ezk 36:35 Rv 2:7; 22:1-2
her wasteland into the garden of Yahweh.
Joy and gladness shall be found in her,
thanksgiving and the sound of music.

Yahweh will soon judge the world

4 Pay attention to me, you peoples,
listen to me,[b] you nations.
For from me comes the Law
and my justice shall be the light of the peoples,
5 I will establish •my integrity speedily,
my salvation shall come like the light,[c] 45:8
my arm shall judge the peoples.
The islands put their hope in me,
put their trust in my strength.

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, 65:17 Jb 14:11 ||Ps 102:25-26 *Mt 24:35p* 2 P 3:7-12 Rv 20:11
look down at the earth.
The heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth wear out like a garment,
and its inhabitants die like vermin,
but my salvation shall last for ever 56:1
and my justice have no end.[d]

7 Listen to me, you who know what integrity means,
people who take my laws to heart:
do not fear the taunts of men,
nor be dismayed by their insults,
8 for the moth shall eat them like garments, 50:9 Jb 13:28
the grub devour them like wool,
but my integrity will remain for ever,
and my salvation for all generations.

The awakening of Yahweh

9 Awake, awake! Clothe yourself in strength, 52:1
arm of Yahweh.
Awake, as in the past,
in times of generations long ago.
Did you not split Rahab in two, 30:7+ Jb 3:8+; 7:12+; 26:13
and pierce the Dragon through?
10 Did you not dry up the sea, Ps 74:13 *63:13*
the waters of the great Abyss,[e] Ex 14:5-31
to make the seabed a road
for the redeemed to cross?

11 Those whom Yahweh has ransomed return, 35:10
they come to Zion shouting for joy,

c. 'reply to' following Greek; 'sustain' Hebr.; 'feed' Targ.

d. The servant, cf. 42:1+, is here not so much a prophet as a sage inspired by Yahweh.

e. This description of the servant's sufferings recurs in the fourth song, 52:13-53:12.

f. The pagans who do not know God are also offered salvation with the devout Jew ('who fears Yahweh'). Both will be judged, v. 11, by their loyalty to the servant's teaching.

g. 'fanning' versions; 'girding' Hebr.

51 a. 'blessed and' increased' versions.

b. 'peoples'; 'nations' MSS and Syr.; 'my people, 'my nation' Hebr.

c. 'like the light' following Greek.

d. 'have no end' corr. following Greek and Lat.

e. 'Rahab', Egypt, is also used to symbolise the primordial chaos vanquished by the creator, Jb 7:12+; the 'Abyss' designates the Red Sea crossed in the course of the Exodus but is also the ocean encircling the earth. The miracles of the Exodus were performed by the same power that created the world.

everlasting joy in their faces;
joy and gladness go with them,
sorrow and lament are ended.[f]

Yahweh is the all-powerful consoler

I, I am your consoler.[g] 12
How then can you be afraid
of mortal man, of son of man,
40:7 whose fate is the fate of grass?
Dt 32:5,15 You have forgotten Yahweh who made you, 13
who spread out the heavens and laid the earth's foundations,
why still go in daily dread
of the oppressor's fury,
when he sets out to destroy you?
What has happened to the fury of oppressors?

Salvation

Ps 107:14 The captive is soon to be set free; he will not die in a deep dungeon nor will 14
2 M 9:8 ||Jr 31:35 his bread run out. •I am Yahweh your God who stirs the sea, making its waves 15
59:21+ Ws 3:1 Jn 10:29 roar, my name is Yahweh Sabaoth. •I put my words into your mouth, I hid 16
you in the shadow of my hand, when I spread out[h] the heavens and laid the
earth's foundations and said to Zion, 'You are my people'.

The awakening of Jerusalem[i]

52:1 Awake, awake! 17
To your feet, Jerusalem!
Ps 60:3 Rv 14:8 You who from Yahweh's hand have drunk
the cup of his wrath.[j]
The chalice of stupor
you have drained to the dregs.

She has not one to guide her 18
of all the sons she has borne,
not one to take her by the hand
of all the sons she has reared.

These two calamities have befallen you 19
Jr 15:5 —who is there to mourn for you?
Devastation and ruin, famine and sword
Na 3:7 —who is there to console you?[k]

Your sons lie helpless 20
(at every street corner)
like an antelope trapped in a net,
sodden with the wrath of Yahweh,
with the threats of your God.

Listen then to this, prostrated one, 21
Ps 60:3 drunk, though not with wine.
Thus says your Lord Yahweh, 22
your God, defender of your people.

See, I take out of your hand
the cup of stupor,
the chalice of my wrath;
you shall drink it no longer.
I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, 23
of those who said to you,

'Bow down that we may walk over you';[i]
while of your back you made a pavement,
a street for them to walk on.

Ps 66:12; 129:3 Ba 4:25

1 52 Awake, awake!
Clothe yourself in strength, Zion.
Put on your richest clothes,
Jerusalem, holy city;
since no longer shall there enter you
either the uncircumcised or the unclean.

51:9,17 Ba 5:1 ↗ Rv 21:27

2 Shake off your dust; to your feet,
captive[a] Jerusalem!
Free your neck from its fetters,
captive daughter of Zion.[b]

Ps 102:14 Ps 107:14

The nation in captivity

45:13

3 Yes, Yahweh says this: You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed
4 without money. •Yes, Yahweh says this: Once my people went to Egypt to
5 settle there, then Assyria bitterly[c] oppressed them. •But now what is there for
me here?—it is Yahweh who speaks—now that my people have been carried
off for nothing, and their masters shout their triumph—it is Yahweh who speaks—
6 all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. •My people will therefore know
my name; that day they will understand[d] that it is I who say, 'I am here'.

50:1 Ps 44:12 Ba 4:6 1 P 1:18 Ezk 36:20-22 ↗ Rm 2:24 Jm 2:7 2 P 2:2

The awakening of Yahweh and of Jerusalem[e]

7 How beautiful on the mountains,
are the feet of one who brings good news,[f]
who heralds peace, brings happiness,
proclaims salvation,
and tells Zion,
'Your God is king!'[g]

40:1 Ps 47:2; 72:3 Na 2:1 Mk 16:15-16 Ac 10:36 ↗ Rm 10:15 Ep 6:15 Ps 93:1

8 Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices,
they shout for joy together,
for they see Yahweh face to face,
as he returns to Zion.

62:6 Ex 33:20+ Ezk 43:1-5

9 Break into shouts of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for Yahweh is consoling his people,
redeeming Jerusalem.

Ps 98:4

10 Yahweh bares his holy arm[h]
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

Ps 98:1 Ps 22:27 Lk 2:30

f. This song of deliverance, interrupted by two short passages, resumes at v. 17.
g. 'your consoler' following Greek and Syr.
h. 'spread out' Greek; 'planted' Hebr.
i. Continuation of the poem 51:9-11.
j. The image of the 'cup of the wrath of Yahweh' filled with a stupefying wine, is found in Jr 13:13; 25:15-18; 48:26; 49:12; 51:7; Ezk 23:32-34; Hab 2:15-16; Ob 16; Zc 12:2; Ps 75:8; Lm 4:21. In other passages, the 'cup' is a means of divination or of drawing lots and signifies the fortune that falls to an individual, Ps 11:6; 16:5.
k. 'who is there to console you' versions and DSIa.
l. A humiliation often inflicted on captives in ancient times.

52 a. 'captive' corr.; 'sit' Hebr.
b. The poem is continued in v. 7.
c. 'bitterly' following Greek; 'without cause' Hebr.
d. 'will understand' corr.; Hebr. 'therefore', absent from Greek and DSIa.
e. Continuation of the long poem on the deliverance of Jerusalem interrupted in v. 2.
f. The Book of Consolation is a 'gospel', good news, cf. Mt 4:23+.
g. The return from exile ushers in a new age under the rule not so much of a human king as of Yahweh himself, ruler in Zion and over the entire world. This reign, foretold in Mi 2:13; 4:7; Zp 3:15; Jr 3:17; 8:19; Ezk 20:33 (cf. 33:11f); Is 43:15; 24:23; Ob 21; Zc 14:9, forms the subject of the 'Psalms of the Kingdom' Ps 47; 93; 96; 97; 98; 99.
h. I.e. to fight, as in the days when 'with a strong arm', he rescued Israel from servitude in Egypt.

Jr 50:8; 51:45 ✗2 Co 6:17 Rv 18:4
'Go away, go away, leave that place, 11
touch nothing unclear.
Get out of her,[i] purify yourselves,
you who carry the vessels of Yahweh.[j]

Ex 12:31-34, 39 58:8
'But you are not to hurry away, 12
you are not to leave like fugitives.
No, Yahweh will go in front of you,
and the God of Israel will be your rearguard.'

Fourth song of the servant of Yahweh[k]

42:1+; 50:5 Ps 22 Ws 2:12-24 Jn 12:32+ Ac 3:13 Ep 1:20-21 Ph 2:9 1 P 1:11
See, my servant will prosper, 13
he shall be lifted up, exalted, rise to great heights.
As the crowds were appalled on seeing him[l] 14
—so disfigured did he look
that he seemed no longer human[m]—
Jb 2:12 Ps 7:7 Mt 26:67; 27:29-31 Jn 19:5
so will the crowds be astonished at him,[n] 15
and kings stand speechless before him;
✗Rm 15:21
for they shall see something never told
and witness something never heard before:
✗Jn 12:38 ✗Rm 10:16
53
'Who could believe what we have heard, 1
and to whom has the power of Yahweh been revealed?'
Like a sapling he grew up in front of us,[a] 2
like a root[b] in arid ground.
Without beauty, without majesty (we saw him),
no looks to attract our eyes;
Ps 22:6-7
a thing despised and rejected by men, 3
a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering,
a man to make people screen their faces;[c]
he was despised and we took no account of him.

Ps 69:26 ✗Mt 8:17
And yet ours were the sufferings he bore, 4
ours the sorrows he carried.
But we, we thought of him as someone punished,
Heb 2:10
struck by God, and brought low.
2 Co 5:21
Yet he was pierced through for our faults, 5
Rm 4:25 Ga 3:13
crushed for our sins.
On him lies a punishment that brings us peace,
✗1 P 2:24
and through his wounds we are healed.

Ps 119:176 Ezk 34 ✗1 P 2:25
We had all gone astray like sheep, 6
each taking his own way,
and Yahweh burdened him
Rm 4:25 2 Co 5:21
with the sins of all of us.
Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly, 7
Ws 2:19 ✗Mt 26:63 *Ps 38:13* Jr 11:19 Mt 27:14 Jn 1:29+ ✗Ac 8:32-33
he never opened his mouth,
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter-house,
like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers
never opening its mouth.

By force and by law he was taken;[d] 8
would anyone plead his cause?[e]
Yes, he was torn away from the land of the living;
for our[f] faults struck down in death.
✗Mt 27:38p
They gave him a grave with the wicked, 9
✗Mt 27:60
a tomb with the rich,[g]
though he had done no wrong
Zp 3:13 ✗1 P 2:22
and there had been no perjury in his mouth.

10 Yahweh has been pleased to crush him with suffering.[h] 49:4 Ps 22:30; 74: 11 Jn 12:24
If he offers his life in atonement,
he shall see his heirs, he shall have a long life
and through him what Yahweh wishes will be done.

11 His soul's anguish over
he shall see the light[i] and be content.
By his sufferings shall my servant justify many,[j] Dn 9:24 Rm 3:26; 5: 19 1 P 3:18
taking their faults on himself.

12 Hence I will grant whole hordes for his tribute, Ps 2:8 Col 2:15
he shall divide the spoil with the mighty,
for surrendering himself to death 50:5 Mt 26:28 ✗ Mk 15:28 ✗ Lk 22:37; 23:32 Jn 1:29+; 19:18 Heb 9:28 1 P 2:24
and letting himself be taken for a sinner,
while he was bearing the faults of many
and praying all the time for sinners.

The fertility of Jerusalem

1 54 Shout for joy, you barren women who bore no children! Ws 3:13 ✗ Ga 4:27 *1 S 2:5* Ps 113:9 Jr 10:20; 30: 18 Zp 3:14
Break into cries of joy and gladness, you who were never in labour!
For the sons of the forsaken one are more in number
than the sons of the wedded wife,[a] says Yahweh.

2 Widen the space of your tent, 33:20 Nb 24:5 Zc 2:8
stretch out your hangings[b] freely, 49:20
lengthen your ropes, make your pegs firm; 26:15
3 for you will burst out to right and to left.
Your race will take possession of the nations,
and people the abandoned cities.

The love of Yahweh

4 Do not be afraid, you will not be put to shame,
do not be dismayed, you will not be disgraced;
for you will forget the shame of your youth
and no longer remember the curse of your widowhood.
5 For now your creator will be your husband,[c] Ho 1:2+
his name, Yahweh Sabaoth;
your redeemer will be the Holy One of Israel,
he is called the God of the whole earth.

l. I.e. from Babylon.

j. The sacred vessels of the Temple, given back by Cyrus, cf. Ezr. 1:7-11.

k. On the meaning of this song, cf. 42:1+. The poem is apparently in dialogue form. First Yahweh delivers an oracle, v. 13, then the kings of the nations speak, vv. 14f, and next the people; the poem ends with a further oracle, 53:11-12. It is difficult to decide, however, precisely where the speaker changes.

l. 'On seeing him' Targ. and Syr.; 'on seeing you' Hebr.

m. A DSIa variant suggests the translation 'By my anointing I took his human appearance from him'.

n. 'will be astonished' following Greek and Lat.; 'he will come to leap' Hebr.

53 a. in front of us' corr.; 'in front of him' Hebr.

b. In 11:1,10, Immanuel is a 'root'.

c. The expression was used of lepers.

d. Suggesting that the servant has been condemned by process of law.

e. 'cause' corr.; 'generation', 'descent' Hebr. Interpretation uncertain. The 'who will explain his descent?' of the Greek and Lat. has been taken by Christian tradition to refer to the mysterious origin of Christ; the Hebr. *dor* (a generation) cannot however bear this sense.

f. 'our' corr.; 'of my people' Hebr.

g. With DSIa; Hebr. 'in his death he is with the rich man'. Early Christian preaching seems to have had this text in mind when recording the burial of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, 'a rich man', Mt 27:57-60. It is possible to correct to 'in his death he is with the evil-doers', cf. Lk 22:37 which, however, refers rather to v. 12.

h. 'with suffering' corr., cf. versions; 'he has pierced him' DSIa, cf. v. 5.

i. 'the light' Greek, DSIa and DSIb; absent from Hebr.

j. 'By his sufferings' corr. following one Hebr. MS; 'By his knowledge' Hebr. Before 'my servant' Hebr. inserts 'the just one'.

54 a. St Paul applies this image to the Church, the new Jerusalem.

b. 'stretch out' versions. 'your hangings' Greek; 'the hangings of your tents' Hebr.

c. 'your husband' corr.; 'your possessor' Hebr. Resumption of the favourite theme of Hosea and Jeremiah: the wife first rejected, then reconciled.

49:14-15 Zc 1:16
Yes, like a forsaken wife, distressed in spirit, 6
Yahweh calls you back.
Does a man cast off the wife of his youth?
says your God.

Ps 22:1; 85:7
I did forsake you for a brief moment, 7
but with great love will I take you back.

57:17 Ps 30:5 Hab 3:2
In excess of anger, for a moment 8
I hid my face from you.
30:18 Lm 3:32 Ho 11:8
But with everlasting love I have taken pity on you,
says Yahweh, your redeemer.[a]

Gn 9:11
I am now as I was in the days of Noah 9
when I swore that Noah's waters
should never flood the world again.
So now I swear concerning my anger with you
and the threats I made against you;

Ps 46:2
for the mountains may depart, 10
the hills be shaken,
but my love for you will never leave you
Rm 11:29
and my covenant of peace with you will never be shaken,
says Yahweh who takes pity on you.

The new Jerusalem

Unhappy creature, storm-tossed, disconsolate, 11
60:17-18 Tb 13:16 Rv 21:2,10-27
see, I will set your stones on carbuncles[e]
and your foundations on sapphires.
I will make rubies your battlements, 12
your gates crystal,
and your entire wall precious stones.
Jr 31:33-34 ↗Jn 6:45 1 Th 4:9
Your sons will all be taught by Yahweh. 13
The prosperity of your sons will be great.
1:26+
You will be founded on integrity; 14
remote from oppression, you will have nothing to fear;
remote from terror, it will not approach you.
Should anyone attack you, that will not be my doing, 15
and whoever attacks you, for your sake will fall.
I it was created the smith, 16
who blows on the coal fire
and from it takes the weapons to work on.
But I also created the destroyer who renders them useless.
Not a weapon forged against you will succeed. 17
Every tongue that accuses you in judgement will be refuted.
Such will be the lot of the servants of Yahweh,
the triumphs I award them—it is Yahweh who speaks.

The food of the poor

12:3 Ps 36:9 Sg 5:1 Si 51:25 Mt 10:8 Jn 4:1+; 7:37 Ac 8:20 Rv 3:18; 21:6; 22:17
55 Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty; 1
though you have no money, come!
Buy corn without money, and eat,[a]
and, at no cost, wine and milk.
Why spend money on what is not bread, 2
your wages on what fails to satisfy?
Ps 81:8 Pr 9:3-6 Si 24:19-22 Jn 6:35 *Jn 7:37*
Listen, listen to me, and you will have good things to eat
and rich food to enjoy.
Pay attention, come to me; 3
Ps 119:175
listen, and your soul will live.

The covenant

With you I will make an everlasting covenant[b]
out of the favours promised to David. — 2 S 23:5; Ps 89:28; *2 S 7:1+*; ↗ Ac 13:34; *Rv 1:5+*
4 See, I have made of you a witness to the peoples,[c]
a leader and a master of the nations.
5 See, you will summon a nation you never knew,
those unknown[d] will come hurrying to you,
for the sake of Yahweh your God,
of the Holy One of Israel who will glorify you. — ‖60:9

The nearness and remoteness of Yahweh

6 Seek Yahweh while he is still to be found, — Si 5:7; Ho 5:6+; *Dt 4:7*; Ps 145:18
call to him while he is still near.
7 Let the wicked man abandon his way, — Jr 29:13; Jn 7:34; Ac 17:27
the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn back to Yahweh who will take pity on him, — Lm 3:40; Zc 1:3-4; Lk 15:20
to our God who is rich in forgiving;
8 for my thoughts are not your thoughts, — 1 S 16:7; Qo 3:11; Mi 4:12
my ways not your ways—it is Yahweh who speaks.
9 Yes, the heavens are as high above earth — Ps 103:11
as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts. — Qo 3:11

The word of Yahweh cannot fail[e] — 9:7

10 Yes, as the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return — Dt 32:2; 1 K 8:56; Jb 23:13; Rm 9:6
without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed
11 for the sower and bread for the eating, •so the word that goes from my mouth — ↗ 2 Co 9:10
does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in — Jos 21:45; Ps 107:20; Ws 18:14-15; Zc 1:5-6; Jn 1:1+
what it was sent to do.

Conclusion of the Book of Consolation

12 Yes, you will leave with joy
and be led away in safety.
Mountains and hills will break into joyful cries before you — Ps 72:3; 96:12; 98:8
and all the trees of the countryside clap their hands.
13 Cypress will grow instead of thorns, — 41:19; 44:3-4
myrtle instead of briars.
And this will make Yahweh famous,
a sign for ever, ineffaceable.

III. THIRD PART OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH[a]

Yahweh welcomes converts from paganism[b]

1 **56** Thus says Yahweh: Have a care for justice, [f]act with integrity, for soon — 45:8; 46:13; 51:6-8; Ps 106:3
my salvation will come and my integrity be manifest.

d. The 'everlasting love' of Yahweh for his people, Jr 31:3; Zp 3:17; Dt 4:37; 7:8; 10:15; Is 43:4; also Ml 1:2, resembling the love of father for children, Ho 1:6; 2:3,25; 11; Jr 31:20; Is 49:14-16, or of husband for wife, Ho 2:16-17, 21-22; 3:1; Jr 2:2; 31:21-22; Ezk 16:8,60; Is 62:4-5, is here manifest as a free gift, cf. 1 Jn 4:10,19, unfailing, cf. Rm 11:29, creative, cf. 1 Jn 3:1-2.

e. 'carbuncles' Greek; 'antimony' Hebr. A word of uncertain meaning.

55 a. Hebr. adds 'come and buy' absent from Greek and DSIa.

b. On this everlasting covenant, 59:21; 61:8, which is also the new covenant, see Jr 31:31+.

c. 'you' corr.; 'him' Hebr. 'the peoples' versions; 'nations' Hebr.

d. The text repeats 'a nation' here.

e. The word is personified here, cf. Pr 8:22+.

56 a. See Introduction to the Prophets.

b. The oracle probably dates from the period following the return from exile. The author's perspective is not narrow: he proclaims that foreign proselytes ought to be admitted into the community, on condition that they submit to the ritual requirements of Yahwism.

58:13f Ex 20:8+ Blessed is the man who does this and the son of man who clings to it: observing 2
the sabbath, not profaning it, and keeping his hand from every evil deed.
Ex 12:48+ Dt 23:3+ Ac 8:27 Let no foreigner who has attached himself to Yahweh say, 'Yahweh will 3
surely exclude me from his people'. Let no eunuch say, 'And I, I am a dried-up
tree'.
Ws 3:14-15 For Yahweh says this: To the eunuchs who observe my sabbaths, and 4
62:2; 65:15 1 S 1:8 resolve to do what pleases me and cling to my covenant, •I will give, in my 5
house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and
Rv 2:17; 3:5 daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall never be effaced.
2:3 Foreigners who have attached themselves to Yahweh to serve him and to 6
love his name and be his servants—all who observe the sabbath, not profaning
57:13 ↗1 K 8:41-43 Ps 15:1 it, and cling to my covenant—•these I will bring to my holy mountain. I will 7
make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their holocausts and their sacrifices
↗Mt 21:13p ↗Mk 11:17 ↗Lk 19:46 will be accepted on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer for
all the peoples.
Ps 147:2 It is the Lord Yahweh who speaks, who gathers the outcasts of Israel: there 8
are others[c] I will gather besides those already gathered.

The unworthiness of the leaders[d] of Judah

Ezk 34:5 Come and gorge, all you wild beasts, 9
all you beasts of the forest.
3:12; 9:15 Our watchmen are all blind, 10
they notice nothing.

Dumb watchdogs all,
unable to bark,
they dream, lie down,
and love to sleep.

Greedy dogs that are never satisfied. 11
Jr 10:21; 12:10; 23:1-2 Ezk 34:2 Shepherds who know nothing.[e]
They all go their own way,
each after his own interest.[f]

5:11; 28:7f 'Come, let me fetch wine; 12
we will get drunk on strong drink,
tomorrow will be just as wonderful as today
and even more so!'

Ws 4:7.14 Rv 14:13 57 The upright perish 1
and no one cares.
Devout men are taken off[a]
and no one gives it a thought.

Ws 4:11 Yes, on account of evil the upright man is taken off
Ws 3:3 to enter peace. 2
They lie on their beds
those who followed[b] the right way.

But you, you sons of a witch, come here,
offspring of the adulterer and the whore.[c] 3

At whom are you jeering, and making faces,
and sticking out your tongue? 4
Are you not the spawn of sin,
children of lies?

Dt 12:2+ Jr 2:20 Lusting among the terebinths, 5
and under every spreading tree,
Lv 18:21+ sacrificing children in the wadis
and in rocky clefts.[d]

Prophetic elegy against idolatry[c]

6 The smooth stones of the wadis, these are your share,
these, these your portion.
To these you pour libations,
bring oblations.
Can all this appease me?
7 On a mountain high and lofty
you have put your bed.
Thither, too, you have climbed
to offer sacrifice. Dt 23:19+

8 Behind door and doorpost
you have set up your sign.[f]
Yes, far removed from me, you unroll your bedding, Ezk 16:15f
climb into it and spread it wide.

You have struck a pact with those
whose bed you love,
whoring with them often
with your eyes on the sacred symbol.[g]

9 With oil you made yourself look your best[h] for Molech, Lv 18:21+
lavishing your scents;
you sent your envoys far afield,
down to Sheol itself.[i]

10 Tired with so much journeying,
you never said, 'I give up'.
Finding your strength revived,
you never weakened.

11 Who was it you dreaded, and feared,
that you should disown me
and not remember me,
and refuse me a place in your heart?

Meanwhile I kept silent and shut my eyes,[j] did I not?
So you cannot have been afraid of me.
12 But now I will expose this integrity of yours[k]
and your futile actions.

13 When you cry, let your hateful idols[l] save you!
The wind will carry them all away,
a breath will take them off.
But whoever trusts in me shall inherit the land 56:7; 60:21; 65:9
and own my holy mountain. Ps 25:13; 37:9

c. The proselytes.
d. This oracle, possibly pre-exilic, enlarges on a favourite theme of Jeremiah, 2:8,26-27; 5:4-5,31; 10:21; 23:1-2.11f, and of Ezekiel, 8:11f; 34, namely, the unworthiness of the leaders of Judah in the 7th century.
e. These two lines are probably a gloss.
f. 'his own interest' Greek. Hebr. adds 'to the last one'.

57 a. Possibly alluding to the persecution under Manasseh.
b. Plural, following Greek.
c. Following Greek; Hebr. 'offspring of an adulterer and you prostitute yourself'.
d. 'in' following Greek. Allusion to the human sacrifice of Canaanite cults.
e. This oracle like the foregoing, is probably pre-exilic. In the manner of the 7th century prophets, Jr 1:16; 7:18, etc., Ezk 8 etc., it attacks the idolatry of Jerusalem. cf. Is 2:6-8.
f. A domestic idol standing by the threshold or over the door.
g. These two lines added, with Greek.
h. 'you made yourself look your best' Symmachus and Vulg; 'you go off to' Hebr.
i. By sacrificing infants.
j. 'shut my eyes' following versions; 'for a long time' Hebr.
k. Ironical.
l. 'hateful idols' following Targ.; 'assembled (idols)' Hebr.

A poem of consolation[m]

It shall be said: 14
Ps 68:4 Open up, open up, clear the way,
remove all obstacles from the way of my people.
For thus speaks the Most High, 15
whose home is in eternity,
Lv 17:1+ whose name is holy:

'I live in a high and holy place,
Ps 51:17; 138:6 Pr 16:19 Zp 2:3 but I am also with the contrite and humbled spirit,
to give the humbled spirit new life,
to revive contrite hearts.

Ps 103:9 'For I will not quarrel for ever 16
nor be always angry,
for then the spirit would give way before me,
the very souls I have made.

54:8+ 'Angered by his wicked brutality, 17
I hid my face[n] and struck him in anger.
Like a rebel he went the way of his choice;
but I have seen the way he went. 18

Ex 15:26 'But I will heal him, and console him,[o]
I will comfort him to the full,
both him and his afflicted fellows,
bringing paise to their lips. 19
Dn 9:7 Ac 2:39 Ep 2:17 Peace, peace to far and near,
I will indeed heal him' says Yahweh.

Jm 1:6 Jude 13 The wicked however are like the restless sea 20
that cannot be still,
and washes up mud and slime.
48:22 'No peace' says my God 'for the wicked.' 21

Fasting[a]

58 Shout for all you are worth, 1
raise your voice like a trumpet.[b]
Proclaim their faults to my people,
their sins to the House of Jacob.

They seek me day after day, 2
they long to know my ways,
like a nation that wants to act with integrity
and not ignore the law of its God.

They ask me for laws that are just,
they long for God to draw near:
Ml 3:14 Mt 6:18 'Why should we fast if you never see it, 3
why do penance if you never notice?'

Look, you do business on your fastdays,[c]
you oppress all your workmen;
look, you quarrel and squabble when you fast 4
and strike the poor man with your fist.[d]

Fasting like yours today
will never make your voice heard on high.
Is that the sort of fast that pleases me, 5
a truly penitential day for men?

Hanging your head like a reed,
lying down on sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call fasting,
a day acceptable to Yahweh?

6 Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me
—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks[e]—
to break unjust fetters
and undo the thongs of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,
and break every yoke,
7 to share your bread with the hungry,
and shelter the homeless poor,

to clothe the man you see to be naked
and not turn from your own kin?
8 Then will your light shine like the dawn
and your wound be quickly healed over

Your integrity will go before you
and the glory of Yahweh behind you.
9 Cry, and Yahweh will answer;
call, and he will say, 'I am here'.

If you do away with the yoke,
the clenched fist, the wicked word,
10 if you give your bread[f] to the hungry,
and relief to the oppressed,

your light will rise in the darkness,
and your shadows become like noon.
11 Yahweh will always guide you,
giving you relief in desert places.

He will give strength to your bones
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never run dry.

12 You will rebuild the ancient ruins,
build up on the old foundations.
You will be called 'Breach-mender',
'Restorer of ruined houses'.[g]

Jl 2:13

Jr 34:8-9
Mt 25:34-40

Tb 4:16
Jb 22:7; 31:16

52:12
Ps 85:13
40:5
Ps 145:18

Pr 11:25

Jb 22:11
Ps 37:6; 112:4
Jn 8:12+

Si 24:30
Jn 4:14

61:4
Ne 3 f
Ps 51:19+

The sabbath

13 If you refrain from trampling the sabbath,
and doing business on the holy day,

56:2+

m. This poem, dating from after the return from exile, tells of Yahweh's care for the 'poor', cf. Zp 2:3+, like many Psalms of the same period.

n. 'I hid my face' indicates either God's displeasure or the hidden nature of his intervention.

o. 'console' following Greek; 'lead' Hebr.

58 a. Post-exilic oracle, cf. v. 12 and note. It insists on inward religion that must accompany outward observance in the spirit of the great prophets, cf. Am 5:21+. The liturgy uses this passage at the beginning of Lent.

b. Feasts and the beginning of fasts were proclaimed by trumpet.

c. The only fast prescribed by the Law was for the day of Atonement, Lv 23:26-32, cf. Lv 16:1+; it seems, however, that at certain periods fasts were added either to commemorate national misfortunes, cf. Zc 7:1-5; 8:18-19, or to implore God's mercy.

d. 'the poor man with' versions; 'with wicked (fist)' Hebr.

e. 'it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks' added with Greek. The gospel will elaborate this profound concept of penance which must be accompanied by charity.

f. 'if you give' corr.; Hebr. 'give'. 'your bread' versions and MSS; 'your soul' Hebr.

g. 'You will rebuild' following Greek; 'They will build from you' Hebr. 'in ruins' corr.; 'paths' Hebr. This allusion suggests dating the prophecy between the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and its restoration by Nehemiah.

if you call the sabbath 'Delightful',
and the day sacred to Yahweh 'Honourable',
if you honour it by abstaining from travel,
from doing business and from gossip,
Jb 22:26 then shall you find your happiness in Yahweh 14
Dt 32:13 Ps 18:33 Hab 3:19 Ps 47:4 and I will lead you triumphant over the heights of the land.
I will feed you on the heritage of Jacob your father.
1:20; 40:5 For the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.

A psalm[a]

50:2+ Nb 11:23 59 No, the hand of Yahweh is not too short to save, 1
nor his ear too dull to hear.
Dt 31:17 Jdt 5:17 Ps 51:4 Pr 15:29 But your iniquities have made a gulf 2
between you and your God.
Your sins have made him veil his face
1:15 Jr 11:11 so as not to hear you,
since your hands are stained with blood, 3
your fingers with crime,
Ps 12:2 your lips utter lies,
your tongues murmur treachery.
No one makes just accusations 4
or pleads sincerely.
All rely on nothingness,[b] utter falsehood,
Jb 15:35 Ps 7:14 conceive harm and give birth to misery.

Mt 3:7+ They[c] are hatching adders' eggs 5
and weaving a spider's web;
eat one of their eggs and you die,
crush one and a viper emerges.
Their webs are no good for clothing, 6
their plots no use for covering.
Their plans are sinful plots,
violence is their only method.
↗ Pr 1:16 ↗ Rm 3:15-17 Their feet run to do evil, 7
are quick to shed innocent blood.
Their thoughts are sinful thoughts,
wherever they go there is havoc and ruin.
They know nothing of the way of peace, 8
there is no equity in their paths.
Twisty trails they clear for themselves
and no one who follows them knows any peace.

So justice is removed far away from us, 9
and integrity keeps its distance.
Ws 9:16 Jr 8:15 Am 5:18-20 Jn 8:12+ We looked for light and all is darkness,
for brightness and we walk in the dark.
Like the blind we feel our way along walls 10
and hesitate[d] like men without eyes.
Dt 28:29 We stumble as though noon were twilight
and dwell in the dark like the dead.
We growl, all of us, like bears, 11
and moan like doves,
waiting for the justice that never comes,
for salvation that is removed far away from us.

Jr 14:7 Dn 3:30 For our faults in your sight have been many 12
and our sins are a witness against us.

And indeed our faults are present to our minds, Ps 51:3
and we know our iniquities:
13 rebellion and denial of Yahweh,
turning our back on our God,
talking treachery and revolt,
murmuring lies in our heart.[e]
14 Justice is withheld
and integrity stands aloof;
in the public square sincerity is brought to its knees Hab 1:4
and uprightness forbidden to enter.

Fragments of an apocalypse[f]

15 Sincerity is missing Ps 12:1
and he who avoids evil is robbed. Ezk 22:30
Yahweh has seen this, and is indignant
that there is no justice to be seen.
16 He saw there was no one
and wondered there was no one to intervene.
So he made his own arm his mainstay, 63:5
his own integrity his support. Ps 98:1
17 He put integrity on like a breastplate, ↗ Ws 5:17-23
and on his head the helmet of salvation. *Jb 29:14*
He put vengeance on like a tunic ↗ Ep 6:14-17
and wrapped himself in ardour like a cloak. ↗ 1 Th 5:8
18 To each he will pay his due, Jr 50:15
wrath to his enemies, reprisals on his foes.[g]
19 In the west men will see[h] the name of Yahweh Ps 102:15
and in the east his glory;
for he shall come like a pent-up stream
impelled by the breath of Yahweh.
20 But for Zion[i] he will come as Redeemer, 41:14+ Rm 11:26-27
for those of Jacob who turn from their faults.
It is Yahweh who speaks.

Oracle[j] 55:3+

21 For my part, this is my covenant with them, says Yahweh. My spirit with which I endowed you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, will not disappear from your mouth, nor from the mouths of your children, nor from the mouths of your children's children for ever and ever, says Yahweh. 51:16 2 S 23:2 Jr 1:9

The glorious resurrection of Jerusalem[a] 45:14+ Tb 13:9 Rv 21:9-27

1 60 Arise, shine out, for your light has come, 2:5 Tb 13:11 Ps 102:16 Ba 4:24 Ep 5:14
2 the glory of Yahweh is rising on you,
though night still covers the earth
and darkness the peoples. 9:1+

59 a. A psalm, of fairly late date, with three parts: an act of faith in Yahweh, vv. 1-4 (possibly the oldest section); a polemic against the enemies of post-exilic Judaism, vv. 5-11; an acknowledgement of guilt analogous to the 'penitential psalms', vv. 12-14.

b. A term often used of idols.

c. Probably hypocritical leaders of the Jewish community.

d. 'hesitate' corr.; 'feel our way' Hebr. 'dwell in the dark' corr. following Targ. and Vulg.; Hebr. incomprehensible.

e. 'treachery' Targ.; 'oppression' Hebr. 'murmuring' DSIa; 'conceiving and murmuring' Hebr.

f. This fragment should presumably be read with ch. 24-27. The first verse may belong to the preceding passage.

g. Hebr. adds 'against the islands he will exact reprisals', absent from Greek.

h. *'see' some MSS; 'fear' Text. Rec.*

i. Rm 11:26 reads 'from Zion'; DSIa 'to Zion'.

j. The covenant between Yahweh and Israel is everlasting, cf. 55:3+ and Jr 31:31+.

60 a. The poems of ch. 60 and 62 form a whole. In style and thought they resemble ch. 40-55 and must have been composed either by the author of the Book of Consolation or at least by one of his immediate disciples.

Above you Yahweh now rises
Ex 24:16+ and above you his glory appears.
↗ Rv 21:24 The nations come to your light 3
Ps 102:22 and kings to your dawning brightness.

49:18-22 Tb 14:7 Ba 5:5-6 Lift up your eyes and look round: 4
all are assembling and coming towards you,
your sons from far away
and your daughters being tenderly carried.

At this sight you will grow radiant, 5
your heart throbbing and full;
Ps 45:12; 72:10 since the riches of the sea will flow to you,
Mt 2:11 the wealth of the nations come to you;

camels in throngs will cover you, 6
Ex 2:15+ and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
1 K 10:1+ everyone in Sheba will come,
bringing gold and incense
and singing the praise of Yahweh.[b]

All the flocks of Kedar will gather inside you, 7
Gn 25:13 the rams of Nebaioth[c] will be at your service.
They will come up, for acceptance, to my altar,
Hg 2:7 to adorn the Temple of my glory.

Who are these flying like a cloud, 8
like doves to their cote?
Yes, for me the ships are assembling,[d] 9
Ps 48:7+ vessels of Tarshish in the front,

to bring your sons from far away,
and their silver and gold with them,
‖55:5 for the sake of the name of Yahweh your God,
for the sake of the Holy One of Israel who has made you glorious.

49:7,16 Foreigners will rebuild your walls 10
and their kings will be your servants.
For though I struck you in anger,
in mercy I have pitied you.

↗ Rv 21:25-26 And your gates will lie open continually, 11
shut neither by day nor by night,
2:3 for men to bring you the wealth of the nations
with their kings leading them;[e]
for the nation and kingdom that refuses to serve you shall perish, 12
such nations shall be utterly ruined.[f]

35:2 The glory of Lebanon[g] will come to you, 13
with cypress and plane and box,
1 K 5:19-20 to adorn the site of my sanctuary,
to glorify the resting place of my feet.

49:23 The sons of your oppressors will come to you bowing, 14
↗ Rv 3:9 at your feet shall fall all who despised you.
1:26+; 65:19 They will call you 'City of Yahweh',
'Zion of the Holy One of Israel'.[h]

62:4,12 Though you have been abandoned, 15
and hated and shunned,[i]
Ps 45:17 I will make you an eternal pride,
a joy for ever and ever.

16 You will be suckled on the milk of nations, 49:23
suckled on the riches[j] of kings,
and you shall know that I, Yahweh, am your saviour, 49:26
that your redeemer is the Mighty One of Jacob.

17 For bronze I will bring gold; 54:11 Tb 13:16
for iron, silver;
and bronze for wood;
and iron for stone;
I will put Peace in as magistrate, 1:26
and Integrity as the government.

18 Violence will no longer be heard of in your country, 26:1
nor devastation and ruin within your frontiers.
You will call your walls 'Salvation'
and your gates 'Praise'.[k]

19 No more will the sun give you daylight, ↗ Rv 21:23; 22:5
nor moonlight shine on you,
but Yahweh will be your everlasting light, Ps 62:7 Ws 7:10
your God will be your splendour.

20 Your sun will set no more
nor your moon wane,
but Yahweh will be your everlasting light
and your days of mourning will be ended.

21 Your people will all be upright,
possessing the land for ever; 4:3; 57:13 Tb 14:7 Ps 45:17
a shoot that Yahweh has planted,[l] 2 P 3:13
my handiwork, designed for beauty.

22 The least among you will become a clan
and the smallest a mighty nation.
I, Yahweh, have spoken;[m]
in due time I shall act with speed.

The mission of the prophet[a]

1 61 The spirit of the Lord Yahweh has been given to me, 11:2; 40:5; 42:1 Ps 146:7; 147:2 Mt 3:16+; 11:5 ↗ Lk 4:18-19; 7:22 Jn 1:32 Ac 10:38
for Yahweh has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken;

to proclaim liberty to captives,
freedom to those in prison;

b. The riches of the sea (i.e. of the maritime powers, Phoenicia and Greece) come by ship from the west. The riches of the East and of Egypt come by caravans across the deserts of Syria and Sinai respectively. Midian, Ephah and Sheba are peoples of Arabia. The liturgy applies this text to the visit of the Magi, Mt 2: 1-12; the immediate significance of the text is somewhat different but its worldwide outlook, cf. Is 45:14+, makes the application apt.

c. Kedar, 21:16-17, is a tribe of nomad bedouin. Nebaioth a small Arabian tribe.

d. Line corr.; Hebr. 'for the islands are waiting for me'.

e. 'will lie open' following versions. 'leading them' corr.; 'led' Hebr.

f. V. 12 is probably a gloss.

g. The cedars. These will be used to build the new Jerusalem as previously they had been used to build the Temple of Solomon, 1 K 5:15f.

h. A new name and, like that given by Isaiah, 1:26+, a symbolic one. Equally symbolic are the names which follow: of walls and gates, 60:18, of Zion and its territory, 62:4, of city and inhabitants, 62:12.

i. 'abandoned' Greek; 'with none passing through' Hebr.

j. 'the riches' following Greek; 'the breasts' Hebr.

k. The walls and gates of Jerusalem had names. Here new names are given; they are symbolic, cf. 60:14+ and 1:26+. Similar names are given in Rv. to the gates and foundations of the new Jerusalem, Rv 21:12,14.

l. 'that Yahweh has' DSIa; 'that I have' Hebr.

m. 'have spoken' restored conj.

61 a. This poem may have originally formed part of the collection ch 60-62, or may have been added by a disciple.

Lv 25:10+ to proclaim a year of favour from Yahweh, 2
a day of vengeance for our God,

Mt 5:5 to comfort all those who mourn[b] •and to give them 3
Ps 30:11 for ashes a garland;
for mourning robe the oil of gladness,
for despondency, praise.
They are to be called 'terebinths of integrity',
planted by Yahweh to glorify him.

58:12 They will rebuild the ancient ruins, 4
they will raise what has long lain waste,
they will restore the ruined cities,
all that has lain waste for ages past.

14:1-2 Strangers will be there to feed your flocks, 5
foreigners as your ploughmen and vinedressers;
Ex 19:6+ / Rv 1:6; 5: 11 but you, you will be named 'priests of Yahweh', 6
they will call you 'ministers of our God'.
You will feed on the wealth of nations
and array yourselves[c] in their magnificence.

For their shame[d] was twofold, 7
disgrace and spitting[e] their lot.
Twofold therefore shall they possess in their land,
everlasting joy is theirs.

For I, Yahweh, love justice, 8
I hate robbery and all that is wrong.[f]
I reward them faithfully
55:3+ and make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their race will be famous throughout the nations, 9
their descendants throughout the peoples.
All who see them will admit
Gn 12:2+ Ps 45:17; 149:4 that they are a race whom Yahweh has blessed.

1 S 2:1 Lk 1:46f 'I exult for joy in Yahweh, 10
my soul rejoices in my God,
Ps 132:16 Ba 5:2 for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation,
he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,
Rv 19:8; 21: 2 like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,[g]
like a bride adorned in her jewels.

'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, 11
as a garden makes seeds spring up,
45:8 Ps 5:11 so will the Lord Yahweh make both integrity and praise
spring up in the sight of the nations.'

Second poem on the glorious resurrection of Jerusalem

Tb 13:16 62 About Zion I will not be silent, 1
about Jerusalem I will not grow weary,
until her integrity shines out like the dawn
and her salvation flames like a torch.[a]

Ps 45:17 The nations then will see your integrity, 2
all the kings your glory,
56:5+; 65: 15 Rv 2:17 and you will be called by a new name,
one which the mouth of Yahweh will confer.
You are to be a crown of splendour in the hand of Yahweh, 3
a princely diadem in the hand of your God;

4 no longer are you to be named 'Forsaken',
nor your land 'Abandoned',[b]
but you shall be called 'My Delight'
and your land 'The Wedded';[c]
for Yahweh takes delight in you
and your land will have its wedding.

5 Like a young man marrying a virgin,
so will the one who built you wed you,[d]
and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride,
so will your God rejoice in you.

6 On your walls, Jerusalem,
I set watchmen.
Day or night
they must never be silent.

You who keep Yahweh mindful
must take no rest.
7 Nor let him take rest
till he has restored Jerusalem,
and made her
the boast of the earth.

8 Yahweh has sworn it by his right hand
and by his mighty arm:
Never again shall I give your corn
to feed your enemies.
Never again will foreigners drink your wine
that you laboured for.

9 But those who gather the harvest will eat it
and praise Yahweh.
Those who gathered the grapes will drink
in the courts of my sanctuary.

Conclusion[e]

10 Pass through, pass through the gates.
Make a way for the people.
Bank up, bank up the highway,
clear it of stones.
Hoist the signal for the peoples.

11 This Yahweh proclaims
to the ends of the earth:

Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Look,
your saviour[f] comes,
the prize of his victory with him,
his trophies before him'.
12 They shall be called 'The Holy People',
'Yahweh's Redeemed'.

1:26+; 60: 15+
Ps 149:4
Jr 30:17
Ho 2:25

Zp 3:17

65:19

52:8

Ps 45:17

65:21
Dt 28:30-33

49:22

=40:10
Ws 5:15
Mt 21:5

1:26+; 60: 14+
Dt 7:6

b. At the beginning of v. 3 the text inserts what is probably a gloss: 'to grant to those who mourn in Zion'.
c. 'array yourselves' Greek; 'succeed to them' Hebr.
d. The shame of the Jews. Line corr.; Hebr. 'Instead of your shame, twofold'.
e. 'and spitting' corr.; 'they will rejoice' Hebr.
f. 'and all that is wrong' Targ. and Syr.; 'in the holocaust' Hebr.
g. 'wearing his wreath' corr., cf. Greek.

62 a. With DSIa and Greek.
b. 'Abandoned' DSIa and Greek.
c. Azubah, 'Abandoned', and Hephzibah, 'My-delight-in-her', proper names in 1 K 22:42 and 2 K 21:1, are here used symbolically of Zion, cf. 60:14+.
d. 'Like' DSIa and Greek. 'the one who built you' corr.; 'your sons' Hebr.
e. Concluding the section ch. 60-62.
f. 'your saviour' Greek; 'your salvation' Hebr.

And you shall be called 'The-sought-after',
'City-not-forsaken'.

An apocalyptic poem on the vengeance of Yahweh[a]

34:1-17
Nb 20:23+
↗ Rv 19:13

63 Who is this coming from Edom, 1
from Bozrah in garments stained[b] with crimson,
so richly clothed,
marching[c] so full of strength?
—It is I, who speak of integrity
and am powerful to save.

—Why are your garments red, 2
your clothes as if you had trodden the winepress?

Lm 1:15
Jl 4:13

—I have trodden the winepress alone. 3
Of the men of my people[d] not one was with me.

Jr 25:30
↗ Rv 14:19-20; 19:15

In my anger I trod them down,
trampled them in my wrath.
Their juice spattered my garments,
and all my clothes are stained.

For in my heart was a day of vengeance, 4
my year of redemption had come.
I looked: there was no one to help; 5
aghast: not one could I find to support me.

59:16

My own arm then was my mainstay,
my wrath my support.
I crushed the people in my fury, 6
trampled them[e] in my anger,
and made the juice of them run all over the ground.

A psalm[f]

Ps 89:1

Let me sing the praises of Yahweh's goodness, 7
and of his marvellous deeds,
in return for all that he has done for us
and for the great kindness[g]
he has shown us in his mercy
and in his boundless goodness.

Dt 32:5

He said, 'Truly they are my people, 8
sons and no rogues'.
He proved himself their saviour
in all their troubles. 9

Ex 23:20

It was neither messenger nor angel[h]
but his Presence that saved them.
In his love and pity
he redeemed them himself,

Dt 32:11+
Ps 68:19

he lifted them up, carried them,
throughout the days of old.

Dt 32:15
Ac 7:51
Ep 4:30

But they rebelled, they grieved 10
his holy spirit.
Then he turned enemy,
and himself waged war on them.
They remembered the days of old, 11
of Moses his servant.[i]

Ex 2:1-10

Where is he who brought out[j] of the sea

Heb 13:20

the shepherd of his flock?

Nb 11:17
Ne 9:20

Where is he who endowed him[k]

with his holy spirit,
12 who at the right hand of Moses
set to work with his glorious arm,
who divided the waters before them — Ex 14:5-31
to win himself everlasting renown,
13 who made them walk through the ocean[l] — 51:10
as easily as a horse through the desert? — Ws 19:9
14 They stumbled as little •as an ox
going down to the plain.
The spirit of Yahweh led them to rest. — Ps 77:20
This is how you guided your people
to win yourself glorious renown.

15 Look down from heaven, look down — Ps 64:6-10 Lm 3:50
from your holy and glorious dwelling.
Where is your ardour, your might,
the yearning of your inmost heart? — 49:15
Do not let your compassion go unmoved,[m]
16 for you are our Father. — Dt 1:31 Tb 13:4
For Abraham does not own us
and Israel[n] does not acknowledge us;
you, Yahweh, yourself are our Father,
Our Redeemer is your ancient name. — 41:14+
17 Why, Yahweh, leave us to stray from your ways
and harden our hearts against fearing you?
Return, for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your inheritance. — Dt 32:9
18 Why have the wicked set foot in[o] your sanctuary,
why are our enemies trampling your sanctuary?[a]
19 We have long been like people you do not rule, — Ps 50:3
people who do not bear your name.

1 Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down — Ps 144:5 Rv 19:11
2 —at your Presence the mountains would melt,
1 64 as fire sets brushwood alight,
as fire causes water to boil— — Ps 18:7f; 50:3
to make known your name to your enemies,
and make the nations tremble at your Presence,
2 working unexpected miracles[a]
3 such as no one has ever heard of before.
4

No ear has heard,[b] — ↗1 Co 2:9
no eye has seen

63 a. Poem written in the form of a dialogue between Yahweh and the prophet.

b. Yahweh is represented as one who treads the grapes, his garments stained red. But what he has been treading are the nations, whose blood has spattered him, and who are represented by Edom. Some emend 'Edom' and 'Bozrah' and translate 'Who is this that comes all in red, in crimson garments like a wine-harvester?'; hence the application of the passage to the suffering Messiah.

c. 'marching' following Symmachus and Latin; 'bowing' Hebr.

d. 'men of my people' DSIa; 'of the peoples' Hebr.

e. 'trampled them' several MSS; 'made them drunk' Hebr.

f. This great psalm must date from the last years of the Exile or the first of the return. It recalls the past history of Israel, celebrates the reconciliation with God, and begs Yahweh to come and restore the city and the Temple.

g. Hebr. adds 'towards the House of Israel'.

h. 'neither messenger nor angel' following Greek and Lat.; 'he was not afflicted and an angel of his face' Hebr.

i. 'They remembered' corr.; 'He remembered' Hebr. 'his servant' Syr.; 'his people' Hebr. 'of Moses his servant' omitted by Greek and Lat.

j. 'brought out' DSIa and versions; 'brought them out' Hebr.

k. Israel or Moses.

l. The Red Sea is referred to in terms of the primordial Abyss vanquished by Yahweh, cf. Jb 7:12+.

m. Text corr. following Greek.

n. Not the nation but the patriarch (Jacob=Israel) after whom it was named.

o. Text corr.; Hebr. corrupt.

64 a. Hebr. here repeats 'that you would come down —at your Presence the mountains would melt'.

b. 'No ear has heard' with 1 Co 2:9; 'No one has heard' Hebr.

any god but you act like this
for those who trust him.
You guide those[c] who act with integrity 4
and keep your ways in mind. 5
You were angry when we were sinners;
we had long been rebels against you.[d]
We were all like men unclean, 5
all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing. 6
Lv 15:19-24 Est 4:17w
We have all withered like leaves
and our sins blew us away like the wind.
No one invoked your name 6
or roused himself to catch hold of you. 7
For you hid your face from us
and gave us up[e] to the power of our sins.
Tb 13:4 And yet, Yahweh, you are our Father; 7
29:16+ Rm 9:21 we the clay, you the potter, 8
we are all the work of your hand.
Do not let your anger go too far, Yahweh, 8
Ps 25:7 or go on thinking of our sins for ever. 9
See, see, we are all your people;
your holy cities are a wilderness, 9
Zion a wilderness, 10
Jerusalem a desolation,
Tb 14:4 our holy and glorious Temple, 10
in which our fathers prayed to you, 11
is burnt to the ground;
all that gave us pleasure lies in ruins.
Yahweh, can you go unmoved by all of this, 11
oppressing us beyond measure by your silence?[a] 12

A diatribe against idolatry; eschatological discourse[a]

Ws 6:16 ↗ Rm 10:20 65 I was ready to be approached by those who did not consult me, ready to be found by those who did not seek me.[b] I said, 'I am here, I am here', 1
Pr 1:24 ↗ Rm 10:21 to a nation that did not invoke my name. •Each day I stretched out my hand to 2
a rebellious people who went by evil ways, following their own whims, •a people 3
Dt 32:21 who provoked me to my face incessantly, sacrificing in gardens, burning incense
on bricks, •living in tombs, spending nights in dark corners,[c] eating the meat 4
of pigs, using unclean foods in their kitchens. •'Keep off,' they say 'do not 5
come near me, or I might sanctify you.'[d] Such men are smoke in my nostrils,
an ever burning fire. •See, it is inscribed in front of me; I will not be silent until 6
I have settled my account with them •for their sins and their fathers'[e] sins, says 7
Yahweh, those men who burned incense on the mountains and insulted me on
the hills. I will pay them back in full all they deserve.
Yahweh says this: When new wine is found in a bunch of grapes people 8
say, 'Do not destroy it, it contains a blessing'. I shall do the same for the sake
4:3+ of those who serve me. I refuse to destroy the whole. •I will create a race from 9
Jacob, and heirs to my mountains from Judah. My chosen shall inherit them,
57:13 my servants live in them. •Sharon will be a pasture for flocks, the Valley 10
Ho 2:17 of Achor a feeding ground for oxen, for those of my people who have sought me.

But you who have abandoned Yahweh, 11
and forgotten my holy mountain,
who lay the table for Gad,
who fill a cup for Meni,[f]
I commit you to the sword, 12
all of you to fall in the slaughter.
Pr 1:24 For I called and you would not answer,

I spoke and you would not listen. 50:2; 66:4 Jr 7:13
You did what I consider evil,
you chose to do what displeases me.
13 Therefore, thus speaks
the Lord Yahweh:
You shall see my servants eat
while you go hungry.
You shall see my servants drink
while you go thirsty.
You shall see my servants rejoice
while you are put to shame.
14 You shall hear my servants sing
for joy of heart,
while you will moan
for sadness of heart;
you will wail for distress of spirit.

15 My chosen ones will use as a curse the name you leave behind: May the Lord Yahweh strike you dead.[g] But my servants are to be given[h] a new name. 1:26+; 56:5; 62:2
16 Whoever asks to be blessed on earth will ask to be blessed by the God of truth, and whoever takes oath on earth will take oath by the God of truth, for Rv 2:17
17 past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes. •For now I create 51:6; 66:22 2 P 3:13
new heavens and a new earth, and the past will not be remembered, and will come ↗ Rv 21:1
18 no more to men's minds. •Be glad and rejoice for ever and ever for what I am
19 creating, because I now create Jerusalem 'Joy' and her people 'Gladness'. •I shall 1:26+
rejoice over Jerusalem and exult in my people. No more will the sound of weeping 60:14+ 62:5
20 or the sound of cries be heard in her; •in her, no more will be found the infant living ↗ *Rv 21:4*
a few days only, or the old man not living to the end of his days. To die at the Dt 4:40
age of a hundred will be dying young; not to live to be a hundred will be the
21 sign of a curse. •They will build houses and inhabit them, plant vineyards and 62:8 Dt 28:30-33
22 eat their fruit. •They will not build for others to live in, or plant so that others Jr 31:5 Am 9:14
can eat. For my people shall live as long as trees, and my chosen ones wear out
23 what their hands have made. •They will not toil in vain or beget children to 49:21
their own ruin, for they will be a race blessed by Yahweh, and their children
24 with them. •Long before they call I shall answer; before they stop speaking Ws 6:16
25 I shall have heard. •The wolf and the young lamb will feed together, *the lion* 11:6-7
eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. *They will do no hurt,* Gn 3:14
no harm on all my holy mountain, says Yahweh.[i] Is 11:9

Oracle[a]

1 66 Thus says Yahweh:
With heaven my throne Ps 11:4 Mt 5:34f ↗ Ac 7:49-55
and earth my footstool,
what house could you build me, 2 S 7:4f 1 K 8:27
what place could you make for my rest?
2 All of this was made by my hand Ps 24:1-2

c. Hebr. inserts 'who rejoice', a gloss.
d. Text corr. following Greek and Latin.
e. 'gave up' following versions; 'caused to tremble' Hebr.

65 a. Ch. 65 and 66 (66:1, 2 excepted) apparently form one apocalypse. They may date from the return from exile or later.
b. The Jews.
c. Probably alluding to the practice of spending the night in the corner of a sanctuary to obtain a dream-revelation.
d. 'I might sanctify you' following Symmachus and Theodotion; Hebr. uncertain. Initiates claim that their sanctity is contagious.
e. 'their... their' versions; 'your... your' Hebr.
f. This 'Gad' is the Aramaean god of good fortune; Meni is a god mentioned elsewhere.
g. Understand 'like them'.
h. 'my servants are to be given' Greek and Lat.
i. The coming restoration will be like a new creation. On this return to the conditions of the earthly paradise, cf. 11:6+.

66 a. This oracle must have been delivered after the Temple had been rebuilt. It warns against an unduly materialistic notion of the presence of God in the Holy of Holies.

and all of this is mine[b]—it is Yahweh who speaks.
Ps 51:17 But my eyes are drawn to the man
of humbled and contrite spirit,
who trembles at my word.

Against the intrusion of idolatrous practice

3 Some immolate an ox, some slaughter a man,
some sacrifice a lamb, some strangle a dog.
Some offer oblations of pig's blood,
some burn memorial incense, some consecrate idols.
Since they elect to follow their own ways
and their souls delight in their abominations,
4 I in my turn will select hardships for them
and bring them what they dread;
50:2; 65:12 Pr 1:24 Jr 7:13 2 Th 1:8 for I called and no one would answer,
I spoke and they would not listen.
They did what I consider evil,
they chose to do what displeases me.

An apocalyptic poem[c]

5 Listen to the word of Yahweh,
you who tremble at his word.
Your brothers say, who hate you,
who reject you because of my name,
2 Th 1:10,12 'Let Yahweh show his glory,[d]
let us witness your joy!'
But they shall be put to shame.

6 Listen. An uproar from the city!
↗ Rv 16:17 A voice from the Temple!
The voice of Yahweh bringing
retribution on his enemies.

7 Long before being in labour
she has given birth.
Before being overtaken by birth pangs,
Jn 16:21 ↗ Rv 12:5 she has been delivered of a boy.[e]

8 Who ever heard of such a thing,
who ever saw anything like this?
Is a country born
in one day?

Is a nation brought forth
all at once,
that Zion only just in labour
should bring forth sons?

9 Am I to open the womb[f] and not bring to birth?
says Yahweh.
Or I, who bring to birth, am I to close it?
says your God.

10 Tb 13:14 Rejoice,[g] Jerusalem,
be glad for her, all you who love her!
Rejoice, rejoice for her,
all you who mourned her!

11 That you may be suckled, filled,
from her consoling breast,

that you may savour with delight
her glorious breasts.[h]

12 For thus says Yahweh:
Now towards her I send flowing Ps 46
peace, like a river,
and like a stream in spate
the glory of the nations.

At her breast will her nurslings[i] be carried
and fondled in her lap.
13 Like a son comforted by his mother
will I comfort you.
(And by Jerusalem you will be comforted.)

14 At the sight your heart will rejoice,
and your bones flourish like the grass.
To his servants Yahweh will reveal his hand,
but to his enemies his fury.

15 For see how Yahweh comes in fire,
his chariots like the tempest,
to assuage his anger with burning, Th 1:8
his threats with flaming fire.

16 For by fire will Yahweh execute judgement,
and by his sword, against all mankind.
The victims of Yahweh will be many.

A fragment condemning pagan mysteries[j]

17 As for those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves to enter
the gardens,
following the one in the centre,[k]
who eat the flesh of pigs, reptiles, rats:
their deeds and their thoughts shall end[l] all at once
—it is Yahweh who speaks.

An eschatological discourse

18 I am coming to gather the nations of every language. They shall come to
19 witness my glory. •I will give them a sign and send some of their survivors[m]
to the nations: to Tarshish, Put, Lud, Moshech, Rosh, Tubal, and Javan, to the
distant islands[n] that have never heard of me or seen my glory. They will proclaim Ps 65:5
20 my glory to the nations. •As an offering to Yahweh they will bring all your
brothers, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, on dromedaries, from all
the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem, says Yahweh, like Israelites
21 bringing oblations in clean vessels to the Temple of Yahweh. •And of some Ps 87:7+
of them I will make priests and Levites, says Yahweh.

22 For as the new heavens 65:17
and the new earth I shall make 2 P 3:13

66 b. 'is mine' following Greek and Syr.; 'has been' Hebr.
c. The consolatory section of the apocalypse of ch. 65-66.
d. 'show his glory' following versions.
e. The new nation to which Jerusalem gives birth. The metaphor indicates the abrupt advent of the new world.
f. Yahweh the creator is the author of fruitfulness.
g. The verb is in the singular with Greek; Hebr. has plural.
h. 'her breasts' trans. conj.
i. 'her nurslings' Greek; 'and you will suck' Hebr.
j. These two verses may be taken with vv. 3-4.
k. Probably the one who conducts the ceremony (or a priestess, since the text has the feminine) in the centre of the procession through the sacred garden.
l. 'reptiles' corr. 'their deeds and their thoughts' is part of v. 18 in Hebr.
m. I.e. of the nations conquered by Yahweh.
n. Tarshish, cf. Ps 48:7+, presumably meaning Tartessos in Spain, the limit of the known world. Put (in the Greek; 'Pul' Hebr.) is Somaliland, Lud probably Libya. Moshech and Tubal are peoples of Asia Minor. Rosh, cf. Ezk 38:2, is unknown. Javan designates the Ionians. See the Table of Nations in Gn 10 and Ezk 38.

will endure before me—it is Yahweh who speaks—
so will your race and name endure.

From New Moon to New Moon, 23
from sabbath to sabbath,
Ps 65:2 all mankind will come to bow down
in my presence, says Yahweh.

And on their way out they will see 24
the corpses of men
who have rebelled against me.
Jdt 16:17
Si 7:17
↗ Mk 9:48 Their worm will not die
nor their fire go out;
they will be loathsome to all mankind.

JEREMIAH

Title

1 The words[a] of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, of a priestly family living at Anathoth[b] 1 k 2:26-27 Is 10:30
2 in the territory of Benjamin. •The word of Yahweh was addressed to him in Ze 1:1 Lk 3:2
the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his
3 reign;[c] •then in the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the deportation of Jerusalem which occurred in the fifth month.[d]

I. ORACLES AGAINST JUDAH AND JERUSALEM

A. IN THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

The call of Jeremiah

4 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me, saying,

5 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;[e] Is 49:1,5 Lk 1:15 Jn 10:36 Ac 26:17 ✓Ga 1:15 Rm 8:29
before you came to birth I consecrated you;[f]
I have appointed you' as prophet to the nations'

6 I said, 'Ah, Lord Yahweh; look, I do not know how to speak: I am a child!' Ex 4:10 Is 6:8+ Mt 10:19

7 But Yahweh replied, Jr 1:17
'Do not say, "I am a child".
Go now to those to whom I send you
and say whatever I command you.
8 Do not be afraid of them, Ezk 2:6
for I am with you to protect you—
it is Yahweh who speaks!'

9 Then Yahweh put out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me: Is 6:6-7 Ezk 3:1-3

'There! I am putting my words into your mouth. 2 S 23:2 Is 59:21
10 Look, today I am setting you 2 Co 10:8
over nations and over kingdoms,
to tear up and to knock down, Ho 6:5

1 a. Here 'words' means 'discourses and doings'—the 'story' of Jeremiah.
b. A village near Jerusalem to which Abiathar the priest had been exiled by Solomon.
c. Formula introducing the narrative of the prophet's call (626). 1:4-19.
d. This verse refers to the years from 608 to July 587; it does not therefore apply to ch. 40-44.
e. To 'know' means, for God, to choose and predestine, cf. Am 3:2; Rm 8:29. On man's 'knowledge' of God, cf. Ho 2:22+.
f. A designation for the prophetic function rather than an inward sanctification.

18:7; 31:28; 45:4
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.'

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me asking, 'Jeremiah, what do you 11
Is 55:10-11 Ba 2:9 Ezk 12:28 Dn 9:14 see?' 'I see a branch of the Watchful Tree'[g] I answered. •Then Yahweh said, 12
'Well seen! I too watch over my word to see it fulfilled.'

A second time the word of Yahweh was spoken to me, asking, 'What do you 13
4:5-31 Is 4:31 see?' 'I see a cooking pot on the boil,' I answered 'with its contents tilting from the North.'[h] •Then Yahweh said: 14

4:6; 6:1,22
'The North is where disaster is boiling over[i]
for all who live in this land;
since I am now going to summon all the kingdoms of the North[j]— 15
it is Yahweh who speaks.
They are going to come, and each will set his throne
in front of the gates of Jerusalem,
all round outside its walls,
and outside all the towns of Judah.
Ezk 5:8 I am going to pronounce my judgements against them 16
for all their wickedness; since they have abandoned me
to offer incense to other gods
and worship what their own hands have made.

'So now brace yourself for action. 17
1:7-8 Stand up and tell them
all I command you.
Ezk 2:6 Do not be dismayed at their presence,
or in their presence I will make you dismayed.
15:20 I, for my part, today will make you 18
into a fortified city,
a pillar of iron,
and a wall of bronze
to confront all this land:
the kings of Judah, its princes,
its priests and the country people.
They will fight against you 19
but shall not overcome you,
for I am with you to deliver you—
it is Yahweh who speaks.'

The earliest preaching of Jeremiah:[a] the apostasy of Israel

Ps 71:17 Ho 11:1 *Ezk 16:1*
2 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me, saying, •'Go and shout this in ½
the hearing of Jerusalem:

"Yahweh says this:
11:15 Ho 2:16-17+ Rv 14:4+
I remember the affection[b] of your youth,
the love of your bridal days:
you followed me through the wilderness,
Ex 13:17+ through a land unsown.
Ex 19:6+ Dt 7:6 Ps 114:2
Israel was sacred to Yahweh, 3
the first-fruits of his harvest;
anyone who ate of this had to pay for it,
misfortune came to them—
it is Yahweh who speaks." '
Is 5:4 Ho 4:1-3
Listen to the word of Yahweh, House of Jacob, 4
and all you families of the House of Israel.
Thus says Yahweh, 5
'What shortcoming did your fathers find in me

that led them to desert me?
Vanity they pursued, — 2 K 17:15; Ps 115:8; Ho 9:10
vanity they became.[c]
6 They never said, "Where is Yahweh,
who brought us out of the land of Egypt — Dt 8:14-16; 32:10-12
and led us through the wilderness,
through a land arid and scored,
a land of drought and darkness,[d]
a land where no one passes,
and no man lives?"
7 I brought you to a fertile country — Ex 3:8+; Dt 8:7-10
to enjoy its produce and good things;
but no sooner had you entered than you defiled my land,
and made my heritage detestable.
8 The priests have never asked, "Where is Yahweh?" — 23:13
Those who administer the Law[e] have no knowledge of me. — 8:8
The shepherds[f] have rebelled against me; — Ezk 34:1+
the prophets have prophesied in the name of Baal,
following things with no power in them.
9 So I must put you on trial once more
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
and your children's children too.
10 Now take ship for the islands of Kittim[g]
or send to Kedar[h] to enquire. — 18:13-16
Take careful notice and observe
if anything like this has happened.
11 Does a nation change its gods? — Dt 32:21
—and these are not gods at all!
Yet my people have exchanged their Glory — Ex 24:16+; Ps 106:20; Ho 4:7; ✗ Rm 1:23
for what has no power in it.[i]
12 You heavens, stand aghast at this,
stand stupefied, stand utterly appalled[j]
—it is Yahweh who speaks.
13 Since my people have committed a double crime:
they have abandoned me, — Is 1:4
the fountain of living water, — 17:13; Ps 36:9; Ba 3:12; Jn 4:1+
only to dig cisterns for themselves,
leaky cisterns
that hold no water.
14 'Is Israel then a slave, — Jn 8:35
or born to serfdom,
for him to be preyed on like this?

g. 'Watchful' *(sheqed)* is the Hebrew name for the almond tree, the first to blossom. Such plays on words are common with the prophets.

h. Jeremiah at his fireside sees a tilting saucepan; it is the starting-point of a revelation.

i. 'is boiling (over)' Greek; 'is open' Hebr.

j. 'all the kingdoms of the North' Greek; 'all the clans of the kingdoms' Hebr.

2 a. With the exception of a few passages, ch. 2-6 contain his earliest preaching, before the reform under Josiah (621). With the relapse into idolatry and the threat of Nebuchadnezzar in the reign of Jehoiakim, these passages resume their relevance.

b. The word *hesed*, cf. Ho 2:21+, stands for the intimacy between Israel and God within the covenant, here with the accent on love.

c. 'Vanity' is often used of false gods. 'Those shall be like them who make them', Ps 115:8.

d. 'darkness' corr.; 'the shadow of death' Hebr.

e. The priests themselves.

f. The king and the ruling class.

g. The ancient Phoenician colony of Kition (Citium) in Cyprus; but here the term must include the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean. Here the text adds 'and see'.

h. Tribe of Transjordanian nomads; here representing the East, as Kittim does the West.

i. The monotheism of the early prophets involves the rejection of alien gods which, for them, are 'vanity', 'emptiness', 'helplessness', 'nothing'. After the Exile this implied condemnation becomes explicit in formal demonstrations of their non-existence, see Is 41:21+; 46:20+; cf. Jr 10:1-16.

j. 'stand appalled' following Syr.

Lions have roared at him, 15
loudly they have roared.
They have reduced his land to a desert;
his towns lie burnt and desolate.
The people of Noph and Tahpanhes 16
Is 3:17; 7:20 have even shaved your skull![k]
Have you not brought this on yourself, 17
by abandoning Yahweh your God?[l]
Is 30:1-3 Lm 5:6 What is the good of going to Egypt now 18
to drink the water of the Nile?
What is the good of going to Assyria
to drink the water of the river?[m]
Your own wickedness is punishing you, 19
your own apostasies are rebuking you:
consider carefully
how evil and bitter it is for you
to abandon Yahweh your God
and not to stand in awe of me
—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks.

3:2; 5:5 Ho 10:11 Mt 11:28-30 'It is long ago now since you broke your yoke, 20
burst your bonds
Dt 12:2+ 1 K 14:23+ Is 1:21; 57:5 Ezk 16:16 and said, "I will not serve!"
Yet[n] on every high hill
and under every spreading tree
Dt 23:19+ you have lain down like a harlot.
Yet I had planted you, a choice vine, 21
5:10; 6:9; 8:13 Is 5:1+ a shoot of soundest stock.
How is it you have become a degenerate plant,[o]
you bastard Vine?
Jb 9:30 Should you launder yourself with potash 22
and put in quantities of lye,
I should still detect the stain of your guilt
—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.
How dare you say, "I am not defiled, 23
2:31 Ho 2:8 I have not run after the Baals?"
Look at your footprints in the Valley,[p]
and acknowledge what you have done.
A frantic she-camel running in all directions[q]
bolts for the desert, 24
snuffing the breeze in desire;
who can control her when she is on heat?
Whoever looks for her will have no trouble,
he will find her with her mate![r]
Beware! Your own foot may soon go unshod, 25
your own throat may grow dry.
18:12; 22:21 Ho 2:7 Am 2:4 But "Who cares?" you said
"For I am in love with strangers
and they are the ones I follow".

'Like a thief in the disgrace of being caught, 26
so will the House of Israel be:
they, their kings, their princes,
their priests and their prophets,
Ws 13:17 Is 44:9 Ho 4:12 who say to a piece of wood, "You are my father", 27
to a stone, "You have begotten me".
Dt 32:18 They turn their backs to me,

never their faces;
but when trouble comes they shout,
"Get up! Save us!"
28 Where are those gods of yours you made for yourself? Dt 32:37-38
Let them get up to save you when trouble comes!
For you have as many gods
as you have towns, Judah, =11:13
as many altars for Baal
as Jerusalem has streets.[s]
29 What case can you make against me?
You have all apostatised from me
—it is Yahweh who speaks.
30 In vain I have struck down your sons, Am 4:6+
you[t] did not accept correction:
your sword devoured your prophets Mt 23:37
like a destructive lion.
31 What a brood you are! Listen, this is the word of Yahweh:[u]
Have I been a desert for Israel
or a land of deepest gloom?
Then why do my people say, 2:23; 22:21 Jb 21:14
"We will go our own way,
we will no longer come to you?"
32 Does a girl forget her ornaments,
a bride her sash?
And yet my people have forgotten me, 18:15 Dt 32:18 Ps 106:21
for days beyond number.

33 'How well you know the way
in pursuit of love!
Yes, you have even accustomed your steps
to walk with crime,
34 to the point when your hands display Is 1:15
the stains from the blood of innocent men.[v]
—You never caught them trying to break and enter![w]
Yes, for all these you will have to answer.[x]
35 You say, "I am blameless,
his anger has turned away from me".
And here I am passing sentence on you
because you say, "I have not sinned".

36 'How frivolously you undertake
a change of course!
But you will be disappointed by Egypt
just as you were by Assyria.

k. 'shaved' conj.; 'broken' Hebr. Noph is Memphis, capital of Lower Egypt; Tahpanhes is a frontier town to the E. of the Delta. Jeremiah alludes to the Egyptian intervention of 608-605.

l. Hebr. adds 'when he led you in the way'.

m. 'Nile' lit. 'Shihor', a branch of the Nile; 'the river' is the Euphrates. These metaphors stand for the policy of appealing to the great powers; the prophets unanimously opposed this policy.

n. Israel while proclaiming its self-sufficiency is enslaved to false gods. In this passage, as in Ho, cf. Ho 1:2+, prostitution signifies idolatry, with secondary reference to sacred prostitution, cf. Dt 23:19+.

o. 'a degenerate plant' conj.

p. The Valley of Ben-hinnom or Gehenna where Topheth was, cf. Jr 7:31 and Lv 18:21+.

q. Lit. 'entangling her ways'.

r. 'bolts' conj. 'with her mate', lit. 'in her lair', conj. based on Greek.

s. The last two lines following Greek and 11:13; Hebr. omits.

t. 'you' Greek; 'they' Hebr.

u. Lit. 'See the word of Yahweh', the text is uncertain.

v. 'hands' Greek. 'the... blood', Hebr. inserts 'poor' before 'innocent'. He means either murdered prophets or sacrificed children, cf. 3:24; 7:31; 19:5, cf. Lv 18:21+.

w. The only permissible form of homicide was of a housebreaker caught in the act, Ex 22:1.

x. Line corr.

You will have to leave there too 37
with your hands on your head,
Ho 2:15 for Yahweh has rejected those that you rely on,
you will come to no good with them.'

The conversion[a]

3 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me saying: 1

'If a man divorces his wife
and she leaves him
to marry someone else,
Dt 24:1-4 may she still go back to him?[b]
Has not that piece of land
been totally polluted?
And you, who have prostituted yourself with so many lovers,
you would come back to me?—it is Yahweh who speaks.

2:20
Dt 12:2+ 'Lift your eyes to the bare heights[c] and look! 2
Is there a single place where you have not offered your body?
You waited by the roadside for clients
like an Arab in the desert.
You have polluted the country
with your prostitution and your vices:
5:24; 14:4
Lv 26:19 this is why the showers have been withheld, 3
the late rains have not come.

'And you maintained a prostitute's bold front,
never thinking to blush.
Tb 13:4 Even then[d] did you not cry to me, "My father! 4
You, the friend of my youth!
Will he keep his resentment for ever, 5
will he maintain his wrath to the end?"
That was what you said,[e] and still you went on sinning,
you were so obstinate.'

The Northern Kingdom urged to repent[f]

Is 50:1
Ezk 16:1;
↗ 23 In the days of King Josiah, Yahweh said to me, 'Have you seen what disloyal 6
Israel has done? How she has made her way up every high hill and to every
Dt 12:2+ spreading tree, and has prostituted herself[g] there? •I thought: After doing all 7
this she will come back to me. But she did not come back. Her faithless sister
Dt 24:1 Judah saw this. •She also saw[h] that I had repudiated disloyal Israel for all her 8
adulteries and given her her divorce papers. Her faithless sister Judah, however,
was not afraid: she too went and played the whore. •So shameless was her 9
whoring that at last she polluted the country; she committed adultery with lumps
of stone and pieces of wood.[i] •Worse than all this: Judah, her faithless sister, has 10
not come back to me in sincerity, but only in pretence—it is Yahweh who speaks.'
And Yahweh said to me, 'Beside faithless Judah, disloyal Israel seems virtuous. 11
So go and shout these words towards the North: 12

31:21
Ps 103:9-10
Lk 15:20 "Come back, disloyal Israel—it is Yahweh who speaks—
I shall frown on you[j] no more,
since I am merciful—it is Yahweh who speaks.
I shall not keep my resentment for ever.
Dt 12:2
Ho 2:7 Only acknowledge your guilt: 13
how you have apostatised from Yahweh your God,
how you have flirted with strangers[k]
and have[l] not listened to my voice—it is Yahweh who speaks.

Zion in the messianic age[m]

14 "Come back, disloyal children—it is Yahweh who speaks—for I alone am your Master. I will take one from a town, two from a clan, and bring you to
15 Zion. •I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and these shall feed you on
16 knowledge and discretion. •And when you have increased and become many in the land, then—it is Yahweh who speaks—no one will ever say again: Where is[n] the ark of the covenant of Yahweh? There will be no thought of it, no memory
17 of it, no regret for it, no making of another.[o] •When that time comes, Jerusalem shall be called: The Throne of Yahweh; all the nations will gather there in the name of Yahweh[p] and will no longer follow the dictates of their own stubborn hearts.
18 "In those days the House of Judah will unite with the House of Israel;[q] together they will come from the land of the North to the land I gave your ancestors for a heritage.

Is 4:3+
23:4 Ezk 34:1+
1 Co 2:9
Ex 25:8+
Is 1:26+ Ezk 48:35
Is 45:14+
Gn 13:14-15

Continuation of the poem on the conversion[r]

19 "And I was thinking:
How I wanted to rank you with my sons,
and give you a country of delights,
the fairest heritage of all the nations!
I had thought you would call me: My father,
and would never cease to follow me.[s]
20 But like a woman betraying her lover,
the House of Israel has betrayed me[t]—
it is Yahweh who speaks." [e]

21 A noise is heard on the bare heights:
the weeping and entreaty[u] of the sons of Israel,
because they have gone so wildly astray,
and forgotten Yahweh their God.
22 'Come back, disloyal sons,
I want to heal your disloyalty.'
'We are here, we are coming to you,
for you are Yahweh our God.[v]
23 The heights are a delusion after all,
so is the tumult of the mountains.[w]

'Yahweh our God is, after all,
the saving of Israel.
24 The Thing of Shame[x] has devoured what our ancestors worked for

Ho 2:9

Ps 62:7; 75:7; 121:1-2 Is 2:12-18

3 a. Two passages, 3:6-13 and 3:14-18, interrupt the poem, which is continued in 3:19–4:4.

b. Following Greek; Hebr. 'may he go back to her?' Dt 24:1-4 forbids such remarriage. Israel, though not repudiated by God, has been so unfaithful that her return and reconciliation would be a miracle of grace, cf. vv. 19f; 31:23; Ho 1-3.

c. An expression not uncommon in Jr; here it indicates the 'high places'.

d. 'even then' corr.

e. Lit. 'Thus *(hennah)* you spoke' corr.; Hebr. *hinneh* 'behold'.

f. This section dates from the reign of Josiah and is to be assigned to the period following the reform of 621. It attests Jeremiah's consistent hope for the Northern Kingdom, cf. 30:1–31:22. It seems to have inspired Ezk 23.

g. '(she) prostituted' corr.; Hebr. 'you (sing.) prostituted'.

h. 'She saw' Syr.; 'I saw' Hebr.

i. Allusion to the syncretic cult in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon.

j. 'you' (sing.) corr.; 'you' (plur.) Hebr.

k. False gods. Hebr. adds 'under every spreading tree'.

l. Singular Greek and Vulg.; Hebr. has plural.

m. This passage presupposes the events of 587.

n. 'Where is' conj.

o. Evidently the ark had been destroyed with the Temple by the Chaldaeans in 587. Jerusalem itself is to become 'the throne of Yahweh' as the ark had formerly been, Ex 25:10+; 2 S 6:7+.

p. Hebr. adds 'in Jerusalem'.

q. For messianic days the prophets foretell a kingdom united as in the time of David and Solomon, Jr 23:5-6; 31:1; Ezk 37:15-27; Ho 2:2; Is 11:13-14; Mi 2:12; Zc 9:10.

r. Continued from v. 5. What law did not permit, v. 1, grace makes possible.

s. Lit. 'thou wouldst call... wouldst never cease' *qere*, Targ., Vulg.; Hebr. 'you' (plur.) in each case.

t. The verse is translated according to the Greek.

u. Contrasting with 3:2.

v. In v. 22 Yahweh appeals, the repentant community answers.

w. Following Greek. God brings down the high and mighty.

x. A name for Baal.

since our youth
(their flocks and herds, their sons and daughters).
Let us lie down in our shame, let our dishonour be our covering, 25
22:21 for we have sinned against Yahweh our God

('we and our ancestors since our youth until today; and we have not listened to the voice of Yahweh our God).'

4 'If you wish to come back, Israel—it is Yahweh who speaks— 1
it is to me you must return.
Do away with your abominations
and you will have no need to avoid me.[a]
12:16 If you swear, "As Yahweh lives!" 2
truthfully, justly, honestly,
the nations will bless themselves by you,
Gn 12:3+ and glory in you[b].
For thus speaks Yahweh 3
to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem:
Ho 10:12 Clean your ground thoroughly,
sow nothing among thorns.
6:10; 24:7 Dt 10:16 Ba 2:31 Ezk 11:19; 18:31; 36:26 Ac 7:51 Rm 2:28 Ph 3:3 Col 2:11 Circumcise yourselves for Yahweh; off with the foreskin of your hearts[c] 4
(men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem),
lest my wrath should leap out like a fire,
and burn with no one to quench it,
in return for the wickedness of your deeds.'

1:13-15 **Invasion from the North[d]**

Announce it in Judah, 5
proclaim it in Jerusalem!
Jl 2:1+ Sound the trumpet in the countryside,
shout the message aloud:
=8:14 Mobilise!
Take to the fortified towns!
Signpost the way to Zion; 6
Run! Do not delay!
1:14 I am bringing you disaster from the North,
an immense calamity.
Na 2:12 The lion is up from his thicket, 7
the destroyer of nations is on his way,
he has come from his home
to reduce your land to a desert;
your towns will be in ruins, deserted.
So wrap yourselves in sackcloth, 8
lament and wail,
since the burning anger of Yahweh
has not turned away from us.

'That day—it is Yahweh who speaks— 9
the king's heart will fail him,
the princes' hearts will fail them too,
the priests will stand aghast,
the prophets stupefied.
People will say, "Ah, Lord Yahweh, 10
how utterly you deceived us[e]
14:13 by saying: You will have peace,[f]—
even when the sword is at our throats!"
When that time comes, this will be said 11

to this people and to Jerusalem:
From the bare heights a scorching wind — Ho 4:19
blows from the desert[g] on the daughter of my people
—and not to winnow or to cleanse! — 51:2
12 A wind, full of threats,[h] comes at my command.
Now I myself am going to pronounce
sentence on them!
13 "Look, he is advancing like the clouds,[i]
his chariots like a hurricane,
his horses swifter than eagles.
Trouble is coming! We are lost!"
14 Wash your heart clean of wickedness, Jerusalem,
and so be saved.
How long will you harbour in your breast
your pernicious thoughts?
15 For a voice from Dan shouts the news, — 8:16
proclaims disaster from the highlands of Ephraim.
16 Give warning of it, announce it in Judah,
proclaim it to Jerusalem:
"Enemies are coming from a distant country,[j]
shouting their war cry against the towns of Judah;
17 they surround Jerusalem[k] like watchmen round a field
because she has apostatised from me—it is Yahweh who speaks.
18 Your own behaviour and actions — Ac 8:23
have brought this on you.
This is your fate! How bitter!
How it pierces your heart!" '
19 I am in anguish! I writhe with pain![l] — 10:19 Lm 1:20 Hab 3:16
Walls of my heart!
My heart is throbbing!
I cannot keep quiet,
for I have heard the trumpet call
and the cry of war.
20 Ruin on ruin is the news:
the whole land is laid waste,
my tents are suddenly destroyed, — 10:20
in one moment all that sheltered me is gone.
21 How long must I see the standard
and hear the trumpet call?
22 [m]'This is because my people are stupid, — Dt 32:6,28
they do not know me,
they are slow-witted children,

4 a. Following Greek.
b. 'you' corr.; 'him' Hebr. The promise to Abraham is renewed.
c. For Israel, circumcision, Gn 17:10+, was the symbol of the covenant. For Jeremiah the symbol is meaningless without inward devotion, 'circumcision of the heart', cf. Dt 10:16. Israel refuses to listen to God, he has 'uncircumcised ears', Jr 6:10; he refuses to repent, he has an 'uncircumcised heart', 9:24-25, cf. Lv 26:41. Yahweh himself, by converting Israel, will circumcise its heart, Dt 30:6. Foreigners are said to be uncircumcised in heart and flesh, Ezk 44:7. The N.T. uses the same metaphor, Ac 7:51, and St Paul teaches that true circumcision, the circumcision which is the mark of the true Israel, is that of the heart, Rm 2:25-29, cf. 1 Co 7:19; Ga 5:6; 6:15; Ph 3:3; Col 2:11; 3:11.
d. Here, as in 1:15, the enemy from the north is not any nation in particular. Jeremiah possibly has in mind both the Scythians (who, between 630-625, are found on the Syria-Palestine frontier) and the Assyrians. In 605, when the Chaldaean invasion threatened, this prophetic oracle would have alarming relevance.
e. 'People will say' following Greek; 'And I said' Hebr. 'us' corr.; 'this people and Jerusalem' (v. 11) Hebr.
f. Allusion to the promises of the false prophets.
g. 'blows from the desert' corr.
h. 'full of threats' corr.
i. The 'destroyer' of v. 7.
j. 'announce it in Judah' corr. 'enemies' corr. following Greek.
k. Lit. 'her'.
l. Jeremiah identifies himself with his suffering country.
m. Yahweh is the speaker.

they have no understanding:
Ps 52:3 Mi 7:3 they are clever enough at doing wrong,
but do not know how to do right.'

I looked to the earth, to see a formless waste; 23
to the heavens, and their light had gone.
Na 1:5 I looked to the mountains, to see them quaking 24
and all the heights astir.
I looked, to see no man at all, 25
the very birds of heaven had fled.
I looked, to see the wooded country a wilderness, 26
all its towns in ruins,
at the presence of Yahweh,
at the presence of his burning anger.
Yes, thus speaks Yahweh, 27
'The whole land shall be laid waste,
I will[n] make an end of it once for all;
Ho 4:3 at which the earth will go into mourning, 28
and the heavens above grow dark.
For I have spoken and will not change my mind,
I have decided and will not go back on it.'[o]
At the cry 'Horsemen and bowmen!' 29
the whole country takes flight:
some plunge into the thickets,
others scale the rocks;
every town is abandoned,[p]
no one is left there.
13:21 And you,[q] what are you going to do? 30
Is 3:16-24 Ezk 23:40 You may dress yourself in scarlet,
put on ornaments of gold,
enlarge your eyes with paint
but you make yourself pretty in vain.
30:14 Ezk 16:37-40; 23:22-29 Your lovers disdain you,
your life is what they are seeking.
Yes, I hear screams like those of a woman in labour, 31
6:24; 10:19; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 49:24; 50:43 anguish like that of a woman giving birth to her first child;
they are the screams of the daughter of Zion, gasping,
Ps 48:6 Is 13:8+ hands outstretched,
'Ah, I despair! I am fainting away
with murderers surrounding me.'

The invasion well deserved[a]

Ps 55:9 5 'Rove to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, 1
look, now, and learn,
search her squares;
Ps 14:1-3 Mi 7:2 if you can find a man,
one man who does right
and seeks the truth,
Gn 18:16-33 Ezk 14:12+ then I will pardon her,
says Yahweh.'[b]

Yahweh, do not your eyes desire to look on truth? 3a
Is 48:1 But though they say, 'As Yahweh lives', 2
they are, in fact,[c] uttering a false oath.
Is 1:5; 9:12 Am 4:6+ You have struck them; they have not felt it. 3b
You have crushed them; they have ignored the lesson.
They have set their faces harder than rock,

they have refused to repent. Rv 16:9.11
4 'Only the ordinary people' I thought 'behave stupidly,
because they do not know what Yahweh requires,[a] Ho 4:6
nor the ruling of their God.
5 I will approach the men in power
and speak to them,
for these will know what Yahweh requires,[a]
and the ruling of their God.'
But these, too, had broken the yoke, 2:20
had burst the bonds. Ho 10:11 Mt11:28-30
6 And this is why a lion from the forest strikes them down,
a desert wolf makes havoc of them,
a leopard lurks round their towns:
whoever goes out is torn to pieces—
because of their countless crimes,
their ever increasing apostasies.

7 'Why should I pardon you?
Your sons have abandoned me,
to swear by gods that are not gods at all.
I fed them full, and they became adulterers, Dt 32:15
they haunted[e] the brothel.
8 They were well-fed, lusty[f] stallions,
each neighing for his neighbour's wife.
9 And am I not to punish them for such things =5:29; 9:8
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
or from such a nation
exact my vengeance?
10 Scale her terraces! Destroy!
Make[g] an end of her!
Strip off her branches, 2:21+ Is 5:1 Lm 2:8
Yahweh does not own them.
11 Treacherously indeed has she betrayed me,
this House of Israel[h]—it is Yahweh who speaks.

12 'They have disowned Yahweh: Ps 14:1 Pr 1:32 Am 6:1 Zc 1:12
they have said, "He is nothing;[i]
no evil will overtake us,
we shall not see sword or famine. Is 28:15 Am 9:10
13a And the prophets? Nothing but wind;
the word is not in them!"
14a Hence—so says Yahweh,
the God of Sabaoth—
13b this is what is going to happen to them
14b for saying this:
now I will make my words 23:29 Ho 6:5 Rv 11:5
a fire in your mouth,
and make this people wood,

a. 'I will' corr.; 'I will not' Hebr.
o. Text corrected from Greek.
p. 'the whole country', 'every town' Greek.
q. Jerusalem; Hebr. adds 'desolate one'.

5 a. To the principal indictment against the idolatrous contamination of Yahwistic worship Jeremiah adds practical atheism, and obduracy, vv. 3,12-13, sensuality, vv. 7-8, exploitation of the poor, vv. 26-29, the blame for which he throws on the ruling classes, vv. 4-5, the priests and the prophets, v. 31.
b. 'says Yahweh' absent from Hebr.
c. 'in fact' Syr. and Hebr. MSS.
d. Lit. 'the way of Yahweh'.
e. Greek and some Hebr. MSS.
f. 'lusty' corr.; 'wandering' Hebr.
g. 'Make' corr.; 'Do not make' Hebr., cf. 4:27+. The Greek continues 'spare her branches, for Yahweh owns them'.
h. Hebr. adds 'and the House of Judah', but here the prophet is using the hallowed name 'Israel' for the Southern Kingdom.
i. Lit. 'Not he'. This is a denial not of God's existence but of his intervention, cf. Ps 14:1+. An alternative interpretation is '(We want) none of him'.

for the fire to devour.

Dt 28:49-52 Is 5:26 Ba 4:15 Na 2:2
Now I will bring on you all 15
a nation from afar, House of Israel
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
an invincible nation,
an ancient nation,
Is 28:11
a nation whose tongue you do not know,
whose language you cannot understand.
Their quiver is an open tomb; 16
heroes all of them.
They will devour your harvest and your food, 17
devour your sons and daughters,
devour your flocks and herds,
Hab 3:17
devour your vines and fig trees,
bring down your fortified towns
in which you put your trust.[j]

Two supplementary paragraphs

Is 4:3+
'Yet even in those days—it is Yahweh who speaks—I shall not completely 18
destroy you.
16:10f; 22:8f Dt 29:23-24
'And when they ask,[k] "Why has Yahweh our God done all this to us?" you 19
are to give them this answer, "As you abandoned me to serve alien gods in your
Dt 28:47-48
own land, so you must serve aliens in a land that is not your own".

8:18-23; 14 **In a time of famine (?)**

12:4f
'Announce this in the House of Jacob, 20
proclaim it in Judah, and say:
"Now listen to this, 21
stupid and thoughtless people
Dt 29:3 Ezk 12:2 Mk 8:18
—they have eyes and do not see,
they have ears and do not hear!
Have you no fear of me?—it is Yahweh who speaks— 22
Will you not tremble at my presence,
who set the sands as limit to the sea,
Jb 38:8-11 Ps 104:9
as an everlasting barrier it can not pass:
it storms but can do nothing,
its waves may roar but do not pass beyond.
But this people 23
has a rebellious, unruly heart;
they have rebelled—being good at this![l]
They have not said in their hearts: 24
Come, we must fear Yahweh our God
3:3 Dt 11:14
who gives the rain, the early rain
and the later, at the right time of year,
who assures us
1 S 12:17+
of weeks appointed for harvest.
Your crimes have made all this go wrong, 25
your sins have deprived you of these favours.

Resumption of the theme of the invasion

"Yes, there are wicked men among my people 26
who spread their nets;
like fowlers[m] they set snares,
Ps 10:8
but it is men they catch.
Like a cage full of birds 27
so are their houses full of loot;

they have grown rich and powerful because of it,
28 fat and sleek. Ps 73:7
Yes, in wickedness they go to any lengths,
they have no respect for rights,
for orphans' rights, to support them;
they do not uphold the cause of the poor.
29 And must I not punish them for such things =5:9
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
or from such a nation
exact my vengeance?
30 Monstrous, horrible things
are happening in the land:
31 the prophets prophesy falsely, 14:14; 23:13 Lm 2:14 Mi 2:11
the priests teach[n] whatever they please.
And my people love it!
But when the end comes, what will you do? Is 10:3

More about the invasion

1 6 "Save yourselves, men of Benjamin,[a]
from the heart of Jerusalem!
Sound the trumpet in Tekoa![b] Jl 2:1+
Set up a standard on Beth-hac-cherem!
For disaster threatens from the North, 1:13-15
an immense calamity.
2 Shall we compare the daughter of Zion
to a tender pasture?[c]
3 Shepherds advance on her 12:10
with their flocks.
They have pitched their tents all round her,
each grazes the part he chooses.
4 Prepare for battle against her![d]
To arms! We will launch the attack in broad daylight.
Despair! The daylight is fading already,
the evening shadows lengthen.
5 To arms! We will launch the attack under cover of dark
and destroy her palaces.
6 For thus says Yahweh Sabaoth:
Cut down the trees,
throw up an earthwork outside Jerusalem:
she is the City of Falsehood,[e] Ps 55:9
with nothing but oppression in her.
7 As a well keeps its water fresh
so she keeps her wickedness fresh.
Violence and ruin are what you hear in her, Hab 1:3
diseases and wounds are always before me.
8 Be warned, Jerusalem,
lest I should turn away from you,
and reduce you to a desert, Ho 2:5
a land without people.

j. Hebr. adds 'with the sword'. This oracle is resumed in v. 26.
k. 'they ask' corr.; 'you ask' Hebr.
l. Lit. 'and they were able' corr.; 'and they went away' Hebr.
m. Text corr.

n. Lit. 'and the priests teach (corr.; Hebr. 'rule') at their hands'.

6 a. Possibly the prophet's fellow townsmen in Anathoth, addressed as if having taken refuge in Jerusalem.
b. To rally those fleeing southwards. Tekoa, the home town of Amos, is 5 m. south of Bethlehem.
c. Text corr.
d. Lit. 'sanctify war', war being reckoned a sacred undertaking, cf. 22:7; Jl 4:9.
e. Greek; Hebr. 'the city that is visited'.

"Yahweh Sabaoth says this: 9
2:21+ Is 5:1 Glean, glean,[f] as a vine is gleaned,
what is left[g] of Israel;
like a grape-picker pass your hand again
over the branches!" '
To whom am I to speak, 10
whom can I urge to hear?
4:4+ Plainly their ears are uncircumcised,
they cannot listen.
Plainly the word of Yahweh is for them something contemptible,
they have no taste for it.
But I[h] am full of the wrath of Yahweh, 11
I am weary of holding it in.
'Then pour it on the children in the streets,
and where young men gather, too.
All shall be taken: husband and wife,
the greybeard and the man weighed down with years.
=8:10-12 Their houses shall pass to other men, 12
so also their fields and their wives.
Yes, I will stretch my hand
over those living in this land—it is Yahweh who speaks.
For all, least no less than greatest, 13
all are out for dishonest gain;
23:11 Lm 4:13 prophet no less than priest,
all practise fraud.
They dress my people's wound 14
Ezk 13:10 Lk 1:79 1 Th 5:3 without concern: "Peace! Peace!" they say,
but there is no peace.[i]
They should be ashamed of their abominable deeds. 15
But not they! They feel no shame,
they have forgotten how to blush.
And so as others fall, they too shall fall;
they shall be thrown down when I come to deal with them
—says Yahweh.

'Yahweh says this: 16
Put yourselves on the ways of long ago[j]
18:15 enquire about the ancient paths:
which was the good way? Take it then,
↗ Mt 11:29 and you shall find rest.
Instead they have said, "We will not take it".
Ezk 3:17 Ho 8:1; 9:8+ I posted look-outs[k] on their behalf: 17
Listen to the sound of the trumpet!
But they answered, "We will not listen".
Then hear, you nations, 18
and know, assembly,
what I will do to them.[l]
Hear, earth! 19
I am bringing a disaster
on this people:
Pr 1:29-31 it is the fruit of their apostasy,[m]
since they have not listened to my words
and, as for my Law, they have rejected that.
What do I care about incense 20
1 K 10:1+ imported from Sheba,
or fragrant cane

from a distant country?
Your holocausts are not acceptable, Am 5:21+
your sacrifices do not please me.
21 Therefore—thus says Yahweh:
In front of this people I will now lay blocks
for them to stumble over;
father as well as son,
neighbour and friend, all shall perish.

22 'Yahweh says this:
Now a people is coming from the land of the North, 1:14; =50: 41-43
from the far ends of the earth a mighty nation stirs: Is 5:26 Ba 4:15 Na 2:2
23 they are armed with bow and spear, =*50:41-43*
they are cruel and pitiless;
their noise is like the roaring of the sea;
they are riding horses,
each man equipped[n] for war
on you, daughter of Zion!
24 We have heard the news,
our hands fall limp,
anguish has gripped us,
pain like a woman's labour. 4:31+
25 Do not go out into the countryside,
do not venture on the roads,
for the enemy's sword is there,
there is terror on every side. 20:10+
26 Wrap yourself in sackcloth, daughter of my people, Lm 2:10
roll in ashes;
mourn as for an only son, Am 8:10 Zc 12:10
a very bitter dirge.
For on us suddenly
the destroyer is coming.

27 'I have appointed you as assayer of my people,[o] Lm 4:1
to learn and to assay how they behave.
28 They are apostates, all of them, promiscuous slanderers,[p]
all of them corrupt.
29 The bellows blast away 9:6 Is 1:22 Ezk 22:17-22 Ml 3:23
to make the fire burn away the lead.[q]
In vain: the smelter does his work,
but the dross is not purged out.
30 Silver-reject, men call them,
and indeed Yahweh has rejected them!'

f. Following Greek. Yahweh instructs Jeremiah to collect a few who will listen to him. Vv. 10-11 express the prophet's discouragement; Yahweh's answer follows.

g. Here, as in 8:3, the expression is still not technical. It becomes so in 23:3; 31:7 (there translated 'remnant'), indicating the faithful Israel, heir to the blessings to come, cf. Is 4:3+.

h. 'But I' corr.

i. Allusion to the lying promises of the false prophets, 14:13; 23:17; 28:8-9, of whom Jeremiah is to make bitter enemies by his forecasts of disaster. They foretell 'peace', *shalom*, which for the Hebrew means not merely the absence of external danger (a primary preoccupation in the times of Jeremiah) but an ideal state of happiness in which individual and nation prosper and social harmony reigns (the 'peace' characterising the messianic age, cf. Is 11:6+). 'Peace! Peace!' could be translated here as 'All is well!'

j. 'on the ways of long ago' corr.

k. The prophets.

l. 'I will do' is here supplied.

m. 'apostasy' Greek; 'scheming' Hebr.

n. 'each man equipped' corr.

o. Hebr. adds 'as a fortress'.

p. 'apostates' Greek. Hebr. adds '(they are but) bronze and iron'.

q. 'to make the fire burn away the lead' following Greek. To purify the silver ore, it is thrown into molten lead, for the silver to separate from the dross which, combining with the oxydised lead, settles at the bottom of the melting-pot. Here the operation fails: no pure metal emerges.

B. ORACLES MAINLY IN THE REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM

26:1-19+ **True worship**[a]

a. Against the Temple[b]

11:15-17 Ezk 24:21 7 The word that was addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh, 2 'Go and stand at the gate of the Temple of Yahweh and there proclaim this message. Say, "Listen to the word of Yahweh, all you men of Judah who come in by these gates to worship Yahweh. 3 Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Amend your behaviour and your actions and I will stay with you[c] here in this place. 4 Put no trust in delusive words like these: This is the sanctuary of Yahweh, the Is 1:16-17 sanctuary of Yahweh, the sanctuary of Yahweh! 5 But if you do amend your 22:3 behaviour and your actions, if you treat each other fairly, 6 if you do not exploit the stranger, the orphan and the widow (if you do not shed innocent blood Ezk 20:2+ in this place), and if you do not follow alien gods, to your own ruin, 7 then here in this place I will stay with you, in the land that long ago I gave to your fathers for ever. 8 Yet here you are, trusting in delusive words, to no purpose! Ho 4:2 Steal, would you, murder, commit adultery, perjure yourselves, burn incense 9 to Baal, follow alien gods that you do not know?—10 and then come presenting yourselves in this Temple that bears my name, saying: Now we are safe—safe ↗Mt 21:13+ Mk 11:17 Lk 19:46 to go on committing all these abominations! 11 Do you take this Temple that bears my name for a robbers' den? I, at any rate, am not blind—it is Yahweh who speaks.

26:6 1 S 1:3; 4:12-22 Ps 78:59-69 Now go to my place in Shiloh[d] where at first I gave my name a home; see 12 what I have done to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel! 13 And now, since you have committed all these sins—it is Yahweh who speaks—and 35:15 Pr 1:24 Is 50:2; 65:12; 66:4 have refused to listen when I spoke so urgently, so persistently, or to answer when I called you, 14 I will treat this Temple that bears my name, and in which 12:7 you put your trust, and the place I have given to you and your ancestors, just as I treated Shiloh. 15 I will drive you out of my sight, as I drove all your kinsmen, the entire race of Ephraim."

b. Alien gods

11:14; 14:11 'You, for your part, must not intercede for this people, nor raise either plea or 16 Jdt 8:19 prayer on their behalf; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you. 17 Cannot you see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The children collect the wood, the fathers light the fire, the women knead the 44:17-19 Ho 3:1 dough, to make cakes for the Queen of Heaven;[e] and, to spite me, they pour libations to alien gods. 19 Is it really me they spite—it is Yahweh who speaks— Ba 1:15 is it not in fact themselves, to their own confusion? 20 Therefore, the Lord Yahweh says this: My anger and my wrath shall be poured out on this place, over man and beast, trees of the countryside, fruits of the soil; it shall burn, and not be quenched.

11:1-14 **c. Worship without sincerity**

11:15-17 'Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Add your holocausts to 21 6:20 Am 5:21+ your sacrifices and eat all the meat. 22 For when I brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt, I said nothing to them, gave them no orders, about holocaust 22:21 and sacrifice. 23 These were my orders: Listen to my voice, then I will be your God and you shall be my people. Follow right to the end the way that I mark out for you, and you will prosper. 24 But they did not listen, they did not pay 9:13 Ps 81:12 Ba 1:22 attention; they followed[f] the dictates of their own evil hearts, refused to face me, and turned their backs on me. 25 From the day your ancestors came out of the land 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 44:4 2 Ch 36:15 Dn 9:6 Am 3:7 of Egypt until today, day after day[g] I have persistently sent you all my servants the prophets. 26 But they have not listened to me, have not paid attention; they have grown stubborn and behaved worse than their ancestors. 27 You may say all

these words to them: they will not listen to you; you may call them: they will
28 not answer. •So tell them this, "Here is the nation that will not listen to the
voice of Yahweh its God nor take correction. Sincerity is no more, it has Is 7:9+
vanished from their mouths.[h]

d. More about idolatrous worship: a threat of exile 19:1-13

29 "Cut off your tresses, throw them down. Mi 1:16
On the bare heights raise a dirge.
For Yahweh has rejected, has abandoned,
a brood that he detests."

30 'Yes, the sons of Judah have done what displeases me—it is Yahweh who
speaks. They have put their abominations[i] in the Temple that bears my name, =32:34
31 to defile it; •they have built the high place[j] of Topheth in the Valley of Ben- Lv 18:21+
hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters; a thing I never commanded, a thing
32 that never entered my thoughts. •So now the days are coming—it is Yahweh =19:6
who speaks—when people will no longer talk of Topheth or of the Valley of
Ben-hinnom, but of the Valley of Slaughter. Topheth will become a burial ground,
33 for lack of other space; •the corpses of this people will feed the birds of heaven 16:4; 34:20 Ps 79:2
34 and the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to drive them away. •I will 16:9; 25:10 Is 24:8 Jr Ba 2:23 Ho 2:13 Rv 18:22 Ba 2:24 Na 1:14
silence the shouts of rejoicing and mirth, the voices of bridegroom and bride,
in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, for the whole land will be
1 reduced to desert. 8 When that time comes—it is Yahweh who speaks—the
bones of the kings of Judah, and of the princes, of the priests, of the prophets,
2 of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, will be taken from their tombs. •They will be Ezk 6:45
spread out before the sun, the moon, the whole array of heaven, whom they have
loved and served, followed, consulted and worshipped.[a] They will not be
3 gathered or reburied but stay lying on the surface like dung. •And death will 16:4; =25:33 2 K 9:37 Ps 83:10
seem preferable to life to all the survivors of this wicked race, wherever I have
driven them—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks.

Threats, lamentations, advice.[b] The perversity of Israel

4 'You are to tell them, "Yahweh says this:
If you fall, can you not stand up again,
if you stray can you never find your way back?
5 Why does this people[c] persist in apostasy,
in continuous apostasy?
They cling to illusion,
they refuse to come back.
6 I have listened attentively,
they are not saying what they ought to:

7 a. The following discourses, placed together because of their common concern with religious observance, belong to the reign of Jehoiakim.

b. Ch. 26 narrates the events that prompted this tirade delivered in the early days of Jehoiakim (608). That the Temple was sanctified by the presence of Yahweh, 1 K 8:10f, cf. Dt 4:7+, might make it seem indestructible, and Sennacherib's setback outside the very walls of Jerusalem in 701 had shown how Yahweh protected his holy city, 2 K 19:32-34; Is 37:33-35. The conclusion was too readily drawn that this protection would be effective a second time. Jeremiah is about to shock his countrymen, ch. 26, by asserting, like Micah before him, Mi 3:12, that their confidence is illusory: that God may well desert his Temple, Ezekiel similarly was to see the glory of Yahweh abandoning the sanctuary, Ezk 11:23.

c. 'stay with you' Greek A, and Vulg.; 'make you stay' Hebr. So also in v. 7.

d. The shrine at Shiloh had been destroyed by the Philistines.

e. 'for the Queen' Greek A, Vulg., and cf. 44:17 Greek; 'for the army' Hebr. The 'Queen of Heaven' is Ishtar, the Assyrian goddess of fertility.

f. Hebr. inserts 'the counsels', absent from Greek.

g. 'day after day' one Hebr. MS, Syr.

h. Lit. 'it has been cut off from their mouth'.

i. I.e. loathsome idols.

j. 'the high place' Greek, Targ.; 'the high places' Hebr.

8 a. Worship of the heavenly bodies was widely practised in the reigns of Manasseh and Amon.

b. This section, 8:4–10:25, is a collection of oracles delivered in the reign of Jehoiakim, about 605. The three poems of 8:4-7; 8:13-18; 9:1-8 resume and expand the reproaches against Israel. The lamentation, 9:9-21, is continued in 10:17-22 and ends with the prayer of Jeremiah in 10:23-24. Other poems of Jeremiah have then been added, 8:8-9; 8:10-12; 8:18-23; 9:22-23; 9:24-25. The fragment 10:1-16 does not seem to be authentic.

c. Hebr. inserts 'Jerusalem', absent from Greek.

not one repents of his wickedness
saying: What have I done?
All go astray as they pursue their course
like a horse charging into battle.
Jb 39:26 Is 1:3 Even the stork in the sky 7
knows the appropriate season;
turtledove, swallow, crane,
observe their time of migration.
And my people do not know
the ruling of Yahweh!

The Law as administered by the priests

2:8 Ob 8 ✗ Mt 23 "How dare you say: We are wise, 8
and we possess the Law of Yahweh?
But look how it has been falsified
by the lying pen of the scribes![d]
The wise shall be shamed, 9
caught out, confounded.
Look how they have rejected the word of Yahweh!
So what use is their[e] wisdom to them?

Repetition of an earlier threat[f]

=6:12-15 "So I will give their wives to other men, 10
their fields to new masters,
for all, least no less than greatest,
all are out for dishonest gain;
prophet no less than priest,
all practise fraud.
They dress my people's wound 11
without concern: Peace! Peace! they say,
but there is no peace.
They should be ashamed of their abominable deeds. 12
But not they! They feel no shame,
they have forgotten how to blush.
And so as others fall, they too shall fall;
they shall be thrown down when I come to deal with them
—says Yahweh.

Threats against Judah the Vine

Is 5:1+ Mt 21:18-22+ Lk 13:6-9 "I would like to go harvesting there,[g] says Yahweh. 13
But there are no grapes on the vine,
no figs on the fig tree:
even the leaves are withered.
This is because I have brought them
ravagers to ravage them." [h]
'Why do we sit still? 14
=4:5 Mobilise!
Let us take to the fortified towns
and perish there,
since Yahweh our God wants us to perish:
9:14 giving us poisoned water to drink
because we have sinned against him.
=14:19 Is 59:9 We were hoping for peace—no good came of it! 15
For the time of healing—nothing but terror!
4:15 From Dan you can hear 16
the snorting of their horses;

at the sound of their stallions' neighing
the whole countryside quakes:
they come to devour the land and all it holds,
the town and those that live in it.'

17 'Yes, now I send you — Nb 21:6; Dt 32:24
serpents, adders,
against which no charm exists;
they will bite you—it is Yahweh who speaks— — Gn 3:14-15
18 incurably.[i]

A lamentation of the prophet during a famine[j] — 5:20–25:14

'Sorrow overtakes[k] me, — 12:4f
my heart fails me.
19 Listen, the cry of the daughter of my people
sounds throughout the land,
"Yahweh no longer in Zion?
Her King no longer in her?"
(Why have they provoked me with their carved images,
with these Nothings from foreign countries?)
20 "The harvest is over, summer at an end,
and we have not been saved!"
21 The wound of the daughter of my people wounds me too,
all looks dark to me, terror grips me.
22 Is there not balm in Gilead any more? — 46:11
Is there no doctor there?
Then why does it make no progress,
this cure of the daughter of my people?
23/1 Who will turn my head into a fountain,
and my eyes into a spring for tears,
so that I may weep all day, all night,
for all the dead out of the daughter of my people?

The moral corruption of Judah

1/2 9 'Who will find me a wayfarer's shelter — Ps 55:7
in the desert,
for me to quit my people,
and leave them far behind?
For all of them are adulterers,
a conspiracy of traitors.
2/3 They bend their tongue like a bow; — Ps 12:1-4; 64:3-4; 116:11; Hab 1:3
not truth but falsehood
predominates in the land;[a]
yes, they go from crime to crime.
But Yahweh,[b] they do not acknowledge him.
3/4 Let each be on his guard against his friend, — Ps 55:13
be mistrustful of your brother,
for every brother is a very Jacob,[c] — Gn 27:36; Is 43:26; Ho 12:4
and every friend a diligent slanderer.
4/5 Each deceives the other,

d. In this case the priests, guardians of the tradition preserved in the texts. The 'word', v. 9, means the teaching of the prophets.
e. 'their' corr.
f. A repetition of 6:12-15, here omitted by Greek.
g. Following Greek. Hebr. 'I shall consume them completely'.
h. This line (corr.) and the preceding are absent from Greek.
i. 'incurably' Greek.
j. Cf. v. 20.
k. 'overtakes' corr.
9 a. Following Greek.
b. 'Yahweh' corr.; 'me' Hebr. Hebr. adds 'oracle of Yahweh' absent from Greek.
c. A play on the name of Jacob ('the supplanter', Gn 25:26+). Alternative translation 'is a supplanter'.

they do not speak the truth,
Ps 52:3 Pr 26:25 they have accustomed their tongues to lying,
they are corrupt, incapable of •repentance. 5/6
Fraud after fraud![d] Deceit after deceit!
They refuse to acknowledge Yahweh.[e]
And so—Yahweh Sabaoth says this: 6/7
6:29+ Look, I will now test them in the crucible
—but how am I to deal with their wickedness?[f]
Their tongue is a deadly arrow, 7/8
the words they utter are deceitful;[g]
Ps 12:2; 55:13 Si 12:16 "Peace!" each says to his neighbour,[h]
while in his heart plotting a trap for him.
And am I not to punish them for such things 8/9
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
5:9 or from such a nation
exact my vengeance?

Lamentation in Zion

'Raise[i] the wail and lamentation for the mountains, 9/10
the dirge for the desert pastures,
for they have been burnt:[j] no one passes there,
the sound of flocks is heard no more.
Ho 4:3+ Birds of the sky and animals,
all have fled, all are gone.
I mean to make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, 10/11
Ps 44:19 a jackal's lair,
and the towns of Judah
34:22 an uninhabited wasteland.'

Who is wise enough to understand this? Who has been charged by Yahweh's own mouth to tell 11/12

Ho 2:5 why the land lies in ruins,
burnt like the desert where no one passes?

Ex 19:5 Yahweh has said, 'This is because they have forsaken my Law which I put before them and have not listened to my voice or followed it, •but have followed 12/13 13/14
7:24 the dictates of their own stubborn hearts, followed the Baals as their ancestors taught them. •And so this is what Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel says: 14/15
8:14; =23:15 Rv 8:11 Dt 4:27; 28:36,64 Tb 14:4 Now I am going to give this people wormwood for their food and poisoned water to drink. •I am going to scatter them throughout nations unknown to their ancestors or to them; and I am going to pursue them with the sword until I have exterminated them.' 15/16

[k]You, there! Call the mourning women! Let them come! 16/17
Send for those who are best at it! Let them come!
Let them lose no time in raising the lament for us! 17/18
Lm 1:2 Let our eyes rain tears,
our eyelids run with weeping!
Yes, the wail is to be heard from Zion, 18/19
'What ruin is ours,
what utter shame!
For we must leave the land,
abandon[l] our homes!'
And you, women, now hear the word of Yahweh, 19/20
let your ears take in the word his own mouth speaks.
Teach your daughters how to wail,
teach one another what dirge to sing,

20 'Death has climbed in at our windows, Lm 1:20
21 and made its way into our palaces;
it has cut down the children in the street,
the youths in the square.
21 22 [m]Men's corpses lie
like dung in the open field, 8:2
like sheaves left by the reaper, Ze 1:17
with no one to gather them.'

True wisdom

22 23 Thus says Yahweh,
'Let the sage boast no more of his wisdom, Ps 49:6
nor the valiant of his valour, Si 10:19,28
nor the rich man of his riches! ↗1 Co 1:31
↗2 Co 10:17
23 24 But if anyone wants to boast, let him boast of this: ↗Jm 1:9
of understanding and knowing me.[n]
For I am Yahweh, I rule with kindness,
justice and integrity on earth;
yes, these are what please me
—it is Yahweh who speaks.

Circumcision, a false guarantee 4:4+

24 25 25 26 'See, the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when I am going to
punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh: •Egypt, Judah, the sons of Rm 2:25
Ammon, Moab, and all the Crop-Heads[o] who live in the desert. For all these
nations,[p] and the whole House of Israel too, are uncircumcised at heart.'

Idols and the true God[a] Ps 115:4-8
Is 40:20+

1 2 **10** Listen, House of Israel, to the word that Yahweh addresses to you. •Thus
says Yahweh:

'Do not adopt the ways of the nations 2 K 19:17
or take alarm at the heavenly signs,[b] Is 40:19; 44:9
alarmed though the nations may be at them. Ba 6:3
3 Yes, the Dread[c] of the peoples is a nothing, Ws 13:11
wood, nothing more, cut out of a forest,
worked with a blade by a carver's hand,
4a then embellished with silver and gold
9 —silver leaf from Tarshish,
and gold from Ophir[d]—
work of a carver and a goldsmith's hand;

d. Following Greek.
e. 'Yahweh' corr.; 'me' Hebr. Hebr. adds 'oracle of Yahweh', absent from Greek.
f. 'their wickedness' Greek; 'the daughter of my people' Hebr.
g. Lit. 'the words of their mouth are deceitful', following Greek; Hebr. 'it speaks deceit; with his mouth'. Hebr. and Greek differ in assigning singulars and plurals in this verse.
h. The customary greeting is '*Shalom!*', peace; cf. 6:14+.
i. 'Raise' Greek; 'I raise' Hebr.
j. Others amend to 'laid waste'. Jerusalem is threatened; the reference is perhaps to Nebuchadnezzar's first campaign, in 605, 2 K 24:1.
k. Hebr. begins 'says this', Yahweh Sabaoth absent from Greek. But there is no divine oracle in the subsequent passage which is a continuation of v. 10.
l. '(we must) abandon' Greek.
m. Hebr. begins 'Speak thus—it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.
n. The 'knowledge of Yahweh' is the sum of true religion, cf. Ho 2:22+, and one of the main themes of Jeremiah's preaching, cf. Jr 2:8; 22:15-16; 24:7; 31:34.
o. Lit. 'who cut the corners of their hair'; the Arabs.
p. 'all these nations' corr.; 'all these nations are uncircumcised' Hebr. (Greek adds 'as to the flesh'): most of these nations did in fact practise physical circumcision.
10 a. This section, 10:1-16, presumably not authentic, elaborates on themes in the second part of Is: the nothingness of false gods, cf. Is 40:20+, and the majesty of Yahweh the creator, cf. Is 42:8+. The text is overloaded: vv. 6-8.10 are absent from the Greek in which the order is different; v. 11 is an Aramaic gloss of v. 12.
b. The stars.
c. 'Dread' corr.; 'the customs' Hebr. 'Dread' refers to an idol.
d. 'Ophir' Targ. and Syr.

all some craftsman's work;
they dress them up in violet and purple;
they fix them with nail and hammer 4b
to prevent them from falling.
Scarecrows in a melon patch, and dumb as these, 5
they have to be carried, cannot walk themselves.
Have no fear of them: they can do no harm
—nor any good either!'

Ps 86:8 Is 40:18; 42:8+ Yahweh, there is no one like you, 6
so great are you,
so great your mighty name.
Ps 47:8 ↗ Rv 15:4 Who would not revere you, King of nations? 7
Yes, this is your due.
Since of all the wise among the nations,
and in all their kingdoms,
there is not a single one like you.

The whole lot of them[e] are brutish and stupid: 8
the teaching given by these Nothings is void of sense.[f]
Ps 10:16 But Yahweh is the true God. 10
He is the living God,
the everlasting King.
The earth quakes when he is wrathful,
the nations cannot endure his fury.

Gn 2:4 Ws 14:11 Is 2:18 ('Tell them this, "The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth, 11
will vanish from the earth and from under the heavens".')

=51:15-19 Jb 38 Ps 104 Pr 8:27-31 By his power he made the earth, 12
by his wisdom set the world firm,
by his discernment spread out the heavens.
When he thunders[g] 13
there is a tumult of water in the heavens;
||Ps 135:7 he raises clouds from the boundaries of earth,
makes the lightning flash for the downpour,
and brings the wind from his storehouse.
Ezk 6:6 At this all men stand stupefied, uncomprehending, 14
every goldsmith blushes for the idol he has made,
since his images are nothing but delusion,
with no breath in them.
They are a Nothing, a laughable production; 15
Is 2:18 when the time comes for them to be punished, they will vanish.
'The Portion of Jacob'[h] is not like these, 16
for he is the maker of everything,
Est 4:17h Ps 74:2 and Israel is the tribe that is his heritage.
His name is Yahweh Sabaoth.

Panic in the country

Ezk 12:3 Pack up! Flee the country,[i] 17
you the besieged!
For Yahweh says this, 18
'Now I will throw out
the inhabitants of the land,
this time,
and bring distress on them,
to see if they will find me then!'[j]
4:19,31 I despair[k] for this wound of mine! 19

My injury is incurable!
I told myself
this was an affliction that could be borne,
20 but now my tent is destroyed, 4:20
all my ropes are snapped,
my sons have left me and are no more; Is 54:1-2
no one is left to put my tent up again,
or to hang the side-cloths.'
21 The shepherds are the ones who have been stupid: Is 56:11 Ezk 34:1
they have not searched for Yahweh.
This is why they have not prospered
and why their whole flock has been dispersed.
22 News! News has come!
A mighty uproar coming from the land of the North
to reduce the towns of Judah
to desert, to a jackal's lair.

A prayer of Jeremiah

23 Well you know,[l] Yahweh,
the course of man is not in his control, Pr 20:24
nor is it in man's power as he goes his way
to guide his steps.
24 Correct us, Yahweh, gently, ||Ps 6:1; 38:1
not in your anger or you will reduce us to nothing.[m]

25 Pour out your anger on the pagans, ||Ps 79:6-7 Si 36:1 1 Th 4:5 2 Th 1:8
who do not acknowledge you,
and on those races
that do not call on your name,
for they have devoured Jacob and made an end of him, 30:16 Is 9:11
and reduced his home to desolation.[n]

Jeremiah and observance of the covenant[a] 7:21-28

1 2 3 11 The word that was addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh, •[b]'Speak to the men
of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. •Tell them, "Yahweh, the
God of Israel, says this: Cursed be the man who will not listen to the words, Dt 27:26
4 of this covenant •which I ordained for your ancestors when I brought them out
of the furnace of iron, out of the land of Egypt. Listen to my voice, I told them, 1 K 8:51
carry out all my orders, then you shall be my people and I will be your God, Dt 4:20
5 to confirm the oath I swore to your fathers, that I would give them a land where Dt 6:3; 7:12-13; 10:15; 11:9
6 milk and honey flow—as it still does today." ' I replied, 'Yahweh, I will'. •Then
Yahweh said to me, 'Proclaim all this in the towns of Judah and in the streets
7 of Jerusalem: "Listen to the words of this covenant and obey them. •For when
I brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt, I solemnly warned them, 22:21; 26:5
8 and have persistently warned them until today: Listen to my voice. •But they
did not listen, did not pay attention; everyone followed the dictates of his own evil

e. The continuation of v. 5.
f. 'void of sense' corr. 'wood' Hebr. V. 9 is here placed between 4a and 4c.
g. Lit. 'when he gives voice' corr.
h. Yahweh, cf. Ps 73:26.
i. The threat is addressed to personified Judah; he danger appears more imminent than in 9:9-21.
j. 'will find me' corr. The line is ironic.
k. The personified nation laments. The prophet himself does not apparently speak again until v. 21.
l. 'you know' corr.; 'I know' Hebr.
m. 'Correct us', 'reduce us' Greek; 'Correct me', 'reduce me' Hebr.
n. Following Greek; Hebr. repeats 'and they have devoured him'.
11 a. In 622 King Josiah undertook a religious reform, 2 K 22:3–23:27+, supported by the priestly and prophetic parties. Apparently Jeremiah took an active part in it as this passage records. It contains many phrases peculiar to Dt, the discovery of which, 2 K 22:8, prompted the reform. The substance of the passage, v. 6, the second part of v. 8, vv. 9-12, is to be ascribed to Jeremiah; the remainder is composed of secondary additions. Vv. 7-8 are absent from Greek.
b. Hebr. begins 'Hear the words of this covenant and', which is meaningless here. 'Speak' (sing.) Greek; 'Speak' (plur.) Hebr.

heart. So, I fulfilled against them all the words of this covenant which I had ordained for them to obey and which they had not obeyed." '

Yahweh said to me, 'Plainly there is conspiracy among the men of Judah 9
Nb 25:1-3 Ho 9:10 and the citizens of Jerusalem. •They have reverted to the crimes of their 10
ancestors who refused to listen to my words: they too are following alien gods
and serving them. The House of Israel and the House of Judah have broken
my covenant which I made with their ancestors. •And so —Yahweh says this— 11
Pr 1:28 Is 59:2 I will now bring them a disaster which they cannot escape; if they invoke me
Ezk 8:18 Mi 3:4 I will not listen to them. •The towns of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem 12
can go and invoke the gods to whom they burn incense, but these will be no
help at all to them in the time of their distress.

=2:28

'For you have as many gods 13
as you have towns, O Judah.
You have built[c] as many incense altars to Baal
as Jerusalem has streets.

7:16 'You, for your part, must not intercede for this people, nor raise either plea or 14
prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their
distress.[d]

7:1-15,21-28 **Rebuke to the frequenters of the Temple[e]**

2:2

'What is my beloved[f] doing in my house? 15
She is playing the hypocrite!
Can vows and consecrated meat
rid you of your guilt?
Am I to make you clean because of this?
Ps 52:8 Is 5:1+ A spreading olive tree so fair, so sturdy, 16
was Yahweh's name for you.
With the roar of a great wind
he sets its foliage on fire;
its branches burn.[g]

'And Yahweh Sabaoth, who planted you, has decreed disaster for you because 17
of the crime the House of Israel and the House of Judah have committed,
provoking me by burning incense to Baal.'

15:10+ **Jeremiah persecuted in his own town[h]**

Yahweh revealed it to me; I was warned. Yahweh, that was when you opened 18
my eyes to their scheming. 12 'Yes, even your own brothers and your own 6
family play you false. Behind your back, they too criticise you openly. Put no
12:3 Is 53:7 reliance on them when they seem to be friendly.' 11 I for my part was like a 19
trustful lamb being led to the slaughter-house, not knowing the schemes they were
Ps 83:3 Ws 2:12 plotting against me, 'Let us destroy the tree in its strength,[i] let us cut him off from
the land of the living, so that his name may be quickly forgotten!'

17:10: =20:12 1 K 8:39 Ps 7:9; 44:21; 139:13 Pr 15:11 Ws 1:6 ↗ Ac 1:24 ↗ Rv 2:23

But you, Yahweh Sabaoth, who pronounce a just sentence, 20
who probe the loins and heart,
let me see the vengeance you will take on them,
for I have committed my cause to you.[j]

This is how Yahweh has spoken against the men of Anathoth who are 21
Is 30:10 Am 2:12 determined to kill me[k] and have warned me, 'Do not prophesy in the name of
Yahweh or you will die at our hands!' •[l]"This is how I will punish them. Their 22
young men shall die by the sword, their sons and daughters by famine. •No one 23
will be left when I bring disaster on the men of Anathoth, when the year comes
for their punishment.'

The prosperity of the wicked[a] Jb 21 Ps 49:72

1 12 You have right on your side, Yahweh,
when I complain about you.
But I would like to debate a point of justice with you.
Why is it that the wicked live so prosperously? Ps 94:3 Qo 8:14
Why do scoundrels enjoy peace?
2 You plant them, they take root,
and flourish, and even bear fruit.
You are always in their lips,
yet so far from their hearts.
3 You know me, Yahweh, you see me, Ps 139:1-3
you probe my heart, it is in your hands.[b]
Drag them off like sheep for the slaughter-house, 11:19 Ps 5:11+
reserve them for the day of butchery.

4 (How long will the land be in mourning, and the grass wither all over the countryside? The animals and birds are dying as a result of the wickedness of the inhabitants.)[c] 5:20-25; 8:18-23; 14 Ho 4:3+

For they say,
'God does not see our behaviour'.[d]

5 If you find it exhausting to race against men on foot, 15:10+
how will you compete against horses?
If you are not secure in a peaceful country,
how will you manage in the thickets along the Jordan?[e]

Yahweh laments his ravaged inheritance

7 'I have abandoned my house,[f] 7:14 Ps 78:61-62; 80:12f
left my heritage,
I have delivered what I dearly loved
into the hands of its enemies.
8 For me my heritage has become
a lion in the forest,
it roars at me ferociously:
so I now hate it.
9 Or is my heritage a speckled bird 18:22
for the birds to flock on her thus from all directions?[g]
Come on, all you wild beasts, gather round,
fall on the quarry![h]
10 Many shepherds have laid my vineyard waste, 6:3 Is 5:1; 56:11

c. Following Greek; Hebr. inserts 'altars to Shame'.
d. 'in the time of' Hebr. MSS and versions.
e. Discourse probably delivered in the Temple at the same period as ch. 7. V. 17 is the continuation of 11:1-14.
f. Feminine in Greek; Hebr. has masculine.
g. 'sturdy' Greek; 'with fine fruit' Hebr. 'its foliage' corr.; 'it' Hebr. 'burn' Vulg.; 'are defaced' Hebr.
h. By championing the reform, and thus the suppression of the local shrines, Dt 12:5, cf. 2 K 23, Jeremiah earned the hatred of his fellow townsmen. We read 12:6 before 11:19.
i. 'in its strength' corr.; 'with its bread' Hebr.; Greek 'we shall put wood (that is, according to Targ., poison) in his bread'. The Christian liturgy applies this verse to the Passion of Christ.
j. 'I have committed' corr.; 'I have revealed' Hebr. On such appeals to God for revenge, cf. Ps 5:10+.
k. 'me' Greek; 'you' Hebr.
l. Hebr. begins with a repetition of 'This is how Yahweh has spoken', absent from Greek.

12 a. This is the first time that this problem is posed in O.T. See Introduction to the Wisdom Books.
b. Lit. 'you probe my heart with you'.
c. A gloss alien to the context, but akin to other passages in Jr which also refer to a period of drought.
d. Following Greek.
e. 'you are not secure' Greek; 'you are secure' Hebr. 'in the thickets', lit. 'in the luxurious vegetation'. Far from granting the prophet's plea for revenge, Yahweh's answer predicts further persecutions for him; far from answering his question, 12:1+, it leaves the problem of retribution still a mystery. Cf. Jb 38:1f; 40:1-5; 42:1-6. For v. 6, see before 11:19.
f. As in Zc 9:8 'house' here means 'land'.
g. 'for the birds to' conj. As on carrion, the birds of prey swoop on Israel, an allusion to the incursions of Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites into Palestine after 602, 2 K 24:1-2.
h. 'gather', 'fall on' (lit. 'come') Vulg.; 'gather (the wild beasts)', 'bring them' Hebr.

have trampled down my inheritance,
reducing my pleasant inheritance
to a deserted wilderness.
They have[i] made it a mournful, desolate place, 11
desolate before me.
The whole land has been devastated
and no one takes it to heart.
The devastators have arrived 12
on all the bare heights of the desert
(for Yahweh wields a sword that devours):
from end to end of the land
there is no peace for any living thing.
Wheat they have sown, thorns they reap: 13
they have worn themselves out, to no profit.
They are disappointed in their[j] harvests,
through the fury of Yahweh.

The neighbouring peoples: their judgement and salvation

'Thus says Yahweh:[k] As for all my evil neighbours who have laid hands on the 14
heritage I granted my people Israel I will now tear them from their countries.
(But I will tear the House of Judah out of their hands.) •But, once torn out, I will 15
take pity on them again and bring them back each to his heritage, each to his own
Is 45:14+ 4:2 country. •And if they take care to learn my people's way[l] and to swear by my 16
name, "As Yahweh lives", as my people learned from them to swear by Baal,
then they shall have a place among my people. •But if any nation refuses to 17
listen, I will tear it up by the roots and destroy it—it is Yahweh who speaks.'

The symbol of the loincloth[a]

13 Yahweh said this to me, 'Go and buy a linen loincloth and put it round 1
your waist. But do not dip it in water.' •And so, as Yahweh had ordered, 2
I bought a loincloth and put it round my waist. •A second time the word of 3
Yahweh was spoken to me, •'Take the loincloth that you have bought and are 4
wearing round your waist; up! Go to the Euphrates and hide it in a hole in the
rock.' •So I went and hid it near the Euphrates as Yahweh had ordered me. 5
Many days afterwards Yahweh said to me, 'Get up and go to the Euphrates and fetch 6
the loincloth I ordered you to hide there'. •So I went to the Euphrates, and I 7
searched, and I took the loincloth from the place where I had hidden it. The
loincloth was spoilt, good for nothing. •Then the word of Yahweh was addressed 8
to me, •'Thus says Yahweh: In the same way I will spoil the arrogance of 9
Judah and Jerusalem. •This evil people who refuse to listen to my words, who 10
follow the dictates of their own hard hearts, who have followed alien gods, and
served them and worshipped them, let them become like this loincloth, good
Ps 76:10+; 109:19 for nothing. •For just as a loincloth clings to a man's waist, so I had intended[b] 11
the whole House of Judah to cling to me—it is Yahweh who speaks—to be my
people, my glory, my honour and my boast. But they have not listened.

The symbol of the shattered wine jugs

'Tell this people,[c] "Any jug can be filled with wine". And if they answer you, 12
"Do you think we do not know that any jug can be filled with wine?" •you are to 13
Is 51:17+ say, "Thus says Yahweh: I am now going to fill all the inhabitants of this
land with drunkenness, the kings who occupy the throne of David, the priests
and the prophets, and all the citizens of Jerusalem. •And I will smash them 14
one against the other, father and son together—it is Yahweh who speaks.
Mercilessly, relentlessly, pitilessly, I will destroy them." '

A vision of exile

Listen, pay attention, away with pride— 15

Yahweh is speaking!

16 Give glory to Yahweh our God — Jn 12:35-36
before he brings darkness down
and your feet stumble
on the darkened mountains.
You hope for light, — 14:19
but he will turn it into deep shadow, — Am 5:18
change it into gloom.

17 If you do not listen to this warning,
I will bewail your pride in secret,[d]
tears will flood my eyes,
for Yahweh's flock is led into captivity.

Jehoiachin threatened[e]

18 Tell the king and the queen mother, — 37:1f
'Sit in a lower place,
since your glorious crown
has fallen from your head'.[f]

19 The towns of the Negeb are shut off[g]
with no one to give access to them.
All Judah has been deported,
deported wholesale.

An admonition to impenitent Jerusalem

20 'Raise your eyes, Jerusalem,[h] and look at these
now coming from the North.
Where is the flock once entrusted to you,
the flock that was your boast?

21 What will you say when they descend on you[i] — 4:30+
as conquerors,
those you yourself taught
to be your friends?
Will not anguish grip you — 4:31+
like a woman in labour?

22 You may ask yourself,
"Why has all this happened to me?" — 5:19
Because of your great wickedness your skirts have been pulled up,[j] — Is 47:2-3 Ho 2:5+
and you have been manhandled.

23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin,
or the leopard his spots?
And you, can you do what is right, — Ho 5:4 Mt 7:16-19p
you[k] so accustomed to wrong?

24 I will scatter you like chaff
driven by the desert wind.

25 This is your share, the wage of your apostasy.[l]
This comes from me—it is Yahweh who speaks—

i. 'They have' Syr., Vulg., Targ.; 'He has' Hebr.
j. 'their' Greek; 'your' Hebr.
k. Hebr. inserts 'as regards'.
l. 'way' Greek, i.e. the religion of Israel.

13 a. This describes not an action performed but a symbolic vision. The meaning is plain: Israel whom Yahweh had fastened as close to himself as a belt round his waist, cf. Ps 76:10+, has broken away and contracted the corruption of Babylonian idolatry.
b. Hebr. inserts 'the whole House of Israel and', a gloss absent from the Syro-Hexapla.
c. Greek. Hebr. 'Say this word to them, "Thus speaks Yahweh, the God of Israel" '.
d. Hebr. adds '(my eye) will weep and weep', absent from Greek.
e. Jehoiachin reigned for only 3 months; he and his mother were exiled to Babylon in 598.
f. 'from your head' Greek.
g. Probably by the Edomites.
h. Following Greek.
i. Lit. 'they visit you' Greek; 'he visits you' Hebr.
j. Men were led naked into captivity, women with their skirts above their knees.
k. 'you' corr.
l. 'apostasy' Greek; 'measure' Hebr.

because you have forgotten me
and put your trust in a Delusion.
I will also pull your skirts up as high as your face 26
and let your shame be seen.
2:20+ Oh! Your adulteries, your shrieks of pleasure, 27
your vile prostitution!
On the hills, in the countryside,
I have seen your Abominations.[m]
Woe to you, Jerusalem, unclean still!
How much longer will you go on like this?'

5:20-25; 8: 18-23; 12: 4f **The great drought**[a]

Am 4:7 14 The word of Yahweh that was addressed to Jeremiah on the occasion of 1
the drought.

'Judah is in mourning, 2
Lm 1:4 her towns[b] are disconsolate,
they sink to the ground;
a cry goes up from Jerusalem.
The nobles send the lesser men for water, 3
they come to the cisterns,
Lv 26:18-20 and find no water,
and return with their pitchers empty.[c]
3:3 Ho 4:3+ The ground refuses its yield,[d] 4
for the country has had no rain;
in dismay the ploughmen
cover their heads.[e]
Even the doe abandons her new-born fawn in open country, 5
for there is no grass;
the wild donkeys standing on the bare heights 6
gasp for air like jackals:
their eyes grow dim
for lack of pasture.'

Jdt 8:19 Is 59:12 If our crimes are witness against us, 7
then, Yahweh, for your name's sake act!
Yes, our apostasies have been many,
we have sinned against you!
17:13 Ho 8:2 Yahweh,[f] hope of Israel, 8
its saviour in time of distress,
why are you like a stranger in this land,
like a traveller who stays only for a night?
Why are you like someone bemused, 9
like a warrior who has no power to rescue?
7:30; 15:16 Dt 28:10 Ba 2:15 Hab 1:2 Yet, Yahweh, you are in our midst,
we are called by your name.
Do not desert us!

Yahweh says this regarding this people, 'They take such pleasure in 10
‖Ho 8:13 wandering, they cannot control their feet!' But Yahweh accepts them no longer;
7:16 now he recalls their crime and will punish their sins. •Yahweh said to me, 11
Is 1:15 Ba 2:25 'Do not intercede for this people or their welfare. •If they fast, I will not listen 12
to their plea; if they offer holocaust and oblation, I will not accept them. Rather,
I mean to exterminate them by sword, famine and pestilence.'
4:10;23+;28 Ezk 13:1 'Ah, Lord Yahweh,' I answered 'here are the prophets telling them, "You 13
will not see the sword, famine will not touch you; I promise you unbroken peace
in this place". '

14 Then Yahweh said to me, 'The prophets are prophesying lies in my name; 5:31; 27:10; 29:9
I have not sent them, I gave them no orders, I never spoke to them. Delusive
visions, hollow predictions, daydreams of their own, that is what they prophesy
15 to you. •Therefore, Yahweh says this: The prophets who prophesy in my
name when I have not sent them, and tell you there will be no sword or famine
in this land, these same prophets are doomed to perish by sword and famine.
16 And as for the people to whom they prophesy, they will be tossed into the
streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and the sword, with not a soul to bury Ps 79:3
them: neither them nor their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters. I will pour
down on them their own wickedness.

17 'Say this word to them,
"Tears flood my eyes
night and day, unceasingly,
since a crushing blow falls on the daughter of my people,[g]
a most grievous injury.
18 If I go into the countryside,
there lie men killed by the sword;
if I go into the city,
I see people sick with hunger;
even prophets and priests
plough the land: they are at their wit's end."[f]

19 'Have you rejected Judah altogether?
Does your very soul revolt at Zion?
Why have you struck us down without hope of cure?
We were hoping for peace—no good came of it! =8:15; 13:6
Am 5:18
For the moment of cure—nothing but terror!
20 Yahweh, we do confess our wickedness
and our fathers' guilt:
we have indeed sinned against you.
21 For your name's sake do not reject us, 1 S 12:22
do not dishonour the throne of your glory.[h]
Remember us; do not break your covenant with us.
22 Can any of the pagan Nothings make it rain?
Can the heavens produce showers?
No, it is you, Yahweh. Ps 147:8
O our God, you are our hope,
since it is you who do all this.'

1 **15** Yahweh said to me, 'Even if Moses and Samuel[a] were standing in my Ex 32:11+ Dt 34:10 Ps 99:6
presence I could not warm to this people! Drive them out of my sight;
2 away with them! •And if they ask you, "Where shall we go?" tell them this,
"Yahweh says this:

Those for the plague, to the plague; =43:11 Rv 6:1f; ↗13:10
those for the sword, to the sword;
those for famine, to famine;
those for captivity, into captivity!"

m. The 'Delusion' of v. 25 and the 'Abominations' mean the false gods.

14 a. Probably in the reign of Jehoiakim (609-598). This dialogue between the prophet and Yahweh has features borrowed from a liturgical lamentation, cf. Jl 1-2; Ps 74 and 79. To the collective confession ascribed to the people, as to the pleading of Jeremiah, Yahweh returns a negative answer, and to the threat of famine adds that of invasion: the description of the famine, 14:2-6; lamentation of the people, vv. 7-9, reply of Yahweh, 10-12; complaint of Jeremiah, 13-16; second description of the famine, 17-18; second lamentation of the people, 19-22; second reply of Yahweh, 15:1-4.

b. Lit. 'her gates'.

c. Hebr. adds 'they are ashamed and confounded and cover their head', absent from Greek.

d. Following Greek. Hebr. 'the ground is dismayed'.

e. A sign of mourning.

f. Hebr. omits 'Yahweh'.

g. Hebr. reads 'the virgin, the daughter...'

h. Zion.

15 a. The great intercessors, cf. Ex 32:11+; to these, later tradition adds Jeremiah himself, 2 M 15:14+.

Four kinds of doom I consign them to: the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, 3
24:9; =29:18 the birds of heaven and beasts of earth to devour and to destroy. •I will make 4
them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh[b]
son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for his misdeeds in Jerusalem.

The horrors of war[c]

Na 3:7 'Who is there to pity you, Jerusalem, 5
who to grieve for you,
Is 51:19 who to pause
and ask how you are?
You yourself have rejected me—it is Yahweh who speaks— 6
you have turned your back on me;
so I have stretched my hand over you to destroy you.
Ex 34:6-7 I am tired of relenting.
And so I have winnowed them with a fork 7
in the towns of their land.
I deprive my people of children, I exterminate them
since they refuse to leave their ways.
Their widows have become more 8
than the sand of the seas.
On the mothers of young warriors
Ps 91:6 I bring[d] the destroyer in broad daylight.
Suddenly I bring down
anguish and terror on them.
2 M 7:1 The mother of seven sons grows faint, 9
and breathes her last.
It is still day, but already her sun has set,
shame and disgrace are hers...
And the remainder of them I shall hand over to their enemies
to be cut to pieces—it is Yahweh who speaks.'

1:4-10; 17-19 **The call of Jeremiah renewed**[e]

20:15 Jb 6:22 Lk 2:34 Woe is me, my mother, for you have borne me 10
to be a man of strife and of dissension for all the land.
I neither lend nor borrow,
yet all of them curse me.
Truthfully, Yahweh, have I not done my best to serve you,[f] 11
interceded with you for my enemy
in the time of his disaster, his distress?[g]
You know I have! 15a

Can a man break iron,[h] 12
=17:3-4 iron from the north, or bronze?
'Your wealth and your treasures 13
I will hand over to plunder,
as payment[i] for all your sins
throughout your territory.
I will enslave you to your enemies[j] 14
in a country which you do not know,
Dt 32:22 for my anger has kindled a fire
that will burn you up.'

Ps 17:13-14 Yahweh, remember me, take care of me, 15b
and avenge me on my persecutors.
Your anger is very slow: do not let me be snatched away.[k]
Ps 69:7 Realise that I suffer insult for your sake.
When your words came, I devoured them: 16

your word was my delight
and the joy of my heart;
for I was called by your name,
Yahweh, God of Sabaoth.
17 I never took pleasure in sitting in scoffers'[l] company;
with your hand on me I held myself aloof,
since you had filled me with indignation.
18 Why is my suffering continual,
my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?
Do you mean to be for me a deceptive stream
with inconstant waters?
19 To which Yahweh replied,
'If you come back,
I will take you back into my service;
and if you utter noble, not despicable, thoughts,
you shall be as my own mouth.
They will come back to you,
but you must not go back to them.
20 I will make you
a bronze wall fortified against this people.
They will fight against you
but they will not overcome you,
because I am with you
to save you and to deliver you
—it is Yahweh who speaks.
21 I mean to deliver you from the hands of the wicked
and redeem you from the clutches of the violent.'

Ps 119:103
14:9+
Jb 6:15
1:9
1:18-19

The prophet's life is itself symbolic[a]

16 1 2 3 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows:
'You must not take a wife or have son or daughter in this place. •For
Yahweh says this regarding the sons and daughters to be born in this place, about
the mothers who give birth to them, and about the fathers who beget them in
4 this land: •They will die of deadly diseases, unlamented and unburied;[b] they
will be like dung spread on the ground; they will meet their end by sword and
famine, and their corpses will be food for the birds of heaven and the beasts
of earth.
5 'Yes, Yahweh says this: Go into no house where there is mourning, do
not go to lament or grieve with them; for I have withdrawn my peace from
6 this people—it is Yahweh who speaks—have withdrawn love and pity. •High or
low, they will die in this land, without burial or lament; there will be no gashing,

8:2
7:33
Lm 3:17

b. The man chiefly responsible for the idolatry infecting Yahwism for nearly three-quarters of a century, 2 K 21.

c. This poem can be dated to a time immediately before the siege of 598.

d. Following Greek.

e. Another dialogue between God and Jeremiah, cf. 11:18–12:5. It reveals a spiritual crisis of the prophet half-way through his ministry. Here, as in 12:5, God, far from soothing Jeremiah's distress, condemns it as 'despicable' and demands of him a new 'conversion', which he sanctions by renewing, in almost identical terms, the commands and promises of Jeremiah's original call, vv. 19-20, cf. 1:9,17-19. On these 'confessions of Jeremiah' cf. 11:18–12:5; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18, and Introduction to the Prophets.

f. 'Truthfully, Yahweh' Greek; 'Yahweh said' Hebr. introducing the oracle of vv. 12-14. 'have I not done my best to serve you' corr.; 'I shall deliver you for (your) good' Hebr.

g. Following Greek.

h. Vv. 12-14 are alien to the context; vv. 13-14 are a doublet of 17:3-4.

i. 'payment' Greek; 'no payment' Hebr.

j. Greek. 'I will make you pass with your enemies' Hebr.

k. I.e. by death, before God's vengeance ('anger') comes.

l. The scoffers, the rich and the arrogant go together and are condemned as a single category in the wisdom Psalms and in the gospels, Lk 6:25; Mt 5:3f.

16 a. The prophets often use symbolic actions to reinforce their preaching, cf. 18:1+, but sometimes their very lives become symbol and sign, cf. Ho 1 and 3; Is 8:18; Ezk 24:15-24.

b. Absence of funeral rites or burial indicates that a man had met a violent end or died under a curse, 22:18-19; 2 S 21:10.

no shaving of the head for them.[c] •No bread will be broken for the mourner[d] 7
to comfort him for the dead; no cup of consolation will be offered him for
father or for mother.

'And do not enter a house where there is feasting, to sit with them and 8
eat and drink. •For Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Now 9
7:34; 25:10 Is 24:8 Rv 18:22 before your eyes, in your own days, I will silence the shouts of rejoicing and
mirth, and the voices of bridegroom and bride.

'When you tell this people all these words and they ask you, "Why has 10
5:19+ Yahweh decreed this appalling disaster for us? What is our crime? What sin have
we committed against Yahweh our God?" •then you are to answer, "It is because 11
Dt 29:24 your ancestors abandoned me—it is Yahweh who speaks—and followed alien gods,
and served and worshipped them. They abandoned me and did not keep my Law.
And you for your part have behaved even worse than your ancestors. Look, each 12
of you follows the dictates of his hardened, wicked heart and will not listen to
me. •And so, I am going to eject you from this land into a country unknown to 13
you and to your ancestors; there you will serve alien gods,[e] day and night, for I
shall show you no more favour."

=23:7-8 **The return of the scattered Israelites**

'See, then, that the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when people 14
Ex 20:2 will no longer say, "As Yahweh lives who brought the sons of Israel out of
the land of Egypt!" •but, "As Yahweh lives who brought the sons of Israel 15
out of the land of the North and back from all the countries to which he
had dispersed them". I will bring them back to the very soil I gave their ancestors.

The invasion foretold[f]

Hab 1:14 'I will now send many fishermen—it is Yahweh who speaks—and these 16
will fish them up; next, I will send many huntsmen, and these will hunt them
out of every mountain, every hill, out of the holes in the rocks. •For my eyes 17
Ps 33:13 watch all their ways, these are not hidden from me, and their guilt does not
↗ Rv 18:6 escape my gaze. •I will requite their guilt and their sin twice over, since they 18
have polluted my land with the corpses of their Horrors, and filled my heritage
with their Abominations.'[g]

The conversion of the nations[h]

Yahweh, my strength, my stronghold, 19
my refuge in the day of distress!
1 K 8:41f Tb 14:6 Is 45:14+ To you the nations will come
from the confines of earth and say,
'Our fathers inherited nothing but Delusion,
Nothings void of all power.
Can man make his own gods? 20
If so, these are not gods!'
'Now listen, I am going to make them acknowledge, 21
this time I am going to them make acknowledge
my hand and my might;
and then they will know that Yahweh is my name.

Judah's contaminated worship[a]

Dn 7:10+ 17 'The sin of Judah is written 1
with an iron pen,
Pr 31:33 3:3; 7:3 engraved with a diamond point
on the tablet of their heart
and on the horns of their altars,[b]
as evidence against them[c] 2
Dt 12:2+ (their altars and their sacred poles, by every spreading tree, on the high hills,
on the mountains,[d] in the open countryside). 3

'Your wealth and your treasures
I will hand over to plunder
as payment for all your sins[e]
throughout your territory.
4 You will have to relinquish your heritage
which I gave you;
I will enslave you to your enemies
in a country which you do not know,
for my anger has kindled[f] a fire
that will burn for ever.

=15:13-14

Dt 32:22

A group of wisdom sayings

5 'Yahweh says this:

'A curse on the man who puts his trust in man,
who relies on things of flesh,
whose heart turns from Yahweh.
6 He is like dry scrub in the wastelands:
if good comes, he has no eyes for it,
he settles in the parched places of the wilderness,
a salt land, uninhabited.

Ps 146:3-4
Is 2:22

7 'A blessing on the man who puts his trust in Yahweh,
with Yahweh for his hope.
8 He is like a tree by the waterside
that thrusts its roots to the stream:
when the heat comes it feels no alarm,[g]
its foliage stays green;
it has no worries in a year of drought,
and never ceases to bear fruit.

||Ps 40:4; 146:5

Ps 1:3

9 'The heart is more devious than any other thing,
perverse too: who can pierce its secrets?
10 I, Yahweh, search to the heart,
I probe the loins,
to give each man what his conduct
and his actions deserve.

Mk 7:21
Pr 17:3
11:20+; 32:19
Ps 62:12
Pr 24:12
✓ Mt 16:27
Rv 2:23

11 'The partridge will hatch eggs it has not laid.
Similarly, the man who wins his wealth unjustly:
his days half done, he must leave it,
proving a fool after all.'

Ps 62:10

Confidence in the Temple and in Yahweh[h]

12 A glorious throne, set high from the beginning,
such is our Holy Place.
13 Hope of Israel, Yahweh!
All who abandon you will be put to shame,

14:8
Ps 68:26

e. Such funeral rites, though forbidden by the Law, Lv 19:27f; Dt 14:1, were practised in Israel, Jr 7:29; 41:5.

d. 'bread' Greek. 'for the mourner' Vulg. This refers to a funeral meal.

e. 'To serve alien gods' is an ancient expression for living in exile (1 S 26:19; cf. 2 K 5:17) outside Palestine, which was thought to be Yahweh's only possession.

f. Before 598.

g. Referring to false gods. 'corpses of their Horrors', possibly the carcases of animals sacrificed to the gods. On defilement by corpses, see Lv 21:1f; 26:30.

h. This passage has affinities with the second part of Is and is probably not by Jeremiah.

17 a. Vv. 1-4 are absent from Greek.

b. 'their altars' Vulg.

c. Lit. 'a memorial against them' corr.

d. 'the mountains' corr.; 'my mountain' Hebr.

e. Line corr., cf. 15:13; 'your high places for sins' Hebr.

f. Cf. 15:14; 'you have kindled' Hebr.

g. 'it feels no alarm' *ketib* and versions.

h. These two verses do not seem to be by Jeremiah, cf. 7:1-15.

those who turn from you will be uprooted[i] from the land,
2:13+ since they have abandoned the fountain of living water.

15:10+ **A prayer for vengeance**

Ps 6:2-3; 71:6 Heal me, Yahweh, and I shall be really healed, 14
save me, and I shall be saved,
for you alone are my hope.[j]
Look, they keep saying to me, 15
'Where is the word of Yahweh? Let it come true then!'[k]
But I, I have never urged you to do evil,[l] 16
the day of disaster was no desire of mine,
this you know;
what came from my lips was not concealed from you.
Do not be a terror to me, 17
you, my refuge in the day of disaster.
Ps 5:10+ Let my persecutors be confounded, not I, 18
let them, not me, be terrified.
On them bring the day of disaster,
destroy them, destroy them twice over!

Ex 20:8+ Lv 26:2 **Observance of the sabbath**[m]

Yahweh said this to me, 'Go and stand at the Gate of the Sons of the 19
People by which the kings of Judah go in and out—and at all the gates of
Jerusalem. •Say to them, "Listen to the word of Yahweh, you kings of Judah, 20
all you people of Judah too, and all you citizens of Jerusalem who pass
Jn 5:10 through these gates. •Yahweh says this: As you value your lives, on no 21
account carry a burden on the sabbath day or bring it in through the gates of
Jerusalem. •Bring no burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, and do no 22
work. Keep the sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors. •They would 23
7:26; 19:15 Dt 9:13+ not hear, would not pay attention, grew so stubborn they would not listen,
and would not accept instruction. •But if you listen carefully to me—it is Yahweh 24
who speaks—and bring no burden in through the gates of this city on the
sabbath day, if you keep the sabbath holy and do no work on that day, •then, 25
22:4 Zc 9:9+ through the gates of this city, kings[n] occupying the throne of David will continue
to make their entry, mounted on chariots and horses, they and their ministers,
Ezk 37:25 Jl 4:20 with the men of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem. And this city will be
inhabited for ever. •They will come from the towns of Judah, from the districts 26
round Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the Lowlands, from the
highlands, from the Negeb, to offer holocaust and sacrifice, oblation, incense
and thanksgiving sacrifice in the Temple of Yahweh. •But if you do not listen 27
to my command to keep the sabbath day holy, and not to enter the gates of
Jerusalem with burdens on the sabbath day, then I will set fire to its gates; it
shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and not be quenched." '

Jeremiah visits the potter[a]

18 The word that was addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh, •'Get up and make 1 2
your way down to the potter's house; there I shall let you hear what I have
to say'. •So I went down to the potter's house; and there he was, working at the 3
wheel. •And whenever the vessel he was making came out wrong, as happens with 4
the clay handled by potters, he would start afresh and work it into another vessel,
as potters do. •Then this word of Yahweh was addressed to me, •'House of Israel, 5 6
Is 29:16+ Rm 9:21 can not I do to you what this potter does?—it is Yahweh who speaks. Yes, as
the clay is in the potter's hand, so you are in mine, House of Israel. •On occasion, 7
1:10 I decree for some nation, for some kingdom, that I will tear up, knock down,
Ezk 18:21-24 destroy; •but if this nation, against which I have pronounced sentence,[b] abandons 8
its wickedness, I then change my mind about the evil which I had intended to

9 inflict on it. •On another occasion, I decree for some nation, for some kingdom, 1:10
10 that I will build up and plant; •but if that nation does what displeases me,
refusing to listen to my voice, I then change my mind about the good which Gn 6:6
11 I had intended to confer on it. •So now, say this to the men of Judah and the
citizens of Jerusalem, "Yahweh says this: Listen, I have been preparing
a disaster for you, I have been working out a plan against you. So now, each
one of you, turn back from your evil ways, amend your conduct and actions."
12 They, however, will say, "What is the use of talking? We prefer to do as 2:25
we please; we mean to behave, each of us, as his wicked heart dictates."

Israel repudiates Yahweh[c]

13 'Therefore—Yahweh says this:
Ask, if you will, among the nations 2:10-12
if anyone has heard anything like this.
She has done a deed of horror,
the Virgin of Israel.
14 Does the snow of Lebanon
vanish from the lofty crag?
Do the proud waters run dry,
so coolly flowing?[d]
15 And yet my people have forgotten me! 2:32
They burn their incense to a Nothing!
They have lost their footing in their ways, 6:16
on the roads of former times,
to walk in tortuous paths,
a way unmarked.[e]
16 They will make their country desolate,
everlastingly derided: 19:8
every passer-by will be appalled at it 1 K 9:8
and shake his head. Lm 2:15-16
Ze 2:15
17 Like the east wind, I will scatter them Mt 27:40
before the enemy.
I will turn my back to them[f] and not my face
on the day of their disaster.'

l. 'from you will be uprooted' corr.; 'from me will be written' Hebr. Hebr. adds 'Yahweh' at the end of the verse.

j. 'hope' corr.; 'praise' Hebr.; 'glory' Greek.

k. The threats of Jeremiah have not materialised. The time is therefore before 598.

l. Line corr., cf. 15:11; 'I have not hastened to avoid being a shepherd (i.e. a prophet) in following you' Hebr.

m. Most commentators deny the authenticity of this passage on the grounds of the importance it attributes to the sabbath which is not mentioned elsewhere in Jeremiah.

n. Hebr. adds 'and nobles'.

18 a. The time of this enacted parable is before 598, since the great disaster has not yet taken place, cf. v. 12. Symbolic gesture had accompanied the preaching of the earliest prophets, of Samuel for example, 1 S 15: 27-28, of Ahijah of Shiloh, 1 K 11:29-39, and of the false prophet Zedekiah, 1 K 22:11-12. This procedure was not simply a dramatisation of the spoken prophecy: it was a pre-enactment of the event threatened or promised, in such a way that the event itself became as inevitable as the gesture was irrevocable. The same phenomenon recurs among the 'writing' prophets. Hosea's whole mission is inextricable from a symbolic action which in turn is his private predicament, Ho 1-3. With Isaiah the symbolic gesture is found less frequently, though cf. Is 20 and the symbolic names he gives to his children, Is 7:3 (cf. 10:21); 8:1-4; 8:18, cf. 1:26+. Jeremiah performs, or interprets, many symbolic actions: the almond tree and the pot, 1:11-14; the hidden loincloth, 13:1-11 (though this seems only to have been enacted in vision); the potter, 18:1-12; the jug, 19; the figs, 24; the yoke, 27-28; the buying of the field, 32. To which we may add that his life itself is a symbol, 16:1-8, and that his sufferings (though he gives this no emphasis) identify him in advance with the nation itself about to suffer, and make him foreshadow the suffering servant of Yahweh, cf. Is 42:1+. Later, Ezekiel was to perform more symbolic actions: the brick 'besieged', Ezk 4:1-3, the rationed food, 4:9-17; the hair, ch. 5; the mime of the exile, 12:1-20; the pot, 24:3-14; the two sticks, 37:15-28; and he too, like Hosea, interprets his personal experiences symbolically: his illness, 4:4-8, his wife's death, 24:15-24, his dumbness and recovery, 24:27; 33:22. Symbolism of this kind is also found in N.T., cf. the fig tree cursed by Jesus, Mt 21:18-19p, the prophecy of Agabus, Ac 21:10-14.

b. 'against which I have pronounced' omitted by Greek, misplaced in Hebr.

c. By way of commentary on 18:12, the editor has inserted this passage characteristic of the early preaching of Jeremiah, cf. 2:10,32, but very timely under Jehoiakim with the recrudescence of idolatry.

d. 'from the lofty crag', 'run dry', 'proud waters' corr.

e. 'They have lost their footing' Greek. 'tortuous' *(tohu)* is added.

f. Lit. 'I will show them my back' versions.

15:10+ **A plot against Jeremiah**

'Come on,' they said 'let us concoct a plot against Jeremiah; the priest will 18
not run short of instruction without him, nor the sage of advice, nor the prophet
Mt 22:15p of the word.[g] Come on, let us hit at him with his own tongue; let us listen
carefully to every word he says.'[h]

Listen to me, Yahweh, 19
hear what my adversaries are saying.
Ps 35:7,12 Should evil be returned for good? 20
(For they are digging a pit for me.)
Ps 109:4 Remember how I stood in your presence
to plead on their behalf,
to turn your wrath away from them.
Ps 5:10+ Then hand their sons over to famine, 21
abandon them to the edge of the sword.
Ps 109:9,10 May their wives become
childless and widowed.
May their husbands die of plague,
their young men be cut down by the sword in battle.
Let cries re-echo from their houses 22
12:9+ as you bring raiders suddenly on them.
2 K 24:2-4 For they have dug a pit to catch me,
Ps 140:4 they have laid snares to trap my feet.
But you, Yahweh, 23
know all their murderous plots against me.
Ne 3:37 Do not forgive their crime,
Ps 109:14 do not efface their sin from your sight.
Keep their destruction always in mind,[i]
when the time for your anger comes deal with them.

The broken jug and the altercation with Pashhur[a]

7:29–8:3 Is 29:16 19 Then Yahweh said to Jeremiah, 'Go and buy an earthenware jug. Take 1
some of the elders of the people and some priests with you.[b] •Go out 2
towards the Valley of Ben-hinnom, as far as the entry of the Gate of the
Potsherds.[c] There proclaim the words I shall speak to you. •You are to say, 3
"Kings of Judah, citizens of Jerusalem! Listen to the word of Yahweh!
Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: I am bringing down such a disaster
on this place that the ears of every one who hears of it will ring. •This is because 4
they have abandoned me, have profaned this place, have offered incense here
to alien gods which neither they, nor their ancestors, nor the kings of Judah, ever
knew before. They have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. •They 5
7:31-33 Lv 18:21+ have built high places for Baal to burn their sons there,[d] which I had never
ordered or decreed, which had never entered my thoughts. •So now the 6
days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when people will no longer call
this place Topheth, or the Valley of Ben-hinnom, but Valley of Slaughter.
Because of this place, I mean to drain[e] Judah and Jerusalem of sound advice; I will 7
make them fall by the sword before their enemies, fall by the hand of people
determined to kill them; I will give their corpses as food to the birds of heaven
18:16 1 K 9:8 Lm 2:15 Ze 2:15 and the beasts of earth. •And I will make this city a desolation, a derision; every 8
passer-by will be appalled at it, and whistle in amazement at such calamity.
Dt 28:53-57 Lm 2:20 Ba 2:3 Ezk 5:10+ I will make them eat the flesh of their own sons and daughters: they shall eat 9
each other during the siege, in the shortage to which their enemies, in their
determination to kill them, will reduce them."

'You are to break this jug in front of the men who are with you, •and say 10 11
Lm 4:2 to them, "Yahweh Sabaoth says this: I am going to break this people and this
city just as one breaks a potter's pot, irreparably.

12 Topheth will become a burial ground, for lack of other space. •That is how
I will treat this place—it is Yahweh who speaks.[f] And I mean to make this city
13 like Topheth; •the houses of Jerusalem and those of the kings of Judah will be
unclean,[g] like this place Topheth: all these houses on the roofs of which they
offered incense to the whole array of heaven and poured their libations to alien
gods." '
14 When Jeremiah came back from Topheth where Yahweh had sent him to
prophesy, he went and stood in the court of the Temple of Yahweh and addressed
15 all the people. •'Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, "Yes, I am
going to bring down every disaster I have threatened on this city and on all its
outlying towns, since they have grown so stubborn and refused to listen to 7:26; 17:23 Dt 9:13
my words". '

1 20 Now the priest Pashhur son of Immer, who was in charge of the police[a] in 36:5 Ho 9:8
2 the Temple of Yahweh, heard Jeremiah making this prophecy. •Pashhur had
Jeremiah the prophet beaten and then put in the stocks at the Gate of Benjamin, 2 Ch 16:10 Heb 11:36
3 the upper gate leading into the Temple of Yahweh.[b] •Next day, Pashhur had
Jeremiah taken out of the stocks; Jeremiah said to him, 'Not Pashhur but Terror
4 is Yahweh's name for you.[c] •For Yahweh says this, "I am going to hand you
over to terror, you and all your friends; they shall fall by the sword of their
enemies; your own eyes shall see it. The whole of Judah, too, I will hand over
to the king of Babylon; he will carry them off captives to Babylon and put them
5 to the sword. •And all the wealth of this city, all its stores, all its valuables, all
the treasures of the kings of Judah, I will hand over to their enemies who will
6 plunder them, round them up and carry them off to Babylon. •As for you,
Pashhur, and your whole household, you shall go into captivity; you shall go
to Babylon; there you will die, and there be buried, you and all your friends to
whom you have prophesied lies." '

Selections from the 'Confessions' of Jeremiah 15:10+

7 You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I have let myself be seduced; Am 3:8
you have overpowered me: you were the stronger.[d]
I am a daily laughing-stock, Lm 3:14
everybody's butt.
8 Each time I speak the word, I have to howl
and proclaim: 'Violence and ruin!'
The word of Yahweh has meant for me
insult, derision, all day long.
9 I used to say, 'I will not think about him,
I will not speak in his name any more'.
Then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart, 23:29
imprisoned in my bones.
The effort to restrain it wearied me, Jb 32:19-20 Ps 39:3
I could not bear it.[e] Ac 4:20

g. The work of these three classes of spiritual leaders will still go on, none the worse for the disappearance of the trouble-maker.

h. 'with his own tongue', Syr.; 'with the tongue' Hebr. 'let us' Greek; 'do not let us' Hebr.

i. Lit. 'let their destruction be before you' Greek.

19 a. This passage appears to be composite. It comprises: 1. The symbolic action of the jug, performed before a few witnesses near the Gate of the Potsherds and interpreted subsequently in the Temple, thus provoking the animosity of Pashhur: *19:1,2bc, 10-11a*, 14-15; 20:1-6. The incident must have taken place about 605, before the events narrated in ch. 36. 2. A discourse delivered at Topheth, addressed to the kings of Judah and the people of Jerusalem: 19:2a,3-9,11b-13; it resumes earlier Jeremian themes which have acquired immediacy under Jehoiakim; it alludes to the jug incident, v. 7.

b. 'Then' Greek. 'to Jeremiah' add. following Greek. 'Take with you' versions; 'some priests' Greek.

c. Probably the 'Dung Gate' of Ne 2:13.

d. Hebr. adds 'as holocausts to Baal', absent from Greek.

e. The verb 'to drain' is *baqaq*, here a play on *baqbuq*, 'jug'.

f. Hebr. adds 'and its citizens'.

g. The pollution is due to the corpses, cf. Lv 21:1f; *26:30*.

20 a. Hebr. adds 'ruler'.

b. Evidently not the city gate of the same name, 37:13.

c. 'Terror' following Greek; Hebr. adds 'from every side', cf. 20:10; 6:25.

d. The images of seduction and struggle illustrate the power of Yahweh over his prophet.

e. 'bear it' following Greek.

6:25 ||Ps 31:13; 41:5 Lm 2:22
I hear so many disparaging me, 10
' "Terror from every side!"[f]
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!'
Ws 2:12
All those who used to be my friends
watched for my downfall,
'Perhaps he will be seduced into error.
Then we will master him
and take our revenge!'
But Yahweh is at my side, a mighty hero; 11
Ps 109:29
my opponents will stumble, mastered,
confounded by their failure;
everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs.
=11:20+ 1 S 16:7
But you, Yahweh Sabaoth, you who probe with justice, 12
who scrutinise the loins and heart,
let me see the vengeance you will take on them,
for I have committed my cause to you.[g]
Sing to Yahweh, 13
praise Yahweh,
for he has delivered the soul of the needy[h]
from the hands of evil men.

A curse on the day when I was born,[i] 14
no blessing on the day my mother bore me!
1:5; 15:10 ✗Jb 3
A curse on the man who brought my father the news, 15
'A son, a boy has been born to you!'
making him overjoyed.
May this man be like the towns 16
Gn 19:24-25
that Yahweh overthrew without mercy;
may he hear alarms in the morning,
the war cry in broad daylight,
since he did not kill me in the womb;[j] 17
my mother would have been my tomb
while her womb was swollen with me.
Why ever did I come out of the womb 18
To live in toil and sorrow
and to end my days in shame!

C. ORACLES MAINLY LATER THAN THE REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM

Jeremiah answers the envoys of Zedekiah[a]

34:1-7
21 The word that was addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh when King Zedekiah 1
sent Pashhur son of Malchiah to him, with the priest Zephaniah son of Ma-
aseiah, to say this, •'Please consult Yahweh for us, since Nebuchadnezzar king 2
of Babylon is making war on us: perhaps Yahweh will work all his wonders on
our behalf, so that the enemy will have to withdraw'. •Jeremiah said to them, 3
'Take this answer to Zedekiah, •"Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: I am 4
going to bring back the weapons of war which you are now carrying, and with
which you are fighting the king of Babylon and the Chaldaeans now besieging
Lm 2:4
your walls; I am going to stack them in the centre of this city. •And I am going 5
to fight against you myself with outstretched hand and mighty arm, in anger,
fury and great wrath. •I am going to strike the inhabitants of this city, man 6
and beast, with a frightful plague: they will die. •After which—it is Yahweh 7
who speaks—I am going to deliver Zedekiah king of Judah with his servants and
the people of this city who escape the plague, the sword, or the famine, into the
hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, into the hands of their enemies and

of those determined to kill them; mercilessly, relentlessly, pitilessly, he will put them to the sword."

8 'And you are to say to this people, "Yahweh says this: Look, I now set Dt 30:15 Ps 1
9 in front of you the way of life and the way of death. •Those who stay in this city Si 15:17 =38:2
will die by sword, by famine, or by plague; but anyone who leaves it and surrenders to the Chaldaeans now besieging it will live; he shall escape with
10 his life. •For I have turned my face against this city for its ruin, not for its prosperity—it is Yahweh who speaks. It is to be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down." '

Address to the royal family of Judah

11 To the royal House of Judah.[b] Listen to the word of Yahweh, •House of
12 David! Yahweh says this:

'Each morning give sound judgement,
rescue the man who has been wronged
from the hands of his oppressor,
or else my wrath will leap out like a fire,
it will burn and no one will be able to quench it.[c]
13 My quarrel is with you,
you that have gone to live at Rock-in-the-Plain[d] 22:23
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
with you that say, "Who would dare attack us
and penetrate our fastness?"
14 (I will punish you as your actions deserve
—it is Yahweh who speaks.)
I will set fire to its forest; =50:32 Ezk 21:3
it will devour the whole district.'

1 22 Yahweh said this, 'Go down[a] to the palace of the king of Judah and there
2 deliver this message, •"Listen to the word of Yahweh, king of Judah sitting on the throne of David, you, your servants too, and your people who go
3 through these gates. •Yahweh says this: Practise honesty and integrity; rescue the 7:6 Ezk 45:9
man who has been wronged from the hands of his oppressor; do not exploit the stranger, the orphan, the widow; do no violence; shed no innocent blood
4 in this place. •For if you are scrupulous in obeying this command, then kings 17:25
occupying the throne of David will continue to make their entry through the gates of this palace mounted on chariots and horses, they, their servants and
5 their people. •But if you do not listen to these words, then I swear by my self —it is Yahweh who speaks—this palace shall become a ruin! Lv 26:31
6 Yes, this is what Yahweh says about the royal palace of Judah:

You were like a Gilead to me, 22:23 Ezk 17:3
like a peak of Lebanon.
All the same, I will reduce you to a desert,

f. The enemies of Jeremiah mock him with his own familiar expression, 6:25; 20:3; 46:5; 49:29.

g. 'with justice' two Hebr. MSS, Syr., Arab., cf. 11:20; 'the just man' Hebr. 'committed' corr., cf. 11:20; 'revealed' Hebr. This verse, a repetition of 11:20, does not seem to have belonged here originally.

h. The 'needy', *ebion*, here in the sense of 'devout', the man who looks to Yahweh for support. The 'poor of Yahweh', cf. Zp 2:3+, are the spiritual children of Jeremiah.

i. Called from his mother's womb, 1:5, Jeremiah curses the day of his birth. This curse, later repeated in Jb 3, marks the climax of his spiritual suffering.

j. 'in the womb' Greek and Syr.; '(coming) from the womb' Hebr.

21 a. The time is the siege of Jerusalem in 588; the passage is perhaps placed here to point the contrast between the Pashhur of v. 1 and the Pashhur of 20:1. The Greek omits several words of this passage.

b. The heading (cf. 23:9) covers the section 21:11–23:8; it indicates a collection that may once have formed a separate unit.

c. Hebr. adds 'for the wickedness of your deeds', cf. 4:4, absent from Greek.

d. Text corr.; Hebr. 'inhabitants of the Valley, of Rock-in-the-Plain'. It is probably addressed to the occupants of the royal palace built on Ophel which looks down on the valley ('plain') of the Kidron. The 'forest' image is repeated in 22:6f where it refers to the cedarwood pillars of the palace, cf. 1 K 7:2.

22 a. From the Temple which stood above the palace, cf. 26:10; 36:12.

to an uninhabited town.[b]
I have dedicated men to destroy you,[c] 7
each man with his axe;
21:13+ they will cut down your finest cedars
and throw them on the fire.

5:19+ Dt 29:23 When the hordes of the nations pass this city, they will say to each other: 8
Why has Yahweh treated such a great city like this? •And the answer will be: 9
1 K 9:7-9 Because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh their God to worship alien gods and serve them." '

Oracles against various kings: against Jehoahaz

2 K 23:29-30 Do not weep for the man who is dead,[d] 10
do not raise the dirge for him.
Weep bitterly for the man who has gone away,[e]
since he will never come back,
2 K 23:34 never see his native land again

For this is what Yahweh has said about Shallum son of Josiah, king of Judah, 11
who succeeded Josiah his father and was forced to leave this place, 'He will never
come back to it •but will die in the place to which he has been taken captive; 12
and he will never see this country again.

Against Jehoiakim

Si 34:23 Is 5:8 Am 6:8 'Doom for the man who founds his palace on anything but integrity, 13
his upstairs rooms on anything but honesty,
Dt 24:15 Hab 2:9,12 who makes his fellow man work for nothing,
without paying him his wages,
who says, "I will build myself an imposing palace 14
with spacious rooms upstairs",
who pierces lights in it,
panels it with cedar, and paints it vermilion.
Are you more of a king 15
for outrivalling others with cedar?[f]
Your father ate and drank, like you,
but he practised honesty and integrity,
so all went well for him.
He used to examine the cases of poor and needy, 16
then all went well.
9:23 Is not that what it means to know me?—it is Yahweh who speaks.
You on the other hand have eyes and heart for nothing 17
but your own interests,
for shedding innocent blood
and perpetrating violence and oppression.'

So Yahweh has said this about Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: 18

'Doom for that man![g]
Raise no dirge for him,
34:5 1 K 13:30 "Mourn for my brother! Mourn for my sister!"
Raise no dirge for him,
48:17 "Mourn for his highness. Mourn for his majesty"[h]
36:30 2 Ch 36:5-6 Is 14:18-19 He will receive the funeral honours of a donkey, 19
—dragged away and thrown
out of the gates of Jerusalem.

Against Jehoiachin

20 'Go up to Lebanon and shriek,[i] 37:1f
let your voice be heard on Bashan,
shriek from Abarim,[j] 48:3
for all your lovers[k] have been ruined!
21 I spoke to you in your prosperity,
but you said, "I will not listen!" 2:25,31
from your youth this has been how you behaved, 3:25; 7:23f; 11:7f
refusing to listen to my voice.
22 The wind will blow all your shepherds away to other pastures,
your lovers will go into captivity.
Yes, now you may well be ashamed and confounded
at the thought of all your wickedness.
23 You who made Lebanon your home, 21:13; 22:6
who made your nest among the cedars,
how you will groan[l] when anguish overtakes you,
and pain like that of a woman in labour! 4:31+

24 'As I live—it is Yahweh who speaks—even if Coniah son of Jehoiakim, king Ba 1:3
of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, I would still wrench him[m] off. Ha 2:23
25 I will deliver you into the hands of those determined to kill you, into the hands
of those you dread, the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the hands
26 of the Chaldaeans. •You and the mother who bore you, I will thrust you both
out into another country; you were not born there but you will both die there.
27 They will not return to the country to which they so long to return.'

28 Is he a shoddy broken pot,
this man Coniah,
a crock that no one wants?
Why are they ejected, he and his descendants,
thrown into a country
they know nothing of?
29 O land, land, land,
listen to the word of Yahweh!
30 Yahweh says this,
'List this man as:[n] Childless;
a man who made a failure of his life,
since none of his descendants will have the fortune
to sit on the throne of David,[o]
or to rule in Judah again.

Messianic oracles. The future king 13:13

1 2 23 'Doom for the shepherds who allow the flock of my pasture to be destroyed Is 56:11 Ezk 34:1+ Jn 10:1,12
and scattered—it is Yahweh who speaks! •This, therefore, is what Yahweh,
the God of Israel, says about the shepherds in charge of my people: You have
let my flock be scattered and go wandering and have not taken care of them.

22 b. 'town' corr.; 'towns' Hebr.
c. Lit. 'I sanctify destroyers against you', cf. 6:4+.
d. 'the man who is dead' Greek, Syr. (it refers to Josiah); 'a dead (man)' Hebr.
e. Jehoahaz summoned to Riblah by the pharaoh Neco and exiled to Egypt. For 'Shallum', v. 11, Greek Luc. reads 'Johaz'.
f. Lit. 'Are you a king because you outrival (others) with cedar?'
g. Thus some Greek MSS.
h. The formulae Jeremiah used here to illustrate the dirge were those in common use.
i. In vv. 20-23 Jeremiah addresses personified Jerusalem, who bewails the events of 598; he then makes a bitter commentary on these events.
j. The mountain range to the E. of Jordan; Mt. Nebo is its highest peak.
k. Here not the false gods, cf. 3:13, nor the allies of Judah, cf. 4:30, but the kings and leading men of Judah, cf. v. 22.
l. *'how you will groan' versions;* 'how you will find favour' Hebr.
m. 'him' Vulg.; 'you' Hebr. Coniah is another name for Jehoiachin (Jeconiah).
n. In the royal genealogical registers. Cf. Is 4:3.
o. Zerubbabel, Jehoiachin's grandson, was only high commissioner for Judah after the return from exile.

Right, I will take care of you for your misdeeds—it is Yahweh who speaks!
Is 4:3+ Jn 10:16 But the remnant of my flock I myself will gather from all the countries where 3
I have dispersed them, and will bring them back to their pastures: they shall
be fruitful and increase in numbers. •I will raise up shepherds to look after 4
them and pasture them; no fear, no terror for them any more; not one shall
be lost—it is Yahweh who speaks!

=33:15-16 Ps 72:1 Pr 8:16 Is 4:2; 11:1 Ezk 34:25 Zc 3:8; 6:12
'See, the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks— 5
when I will raise a virtuous Branch[a] for David,
who will reign as true king and be wise,
practising honesty and integrity in the land.
3:18+ In his days Judah will be saved 6
and Israel dwell in confidence.
And this is the name he will be called:
Yahweh-our-integrity.[b]

=16:14-15 'So, then, the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when people will 7
no longer say, "As Yahweh lives who brought the sons of Israel out of the
land of Egypt!" •but, "As Yahweh lives who led back and brought home the 8
descendants of the House of Israel out of the land of the North and from all
the countries to which he[c] had dispersed them, to live on their own soil". '

14:13-16 Dt 13:2-6
A tract against the false prophets

28 Ne 6:14 Ezk 13:1
On the prophets.[d] 9

My heart[e] is broken within me,
I tremble in all my bones
I am like a drunken man,
a man overcome with wine—
because of Yahweh
and his holy words,
'The land is full of adulterers[f] 10

(yes, because of these men[g] the land is in mourning and the desert pastures have dried up);

'they are quick only at doing wrong
and powerful only in crime.
6:11 Dt 13:3-4
Yes, even prophet and priest are godless, 11
I have found their wickedness even in my own House
—it is Yahweh who speaks.
Ps 35:6
Because of this their way will prove 12
treacherous going for them;
in the darkness where they are driven,
there they will fall.
For I will bring disaster down on them
when the year comes for me to deal with them—
it is Yahweh who speaks.

'In the prophets of Samaria 13
I have seen nauseating things:
2:8; 5:31
they prophesied in the name of Baal
and led my people Israel astray.
But in the prophets of Jerusalem 14
I have seen horrors:
adultery, persistent lying,
such abetting of evil men,
that no one renounces his evil-doing;

to me they are all like Sodom,
its inhabitants all like Gomorrah. Gn 19

15 So this is what Yahweh Sabaoth says about the prophets:
Now I will give them wormwood for their food, =9:14 Lm 3:15
and poisoned water to drink,
since from the prophets of Jerusalem
godlessness has spread throughout the land.

16 'Yahweh Sabaoth says this:
Do not listen to what those prophets[h] say:
they are deluding you,
they retail visions of their own,
and not what comes from the mouth of Yahweh;
17 to those who reject the word of Yahweh[i] they say,
"Peace will be yours",
and to those who follow the dictates of a hardened heart,
"No misfortune will touch you". '

18 (But who has been present at the council of Yahweh? Who has seen it and heard his word? Who has paid attention to his word in order to proclaim it?)[j] Jb 15:8 Is 40:13 1 Co 2:16

19 Now a storm of Yahweh[k] breaks, =30:23-24 Pr 1:27
a tempest whirls,
it bursts over the head of the wicked;
20 the anger of Yahweh will not turn aside
until he has performed, and has carried out,
the decision of his heart.

You will understand this clearly in the days to come.

21 'I have not sent those prophets,
yet they are running;
I have not spoken to them,
yet they are prophesying.
22 Have they been present at my council?
If so, let them proclaim my words to my people
and turn them from their evil way
and from the wickedness of their deeds![l] 28:9+

23 'Am I a God when near—it is Yahweh who speaks—
and not one when far away?
24 Can anyone hide in a dark corner 1 K 8:27 Jb 22:14 Ps 139:7-12 Si 16:17 Am 9:2-3 *Ws 1:7*
without my seeing him?—it is Yahweh who speaks.
Do I not fill
heaven and earth?—it is Yahweh who speaks.

23 a. 'Branch' was to become a messianic title, Zc 3:8; 6:12.

b. This symbolic name, cf. Is 1:26+, by which the Messiah is to be called, is contrasted with the name of Zedekiah which means 'Yahweh my integrity'.

c. 'he' Greek; 'I' Hebr.

d. The title (as in 21:11) of a composite booklet, its text overloaded, vv. 9-40. The first section, vv. 9-12, in which Jeremiah apparently for the first time becomes aware of the wickedness of the false prophets, might be dated under Josiah. The subsequent sections could equally well reflect the situation under Jehoiakim or under Zedekiah. On this polemic against the false prophets, see Introduction to the Prophets.

e. Jeremiah is the speaker.

f. Yahweh speaks in vv. 10-12, the bracketed gloss excepted.

g. 'these men' versions; 'the curse' Hebr.

h. Hebr. adds 'who prophesy to you', absent from Greek.

i. 'who spurn the word of Yahweh', Greek; 'who spurn me: Yahweh has said' Hebr.

j. '(seen) it' Syr., Hebr. omits 'it'. 'in order to proclaim it' corr.; 'and heard it' Hebr.

k. Hebr. adds 'my anger'.

l. On the criteria of genuine prophecy, see Introduction to the Prophets.

'I have heard what the prophets say who make their lying prophecies in my 25
name. "I have had a dream," they say "I have had a dream!"[m] •How long 26
will they retain this notion in their hearts, these prophets prophesying lies, who
announce their private delusions as prophetic? •They hope, by means of the 27
dreams that they keep telling each other, to make my people forget my name,
just as their fathers forgot my name in favour of Baal. •Let the prophet who 28
has had a dream tell his dream[n] as his own! And let him who receives a word
from me, deliver it accurately!

'What have straw and wheat in common?
—it is Yahweh who speaks.
5:14; 20:9 Does not my word burn[o] like fire 29
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
is it not like a hammer shattering a rock?

'So, then, I have a quarrel with the prophets—it is Yahweh who speaks— 30
that steal my words from one another. •I have a quarrel with the prophets—it 31
is Yahweh who speaks—who have only to move their tongues to utter oracles.
I have a quarrel with the prophets who make prophecies out of lying dreams 32
—it is Yahweh who speaks—who recount them, and lead my people astray with
their lies and their pretensions. I certainly never sent them or commissioned
them, and they serve no good purpose for this people—it is Yahweh who
speaks.

'And when these people, either a prophet or a priest, ask you, "What is the 33
Burden of Yahweh?"[p] you are to answer, "You, you are the burden[q] of Yahweh;
yes, you, and I mean to be rid of you! It is Yahweh who speaks."

'And the prophet, priest, or anyone else, who says, "Burden of Yahweh", 34
I will punish that man, and his household too. •This is the way you ought 35
to talk, neighbour to neighbour, brother to brother, "What answer has Yahweh
given?" or "What has Yahweh said?" •But do not go on using[r] the expression 36
burden of Yahweh or, for the man who uses it, burdensome it will certainly
prove, since you twist the words of the living God, of Yahweh Sabaoth, our
God. •This is the way to speak to a prophet, "What answer has Yahweh given?" 37
or "What has Yahweh said?" •But if you say, "Burden of Yahweh", then thus 38
speaks Yahweh: Since you use these words, "Burden of Yahweh", when I have
warned you to stop saying, "Burden of Yahweh", •I myself will pick you up[s] 39
and fling you out of my sight, both you and the city I gave to you and to your
ancestors. •I will bring down everlasting shame on you, everlasting and unfor- 40
gettable disgrace.'

29:1-20 Mt 21:18-19p **The two baskets of figs**[a]

2 K 24:12-16 24 Yahweh gave me a vision: placed in front of the Temple of Yahweh stood 1
two baskets of figs.[b] This was after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had led
away Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into exile from Jerusalem, with
all the nobles of Judah, and the blacksmiths and metalworkers, and had taken
them to Babylon. •One basket contained excellent figs, like those that ripen 2
first; the other contained very bad figs, so bad they were uneatable. •Yahweh 3
said to me, 'What do you see, Jeremiah?' 'Figs,' I answered 'the good ones
excellent, the bad ones very bad, so bad as to be uneatable.' •Then the word 4
of Yahweh was addressed to me, •'Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: 5
Ezk 11:14-21 As these figs are good, so I mean to concern myself with the welfare of the exiles
of Judah whom I have sent from this place to the land of the Chaldaeans. •My 6
1:10 eyes will watch over them for their good, to bring them back to this land, to
build them up and not to break them down, to plant them and not to tear them
4:4+; 31: 31+, 33-34; 32:39 Jn 17:3 ↗1 Jn 5:20 up. •I will give them a heart to acknowledge that I am Yahweh. They shall 7
be my people and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their
heart. •As for the bad figs, the figs so bad as to be uneatable—yes, Yahweh 8

says this—that is how I will treat Zedekiah king of Judah, his nobles and the remnant of Jerusalem: those who have stayed in this land, as also those living in
9 the land of Egypt.[c] •I will make them an object of horror[d] to all the kingdoms 15:4; 26:6; 29:18; 42: 18; 44:12
of the earth, a thing of shame, a byword, a laughing-stock, a curse in every place
10 where I shall disperse them. •Sword, famine and plague I will send against them
until they have vanished from the soil I gave to them and to their ancestors.'

D. BABYLON THE SCOURGE OF YAHWEH[a]

1 25 The word that was addressed to Jeremiah about all the people of Judah
in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah (that is to
2 say the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon). •The prophet Jeremiah
proclaimed it before all the people of Judah and all the citizens of Jerusalem:
3 'For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon,
king of Judah, until today, the word of Yahweh has been addressed to me and
4 I have persistently spoken to you (but you have not listened. •Furthermore,
Yahweh has persistently sent you all his servants the prophets, but you have not 7:25+; 35:5
5 listened, or paid attention.) •The message was this, "Turn back, each of you, from
your evil behaviour and your evil actions, and you will stay on the soil Yahweh
6 long ago gave to you and to your ancestors for ever. •(And do not follow alien
gods to serve and worship them, do not provoke me by what your own hands
7 have made; then I will not harm you.) •But you have not listened to me (it is
Yahweh who speaks—so that you have now provoked me by what your own
hands have made, and thus harmed yourselves).
8 "So—this is what Yahweh Sabaoth says: Since you have not listened to my
9 words, •I will now send for all the clans of the North (it is Yahweh who speaks—
referring to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, my servant) and bring them 43:10
down on this land and its inhabitants (and on all these surrounding nations):
I will lay the ban on them and make them an object of horror, of scorn, of Jos 6:17+
10 lasting shame.[b] •I will put an end for them to the shouts of rejoicing and 7:34; 16:9; 33:11
mirth, to the voices of bridegroom and bride, to the sound of the millstone and Jb 18:15 Is 24:8
11 to the light of the lamp. •The whole land shall be devastated and reduced to a Ezk 26:13 ↗ Rv 18:22
desert, while they will stay in slavery among the nations[c] for seventy years.[d] 27:7; 29:10
12 (But when the seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and 2 Ch 36:21-22
that nation—it is Yahweh who speaks—for the wrong they have done; and Ezr 1:1 Is 23:15
13 punish the land of the Chaldaeans too, and make it a desert for ever.) •I will ↗ Dn 9:2f
bring down on that country all the words I have pronounced against it, all that
is written in this book."'

m. The false prophets accept any dream, as they accept their 'private delusions', as prophetic. God might indeed use dreams to convey a message, Nb 12:6, but the message and its origin need discernment.

n. 'his dream' Greek; 'a dream' Hebr.

o. 'Does not my word burn' corr.; 'Is not my word thus' Hebr.

p. The word *massa* means 'burden', but also, as in Is 13:1; 14:28; 19:1; Zc 9:1; 12:1; Ml 1:1, 'oracle'. The objectors play on the word: the gloomy oracles of Jeremiah are burdensome. The prophet selects the sense of 'burden' and applies it to his critics.

q. Greek. Hebr. 'What burden'.

r. 'using' Greek; 'remembering' Hebr.

s. 'pick you up' Greek; 'forget you' Hebr.

24 a. This vision, cf. 13:1+, is reminiscent of Am (8:1-2). It may be assigned to the reign of Zedekiah, about 593. The verdict given by Jeremiah (cf. also 29:1-23) is matched by that of Ezk (11:14-21): from the exiles God will recruit a people devoted to him, cf. Is 4:3+.

b. 'placed' Greek; 'appointed' Hebr. The country people used to bring the first-fruits of the harvest to the Temple.

c. Perhaps those who shared the captivity of Jehoahaz, 2 K 23:34, perhaps Israelite refugees in Egypt.

d. Hebr. adds 'a disaster', absent from Greek.

25 a. This passage recapitulates the activity of the prophet Jeremiah from his call, and proclaims the imminence of the Chaldaean menace, thus giving new urgency to all the earlier threats. It may be regarded as a summary, cf. v. 13, of the scroll first dictated by Jeremiah to Baruch in 605, cf. 36:2, then rewritten and completed, 36:32, see Introduction to the Prophets. There are considerable divergences between the Hebr. text and the Greek version: with occasional exceptions we follow Hebr. Brackets indicate passages that appear not to be original (several are absent from Greek).

b. 'shame' Greek; 'ruins' Hebr.

c. 'they will stay in slavery among the nations' Greek; 'these nations will be slaves to the king of Babylon' Hebr.

d. Round number for the years of exile, repeated in 29:10 and, in another form, in 27:7. The figure is also found in 2 Ch 36:21 and is the basis for the calculation in Dn 9.

II. ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION[c]

The vision of the cup (LXX 33:13-38)

What Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations.

('For these in their turn are to be enslaved[f] to powerful nations and great 14
kings, and I will pay them back as their deeds and their handiwork deserve.')

51:7 Ps 60:3 Is 51:17+ Ezk 23:32 Rv 14:8-16
Yahweh the God of Israel said this to me, 'Take this cup of wine[g] from 15
my hand and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it, •let them drink 16
and reel and lose their wits at the sword I am sending among them'. •I took the 17
cup from the hand of Yahweh and made all the nations to whom Yahweh sent
2 Ch 29:8 me drink it[h] •(Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and its nobles, to 18
make them into a desolation and a waste, a thing of scorn, a curse, as is so today):
Pharaoh king of Egypt, with his servants, his nobles, and all his people, •the 19 20
whole crowd of foreigners besides (all the kings of the land of Uz); all the kings
of the country of the Philistines, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and what still remains
of Ashdod; •Edom, Moab and the sons of Ammon; •(all) the kings of Tyre, 21 22
49:28 (all) the kings of Sidon, the kings of the islands across the sea;[i] •Dedan, Tema, 23
Jb 32:2 Buz, all the Crop-Heads,[j] •all the kings of Arabia[k] who live in the desert; •(all 24 25
the kings of Zimri)[l] and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of Media; •all 26
the kings of the north, near and far, one after another; and all the kingdoms
that are on the face of the earth. (As for the king of Sheshak,[m] he shall drink
last of all.)

'You are to say to them, "Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: 27
Drink! Get drunk! Vomit! Fall, never to rise, at the sword that I am sending
49:12 among you!" •If they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, you are 28
to say to them, "Yahweh Sabaoth says this: You must drink! •Since I am now 29
✗1 P 4:17 making a beginning of disaster with the city that bears my name, do you think
you are likely to go unpunished? You certainly shall not, for I will next summon a
sword against all the inhabitants of the earth—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks."

'Let your prophecy to them contain all these words, and tell them: 30

Jl 4:16 Am 1:2+ Rv 10:3
"Yahweh roars from on high,
he makes his voice heard from his holy dwelling place,
he roars loud against his sheepfold,
Is 63:3-6 he shouts aloud like those who tread the grape.
The sound reaches all the inhabitants of the earth,
to the far ends of the world. 31
For Yahweh is indicting the nations,
arraigning all flesh for judgement;
the wicked he abandons to the sword
—it is Yahweh who speaks.[n]
Yahweh Sabaoth says this: 32
See! The disaster spreads
from nation to nation,
Ps 83:15 a mighty tempest rises
from the far ends of the world.

"Those slaughtered by Yahweh that day will be scattered across the world 33
=8:2 from end to end. No dirge will be raised for them; no one will gather them or
Ezk 29:5 bury them; they will stay lying on the surface like dung.

"Howl, shepherds, shriek, 34
Mi 1:10 roll on the ground, you lords of the flock,
for the days have arrived for your slaughter,
like the finest rams[o] you will fall.

35 No refuge now for the shepherds,
no escape for the lords of the flock!
36 Listen! A shout from the shepherds,
a howl from the lords of the flock!
For Yahweh has laid their pastures waste,
37 their quiet sheepfolds are in ruins.[p]
38 The lion[q] has left his lair,
their land is a wasteland now,
thanks to the destroying sword,
and the fierce anger of Yahweh."'[r]

III. PROPHECIES OF HAPPINESS

A. INTRODUCTION: JEREMIAH THE TRUE PROPHET

Jeremiah's discourse against the Temple: his arrest and condemnation[a] (LXX 33) Mt 24:26: 59-66 Lk 19:41-44

1 **26** At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah,
2 this word was addressed to Jeremiah[b] by Yahweh, •'Yahweh says this: 7:1-15
Stand in the court of the Temple of Yahweh. To all the people of the towns of
Judah who come to worship in the Temple of Yahweh you must speak all the
3 words I have commanded you to tell them; do not omit one syllable. •Perhaps
they will listen and each turn from his evil way: if so, I shall relent and not bring Gn 6:6 Jon 3:10
4 the disaster on them which I intended for their misdeeds. •Say to them, "Yahweh *32:23; 44:10, 23*
says this: If you will not listen to me by following my Law which I put Dt 28:15 Dn 9:10
5 before you, •by paying attention to the words of my servants the prophets *11:7-8;* 25-26
6 whom I send so persistently to you, without your ever listening to them, •I will
treat this Temple as I treated Shiloh, and make this city a curse for all the 7:12+; 24:9 Ps 78:60
nations of the earth".'

7 The priests and prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah say these words
8 in the Temple of Yahweh. •When Jeremiah had finished saying everything that
Yahweh had ordered him to say to all the people, the priests and prophets[c]
9 seized hold of him and said, 'You shall die! •Why have you made this prophecy
in the name of Yahweh, "This Temple will be like Shiloh, and this city will be
desolate, and uninhabited"?' And the people were all crowding round Jeremiah in
10 the Temple of Yahweh. •Hearing of this, the officials of Judah went up from
the royal palace to the Temple of Yahweh and took their seats at the entry
of the New Gate of the Temple of Yahweh.[d]

11 The priests and prophets then addressed the officials and all the people,
'This man deserves to die, since he has prophesied against this city, as you have
12 heard with your own ears'. •Jeremiah, however, replied to the people as follows,

e. This is a sort of preface to the oracles against *the nations*, ch. 46-51, *the earliest of which must have* formed part of the scroll dictated in 605. The Greek puts these oracles immediately after ch. 25, the Hebr. places them at the end of the book. Again, in this section the Hebr. text and the Greek version show differences.

f. 'are to be enslaved' corr.; 'were enslaved' Hebr.

g. Hebr. adds 'wrath'.

h. *The peoples threatened fall into four groups, here* named in the order in which they appear in ch. 46-51: 1. Egypt; 2. the Philistines on the W.; 3. Edom, Moab, Ammon on the E.; 4. Dedan, Tema, Buz to the S.E. Vv. 18-29 were expanded, while the collection of oracles was taking its present shape, by the addition of the Phoenicians, cf. 47:4, Elam, cf. 49:34, and Babylon, cf. ch. 50-51.

i. *The Phoenician colonies.*

j. The Arabs, cf. 9:25.

k. Hebr. adds 'and all the kings of the medley of peoples'.

l. Possibly *Zimki*, which would be a cryptogram for Elam.

m. Possibly a cryptogram for Babel.

n. Vv. 30-31, which describe the universal judgement, are probably post-exilic.

o. 'rams' Greek; 'vessels' Hebr.

p. Hebr. adds 'because of the fierce anger of Yahweh'.

q. 'The lion' corr.; 'like the lion' Hebr. The 'lion' is either Nebuchadnezzar or Yahweh himself.

r. 'sword' Greek; 'anger' Hebr. 'the anger of Yahweh' corr.; 'his anger' Hebr.

26 a. These biographical passages may be attributed to Baruch; here he summarises the discourse against the Temple, 7:1-15, and tells of what followed it.

b. 'to Jeremiah' Lat. and Syr.; omitted by Hebr. and Greek.

c. Hebr. adds 'and all the people', which seems to contradict vv. 11 and 16.

d. A formal assize held by officials of the king.

'Yahweh himself sent me to say all the things you have heard against this Temple and this city. •So now amend your behaviour and actions, listen 13
to the voice of Yahweh your God: if you do, he will relent and not bring down
on you the disaster he has pronounced against you. •For myself, I am as you 14
see in your hands. Do whatever you please or think right with me. •But be sure 15
Jon 1:14 of this, that if you put me to death, you will be bringing innocent blood on your-
selves, on this city and on its citizens, since Yahweh has truly sent me to you
to say all these words in your hearing.'

The officials and all the people then said to the priests and prophets, 'This 16
man does not deserve to die: he has spoken to us in the name of Yahweh our
God'. •Some of the elders of the land had risen to address all the assembled 17
people. •'Micah of Moresheth,' they said 'who prophesied in the days of 18
Hezekiah king of Judah, had this to say to all the people of Judah, "Yahweh
says this:

Mi 3:12 *Zion will become ploughland,*
Jerusalem a heap of rubble,
and the mountain of the Temple a wooded height".[e]

'Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all of Judah put him to death for this? 19
Did they not rather, fearing Yahweh, entreat his favour, to make him relent
and not bring the disaster on them which he had pronounced against them?
Are we now to burden our souls with such a crime?'

There was another man, too, who used to prophesy in the name of Yahweh, 20
Uriah son of Shemaiah, from Kiriath-jearim. He prophesied exactly the same
things against this city and this land as Jeremiah. •When King Jehoiakim with 21
all his ministers and officials heard what he said, he wished to put him to death.
Learning this, Uriah took fright and escaped to Egypt. •King Jehoiakim, however, 22
sent Elnathan son of Achbor to Egypt with others, •who brought Uriah back 23
from Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him put to the sword and
his body thrown into the common burying ground. •But Jeremiah had a 24
36:10 protector in Ahikam son of Shaphan,[f] so he was not handed over to the people
to be put to death.

B. THE PAMPHLET FOR THE EXILES[a]

18:1+ **The symbolic yoke and the message to the kings of the west** (LXX 34)

27 [b](At the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah[c] son of Josiah, king of Judah, 1
this word was addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh:) •Yahweh said this to 2
me, 'Make yourself ropes and a yoke and put them on your neck. •Then send 3
word[d] to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites,
the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon,[e] through their envoys accredited
to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem. •Give them the following message for 4
their masters, "Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: You must tell
Si 10:4 Lk 4:6 your masters this: •I by my great power and outstretched arm made the earth, 5
=*28:14; 43:* 10 man and the animals that are on earth. And I can give it to whom I please. •For 6
Dn 2:38 Lk 4:5-6 Rm 13:1 *Jdt 11:7* Ba 3:16-17 the present, I have handed all these countries over to Nebuchadnezzar king of
Babylon, my servant; I have even put the wild animals at his service. •(All the 7
nations will be subject to him, to his son and to his grandson, until the time
for his own country comes in its turn, when mighty nations and great kings
will enslave him.) •Any nation or kingdom that will not submit to Nebuchad- 8
nezzar king of Babylon, and will not bow its neck to the yoke of the king of
Babylon, I shall punish with sword, famine and plague—it is Yahweh who
speaks—until I have delivered it into[f] his power. •For your own part, do not 9
14:14; 28: 8-9 listen to your prophets, your diviners, dreamers,[g] soothsayers, or sorcerers, who
tell you: You will not be subjects of the king of Babylon. •They prophesy lies 10

to you, the result of which will be that you will be banished from your soil, that
11 I shall expel you, and you will perish. •The nation, however, that bends its neck
to the yoke of the king of Babylon and submits to him, I shall leave in peace
on its own soil—it is Yahweh who speaks—to farm it and stay in it." '
12 To Zedekiah king of Judah I had the same to say. 'Bend your necks,' I told
him 'to the yoke of the king of Babylon; submit to him and to his people and Ba 2:21
13 you will live. •(Why so anxious to die, you and your people, by sword, famine
and plague, with which Yahweh has threatened the nation that will not submit
14 to the king of Babylon?) •Do not listen to the words the prophets say to you,
"You will not be subjects of the king of Babylon". They prophesy lies to you.
15 Since I have not sent them—it is Yahweh who speaks—they prophesy untruths
in my name. The result will be that I shall expel you, you will perish, and so
will the prophets who prophesy to you.'
16 Next I spoke to the priests and all the people as follows, 'Yahweh says this, Ezk 13:1
"Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you as follows:
Look, the vessels of the Temple of Yahweh will (soon) be brought back from
17 Babylon: they prophesy lies to you. •(Do not listen to them; submit to the
18 king of Babylon and you will live; why should this city become a waste?) •If
they were prophets, if they had the word of Yahweh, they would now be praying
to Yahweh Sabaoth that the remaining vessels in the Temple of Yahweh, in
19 the royal palace of Judah and in Jerusalem should not go to Babylon. •For this
is what Yahweh Sabaoth says about (the pillars, the Sea, the stands and) the 1 K 7:15f, 23f, 27f
20 other vessels still remaining in this city, •those not carried off by Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon when he led away Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, 2 K 24:8-17
into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon (with all the leading men of Judah and
21 Jerusalem). •Yes, this is what Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says about
the vessels still remaining in the Temple of Yahweh, in the royal palace of
22 Judah, and in Jerusalem: •They will be carried off to Babylon (and stay there
until the day I fetch them)—it is Yahweh who speaks. (Then I shall bring them
back and restore them to this place)." '

The dispute with Hananiah[a]

(LXX 35) 14:13-16; 23: 9-40

1 28 That same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah in
the fifth month of the fourth year, the prophet Hananiah son of Azzur, a
Gibeonite, spoke as follows to Jeremiah[b] in the Temple of Yahweh in the pres-
2 ence of the priests and of all the people. •'Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this,
3 "I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. •In two years' time I will bring
back all the vessels of the Temple of Yahweh which Nebuchadnezzar king of
4 Babylon carried off from this place and took to Babylon. •And I will also bring
back Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles of Judah who
have gone to Babylon—it is Yahweh who speaks. Yes, I am going to break the
yoke of the king of Babylon." '
5 The prophet Jeremiah then replied to the prophet Hananiah in front of the
6 priests and all the people there in the Temple of Yahweh. •'I hope so'
the prophet Jeremiah said. 'May Yahweh do so. May he fulfil the words that
you have prophesied and bring the vessels of the Temple of Yahweh and all the

e. This threat had been conditional; it may have influenced Hezekiah in his attempt at reform, 2 K 18:4f.

f. The king's scribe who had supported the reform under Josiah, 2 K 22:8f. The family of Shaphan was always well-disposed to Jeremiah; Gedaliah, grandson of Shaphan, was also to prove the prophet's protector, Jr 40:5-6.

27 a. Subject-matter, form, orthographic peculiarities, indicate ch. 27-29 as a distinct entity. These chapters may have formed a collection intended for the exiles.

b. This chapter is considerably shorter in the Greek.

c. 'Zedekiah' corr. in accordance with 28:1; 'Jehoiakim' Hebr.

d. 'Send (word)' Greek Luc.; 'Send them' Hebr. and Greek.

e. The accession of Psammeticus II in Egypt resulted in an anti-Babylonian coalition (593-592) of these smaller powers; Judah joined them.

f. 'delivered it into' Syr. and Targ.; 'consumed it by' Hebr.

g. 'dreamers' Greek and Vulg.; 'dreams' Hebr.

28 a. Another biographical chapter relating events contemporaneous with those of the preceding chapter. The year is 593.

b. 'to Jeremiah' corr.; 'to me' Hebr.

exiles back to this place from Babylon. •Listen carefully, however, to this word 7
27:9 Dt 18:21-22 Ezk 2:5; 33:33 that I am now going to say for you and all the people to hear: •From remote 8
times, the prophets who preceded you and me prophesied war, famine[c] and
23:22 plague for many countries and for great kingdoms; •but the prophet 9
who prophesies peace can only be recognised as one truly sent by Yahweh when
his word comes true.'[d]

The prophet Hananiah then took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah 10
and broke it. •In front of all the people Hananiah then said, 'Yahweh says 11
this, "This is how, two years hence, I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon and take it off the necks of all the nations" '. At this, the
prophet Jeremiah went away.

After the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke which he had taken off 12
the neck of the prophet Jeremiah the word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah,
'Go to Hananiah and tell him this, "Yahweh says this: You can break 13
wooden yokes? Right, I will[e] make them iron yokes instead! •For Yahweh 14
Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: An iron yoke is what I now lay on the
necks of all these nations to subject them to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
=27:6 (They will be subject to him; I have even given him the wild animals.)" '

The prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, 'Listen carefully, 15
Hananiah: Yahweh has not sent you; and thanks to you this people are
=29:32 now relying on what is false. •Hence—Yahweh says this, "I am going to throw 16
Dt 13:6 you off the face of the earth: you are going to die this year (since you have
preached apostasy from Yahweh)".'

The prophet Hananiah died the same year, in the seventh month.[f] 17

Ba 6:1 **The letter to the exiles** (LXX 36:1-23)

24:1f 29 This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem 1
to those elders[a] carried off into exile, to the priests, the prophets and all the
people whom Nebuchadnezzar had led away into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.
2 K 24:12-16 This was after King Jeconiah had left Jerusalem with the queen mother, the 2
eunuchs, the nobility of Judah and Jerusalem, and the blacksmiths and metal-
workers. •The letter was entrusted to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah 3
son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah had sent to Babylon, to Nebuchad-
nezzar king of Babylon.[b] The letter said:

'Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this to all the exiles deported[c] 4
from Jerusalem to Babylon, •"Build houses, settle down; plant gardens and eat 5
what they produce; •take wives and have sons and daughters; choose wives for 6
your sons, find husbands for your daughters so that these can bear sons and
daughters in their turn; you must increase there and not decrease. •Work for 7
Ba 1:11 the good of the country[d] to which I have exiled you; pray to Yahweh on its
behalf, since on its welfare yours depends.[e] •For Yahweh says this: Only 10
25:11+ Ezr 1:1 Dn 9:2 when the seventy years granted to Babylon are over, will I visit you and fulfil
my promise in your favour by bringing you back to this place. •I know the plans 11
I have in mind for you—it is Yahweh who speaks—plans for peace, not disaster,
33:3 Heb 11:6 reserving a future full of hope for you. •Then when you call to me, and come 12
Dt 4:29-31+ 2 Ch 15:2-4 to plead with me, I will listen to you. •When you seek me you shall find me, 13
Ps 145:18 Ws 6:12-13 when you seek me with all your heart; •I will let you find me (—it is Yahweh 14
Is 55:6-9 Ho 5:15 Am 5:4+ who speaks. I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations
and all the places where I have dispersed you—it is Yahweh who speaks. I will
bring you back to the place from which I exiled you.)

"You may say: Yahweh has raised up prophets for us in Babylon, •but 15 8
14:14+ Lm 2:14 thus says Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel: Do not be deceived by the
prophets among you or by your diviners; do not listen to the dreams they
dream,[f] •since they prophesy lies to you in my name. I have not sent them— 9
it is Yahweh who speaks.

16 [g]"For this is what Yahweh says about the king now seated on the throne of
David and all the people who live in this city, your brothers who did not go
17 with you into exile: •Thus says Yahweh Sabaoth: I am now going to send
them sword, famine and plague; I will make them like rotten figs, so bad as 24
18 to be uneatable. •I will pursue them with sword, famine and plague, and =15:4; 24:9; 34:17
make them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, a curse, a thing 1 K 9:8
of wonder, scorn, derision, for all the nations where I have dispersed them; Ba 2:4
19 because they have refused to listen to my words—it is Yahweh who speaks—
although I have persistently sent them all my servants the prophets. However,
20 they[h] would not listen—it is Yahweh who speaks. •But all you exiles, whom 7:25+
I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon, listen to the word of Yahweh.

21 "This is what Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of
Kolaiah, and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who prophesy lies to you in my name:
I shall hand them over now to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon who will strike Dn 3:6
22 them before your eyes. •This curse, based on their fate, will be used by all the
exiles of Judah in Babylon: May Yahweh treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab,
23 roasted alive by the king of Babylon! •Such is the fate of those who perpetrate
infamies in Israel, committing adultery with other men's wives, speaking words 2 S 13:12
in my name without orders from me. I know all the same; I see—it is Yahweh
who speaks." '

An exile objects to Jeremiah's letter (LXX 36:24-32)

24 25 [i]Shemaiah of Nehelam sent a letter of his own (to all the people in Jerusalem)
to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah (and to all the priests), which said:
26 'Yahweh has appointed you priest in succession to Jehoiada to keep order in
the Temple of Yahweh; in the case of a madman who acts the prophet, your
27 duty is to put him in the stocks and iron collar. •This being the case, why have
you not disciplined Jeremiah of Anathoth, who poses as a prophet to you?
28 —since on the strength of this pretension he has sent a message to us in Babylon
to say, "It will be a long time. Build houses, settle down; plant gardens and eat
what they produce." '

29 30 The priest Zephaniah read this letter aloud to the prophet Jeremiah. •The
31 word of Yahweh, however, was addressed to Jeremiah, •'Send this message to all
the exiles, "This is what Yahweh says about Shemaiah of Nehelam: Since
Shemaiah has prophesied to you without my sending him, and since it is due
32 to him that you are now relying on what is false, •now therefore—thus says
Yahweh—I will punish Shemaiah of Nehelam and his descendants; no male
member of his family shall survive among this people to see the happiness that =28:16 Dt 13:6
I will bestow on my people (—it is Yahweh who speaks—since he has preached
apostasy from Yahweh)." '

C. THE BOOK OF CONSOLATION

Promise of recovery for the northern kingdom of Israel[a] (LXX 37:1-38:22)

1 2 3 **30** The word addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh: •Yahweh, the God of Israel
says this: Write all the words I have spoken to you in a book. •For see, Hab 2:2

c. 'famine' several Hebr. MSS; 'evil' Text. Rec.
d. In stating that the genuine prophet foretells disaster, Jeremiah implicitly refers to the sinful conduct of the nation, always condemned by the true prophets. On the criteria of genuine prophecy, see Introduction to the Prophets.
e. 'I will' Greek; 'thou shalt' Hebr.
f. The fulfilment of a short-term prophecy is a sign that a prophet's ministry is from God, cf. 20:6; 29:32; 44:29-30; 45:5. Cf. Dt 18:21+.
29 a. 'elders' Greek; 'the rest of the elders' Hebr.
b. Possibly the mission of 51:59.
c. 'deported' Syr.; 'whom I have deported' Hebr.
d. 'country' Greek; 'city' Hebr.
e. Vv. 8-9 are placed after v. 15.
f. Lit. 'their dreams which they dream' corr.; 'your dreams which you dream' Hebr.
g. Vv. 16-20 are absent from Greek.
h. 'they' corr.; 'you' Hebr.
i. The text of vv. 24-25 is very doubtful. Here it is conjecturally restored.
30 a. The greater part of the 'Book of Consolation', 30:1–31:22, was written between the reform of 622 and

the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when I will restore the fortunes
of my people Israel (and Judah), Yahweh says, and bring them back to possess
the land I gave to their ancestors.

These are the words Yahweh spoke about Israel (and Judah): 4

Yahweh says this: 5
Na 2:11 I[b] have heard a cry of panic,
of terror, not of peace.
Now ask, consider: 6
can men bear children?
Then why do I see each man
4:31+ with his hands on his loins like a woman in labour?
Why has every face changed,
turned[c] pale?
This is indeed a great day, 7
no other like it:
Dn 12:1 a time of distress for Jacob;
but he will be freed from it.

Is 9:3+ On that day—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks—I will break the yoke 8
5:19 on their necks, and snap their chains.[d] They will be no longer the servants of
Ho 3:5 aliens, •but will serve Yahweh their God, and David their king whom I will 9
raise up for them.[e]

=46:27-28 Is 41:8 So do not be afraid, my servant Jacob 10
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
Israel, do not be alarmed:
look, I will rescue you from distant countries
and your descendants from the country where they are captive.
Jacob will have quiet again
Mi 4:4 and live at ease, with no one to trouble him.
For I am with you[f] to save you: 11
I will make an end of all the nations
where I have scattered you;
I will not make an end of you,
only discipline you in moderation,
so as not to let you go entirely unpunished.

Yes, Yahweh says this: 12
Lm 2:13 Your wound is incurable,[g]
your injury past healing.
Is 1:5-6 There is no one to care for your sore, 13
no medicine to make you well again.[h]
4:30 Lm 1:2 All your lovers[i] have forgotten you, 14
they look for you no more.
Yes, I have struck you as an enemy strikes,
with harsh punishment
(so great is your guilt, so many your sins).
Why bother to complain about your wound? 15
Your pain is incurable.
So great is your guilt, so many your sins,
that I have done all this to you.
10:25 But[j] all those who devoured you shall themselves be devoured, 16
all your oppressors go into captivity,
Is 33:1 those who despoiled you shall be despoiled,
and all who preyed on you I will make into prey.
Is 62:4 For they used to call you 'The Outcast', 17b
'Our booty[k] whom no one cares about!'

17a But I will restore you to health
and heal your wounds—it is Yahweh who speaks.

18 Yahweh says this:
Now I will restore the tents of Jacob, Is 54:1-3
and take pity on his dwellings:
the city shall be rebuilt on its ruins, Ps 51:18
the citadel restored on its site.
19 From them will come thanksgiving
and shouts of joy.
I will make them increase, and not diminish them,
make them honoured, and not disdained.
20 Their sons shall be as once they were,
their community fixed firm in my presence,
and I will punish all their oppressors.
21 Their prince will be one of their own,
their ruler come from their own people.[i]
I will let him come freely into my presence and he can come close to me;
who else, indeed, would risk his life Ex 19:12+; 33:20+
by coming close to me?—it is Yahweh who speaks.

22 And you shall be my people and I will be your God. Ezk 11:20
23 Now a storm of Yahweh breaks, =23:19-20
a tempest whirls,
it bursts over the head of the wicked;
24 the anger[m] of Yahweh will not turn aside
until he has performed and carried out,
the decision of his heart.
You will understand this in the days to come.

1 31 When that time comes—it is Yahweh who speaks—I will be the God of all the clans of Israel: they shall be my people. Tb 14:5 3:18+

2 Yahweh says this:
They have found pardon in the wilderness,[a] Ho 2:16-17
those who have survived the sword.
Israel is marching to his rest.
3 Yahweh has appeared to him[b] from afar:
I have loved you with an everlasting love, Is 54:8+ Ezk 16:60 Ho 11:1-9
so I am constant in my affection for you.

the death of Josiah (609). The deuteronomic reform, cf. 2 K 22:3–23:24, had both stimulated the cult of Yahweh by breaking with the religious syncretism introduced by Manasseh, and revived national aspirations: the decline of Assyria had allowed Josiah to undertake the reconquest of Samaria and Galilee, 2 K 23:15,19; 2 Ch 35:18. This gave rise to the hope that the exiles of 721 might return to a restored kingdom of David. The poems that follow express this hope. Yahweh still loves the Israel of the north, 31:3,15-20, cf. Ho 11:8-9; he will bring the exiles back to their homes, 30:3; 31:2-14, cf. Ho 10:11; religious unity will be restored with Zion as its centre, 31:6, cf. Is 11:10-16. Later, this promise of return was extended to Judah, conquered and exiled in its turn. Subsequent oracles, 30:8-9; 31:1,23-26,27-28, with glosses in 30:3,4; 31:31, associate Judah with Israel, thus giving the 'Book of Consolation' its final, messianic scope: Israel and Judah will unite, cf. 3:18+, to serve 'Yahweh their God and David their king', 30:9. This gathering of scattered Israel becomes a major theme of the exilic, Is 43:5f; 49:5-6,12,18-23, etc.; Ezk 11:17; 20:34; 28:25; 34:12-13, etc. and post-exilic prophets, Zc 10:6-12; cf. also Jn 11:52.

b. 'I' corr.; 'we' Hebr.

c. Lit. 'become', Greek; 'alas' Hebr.

d. 'the yoke', 'their necks', 'their chains' Greek.

e. This passage on the messianic kingdom, cf. Ezk 37:22, is a later addition.

f. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks'; so also in 46:28.

g. Line corr.

h. Lit. 'There is no one to uphold your cause with regard to the sore, no means of rising for you'. Before 'no means of rising' Hebr. inserts 'cure'.

i. The nations on which Israel depended for support.

j. 'But' corr.; 'Therefore' Hebr.

k. 'Our booty' following Greek ('your booty'); 'Zion' Hebr.

l. Not as under the Assyrian domination when the governor was representative of a foreign power.

m. 'the anger' cf. 23:20; 'the fierce anger' Hebr.

31 a. For the wilderness as the scene of conversion, cf. Ho 2:16+. The theme of the second Exodus which will bring Israel back from exile, broached here and in vv. 8-9,21, is resumed and developed in the second part of Is, cf. Is 40:3+.

b. 'him' Greek; 'me' Hebr.

Ps 51:18
I build you once more; you shall be rebuilt, 4
virgin of Israel.
Jdt 15:12
Adorned once more, and with your tambourines,
you will go out dancing gaily.
You will plant vineyards once more 5
on the mountains of Samaria
Ps 107:37
Is 65:21-22
Am 9:14
(the planters have done their planting: they will
gather the fruit).
Yes, a day will come when the watchmen shout 6
on the mountains of Ephraim,
'Up! Let us go up to Zion,[c]
to Yahweh our God!'

For Yahweh says this: 7
Shout with joy for Jacob!
Hail the chief of nations!
Proclaim! Praise! Shout:
'Yahweh has saved his people,[d]
Is 4:3+
the remnant of Israel!'
See, I will bring them back 8
from the land of the North
and gather them from the far ends of earth;
all of them: the blind and the lame,
women with child, women in labour:
a great company returning here.
Ps 126:5-6
Is 40:3+
They had left in tears, 9
I will comfort them as I lead them back;[e]
I will guide them to streams of water,
by a smooth path where they will not stumble.
Dt 1:31
↗2 Co 6:18
For I am a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my first-born son.

Listen, nations, to the word of Yahweh. 10
Tell this to the distant islands,
Dt 30:3-5
Ps 147:2
Ezk 34:1+
Jn 10:16
'He who scattered Israel gathers him,
he guards him as a shepherd guards his flock'.
Is 49:25
Lk 11:21-22
For Yahweh has ransomed Jacob, 11
rescued him from a hand stronger than his own.
Ba 4:23
They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion, 12
they will throng towards the good things of Yahweh:
corn and oil and wine,
sheep and oxen;
their soul will be like a watered garden,
they will sorrow no more.
Jdt 15:12
The virgin will then take pleasure in the dance, 13
Ps 148:12
young men and old will be happy;[f]
Ps 30:11;
90:15
Ba 4:23
Jn 16:22
I will change their mourning into gladness,
comfort them, give them joy after their troubles,
Ps 132:16
refresh my priests with rich food, 14
and see my people have their fill of my good things
— it is Yahweh who speaks.
Thus speaks Yahweh: 15
Gn 37:35
↗Mt 2:18
A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamenting and weeping bitterly:
1 S 10:2+
it is Rachel[g] weeping for her children
because they are[h] no more.
Yahweh says this: 16

Stop your weeping,
dry your eyes,
your hardships will be redressed:[c]
they shall come back from the enemy country.
17 There is hope for your descendants:[d]
your sons will come home to their own lands.
18 I plainly hear the grieving of Ephraim,
'You have disciplined me, I accepted the discipline
like a young bull untamed. Ho 4:16
Bring me back, let me come back, Ps 80:3-4 Lm 5:21
for you are Yahweh my God!
19 Yes, I turned away, but have since repented;
I understood, I beat my breast.[k] Ezk 21:17; 36:31
I was deeply ashamed, covered with confusion;
yes, I still bore the disgrace of my youth'.
20 Is Ephraim, then, so dear a son to me,
a child so favoured,
that after each threat of mine Ps 27:10 Pr 3:12 Rv 3:19
I must still remember him,
still be deeply moved for him, Is 49:14-16 Ho 11:8-9
and let my tenderness yearn over him?
It is Yahweh who speaks.

21 Set up signposts, *Is 40:3+*
raise landmarks;
mark the road well, Sg 1:8
the way by which you went.
Come home, virgin of Israel, 3:12 Lk 15:20
come home to these towns of yours.
22 How long will you hesitate, disloyal daughter?
For Yahweh is creating something new on earth:
the Woman sets out to find her Husband again.[l] *Ho 2:18-19*

Promise of restoration to Judah[m] (LXX 38:23-26)

23 Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: In the land of Judah and in its towns, they will use these words again, once I have restored their fortunes:

'Yahweh grant you his blessing,
you pasture of justice,
you holy mountain!' Is 11:9

24 Judah and all his towns, the farmers and those who tend the flock will live
25 in this land. •For I refresh the wearied soul and satisfy every sorrowing soul. Ps 23:2-3
26 And hence:[n]

I awoke and was refreshed,[o]
and my sleep was peaceful.

31 c. Religious unity recovered round the unique sanctuary of Zion.
d. 'has saved his' Greek; 'save thy' Hebr.
e. 'they had left' Greek; 'they will come' Hebr. 'comfort' (lit. 'I will lead them back with consolations') Greek; 'with supplications' Hebr.
f. 'will be happy' Greek; 'together' Hebr.
g. The mother of Ephraim and Manasseh; her tomb was at Ramah.
h. 'they are' Greek; 'it is' Hebr.
i. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.
j. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.
k. Lit. 'smote the thigh', gesture expressing regret.
l. The Hebr. verb translated here as 'set out to find again', means 'to surround', 'to turn (dance?) round something', 'to go looking for'. The text expresses the resumption of the loving relationship between Israel and her Husband, Yahweh, cf. Ho 1:2+; Is 54:5-8; Ezk 16:59-60. The Vulg. has accentuated the messianic scope of the text by translating: 'the woman will surround the man', suggesting the virginal conception of Christ.
m. This and the following oracle were pronounced in about 587. See 30:1+.
n. Probably an allusion to a popular song.
o. 'was refreshed' corr.; 'saw' Hebr.

Israel and Judah (LXX 38:27-28)

Ps 107:41 Is 49:19-20 Zc 2:8 — See, the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when I am going to sow 27
the seed of men and cattle on the House of Israel and on the House of Judah.
1:10 Ba 2:9 — And as I once watched them to tear up, to knock down, to overthrow, destroy 28
and bring disaster, so now I shall watch over them to build and to plant. It is
Yahweh who speaks.

Dt 24:16+ **Individual retribution**[p]

In those days people will no longer say: 29

||Ezk 18:2 — 'The fathers have eaten unripe grapes;
the children's teeth are set on edge'.

But each is to die for his own sin. Every man who eats unripe grapes is to have 30
his own teeth set on edge.

The new covenant[q] (LXX 38:31-34)

↗Heb 8:8-12 Lk 22:20p — See, the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when I will make a new 31
covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), •but not a covenant 32
Ex 32:1.7 Ex 19:1+ like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand
to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so
I had to show them who was master. It is Yahweh who speaks. •No, this is 33
↗Heb 10:16 17:1; 24:7; 32:39-40 Dt 6:6 Ps 37:31 Is 11:8; 54:13 Ba 3:7 Jn 6:45 ↗2 Co 3:3 ↗1 Th 4:9 ↗Heb 10:17 — the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive—it is
Yahweh who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on
their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. •There 34
will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to
say to brother, 'Learn to know Yahweh!' No, they will all know me, the least
no less than the greatest—it is Yahweh who speaks—since I will forgive their
iniquity and never call their sin to mind.

Israel will endure (LXX 38:35-37)

Gn 1:14 Ps 136:7f — Yahweh who provides the sun for light by day, 35
the moon[r] and stars for light by night,
Ps 72:7-8 — who stirs the sea, making its waves roar,
Ps 148:6 ||Is 51:15 — he whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth, says this:
Ps 89:33-37 — Were this established order ever to pass away 36
from my presence—it is Yahweh who speaks—
only then would the race of Israel also cease
to be a nation in my presence for ever.
[s]Were the heavens above ever to be measured, 37
the foundations of the earth below ever to be fathomed,
only then would I reject the race of Israel
for all that they have done. It is Yahweh who speaks.

Jerusalem magnificently rebuilt[t]

Ne 3:2 Tb 14:5 — See, the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when the city of 38
Yahweh will be rebuilt from the Tower of Hananel to the Gate of the Corner.
Ezk 41:13 Zc 2:5 — Then once again the measuring line will stretch straight to the Hill of Gareb, 39
turning then to Goah.[u] •And the whole valley, with its dead and its ashes, and 40
Jos 6:17+ Zc 14:11 ↗Rv 22:3 — all the fields beside[v] the wadi Kidron as far as the corner of the Horse Gate,
eastwards, will be consecrated to Yahweh. It shall never again be destroyed,
or laid under the ban.

D. ADDITIONS TO THE BOOK OF CONSOLATION

Jeremiah buys a field in token of his confidence in the future of Judah[a] (LXX 39) 18:1+; 34: 1-7

32 1 The word that was addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh in the tenth
year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of
2 Nebuchadnezzar. •The army of the king of Babylon was at that time besieging
Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined to the Court of the Guard
3 in the royal palace of Judah, •where Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned
him. 'Why' he had asked 'do you make a prophecy like this, "Yahweh says
this: I am now going to deliver this city into the hands of the king of Babylon,
4 for him to capture it; •and Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape the power of
the Chaldaeans, but will inevitably be delivered into the hands of the king of
5 Babylon, speak to him personally and see him face to face. •He will take
Zedekiah to Babylon and he will stay there (until I visit him—it is Yahweh who
speaks. If you fight the Chaldaeans you will not succeed!)"?'
6 Jeremiah said, 'The word of Yahweh has been addressed to me as follows,
7 "Look, Hanamel the son of your uncle Shallum will come to you and say:
Buy my field at Anathoth, for you have the right of redemption[b] to purchase it".
8 And, as Yahweh had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me, in the Court of
the Guard. He said to me, "Buy my field at Anathoth,[c] for you have the
right of inheritance and redemption; buy it". I knew then that this was
9 Yahweh's order. •Accordingly, I bought the field from my cousin Hanamel of
10 Anathoth and paid him the price: seventeen silver shekels. •I drew up the deed
and sealed it, called in witnesses and weighed out the money on the scales.
11 I then took both the sealed deed of purchase and its open copy, in accordance
12 with the requirements of the law, •and handed over the deed of purchase to
Baruch[d] son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, Ba 1:1
of the witnesses who had signed the deed of purchase, and of all the Jews who
13 then happened to be in the Court of the Guard. •In their presence I gave
14 Baruch these instructions: •[e]'Take these deeds, the sealed deed of purchase
and its open copy, and put them in an earthenware pot, so that they may be

p. Here Jeremiah refutes a common saying, quoted again in Ezk 18:2, expressing the old principle of collective responsibility: in this context the penalty contracted by all the members of a family for the fault of one. He foretells that a new principle will be applied in the future—Ezekiel is to declare that the time has come already—namely that sinners will be punished individually, cf. Ezk 14:12+; 18.

q. In vv. 31-34 Jr reaches its highest peak of spirituality. The old covenant has been violated, v. 32, Ezk 16:59, and the attempted reform under Josiah has been short-lived: it is evident now that God has other plans. A disaster will ensue, leaving only a 'remnant' of the nation, Is 4:3+, and then an everlasting covenant will be made, v. 31, a covenant as in the days of Noah, Is 54:9-10. The former perspectives remain: man's obedience to the Law, and the divine presence bestowing peace and material prosperity, Ezk 36:29-30, this ideal being summed up in the formula: 'I will be your God and you shall be my people', v. 33; 24:7; 32:38; Ezk 11:20; 36:28; 37:27; cf. Dt 7:6+. But the covenant is 'new' in three respects: 1. God's spontaneous forgiveness of sin, v. 34; Ezk 36:25,29; Ps 51:1-2,7. 2. Individual responsibility and retribution, v. 29, cf. Ezk 14:12+. 3. Interiorisation of religion: the Law is no longer to be a code regulating external activity but an inspiration working on the heart of man, v. 33; 24:7; 32:39, under the influence of the spirit of God, who gives man a new heart, Ezk 36:26-27; Ps 51:10, cf. Jr 4:4+, capable of 'knowing' God, Ho 2:22+. This new and eternal covenant, proclaimed again by Ezekiel, Ezk 36:25-28, by the closing chapters of Is, Is 55:3; 59:21; 61:8, cf. Ba 2:35, and operative in Ps 51, will be inaugurated by the sacrifice of Christ, Mt 26:28p—and the apostles will proclaim its fulfilment, 2 Co 3:6; Rm 11:27; Heb 8:6-13; 9:15f; 1 Jn 5:20+.

r. Before 'the moon' Hebr. inserts 'the established order' (lit. 'the laws'), cf. v. 36; absent from Greek.

s. Hebr. inserts at beginning of verse 'Thus says Yahweh', absent from Greek.

t. The measurements of the newly built city are those of the old, destroyed by the Chaldaeans. So also in Zc 14:10.

u. Goah, Zc 14:5, was presumably situated at the junction of the three valleys: Ben-hinnom, the Tyropoean and Kidron.

v. 'beside' one MS; 'as far as' Hebr.

32 a. The incident, which is given a symbolic construction, cf. 18:1+, took place in 587 when the siege foretold in 34:21-22 had been resumed, vv. 2,24. The purchase of the field is doubtless connected with the distribution of property for which Jeremiah proposed to go to Anathoth, 37:12. The original, autobiographical text, vv. 6b-17a, 24-29a, 42-44, seems to have been expanded by an introduction, vv. 1-6a, a prayer, vv. 17b-23 (reminiscent of Ne 9), and a messianic passage, vv. 29b-41, resuming themes characteristic of Jeremiah.

b. For this right of priority in purchase cf. Rt 4.

c. Hebr. adds 'which is in the land of Benjamin'.

d. The scribe who acted as secretary to Jeremiah, ch. 36:45.

e. Hebr. inserts at the beginning of the verse 'Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel says this'.

preserved for a long time. •For Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, 15
"People will buy fields and vineyards in this land again".

'After I had entrusted the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed 16
Nb 11:23 thus to Yahweh: •Ah, Lord Yahweh, you have made the heavens and 17
32:27 the earth with your great power and outstretched arm. To you nothing is
Ex 34:6-7+ Rm 4:21 Ex 34:7 Am 4:13 impossible. •You show kindness to thousands but repay the fathers' guilt in 18
full to their children after them. Great and mighty God, whose name is Yahweh
Ps 33:14-15 Sabaoth! •Great in purpose, mighty in execution, whose eyes are open on all 19
17:10 Jb 34:21 the ways of men, rewarding each man as his ways and the results of his actions
deserve! •You performed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt and do the same 20
Dt 4:34 Dn 9:15 today, in Israel and among mankind. You have won the name that is yours
today. •You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs 21
and wonders, with mighty hand and outstretched arm and fearsome terror;
Ex 3:8+ then you gave them this land which you promised on oath to their ancestors, 22
a land where milk and honey flow; •and in due course they entered it and took 23
26:4 possession. But they would not listen to your voice or follow your Law: they
would do nothing you ordered them to do; and so you made all these
disasters happen to them. •See how the earthworks grow nearer to the city for 24
the assault! Sword, famine, and plague will deliver the city into the hands of
the attacking Chaldaeans. What you have said is now fulfilled, as you see.
Yet you yourself, Lord Yahweh, told me, "Buy the field with money in front 25
of witnesses"—and even now the city is falling into the hands of the Chaldaeans!

32:17 Zc 8:6 Lk 1:37 'The word of Yahweh was addressed to me[f] as follows, •"See, I am Yahweh, 26 27
the God of all mankind: is anything impossible to me?

"Therefore—Yahweh says this: I am now putting this city into the power of 28
the Chaldaeans, into the power of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will
capture it; •the Chaldaeans attacking this city will come and set fire to it; 29
they will burn the houses on the roofs of which incense was offered to Baal and
libations were poured to alien gods, to provoke me. •For the sons of Israel and 30
of Judah have done nothing but displease me from their youth up (the sons
of Israel in fact have done nothing but provoke me by their actions—it is
Yahweh who speaks). •Yes, from the day when it was built until today, this 31
city has been such cause of anger and of wrath to me that I mean to remove
it from my sight, •because of all the wickedness the sons of Israel and the sons 32
of Judah have committed to provoke me: they, their kings, their nobles, their
priests and their prophets, the men of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem.
They turned their backs to me, never their faces; and though I taught them[g] 33
so urgently, so persistently, they would not listen and learn the lesson. •They 34
=7:30-31 have put their abominations in the Temple that bears my name to defile it.
They have built the high places of Baal in the Valley of Ben-hinnom, there to 35
Lv 18:21+ make their sons and daughters pass through fire in honour of Molech—
something I never ordered, for it never entered my thoughts that they would do
such detestable things—and so they have led Judah into sin.

"But now, and for the same reason, this is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, 36
says about this city of which you say:[h] Sword, famine and plague will deliver
it into the hands of the king of Babylon: •I mean to gather them from all the 37
countries where I have driven them in my anger, my fury and great wrath.
Tb 14:7 I will bring them back to this place and make them live in safety. •Then they 38
shall be my people, and I will be their God. •I will give them a different heart and 39
24:7 different behaviour[i] so that they will always fear me, for the good of themselves
31:31+ and their children after them. •I will make an everlasting covenant with them; I 40
will not cease in my efforts for their good, and I will put respect for me into their
Dt 30:9 Zc 3:17 hearts, so that they turn from me no more. •It will be my pleasure to bring 41
about their good, and I will plant them firmly in this land, with all my heart and
soul. •For Yahweh says this: As I have brought this great disaster on this 42
people, so I am going to bring them all the good I promise them. •People will 43

buy fields in this land of which you say: It is a wasteland without man or beast,
44 it is given over into the power of the Chaldaeans. •People will buy fields, pay
money, draw up deeds and seal them, and witness them in the land of Benjamin,
in the districts round Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah, of the highlands, of the
Lowlands and of the Negeb. For I am going to restore their fortunes—it is
Yahweh who speaks." '

Another promise of recovery for Jerusalem and Judah[a] (LXX 40)

1 33 Jeremiah was still confined to the Court of the Guard when the word
2 of Yahweh was addressed to him a second time, •'Yahweh, who made
the earth,[b] who formed it and set it firm—Yahweh is his name—says this,
3 Call to me and I will answer you; I will tell you great mysteries of which you 29:12 Ps 91:15
4 know nothing. •For this is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says about the
houses of this city and the royal palaces of Judah which are to be destroyed.
5 Against the earthworks and the palisades[c] •they will join battle with the
Chaldaeans, only to fill the city with the corpses of those I strike down in my
anger and my wrath, of those from whom I turned my face because of all their
wickedness.[d]
6 'But look, I will hasten their[e] recovery and their cure; I will cure them Ps 147:2
7 and let them know peace and security in full measure. •I will restore the fortunes
8 of Judah and Jerusalem,[f] and build them again as they were before. •I will
cleanse them of every sin they have committed against me; the sins by which 31:31+ Ezk 36:25
9 they offended me and apostatised from me, all these I will forgive. •And
Jerusalem[g] shall be my theme of joy, my honour and my boast, before all the
nations of the earth: these, when they hear of all the prosperity that I shall Ps 67:2
grant, will be seized with fear and trembling at all the prosperity and the peace
that I provide for it.
10 'Yahweh says this: In this place of which you say, "It is a waste without
man or beast", in the towns of Judah and in the ruined streets of Jerusalem
11 where there is neither man nor beast, once more will be heard •shouts of Ps 147:13
rejoicing and mirth, the voices of bridegroom and bride, and the singing of 25:10
those who bring thanksgiving sacrifices to the Temple of Yahweh, "Give thanks 1 Ch 16:34 Ezr 3:11
to Yahweh Sabaoth, for Yahweh is good, for his love is everlasting". For I will ||Ps 100:5; 106:1; 107:1
restore the fortunes of this land as they were before. Yahweh declares it!
12 [h]'Yahweh Sabaoth says this: In this place, this waste without man or
beast, and in all its towns, once again there will be pastures for the shepherds
13 to rest their flocks. •In all the towns of the highlands, of the Lowlands
and the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, in the districts round Jerusalem and
in the towns of Judah, once again the flocks shall pass under the hand of him
who counts them.[i] Yahweh declares it!

The institutions of the future[j]

14 'See, the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when I am going
to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

15 'In those days and at that time, =23:5-6
I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David, Ps 132:17 Is 4:2+
who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.

f. 'me' Greek, Vet. Lat.; 'Jeremiah' Hebr.
g. 'though I taught them' versions.
h. 'you' (singular) Greek; 'you' (plural) Hebr. So also in v. 43.
i. 'different heart', 'different behaviour' (lit. 'way') Greek; 'one heart', 'one way' Hebr.

33 a. This prophecy dates from the same period as that of ch. 32.
b. 'who made the earth' Greek.
c. 'palisades' Greek; 'sword' Hebr.
d. Following Greek.
e. 'their' Greek A, Vulg. and Targ.
f. 'Jerusalem' Greek S; 'Israel' Hebr.
g. Text 'And it'.
h. Vv. 12-26 are absent from Greek.
i. The return to pastoral life is a messianic theme.
j. The passage, which is not authentic, describes the administration of the messianic community as in Zc 4:1-14; 6:13. In the messianic age the functions of king and priest will be closely associated.

In those days Judah shall be saved 16
and Israel shall dwell in confidence.
And this is the name[k] the city will be called:
Yahweh-our-integrity.[l]

2 S 7:1+ Lk 1:32-33 *Heb 7:17* 1 P 2:5-6 Rv 1:6 Zc 4:14+ For Yahweh says this: David shall never lack a male descendant to sit on 17 the throne of the House of Israel. •And the levitical priests shall never lack 18 a male descendant to stand in my presence and offer holocaust, to burn the oblation and offer sacrifice every day.'

31:35-36 Ps 72:7-8; 89:33-37 *2 S 7:1+* The word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah, •'Yahweh says this: 19 20 If you could break my covenant with the day[m] and my covenant with the night so that day and night do not come at their due time, •then my covenant with 21 David my servant might also be broken and he would have no son to reign on his throne, and so might my covenant with the levitical priests,[n] who are my ministers.

Gn 15:5 As the array of heaven is past counting, the sand on the seashore beyond all 22 reckoning, so will I increase the heirs of David my servant and the Levites, who, with these heirs, minister to me.'[o]

The word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah, •'Have you not noticed 23 24 what these people say, "The two families which Yahweh chose he has now rejected"? So they despise my people, whom they no longer think of as a nation.

Dt 11:21 Yahweh says this: If I have not created[p] day and night and have not laid down 25 laws for the heavens and the earth, •why, then I reject the descendants of Jacob 26 and of David my servant and cease to choose rulers from his descendants for the heirs of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! For I mean to restore their fortunes and take pity on them.'

E. MISCELLANEOUS PASSAGES

21:1-7; 32:1-5 **The fate of Zedekiah**[a] (LXX 41:1-7)

34 The word addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh when Nebuchadnezzar king 1 of Babylon and his whole army, with all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion and all the peoples, were waging war on Jerusalem and its outlying towns, •'Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: Go and speak to Zedekiah 2 king of Judah. Say this to him, "Yahweh says this: I am now handing over this city into the power of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. •And you 3 yourself will not escape his power but will inevitably be captured and delivered into his hands. You will see the king of Babylon face to face and speak to him personally. Then you will go to Babylon. •Even so, listen to the word of 4 Yahweh, Zedekiah king of Judah, and you will not die by the sword;[b] •you will 5 die in peace. And as spices were burnt for your fathers, the kings who in times past preceded you, so they will also burn spices for you and raise this dirge for

22:18 you: Mourn for his highness! I myself declare it—it is Yahweh who speaks." '

The prophet Jeremiah repeated all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah, 6 in Jerusalem, •while the army of the king of Babylon was attacking Jerusalem 7 and the towns of Judah which still held out, namely Lachish and Azekah, these being the only towns of Judah that still held out, since they were fortified.

The episode of the liberated slaves[c] (LXX 41:8-22)

Lv 25:10,39 Ne 5:1f Jb 31:13 Is 58:6 The word addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh after King Zedekiah had made 8 a pact with all the people in Jerusalem to free their slaves: •each man was to 9 free his Hebrew slaves, men and women, and no one was any longer to keep a brother Jew in slavery. •All the nobles and all the people who had entered into 10 the pact had agreed that everyone should free his slaves, men or women, and no longer keep them as slaves: they had agreed on this and set them free. •Afterwards, 11 however, they changed their minds, recovered the slaves, men and women, whom they had set free, and reduced them to slavery again. •So the word of Yahweh 12

13 was addressed to Jeremiah,[a] •'Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: I made
a covenant with your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the
14 house of slavery; it said: •At the end of seven years each one of you is to free Dt 15:12-13
his brother Hebrew who has sold himself to you: he may be your slave for
six years, then you must send him away free. But your ancestors did not listen to
15 me and would not pay attention. •Now, today you took a different attitude and
did what pleases me by proclaiming freedom for your neighbour; you made a
16 covenant in my presence in the Temple that bears my name. •And then you changed
your mind and, profaning my name, each of you has recovered his slaves, men
and women, whom you had sent away free to live their own lives, and has forced
them to become your slaves again.
17 'Therefore—Yahweh says this: You have disobeyed me, by not each granting
freedom to his brother and his neighbour. Very well, I in my turn —is is 29:18
Yahweh who speaks—leave sword, famine and plague free to deal with you;
18 I will make you an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. •And
these men who have infringed my covenant, who have not observed the terms
of the covenant made in my presence, I will treat these men like the calf they cut in
19 two to pass between the parts of it.[e] •As for the nobles of Judah and of Jerusalem,
the eunuchs and the priests, and all the people of the country who have passed
20 between the parts of the calf, •I will put them into the power of their enemies
and into the power of men determined to kill them: their corpses will feed the 7:33
21 birds of heaven and the beasts of the earth. •As for Zedekiah king of Judah
and his nobles, these too I will hand over to their enemies and to men
determined to kill them, and to the army of the king of Babylon which has just
22 withdrawn. •Listen, I will give the order—it is Yahweh who speaks—and bring
them back to this city to attack it and capture it and burn it down. I am going to 9:10
make an uninhabited desert of the towns of Judah.'

The example of the Rechabites[a] (LXX 42)

1 35 The word addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh in the days of Jehoiakim
2 son of Josiah, king of Judah, •'Go to the clan of the Rechabites and speak
to them; bring them into one of the apartments of the Temple of Yahweh and
3 offer them wine to drink'. •So I brought Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, son of
Habazziniah, with his brothers and all his sons: the whole Rechabite clan. Nb 6:4
4 I took them to the Temple of Yahweh into the apartment of Ben-johanan[b]
son of Igdaliah, a man of God,[c] a room near that of the officials, over the
5 apartment of Maaseiah son of Shallum, guardian of the threshold. •I then set
pitchers full of wine, and some cups, before the men of the Rechabite clan and
said, 'Drink some wine'.
6 They replied, 'We do not drink wine, because our ancestor Jonadab son of 2 K 10:15
Rechab gave us this order: "You must never drink wine, neither you nor your
7 sons; •nor must you build houses, sow seed, plant vineyards, or own property;

k. 'the name' Theod., Vulg.; omitted from Hebr.

l. Vv. 15-16 are a repetition of 23:5-6, but the name 'Yahweh-our-integrity' is applied to Jerusalem. On the messianic name of Jerusalem, see Ezk 48:35, and cf. Is 1:26+.

m. 'the day' corr.; 'by day' Hebr.

n. Lit. 'the Levites, the priests'; in v. 18: 'the priests, the Levites'.

o. 'As' versions; 'For' Hebr. 'with... me' (lit. 'with it are my ministers') corr.

p. 'If I have not created' corr.; 'If I have no covenant with' Hebr.

34 a. This incident must belong to the opening months of the siege, 588-587, when Nebuchadnezzar had not yet concentrated his forces on Jerusalem but was still fighting in the S. and S.E., v. 7; Zedekiah still has time to avert the catastrophe by surrendering, like Jehoiakim in 605.

b. 'and' is not in the text. Immediately before 'you will not die' Hebr. inserts 'Thus says Yahweh about you'.

c. The incident took place during the suspension of the siege, vv. 21-22.

d. Hebr. adds 'from Yahweh', absent from Greek.

e. 'like the calf' corr.; 'the calf' Hebr. On this ancient covenant ritual in which the partners passed between the two halves of a sacrificed animal, cf. Gn 15:17+.

35 a. This incident took place towards the end of the reign of Jehoiakim. Bands of Syrians had been recruited by Nebuchadnezzar to harry the countryside which the countryfolk abandoned, as in 605, to find shelter in the capital.

b. 'of Ben-johanan' following Greek B; 'of the sons of Hanan' Hebr.

c. Doubtless a prophet attached to the Temple, and a friend of Jeremiah.

but you must live in tents all your lives, so that you may live long on the soil to which you are alien".[d] •We have punctiliously obeyed the orders of our ancestor, 8
Jonadab son of Rechab, never drinking wine ourselves, nor our wives, our sons or our daughters, •not building houses to live in, owning neither vineyard nor 9
field to sow,[e] •living in tents. We have obeyed the orders of our ancestor 10
Jonadab, respecting them in every particular. •However, when Nebuchadnezzar 11
king of Babylon invaded this country, we decided, "We must get away! We will go to Jerusalem to escape the army of the Chaldaeans and the army of Aram." So here we are, living in Jerusalem.'

Then the word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah, •'Thus says Yahweh 12 13
Sabaoth, the God of Israel: Go and say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "Will you not learn the lesson and listen to my words? It is Yahweh
who speaks. •The word of Jonadab son of Rechab ordering his sons to drink 14
no wine has been kept; obedient to their ancestor's command, they drink none
7:13 even today. But to me, who spoke to you so urgently, so persistently, you
have not listened. •I have sent you all my servants the prophets so persistently, 15
25:4-7 so often, to say: Each of you turn from your evil way, and amend your actions, do not follow alien gods and serve them; then you will be able to stay on the soil I gave to you and your ancestors. But you would not listen to me. •The 16
sons of Jonadab son of Rechab have kept the command their ancestor gave them, but this people has not listened to me. •And so—Yahweh, the God of 17
Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: I will bring down on Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem all the disasters with which I have threatened them, because I spoke to them and they would not listen, called to them and they would not answer." '

Then Jeremiah said to the Rechabite clan, 'Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, 18
says this, "Because you have obeyed the orders of Jonadab and kept all his rules and done all that he ordered you, •for this—thus says Yahweh 19
Sabaoth, the God of Israel—Jonadab son of Rechab shall never lack a male descendant to stand in my presence" '.[f]

IV. THE SUFFERINGS OF JEREMIAH

The scroll written in 605-604[a] (LXX 43)

36 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim[b] son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word 1
was addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh, •'Take a scroll and write on it all 2
the words I have spoken to you about Jerusalem[c] and Judah and all the nations, from the day I first spoke to you, in the time of Josiah, until today. •Perhaps 3
when the House of Judah hears of all the evil I have in mind for them, each man will turn from his evil way, and then I can forgive their misdeeds and their sin.'
Ba 1:1 Jeremiah therefore summoned Baruch son of Neriah, who at his dictation wrote 4
down on the scroll all the words Yahweh had spoken to him.[d]

Now in the fifth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth 9
month,[e] there was a summons to a fast in the presence of Yahweh for the whole population of Jerusalem and for all the people who could come to Jerusalem from the towns of Judah. •Jeremiah then gave Baruch this order: 'As I am 5
20:1-2 prevented from entering the Temple of Yahweh, •you yourself must go and, 6
from the scroll you wrote at my dictation, read all the words of Yahweh to the
2 Ch 20:4 people in his Temple on the day of the fast; read them also in the hearing of all the men of Judah who come in from the towns. •Perhaps they will offer their prayers 7
to Yahweh and each one turn from his evil way, for great is the anger and wrath with which Yahweh has threatened this people.' •Baruch son of Neriah duly 8
carried out the order that the prophet Jeremiah had given him, to read all the words of Yahweh from the book in his Temple. •He read the words of Jeremiah 10
26:24+ from the book; this happened in the apartment of Gemariah, son of Shaphan

the secretary, in the upper court at the entry of the New Gate of the Temple of Yahweh, where all the people could hear.

11 Micaiah son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan, had heard all the words of Yahweh
12 read from the book, •and he went down to the royal palace and into the secretary's room. All the officials were in session there: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan,
13 Zedekiah son of Hananiah and all the other officials. •Micaiah reported to them
14 all the words he had heard as Baruch was reading the book to the people. •The officials then by common consent sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah to Baruch, with Shelemiah[f] son of Cushi, to give him this message, 'Come, and bring the scroll with you which you were reading to the people'. Bringing the scroll with him,
15 Baruch son of Neriah appeared before them. •'Sit down,' they said 'and read
16 it out.' So Baruch read it to them. •When they had heard all the words they turned to one another in alarm and said,[g] 'We must certainly inform the king
17 of all this'. •They then questioned Baruch: 'Tell us' they said 'how you came
18 to write all these words'.[h] •'Jeremiah dictated them to me,' Baruch replied 'and
19 I wrote them down in ink in this book.' •The officials then said to Baruch, 'You and Jeremiah had better go into hiding; and do not tell anyone where you are'.
20 Whereupon they went off to the king in the palace court, depositing the scroll in the room of Elishama the secretary. And they informed the king of the whole affair.

21 The king sent Jehudi for the scroll, and he brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it out to the king and all the officials standing round the
22 king. •The king was seated in his winter apartments—it was the ninth month—
23 with a fire burning in a brazier in front of him. •Each time Jehudi had read three or four columns, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the fire in the brazier until the whole of the scroll had been burnt in
24 the brazier fire. •But even after hearing all these words, neither the king nor
25 any of his servants took alarm or tore their garments; •and although Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had urged the king not to burn the scroll he would
26 not listen to them. •He ordered Prince Jerahmeel and Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest the scribe Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah. But Yahweh had hidden them.

27 And then the word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah, after the king had burnt the scroll containing the words Baruch had written at the dictation
28 of Jeremiah, •'Take another scroll and write down all the words that were
29 written on the first scroll burnt by Jehoiakim king of Judah. •And as regards Jehoiakim king of Judah, say, "Yahweh says this: You have burnt this scroll, saying: Why have you written down: The king of Babylon will certainly come
30 and lay this country waste and leave it without man or beast? •And so, this is what Yahweh says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his corpse will be tossed out to the heat of 22:19 Ba 2:25
31 the day and the frost of the night. •I will punish him, his heirs and his servants for their misdeeds; on them, on the citizens of Jerusalem and on the men of Judah I will bring down all the disasters with which I have threatened them, though they have not listened." '

32 Jeremiah then took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of

d. The Rechabite clan, a survival from nomadic days, represented a reaction against urban civilisation in favour of the ancient religious practices of the desert, Ho 2:16+.
e. 'nor field to sow' corr.
f. The phrase is commonly used of the priestly liturgical functions; but it can also be applied to laymen; one is 'in the presence of Yahweh' when living in his territory.

36 a. See Introduction to the Prophets.
b. 605. Jehoiakim has just capitulated to Nebuchadnezzar and feels safe.
c. 'Jerusalem' Greek MSS; 'Israel' Hebr.
d. We read v. 9 before v. 5.
e. December 604.
f. 'with (lit. 'and') Shelemiah' corr.; 'son of Shelemiah' Hebr.
g. Hebr. inserts 'to Baruch', absent from Greek.
h. Hebr. inserts 'at his dictation', absent from Greek.

Neriah, and at the dictation of Jeremiah he wrote down all the words of the book that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt, with many similar words in addition.

2 Ch 36:12 **A verdict on Zedekiah** (LXX 44:1-2)

13:18-19; 22:20-30 37 Zedekiah son of Jehoiakim became king, succeeding Coniah son of Josiah: 1
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had made him king of the land of
2 K 24:17-20 Judah. •But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the country paid any 2
attention to the words Yahweh spoke through the prophet Jeremiah.

Zedekiah consults Jeremiah during the respite of 588 (LXX 44:3-10)

King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and the priest Zephaniah son 3
of Maaseiah to the prophet Jeremiah with this message, 'Intercede for us with
Yahweh our God'. •Now Jeremiah was still moving freely among the people: 4
he had not yet been put in prison. •Meanwhile Pharaoh's army was on the 5
move from Egypt and the Chaldaeans besieging Jerusalem had raised the siege
when they heard the news.

Then the word of Yahweh was addressed to the prophet Jeremiah, •'Yahweh, 6 7
the God of Israel, says this: To the king of Judah who sent you to consult
Lm 4:17 me make this reply, "Is Pharaoh's army marching to your aid? It will withdraw
to its own country, Egypt. •The Chaldaeans will return to attack this city; 8
they will capture it and burn it down. •Do not deceive yourselves and say: 9
The Chaldaeans are leaving us for good. They are not leaving. •Even if you cut 10
to pieces the whole Chaldaean army now fighting against you until there were
only the wounded left, they would stand up again, each man in his tent, to burn
this city down." '

The arrest of Jeremiah. Improvement in his treatment (LXX 44:11-21)

At the time when the Chaldaean army, threatened by the army of Pharaoh, 11
32:1+ had raised the siege of Jerusalem, •Jeremiah started to leave Jerusalem and go 12
to the land of Benjamin, there among his own people to divide his property.
He was at the Benjamin Gate when a sentry on duty there, Irijah son of 13
Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, arrested the prophet Jeremiah. 'You are desert-
ing to the Chaldaeans!' he said. •'It is a lie!' Jeremiah answered. 'I am not 14
deserting to the Chaldaeans.' But Irijah would not listen to Jeremiah and
took him under arrest to the officials. •The officials, furious with Jeremiah, had 15
Heb 11:36 him beaten and shut up in the house of Jonathan the secretary which had been
turned into a prison. •Thus Jeremiah found himself in an underground cell. 16
And there for a long time he stayed.

King Zedekiah had him sent for, and he questioned him privately in his 17
palace. 'Is there any word from Yahweh?' he asked. 'There is' Jeremiah
answered. ' "You will be handed over," he said "into the power of the king of
Babylon." ' •Jeremiah then said to King Zedekiah, 'What wrong have I done to 18
you or your servants or this people, for you to put me in prison? •Where are 19
your prophets now who prophesied, "The king of Babylon will not attack you
or this country"? •Let my lord king be pleased to listen to me now; let my 20
request meet your favour. Do not have me taken back to the house of Jonathan
the secretary, or I shall die there.' •King Zedekiah then gave an order, and 21
Jeremiah was confined in the Court of the Guard and given a loaf of bread a day
from the Street of the Bakers as long as there was bread left in the city. So
Jeremiah stayed in the Court of the Guard.

Jeremiah is thrown into the cistern. Ebed-melech intervenes (LXX 45:1-13)

38 But Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jucal son of 1
Shelemiah and Pashhur son of Malchiah heard the words which Jeremiah
=21:9 was saying to all the people,[a] •'Yahweh says this, "Anyone who stays in this 2
city will die by sword, famine or plague; but anyone who leaves it and surrenders

3 to the Chaldaeans will live; he will escape with his life. •Yahweh says this:
This city will certainly be delivered into the power of the army of the king of
Babylon, who will capture it." '
4 These leading men accordingly spoke to the king. 'Let this man be put to
death: he is unquestionably disheartening the remaining soldiers in the city,
and all the people too, by talking like this. The fellow does not have the welfare
5 of this people at heart so much as its ruin.' •'He is in your hands as you
6 know,' King Zedekiah answered 'for the king is powerless against you.'[b] •So
they took Jeremiah and threw him into the well of Prince Malchiah in the Ps 40:2
Court of the Guard, letting him down with ropes. There was no water in the
well, only mud, and into the mud Jeremiah sank.
7 But Ebed-melech the Cushite, a eunuch attached to the palace, heard that
Jeremiah had been put into the well. As the king was sitting at the Benjamin
8 9 Gate, •Ebed-melech came out from the palace and spoke to the king. •'My lord
king,' he said 'these men have done a wicked thing by treating the prophet
Jeremiah like this: they have thrown him into the well where he will die.'[c]
10 At this the king gave Ebed-melech the Cushite the following order: 'Take
three[d] men with you from here and pull the prophet Jeremiah out of the well
11 before he dies'. •Ebed-melech took the men with him and went into the palace
to the storehouse wardrobe;[e] out of it he took some torn, worn-out rags which
12 he lowered on ropes to Jeremiah in the well. •Ebed-melech the Cushite then
said to Jeremiah, 'These torn, worn-out rags are for you to put under your
13 armpits to pad the ropes'. Jeremiah did this. •They then hauled Jeremiah up
with the ropes and pulled him out of the well. And Jeremiah stayed in the
Court of the Guard.

The last conversation between Jeremiah and Zedekiah (LXX 45:14-28)

14 King Zedekiah had the prophet Jeremiah summoned to him at the third
entrance to the Temple of Yahweh. 'I want to ask you for a word,' the king
15 said to Jeremiah 'keep nothing back from me.' •Jeremiah answered Zedekiah,
'If I tell you, surely you will have me put to death? And if I give you advice, you
16 will not listen to me.' •King Zedekiah then swore this oath in secret to Jeremiah,
'As Yahweh lives, giver of this life of ours, I will neither have you put to death
nor handed over into the power of these men who are determined to kill you'.
17 Jeremiah then said to Zedekiah, 'Yahweh, the God of Sabaoth, the God of
Israel, says this, "If you go out and surrender to the officers of the king of
Babylon, your life will be safe and this city will not be burnt down; you and
18 your family will survive. •But if you do not go out and surrender to the officers
of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over into the power of the king of
the Chaldaeans who will burn it down; and you yourself will not escape their
19 hands." ' •King Zedekiah then said to Jeremiah, 'I am afraid of the Jews who
have already gone over to the Chaldaeans: I might be handed over to them and
20 they would ill-treat me'. •'You will not be handed over to them,' Jeremiah replied
'just listen to the voice of Yahweh, in obedience to which I have spoken, and
21 all will go well with you and your life will be safe. •But if you refuse to go,
22 this is what Yahweh has shown me: •a vision of all the women left in the palace
of the king of Judah being led off to the officers of the king of Babylon and
singing:

"They have misled you, they have overreached you, Ob 7
your fine friends!
Are your feet sinking in the mud?
They are up and away!"

38 **a.** In the Court of the Guard, Jeremiah could receive visitors.

b. Lit. 'with you' corr.

c. 'he will die' corr.; 'and he has died' Hebr. The Hebr. adds 'of hunger; for there was no more bread in the city', a gloss suggested by 37:21.

d. 'three' one MS; 'thirty' Hebr.

e. corr.; Hebr. 'to (the room) under the storehouse'.

Yes, all your wives and children will be led off to the Chaldaeans, and you 23
yourself will not escape their hands, but will be a prisoner in the clutches of the
king of Babylon. And as for this city, it will be burnt down.'[f]

Zedekiah then said to Jeremiah, 'Do not let anyone else hear these words or 24
you will die. •If the officials hear that I have been talking to you, and come to 25
you and say, "Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you;[g]
keep nothing back from us, or we will put you to death", •you must reply, 26
"I presented this request to the king: that he would not have me sent back to
the house of Jonathan to die there".'

All the officials did in fact come to Jeremiah to question him. He told them 27
exactly what the king had ordered him to say. They then left him in peace, since
no part of the conversation had been overheard. •Jeremiah stayed in the Court 28
of the Guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

The fall of Jerusalem: the treatment Jeremiah received[a] (LXX 45:28; 46:14)

‖2 K 25:1-21 Now when Jerusalem was captured...

=52:4f 39 In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month,[b] 1
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with his whole army to attack Jerusa-
lem and besieged it. •In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month,[c] a 2
breach was made in the city wall.

...all the officers of the king of Babylon marched in and took up their quarters 3
at the Middle Gate: Nergal-sharezer, prince of Sin-magir, the chief officer,[d] Nebus-
hazban, the high official,[e] and all the other officers of the king of Babylon...

52:7-8 Seeing this, Zedekiah king of Judah fled under cover of dark, with all the 4
fighting men, leaving the city by way of the king's garden through the gate
between the two walls, and making their way towards the Arabah.[f] •The Chaldaean 5
troops pursued them and caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They
captured him and took him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah
in the land of Hamath, who passed sentence on him. •The king of Babylon had 6
the sons of Zedekiah slaughtered before his eyes at Riblah; the king of Babylon
also had all the leading men of Judah put to death. •He then put out Zedekiah's 7
eyes and, loading him with chains, carried him off to Babylon. •The 8
Chaldaeans burnt down the royal palace and the private houses, and demolished
the walls of Jerusalem. •Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, deported the 9
remainder of the population left behind in the city, the deserters who had gone
over to him, and the rest of the artisans[g] to Babylon. •Nebuzaradan, command- 10
er of the guard, left some of the humbler people who had nothing, in the land
of Judah, at the same time giving them vineyards and fields.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had given the following orders to[h] 11
Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, about Jeremiah: •'Take him, look 12
after him; do him no harm, but treat him as he wishes'.

Whereupon (Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard,) Nebushazban, the 13
high official, Nergal-sharezer, the chief officer, and all the officers of the king
of Babylon despatched men.

...and they despatched men to take Jeremiah from the Court of the Guard, 14
and allowed him to move about freely.[i] And so he lived among the people.

An oracle assuring the safety of Ebed-melech[j] (LXX 46:15-18)

45:1-5 While Jeremiah was confined in the Court of the Guard, the word of Yahweh 15
was addressed to him, •'Go and say to Ebed-melech the Cushite, "Yahweh, the 16
God of Israel, says this: See, I am bringing disaster, not prosperity, on this
city, as I said I would. That day, when this comes true before your eyes, •I will 17
rescue you that day—it is Yahweh who speaks—and you will not be delivered
into the hands of the men you fear. •I will see that you escape: you are not 18
going to fall to the sword; you will escape with your life, because you have
put your trust in me—it is Yahweh who speaks." '

Further details about the treatment of Jeremiah (LXX 47:1-6)

40 1 The word addressed to Jeremiah by Yahweh after Nebuzaradan,
commander of the guard, had released him from Ramah; there he had
him singled out, chained as he was with all the other captives from Jerusalem
2 and Judah who were being deported to Babylon.[a] •Then taking Jeremiah aside,
the commander of the guard said to him, 'Yahweh your God foretold calamity
3 for this country, •and now he has brought it. He has done what he threatened
to do, because you had sinned against Yahweh and would not listen to his
4 voice; so all this has happened to you. •Look, today I am having your hands
unchained. If you like to come with me to Babylon, then come: I will look after
you. If you do not want to come with me to Babylon, never mind. Look, you
have the whole country to choose from: you may go where you please, wherever
5 you choose.[b] •You can, for instance, go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Sha- 2 K 25:22
phan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed governor of the towns of Judah, and
stay with him and live with the people; or you can go anywhere else you
choose.' With that, the commander of the guard provided him with food and
6 gave him a present and sent him on his way. •Jeremiah went to Mizpah to
Gedaliah son of Ahikam and stayed with him, living with the people still left
in the country.

Gedaliah the governor; his assassination (LXX 47:7-48:18) ||2 K 25:22-26

7 When all the commanders of the troops, who with their men were still
roaming the countryside, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah[e]
son of Ahikam as governor of the country, making him responsible for the
men, women and children, and those humbler people of the country who had
8 not been deported to Babylon, •they went to Gedaliah at Mizpah: Ishmael son
of Nethaniah, Johanan[d] son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of
Ephai the Netophathite, Jezaniah son of the Maacathite, they and their men.
9 To them and to their men Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, swore
an oath. 'Do not be afraid' he said 'of submitting to the Chaldaeans; but live
in the country, and obey the king of Babylon, and all will go well with you.
10 I for my part, as the man answerable to the Chaldaeans when they come to us,
am going to live here at Mizpah; but you can harvest your wine, summer fruits and
oil, fill your storage jars and settle down in those towns which you care to occupy.'
11 Similarly, when all the Judaeans living in Moab and among the Ammonites, and
in Edom, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and Is 4:3+
had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, as their governor,
12 they all came back from all the places to which they had been dispersed.
On their return to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, they harvested an
immense quantity of wine and summer fruits.

f. 'it will be burnt down' Hebr. MSS and Greek; 'you will burn it down' Hebr.

g. Following Syr.

39 a. The text of this section is composed of disparate, ill-assorted elements. The Greek version lacks 38:28b and 39:4-13. Apparently, to the original biographical elements relating to Jeremiah, 38:28b; 39:3,14, were added, first, 39:1-2, the account of the siege from its start to the opening of the breach, as in 2 K 25:1-4a (Jr 52:4-7a); next, 39:4-10, an account of the end of the siege and of what followed it, which is an abridgement of 2 K 25:4b-7,9-12 (Jr 52:7b-16); and, finally, 39:11-13 with its information on the prophet's release.

b. January-February 588.

c. August 587.

d. *rab-mugi* a superior officer of high, but unspecified, rank.

e. Lit. 'chief of the eunuchs', but the phrase more probably means one of the higher officials of the court. The proper names in this verse have been corrected from v. 13.

f. 'this' corr.; 'them' Hebr. 'making their way' corr.; 'he went out' Hebr. The Arabah here means the Jordan valley.

g. 'artisans' corr.; cf. 52:15; 'people' Hebr. Hebr. adds 'who were left'.

h. 'to' corr.; 'through' Hebr.

i. Lit. 'and they gave him to go out and to come in', corr.; 'they entrusted him to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, to take him home' Hebr. (but contradicting 40:1f).

j. This passage continues the narrative of 38:7-13.

40 a. There are evident gaps in the group of biographical narratives about Jeremiah. He was released in Jerusalem, 39:14, but here we find him among the captives at Ramah (about 6 m. north of Jerusalem). This second account must follow 39:11-12.

b. Hebr. inserts at the beginning of the verse 'And he did not return yet'.

c. Gedaliah came of a family of high Jewish officials who were well-disposed towards Jeremiah, 26:24+.

d. Hebr. adds 'and Jonathan', absent from Greek and from the parallel passages.

Now Johanan son of Kareah, and all the army leaders still roaming in the countryside, went to Gedaliah at Mizpah •and said to him, 'Are you aware that Baalis king of the Ammonites[e] has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to murder you?' But Gedaliah son of Ahikam would not believe them. •Johanan son of Kareah had even told Gedaliah secretly at Mizpah, 'Let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah, and no one will know who did it. Why should he murder you? It would mean that all the Judaeans who have rallied round you would be scattered again. Why should the remnant of Judah perish?' •But Gedaliah son of Ahikam replied to Johanan son of Kareah, 'You must not do this; what you say about Ishmael is false'.

41 But in the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, who was of royal descent,[a] and ten men with him, came to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. And as they were taking their meal together, there at Mizpah, •Ishmael son of Nethaniah stood up with his ten men, and attacking Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, with their swords, murdered the man whom the king of Babylon had made governor of the country. •And all the Judaeans who were with him at the feast,[b] and those of the Chaldaeans who happened to be there—they were fighting men—Ishmael killed too.[c]

On the day after the murder of Gedaliah, before the news had become known, •eighty men arrived from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, with their beards shaved off, their garments torn and their bodies gashed; they had oblations and incense with them to take to the Temple of Yahweh.[d] •Ishmael son of Nethaniah left Mizpah to meet them as they[e] approached, weeping as they went. When he met them he said, 'Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam'. •But once they were well inside the town, Ishmael son of Nethaniah slaughtered them, with the help of his men, and threw them[f] into a cistern. •There were ten of them, however, who said to Ishmael, 'Do not kill us: we have stocks of wheat and barley, oil and honey, hidden away in the fields'. So he spared them and did not kill them with their brothers. •The cistern into which Ishmael threw the corpses of all the men he had killed was a large cistern[g] which King Asa had
1 K 15:16-22 built as a precaution against Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the bodies of his victims. •Then Ishmael led the entire remnant of the people at Mizpah away, and the royal princesses[h] whom Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, had left in the care of Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah set out early to cross to the Ammonites.

When Johanan son of Kareah and all the army leaders who were with him heard about all the crimes committed by Ishmael son of Nethaniah, •mustering all their men, they set out to attack Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him at the great Pool of Gibeon. •At the sight of Johanan son of Kareah and all the army leaders with him, all the people with Ishmael were beside themselves with joy. •All the people whom Ishmael had led away from Mizpah turned about and rallied to Johanan son of Kareah. •Ishmael son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight of his men and fled to the Ammonites. Johanan son of Kareah and all the army leaders with him then rallied the entire remnant of the people whom Ishmael son of Nethaniah had led away[i] from Mizpah after the murder of Gedaliah son of Ahikam: men,[j] women and children, and eunuchs, whom Johanan brought back from Gibeon. •They set out, making a halt at Khan Kimham near Bethlehem. Their plan was to make for Egypt,
2 K 25:26 away from the Chaldaeans, of whom they were now terrified because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam whom the king of Babylon had made governor of the country.

The flight to Egypt (LXX 49:1-18; 50:1-3; 49:19-22; 50:4-7)

42 Then all the army leaders, with Johanan son of Kareah and Azariah[a] son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from least to greatest, approached the prophet Jeremiah and said, 'May it please you to hear our request! Intercede[b]

with Yahweh your God for all this remnant—and how few we are who once Dn 3:37
were so many, your own eyes can now see—•so that Yahweh your God may show
us the way we are to go and what we must do.' •The prophet Jeremiah replied,
'I hear you; and I will indeed pray to Yahweh your God as you ask; and every
word Yahweh your God replies[c] I will tell you, keeping nothing back from you'.
They in their turn said to Jeremiah, 'May Yahweh be a true and faithful
witness against us, if we do not follow the instructions that Yahweh your God
sends us through you. •Whether we like it or not, we mean to obey the voice of
Yahweh our God to whom we send you to speak for us, and by thus obeying the
voice of Yahweh our God we will prosper.'

Ten days later the word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah. •He then
summoned Johanan son of Kareah and all the army leaders who were with
him, and all the people from least to greatest. •He said, 'Yahweh, the God of
Israel, to whom you delegated me to offer your request says this' •"If you are
willing to remain peaceably[d] in this country, I will build you and not overthrow 1:10
you; I will plant you, not tear you up. For I am sorry for the evil I have done Ps 106:45
you. •Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon any longer; do not fear him—it
is Yahweh who speaks—for I am with you to save you and deliver you from his
hands. •I will take pity on you, and move him to pity you and let you return to
your native soil. •But if you say: We do not want to stay in this country; if you
disobey the voice of Yahweh your God, •and say: No, the land of Egypt is
where we want to go, where we shall not see war nor hear the sound of trumpet,
nor lack for bread; that is where we want to live; •in that case, remnant of Judah,
listen to the word of Yahweh. Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: If
you are determined to go to Egypt, and if you do go and settle there, the sword 46:13f
you fear will overtake you, there in the land of Egypt; the famine you dread
will follow on your heels, right into Egypt; you shall die there. •All the men who
are determined to go to Egypt and settle there shall die by sword, famine and
plague: not one survivor will escape the disaster I mean to bring them. •Yes,
Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: Just as my anger and my fury have
been poured out on the citizens of Jerusalem, so will my fury be poured out on 24:9; 44:9
you if you go to Egypt: you will become an object of execration and horror,
a curse, a laughing-stock; and you will never see this place again." '[e]

43 However, when Jeremiah had finished telling all the people all the words
of Yahweh their God, with which Yahweh[a] had entrusted him for them
—all the words quoted above—•Azariah son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan son of
Kareah, and all those arrogant and apostate[b] men, said to Jeremiah, 'You are
lying. Yahweh did not instruct you to say, "Do not go to Egypt and settle
there". •It is Baruch son of Neriah who keeps encouraging you to thwart us,
to hand us over into the power of the Chaldaeans, who will either put us to
death or deport us to Babylon!'

42 'Remnant of Judah!' Jeremiah answered[f] 'Yahweh himself tells you, "Do not

e. Still holding out against Nebuchadnezzar and resenting the governorship of Gedaliah.

41 a. Hebr. adds 'and one of the king's chief officers', absent from Greek and 2 K 25:25.

b. 'with him'; Hebr. adds 'with Gedaliah'. 'at the feast' corr.; 'at Mizpah' Hebr.

c. The anniversary of this event (September 587) was celebrated in subsequent years, cf. Zc 7:5; 8:19.

d. Evidently Jerusalem was still regarded as the religious centre by many Israelites of the Northern Kingdom, or at least had regained this status since the reform under Josiah, 2 K 23:19-20. The fall of Jerusalem had not put an end to Temple worship.

e. 'they' Greek; 'he' Hebr.

f. 'and threw them' Syr. The motive is not clear: possibly theft, cf. v. 8, and the concealment of Gedaliah's assassination.

g. 'a large cistern' Greek; 'by the hand of Gedaliah' Hebr.

h. 'led away' Greek; 'took captive' Hebr. After 'royal princesses' Hebr. repeats 'and the entire remnant of the people at Mizpah', absent from Greek and Syr.

i. 'whom... away' corr.; 'whom he had recovered from Ishmael' Hebr.

j. Hebr. adds 'fighting men'.

42 a. 'Azariah' Greek and 43:2; 'Jezaniah' Hebr.

b. Jeremiah here, and cf. 15:11; 2 M 15:14+, plays the part of intercessor like Moses, Ex 32:11+.

c. 'Yahweh your God replies' corr.; 'Yahweh replies to you' Hebr.

d. 'peaceably' versions; 'once more' Hebr.

e. We read 43:1-3 before v. 19.

43 a. Hebr. adds 'their God', absent from Greek.

b. 'and apostate' corr.; 'saying' Hebr.

f. We insert 'Jeremiah answered', as the transposition of 43:1-3 requires. For 43:4, see after 42:22.

go into Egypt". Understand this clearly: today I have given you solemn warning.
You were playing with your own lives when you made me your envoy to 20
Yahweh your God and said, "Intercede for us with Yahweh our God; tell us
what Yahweh our God orders and we will do it". •And now that I have told 21
you, you have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh your God today, or any part of
the message he gave me for you. •So understand this clearly: you are going to 22
die by sword, famine and plague in the place where you have been wanting to go
and settle.'

43 Despite this, Johanan son of Kareah and all the army leaders and 4
all the people would not obey the voice of Yahweh and stay in the
land of Judah. •Johanan son of Kareah and all the army leaders led off the entire 5
remnant of Judah, those who had come back from all the nations into which
they had been dispersed, to live in the land of Judah: •men, women, children, 6
the royal princesses too, and every single person entrusted to Gedaliah son of
Ahikam, son of Shaphan, by Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard; they also
led off the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch son of Neriah. •And so, disregarding 7
the voice of Yahweh, they reached the land of Egypt and arrived at Tahpanhes.[e]

Jeremiah foretells the invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar (LXX 50:8-13)

46:13f At Tahpanhes the word of Yahweh was addressed to Jeremiah, •'Take 8 9
some large stones and bury them in the presence of the men of Judah in the
cement on the square[d] outside the entrance of Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes.
25:9; 27:6 Then say to them, "Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: I am sending for 10
Ezk 29:30 Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, my servant; he[e] will place his throne over
these stones that I have buried, and spread his canopy above them. •He is 11
coming to strike the land of Egypt:

=15:2 Those for the plague, to the plague;
those for captivity, into captivity;
those for the sword, to the sword!

He[f] will set fire to the temples of the gods of Egypt; he will burn these gods 12
or carry them off; as a shepherd picks his cloak clean of vermin, so will he pick
Egypt clean and leave without interference.[g] •He will break the obelisks of the 13
temple of the Sun at On[h] and burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt." '

The last episode of Jeremiah's ministry: the Jews and the Queen of Heaven (LXP 51:1-30)

46:14 44 The word that was addressed to Jeremiah for all the Jews living in the 1
land of Egypt with homes in Migdol, Tahpanhes, Noph and the land of
Pathros.[a]

'Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: You have seen all the 2
misery I have brought down on Jerusalem and the towns of Judah; today they
lie in ruins and uninhabited. •This was because of the wicked deeds which they 3
committed to provoke me, offering incense and serving alien gods which neither
7:25+ they, nor you, nor your ancestors ever knew. •I persistently sent you all my 4
servants the prophets; I sent them to say, "Do not commit this abomination
that I find so hateful". •But they would not listen, would not pay attention 5
and so turn from their wicked deeds and no longer offer incense to alien gods.
And so my fury and my anger overflowed, burning down the towns of Judah 6
and the streets of Jerusalem, which were reduced to ruins and wasteland, as
they still are today. •And now, Yahweh, the God of Sabaoth, the God of Israel, 7
says this: Why bring the same disaster on yourselves? Do you want to
destroy all the men, women, children and babes in arms, out of Judah,[b] and
Is 4:3+ leave yourselves no remnant, •by provoking me with the work of your own 8
hands, offering incense to alien gods in the land of Egypt where you have come
to settle, thus working for your own destruction, to become a curse and a

9 laughing-stock for all the nations of the earth? •Have you forgotten the 42:18
crimes of your ancestors, of the kings of Judah and of their wives,[c] your own
crimes, the crimes of your own wives, committed in the land of Judah and
10 in the streets of Jerusalem? •To this day they have felt neither contrition nor 26:4
fear; they have not observed my Law nor the statutes I proclaimed before you,
11 as before your ancestors. •Therefore—Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says
this: Now I mean to turn my face against you to bring disaster, and exterminate
12 the whole of Judah. •The remnant of Judah who resolved to come to the land
of Egypt and to settle there, I will remove: they will all perish in the land of
Egypt; they will fall to the sword or perish of famine, from least to greatest; by
sword and famine they will die; they will be an object of execration and horror, 24:9
13 a curse, a laughing-stock. •I will deal as severely with these who have made
their home in the land of Egypt, as I dealt with Jerusalem, with sword, famine
14 and plague. •Of the remnant of Judah settled in the land of Egypt, not one
survivor is going to escape to return to the land of Judah where they long to
live once again. For none of them are going to return, except for a few refugees.'
15 At this, all the men who knew that their wives offered incense to alien gods,
and all the women who were standing there, a large assembly (with all the
people living in Pathros in the land of Egypt), answered Jeremiah as follows,
16 'We have no intention of listening to this word you have spoken to us in Yahweh's
17 name, •but intend to go on doing all we have vowed to do: offering incense 7:18+
to the Queen of Heaven[d] and pouring libations in her honour, as we used to do,
we and our fathers, our kings and our leaders, in the towns of Judah and in the
streets of Jerusalem: we had food in plenty then, we lived well, we suffered no Ho 2:7
18 disasters. •But since we gave up offering incense to the Queen of Heaven and
pouring libations in her honour, we have been destitute and have perished
19 either by sword or by famine.' •The women added,[e] 'When we offer incense
to the Queen of Heaven and pour libations in her honour, do you think we
make cakes for her with her features on them, and pour libations to her, without
our husbands' knowledge?'
20 To all the people, men and women, all those who had made this answer,
21 Jeremiah retorted, •'The incense you offered in the towns of Judah and in the
streets of Jerusalem, you, your fathers, your kings, your leaders, and the people Dn 9:6
of the country—is not this what Yahweh remembered, what came to his mind?
22 Yahweh could no longer endure your misdeeds and your detestable practices;
this is why your country has today become a desert, an object of horror and
23 a curse, uninhabited. •And this has happened because you offered incense,
because you sinned against Yahweh, refusing to listen to the voice of Yahweh, 26:4
or to observe his Law, his statutes and his decrees; this is the cause of the
disaster that has overtaken you—as is the case today.'
24 Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people, and particularly to all the women,
25 'Listen to the word of Yahweh:[f] •Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says
this, "You women, what your mouth promises, your hands should certainly
perform! You have said: We will perform the vows we have made without fail and
offer incense to the Queen of Heaven and pour libations in her honour. Very well,
26 keep your vows, make your libations![g] •But listen to the word of Yahweh,

c. A frontier town, E. of the Nile delta.
d. Lit. 'the mould for bricks'; translation conj. Jeremiah symbolically, cf. 18:1+, lays the foundations for Nebuchadnezzar's throne.
e. 'he' Greek and Syr.; 'I' Hebr.
f. 'He' versions; 'I' Hebr.
g. This successful expedition took place in 568-567 under the pharaoh Amasis.
b. 'At On' Greek; 'in the land of Egypt' Hebr. On, where there was a temple of Ra, the sun-god, is Heliopolis, near Cairo.
44 a. Migdol lies E. of Tahpanhes, 43:7+. Noph is the same as Memphis, in Lower Egypt. 'The land of Pathros' is Upper Egypt. This introduction thus represents Jeremiah's discourse as addressed to the whole Jewish Diaspora in Egypt (Elephantine in Upper Egypt already had a Jewish colony, cf. 2 M 1:1+).
b. Here the people, not the territory, of Judah.
c. 'their wives' corr.; 'his wife' Hebr.; 'your leaders' Greek.
d. 'Queen of Heaven' Greek and Vulg.; 'works of the heavens' Hebr. So also in vv. 18,19,25.
e. 'the women added' some versions.
f. Hebr. adds 'all you Judaeans who are in the land of Egypt', absent from Greek.
g. 'You women' Greek; 'You and your wives' Hebr. 'your libations' some Hebr. MSS.

all you Judaeans living in the land of Egypt: I swear by my great name, Yahweh says, that my name shall be spoken no more by any man of Judah throughout the land of Egypt; not one shall say: As the Lord Yahweh lives.[h]
Ba 2:9 Yes, I will watch over them for their ruin, not for their good; all the men of 27
Judah in the land of Egypt shall perish either by the sword or by famine until they are wiped out. •Yet, though few in number, those who escape the sword 28
will return to the land of Judah from the land of Egypt. Then the entire remnant of Judah who have come to settle in the land of Egypt will know whose word came true, mine or theirs.

"And here is the proof for you—it is Yahweh who speaks—that I mean to 29
deal with you in this place: so that you may know that the words with which I threaten you will come true: •Yahweh says this: I will hand the pharaoh 30
Hophra,[i] king of Egypt, over to his enemies and to those determined to kill
Ezk 29:20 him, just as I handed Zedekiah king of Judah over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who was bent on killing him." '

39:15-18 **An oracle of comfort for Baruch**[a] (LXX 51:31-35)

45 The word that the prophet Jeremiah addressed to Baruch son of Neriah 1
when the latter wrote these words down in a book at the dictation of Jeremiah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim[b] son of Josiah, king of Judah, •'This 2
is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says about you, Baruch! •Since you have 3
said, "I despair, for Yahweh has added sorrow to my ordeals! I am worn out with groaning, and find no relief!" •[c]Yahweh says this, "Now I am knocking 4
1:10 down what I have built, tearing up what I have planted: I am going to strike the whole earth. •And here you are asking for special treatment! Do not ask, 5
for I am now going to bring down disaster on all mankind—it is Yahweh who speaks. As for you, I will let you escape with your own life, wherever you may go." '

II(continued). ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

B. THE ORACLES IN DETAIL[a]

Ezk 29:1 Zc 2:12 46 The words of Yahweh which were addressed to the prophet Jeremiah 1
against the nations.

Is 19 **Oracles against Egypt. The defeat at Carchemish** (LXX 26.2-12)

On Egypt. 2

Against the army of Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, which took up position near the river Euphrates by Carchemish,[b] when it was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah.

Have buckler ready, and shield: 3
onward to battle!
Harness the horses: 4
into the saddle, horsemen!
To your ranks! On with your helmets!
Sharpen your spears,
put on your breastplates!...
What do I see? 5
Am 2:14-16 They are panic-stricken,
in full retreat!
Their heroes, beaten back,
are fleeing headlong
with not a look behind.

Terror from every side!
—it is Yahweh who speaks.
6 The fastest cannot escape,
nor the bravest save himself:
there in the north, there by the river Euphrates,
they have collapsed, have fallen.

7 Who was it rose like the Nile, Is 8:7-8
its waters foaming like a torrent?
8 Why, Egypt rose like the Nile,
its waters foaming like a torrent.
'I will rise,' he said 'and drown the earth;
sweep towns and their inhabitants away!
9 Charge, horses!
Crash on, chariots!
Advance, warriors,
you men from Cush and Put with shield in hand, Ezk 27:10; 30:5
you men from Lud who bend the bow!'[c]
10 Now, this is the day of the Lord Yahweh,[d]
a day of vengeance for his revenge on his enemies:
his sword[e] will eat them up and have its fill, Dt 32:42
will grow drunk with their blood.
Yes, the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth has a sacrifice to make
in the north country, by the river Euphrates.

11 Go up to Gilead in search of balm, 8:22
virgin daughter of Egypt!
You multiply remedies in vain,
nothing can cure you.
12 The nations have heard of your shame,
the dirge raised for you fills the earth:
for warrior has stumbled against warrior,
and both have fallen.

The invasion of Egypt[f]

(LXX 26:13-28) 42:15-22; 43:8-13

13 The word that Yahweh addressed to the prophet Jeremiah when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon set out to attack the land of Egypt.

14 Publish it[g] in Migdol, 44:1
proclaim it in Noph.[h]
Say, 'To your posts! At the ready!'
for the sword is devouring round you.
15 What! Has Apis[i] fled? Is 46:1-2

h. The worshippers of Ishtar also made a show of invoking Yahweh.

i. Hophra ('Apries' to the Greeks) succeeded Neco in 588; he was dethroned and executed by Amasis in 569. Jeremiah makes this short-term prophecy, offering its fulfilment as a sign, cf. 28:17+, commending his prediction of a more distant event, namely invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in 568-567, cf. 43:12+.

45 a. This passage, preserving an oracle addressed personally to Jeremiah's secretary, stands as it were for Baruch's signature; presumably he was also the author of the biographical fragments in ch. 26-44.

b. 605 B.C.

c. Hebr. inserts at the beginning 'You will say this to him'. 'I am going to strike the whole earth' Syr.; 'that is, the whole earth' Hebr.; Greek omits.

46 a. The Hebr. text places the oracles against the nations at the end of the book, ch. 46-51. In the Greek version however they follow their introductory chapter, 25, which seems to have been expanded in the light of subsequent events, see 25:17+.

b. The battle (605) was decisive and made Nebuchadnezzar master of Syria and Palestine, cf. 2 K 24:7+.

c. 'advance' corr.; 'and they will advance' Hebr. Before 'who bend' Hebr. inserts 'who carry'. Cush is Ethiopia; Put, Somaliland; Lud, an African people associated with Put in most biblical passages.

d. 'Yahweh' Greek; 'Yahweh Sabaoth' Hebr.

e. 'his sword' corr.

f. This oracle was uttered later than 46:3-12. The invasion in question took place in the reign of the pharaoh Amasis, cf. 43:12+.

g. Hebr. adds 'in Egypt, and proclaim it'.

h. Hebr. adds 'and in Tahpanhes', absent from Greek.

i. The bull, sacred to the god Ptah, tutelary deity of Memphis.

Has your Strong One not stood firm?[j]
Yes, Yahweh has knocked him •flat! 16
He tottered, and now he has fallen down![k]
Then they said to each other,
'Up! Let us go back to our own people,
to the country where we were born,
far from the destroying sword!'
Give this name to Pharaoh:[l] 17
'Much-noise-but-he-lets-the-chance-slip-by'!
As I live—it is the King who speaks 18
whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth—
someone will come, a Tabor among mountains,
a Carmel high above the sea.

Get your bundle ready for exile, 19
daughter of Egypt, so safe in your home!
Noph will be reduced to a desert,
desolate, uninhabited.
Egypt was a splendid heifer, 20
but a gad-fly from the North has settled on her.[m]
The mercenaries she had with her, these too 21
were as sleek as fattened calves:
but they too have taken to their heels,
they all run at once and cannot hold their ground.
For on them comes the day of their disaster,
their time of reckoning.

Listen: a sound like a serpent hissing![n] 22
Yes, they are coming in force
to fall on her with their axes,
like woodcutters,
they will fell her forest—it is Yahweh who speaks. 23
Yes, they are[o] past counting,
Jg 7:12 Jl 1:6 outnumbering the locusts,
innumerable.
The daughter of Egypt is put to shame, 24
handed over to a people from the North.

Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, has said: Now I mean to punish Amon 25
of No,[p] with Pharaoh and those who put their trust in him. •I will hand him 26
Ezk 29:20 over to those who are determined to kill him, over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, over to his servants. But in later days, Egypt will be inhabited again as in the past—it is Yahweh who speaks.[q]

=30:10-11 But do not be afraid, my servant Jacob, 27
Israel, do not be alarmed:[r]
look, I will rescue you from distant countries
and your descendants from the country where they are captive.
Jacob will have quiet again
and live at ease, with no one to trouble him.
Do not be afraid, my servant Jacob 28
—it is Yahweh who speaks—for I am with you:
I will make an end of all the nations
where I have scattered you;
I will not make an end of you,
only discipline you in moderation,
so as not to let you go entirely unpunished.

Oracle against the Philistines (LXX 29:1-7)

Jos 13:2+ Ezk 25:15-17 Am 1:6-8 Ze 2:4-7

1 2 47 The word of Yahweh that was addressed to Jeremiah against the Philistines before Pharaoh took Gaza by storm.[a] •Yahweh says this:

See how the waters rise from the North,
and become an overflowing torrent,
overflowing the country and all it contains,
the towns and their inhabitants!
Men shout aloud, and there is wailing
from all the inhabitants of the country,
3 at the thunder of his stallions' hoofs,
the crash of his chariots, the grinding of his wheels.
Fathers forget about their children,
their hands fall limp
4 because the day has come
on which all the Philistines are to be destroyed, Ze 2:5
on which Tyre and Sidon are to be stripped
to the last of their auxiliaries.
Yes, Yahweh is destroying the Philistines,
the remnant from the Isle of Caphtor. Jos 13:2+
5 A shaven scalp for Gaza!
Silence over Ashkelon!
Ashdod,[b] all that is left of the Anakim, Dt 2:10+ Jos 11:22
how long will you gash yourselves?[c]
6 Oh, sword of Yahweh,
how long before you rest?
Back into your scabbard,
stop, keep still!
7 Yet how can it rest
when Yahweh has given it an order?
Ashkelon and the sea coast,
these are the targets assigned to it.

Oracles against Moab[a] (LXX 31)

Nb 20:23+ ||Is 15-16 Ezk 25:8-11 Am 2:1-3

1 48 On Moab. Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this:

Woe to Nebo, for it has been ravaged,
Kiriathaim[b] has been taken,
all is confusion and alarm in the fortress:
2 it is no longer the boast of Moab!
At Heshbon[c] they plotted her downfall,

j. 'Has Apis fled' Greek; '(your Strong One) has been overthrown' Hebr. 'your Strong One', lit. 'your strong ones'.

k. 'flat' corr. (lit. 'much'). 'he tottered' Greek.

l. 'Give this name' Greek and Vulg.; 'They called there' Hebr. After 'Pharaoh' Greek wrongly adds 'Neco' and then, with Hebr., adds 'king of Egypt'. The pharaoh is Hophra, Neco's successor; he had raised Zedekiah's hopes in 588 only to disappoint them, ch. 37.

m. 'on her' Greek.

n. Following Greek; Hebr. 'the sound of her is like a serpent going away'.

o. 'They are' some Hebr. MSS; 'it (the forest) is' Text. Rec.

p. Thebes, the god of which was Amon, cf. Na 3:8. Hebr. adds '(with the pharaoh) and Egypt and her gods and her kings' absent from Greek.

q. For similar prophecies of recovery for nations punished by Yahweh, see 48:47; 49:6,39.

r. The prophecy of recovery for Egypt in v. 26 is matched by the promise to Israel in vv. 27-28. These last verses repeat 30:10-11, but now 'Jacob' and 'Israel' indicate not only the Northern Kingdom but, in the spirit of the second part of Is, the whole people of Yahweh.

47 a. According to Herodotus, Hophra attacked Tyre and Sidon; his attack on their allies, the Philistines, perhaps occurred at the same time.

b. 'Ashdod' inserted conjecturally.

c. Shaven head and self-inflicted wounds were signs of mourning.

48 a. It is difficult to identify the original nucleus of this oracle, the text of which incorporates several biblical passages of earlier date: Is 15-16; Nb 21:27-30; 24:17. It may have been delivered shortly after 605, cf. Jr 25:21, or 593, cf. 27:3, or 587, cf. Ezk 25:8-11.

b. Hebr. adds 'is put to shame', absent from Greek.

c. Where the enemy has set up his headquarters. The Hebr. plays on the words Heshbon and *hashbah* (to plot), as also on Madmen and *tiddomi* (to be subdued).

'Come on! Let us blot her out from the nations!'
And you too, Madmen, you will be subdued,
the sword is close on you.

22:20+ Hark! From the Abarim[d] a shout, 3
'Devastation! Dire calamity!'
'Moab is shattered' 4
the cry echoes as far as Zoar.[e]
||Is 15:5 Ah, slopes of Luhith, 5
they go up them weeping.
At the descent of Horonaim
cries of distress are heard,
'Away! Flee for your lives! 6
Run like the wild asses in the desert!'[f]
Yes, since you trusted in your strongholds[g] 7
you will be captured too.
Chemosh[h] will go into exile,
with all his priests and his nobles.
The destroyer will descend on every town, 8
not one will escape;
the Valley will be despoiled, the Plain[i] be plundered:
Yahweh proclaims it!
Give Moab a tomb, 9
since she is totally destroyed;[j]
her towns are in ruins,
with no one to live in them.

(Cursed be he who does the work of Yahweh half-heartedly! Cursed be he who grudges blood to his sword!) 10

From his youth Moab lived at ease, 11
Ze 1:12 he settled on his[k] lees,
never having been decanted,
never having gone into exile:
and so he kept his own flavour,
his aroma was unchanged.[l]

And so the days are coming—it is Yahweh who speaks—when I shall send him decanters to decant him; they will empty his storage jars and break his 12
1 K 12:29 Ho 10:5 Am 5:5 amphorae to bits. •Moab will blush for Chemosh then, as the House of Israel blushed for Bethel[m] in whom they put their trust. 13

How can you say, 'We are heroes, 14
sturdy fighting men'?
The destroyer of Moab has advanced on him:[n] 15
the flower of his youth goes down to the slaughter.[o]
Moab's ruin is coming soon, 16
his downfall comes at top speed.
Grieve for him, all you living near him, 17
all you who knew his name.
22:18+ Say, 'Imagine it being broken, that mighty rod,
that splendid sceptre!'

Come down from your glory, sit in the dung,[p] 18
daughter of Dibon, so safe in your home:
the destroyer of Moab has advanced on you,
he has stormed your strongholds.
Stand by the roadside, keep watch, 19
inhabitants of Aroer.

Question fugitive and runaway,
ask, 'What has happened?'[q]
20 Moab is shattered and shamed.
Wail and shriek!
Shout across the Arnon,
'Moab has been laid waste!'

21 Judgement has also come on the land of the Plain, on Holon, Jahzah, Mephaath, Nb 33:46 Jos 13: 17-19
22 23,24 Dibon, Nebo, Beth-diblathaim, •Kiriathaim, Beth-gamul, Beth-meon, •Kerioth, Bozrah, and all the towns in the land of Moab, far and near.

25 The horn of Moab has been cut off,
and his arm broken.[r]

26 Make him drunk! He has set himself up against Yahweh: Moab will wallow Is 51:17+
27 in his vomit, become a laughing-stock in his turn. •Was not Israel a laughing-stock to you? Was he caught red-handed with the thieves, for you to shake Ezk 25: 8-11
your head whenever you mention him?[s]

28 Leave the towns, make the rocks your home,
inhabitants of Moab.
Learn from the dove that makes its nest
in the walls of the gaping gorge.

29 We have heard of the pride of Moab, ||Is 16:6
excessive pride!
What arrogance! What pride! What conceit!
What a haughty heart!
30 —I know all about his presumption—it is Yahweh who speaks—
his empty boasting,
those empty deeds of his!
31 —And so I lament for Moab, ||Is 16:7
for all Moab I cry aloud,
and mourn for the men of Kir-heres.[t]
32 More than for Jazer I weep for you,
vine of Sibmah:
your shoots stretched beyond the sea,
they reached all the way to Jazer.[u]
On your harvest, on your vintage,
the destroyer has descended.
33 Gladness and joy have vanished Is 16:10
from the land of Moab.
There is no longer wine in the presses,
the treader of grapes treads no more,
no more do shouts of joy ring out.[v]

48 d. 'From the Abarim' corr., cf. 22:20; 'Horonaim' Hebr.
e. Text corr.
f. Vv. 5 and 6 follow Greek.
g. 'your strongholds' Greek; 'your works and your treasures' Hebr.
h. National god of the Moabites.
i. The 'Valley' is the Arnon; the 'Plain' the plateau of Moab.
j. Following Greek. Hebr. 'Give Moab wings (?) for her to go flying (?) away'.
k. Personified Moab is masculine here, feminine in the preceding passage.
l. Moab was famous for its wine, cf. vv. 32-33.
m. The name of the rival sanctuary to Jerusalem in the Northern Kingdom, but also the name of a god in the heterodox worship of the Jewish colony in Elephantine.
n. Text corr.; Hebr. 'Moab is destroyed; he has gone up against her towns'.
o. Hebr. adds 'it is the King who speaks whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth', cf. 46:18; absent from Greek.
p. 'the dung' Syr.; 'thirst' Hebr.
q. The fugitives' reply is given in vv. 20,25,28, the prose passages being the author's commentary.
r. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.
s. 'whenever you mention him' Symmachus.
t. Nickname ('Potsherd Wall') for Kir-moab, the ancient Moabite capital, today Kerak.
u. 'to Jazer' corr.
v. The verse is corrected from the versions.

Is 15:4-5 The howling of Heshbon and Elealeh can be heard as far as Jahaz. The 34
shrieks resound from Zoar to Horonaim and Eglath-shelishiyah, for the waters
of Nimrim too are now becoming desolation.
And I shall make an end—it is Yahweh who speaks—of any man in 35
Moab who offers sacrifice and incense to his god on the high places.
Is 15:5 That is why my heart sobs like a flute for Moab, sobs like a flute for the 36
47:5 Lv 21:5 Is 15:2-3 men of Kir-heres: that accumulated treasure all lost! •Yes, every head is shorn, 37
every beard cut off, gashes are on the hands of all, sackcloth round all their
loins. •On all the housetops of Moab and in its squares there is nothing but 38
lamenting, for I have broken Moab like a crock that no one wants—it is
Yahweh who speaks. •What! Broken?[w] What! Moab so shamefully in retreat? 39
What! Moab become a laughing-stock, a thing of horror to all its neighbours?

For Yahweh says this: 40
=49:22 (Here is one who hovers like an eagle,
who will spread his wings over Moab.)
The towns will be captured, 41
the strongholds seized.

(And the heart of Moab's warriors that day will be like the heart of a woman
in labour pains.)

Moab will be destroyed, no longer a people, 42
for setting itself up against Yahweh.
||Is 24:17-18 Terror, the pit, the snare, 43
are for you, inhabitant of Moab—
it is Yahweh who speaks:
the man who takes flight from the terror 44
shall fall into the pit,
climbing out of the pit,
he shall be caught in the snare.
Yes, these are the scourges[z] I mean to inflict on Moab
when the year comes to punish them—
it is Yahweh who speaks.
In the shelter of Heshbon the fugitives 45
have paused, exhausted.
Nb 21:28-29; 24:17 But a fire has come out from Heshbon,
a flame from the palace[y] of Sihon,
consuming the brows of Moab,
the head of a turbulent brood.
Woe to you, Moab! 46
People of Chemosh, you are lost![z]
For your sons have been taken into exile,
and your daughters into captivity.
46:26+ But I will restore the fortunes of Moab 47
in the days to come. It is Yahweh who speaks.

Thus far the judgement on Moab.

Nb 20:23+ **Oracle against Ammon**[a] (LXX 30:17-21)

Ezk 25:1-7 Am 1:13-15 Zc 2:8-11 **49** On the sons of Ammon. 1

Yahweh says this:
Has Israel no sons?
Has he no heir?
Why should Milcom have inherited Gad
and his people have settled in its towns?[b]
And so the days are coming 2

—it is Yahweh who speaks—
when I will make the war cry ring out
for Rabbath-of-the-Ammonites:
she will become a deserted ruin,
her daughter towns[c] burnt down.
Israel will then despoil his despoilers, Is 11:14
Yahweh proclaims.
3 Heshbon lament! The destroyer is on the march. 48:2
Cry aloud, daughters of Rabbah!
Wrap yourself in sackcloth, raise the dirge,
walk about with your bodies gashed.[d]
For Milcom is going into exile,
with all his priests and his nobles.
4 So you boast of your valley,
thoughtless girl!
Confident of your resources, you say,[e]
'Who will dare to attack me?'
5 But I will bring down on you
terror[f] from every side;
you shall be driven away, each man making his own way,
with no one to rally the fugitives.

6 (But later I will restore the fortunes of the sons of Ammon. It is Yahweh who speaks.) 46:26+ Nb 20:23+

Oracle against Edom[g]

Ps 137:7 Is 34:1 Ezk 25:12-14 Am 1:11-12 ||Ob 1-9

7 On Edom.

Yahweh says this:
Is there no wisdom left in Teman? Ba 3:22
Have the shrewd run out of commonsense,[h]
has their wisdom gone stale?
8 Away! Take to your heels![i] Go into hiding,
inhabitants of Dedan! Is 21:13
For I will bring down ruin on Esau, Ml 1:2-5
at the time when I must punish him.
9 If grape-gatherers come to you, Si 33:16 ||Ob 5-6
they will leave no gleanings behind them;
if robbers come at night,
they will loot to their heart's content.
10 For I myself am despoiling Esau,
I lay his hiding places bare
until he has no cover left.
His race is destroyed: it is no more!
Of his neighbours, not one will say,[j]

w. Hebr. adds 'Wail!', absent from Greek.
x. Cf. Greek; 'for him' Hebr.
y. 'from the palace' three Hebr. MSS; 'from between' Text. Rec.
z. Lit. 'you have perished' one Hebr. MS, Syr., Vulg.; 'he has perished' Hebr.

49 a. The oracle is authentic, except for v. 2, a later addition.
b. 'Milcom' versions; 'their king' Hebr., so also in v. 3. Milcom, the god of the Ammonites, is a usurper: from the time of Moses and Joshua, Gad had belonged to Israel; the Ammonites occupied it after 734 and 721.
c. Lit. 'daughters': the dependencies of Rabbah.
d. 'The destroyer is on the march' (lit. 'has gone up') corr., cf. 48:18; 'Ai is laid waste' Hebr. 'with your bodies gashed', lit. 'with gashes' corr.; 'in the sheepfolds' Hebr.
e. 'of your Valley' (the gorge of the Jabbok) corr.; 'of your valleys, your valley flows' Hebr. 'thoughtless' cf. 48:11, corr.; 'apostate' Hebr. 'you say' versions.
f. Hebr. inserts 'it is the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks'.
g. This oracle was delivered in about 605 B.C.
h. 'shrewd' corr.; 'sons' Hebr. Edom was famous for its sages, cf. 1 K 5:10-11; Jb 2:11+, etc.
i. Lit. 'turn your back' corr.
j. Text corr. from the versions.

'Leave your orphans, I will keep them alive, 11
your widows can rely on me'.

For Yahweh says this: Those who were not bound to drink the cup have to 12
25:28-29 Is 51:17+ Rm 11:21 drink it now; so why should you go unpunished? You will not go unpunished:
you too must drink! •For by my own self I have sworn it—it is Yahweh who 13
speaks: Bozrah[k] is to become an object of horror, a laughing-stock, a desert,
a curse, and all its towns ruins for ever.

||Ob 1-4 I have received a message from Yahweh, 14
a herald has been sent throughout the nations,
'Muster! March against this people!
Prepare for battle!'
Ob 2 For now I will reduce you among the nations, 15
make you despised among mankind:
your reputation for ferocity, 16
your pride of heart, have led you astray,[l]
you whose home is in the holes in the rocks,
who cling to the topmost peaks!
51:53 Hab 2:9 Though you made your nest high as the eagle,
I would still fling you down again—it is Yahweh who speaks.

Ze 2:15 Edom will become a desolation; every passer-by will be appalled at it, and 17
=50:40 whistle in amazement at such calamity. •As at the overthrow of Sodom and 18
Gomorrah and their neighbouring towns, no one will live there any more,
Yahweh proclaims, no man will make his home there ever again.

=50:44-46 See how the lion climbs from the thickets of the Jordan 19
to a perennial pasture!
So shall I chase them suddenly away,
and place there whom I please.[m]
For who is there like me?
Jb 9:19 Ws 12:12 Who can hale me into court?
Name me the shepherd
who can stand up to me.
So now hear the plan 20
that Yahweh has made for Edom,
the schemes he has in mind
for the inhabitants of Teman:
yes, even the weakest of the flock will be dragged away.
At such a sight their pastures will shudder with dread.
Earth trembles at the crash of their downfall, 21
the sound of it echoes[n] as far as the Sea of Reeds.
=48:40 Here is someone who soars and hovers like an eagle, 22
who will spread his wings over Bozrah.
||Ob 9 And the heart of Edom's warriors that day
will be like the heart of a woman in labour pains.

Oracle against the towns of Syria[o] (LXX 30:29-33)

Is 17:1-3 Am 1:3-5 On Damascus: 23

Hamath is in confusion, so is Arpad;[p]
they have heard bad news.
Their heart is faint with fear[q]
and cannot be calmed.
Damascus is unmanned, she prepares for flight, 24
she is seized with trembling

4:31+ (anguish and sorrow have laid hold on her as on a woman in labour).

25 What now! That famous town deserted,
that city of gaiety?[r]

26 And so in her squares her young men will fall, and all her fighting men will perish, that day. It is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks.

27 I will light a fire inside the walls of Damascus,
it shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.

Oracle against the Arab tribes (LXX 30:23-28) 25:23-24 Is 21:13-17

28 On Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, which were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Yahweh says this:

Up! March on Kedar,
destroy the sons of the East!
29 Let their tents and their flocks be captured,
their fabrics, all their gear,
and their camels too.
Let the shout be raised for them: 'Terror on every side!'
30 Away! Get into hiding as fast as you can,
citizens of Hazor! It is Yahweh who speaks.
For Nebuchadnezzar[s] has made a plan for you,
he has a scheme in mind for you:
31 'Up! March on a nation at its ease,
that dwells in confidence,[t]
that has no gates, no bars,
that lives in a remote place!
32 Their camels will be the plunder,
their countless sheep the spoil.'
I will scatter them to the winds,
those Crop-Heads,
and bring disaster down on them from every side,
it is Yahweh who speaks.
33 Hazor will become a lair for jackals,
a desert for ever.
No one will live there any more,
no man make his home there ever again.

Oracle against Elam[u] (LXX 25:14-20)

34 The word of Yahweh that was addressed to the prophet Jeremiah about
35 Elam, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah. •Yahweh Sabaoth says this:

I am going to break the bow of Elam,
the source of all his might.
36 I will bring four winds down on Elam
from the four corners of the sky, Rv 7:1

and I will scatter the Elamites to the winds: there will not be a single nation into which the Elamites have not been driven for refuge.

49 k. The principal Edomite stronghold, N. of Petra.
l. 'have led you astray' corr.
m. Text corr.
n. Hebr. inserts 'the noise of it', absent from Greek.
o. This oracle on Damascus, a city not mentioned in the introductory list of 25:20-26, perhaps refers to the panic in Syria, then under Egyptian suzerainty, when Egypt was defeated at Carchemish in 605. The heading 'Damascus' in v. 23 is inadequate.
p. Hamath is on the river Orontes, Arpad to the N. of Aleppo.
q. Line corr.; 'they faint, near the sea there is fear' Hebr.
r. 'deserted' Vulg.; 'not deserted' Hebr. 'city of gaiety' versions; 'city of my gaiety' Hebr. and Greek.
s. Hebr. adds 'king of Babylon'.
t. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.
u. As early as 597 Jeremiah was able to foresee the conquest of Elam by the Persians.

I will make the Elamites tremble before their enemies, 37
before those determined to kill them.
I will bring down disaster on them,
my own fierce anger.[v]
I will pursue them with the sword
until I have destroyed them all.
I will set up my throne in Elam, 38
and purge it of king and nobles.
It is Yahweh who speaks.

46:26+ But in the days to come I will restore the fortunes of Elam. It is Yahweh 39
who speaks.

Is 13:14:17 Rv 18 **Oracle against Babylon**[a] (LXX 27:1)

Ps 137:8 Is 21:1 50 The word that Yahweh spoke against Babylon, against the country of 1
the Chaldaeans, through the prophet Jeremiah.

The fall of Babylon and the liberation of Israel (LXX 27:2-20)

Publish it among the nations, proclaim it;[b] 2
make no secret of it, say:
51:44 Is 46:1 'Babylon is captured, Bel disgraced,
Merodach shattered.[c]
(Her idols are disgraced,
her Obscenities shattered.)'
For a nation is marching on her from the North, 3
to turn her country into a desert:
no one will live there any more;
man and beast have fled and gone.

In those days and at that time[d] 4
the sons of Israel will return:[e]
they will come weeping
in search of Yahweh their God.
They will ask the way to Zion, 5
their faces will turn in that direction:
'Come,' they say 'let us bind ourselves[f] to Yahweh
by an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten!'

Ps 119:176 Ezk 34:1+ Mt 9:36+ Lost sheep, such were my people; 6
their shepherds led them astray, left them wandering in the mountains;
from mountain to hill they went,
forgetful of their fold.
Ps 79:7 Whoever came across them devoured them, 7
their enemies said, 'No blame to us;
it is because they have sinned against Yahweh
their true fold and the hope of their fathers'.[g]

51:6,45 Is 48:20; 52:11 Rv 18:4 Escape out of Babylon, 8
from the country of the Chaldaeans.
Go![h] Act like the he-goats,
be leaders of the flock.
See, I am raising[i] a league 9
of mighty nations against Babylon.
They will come from the land of the North, will draw up the battle line against her:
there she will be captured;
their arrows are like a victorious[j] warrior,
never returning empty-handed.

10 Chaldaea will be plundered,
all who plunder her will have their fill.[k]

11 Rejoice, if you like! Have your triumph,
you plunderers of my heritage!
Be playful like calves let out to grass![l]
Neigh like stallions!
12 But your mother[m] is covered with shame,
disgraced is the woman who bore you;
she is the least of nations now;
a wilderness, a parched land, a desert.
13 The fury of Yahweh will leave her uninhabited,
she will become an empty solitude.
All who pass by Babylon will be appalled at it,
and whistle in amazement at such calamity.

14 Draw yourself up against Babylon, surround her,
all you who bend the bow.
Shoot! Do not spare your arrows.[n]
15 Raise the war cry against her from all sides.
She surrenders! Her bastions fall!
Her walls collapse!
This is the vengeance of Yahweh. Take revenge on her. 51:6 Is 59:18
Treat her as she has treated others. Rv 18:5
16 Deprive Babylon of the man who sows,
of the man who wields the sickle at harvest.
Escape from the destroying sword,
let everyone return to his own people, 51:9
let everyone escape to his own country!

17 Israel was a straying sheep
hunted by lions.
First, the king of Assyria devoured him; next, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon 51:34
18 crunched his bones. •Therefore—Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this: Now I will punish the king of Babylon and his country as I punished the king of Assyria.

19 I will bring Israel back to his pastures
to browse on Carmel and in Bashan,
and on the highlands of Ephraim and in Gilead
to eat his fill.
20 In those days and at that time[o]
you may look for Israel's iniquity, it will not be there,
for Judah's sins, you will not find them.
For I will pardon the remnant that I leave. Is 4:3+ Mi 7:18

v. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.

50 a. In the following oracles two dominant themes recur: the fall of Babylon and the return from exile, both expected by Jeremiah, though not in the immediate future, cf. 27:7; 29:10,28. Here, as in the second part of Is, the fall of Babylon (538) is treated as if it were about to occur.

b. Hebr. adds 'set up a banner, proclaim', cf. Is 13:2, absent from Greek.

c. Merodach (Marduk) and Bel are two names of the tutelary god of Babylon.

d. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.

e. Hebr. adds 'they and the sons of Judah together'.

f. 'let us bind ourselves to' Syr.; 'and they will be bound to' Hebr.

g. Hebr. adds 'Yahweh'.

h. 'Go' *qere*, versions; 'they will go' *ketîb*.

i. Hebr. adds 'and bringing up'.

j. 'will draw up the battle line' corr.; 'have drawn up the battle line' Hebr. 'victorious' some MSS and certain versions; 'who bereaves' Hebr.

k. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.

l. 'calves let out to grass' Greek, Vulg.; 'a heifer that treads (the corn)' Hebr.

m. Babylon.

n. Hebr. adds 'for she has sinned against Yahweh', absent from Greek.

o. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks'.

The fall of Babylon proclaimed to Jerusalem (LXX 27:21-28)

March up to the land of Merathaim; 21
march against it
and against the inhabitants of Pekod;
follow them;
brandish the sword, let their destruction be complete,
it is Yahweh who speaks.
Do everything I have ordered![p]
The din of battle fills the country, 22
immense destruction.

51:8,20
Is 14:4-6
What! Broken to pieces 23
that hammer of the whole world?
What! Babylon become a thing of horror,
throughout the nations?
A snare was set for you, and you were caught[q] 24
before you knew it.
You have been found out and overpowered,
because you defied Yahweh.

Yahweh has opened his armoury 25
and taken out the weapons of his fury.
For the Lord Yahweh[r] has work to do
in the country of the Chaldaeans.
Fall on her, one and all,[s] 26
break her granaries open,
Jos 6:17+ pile the plunder up like heaps of grain, put her under the ban
until nothing is left of her.

Slaughter all her bulls, 27
down to the slaughter-house with them!
Woe to them, their day has come,
their time of reckoning.
Listen! Fugitives and runaways come 28
from the land of Babylon
to proclaim in Zion
the vengeance of Yahweh our God.[t]

The sin of arrogance (LXX 27:29-32)

Call up the archers against Babylon! 29
All you who bend the bow,
encamp round her:
leave her no way of escape.
Ex 21:25+ Repay her as her deeds deserve;
Ps 28:4
Rv 18:6 treat her as she has treated others,
Is 14:13-14 to repay her arrogance against Yahweh,
against the Holy One of Israel.

And so in her squares her young men will fall, and all her fighting men will 30
perish, that day. It is Yahweh who speaks.

My quarrel is with you, 'Arrogance'! 31
It is the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks:
your day has come,
the time when I must punish you.
'Arrogance' will stumble, she will fall, 32
no one will lift her up:
=21:14 I will light a fire inside her towns;
it shall devour all her surroundings.

Yahweh the redeemer of Israel (LXX 27:33-40)

33 Yahweh Sabaoth says this:
The sons of Israel are oppressed,[u]
all those who have taken them captive hold them fast,
they will not let them go.
34 But their redeemer is strong: Is 41:14+
Yahweh Sabaoth is his name.
He has taken up their cause: 51:10,36
he will bring peacefulness to the world
but trembling to the inhabitants of Babylon.

35 A sword for the Chaldaeans,[v]
for the inhabitants of Babylon,
for her leaders and her sages!
36 A sword for her diviners: may they lose their wits!
A sword for her men of war: may they be discomfited!
37 A sword[w] for the whole crowd of foreigners 51:30
within her: may they be like women!
A sword for her treasures: may they be plundered! 51:13
38 A sword[x] for her waters: may they dry up! 51:36
For it is a country of idols: they are mad, they and their bogies.

39 Hence wild cats and jackals will live there, 51:37 ↗ Rv 18:2
and ostriches make their home there.
She will never be inhabited again,
but remain uninhabited age after age.
40 As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, =49:18
with their neighbouring towns
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
no one will live there any more, 51:26,37
no man will make his home there ever again.

The enemy from the north and the lion of Jordan[y] (LXX 27:41-46)

41 Now a people is coming from the North, =6:23-24
a mighty nation;
from the far ends of the earth
great kings are stirring:
42 they fight with bow and spear,
they are cruel and pitiless;
their noise is like the roaring of the sea;
they ride horses,
each man equipped for war
on you, daughter of Babylon.
43 But the king of Babylon has heard the news of them,
his hands fall limp,
anguish has seized him, 4:31
pain like that of a woman in labour.

50 p. Text corr. These orders are addressed to those who are to attack Babylon. Merathaim designates the region where the Tigris and Euphrates flow into the Persian Gulf. Pekod, Ezk 23:23, is the name of a tribe to the E. of Babylon.

q. Lit. 'they set' Greek; 'I set' or 'you set (for yourself)' Hebr. Hebr. adds 'Babylon'.

r. 'Yahweh' Greek; 'Yahweh Sabaoth' Hebr.

s. 'one and all', cf. Symmachus; 'without end' Hebr.

t. Hebr. adds 'vengeance for his Temple', cf. 51:11, absent from Greek.

u. Hebr. adds 'and the sons of Judah with them'.

v. Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh who speaks', absent from Greek.

w. Hebr. adds 'for her horses and her chariots'.

x. 'A sword' Syr.; 'Drought' Hebr.

y. This oracle now applies the threat of an enemy from the North, originally uttered against Judah, 6:22-24 (same corrections for 50:42 as for 6:23), and the oracle against Edom, 49:19-21 (same textual corrections), to Babylon.

=49:19-21 See how the lion climbs from the thickets of the Jordan 44
to a perennial pasture!
So shall I chase them suddenly away,
and place there whom I please.
For who is there like me?
Who can hale me into court?
Name me the shepherd
who can stand up to me.
So now hear the plan 45
that Yahweh has made for Babylon,
the schemes he has in mind
for the country of the Chaldaeans:
yes, even the weakest of the flock will be dragged away.
At such a sight their pastures will shudder with dread.
Earth trembles at the sound of the capture of Babylon, 46
the dirge for her is heard throughout the nations.

Ps 137:8 **Yahweh makes war on Babylon** (LXX 28:1-19)

51 Yahweh says this: 1
Against the citizens of Leb-kamai[a] I will rouse[b]
a destroying spirit;
4:11 I will send winnowers[c] to Babylon to winnow her and leave her 2
country bare:
for they will beleaguer her from every side
in the day of disaster.
Let no archer bend[d] his bow! 3
Let no man swagger in his coat of mail!
—No quarter for her young warriors!
Jos 6:17+ Vow her whole army to the ban![e]
In the country of the Chaldaeans the slaughtered will fall, 4
in the streets of Babylon, those whom the sword runs through.
This is because their country was full of sin 5b
against the Holy One of Israel.
But Israel[f] is not bereft 5a
of his God, Yahweh Sabaoth.

50:8 Escape out of Babylon 6
Is 48:20
↗ Rv 18:4 (save your lives, each one of you);
do not perish yourselves in her punishment,
50:15 for this is the time of Yahweh's vengeance:
he is paying her her reward!
Rv 17:2,4 Babylon was a golden cup in Yahweh's hand, 7
25:15-29 she made the whole world drunk,
Is 51:17+
↗ Rv 18:3 the nations drank her wine
and then went mad.
50:23 Babylon has suddenly fallen, is broken: 8
↗ Rv 18:2 lament for her!
Go and fetch balm for her wounds,
perhaps she can be cured!
Rv 18:5 —'We tried to cure Babylon; she has got no better. 9
50:16 Leave her alone and let us each go to his own country.'
Yes, her sentence reaches to the sky,
rises to the very clouds.
50:34 Yahweh has vindicated our integrity. 10
Come, let us tell in Zion
what Yahweh our God has done.

11 Sharpen the arrows,
fill the quivers!

Yahweh has roused the spirit of the king of the Medes,[g] because he has a plan against Babylon to destroy it; this is the vengeance of Yahweh, the revenge for his Temple. Is 13:17

12 Against the walls of Babylon display the standard!
Strengthen the guard!
Post the sentries!
Take up concealed positions!

For Yahweh made a plan, and he has treated the citizens of Babylon as he promised he would.

13 Enthroned beside abundant waters, 50:37-38
rich in treasures, ↗ Rv 17:1,15
you now meet your end,
the finish[h] of your pillaging.
14 By his own self Yahweh Sabaoth has sworn:
Had I filled you with men as plentiful as locusts,

the war cry would still have been raised against you!

15 [i]By his power he made the earth, =10:12-16
by his wisdom set the world firm, Is 40:19
by his discernment spread out the heavens.
16 When he thunders
there is a tumult of water in the heavens;
he raises clouds from the boundaries of earth, ||Ps 135:7
makes the lightning flash for the downpour,
and brings the wind from his storehouse.
17 At this all men stand stupefied, uncomprehending,
every goldsmith blushes for the idol he has made,
since his images are nothing but delusion,
with no breath in them.
18 They are a Nothing, a laughable production,
when the time comes for them to be punished, they will vanish.
19 'The portion of Jacob' is not like these,
for he has formed everything,
and Israel is the tribe that is his heritage. Ps 74:2
His name is Yahweh Sabaoth.

The hammer of Yahweh and the giant mountain (LXX 28:20-20)

20 You were my mace, 50:23
a weapon[j] of war. Is 13:15
With you I crushed the nations,
struck kingdoms down,
21 with you crushed horse and rider,
chariot and charioteer,
22 with you crushed man and woman,
old man and young,

51 a. Hebr. adds 'against Babylon and'.
b. I.e. 'The heart of those who rise against me', cryptogram for Kashdim (Chaldaeans); cf. also 25:25-26 ('Sheshak' for Babel'?).
c. 'Winnowers' some versions; 'foreigners' Hebr.
d. Text corr. from versions.
e. The first half of the verse is addressed to the besieged, the second to the besiegers.
f. Hebr. adds 'and Judah'.
g. 'king' Greek; 'kings' Hebr. The poem originally spoke of an enemy from the North, 50:3,9,41; 51:48. The prose gloss says more specifically the Medes (identified here, as in Is 13:17, with the Persians).
h. 'finish' corr.; 'measure' Hebr.; 'truth' Greek.
i. For textual corrections see 10:12-16.
j. 'a weapon' corr.; 'weapons' Hebr.

youth and maid,
with you crushed shepherd and flock, 23
ploughman and team,
governors and nobles,

but I will let you see how I make Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldaea 24
pay for all the wrongs they have done to Zion. It is Yahweh who speaks.

My quarrel is with you, 25
Rv 8:8 Mountain of destruction
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
destroyer of the whole world!
I will stretch out my hand against you
and send you tumbling from the crags
and make you a mountain scorched.
Never a cornerstone will be taken from you, 26
never a foundation-stone either,
50:40; 51:62 for you will be a desert for ever,
it is Yahweh who speaks.

The end of Babylon is imminent (LXX 28:27-33)

Display the standard throughout the world, 27
sound the trumpet among the nations!
Prepare nations to make war on her;
summon kingdoms against her:
Ararat, Minni, Ashkenaz;[k]
call the roll of her enemies, officer![l]
Bring up the cavalry, bristling like locusts.

Prepare nations to make war on her: the king[m] of Media with his governors 28
and dignitaries and the whole territory under his rule.

Then the earth trembled and writhed, 29
for Yahweh's plan against Babylon was going forward:
to change the country of Babylon
into an unpopulated desert.

The warriors of Babylon have done with fighting, 30
they have taken to their strongholds;
their strength has gone:
50:37 they are like women now.
Is 19:16
Na 3:13 Her houses are on fire,
her gates are shattered.
Courier follows close on courier, 31
messenger on messenger,
to tell the king of Babylon
that his city has been stormed from every side:
the fords occupied, 32
the bastions burnt down,
the fighting men thrown into panic.
For Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: 33
The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor
when it is being trodden:
a little while, and there the grain will lie
that has been harvested.[n]

The vengeance of Yahweh (LXX 28:34-40)

50:17 'He has devoured, consumed me,[o] that king of Babylon; 34
he has left me like an empty dish,

like a dragon he has swallowed me whole,
he has filled his belly with my delicacies.'[p]
35 'May her violence to me, and all my sufferings, Lm 1:22
be avenged on Babylon!'[q]
say the people of Zion;
'On the inhabitants of Chaldaea be my blood!'
says Jerusalem.

36 Therefore—Yahweh says this:
See, I myself am taking up your cause 50:34,38
to make sure you are avenged.
I will dry her river up.
make her springs run dry,
37 and turn Babylon into a heap of stones, 50:39
a lair for jackals,
a thing of horror and of scorn,
with no one living in it. 50:40
38 Like lions they roar together,
they growl like lions' whelps.
39 Are they feverish? I will prepare them a drink
and make them drink until they grow drowsy[r]
and fall into an everlasting sleep, =51:57 Ps 76:5
never to wake up;
it is Yahweh who speaks.
40 I will take them down to the slaughter-house like lambs,
like rams and he-goats.

An elegy for Babylon (LXX 28:41-43)

41 What! Is she[s] captured and conquered,
the admiration of all the world?
What! Babylon become a thing of horror, =50:23
throughout the nations?
42 The sea has risen over Babylon,
she sinks under its boisterous waves.
43 Her towns have been turned into desert,
a parched land, a wilderness:
no one lives in them,
no man goes that way.

Yahweh punishes the idols (LXX 28:44-57)

44 I will punish Bel in Babylon 50:2+
and take from his mouth what he has swallowed.
In future the nations
will stream to him no more.
The wall of Babylon has fallen.
45 Go out of her, my people; 50:8; 51:6 Is 48:20; 52:11 2 Co 6:17
save your lives, each one of you,
from the fierce anger of Yahweh.

46 But do not be faint-hearted! Do not take fright at rumours hawked round the Mt 24:6f

51 k. Kingdoms near Armenia.
l. Lit. 'Appoint against her *tiphsar*', a transliteration of an Assyrian word for someone who writes on tablets; here it refers to the officer who calls the roll.
m. 'the king' Greek, Syr.; 'the kings' Hebr.
n. Lit. 'there will be the coming of the harvest grain' versions; 'there will come the time of the harvest grain for her' Hebr.
o. Hebr. here adds 'Nebuchadnezzar'. 'me' *qere* and versions; 'us' *ketib*. Jerusalem is speaking.
p. 'with my delicacies' corr.; Hebr. 'away from my delicacies', adding 'he has driven me out (?)'.
q. 'my sufferings' Greek; 'my flesh' Hebr.
r. 'drowsy' versions; 'joyful' Hebr.
s. Following Greek; 'Sheshak' Hebr.

country: one rumour spreads[t] one year, next year another follows; violence rules on earth and one tyrant cancels out another.

See, the days are coming 47
when I am going to punish the idols of Babylon.
Her whole country shall be put to shame,
with all her slaughtered lying in her midst.
↗ Rv 18:20; 19:1-2 Then heaven and earth and all within them 48
shall shout for joy over Babylon,
because the destroyers from the North
are coming against her—it is Yahweh who speaks.

Babylon in her turn must fall 49
because of[u] those who were slaughtered in Israel,
just as through Babylon there fell
men slaughtered over all the world.
You who have escaped her sword, 50
get away,[v] do not wait there!
Remember Yahweh in that distant country,
Ps 137:5 let Jerusalem be in your mind.
—'We were ashamed when we heard of the outrage, 51
our face was covered with confusion:
because foreigners had entered
the holy places of the Temple of Yahweh.'
—See, the days are coming, 52
it is Yahweh who speaks,
when I will punish her idols,
and the stricken shall groan throughout her country.

49:16 Gn 11:9 Is 14:13 Were Babylon to scale the heavens, 53
or reinforce her towering citadel,
destroyers would still fall on her at my command,
it is Yahweh who speaks.
Listen to the shouting from Babylon, 54
the mighty crash from the country of the Chaldaeans!
That is Yahweh as he lays Babylon waste 55
and silences her monstrous din;
well may her waves roar like mighty waters
and their tumultuous voice resound:
for a destroyer is sweeping down[w] on Babylon, 56
her warriors are taken captive, their bows are broken.
Ps 94:2 Lm 3:64 Yes, Yahweh is a God of retribution,
he pays in full.

=51:39 Ps 76:5 I will make her nobles and her sages drink, 57
her governors, her officials and her warriors;
they shall fall into an everlasting sleep
and not wake up;
it is the King who speaks,
whose name is Yahweh Sabaoth.

Babylon razed to the ground (LXX 28,58)

Yahweh Sabaoth says this: 58
The wide ramparts of Babylon
will be razed to the ground,
and her high gates
will be burnt down.
‖Hab 2:13 Thus the labouring of the peoples comes to nothing
the toiling of the nations ends in fire.

The written oracle thrown into the Euphrates[z] (LXX 28:59-64)

59 This is the order that the prophet Jeremiah gave to Seraiah son of Mahseiah
when the latter left for Babylon at the command of Zedekiah king of Judah,
60 in the fourth year of his reign. •Now Jeremiah had written down the entire
disaster that was to befall Babylon in a special book, all these words recorded
61 here as regards Babylon. •Jeremiah then said to Seraiah, 'When you reach
62 Babylon, make a point of reading out every one of these words. •Then say,
"Yahweh, you yourself have proclaimed that this place will be destroyed, that 51:26
no one will live here ever again, neither man nor beast, but that it will remain
63 desolate for ever". •When you have finished reading this book, tie a stone to it
64 and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, •with the words, "So shall Ex 15:5 ↗Rv 18:21
Babylon sink, never to rise again from the disaster with which I am going to
overwhelm her".'[y]

Here end the words of Jeremiah.[z]

V. APPENDIX[a]

The destruction of Jerusalem and the pardon of Jehoiachin ||2 K 24:18–25:30 ||2 Ch 36:11

1 **52** Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he came to the throne, and he
reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamital,
2 daughter of Jeremiah, from Libnah. •He did what is displeasing to Yahweh,
3 just as Jehoiakim had done. •That this happened in Jerusalem and Judah was
due to the anger of Yahweh, with the result that in the end he cast them
away from him.

4 Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. •In the ninth year of his =39:1-10
reign, in the tenth month,[b] on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon came with his whole army to attack Jerusalem; he pitched
5 camp in front of the city and threw up earthworks round it. •The city lay under
6 siege till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. •In the fourth month,[c] on the ninth
day of the month, when famine was raging in the city and there was no food
7 for the populace, •a breach was made in the city wall. Seeing this, the king[d]
fled under cover of dark, with all the fighting men, leaving the city by way of
the gate between the two walls, which is near the king's garden—the Chaldaeans
8 had surrounded the city—and making his way towards the Arabah. •The 39:4+
Chaldaean troops pursued the king and caught up with Zedekiah in the plains
9 of Jericho, where all his troops deserted. •The Chaldaeans captured the king
and took him to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, who
10 passed sentence on him. •He had the sons of Zedekiah slaughtered before his
11 eyes; he also had all the leading men of Judah put to death at Riblah. •He then
put out Zedekiah's eyes. Loading him with chains, the king of Babylon
carried him off to Babylon where he kept him prisoner until his dying day.

12 In the fifth month,[e] on the tenth day of the month—it was in the nineteenth
year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, commander of the
13 guard, one of the king's ministers, entered Jerusalem. •He burnt down the Lm 2:6
14 Temple of Yahweh, the royal palace and all the houses in Jerusalem.[f] •The

t. 'spreads' corr.; 'and they shall spread' Hebr.
u. 'because of' corr.; 'O' Hebr.
v. Text corr.
w. Hebr. inserts 'on her', absent from versions.

x. This symbolic gesture, cf. 18:1+, which was to be kept secret, took place in about 593. It demonstrates the faith of the prophet in the irrevocability of the word of God.
y. Hebr. adds 'and they will toil', cf. v. 58, absent from Greek.
z. This colophon, absent from Greek, must originally have followed v. 58.

52 a. This chapter is a repetition, with some complementary material, of 2 K 24:18–25:30 (see notes), and is in part parallel with Jr 39:1-10; the three passages draw on the one source. It has been added to Jr as Is 36-39 were added to the first part of Is. It shows how the prophet's threats came true, and ends, like 2 K, by offering a hope for the future, such as Jeremiah too had entertained.
b. January-February 588.
c. August 587.
d. 'Seeing this, the king', added in accordance with 39:4.
e. September 587.
f. Hebr. adds 'and the house of every dignitary'.

Chaldaean troops who accompanied the commander of the guard demolished all the walls surrounding Jerusalem.

Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, deported[g] the remainder of the 15
population left behind in the city, the deserters who had gone over to the king
of Babylon, and the remainder of the artisans.[h] •Nebuzaradan, commander of 16
the guard, left some of the humbler country people as vineyard workers and
ploughmen.

The Chaldaeans broke up the bronze pillars from the Temple of Yahweh, 17
the wheeled stands and the bronze Sea that were in the Temple of Yahweh,
and took all the bronze away to Babylon. •They also took the ash containers, 18
the scoops, the knives, the sprinkling bowls, the incense boats, and all the bronze
furnishings used in worship. •The commander of the guard also took the bowls, 19
the censers, the sprinkling bowls, the ash containers, the lamp-stands, the
goblets and the saucers: everything that was made of gold and everything
made of silver. •As regards the two pillars, the one Sea and the twelve bronze 20
oxen supporting the Sea,[i] and the wheeled stands, which King Solomon had
made for the Temple of Yahweh, there was no reckoning the weight of bronze
in all these objects. •As regards the pillars, the height of one pillar was eighteen 21
cubits, its circumference was twelve cubits, it was four fingers thick, and hollow
inside; •on it stood a capital of bronze, the height of the capital being five 22
cubits; round the capital were filigree and pomegranates, all in bronze. So also
for the second pillar.[j] •There were ninety-six pomegranates which hung down, 23
making a hundred pomegranates round the filigree in all.

The commander of the guard took prisoner Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah 24
the priest next in rank, and the three guardians of the threshold. •In the city 25
he took prisoner a eunuch who was in command of the fighting men, seven of
the king's personal friends who were discovered in the city, the secretary of the
army commander, responsible for military conscription, and sixty men of
distinction discovered in the city. •Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, 26
took these men and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah, •and at 27
Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king of Babylon had them put to death.

Thus Judah was deported from its land. •The number of people deported 28
by Nebuchadnezzar was as follows.[k] In the seventh year: three thousand and
twenty-three Judaeans; •in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, eight hundred 29
and thirty-two persons were deported from Jerusalem; •in the twenty-third 30
year[l] of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, deported
seven hundred and forty-five Judaeans. In all: four thousand six hundred persons.

But in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the 31
twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, Evil-merodach king of
Babylon, in the year he came to the throne,[m] pardoned Jehoiachin king of Judah
and released him from prison. •He treated him kindly and allotted him 32
a seat above those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. •So 33
Jehoiachin laid aside his prisoner's garb, and for the rest of his life always ate
at the king's table. •And his upkeep was permanently ensured by the king for 34
the rest of his life day after day until his dying day.

52 g. Hebr. adds 'some of the humbler people of the country', cf. v. 16.
h. 'artisans' corr.; 'crowd' Hebr.
i. 'and... 'Sea' ', absent from 2 K; the bronze oxen had already been taken, in the reign of Ahaz, 2 K 16:17.
j. Hebr. adds 'And pomegranates...'
k. This list, peculiar to Jr 52 must have been borrowed from a Babylonian source: the years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign are calculated in the Babylonian fashion which does not count the incomplete year of accession.
l. In 582; possibly the rebellion of Ammon and Moab had found some support in Judah, and this deportation was the punishment.
m. In 562.

LAMENTATIONS

FIRST LAMENTATION[a]

1 1 *Aleph* Oh, how lonely she sits,
the city once thronged with people,
as if suddenly widowed.
Though once great among the nations,
she, the princess among provinces,
is now reduced to vassalage.

2 *Beth* She passes her nights weeping;
the tears run down her cheeks.
Not one of all her lovers[b]
remains to comfort her.
Her friends have all betrayed her
and become her enemies.

3 *Ghimel* Judah is exiled after her downfall
and harsh enslavement.
She dwells among the nations now,
but finds no relief there.
Her pursuers all overtake her
in places where there is no way out.

4 *Daleth* The roads to Zion are in mourning;
no one comes to her festivals now.
Her gateways are all deserted;
her priests groan;
her virgins are grief-stricken;
she suffers bitterly.

5 *He* Her oppressors now have the upper hand,
her enemies enjoy prosperity;
Yahweh himself has made her suffer
for her many, many sins;
her little children have left her as prisoners
driven in front of the oppressor.

6 *Wau* From the daughter of Zion
all her glory has departed.
Her leaders were like rams[c]
that find no pasture.

1:9

1:16,19
Ba 4:12

2:18
Jr 9:17

Ps 69:20
Jr 30:14

Jn 13:18

Lv 26:22
Si 49:7
Is 3:26
Jr 14:2

2:17
Dt 28:25
Ps 89:42

Ezk 10:18f;
11:22f

1 a. The poet describes the pitiable plight of Jerusalem. Personified Zion speaks in v. 9 and v. 11, to utter a complaint, vv. 12-16, then a prayer, vv. 18f, which is simultaneously a confession, an aspiration and an imprecation. Greek and Vulg. here insert the introduction 'When Israel had been taken into captivity and Jerusalem had become a wilderness, it happened that the prophet Jeremiah sat down in tears; he uttered this lamentation over Jerusalem, he said...'
b. The former allies of Judah.
c. 'rams' Greek, Vulg.; 'stags' Hebr.

Listlessly they took the road,
driven by the drover.

Zain

Jerusalem remembers 7
her days of misery and distress,[d]
when her people fell before the enemy
and no one came to help her.
Her oppressors looked at her
and laughed at her downfall.

Heth

Jerusalem has sinned grievously 8
1:17 and she has[e] become a thing unclean.
All those who used to honour her despise her;
Is 47:3 Ezk 16:37 they have seen her nakedness.
While she herself groans
and turns her face away.

Teth

Her filth clings to the hem of her clothes. 9
She had never thought of ending like this,
sinking as low as this.
1:2 She has no one to comfort her.
'Yahweh, look on my degradation;
my enemy is triumphant.'

Yod

The oppressor has laid his hands 10
2 K 24:13 on all she treasured;
she has seen the pagans
enter her sanctuary,
Dt 23:4 Ezk 44:7-9 Ac 21:28 men whom you had forbidden
to attend your Assembly.

Kaph

All her people groan 11
1:19; 2:12 Dt 28:51f as they search for bread;
they barter their valuables for food,
to keep life in them.
'Look, Yahweh, and mark
how despised I am.'

Lamed

All you[f] who pass this way, 12
look and see:
2:13 Dn 9:12; 12:1 Mt 24:21 is any sorrow like the sorrow
that afflicts me,
with which Yahweh has struck me
on the day of his burning anger?

Mem

He has sent a fire from on high 13
down into my bones;
he has laid a snare underneath my feet;
he has brought me down;
he has left me deserted,
and ill all day long.

Nun

The yoke of my sins weighs down on me, 14
his, the hand that knotted them;
Dt 28:48 their yoke is on my neck,
he makes my energy fail.
The Lord has put me at their mercy,
I have no strength left to resist.[g]

Samek

Yahweh[h] has spurned 15
2 Ch 36:17 the bravest fighters I had;

he has summoned a host against me
to destroy the flower of my army.
In his winepress the Lord has trampled
the virgin daughter of Judah. Is 63:3 Jl 4:13

16 *Ain* And that is why I weep;
my eyes dissolve in tears, 1:2
since the comforter who could revive me
is far away.
My sons are in despair,
the enemy has proved too strong.

17 *Pe* Zion stretches out her hands;
no one is there to comfort her.
Yahweh has summoned against Jacob
foes from every side;
Jerusalem has become
an unclean thing to them. 1:8

18 *Sade* Yahweh is acting rightly,
for I had rebelled against his order.
Listen therefore, all you nations,
and see my sorrow.
My virgins and my young men
have gone into exile.

19 *Qoph* I called for help to my lovers;
they failed me. 1:2
My priests and my elders
were perishing inside the city,
as they searched for food 1:11
to keep life in them.

20 *Resh* Look, Yahweh. How great my anguish!
My entrails shudder; Jr 4:19
my heart turns over inside me.
Alas! I have always been a rebel—
and now, outside, the sword has robbed me of my children, Dt 32:25 Jr 9:20
and inside, there is death.[i]

21 *Shin* Listen to my groaning;
there is no one to comfort me.
All my enemies gloat over my disaster:
this is your doing.
Bring the day you once foretold, Am 5:18+
so that they may be as I am.[j]

22 *Tau* Let all their wickedness come before you; Jr 51:35
treat them
as you have treated me
for all my sins.
Many indeed are my groans,
my heart is sick.

1 d. Hebr. adds 'all her precious things from the days of old'.
e. Hebr. 'therefore she has'.
f. Lit. 'O all you' corr., cf. Vulg.; 'not for you' Hebr.
g. 'weighs down' corr.; 'is bound' Hebr. 'their yoke' corr.; 'they came on' Hebr. 'at their mercy' corr.; 'at the mercy of those (whom)' Hebr.
h. 'Yahweh' some MSS; 'the Lord' Text. Rec. (which reads 'Yahweh' in the following line).
i. 'death' Syr.; 'like death' Hebr.
j. 'Listen' (singular) Syr.; 'Listen' (plural) Greek; 'They have listened' Hebr. After 'my enemies' Hebr. adds 'have listened to (my disaster)'. 'Bring' Syr.; 'Thou hast brought' Hebr.

SECOND LAMENTATION[a]

2 *Aleph* Oh, how Yahweh in his wrath 1
has brought darkness on the daughter of Zion!
He has flung the glory of Israel
from heaven to the ground,
Ezk 43:7 no more remembering his footstool[b]
on the day of his wrath.

Beth The Lord has pitilessly destroyed 2
all the homes of Jacob;
in his displeasure he has shattered
Dt 28:52 the strongholds of the daughter of Judah;
he has thrown to the ground, he has left accursed
the kingdom and its rulers.

Ghimel In his burning anger 3
Ps 75:4+ he has broken every horn in Israel,
withdrawn the strength of his right hand
at the coming of the enemy,
4:11 and kindled in Jacob a fire
that burns up everything near it.

Daleth Like an enemy he has bent his bow, 4
Jr 21:5,6 holding his right hand steady;
like a foe, he has slaughtered
everything that delights the eye;
on the tent of the daughter of Zion
he has poured his anger out like fire.

He The Lord has been like an enemy; 5
Lv 26:31 he has destroyed Israel;
he has destroyed every one of her palaces,
laid low her strongholds,
and for the daughters of Judah has multiplied
wailing on wailing.

Wau He has wrecked his own domain like a garden, 6
2 Ch 36:19 Jr 52:13 shattered his own gathering place;
Yahweh has wiped out the memory
of festivals and sabbaths in Zion;
Is 1:13 Ze 3:18 in the heat of his wrath he has repudiated
king and priest.

Zain The Lord has grown weary of his altar, 7
Ezk 24:21 has come to loathe his sanctuary,
and handed her palace walls
over to the enemy;
from the uproar in the Temple of Yahweh[c]
it might have been a day of festival.

Heth Yahweh resolved to ruin 8
Jr 5:10 the city wall of the daughter of Zion;
with a line he measured it, and did not withdraw his hand
2 K 21:13 Is 34:11 until he had completely overthrown it,
bringing mourning on city wall and rampart;
now they are crumbling down together.

9 *Teth*
Her gates have sunk into the ground;
he has shattered their bars.
Her king, her nobles, are now with the pagans, Dt 28:36 2 K 25:7
the Law is no more.
Even her prophets receive Dt 4:6,8 Ps 74:9 Ezk 7:26 Dn 3:38
no further vision from Yahweh.

10 *Yod*
Mutely they sit on the ground,
the elders of the daughter of Zion;
they have put dust on their heads, Jr 6:26
and wrapped themselves in sackcloth.
The virgins of Jerusalem hang their heads
down to the ground.

11 *Kaph*
My eyes wasted away with weeping,
my entrails shuddered,
my liver spilled on the ground
at the ruin of the daughters of my people,
as children, mere infants, fainted 4:4
in the squares of the Citadel.

12 *Lamed*
They kept saying to their mothers,
'Where is the bread?'[d] 1:11
as they fainted like wounded men
in the squares of the City,
as they poured out their souls
on their mothers' breasts.

13 *Mem*
How can I describe you,[e] to what compare you,
daughter of Jerusalem?
Who can rescue and comfort you,[f]
virgin daughter of Zion?
For huge as the sea is your affliction; 1:12 Jr 30:12
who can possibly cure you?

14 *Nun*
The visions your prophets had on your behalf
were delusive, tinsel things,[g] Jr 5:31; 29:8 Ezk 13:10
they never pointed out your sin,
to ward off your exile.
The visions they proffered you were false,
fallacious, misleading.

15 *Samek*
All who pass your way Jr 19:8 Mt 27:39p
clap their hands at the sight;
they whistle and shake their heads Jr 18:16
over the daughter of Jerusalem.
'Was this the loveliest of all,[h]
this, the joy of the whole world?' Ps 48:1

16 *Pe*
Your enemies open their mouths Ps 35:21
in chorus against you;
they whistle and grind their teeth;
they say, 'We have swallowed her up.

2 a. In vv. 1-12 the poet describes the wretched fate of kings, priests, prophets, elders, children; then, addressing Zion, vv. 13-17, he reminds her how the false prophets have lied, and urges her to bewail her fate before God, vv. 18-22.
b. The Temple.
c. The triumphant shouts of the enemy.
d. Hebr. adds 'and wine'.
e. Lit. 'To what can I liken you' Vulg.; 'What can I witness for you' Hebr.
f. Following Greek; Hebr. 'To what can I liken you to comfort you'.
g. Lit. 'whitewash, roughcast'.
h. Text corr.; Hebr. 'Is this the city that was called the loveliest'.

Am 5:18 This is the day we were waiting for;
now we can touch it, see it.'

Ain Yahweh has accomplished his intention, 17
he has carried out his word
Dt 28:15 decreed in the days of old;
he has destroyed without pity,
giving your enemy cause to gloat over you
and raising his horn.[i]

Sade Cry aloud, then, to the Lord, 18
groan,[j] daughter of Zion;
1:2 let your tears flow like a torrent,
day and night;
give yourself no relief,
grant your eyes no rest.

Qoph Up, cry out in the night-time, 19
in the early hours of darkness;
pour your heart out like water
before Yahweh.
Stretch out your hands to him
for the lives of your children.[k]

Resh Look, Yahweh, and consider: 20
whom have you ever treated like this?
4:10 Why, women have eaten their little ones,
Dt 28:53 Jr 19:9 Ba 2:3 the children they had nursed in their arms!
Why, priest and prophet have been slaughtered
Lv 26:29 in the sanctuary of Yahweh![l]

Shin Children and old men are lying 21
on the ground in the streets;
my virgins and my young men
have fallen by the sword;
you have killed on the day of your wrath,
you have slaughtered pitilessly.

Tau As though to a festival you have summoned 22
Jr 20:10+ terrors from every side;
on the day of your wrath,[m] no one escaped,
no one survived.
Ba 4:26 Those whom I had nursed and reared,
my enemy has murdered them all.

THIRD LAMENTATION[a]

Jb 30:9 3 *Aleph* I am the man familiar with misery 1
under the rod of his anger;
I am the one he has driven and forced to walk 2
Jn 8:12+ in darkness, and without any light.
Against me alone he turns his hand, 3
again and again, all day long.

Beth He has wasted my flesh and skin away, 4
Jb 30:30 has broken my bones.
He has made a yoke for me, 5
has encircled my head with weariness.[b]

6 He has forced me to dwell in darkness
with[c] the dead of long ago. ||Ps 143:3

7 *Ghimel* He has walled me in; I cannot escape; Jb 3:23; 19:8 Ps 88:8; 142:7
he has made my chains heavy;
8 and when I call and shout,
he shuts out my prayer. 3:44
9 He has blocked my ways with cut stones,
he has obstructed my paths.

10 *Daleth* For me he has been a lurking bear,
a lion on the watch. Jb 10:16
11 He has filled my paths with briars and torn me,
he has made me a thing of horror.
12 He has bent his bow and taken aim, Jb 16:12-13
making me the target for his arrows.

13 *He* In my back he has planted his darts,
the children of his quiver.
14 I have become the laughing-stock of my whole nation,[d] 3:63 Dt 28:37 Jb 30:9 Ps 69:11f Jr 20:7
their butt all day long.
15 He has given me my fill of bitterness,
he has made me drunk with wormwood. Ps 69:21 Jr 23:15

16 *Wau* He has broken my teeth with gravel,
he has given me ashes for food.[e]
17 My soul is shut out[f] from peace; Jr 16:5
I have forgotten happiness.
18 And now I say, 'My strength is gone, Jb 17:15
that hope which came from Yahweh'.

19 *Zain* Brooding on my anguish and affliction
is gall and wormwood.
20 My spirit ponders it continually Ps 42:4
and sinks within me.
21 This is what I shall tell my heart,[g]
and so recover hope:

22 *Heth* the favours of Yahweh are not all past, Ps 77:8-9
his kindnesses are not exhausted; Ex 34:6-7
23 every morning they are renewed;
great is his[h] faithfulness.
24 'My portion is Yahweh' says my soul Ps 16:5; 73:26
'and so I will hope in him.'

25 *Teth* Yahweh is good to those who trust him, Ps 40:1 Is 30:18
to the soul that searches for him.
26 It is good to wait in silence Lv 26:44 Ps 106:13
for Yahweh to save.
27 It is good for a man to bear the yoke
from youth onwards,[i]

i. 'his horn' (i.e. power) corr.; 'the horn of your enemies' Hebr.
j. 'Cry' corr.; 'Their heart cries' Hebr. 'groan' corr.; 'O wall' Hebr.
k. Hebr. adds 'who faint with hunger at the entrance to every street'.
l. 'of Yahweh' corr.; 'of the Lord' Hebr.
m. 'terrors' corr.; 'my terrors' Hebr. 'of your wrath' corr.; 'the wrath of Yahweh' Hebr.

3 a. Here, as in several Psalms, the complaint of an individual expands (in vv. 40-47) into a collective lament.
b. Text corr.
c. 'with' corr.; 'like' Hebr.
d. Some Hebr. and Syr. MSS have 'the nations', making this a collective prayer by Israel.
e. Greek. 'He has tumbled me into ashes' Hebr.
f. 'is shut out' Syr., Vulg.; 'he has shut out' Greek; 'you have shut out' Hebr.
g. Following Greek. Vv. 22-24 are absent from Greek.
h. 'his' corr.; 'your' Hebr.
i. Text corr.

Jr 15:17 *Yod*
to sit in solitude and silence 28
when the Lord fastens it on him,
to put his lips to the dust 29
—perhaps there still is hope—
Is 50:6 Mt 5:39 to offer his cheek to the striker, 30
to be overwhelmed with insults.

Ps 77:7-8 *Kaph* For the Lord does not reject mankind 31
for ever and ever.
Lv 26:44 Is 54:8-9 If he has punished, he has compassion 32
so great is his kindness;
Ezk 33:11 since he takes no pleasure in abasing 33
and afflicting the human race.

Lamed When all the prisoners in a country 34
are crushed and trampled underfoot,
when a man's rights are overridden 35
in defiance of the Most High,
when a man is deprived of justice, 36
does not the Lord see it?

Gn 1 Ps 33:9 *Mem* Who has only to speak to make things exist? 37
Who commands, if not the Lord?
From where, if not from the mouth of the Most High, 38
Is 45:7 do evil and good come?
Why then should man complain? 39
Better for him to be bold against his sins.[j]

Nun Let us examine our path, let us ponder it 40
Is 55:7 and return to Yahweh.
Let us stretch out our hearts and[k] hands 41
to God in heaven.
We are the ones who have sinned, who have rebelled, 42
and you have not forgiven.

Samek You have wrapped yourself in wrath, pursued us, 43
slaughtered us without pity.
You have wrapped yourself in a cloud 44
3:8 too thick for prayer to pierce.
Dt 28:37 You have reduced us to rubbish 45
to the scourings of the nations.

Pe Our enemies have opened their mouths 46
in chorus against us.
Dread and pitfall have been our lot, 47
ravage and ruin.
Ps 137:1 My eyes dissolve in torrents of tears 48
over the ruin of the daughters of my people.

Ain 49
My eyes weep ceaselessly,
without relief
Is 63:15 until Yahweh looks down 50
and sees from heaven.
My eyes have grown sore 51
over all the daughters of my Citadel.

Sade They hunted me, harried me like a bird, 52
Ps 35:19; 69:4 they who hate me for no reason.
They tumbled my life into a pit, 53
they threw stones down on me.

54 The waters went over my head;
I said, 'I am lost'.

55 *Qoph* Yahweh, I called on your name Jon 2:3
from the deep pit.
56 You heard me crying, 'Do not close your ear Ps 130:2
to my prayer'.[l]
57 You came near that day when I called to you;
you said, 'Do not be afraid'.

58 *Resh* You have defended the cause of my soul,[m]
you have redeemed my life.
59 Yahweh, you have seen the wrong done to me;
grant me redress.
60 You have seen all their frenzy,
all their plots against me.

61 *Shin* Yahweh, you have heard their insults,
all their plots against me,
62 my opponents slandering me
under their breath all day long.
63 Whether they sit, or whether they stand,
see, I am their butt. 3:14

64 *Tau* Yahweh, repay them Ps 94:2
as their deeds deserve. Jr 51:56
65 Give them hardness of heart,
your curse be on them.
66 Pursue them in fury, root them out
from underneath your heavens.[n]

FOURTH LAMENTATION

1 4 *Aleph* Oh, how the old gold has tarnished,
that gold so fine![a] Jr 6:27-30
The sacred stones now lie scattered
at the corner of every street.

2 *Beth* The sons of Zion, as precious
as finest gold,
Oh, reckoned now no better than earthenware pots Jr 19:11
made by the potter!

3 *Ghimel* The very jackals give the breast,
and suckle their young:
but the daughters of my people[b] have grown cruel
like the ostriches of the desert. Jb 39:13-17

4 *Daleth* The tongue of the baby at the breast
sticks to his palate for thirst,
little children go begging for bread; 2:11-12
no one spares a scrap for them.

j. Text corr
k. 'and' (or 'with') Vulg.; 'on' Greek; 'to' Hebr.
l. 'to my prayer' Greek; 'to my liberation, to my cry for help' Hebr.
m. Hebr. adds 'Lord'
n. 'your heavens' some Greek MSS and Syr.; 'the heavens of Yahweh' Hebr.
4 a. 'old' corr.; 'is changed' Hebr. The 'gold' and the 'sacred stones' are the people of Jerusalem.
b. 'daughters' Greek; 'daughter' Hebr.

Ba 4:26

He Those who used to eat only the best, 5
now lie dying in the streets;
those who were reared in the purple
claw at the rubbish heaps.

Wau The crimes of the daughter of my people have outdone 6
the sins of Sodom,[c]
Gn 19 which was overthrown in a moment,
no time for a man to wring his hands.[d]

Zain Once her young men[e] were brighter than snow, 7
whiter than milk;
rosier than coral their bodies,
their hue as radiant as sapphire.

Heth Now with faces darker than blackness itself 8
they move unrecognisable through the streets.
The skin is shrunken against their bones,
dry as a stick.

Teth Happy were those killed by the sword, 9
happier than those by hunger,
spent and sinking,
deprived of the fruits of the fields.

Yod With their own hands, tender-hearted women 10
2:20 have boiled their children;
Lv 26:29 these have been their food
Dt 28:53 in the disaster that fell on the daughter of my people.
Ezk 5:10

Kaph Yahweh has indulged his fury, 11
has poured his anger out.
2:3 He has lit a fire in Zion
that has devoured her foundations.

Lamed The kings of the earth never believed, 12
nor did all the inhabitants of the world,
that oppressor and enemy would ever penetrate
the gates of Jerusalem.

Mem It came through the sins of her prophets 13
Jr 6:13 and the crimes of her priests,
who had shed the blood of the upright
Ezk 7:23 in the heart of the city.

Nun Through the streets like blind men, they roamed 14
Nb 35:32-33 polluted with blood,
so that no one dared to touch
their clothes.

Samek 'Keep away! Unclean!' people shouted 15
Lv 13:45 'Keep away! Do not touch us!'
If they left and took refuge with the nations,[f]
they were not allowed to shelter there either.

Pe The face of Yahweh dispersed them; 16
he never spared a glance for them again.
People respected the priests no longer,
they paid no attention to the prophets.[g]

Ain And still we wore out our eyes, 17
watching for help—in vain.

From our towers we watched for a nation[h] Jr 37:7 Ezk 29:6
which could not save us anyway.

18 *Sade* Our enemies eyed our steps,
and barricaded our squares.
Our end was near,
our days were done.[i]

19 *Qoph* Our pursuers were swifter
than eagles in the sky;
they dogged our steps in the mountains,
they ambushed us in the desert.

20 *Resh* The breath of our nostrils, Yahweh's anointed,[j]
was captured in their pits, 2K 25:5-6
he of whom we said, 'Under his shadow
we shall live among the nations'.

21 *Shin* Rejoice, exult, daughter of Edom,
as you dwell in Uz![k]
To you in turn the cup will pass; Gn 9:21 Is 51:17+ Jr 25:16 Ob 16 Hab 2:16f
it will make you drunk, and you will show your nakedness.

22 *Tau* Your crime has been atoned for, daughter of Zion;
he will never banish you again. Is 40:2
Your crime he will punish, daughter of Edom;
he will lay bare your sins.

FIFTH LAMENTATION[a] Ne 9:32

1 5 Yahweh, remember what has happened to us;
look on us and see our degradation.

2 Our inheritance has passed to aliens,
our homes to barbarians.

3 We are orphans, we are fatherless;
our mothers are like widows.

4 We drink our own water—at a price;
we have to pay for what is our own firewood.

5 The yoke[b] is on our necks; we are persecuted;
we are worked to death; no relief for us.

6 We hold out our hands to Egypt, Jr 2:18
or to Assyria, just to get enough bread.[c]

7 Our fathers have sinned; they are no more,
and we ourselves bear the weight of their crimes.[d] Ezk 18:2

c. The Hebr. words translated 'crime' and 'sin' may mean also the punishment for such.
d. Following Greek.
e. 'young men' corr.; 'nazirites' (cf. Nb 6:1+) Hebr.
f. 'If... nations' corr.; 'Men said among the nations' Hebr.
g. 'prophets' some Greek MSS, Vet. Lat.; 'elders' Hebr.

h. Egypt, ally of Judah in the reign of Zedekiah.
i. 'Our enemies' added. Hebr. adds at the end 'yes, ou r end approached'.
j. Zedekiah.

k. Uz, cf. Gn 36:28; Jb 1:1. When Israel was defeated, the neighbouring peoples of Edom, Moab and Ammon not only refused help but were actively hostile, hence the diatribes against Edom in prophetic and post-exilic literature, cf. Ezk 25; Ps 137:7, etc., and here.

5 a. Entitled 'The Prayer of Jeremiah' in the Vulg.
b. 'The yoke', restored to the text (cf. Symmachus).
c. Merely to subsist, the Israelites are now dependent on their traditional enemies. 'Assyria' here signifies Babylon.
d. The author sees the present disaster in terms of collective retribution; this has not yet yielded to the principle of individual retribution, cf. Ezk 14:12+.

Slaves[e] rule us; 8
no one rescues us from them.

At peril of our lives we earn our bread, 9
by risking the sword of the desert.

Our skin is as hot as the oven, 10
such is the fever of famine.

2 Ch 36:17 They have raped the women in Zion, 11
the virgins in the towns of Judah.

Princes have been hanged at their hands; 12
the face of the old has not been respected.

Youths have toiled at the mill; 13
boys have collapsed under loads of wood.

The elders have deserted the gateway; 14
Ps 137:2 the young men have given up their music.

Joy has vanished from our hearts; 15
our dancing has been turned to mourning.

The garland has fallen from our heads. 16
Woe to us, because we have sinned!

This is why our hearts are sick; 17
this is why our eyes are dim:

Dn 9:18 because Mount Zion is desolate; 18
Is 34:13-15 jackals roam to and fro on it.

Ps 102:12, 28; 145: 13; 146:10 Ba 3:3 But you, Yahweh, you remain for ever; 19
your throne endures from age to age.[f]

Ps 13:1 You cannot mean to forget us for ever? 20
You cannot mean to abandon us for good?

Lv 26:44 Jr 31:18 Make us come back to you, Yahweh, and we will come back. 21
Renew our days as in times past,

unless you have utterly rejected us, 22
in an anger that knows no limit.

5 e. The Chaldaean officials. The technical term for officers of the king ('servants') is used here in an insulting sense.

f. The earthly Temple may be in ruins, but Yahweh, mighty and glorious always, reigns in heaven.

THE BOOK OF
BARUCH

I. INTRODUCTION

Baruch and the Jews in Babylon[a]

1 These are the words of the book written in Babylon by Baruch son of Neraiah, Jr 32:12; 36:4
2 son of Mahseiah, son of Zedekiah, son of Hasadiah, son of Hilkiah, •in the fifth year,[b] on the seventh day of the month, at the time when the Chaldaeans captured Jerusalem and burned it down.

3 Baruch read the words of this book aloud to Jeconiah[c] son of Jehoiakim, 2 K 24:8-17 Jr 22:24-30
4 king of Judah, and to all the people who had come to hear the reading, •to the nobles and the sons of the king,[d] and to the elders; to the whole people, that is, least no less than greatest, to all who lived in Babylon beside the river Sud.
5 6 On hearing it they wept, fasted and prayed before the Lord; •and they collected
7 as much money as each could afford •and sent it to Jerusalem for the priest Jehoiakim[e] son of Hilkiah, son of Shallum, and the other priests, and for as
8 many of the people as were with him in Jerusalem. •It was Baruch who on the tenth day of Sivan had recovered the utensils of the house of the Lord, which had been removed from the Temple, to take them back[f] to the land of Judah: these were silver utensils which Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, had had
9 made •when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had deported Jeconiah from 2 K 24:14
Jerusalem to Babylon, together with the princes, the metalworkers,[g] the men of rank and the common people.

10 With this—they wrote—we are sending you money with which to bay for holocausts, offerings for sin, and incense; prepare oblations, and offer them on the altar
11 of the Lord our God. •Pray for the long life of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Jr 29:7 1 Tm 2:1-2
and of his son Belshazzar, and that their days on earth may endure as the
12 heavens; •pray that the Lord may give us strength and clear understanding so that we may lead our lives under the protection of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and of his son Belshazzar, and by our long service win their favour. Dn 5:2,13
13 Also pray to the Lord our God for us, because we have sinned against him, and the anger, the fury of the Lord, has still not yet been turned away from us.
14 Lastly, you are to read the book aloud which we send you with this and so make public confession in the house of the Lord on the feastday[h] and on days
15 of solemn assembly. •You are to say:

1 a. On the elements of which Ba is composed, see Introduction to the Prophets.
b. The year 582, probably in the 5th month, anniversary of the fall of Jerusalem which was doubtless commemorated among the exiles as it was in Palestine, cf. Zc 7:3; hence the gathering referred to in vv. 3-4.
c. Called also Jehoiachin.
d. Or 'king's men', court officials.
e. Next in rank, apparently, to the high priest, cf. 2 K 25:18. He lived in Jerusalem beside what was left of the Temple; the high priest Jehozadak had been exiled to Babylon. 1 Ch 5:41.
f. The historical books speak only of a return of the sacred vessels under Cyrus, Ezr 1:7-11.
g. 'metalworkers', following Jr 24:1; 'captives' Greek.
h. The feast of Tabernacles, cf. Ex 23:14+. The 'solemn assembly' took place on the 1st and 8th days of the feast, Lv 23:35-36.

II. THE PRAYER OF THE EXILES

Confession of sins

=2:6 Jr 7:19 Dn 9:7-8 Integrity belongs to the Lord our God; to us the look of shame we wear today, to us, the people of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem, •to our kings 16
and princes, our priests, our prophets, as to our ancestors, •because we have 17
Tb 3:3,4 Dn 3:29; 9:5-6 2:10 Jr 7:25-26 sinned in the sight of the Lord, •have disobeyed him, and have not listened 18
to the voice of the Lord our God telling us to follow the commandments which
the Lord had ordained for us. •From the day when the Lord brought our ancestors 19
out of the land of Egypt until today we have been disobedient to the Lord our
Lv 26:14-39 Dt 28:15-68 Dn 9:11 Ex 3:8 God, we have been disloyal,[c] refusing to listen to his voice. •And so the disasters, 20
and the curse which the Lord pronounced through his servant Moses the day
he brought our fathers out of Egypt to give us a land where milk and honey
flow, have seized on us, disasters we experience today. •Despite all the words 21
of those prophets whom he sent us, we have not listened to the voice of the
Jr 7:24 Lord our God, •but, each following the dictates of his evil heart, we have taken 22
to serving alien gods, and doing what is displeasing to the Lord our God.

Dn 9:12-13 2 And so the Lord has carried out the sentence which he passed on us, on 1
our judges who governed Israel, on our kings and leaders, on the men of
Israel and of Judah; •what he did to Jerusalem has never been paralleled under 2
the wide heavens—all this in conformity with what was written in the Law of
Dt 28:53-57 Jr 19:9 Moses; •we were all reduced to eating the flesh of our own sons and daughters. 3
Lm 2:20; 4:10 3:8 Dt 28:37 Furthermore, he has handed them over into the power of all the kingdoms that 4
surround us, to be loathed and avoided by all the neighbouring nations among
Tb 3:4 Jr 29:18 whom he scattered them. •Instead of being masters, they found themselves 5
Dt 28:13; 43 enslaved, because we had sinned against the Lord our God by not listening to
his voice.

=1:15 Dn 9:7-8 Integrity belongs to the Lord our God; to us the look of shame we wear 6
today, to us, as to our ancestors. •All those disasters which the Lord pronounced 7
against us have now happened to us. •And yet we have not tried to win 8
the favour of the Lord by each one of us renouncing the dictates of his own
Jr 1:12; 31:28; 44:27 Dn 9:14 wicked heart; •and so the Lord has watched for the right moment to bring disaster 9
on us, since the Lord gives a just return for what we do of all that he has
1:18 ordered us to do, •and we have not listened to his voice telling us to follow 10
the commandments which the Lord had ordained for us.

The prayer

Dn 9:15-16 And now, Lord, God of Israel, who brought your people out of the land of 11
Dt 6:21-22 Egypt with a mighty hand, with signs and wonders, with great power and with
Ps 106:6 outstretched arm, to win yourself a name renowned today, •we have sinned, 12
we have been irreligious; Lord our God, we have broken all your com-
mandments. •Let your anger turn from us since we are no more than a poor 13
Am 3:12+ remnant among the nations where you have dispersed us. •Listen, Lord, to our 14
Ps 25:11 prayer, to our entreaty; deliver us for the sake of your honour and grant us
your favour for all our captors to see it, •so that the whole world may know that 15
you are the Lord our God, since Israel and his descendants bear your name. •Look 16
Dt 26:15 Jr 14:9 Dn 9:19 down, Lord, from your holy dwelling place and give a thought to us, take
heed of us and listen, •look at us, Lord, and consider; the dead down in 17
Is 38:18 Sheol, whose breath has been taken from their bodies, are not the ones to give
Dt 28:65-67 glory and due observance to the Lord; •the person overcome with affliction, 18
who goes his way bowed down and frail, with failing eyes and hungering soul,[a]
3:1 he is the one to give you glory, Lord, and due observance.

Ezk 36:22 Dn 9:18 We do not rely on the merits of our ancestors and of our kings to offer you 19
our humble plea, Lord our God. •No. You have sent down your anger and your 20
fury on us, as you promised through your servants the prophets when they said,

'The Lord says this: *Bend your necks and submit to the king of Babylon*, and you Jr 27:12
will remain in the land which I gave your ancestors. •But if you do not listen to
the voice of the Lord and submit to the king of Babylon, •then *I will silence the* Jr 7:34
shouts of rejoicing and mirth and the voices of bridegroom and bride in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, and the whole land will be reduced to desert, without inhabitants.' •But we did not listen to your voice and submit to the king of Babylon, and so you carried out what you had promised through your servants the prophets: that the bones of our kings and of our ancestors would be dragged Jr 8:1-2
from their resting places. •They were indeed *tossed out to the heat of the day* Jr 36:30
and the frost of the night. And people died in dreadful agony, from famine, Jr 14:12
sword and plague. •And so, because of the wickedness of the House of Israel and the House of Judah, you have made this House, that bears your name, what it is today.

And yet, Lord our God, you have treated us in a way worthy of all
your goodness and boundless tenderness, •just as you had promised through your servant Moses, the day you told him to write your Law in the presence of the
sons of Israel, and said this, •'If you do not listen to my voice, this great and Lv 26:39
innumerable multitude will certainly be reduced to a tiny few among the nations
among which I shall disperse them, •and I know very well that this people
will not listen, it is so stubborn. But in the country of their exile they will take Dt 9:13+
all this to heart •and acknowledge that I am the Lord their God. I will give Lv 26:44f
them a heart and an attentive ear. •They will sing my praises in the country Jr 4:4+ Ezk 36:26+
of their exile, they will remember my name; •they will not be stubborn any Dt 30:1,9f
more, but, remembering what became of their ancestors who sinned in the sight
of the Lord, will turn from their evil deeds. •Then I will bring them back to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and make them
masters in it. I will increase their number: they shall not dwindle. •And I will Jr 31:31
make an everlasting covenant with them; I will be their God and they shall be my people. And I will never again drive my people Israel out of the land that I have given them.'

3 Almighty Lord, God of Israel, a soul in anguish, a troubled heart now cries 2:18
to you: •Listen and have pity, Lord, for we have sinned in your sight. •You
sit enthroned for ever, while we perish continually. •Almighty Lord, God of Ps 29:10; 44:22
Israel, hear the prayer of the dead of Israel,[a] of the sons of those who have Lm 5:19
sinned against you and have not listened to the voice of the Lord their God,
hence the disasters that have seized on us. •Do not call to mind the misdeeds
of our ancestors, but remember instead your power and your name. •You are
indeed the Lord our God and we long to praise you, Lord, •since you have put respect for you in our hearts to encourage us to call on your name. We Jr 31:33
long to praise you in our exile, for we have emptied our hearts of the evil inclinations of our ancestors who sinned against you. •Look on us today, still in exile
where you have dispersed us as something execrable, accursed, condemned, in 2:4 Tb 3:4
punishment for all the misdeeds of our ancestors who had abandoned the Lord our God.

III. WISDOM, THE PREROGATIVE OF ISRAEL

Si 24

Listen, Israel, to commands that bring life; Pr 4:20-22
hear, and learn what knowledge means.
Why, Israel, why are you in the country of your enemies,
growing older and older in an alien land,

1. 'we have been disloyal' corr.; 'we have been ha sty' Codex Alex.
2 a. This passage refers to the religion of 'the poor', cf. Zp 2:3+.
3 a. The Israelites brought near to death, cf. Is 59:10; Lm 3:6; Ezk 37:11f.

sharing defilement with the dead, 11
reckoned with those who go to Sheol?
Si 1:5 Jr 2:13 Because you have forsaken the fountain of wisdom. 12
Had you walked in the way of God, 13
Is 48:18 you would have lived in peace for ever.
Learn where knowledge is, where strength, 14
where understanding, and so learn
where length of days is, where life,
where the light of the eyes and where peace.
Jb 28:12,20 But who has found out where she lives, 15
who has entered her treasure house?[b]

Where now are the leaders of the nations 16
Jdt 11:7 Jr 27:6 and those who ruled even the beasts of earth,
who had the birds of heaven at their beck and call, 17
who accumulated silver and gold
on which mankind relies,
and whose possessions had no limits,
those who displayed such artistry in silver 18
that their masterpieces beggar imagination?
They have vanished, gone down to Sheol. 19
Others have risen to their places,
more recent generations have seen the day 20
and peopled the earth in their turn:
Si 1:4 but the way of knowledge is something they have not known,
they have not recognised the paths she treads. 21
Nor have their sons had any grasp of her,
remaining far from her way.[c]
Ezk 28:4-5 Zc 9:2 Nothing has been heard of her in Canaan, 22
Jr 49:7 nothing has been seen of her in Teman;
the sons of Hagar in search of worldly wisdom, 23
Ex 2:15+ Jb 2:11+ the merchants of Midian[d] and Tema,
the tale-spinners and the philosophers
have none of them found the way to wisdom,
or discovered the paths she treads.

How great, Israel, is the house of God,[e] 24
how wide his domain,
immeasurably wide, 25
infinitely lofty!
Gn 6:4 Dt 2:10+ Ws 14:6 In it were born the giants, famous to us from antiquity, 26
immensely tall, expert in war;
1 S 16:7 God's choice did not fall on these, 27
he did not reveal the way to knowledge to them;
they perished for lack of wisdom, 28
perished in their own folly.

Ws 9:4 Si 24:4 Who has ever climbed the sky and caught her 29
to bring her down from the clouds?
Who has ever crossed the ocean and found her 30
to bring her back in exchange for the finest gold?
Jb 28:13,14 No one knows the way to her, 31
no one can discover the path she treads.

Jb 28:23 But the One who knows all knows her, 32
he has grasped her with his own intellect,
he has set the earth firm for ever
and filled it with four-footed beasts,

33 he sends the light—and it goes, Gn 1:14
he recalls it—and trembling it obeys;
34 the stars shine joyfully at their set times: Jb 38:7
35 when he calls them, they answer, 'Here we are'; Jdt 9:6 Jb 38:35 Ps 147:4 Is 40:26
they gladly shine for their creator.
36 It is he who is our God,
no other can compare with him.
37 He has grasped the whole way of knowledge,
and confided it to his servant Jacob, Ps 147:19 Si 24:8,10f
to Israel his well-beloved;
38 so causing her to appear on earth Pr 8:31 Ws9:10
and move among men. Jn 1:14

1 **4** This is the book of the commandments of God,
the Law that stands for ever; Si 24:23
those who keep her live, Pr 1:32-33; 8:35-36
those who desert her die.
2 Turn back, Jacob, seize her,
in her radiance make your way to light: Pr 6:23
3 do not yield your glory to another,
your privilege to a people not your own.
4 Israel, blessed are we: Dt 4:8,32-37 Ws 9:18
what pleases God has been revealed to us.

IV. THE COMPLAINTS AND HOPES OF JERUSALEM[a]

5 Take courage, my people,
constant reminder of Israel.[b]
6 You were sold to the nations, Is 50:1; 52:3
but not for extermination.
You provoked God;
and so were delivered to your enemies,
7 since you had angered your creator
by offering sacrifices to demons, not to God. Dt 32:17 Ps 106:37
8 You had forgotten the eternal God who reared you. *Dt 32:5,10.* 15
You had also grieved Jerusalem who nursed you, Is 1:2
9 for when she saw the anger fall on you
from God, she said:

Listen, you neighbours of Zion:
God has sent me great sorrow.
10 I have seen my sons and daughters taken into captivity,
to which they have been sentenced by the Eternal.
11 I had reared them joyfully;
in tears, in sorrow, I watched them go away.
12 Do not, any of you, exult over me,
a widow, deserted by so many; Lm 1:1-2
I suffer loneliness because of the sins of my own children,
who turned away from the Law of God,

b. As in Jb 28:13-28, this question is first answered negatively: man cannot achieve wisdom of himself, 3:16-31; the positive answer follows: wisdom is God's possession, he has enriched Israel with it by his gift of the Law, 3:32–4:4.

c. 'her way' Syr.; 'their way' Greek.

d. 'Midian' corr.; 'Merran' Greek.

e. The universe.

4 a. After the introductory verses, 5-9a, personified Jerusalem addresses the neighbouring towns and her own scattered children, vv. 9b-29; the poet then replies with a promise of recovery in messianic days, 4:30-5:9

b. The race in which Jacob's God-given name Israel is perpetuated.

who did not want to know his injunctions, 13
and would not follow the ways of his precepts,
or tread the paths of discipline as his justice directed.
Let them come here, those neighbours of Zion. 14
Let me remind you of the captivity of my sons and daughters
to which they have been sentenced by the Eternal:
Dt 28:49-50 Jr 5:15; 6: 22,23 how he brought a distant nation down on them, 15
a ruthless nation speaking a foreign language,
having neither respect for the aged,
nor pity for the child;
they carried off the widow's cherished sons, 16
they left her quite alone, bereft of her daughters.
For my part, how can I help you? 17
He who brought those disasters down on you, 18
he is the one to deliver you from the hands of your enemies.
Go, my children, go your way! 19
I must stay bereft and lonely;
I have taken off the clothes of peacetime, 20
and put on the sackcloth of entreaty;
I will cry to the Eternal all my life.
Take courage, my children, call on God: 21
he will deliver you from tyranny, from the hands of your enemies;
for I look to the Eternal for your rescue, 22
and joy has come to me from the Holy One
at the mercy soon to reach you
from your saviour, the Eternal.
In sorrow and tears I watched you go away, 23
Ps 126:5 Jr 31:12,13 but God will give you back to me in joy and gladness for ever.
As the neighbours of Zion now witness your captivity, 24
so will they soon see you rescued by God,
Is 60:1-3 who will intervene, in the great glory and splendour of the Eternal.
My children, patiently bear the anger brought on you by God. 25
Your enemy has persecuted you,
but soon you will witness his destruction
Is 51:23 and set your foot on his neck.
Lm 2:22; 4:5 My favourite children have travelled by rough roads, 26
carried off like a flock by a marauding enemy.
Is 40:1 Take courage, my children, call on God: 27
he who brought disaster on you will remember you.
As by your will you first strayed away from God, 28
so now turn back and search for him ten times as hard;
for as he brought down those disasters on you, 29
so will he rescue you and give you eternal joy.

Take courage, Jerusalem: 30
he who gave you that name[e] will console you.
Tb 13:12 Trouble will come to all who have ill-treated you 31
and gloated over your fall.
Trouble will come to the cities where your children were slaves; 32
trouble will come to the city which received your sons,
for just as she rejoiced at your fall 33
and was happy to see you ruined,
so shall she grieve over her own desolation.
I will deprive her of that joy known to populous cities, 34
her boasting shall be turned into mourning,
Is 34:9,10,14 fire from the Eternal will burn in her for many a day 35

and demons will dwell in her for ages. Lv 16:8+; 17:7+
36 Jerusalem, turn your eyes to the east, Is 60:4-5
see the joy that is coming to you from God.
37 Look, the sons you watched go away are on their way home;
reassembled from east and west, they are on their way home
at the command of the Holy One, jubilant at the glory of God.

1 5 Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress, Tb 13:16 Is 52:1
put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever,
2 wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you, Is 61:10
put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head:
3 since God means to show your splendour to every nation under heaven,
4 since the name God gives you for ever will be,
'Peace through integrity, and honour through devotedness'.[a]
5 Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights
and turn your eyes to the east:
see your sons reassembled from west and east
at the command of the Holy One, jubilant that God has
remembered them.
6 Though they left you on foot,
with enemies for an escort,
now God brings them back to you
like royal princes[b] carried back in glory. Is 49:22; 60:4
7 For God has decreed the flattening Is 40:3,4
of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills,
the filling of the valleys to make the ground level
so that Israel can walk in safety under the glory of God.
8 And the forests and every fragrant tree will provide shade Is 41:19
for Israel at the command of God;
9 for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory
with his mercy and integrity for escort.

V. THE LETTER OF JEREMIAH

A copy of the letter which Jeremiah sent to those about to be led captive Jr 29:1
to Babylon by the king of the Babylonians, to inform them of the instructions
which God had given him.

1 6 Because of the sins you have committed before God you are to be deported
2 to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar king of the Babylonians. •Once you have
reached Babylon you will stay there for many years, as long as seven generations;
3 after which I shall bring you home in peace. •Now in Babylon you will see
gods made of silver, of gold, of wood, being carried shoulder-high,[a] and filling Is 40:20+ Jr 10:1-16
4 the pagans with fear. •Be on your guard. Do not imitate the foreigners, do not
5 have any fear of their gods •as you watch their worshippers flocking before and
behind them. Instead, say in your hearts, 'Master, it is you that we have to
6 worship'. •For my angel is with you; your lives will be in his care. Ex 23:20+
7 Plated with gold and silver, their tongues polished smooth by a craftsman,
8 they are counterfeit and have no power to speak. •As though for a girl fond Ps 115:5
of finery, these pagans take gold and make crowns for the heads of their gods.
9 Sometimes, the priests actually filch gold and silver from their gods to spend
10 themselves, even using it on presents for the temple prostitutes.[b] •They

c. Thus making the city his own, Ps 46:4; Is 60:14.

5 a. For other messianic names given to Jerusalem, cf. Is 1:26+; 60:14+; Jr 33:16; Ezk 48:35.
b. Lit. 'sons of the kingdom' Vulg. and some Greek MSS; 'as (on) a royal throne' Greek. On this second Exodus, cf. Is 40:3+.

6 a. For religious processions in Babylon the images of the gods were carried from the temples, cf. also v. 5.
b. Lit. 'the prostitutes on the roof'; the sacred prostitutes apparently occupied the upper story of Babylonian temples.

dress up these gods of silver, gold and wood, in clothes, like human beings, although they cannot protect themselves either from tarnish or woodworm, in spite of the purple cloaks they drape them in. Their faces even have to be 11
dusted, owing to the dust of the temple which settles thick on them. •One holds 12
a sceptre like the governor of a province, yet is powerless to put anyone who offends him to death; •another holds sword and axe in his right hand, yet is 13
powerless to defend himself against war or thieves. •From this it is evident that 14
they are not gods; do not be afraid of them.

Just as a pot in common use becomes useless once it is broken, so are these 15
gods enshrined inside their temples. •Their eyes are full of dust raised by the 16
feet of those who enter. •Just as the doors are locked on all sides on the man 17
who has offended the king and is under sentence of death, so the priests secure the temples of these gods with gates and bolts and bars for fear of burglary. They light more lamps than for themselves, and the gods cannot see one of them. 18
They are like one of the temple beams, gnawed away from within, so they say, 19
by termites which creep out of the ground and eat them, and their fine clothes too. They are unaware •that their faces are blackened by the smoke that rises 20
from the temple. •Bats, swallows, birds of every kind flutter over their bodies 21
and heads, and cats prowl there. •From all this you can see for yourselves that 22
they are not gods: do not be afraid of them.

The gold with which they are plated is fine enough to look at, but if someone 23
does not rub off the tarnish, these gods will not do much shining on their own. They felt nothing while they were being cast. •However much was paid for them, 24
Is 46:7 there is still no breath of life in them. •Being unable to walk, they have to be carried 25
on men's shoulders, which shows how futile they are. It is humiliating for their
Ws 13:16 worshippers, too, who have to stand them up again if they fall over. •Once they 26
have been stood up, they cannot move on their own; if they tilt askew, they cannot right themselves; offerings made to them might as well be made to dead men. •Whatever is sacrificed to them, the priests re-sell and pocket the profit; 27
while their wives salt down part of it, but give nothing to the poor or to the
Lv 12:4; 15: 19f; 20:18 helpless. As to the sacrifices themselves, why, women during their periods and women in childbed are not afraid to touch them! •As you can see from these 28
examples that they are not gods, do not be afraid of them.

Indeed, how can they even be called gods, when women do the offering[c] 29
to these gods of silver, gold and wood? •In their temples, the priests stay sitting 30
down, their garments torn, heads and beard shaved and with heads uncovered; they roar and shriek before their gods as people do at funeral feasts.[d] •The 31 32
priests take the robes of the gods to clothe their own wives and children. •Whether 33
these gods are treated badly or well, they are incapable of paying back either treatment; as incapable too of making or unmaking kings, •equally incapable 34
of distributing wealth or money. If anyone fails to honour a vow he has made
Ps 146:7-8 to them, they cannot call him to account. •They can neither save a man from 35
death nor rescue the weak from the strong, •nor restore sight to the blind, nor 36
Ps 68:5 save someone in trouble, •nor take pity on a widow, nor be generous to an 37
orphan. •These wooden gods plated with gold and silver are about as much 38
use as rocks cut out of the mountain side. Humiliation awaits their worshippers. So how can anyone think or say that they are gods? 39

The Chaldaeans themselves do them no honour; if they find someone who 40
is dumb and cannot speak, they present him to Bel, entreating him for the gift of speech, as if he could hear them! •And they are incapable of drawing the 41
conclusion and abandoning those gods—such is their lack of commonsense. Women with strings round their waists sit in the streets, burning bran like incense; 42
when one of these has been picked up by a passer-by and been to bed with him, 43
she then twits her neighbour for not being singled out and for not having her string broken.[e] •Everything going on anywhere near[f] these gods is spurious. 44
So how can anyone think or say that they are gods?

45 Made by woodworkers and goldsmiths, they are only what those workmen
46 decide to make them. •The makers have not long to live themselves, so how can
47 the things they make be gods? •Their legacy to their descendants is nothing but
48 illusion and disappointment. •If war or disasters occur, the priests discuss where
49 best to hide themselves and these gods; •how can anyone fail to realise that
they are not gods, if they cannot save themselves from war or from disasters?
50 And since in any case they are only made of wood plated with gold or silver,
it must be obvious from all this that they are spurious; and plain to everyone,
to nations as to kings, that they are not gods but the work of human hands, and
51 that there is no divine activity in them. •Can there be anyone still unconvinced[g]
that they are not gods?
52 They can neither appoint a king over a country, nor give rain to mankind,
53 nor regulate their own affairs, nor rescue anyone who suffers a wrong; they are
54 as helpless as crows between sky and ground. •If fire falls on the temple of these
wooden gods plated with gold or silver, their priests fly to safety while they for
55 their part stay there like beams, to be burnt. •They cannot put up any resistance
56 to a king or to enemies. •So how can anyone think or say that they are gods?
57 These wooden gods plated with gold or silver cannot evade thieves or
marauders; violent men may rob them of their gold and silver and make off with
the robes they are dressed in; yet they are powerless to help even themselves.
58 Better to be a king displaying his prowess, a household pot of use to its owner,
than to be these false gods; or merely the door of a house, protecting what is
inside, than these false gods; or a wooden pillar in a palace than these false gods.
59 The sun, the moon and the stars, which shine and have been given work to do,
60 are obedient; •similarly, the lightning, as it flashes, is a fine sight; in the same
61 way, the wind blows across every country, •the clouds execute the order God
gives them to pass over the whole earth, and the fire, sent from above to consume
62 mountain and forest, carries out its orders. •Now these gods are not their
63 equal, either in beauty or in power. •So, no one can think or say that they are
gods, powerless as they are to administer justice or to do men any good.
64 Therefore, knowing that they are not gods, do not be afraid of them.
65
66 They can neither curse nor bless kings, •nor produce signs in heaven for the
67 nations, nor shine like the sun, nor shed light like the moon. •The animals are
better off than they are, being able to make for cover and look after themselves.
68 There is not the slightest shred of evidence that they are gods; do not be afraid
of them!
69 Their wooden gods plated with gold and silver are like a scarecrow in a melon
70 patch—protecting nothing. •Again, their wooden gods plated with gold and
silver are like a thornbush in a garden—any bird may perch on it—or like
71 a corpse thrown into the dark. •From the purple and fine linen[h] rotting on their
backs you will recognise that they are not gods; and in the end, eaten away
72 themselves, they will be a disgrace to the country. •Better, then, a virtuous man
who has no idols; disgrace will never come near him.

6 c. This was forbidden by Jewish Law.
d. Referring to the worship of gods that die and rise again.
e. This custom was associated with sacred prostitution.
f. 'anywhere near' Codex Alex.
g. Lit. 'To whom will it not be clear'; variant reading: '...will it be'.
h. 'fine linen' corr.; 'marble' Greek.

EZEKIEL

INTRODUCTION

43:3 Dn 10:5 1 In the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, as I was among the exiles on the bank of the river Chebar, heaven opened and I saw 1
visions from God. •On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of exile for 2
8:1 1 K 18:46 Si 49:8 King Jehoiachin— •the word of Yahweh was addressed to the priest Ezekiel 3
son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldaeans, on the bank of the river Chebar.[a]

10 Rv 4 **The vision of the 'Chariot of Yahweh'**[b]

There the hand of Yahweh came on me.[c] •I looked; a stormy wind blew 4
from the north, a great cloud with light around it, a fire from which flashes of
lightning darted, and in the centre a sheen like bronze at the heart of the fire. •In 5
10:8-22 Ex 25:18+ ↗ Rv 4:6-8 the centre I saw what seemed four animals. They looked like this. They were of
human form. •Each had four faces, each had four wings. •Their legs were straight; 6 7
they had hooves like oxen, glittering like polished brass. •Human hands showed 8
under their wings; the faces of all four were turned to the four quarters.[d] •Their 9
wings touched each other; they did not turn as they moved; each one went
straight forward. •As to what they looked like, they had human faces, and all 10
four had a lion's face to the right, and all four had a bull's face to the left, and
Is 6:2 all four had an eagle's face.[e] •Their wings[f] were spread upwards; each had two 11
wings that touched, and two wings that covered his body; •and they all went 12
straight forward; they went where the spirit urged them; they did not turn as
they moved.

Between these animals something could be seen[g] like flaming brands or 13
Ex 19:18 torches, darting between the animals; the fire flashed light, and lightning
Ps 104:4 streaked from the fire. •And the creatures ran to and fro[h] like thunderbolts. 14
10:19-13 I looked at the animals; there was a wheel on the ground by each of them, one 15
beside each of the four.[i] •The wheels[j] glittered as if made of chrysolite. All four 16
looked alike, and seemed to be made one inside the other. •They went forward four 17
ways[k] and kept their course unswervingly. •Their rims seemed enormous when 18
Zc 4:10 ↗ Rv 4:8 I looked at them and all four rims had eyes[l] all the way round. •When the animals 19
went forward, the wheels went forward beside them; and when the animals
10:16 left the ground, the wheels too left the ground. •Where the spirit urged them, 20
there the wheels went,[m] since the spirit of the animal was in the wheels. •When 21
the animals moved on, they moved on; when the former halted, the latter
halted; when the former left the ground, the wheels too left the ground, since
10:1 the spirit of the animal was in the wheels. •Over the heads of the animals a sort 22
Ex 24:10 ↗ Rv 4:6 of vault, gleaming like crystal,[n] arched above their heads;[o] •under this vault 23
their wings stretched out to one another, and each had two covering his body.[p]
10:5 I heard the noise of their wings as they moved; it sounded like rushing water, 24
Gn 17:1+ like the voice of Shaddai, a noise like a storm, like the noise of a camp; when
they halted, they folded their wings, •and there was a noise.[q] 25

26 Above the vault over their heads was something that looked like a sapphire; ↗ Rv 4:2-3
it was shaped like a throne and high up on this throne was a being that looked Ex 24:10
27 like a man. •I saw him shine like bronze, and close to and all around him from 8:2
what seemed his loins upwards was what looked like fire; and from what seemed
28 his loins downwards I saw what looked like fire, and a light all round •like a
bow in the clouds on rainy days; that is how the surrounding light appeared. Gn 9:13-15 Si 43:11
It was something that looked like the glory of Yahweh.[r] I looked, and prostrated *3:23; 8:4;* 10:4,18 Ex 24:16+ Dn 8:17 ↗ Rv 1:17
myself, and I heard a voice speaking.

The vision of the scroll[a]

1 2 It said, 'Son of man,[b] stand up; I am going to speak to you'. •As he said Dn 8:17; 10:11
2 these words the spirit came into me and made me stand up, and I heard him *3:24*
3 speaking to me. •He said, 'Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to Dt 9:7,24
the rebels[c] who have turned against me. Till now they and their ancestors have
4 been in revolt against me. •The sons are defiant and obstinate; I am sending
5 you to them, to say, "The Lord Yahweh says this". •Whether they listen or 12:2; 33:33 Dt 18:21-24
6 not, this set of rebels shall know there is a prophet among them. •And you, Jr 28:9
son of man, do not be afraid of them, do not be afraid when they say, "There Jr 1:8
are thorns all round you[d] and scorpions under you". There is no need to be Jr 1:8,17
afraid either of their words or of their looks, for they are a set of rebels.
7 You must deliver my words to them whether they listen or not, for they are
a set of rebels.[e]
8 'You, son of man, listen to the words I say; do not be a rebel like Ps 106:8
that rebellious set. Open your mouth and eat what I am about to give you.'
9 10 I looked. A hand was there, stretching out to me and holding a scroll. •He unrolled Zc 5:2
it in front of me; it was written on back and front; on it was written[f] 'lamentations, ↗ Rv 5:1; 10:2
1 wailings, moanings'. 3 He said, 'Son of man, eat what is given to you; eat this *Jr 1:9* ↗ Rv 10:8-11
2 scroll, then go and speak to the House of Israel'. •I opened my mouth; he gave
3 me the scroll to eat •and said, 'Son of man, feed and be satisfied by the scroll
I am giving you'. I ate it, and it tasted sweet as honey.[a] Rv 10:10

1 a. Vv. 1-3 appear to juxtapose two distinct introductions. One, vv. 2-3a, speaks of Ezekiel in the third person and serves as introduction to the whole book, dating the prophet's first vision to the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile, 593-592. The other, v. 1, may have introduced the vision of the 'chariot of Yahweh' before this occupied its present position, cf. Introduction to the Prophets. If so, the date ('the thirtieth year') is difficult to interpret, unless we amend it to 'thirteenth year' (of Jehoiachin's exile), i.e. summer of 585.

b. Though some details are obscure, the substantial meaning of the vision is clear, namely Yahweh's transcendence of place: he is not tied to the Temple of Jerusalem but can follow his people into exile if he wishes.

c. 'on me' versions; 'on him' Hebr. A phrase commonly used by Ezekiel to indicate ecstasy, cf. 3:22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1.

d. 'the faces... four quarters' corr.; 'towards the four sides, and their faces, and their wings' Hebr.

e. These strange animals are reminiscent of the Assyrian Karibu (a name akin to that of the cherubs over the ark, cf. Ex 25:18+), creatures with the head of a man, the body of a lion, the hooves of a bull and the wings of an eagle; their effigies stood guard outside the palaces of Babylon. These servants of the pagan gods are here shown harnessed to the chariot of the God of Israel, a vivid illustration of Yahweh's transcendence. The characteristics of these creatures were later used to describe the 'four living beings' in Rv (4:7-8 etc.). In Christian tradition they have become symbolic of the four evangelists.

f. 'Their wings' Greek.

g. 'Between' versions; 'the likeness of' Hebr. 'could be seen' Greek; 'their appearance' Hebr.

h. Lit. 'went' following Vulg.; Hebr. incomprehensible.

i. 'each of the four' corr. following versions

j. Hebr. adds 'and their construction'.

k. 'four ways' versions. Hebr. inserts 'going'.

l. Text obscure; translation uncertain.

m. Hebr. adds 'the spirit to go'.

n. Hebr. 'like terrible crystal'.

o. The throne of Yahweh is therefore supported, rather than drawn along, by these animals. Compare the ark of the covenant, Ex 25:10+; there Yahweh is 'seated on the cherubs', 1 S 4:4, etc.

p. Hebr. repeats 'each had two covering him'.

q. Hebr. adds 'above the vault over their heads, when they halted they folded their wings'.

r. The 'glory of Yahweh', Ex 24:16+, is normally described as a bright cloud, Ex 16:10; Ezk 43:1-5; here the cloud is accompanied by a brilliant, luminous silhouette in human shape.

2 a. The vision of the chariot of Yahweh is continued later, 3:12. It is here interrupted by the vision of the book, which was probably Ezekiel's first vision (in 593) in which he received his prophetic call, cf. Introduction to the Prophets.

b. The expression 'son of man' used by God of his prophet is peculiar to Ezk (Dn 8:17 excepted). It emphasises the distance between God and man. In Dn 7:13 the same expression becomes a messianic title which is later adopted by Jesus, cf. Mt 8:20+.

c. 'to the rebels' Greek

d. 'There are thorns all round you' corr. following Greek.

e. 'set (lit. house) of rebels' Greek.

f. 'on it (was written)' corr.

3 a. The mouth of Isaiah had been touched by a seraph, Is 6:5-7, that of Jeremiah by Yahweh himself who 'put his words into the prophet's mouth', Jr 1:9, an idea which Ezekiel expresses even more realistically.

Then he said, 'Son of man, go to the House of Israel and tell them what 4
Is 28:9-13; 33:19 I have said. •You are not being sent to a nation that speaks a difficult foreign 5
language; you are being sent to the House of Israel. •Not to big nations that 6
speak difficult foreign languages, and whose words you would not understand—
Jon 3 Mt 12:38-42 if I sent you to them, they would listen to you; •but the House of Israel will not 7
listen to you because it will not listen to me. The whole House of Israel is
Is 50:7 stubborn and obstinate. •But now, I will make you as defiant as they are, and as 8
obstinate as they are; •I am going to make your resolution as hard as a diamond 9
and diamond is harder than flint. So do not be afraid of them, do not be overawed
by them for they are a set of rebels.'

Then he said, 'Son of man, remember everything I say to you, listen closely, 10
and go to your exiled countrymen and talk to them. Tell them, "The Lord 11
Yahweh says this", whether they listen or not.'

8:3; 11:1,24; 37:1 The spirit lifted me up, and behind me I could hear a tumultuous shouting, 12
1 K 18:12+ Lk 2:13-14 'Blessed be the glory of Yahweh in his dwelling place'. •This was the sound of the 13
animals' wings beating against each other, and the sound of the wheels beside
them; a tumultuous shouting. •The spirit lifted me up and took me; my heart, 14
as I went, overflowed with bitterness and anger, and the hand of Yahweh lay
Ps 137:1 heavy on me. •I came to Tel Abib, to the exiles beside the river Chebar where 15
they were then living; and I stayed with them for seven days like a man stunned.

The prophet as sentry[b]

After seven days the word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, 16
33:1-9 Is 21:6; 8:11 Jr 6:17 Ho 8:1 'Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. Whenever 17
you hear a word from me, warn them in my Name. •If I say to a wicked man: 18
You are to die, and you do not warn him; if you do not speak and warn him
Heb 13:17 to renounce his evil ways and so live, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold
you responsible for his death. •If, however, you do warn a wicked man and he 19
does not renounce his wickedness and his evil ways, then he shall die for his sin,
18:24; 33:12-13 but you yourself will have saved your life. •When the upright man renounces 20
his integrity to do evil and I set a trap for him, he too shall die; since you failed
2 P 2:21 to warn him, he shall die for his sin and the integrity he practised will no longer
be remembered; but I will hold you responsible for his death. •If, however, you 21
warn the upright man not to sin and he abstains from sinning, he shall live,
thanks to your warning, and you too will have saved your life.'

I. BEFORE THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

Ezekiel is struck dumb

8:4 While I was there the hand of Yahweh came on me; he said, 'Get up, go out 22
into the valley; I am going to speak to you'. •I got up and went out into the 23
1:28 valley; the glory of Yahweh was resting there, like the glory I had seen by
2:2 the river Chebar, and I prostrated myself. •The spirit of Yahweh then entered me, 24
and made me stand up, and spoke to me.

He said, 'Go and shut yourself in your house. •Son of man, bonds are now 25
about to be laid on you;[c] you will be bound with them and not be able to mix
with others. •I am going to make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth; 26
24:27; 33:22 you will be dumb; you will stop warning them, for they are a set of rebels. •When 27
I speak to you, I shall open your mouth and you will tell them, "The Lord
Yahweh says this". Whoever will listen, let him listen; whoever will not, let
him not; for they are a set of rebels.

Jr 18:1+ **The siege of Jerusalem foretold**

26:8 4 'Son of man, take a brick and lay it in front of you; on it scratch a city, 1
Jerusalem. •You are then to besiege it,[a] trench round it, build earthworks, pitch 2

3 camps and bring up battering-rams all round. •Then take an iron pan and place 21:27
it as if it were an iron wall between you and the city. Then turn to it; it is being
besieged and you are besieging it. This is a sign for the House of Israel.
4 'Lie down on your left side and take the sin of the House of Israel on
5 yourself.[b] I am making you bear their sin for as many days as you lie there. •I myself
have set the years they will sin at a hundred and ninety days;[c] during these you
6 are to bear the sin of the House of Israel. •And at the end of these days, you are
to lie down again on your right side and bear the sin of the House of Judah for
7 forty days.[d] I have set the length for you as one day for one year. •And you are to
turn towards the siege of Jerusalem, lift your bare arm and prophesy against it.
8 I have laid bonds on you, and you must not turn over until the period of your 3:25
seclusion is finished.
9 'You must then take wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt; put them
all in the same pot and make yourself some bread. You are to eat it for as many
10 days as you have been lying on your side, a hundred and ninety days.[e] •As
regards this food you are to measure out a daily portion of twenty shekels and
11 make it last the whole day. •And you are to drink water sparingly; your drink
12 is to be the sixth of a hin and to last the whole day. •Take this food in the shape
13 of a barley cake baked where they can see you, over human dung. •And say,
"Yahweh, the God of Israel, says this:[f] This is the way the Israelites will have to
14 eat their defiled food, wherever I disperse them among the nations".' •I then
said, 'Lord Yahweh, my soul is not defiled. From my childhood until now, I have
never eaten an animal that has died a natural death or been savaged; no unclean Ex 22:30 Lv 17:15; 22:8
15 flesh has ever entered my mouth.' •'Very well,' he said 'I grant you cow's dung[g] Dt 14:3-21
16 instead of human dung; you are to bake your bread on that.' •He then said, 'Son Ac 10:14
of man, I mean to destroy the stock of bread[h] in Jerusalem; in their distress Lv 26:26 Ps 105:16
they will eat bread strictly weighed; in terror they will drink water grudgingly *12:18-19* Rv 6:6
17 measured, •since bread and water will be scarce; they will all pine and waste away *Lv 26:39*
as a result of their sins.
1 5 'Son of man, take a sharp blade, sharp as a barber's razor; take it and use
it on your head and beard. Then take scales and divide the hair you have cut
2 off. •You are to set fire to a third in the centre of the city, while the time of the
siege is working itself out. Then take another third and toss it by swordpoint all
round the city. The last third you are to scatter to the wind, while I unsheathe the
3 sword behind them.[a] •Then take a few hairs[b] and wrap them in the folds
4 of your cloak; •and of these again take a few, and throw them on the fire and
burn them. From them will issue fire,[c] and you are to say to the entire House of
5 Israel,[d] •"The Lord Yahweh says this: This is Jerusalem, which I have placed 38:12
6 in the middle of the nations, surrounded with foreign countries. •She is so
perverse that she has rebelled more against my observances than the nations,

b. In 33:1-9 the same theme is developed more coherently; it may have been reproduced, barely modified, here, since it outlines the programme of the prophet's future career. Ezekiel stresses the individual responsibility of his hearers, cf. 14:12+.

c. By 'bonds' some understand a paralysis of some kind, cf. 4:4f, and that this physical ordeal acquires, by revelation, a symbolic meaning incorporating it into the prophetic message, cf. Jr 18:1+.

4 a. Ezekiel is commanded to mime the forthcoming siege of Jerusalem (the brick 'besieged', the motionless prophet, the poor food and its meagre ration, the hair burnt or scattered to the winds). For these symbolic gestures, particularly elaborate with Ezekiel, cf. Jr 18:1+.

b. 'on yourself' corr.

c. 'the years they will sin' corr.; 'the two sins' Hebr. 'a hundred and ninety' Greek; 'three hundred and ninety' Hebr.

d. Unsuccessful attempts have been made to put a strict interpretation on these figures as prophecies of the duration of the respective exiles of Israel and Judah. Presumably they are only to be taken as the prophecy of a siege, the duration of which has not been revealed, designed as punishment for the protracted infidelity of the two kingdoms.

e. 'a hundred and ninety' Greek; 'three hundred and ninety' Hebr.

f. 'say... God of Israel' Greek.

g. Dried dung is used as fuel in the East.

h. Lit. 'the staff of bread' (loaves were long and thin), cf. 5:16; 14:13.

5 a. The siege will end in massacre; the meaning of the prophet's mime is unmistakable.

b. The 'remnant' that is spared and, after further ordeal, saved, cf. Is 4:3+.

c. Meaning obscure. Possibly a gloss suggested by 19:14.

d. 'fire. And you will say to the entire' Greek; 'fire for the entire' Hebr.

and more against my laws than the surrounding countries; for she has rejected my observances and refused to keep my laws.

Mt 12:38-42 Therefore, the Lord Yahweh says this: Since you are more rebellious[e] than the nations round you, since you do not keep my laws or respect my observances, and since you do not even respect the observances of the surrounding nations, •so then, the Lord Yahweh says this: I have now set myself against you, I will inflict punishments[f] upon you for all the nations to see. •On account of all your filthy practices I will do things to you that I have never done before and that I will never do again. •Fathers among you will eat their children, and children eat their fathers. I will inflict punishments on you and disperse what remains of you to the winds. •Therefore, as I live—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—as sure as you have defiled my sanctuary with all your horrors and all your filthy practices, I too will reject[g] pitilessly; I will not spare, either. •A third of your inhabitants shall die of plague or starve to death inside you; a third shall fall by the sword, outside you; a third I will scatter to every wind, while I unsheathe the sword behind them. •My anger will be satisfied; I mean to satisfy my fury against them and be avenged; they will know that I, Yahweh, have spoken in my jealousy, when I have exhausted my fury against them. •I mean to reduce you to a ruin, an object of contempt to surrounding nations, in the eyes of all who pass by. •You will become an object of contempt and shame, an example and a thing of horror, to all the surrounding nations, when I execute my judgements on you in anger and fury, with bitter punishments. I, Yahweh, have spoken. •Against you[h] I mean to send the deadly arrows of starvation—which will destroy you, since I shall send them to destroy you—and I will destroy your stock of bread. •Against you I mean to send famine and wild animals, to rob you of your children; plague and bloodshed shall visit you. I will summon the sword against you. I, Yahweh, have spoken." '

Jr 1:16 Lv 26:29 Dt 28:53 Jr 19:9 Lm 2:20; 4:10 Lv 26:33 7:4; 8:18; 9:10; 24:14 Ps 59:13 22:4 Lv 26:32 Dt 32:23 4:16 Rv 6:1

Against the mountains of Israel

6 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, turn towards the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them. •Say, "Mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Yahweh. The Lord Yahweh says this to mountains and hills and ravines and valleys: Listen; I am going to summon the sword against you and destroy your high places. •Your altars will be wrecked, and your incense burners smashed; your inhabitants are going to be cut to pieces and thrown down in front of your idols, •[a]and their bones spread all round your altars. •Throughout your territory the towns will be destroyed and the high places wrecked, to the ruin and wrecking of your altars, the shattering and abolition of your idols, the smashing of your incense burners and the utter destruction of all your works. •Among you men will fall, and be cut to pieces; and so you will learn that I am Yahweh.[b]

Lv 26:30-31 Jr 8:1-2 Is 2:18 Jr 10:14-15 Mi 1:7

But I shall spare some of you; they will escape the sword and be dispersed by me among the nations. •Your survivors will remember me among the nations where they have been deported. I shall have broken[c] their wanton hearts for having deserted me, and blinded their adulterous eyes for having fawned on idols. They will loathe themselves for all the wrong they have caused by their filthy practices, •and so they will learn that I am Yahweh; I have said, and I have meant it, that I am going to inflict all these disasters on them.

Is 4:3+ Lv 26:40-41 Dt 30:1-2 16:23 Ps 51:3

The sins of Israel

The Lord Yahweh says this: Clap your hands, stamp your feet, and say: Alas! for all the abominable sins of the House of Israel, which is about to perish by sword, famine and plague. •Far off, they will die by plague; near at hand they will fall by the sword; those who are spared and besieged will die of hunger, since I mean to satisfy my fury against them. •You will know that I am Yahweh when their corpses, cut to pieces, lie there among their idols, all round

22:13 Ps 59:13

their altars, on every high hill, on every mountain top, under every spreading tree, under every leafy oak, in fact wherever they offer an appeasing fragrance to all
14 their idols. •I mean to stretch out my hand against them and reduce the country to an empty wasteland from the desert to Riblah,[d] the length and breadth of the country; and so they will learn that I am Yahweh." '

Dt 12:2+
Ex 29:18+

The end is near

Am 5:18+

1 2 7 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, say,[a] The Lord Yahweh says this to the land of Israel: Finished! The end is
3 coming for the four quarters of the land. •Now all is over with you; I mean to unleash my anger on you, and judge you as your conduct deserves and
4 force you to answer for all your filthy practices. •I mean to show you no pity, I will not spare you; I am going to call you to account for your conduct and for the filthy practices that you parade; and so you will learn that I am Yahweh.

Rv 7:1
=7:8-9
5:11+

5 The Lord Yahweh says this: Now disaster is going to follow on disaster.[b]
6 7 The end is coming, the end is coming for you;[c] it is coming now. •Now it is your turn,[d] you who live in this country. The time has come, the day is near;[e] no
8 joy now, only tumult, on the mountains. •Soon I am going to pour out my fury on you and exhaust my anger at you; I will judge you as your conduct
9 deserves and call you to account for all your filthy practices. •I mean to show you neither pity nor mercy, since I am going to call you to account for[f] your conduct and for the filthy practices which you parade; and so you will learn that I am Yahweh, and that I strike.

Is 5:8
↗ Rv 8:13; 9:12; 11:14
=7:3-4

10 Here is the day! It has come; your turn has come, the scourge is ready,[g] pride
11 12 is at its peak. •Violence has risen to become the scourge of wickedness...[h] •The time has come and the day is near. Let neither buyer rejoice, nor seller regret,
13 for anger rages against all alike.[i] •The seller will not recover what he has sold;
14 they will all carry on sinning and be none the stronger for it. •The trumpet will sound, all will be ready; but no one will go into battle, since my anger rages against all alike.

The sins of Israel[j]

15 Outside, the sword; inside, plague and famine. Anyone who is found in the countryside will die by the sword; anyone who is found in the city will
16 be devoured by famine and plague. •Their fugitives will run away and make for the mountains; I shall slaughter them all[k] like doves of the valleys, each
17 18 for his sin. •With limp hands and quaking knees, •they will put on sackcloth; and shudder all over. All their faces will be red with shame and every head
19 will be shaved.[l] •They will throw their silver down in the streets and their gold will fill them with horror.[m] Never again will they have enough to eat,

Dt 32:25
↗ Mt 24:16-18
21:12
Am 8:10
Ps 49:7-8
Zp 1:18

e. 'rebellious' corr.; 'turbulent' Hebr.
f. 'punishments' corr.
g. 'reject' corr.; 'shave' Hebr.
h. 'Against you' corr.; 'against them' Hebr.

6 a. Hebr. inserts at the opening of the verse 'I am going to lay the corpses of the Israelites in front of their idols', cf. Lv 26:30.
b. 'you are going to learn that I am Yahweh', a recurrent expression with Ezekiel. Yahweh's deeds force men, however ill-disposed, to acknowledge his omnipotence, cf. Is 42:8+.
c. 'I shall have broken' versions; 'I shall have been broken' Hebr.
d. 'from the desert to Riblah' some MSS; 'a waste more desolate than the desert of Riblah' Text. Rec. Riblah, cf. 2 K 23:33; 25:6f, here stands for the most northerly point of Palestine, and 'the desert' is its southern boundary; cf. Jg 20:1+.

7 a. 'say' is absent from Hebr.
b. 'disaster on disaster' some MSS and Syr.; 'a single disaster, behold a disaster comes' Hebr.
c. Hebr. adds 'it awakens'.
d. 'your turn' translation uncertain, lit 'your crown'. So also in v. 10.
e. The 'day of Yahweh', cf. Am 5:18+.
f. 'since I am going to call you to account for' corr.; 'I am going to judge you according to' Hebr.
g. Text very obscure. We have tried to give a translation consistent with v. 7. Literally, the Hebr. would give 'the crown has come out, the sceptre (or: rod) has blossomed'.
h. The end of this verse is unintelligible. Lit. 'not (coming) from them, nor from their tumult or their multitude, and they are worthless'. The Greek interprets the whole verse 'He will break the prop of the wicked, without tumult, without haste'.
i. Lit. 'against all its (Jerusalem's?) multitude'. So also in v. 14.
j. This passage is the sequel of 6:11-14.
k. 'I shall slaughter them all' Greek; 'all moaning' Hebr.
l. Sign of disgrace.
m. Hebr. adds 'Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to rescue them on the day of the wrath of Yahweh', cf. Zp 1:18.

never again will they fill their bellies, since this has been the cause of their crimes.
They used to pride themselves on the beauty of their jewellery, out of which 20
they made their loathsome images and idols. That is why I mean to make it an
object of horror to them. •I intend to hand it over to be the plunder of foreign- 21
ers and loot for local brigands, who will profane it. •I shall turn my face from 22
them; my treasury[n] will be profaned; barbarians will force their way in and
profane it.

Lm 4:13 Forge yourself a chain;[o] for the country is filled with bloody murders, the 23
city is full of violent crime. •I am going to summon the cruellest of the nations 24
to seize their houses. I will break the pride of their grandees; their sanctuaries
will be profaned. •Anguish is on its way: they will look for peace and there 25
Rv 8:13 will be none. •Disaster will follow on disaster, rumour on rumour; they will 26
Ps 74:8 Is 29:14 Lm 2:9 Mi 3:6 pester the prophet for a vision; the priest will be at a loss over the law and the
elders on how to advise. •The king will go into mourning,[p] the prince be 27
plunged in grief, the hands of the country people tremble. I mean to treat them
as their conduct deserves, and judge them as their own verdicts merit; and so
they will learn that I am Yahweh." '

A vision of the sins of Jerusalem

14:1; 20:1 1:3+ 8 In the sixth year, on the fifth day of the sixth month,[a] I was sitting at home 1
and the elders of Judah were sitting with me, when the hand of the Lord
Yahweh fell on me.

1:26-28 I looked and saw something that looked like a man.[b] Downwards from what 2
seemed to be his loins he was fire; and upwards from his loins he seemed to shine
40:1 Dn 14:36 like polished bronze.[c] •He stretched out what seemed to be a hand and took 3
3:12 Dt 32:21 me by the hair; and the spirit lifted me into the air and, in visions from God,[d] took
me to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the inner north gate, where the idol of
1:28; 3:22f Ex 24:16+ Jealousy stands, provoking jealousy.[e] •There I saw the glory of the God of 4
Israel, as I had seen it in the valley. •He said, 'Son of man, raise your eyes to 5
the north'. I raised my eyes to the north, and there, to the north of the altar
gate, stood this statue of Jealousy at the entrance. •He said, 'Son of man, do 6
you see what they are doing? Do you see all the filth practised here by the House
of Israel, to drive me out of my sanctuary? You will see filthier practices yet.'

He next took me to the entrance to the court. I looked; there was a hole 7
in the wall. •He said, 'Son of man, break through the wall'. I broke through 8
the wall; there was a door. •He said, 'Go in and look at the filthy things they 9
are doing inside'. •I went in and looked: all sorts of images of snakes and repulsive 10
animals and all the idols of the House of Israel drawn on the wall all round.
Seventy elders of the House of Israel were standing in front of the idols, among 11
them Jaazaniah son of Shaphan, each one, censer in hand; the fragrance
Lv 26:1 of incense was rising. •He said, 'Son of man, have you seen what the elders of 12
the House of Israel do in the dark, each in his painted room? They say, "Yahweh
9:9 Is 29:15 cannot see us; Yahweh has abandoned the country". ' •He said, 'You will see 13
them at filthier practices still'.

He next took me to the entrance of the north gate of the Temple of Yahweh 14
where women were sitting, weeping for Tammuz.[f] •He said, 'Son of man, do you 15
see that? You will see even filthier things than that.'

He then led me to the inner court of the Temple of Yahweh. And there, 16
at the entrance to the sanctuary of Yahweh, between the porch and the altar,
there were about twenty-five men, with their backs to the sanctuary of Yahweh
Jb 31:26 and their faces turned to the east. They were bowing to the east, towards the sun.
He said to me, 'Son of man, do you see that? Is it not bad enough for the House 17
of Judah to do the filthy things that they are doing here? But they fill the country
with violence and provoke my anger further; look at them now putting that
5:11+ Jr 11:11+ branch to their nostrils.[g] •My anger forces me to it; I will show neither pity 18
nor mercy. They may shout as loud as they like; I will not listen to them.'

The punishment[a]

1 9 Then as I listened he shouted, 'Come here, you scourges of the city, and
2 bring your weapons of destruction'. •Immediately six men advanced from Tb 5:4+
the upper north gate, each holding a deadly weapon. In the middle of them was
a man in white, with a scribe's ink horn in his belt. They came in and halted
3 in front of the bronze altar. •The glory of the God of Israel rose off the cherubs 1:28+
where it had been and went up to the threshold of the Temple. He called Ex 25:18+
4 the man in white with a scribe's ink horn in his belt •and said,[b] 'Go all through
the city, all through Jerusalem, and mark a cross[c] on the foreheads of all who Ex 12:7,13
5 deplore and disapprove of all the filth practised in it'. •I heard him say to the Ps 119:136
others, 'Follow him through the city, and strike. Show neither pity nor mercy; ↗ Rv 7:2-3
6 old men, young men, virgins, children, women, kill and exterminate them all. Ex 32:27
But do not touch anyone with a cross on his forehead. Begin at my sanctuary.' Nb 25:5,8
7 So they began with the old men in front of the Temple. •He said to them, 'Defile ↗ Rv 9:4
the Temple; fill the courts with corpses, and go'. They went out and hacked
their way through the city.
8 While they were hacking them down, I stayed behind; I fell face downwards 11:13
and exclaimed, 'Ah, Lord Yahweh, are you going to annihilate all that is left Is 6:11
9 of Israel as you turn your anger on Jerusalem?' •He said, 'The guilt of the House Am 7:2,5
of Israel and Judah is immense, boundless; the country is full of bloodshed, the Is 4:3
city overflows with wickedness, for they say, "Yahweh has abandoned the 24:9
10 country, Yahweh cannot see". •Right, then, I too will show no pity, I too will 8:12
11 not spare. I mean to call them to account for all their behaviour.' •The man Ps 10:11+
in white with the scribe's ink horn in his belt then came back and made his 5:11
report, 'I have carried out your orders'.

1 10 [a]I looked, and I saw that above the vault over the cherubs' heads there 1:22
was something that looked like a sapphire, and there showed above them ↗ Rv 4:3
2 the semblance of a throne. •He then said to the man in white, 'Go under the
chariot, beneath the cherubs; take a handful of burning coal from between 28:14,16
the cherubs and scatter it over the city'. He went in as I watched. Gn 19:24
3 The cherubs were on the right of the Temple as the man went in, and the Ps 11:6
4 cloud filled the inner court. •The glory of Yahweh rose off the cherubs and ↗ Rv 8:5
up to the threshold of the Temple; the Temple was filled with the cloud and 1:28+
5 the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of Yahweh. •The noise of Ex 24:16+; 40:34-35
the cherubs' wings could be heard even in the outer court, like the thunder of 1 K 8:10-11
God Almighty when he speaks. 1:24
6 When he ordered the man in white to take the fire from under the chariot, Ex 19:19
7 between the cherubs, the man went and stopped by the wheel; •one cherub Ps 29:3f
stretched his hand[b] towards the fire which was between the cherubs, took some 28:16
8 and put it into the hands of the man in white, who took it and went off. •I then
saw[c] that the cherubs had what seemed to be a human hand under their wings.
9 I looked; there were four wheels at the side of the cherubs, one wheel at the side 1:5-21

n. Possibly the city of Jerusalem.

o. Perhaps alluding to the coming deportation; but the text is doubtful.

p. These words, not in the Greek, may be a later addition; reference to the king is exceptional in Ezk.

8 a. September-October 592

b. 'like a man' Greek; 'like fire' Hebr.

c. As in 1:26-28, Yahweh himself appears to the prophet. In v. 4 it is only the 'glory of Yahweh', cf. also 1:28.

d. These are to show the prophet the guilt of Jerusalem, not for past sins or for any collective identification with sinners who disregard the Law, but for present and positive faults calling for immediate punishment, cf. 14:12+.

e. The jealousy of Yahweh aroused by any form of idolatry. This 'idol of jealousy' is perhaps the statue of Astarte set up in the Temple by Manasseh, 2 K 21:7.

f. Assyro-Babylonian deity of popular origin, known in Mediterranean mythology as Adonis ('My Lord'). Mourning was held for him every year in the month of Tammuz to commemorate the period of his stay in the underworld.

g. The ceremony referred to here cannot be identified with any certainty.

9 a. The vision will show that the punishment will not strike indiscriminately; it will spare the innocent, cf. 14:12+.

b. '(he) said' Greek; 'Yahweh said' Hebr.

c. Lit. 'a *tau*', as the Vulg. translates. In the ancient script this letter was cruciform.

10 a. After the massacre of the inhabitants, the destruction of the city itself.

b. Hebr. adds 'between the cherubs'.

c. 'I saw' versions; 'he saw' Hebr

of each cherub, and the wheels glittered as if made of chrysolite. •All four looked 10
alike, and seemed to be one inside the other. •They went forward four ways 11
and kept their course unswervingly, moving the way they faced and never swerving
Rv 4:8 off their course. •Their bodies, their backs, their hands, their wings, and the 12
wheels—the wheels of all four—were covered in eyes all over. •I heard that 13
Rv 4:7 the wheels were called 'galgal'.[d] •Each cherub had four faces: the first face 14
was the face of the cherub, the second face the face of a man, the third the face
of a lion, the fourth the face of an eagle. •The cherubs rose; this was the creature 15
1:20 I had seen by the river Chebar. •As the cherubs went forward, the wheels went 16
forward beside them; and the wheels did not swerve[e] even when the cherubs
spread their wings to leave the ground. •When the former stopped, the latter 17
stopped; when the former rose, the latter rose with them, since the spirit of the
creature was in them.

1:28+ Ex 24:16+ **The glory of Yahweh leaves the Temple**

43:3 Lm 1:6 The glory of Yahweh came out from the Temple threshold and paused over 18
the cherubs. •The cherubs spread their wings and rose from the ground to leave, 19
and as I watched the wheels rose with them. They paused at the entrance to the
east gate[f] of the Temple of Yahweh, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered
over them. •This was the creature that I had seen supporting the God of Israel 20
beside the river Chebar, and I was now certain that these were cherubs. •Each 21
Is 6:2 had four faces and four wings and what seemed to be human hands under their
wings. •Their faces were just as I had seen them beside the river Chebar.[g] Each 22
moved straight forward.

The sins of Jerusalem (continued)[a]

3:12 11 The spirit lifted me up and carried me to the east gate of the Temple of 1
Yahweh, the gate that looks eastwards. There at the entrance to the gate
stood twenty-five men, among whom I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah
son of Benaiah, leaders of the people. •Yahweh[b] said, 'Son of man, these are 2
the wicked schemers who are spreading their bad advice through this city. •They 3
24:1-14 say, "Shall we not soon[c] be building houses? Here is the cooking pot and we are
the meat."[a] •Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, son of man.' •The 4 5
spirit of Yahweh fell on me, and he said to me, 'Say, "Yahweh says this: I know
what you are saying, House of Israel, I know how insolent you are. •You have 6
filled this city with more and more corpses of murdered men, you have strewn
its streets with your victims. •And so, the Lord Yahweh says this: The corpses 7
you have thrown into it are the meat, and the city is the cooking pot; but I mean
to drive you out.[c] •You are afraid of the sword and I will summon it against you— 8
it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. •I shall drive you from the city and hand 9
you over to foreigners, and I shall carry out my sentence on you; •you will fall 10
by the sword on the soil of Israel; I shall execute justice on you; and so you will
learn that I am Yahweh. •This city will be no cooking pot for you, and you 11
will never be the meat inside; I am going to execute justice on you on the soil of
Israel; •and so you will learn that I am Yahweh, whose laws you have not obeyed 12
Dt 22:29-30 and whose observances you have not kept; instead, you have adopted the manners
of the nations round you" '

Now as I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah dropped dead. I prostrated 13
9:8+ myself and cried aloud, 'Ah, Lord Yahweh, are you going to wipe out all that
is left of Israel?'

Jr 24 **The new covenant promised to the exiles**

The word of Yahweh was then addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, 14 15
your brothers, your kinsmen, the whole House of Israel, these are told by the
citizens of Jerusalem, "You have been sent away from Yahweh; it is to us that the
33:24 land was given as our domain".[f] •Say therefore, "The Lord Yahweh says this: 16

Yes, I have sent them far away among the nations and I have dispersed them 36:19
to foreign countries; and for a while I have been a sanctuary for them in the
17 country to which they have gone". •Then say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: 36:24-25 Dt 30:3-5
I will gather you together from the peoples, I will bring you all back from the
countries where you have been scattered and I will give you the land of Israel.
18 They will come and will purge it of all the horrors and the filthy practices •I will 39:29; 44:7 Dt 30:6-8
19 give them a single heart[g] and I will put a new spirit in them;[h] •I will remove Jr 4:4+ Zc 7:12
20 the heart of stone from their bodies and give them a heart of flesh instead, •so
that they will keep my laws and respect my observances and put them into 36:27 Jr 31:31+
21 practice. Then they shall be my people and I will be their God. •But those Jr 30:22
whose[i] hearts are set on their idols and their filthy practices I will call to account
for their conduct—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

The glory of Yahweh leaves Jerusalem

1:28+ Ex 24:16+
22 The cherubs then spread their wings and the wheels began to move with them, Lm 1:6
23 while the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them. •And the glory of
Yahweh rose to leave the city and paused on the mountain to the east of the 43:3 Ps 85:9 Mt 23:38
city.
24 The spirit lifted me up in vision, in the spirit of God, and took me to 3:12
25 the Chaldaeans, away to the exiles, and so the vision I had seen faded; •and
then I told the exiles[j] everything that Yahweh had shown me.

The mime of the emigrant[a]

Jr 18:1+
1 2 12 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, you 2:5-7 Jr 5:21
are living with that set of rebels who have eyes and never see, ears Mk 8:18
3 and never hear, for they are a set of rebels. •You, son of man, pack an
exile's bundle and emigrate by daylight when they can see you, emigrate from
where you are to somewhere else while they watch. Perhaps they will admit
4 then that they are a set of rebels. •You will pack your baggage like an exile's
bundle, by daylight, for them to see, and leave like an exile in the evening, making
5 sure that they are looking. •As they watch, make a hole in the wall, and go
6 out through it.[b] •As they watch, you will shoulder your pack and go out into Jr 18:1+
the dark; you will cover your face so that you cannot see the country, since Is 8:18+
I have made you a symbol for the House of Israel.'
7 I did as I had been told. I packed my baggage like an exile's bundle,
by daylight; and in the evening I made a hole through the wall with my hand.
I went out[c] into the dark and shouldered my pack as they watched.
8 9 The next morning the word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son
of man, did not the House of Israel, did not that set of rebels, ask you what
10 you were doing? •Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this:[d] This oracle is directed

d. Meaning uncertain, possibly 'chariot' or 'whirlwind'.
e. Hebr. adds 'from beside them'.
f. Which overlooks the Kedron valley to the Mount of Olives, cf. 11:23.
g. Hebr. adds two unintelligible words.

11 a. This passage, 11:1-21, should be attached to ch. 8 (prior to the destruction of the city) unless it is a doublet, cf. 8:7f. The vision of the departure of Yahweh, cf. 10:18-22, should have its normal continuation in 11:22-23.
b. 'Yahweh' is absent from Hebr.
c. 'Shall we (lit. 'they') not soon' Greek.
d. A proverb. The citizens of Jerusalem believe themselves safe, protected by their ramparts as the pot stands between the meat in it and the fire. Ezekiel turns the proverb: the city is indeed a pot—full of men foully murdered. Yahweh will drive out those who think to shelter there. Later the prophet offers, and mimes, another interpretation of the proverb, 24:1-14.
e. 'I mean to drive' Greek; 'you will be driven' Text. Rec.
f. The citizens of Jerusalem, spared from deportation, considered themselves the chosen ones of the nation. Jeremiah had already attacked this assumption, prophesying, Jr 24, that Yahweh would ultimately prefer the exiles. Ezekiel adds that possession of the Temple is of little importance since Yahweh can be a 'sanctuary' for his people in a foreign country, cf.1:3+.
g. 'a single heart', or perhaps 'another heart' (Greek); or 'a new heart' (Syr.). Cf. Jr 4:4+.
h. 'in them' versions.
i. 'those whose' corr.
j. Vv. 24-25 presuppose that Ezekiel is living in Babylonia. If the hypothesis of a ministry in Jerusalem is to be maintained, these verses must be regarded as additions or adaptations.

12 a. This new symbolic action, mimed in dumb-show, foretells the approaching deportation of the population of Jerusalem.
b. 'go out' versions.
c. 'I went out' versions.
d. Hebr. inserts 'the prince'.

against Jerusalem and the whole House of Israel wherever they are living".
Say, "I am a symbol for you; the thing I have done will be done to them; they 11
will go into exile, into banishment". •Their ruler will shoulder his pack in the 12
dark and go out through the wall; a hole will be made to let him out; he will
=17:20 Hab 1:14 cover his face rather than see the country,[e] •I shall throw my net over him and 13
catch him in my mesh; I shall take him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldaeans,
though he will not see it; and there he will die. •And all those who form his 14
Lv 26:33 court, his guards and all his troops, I shall scatter to all the winds and unsheathe
Tb 14:4 the sword behind them. •They will learn that I am Yahweh, when I scatter 15
them throughout the nations and disperse them in foreign countries. •However, 16
Is 4:3+ I intend to leave some of them unscathed by sword, famine and plague, to
describe all their filthy practices to the peoples among whom they will go, so
Ps 46:10 that these too may learn that I am Yahweh.'

4:16 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, you are 17 18
to tremble as you eat your bread and to behave restlessly and anxiously as you
drink your water,[f] •and you are to say to the people of the country, "The 19
Lord Yahweh says this to the citizens of Jerusalem scattered throughout
Israel: They are going to eat their bread in anxiety, and drink their water in
fear, until the country and those who live in it are free[g] of the violence of all its
inhabitants. •The inhabited towns are going to be destroyed and the country 20
will be reduced to desert; and so you will learn that I am Yahweh." '

Popular proverbs

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, what 21 22
2 P 3:3-4 do you mean by this proverb common throughout the land of Israel: Days go
by and visions fade?[h]

'Very well, tell them, "The Lord Yahweh says this: I will put an end to 23
this proverb; it shall never be heard in Israel again". Instead, tell them:

"The day is coming when every vision will come true." •From now on there 24
will be no empty vision, no deceitful prophecy in the House of Israel, •since 25
Nb 11:23 it is I, Yahweh, who will speak. What I say is said and will soon come true;
since what I pronounce I will fulfil in your own lifetime, you set of rebels—it
is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.'

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, the 26 27
House of Israel is saying, "The vision that this man sees concerns the distant
future; he is prophesying for times far ahead". •Very well, tell them, "The Lord 28
✗ Rv 10:6 Yahweh says this: There will be no further delay in the fulfilling of any of my
Jr 1:11-12 words. What I say is said and will come true—it is the Lord Yahweh
who speaks." '

Jr 14:13-16; 23:9-40; 27:9-10, 16-18; 28 **Against the false prophets**

13 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, 1 2
prophesy against the prophets of Israel; prophesy,[a] and say to those who
make up prophecies out of their own heads, "Hear the word of Yahweh. •The 3
Lord Yahweh says this: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own
spirit, without seeing anything! •Like jackals in a ruin, so are your prophets, 4
Israel.

You have never ventured into the breach; you have never bothered to 5
fortify the House of Israel, to hold fast in battle on the day of Yahweh. •They 6
Am 5:18+ have empty visions and give lying prophecies and say: It is Yahweh who speaks,
although Yahweh has not sent them; and they are still waiting for their words
to come true. •Can you deny that you have only empty visions, that you utter 7
only lying prophecies when you say: It is Yahweh who speaks, when I myself
have not spoken?

Very well, the Lord Yahweh says this: Because of your empty words and 8
lying visions, I have now set myself against you—it is the Lord Yahweh who

9 speaks. •I am going to stretch my hand over the prophets who have empty visions
and give lying predictions; they will not be admitted to the council of my people,
their names will not be entered in the Book of the House of Israel, they will not
10 set foot on the soil of Israel; and you will learn that I am the Lord Yahweh, •since Ps 87:6
they have misled my people by saying: Peace![b] when there is no peace. Instead 22:28 Jr 6:14+
11 of my people rebuilding the wall, these men come and slap on plaster.[c] •Tell Lm 2:14 Mt 7:27
12 these plasterers:[d] It will rain hard, it will hail,[e] it will blow a gale, •and down Ac 23:3
will come the wall. Will not people ask: Where is the plaster you slapped on it?
13 Well then, the Lord Yahweh says this: I am going to unleash a stormy wind in Ps 59:13
14 my anger, torrential rain in my wrath, hailstones in my destructive fury. •I mean
to shatter the wall you slapped with plaster, to throw it down and lay its foundations bare. It will fall and you will perish under it; and so you will learn that I am Yahweh.
15 When I have exhausted my anger against the wall and those who plastered it, I
shall say to you: The wall is gone, and so are those who slapped it over with
16 plaster, •these prophets of Israel who prophesy about Jerusalem and have visions
of peace for her when there is no peace—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks."

The false prophetesses

17 'And you, son of man, turn to the daughters of your people who make up
18 prophecies out of their own heads; prophesy against them.[f] •Say, "The Lord
Yahweh says this: Trouble is coming to the women who sew frills round wrists,[g]
who make veils for people of all sizes, the better to ensnare lives! You ensnare
19 the lives of the men of my people while looking after your own. •You dishonour 1 S 9:7+
me in front of my people for a few handfuls of barley, a few bits of bread, killing
those who ought not to die and sparing those who ought not to live, lying to
my people who love to listen to lies.
20 Well then, the Lord Yahweh says this. We shall see about these frills you
use for snaring lives like birds. I intend to rip them off your arms, and free those
21 lives you try to snare like birds.[h] •I am going to rip your veils to pieces and
rescue my people from you; they will no longer be fair game for you. And so
you will learn that I am Yahweh.
22 Since you distress with lies the heart[i] of the upright man whom I would
never distress, and since you encourage the wicked man not to give up his wicked
23 ways and find life again, •very well, you will have no more empty visions, and
you will not make any more predictions. I mean to rescue my people from you,
and then you will learn that I am Yahweh." '

Against idolatry

1 2 3 14 When some elders of Israel had come to my house and sat down with me, 8:1; 20:1-4
the word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, these
people have enshrined their own idols in their hearts, they cling to the cause
4 of their sins; am I going to let myself be consulted by them? •Well then, speak
to them; tell them this, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Every member of the
House of Israel who enshrines his own idols in his heart, or who, clinging to the

e. Possibly foretelling two incidents at once: the attempted escape of Zedekiah and his army through a breach in the walls, 2 K 25:4f, and the putting out of his eyes before he was led captive to Babylon, 2 K 25:7.

f. Perhaps a command to perform another symbolic action.

g. The translation follows the Greek.

h. People had evidently refused to believe Ezekiel's prophecies of disaster; he now turns their words against them.

13 a. 'prophesy' Greek; 'who prophesy' Hebr.

b. The word 'peace' means not merely the absence of danger from abroad but prosperity and harmony within the community, cf. Jr 6:14+.

c. The illustration is presumably taken from real life: in about 590 B.C., people were preoccupied with repairing the defences of Jerusalem. Ezekiel draws a moral lesson; where the wall should have been rebuilt, the cracks have merely been plastered over; an image of the deceptive optimism of the false prophets.

d. Hebr. adds 'and it will fall'.

e. 'It will' Greek. After 'hail' Hebr. adds 'I shall send'.

f. Following the complaints against spurious prophets come obscure allusions to what appear to be magical or idolatrous practices.

g. Lit. 'every wrist' versions.

h. 'like (birds)' corr.

i. 'you distress the heart' versions.

cause of his sins, comes looking for the prophet, will get his answer from me, Yahweh, on account of his hundreds of idols"; •and in this way I hope to touch 5
the heart of the House of Israel who have deserted me in favour of a pack of idols.

'Say therefore to the House of Israel, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Come 6
back, renounce your idols and give up all your filthy practices; •for if any member 7
of the House of Israel—or even any foreigner living in Israel[a]—deserts me to enshrine his own idols in his heart, and, clinging to the cause of his sins, then comes looking for the prophet to consult me, he will get his answer from me, Yahweh.[b] •I will turn against this man; I will make him an example and a 8
byword; I will cut him off from my people; and you will learn that I am Yahweh.
If the prophet is led astray and speaks, it is I, Yahweh, who have led that 9
prophet astray;[c] I will stretch out my hand against him and will wipe him out from my people Israel. •They will bear the weight of their faults, and the 10
fault of the prophet will be as grave as the fault of the man who consults him.
So the House of Israel will not desert me any more; it will not defile itself with 11
any more of these sins. They shall be my people, and I will be their God—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

18:33:10-20 **Individual responsibility**[d]

Jr 5:1 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, if a 12 13
Rv 6:1 country were to sin against me by faithlessness, and if I were to stretch out my hand against it and destroy its stock of bread and send famine to it to kill its
28:3 men and beasts, •and if in that country there were these three men, Noah, Danel 14
Gn 18:22-33 Jb 1:1 and Job,[e] these men would have their lives spared because of their integrity
Lv 26:22 —it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. •Were I to unleash wild animals on that 15
country to rob it of its children and reduce it to such a desert that no one would dare to cross it because of the animals, •and if these three men were in that 16
country, then, as I live—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—they would not be able to save either son or daughter; they alone would be saved, and the country would become a desert. •If I were to bring the sword into that country and 17
say: Let the sword pass through the country; I will strike down men and beasts with it, •and if these three men were in that country, then, as I live—it 18
is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—they would not be able to save either son or daughter; they alone would be saved. •If I were to send the plague into that 19
country and satisfy my anger with them by bloodshed, cutting off men and beasts, if Noah and Danel and Job were in the country, as I live—it is the Lord Yahweh 20
who speaks—they would not be able to save either son or daughter, though they would save their own lives because of their integrity.

Rv 6:8 'The Lord Yahweh says this: Now, if I do send my four dreadful scourges 21
against Jerusalem—sword, famine, wild animals and plague—to cut off its men and beasts, •and if any survivors are left there to contrive the escape of[f] 22
son and daughter, they will come for you to see their conduct and actions and so be comforted in spite of the scourges I shall have brought on Jerusalem, in spite of everything I shall have brought on her. •They will comfort you, when 23
you see their conduct and actions,[g] and so you will learn that I have not done all I have done against her for nothing—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.'

Is 5:1+ **A parable of the vine**

Jn 15:6 15 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows: 1

'Son of man, how is the wood of the vine better 2
than wood from the branch of a forest tree?
Do people use its wood to carve it into something? 3
Do they make a peg out of it, and hang things on it?
There it is, thrown on the fire for fuel. 4
The fire burns off both ends;
the middle is charred; is it fit for carving now?[a]

5 While it was intact, it was impossible to carve;
burned and charred, will it be now fit for carving?
6 Therefore, the Lord Yahweh says this:
As the wood of the vine among the forest trees,
which I have thrown on the fire for fuel,
so have I treated the citizens of Jerusalem.
7 I have turned my face against them.
They have escaped the fire, but the fire will devour them yet.
And you will learn that I am Yahweh, when I turn my face against them.
8 I mean to reduce the country to desert, to punish their faithlessness to me —it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.'

An allegorical history of Israel[a]

23 Is 1:21 Jr 2:2; 3:6f Ho 1:3 Mt 22:2-14; 25:1-13 Jn 3:29 Ep 5:25-33 Rv 17 *16:45*

1 2 3 16 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her filthy crimes. •Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: By origin and birth you belong to the land of Canaan. Your father 4 was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. •At birth, the very day you were born, there was no one to cut your navel-string, or wash you in cleansing water, 5 or rub you with salt, or wrap you in napkins. •No one leaned kindly over you to do anything like that for you. You were exposed in the open fields; you were as unloved as that on the day you were born.

6 7 I saw you struggling in your blood as I was passing, and I said to you as you lay in your blood:[b] Live, •and grow like the grass of the fields. You developed, you grew, you reached marriageable age.[c] Your breasts and your hair both grew, 8 but you were quite naked. •Then I saw you as I was passing. Your time had come, Ho 2:5

14 a. In the legislation of Ezk, the foreigner settling in Israel, cf. Ex 12:48+, has the same legal status as an Israelite, Ezk 47:22.

b. Yahweh refuses to give an answer through his prophet when the apostate Israelites consult him. He will answer them himself by punishing them.

c. I.e. if the prophet allows himself to be led astray, I myself shall have permitted him to be led astray, because I have decided to destroy him.

d. With ch. 18 and 33:10-20, this text marks a decisive advance in the development of moral teaching in the O.T. Early texts were mainly concerned with the individual as an integral part of family, tribe and, later, nation. Not only Noah but his relations too are saved, Gn 6:18; Abraham is called by God but his whole clan accompanies him to Canaan, Gn 12. This outlook also conditioned concepts of responsibility and of retribution. When Abraham intercedes for Sodom, Gn 18: 22-23, he is asking not that the good be isolated and spared but that, by virtue of a solidarity that can work both ways, the good should earn immunity for the wicked. It had been taken for granted that a city or a nation would be punished as one entity, virtuous and sinner alike, and also that the fate of the children would correspond to the behaviour of their fathers, Ex 20:5; Dt 5:9, cf. Jr 31:29=Ezk 18:2. But the prophets were later to lay stress on the individual and thus correct the emphasis of the earlier teaching. Jeremiah may see as something still to come the break with this solidarity in sin and punishment between the generations, Jr 31:29-30, but the Deuteronomist has already protested against the punishment of the children for the sins of the fathers, Dt 24:16, cf. 2 K 14:6. Ezekiel, convinced by the vision of ch. 8-10 that the imminent punishment of Jerusalem is due to her present sins, becomes the champion and exponent of the principle of individual responsibility. A man's salvation or ruin does not depend on ancestor or associates; not even on his own past life. Yahweh is concerned only with his present dispositions. These radical assertions of individualism will in their turn be qualified by the principle of solidarity as expressed in the fourth song of the servant of Yahweh, Is 52:13–53:12, cf. Is 42:1+. In any case, these assertions, if strictly and exclusively applied to human life in this world, are contradicted by everyday experience (cf. Job), and this contradiction calls for further doctrinal development, effected by the revelation of sanctions beyond the grave (cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books). In the end, the N.T. (and especially St Paul) resolves the tension between the individualism of Ezekiel and the principle of collective solidarity by showing how Christian hope is based on faith in the risen Christ in union with whom mankind, mankind created and saved by God, is united in redemption as it was previously in sin.

e. Israelite tradition was evidently familiar with the Daniel celebrated in the Ras-Shamra texts for his wisdom and virtue.

f. 'contrive the escape of' versions.

g. The wicked deeds which will convince the exiles that Yahweh has been fully justified in inflicting such treatment on Jerusalem.

15 a. If the comparison is to be urged, Israel has been deprived of the territory of Samaria in 720 and of Judah in 597. Jerusalem itself (the 'middle') is no longer 'intact' since it has already suffered siege and deportation.

16 a. Israel, faithless wife of Yahweh, 'whore' of alien gods: a familiar image in prophetic literature from Ho onwards, cf. Ho 1:2+. Ezekiel develops it in a long allegory (resumed in another form in ch. 23) surveying the whole history of Israel (ch. 20, cf. 22, is a direct account of the same events). As in Ho, this allegory ends, vv. 60-63, with a free pardon from the husband who establishes a new covenant, thus prefiguring the marriage of God with his people in messianic days, a theme which is taken up in the N.T.

b. Hebr. repeats 'And I said to you: Live in your blood'. The child remains polluted with blood and grows like a wild plant until the covenant of Sinai, represented here as a wedding, vv. 8f.

c. 'grow like' following Syr.; Hebr. inserts 'I shall make you'. 'of marriageable age' corr.; 'with the finest jewels' Hebr.

Dt 23:1+ the time for love. I spread part of my cloak over you and covered your nakedness;
Ex 19:1+ I bound myself by oath, I made a covenant with you—it is the Lord Yahweh
who speaks—and you became mine. •I bathed you in water, I washed the blood 9
Ps 45:14-15 off you, I anointed you with oil. •I gave you embroidered dresses, fine leather 10
shoes, a linen headband and a cloak of silk. •I loaded you with jewels, gave you 11
bracelets for your wrists and a necklace for your throat. •I gave you nose-ring 12
1 Th 2:19 and earrings; I put a beautiful diadem on your head. •You were loaded with 13
gold and silver, and dressed in fine linen and embroidered silks. Your food was
Dt 32:13 the finest flour, honey and oil. You grew more and more beautiful; and you rose to
be queen. •The fame of your beauty spread through the nations, since it was 14
perfect, because I had clothed you with my own splendour—it is the Lord
Yahweh who speaks.

Dt 31:16; 32:15 Jdt 8:19 Is 57:8 You have become infatuated with your own beauty; you have used your 15
fame to make yourself a prostitute; you have offered your services to all
comers...[d] •You have taken your clothes to brighten your high places[e] and there 16
Ex 32:2 Jr 2:20 Ho 2:10 you have played the whore...[f] •You have taken my presents of gold and silver 17
jewellery and made yourself human images to use in your whorings. •You have 18
taken your embroidered clothes and put them on the images, and the oil and
incense which are rightly mine you have offered to them. •The bread I gave 19
you, the finest flour, oil and honey with which I used to feed you, you have
now offered to them as an appeasing fragrance.

You have even—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—•taken the sons and 20
Lv 18:21+ daughters you bore me and sacrificed them as food to the images. Was it not
enough for you just to be a whore? •You have slaughtered my children and handed 21
them over as a burnt offering to them, •and in all your filthy practices and 22
your whorings you have never remembered your youth or the time when you
were quite naked and struggling in your own blood.

Is 1:21 To crown your wickedness—trouble for you, it is the Lord Yahweh who 23
Dt 12:2+ speaks—•you have built yourself a mound and made a high place at every cross- 24
roads. •At the beginning of every road you have built a high place to defile your 25
beauty there and to give your body to every comer; you have piled whoring on
Is 30:31 whoring. •You have lain down for those big-membered neighbours, the Egyptians; 26
you have piled whoring on whoring to provoke me, •and now I have raised my 27
hand against you. I have rationed your food, I have handed you over to the
mercy of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines,[g] who are sick of your
2 K 21:1-18 2 Ch 33:1-10 filthy ways. •Still unsatisfied, you have prostituted yourself to the Assyrians; you 28
have played the whore and not been satisfied even then.[h] •You have piled whor- 29
17:4 ing on whoring with Canaanite and Chaldaean, and even then not been satisfied.

How easily led you were[i]—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—to behave 30
no better than a bold-faced whore! •When you built yourself a mound at the 31
beginning of every road and made a high place at every crossroads, you were
not, like the whore, out for money:[j] •an adulteress welcomes strangers instead 32
Ho 8:9+ of her husband; •a prostitute is paid. But you, in your whoring, have given your 33
presents away to all your lovers; you have offered them gifts to attract them
from everywhere. •In your whoring you have done the exact opposite from 34
other women; no one was running after you, so you went and paid them; they
did not pay you since your behaviour was so outrageous.

Well then, whore, hear the word of Yahweh. •The Lord Yahweh says this: 35 36
For having undressed and let yourself be seen naked while whoring with your
↗ Rv 17:5-6 lovers and with your filthy idols, and for giving them your children's blood[k]—
for all this, I am going to band together all the lovers who have pleasured you, 37
both those you liked and those you disliked, I am going to band them together
Jr 4:30 Lm 1:8 Ho 2:12 against you from all around; I will strip you in front of them, and let them see you
↗ Rv 17:16 naked. •And I mean to punish you like women who commit adultery and murder; 38
I intend to hand you over to fury[l] and jealousy; I will hand you over to them; they 39
will level your mound and demolish your high places; they will tear your clothes

40 off, take your jewels and leave you completely naked. •They will then whip Ho 2:5+
up the crowd against you; you will be stoned and run through with a sword;
41 they will set your houses on fire and execute justice on you with crowds of women
looking on; I will put an end to your whoring: no more paid lovers for you.
42 I will exhaust my fury against you. My jealousy will then leave you; I shall
43 be appeased and my anger will stop. •Since you have never remembered your
youth, since in all this you have done nothing but provoke me, I in my turn
intend to bring your conduct down on your own head—it is the Lord Yahweh
who speaks. Have you not been disgusting with all your filthy practices?[m]
44 Now all the proverb-makers will make up a proverb about you: Like mother,
45 like daughter. •Yes; you are a true daughter of your mother, who hated her
husband and her children; a true sister of your sisters,[n] who hated their husbands
and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. 16:3
46 Your elder sister is Samaria, who lives on your left with her daughters. Your 21:1
47 younger sister is Sodom, who lives on your right[o] with her daughters. •You
have not failed to copy their behaviour;[p] throughout your career you have
48 shown yourself more corrupt than they were. •As I live—it is the Lord Yahweh
who speaks—your sister Sodom and her daughters have not been as bad as you
49 and your daughters. •The crime of your sister Sodom was pride, gluttony, arro-
gance, complacency; such were the sins of Sodom and her daughters. They never
50 helped the poor and needy; •they were proud and engaged in filthy practices in
51 front of me; that is why I have swept them away as you have seen.[q] •And yet Gn 19
Samaria never committed half the crimes that you have.

You have done far filthier things than they did. By your filthy practices
52 you have made your sisters seem almost innocent, •and now you have
to bear the shame for all those faults of which you have cleared your sisters;
since the grossness of the sins for which you bear the guilt is more horrible
than theirs, they now appear more virtuous than you are. Be ashamed, then;
bear the shame of having put your sisters in the right.[r]
53 I will restore them. I will restore Sodom and her daughters. I will restore
Samaria and her daughters; and, after that, I will restore you along with them,
54 that you may bear your shame and be ashamed of all you have done, and so
55 console them. •Your sister Sodom and her daughters will be restored to what
they were. Samaria and her daughters will be restored to what they were. You
56 and your daughters will be restored to what you were. •Did you not[s] gloat
57 over your sister Sodom when you were still in your finery, •before you were
stripped naked? Now the daughters of Edom and all the women around are jeering
at you,[t] and the daughters of the Philistines are treating you like something
58 beneath them, and so are all your neighbours. •You have brought it on yourself
by your brazenness and filth—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.
59 For the Lord Yahweh says this: I will treat you as you deserve, you who 20:39
60 have despised your oath even to the extent of breaking a covenant, •but I will 36:22
remember the covenant that I made with you when you were a girl, and I will Lv 26:41
61 conclude a covenant with you that shall last for ever. •And you for your part Jr 31:3,31-34
will remember your past behaviour and be covered with shame when I take[u] 36:31 Ho 2:16-25

16 d. Hebr. adds two unintelligible words absent from the versions.
e. Possibly this means 'tents on the high places'.
f. Four untranslatable words, lit. 'they do not come and it will not be so'.
g. The Philistine threat was renewed long after the judges and Saul, in the days of Ahaz, 2 Ch 28:18, and even of Hezekiah.
h. Especially in the reign of Manasseh when idolatry was encouraged by foreign alliances.
i. Text uncertain.
j. 'built' and 'out for': versions.
k. Lit. 'because of your children's blood' versions.
l. 'I intend to hand you over to fury' corr.
m. 'on your own head' versions. 'Have you not' corr.
n. 'of your sisters' corr.; 'of your sister' Hebr.
o. The 'left' and 'right' as one faces east, i.e. north and south.
p. Translation conj.
q. 'you have seen' corr.; 'I have seen' Hebr.
r. 'your sisters' (twice) versions.
s. 'Did you not' corr.; 'You did not' Heb .
t. 'you...naked' lit. 'your nakedness was uncovered' corr., cf. v. 37; 'your wickedness' Hebr. 'Now... you' lit. 'And (or 'As') now you are the scorn of the daughters...' corr. 'Edom' corr.; 'Aram' Hebr.
u. 'I take' corr.; 'you take' Hebr.

your elder and younger sisters and make them your daughters, although this was not included in this covenant. •I am going to renew my covenant with you;[v] 62
and you will learn that I am Yahweh, •and so remember and be covered with 63
shame, and in your confusion be reduced to silence, when I have pardoned you
for all that you have done—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

The allegory of the eagle

Jg 14:12 17 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, ask 1 2
them a riddle; propound a parable to the House of Israel. •Say, "The 3
Lord Yahweh says this:

Is 5:1 A large eagle,[a] with huge wings
and a wide span,
covered with speckled feathers,
Jr 22:6 came to Lebanon.
He took hold of the top of the cedar,
plucked off the top branch, 4
16:29 carried it off to the land of merchants,
and set it down in a city of shopkeepers.
Then he carried off a seedling vine, 5
and planted it in fertile soil;
by the side of a wide stream,
as a border he set it.[b]
19:10 The seedling grew, and turned into a vine, 6
not tall but well spread out;
its branches grew up towards the eagle,
its roots grew down.
It turned into a vine;
it sent out stems and put out sprays.
There was another large eagle,[c] 7
with huge wings and thickly feathered.
And now the vine twisted its roots toward him,
stretched its branches towards him
away from the bed where it was planted
for him to water them.
It was in a fertile field, by the side of a wide stream, 8
that the vine had been planted,
to grow shoots, bear fruit
and become a noble vine."
Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: 9
Will this vine thrive?[d]
Will not the eagle break its roots,
and snap up the fruit,
so that all the new leaves will wither when they shoot?
It will take no effort and no strong nation
to pull it up by the roots.
It is planted there; will it thrive? 10
Will it not shrivel when the east wind blows?
It will wither on the soil where it was growing." '

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows: 11
2 K 24:10-17 'Say to that set of rebels, "Do you not know what this means?" Say this, 12
"Listen; the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem; he carried away the king and the
princes, and took them to where he lives in Babylon. •He took a member of the 13
royal family and made a treaty with him, forcing him to swear loyalty, after having
already deported the chief men of the land, •so that the kingdom would remain 14
modest and without ambition and so maintain his treaty faithfully. •But the 15

prince rebelled and sent envoys to Egypt, asking for horses and a large number of troops. Is he going to thrive? Will a man who has done this go unpunished? 2 K 24:20
16 Can he break a treaty and go unpunished? •As I live, I swear—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks: In Babylon, in the country of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he has ignored, whose treaty he has broken, there
17 will he die. •Despite the pharaoh's great army and hordes of men, he will not be able to save him[e] by fighting, however many earthworks are raised, however
18 many trenches dug to the loss of many lives. •He has ignored the oath and broken the treaty by which he was bound. He has done all this and shall not go unpunished.
19 "And so, the Lord Yahweh says this: As I live, I swear: my oath which he has ignored, my treaty which he has broken, I will make them both recoil
20 on his own head. •I mean to throw my net over him and catch him in my mesh; =12:13 Hab 1:14
I mean to take him to Babylon and punish him there for breaking his oath to me.
21 The pick[f] of his army will fall by the sword, and the survivors be scattered to all the winds. And so you will learn that I, Yahweh, have spoken.
22 The Lord Yahweh says this:[g]

From the top of the cedar,[h]
from the highest branch I will take a shoot
and plant it myself on a very high mountain.
23 I will plant it on the high mountain of Israel.
It will sprout branches and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.
Every kind of bird will live beneath it,
every winged creature rest in the shade of its branches. ↗Mt 13:32 ↗Lk 13:19
24 And every tree of the field will learn that I, Yahweh, am the one
who stunts tall trees and makes the low ones grow, Ps 113:7-9 Lk 1:51-53
who withers green trees and makes the withered green.
I, Yahweh, have spoken, and I will do it." '

Individual responsibility 14:12+ 33:10-22

1 2 18 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •"Why do you keep repeating this proverb in the land of Israel:

The fathers have eaten unripe grapes; ||Jr 31:29+
and the children's teeth are set on edge? Lm 5:7

3 'As I live—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—there will no longer be any
4 reason to repeat this proverb in Israel. •See now: all life belongs to me; the father's life and the son's life, both alike belong to me. The man who has sinned, =18:20 Dt 24:16
he is the one who shall die.
5 6 'The upright man[a] is law-abiding and honest; •he does not eat on the 22:6 Ps 15:2-5; 24:36
mountains[b] or raise his eyes to the idols of the House of Israel, does not seduce
7 his neighbour's wife or sleep with a woman during her periods. •He oppresses no one, returns pledges, never steals, gives his own bread to the hungry, his clothes Jb 22:6 Mt 25:35f
8 to the naked. •He never charges usury on loans, takes no interest, abstains from

v. Ezekiel insists that these divine gifts are bestowed freely: Israel's repentance (which in effect takes place after the establishing of the new covenant) does not earn them; with this emphasis on God's disinterested benefits Ezekiel anticipates the revelation of the N.T., cf. 1 Jn 4:10, etc.

17 a. Nebuchadnezzar who in 597, having deported Jehoiachin, put Zedekiah on the throne, cf. vv. 12f.

b. 'cedar' corr.; 'of the land' Hebr. Before 'by the side of' Hebr. inserts 'take', absent from Greek.

c. 'another large eagle' corr. following versions; 'one large eagle' Hebr. This eagle is Egypt, on whose help Zedekiah was always disposed to rely for support against Babylon, cf. v. 15.

d. 'Will (this vine) thrive?' some MSS; '(It) will thrive' Text. Rec.

e. 'save' corr.; 'make' Hebr.

f. 'The pick' corr.

g. After the explanatory prose section the poem is resumed and now foretells the future restoration, described as a messianic age.

h. Hebr. adds 'and I will give', absent from versions.

18 a. The following catalogue recalls the confessions or 'protestations' which presumably accompanied certain liturgical ceremonies.

b. Eating (the sacred meal) on 'high places' was a practice in idolatrous cults.

evil, gives honest judgement between man and man, •keeps my laws and sincerely 9
respects my observances—such a man is truly upright. It is Yahweh who speaks.
'But if anyone has a son prone to violence and bloodshed, who commits 10
one[c] of these misdeeds—•even though the father never has—a son who dares 11
to eat on the mountains and to seduce his neighbour's wife, •who oppresses the 12
poor and needy, steals, fails to return pledges, raises his eyes to idols, engages in
filthy practices, •charges usury on loans and takes interest, then this son shall 13
certainly not live;[d] having committed all these appalling crimes he will have to
die, and his blood be on his own head.
'But if he in turn has a son who, in spite of seeing all the sins that his father 14
has committed, does not imitate him, •does not eat on the mountains or raise 15
his eyes to the idols of the House of Israel, does not seduce his neighbour's
wife, •oppresses no one, takes no pledges, never steals, gives his own bread 16
to the hungry, clothes to the naked, •abstains from evil,[e] does not charge usury 17
or take interest, respects my observances and keeps my laws, he will not die
for his father's sins, this son shall certainly live. •Because the father was violent, 18
robbed others and never did good among my people,[f] be sure he shall die for
his sins. •But you object, "Why does the son not suffer for the sins of his father?" 19
The son, however, has been law-abiding and honest, has kept all my laws and
=18:4 Dt 24:16 Jn 8:21 followed them, and so he shall certainly live. •The man who has sinned is the 20
one who must die; a son is not to suffer for the sins of his father, nor a father
for the sins of his son. To the upright man his integrity will be credited, to the
wicked his wickedness.
Jr 18:8 'But if the wicked man renounces all the sins he has committed, respects my 21
laws and is law-abiding and honest, he will certainly live; he will not die.[g] •All 22
=33:16 the sins he committed will be forgotten from then on; he shall live because of the
18:31; 33:11 Ws 11:26 Ho 11:9 Lk 15:7,10, 32 Jn 8:11 Rm 11:32 2P 3:9 integrity he has practised. •What! Am I likely to take pleasure in the death of 23
a wicked man—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—and not prefer to see him
renounce his wickedness and live?
'But if the upright man renounces his integrity, commits sin, copies the 24
wicked man and practises every kind of filth, is he to live? All the integrity
3:20; 33: 12-13 he has practised shall be forgotten from then on; but this is because he himself
has broken faith and committed sin, and for this he shall die. •But you object, 25
"What the Lord does is unjust". Listen, you House of Israel: is what I do unjust?
Is it not what you do that is unjust? •When the upright man renounces his integrity 26
to commit sin and dies because of this, he dies because of the evil that he himself
has committed. •When the sinner renounces sin to become law-abiding and 27
honest, he deserves to live. •He has chosen to renounce all his previous sins; 28
=33:17 he shall certainly live; he shall not die. •And yet the House of Israel objects, 29
"What the Lord does is unjust". Is what I do unjust, you House of Israel? Is it
=33:20 Mt 16:27 not what you do that is unjust? •House of Israel, in future I mean to judge 30
each of you by what he does—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. Repent,
renounce all your sins, avoid all occasions of sin! •Shake off all the sins you have 31
11:19+ Jr 4:4+ committed against me, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!
33:11; 18:23 Ws 1:13 *Ho 11:9* Mt 3:2+ Jn 8:11 Why are you so anxious to die, House of Israel? •I take no pleasure in the death 32
of anyone—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. Repent and live!

A lamentation over the rulers of Israel[a]

19 'As for you, raise a dirge for the princes of Israel. •Say: 1/2

"What was your mother? A lioness
surrounded by lions;
lying among the cubs
she nursed her whelps.[b]
She reared one of her whelps 3
and it grew into a young lion;

he learnt to tear his prey;
he became a man-eater.
4 The nations combined[c] against him;
he was caught in their pit;
they dragged him off with hooks — Jb 40:26; 2 K 23:33-34
to the land of Egypt.[d]
5 Her expectation thwarted,
her hope dashed,
she took another of her whelps
and made a young lion of him.
6 He grew to prowl with other lions,
and grew into a young lion;
he learned to tear his prey;
he became a man-eater.
7 He stormed their palaces,[e]
and sacked their cities;
the country and its inhabitants were alarmed
by the sound of his roars.
8 The nations marched out against him
from the surrounding provinces;
they spread their net for him;
he was caught in their pit.
9 They caged him with hooks — Jb 40:26; 2 Ch 33:11
(they took him to the king of Babylon);
they took him into a fortress, — 2 K 24:8-17
so that his voice could never again be heard
on the mountains of Israel.[f]

10 "Your mother was like a vine[g] — Is 5:1+; Ezk 17:6-10
planted beside the water, — Ps 1:3
fruitful and leafy,
because the water flowed so full.
11 It put out strong branches — Rv 22:1-2
that turned to royal sceptres;
they reached up, reached so high
they touched the clouds;[h]
men admired them for their height
and their thick foliage.
12 But it was rooted up
and thrown on the ground;
the east wind dried up its fruit;
it was broken up;
its strong branch withered away;[i] — Jn 15:6
fire consumed it all.

c. 'who commits one' versions; 'a brother committing' Hebr.
d. 'shall certainly not live' corr.
e. 'from evil' following Greek; 'from the wretched' Hebr.
f. 'robbed' and 'my people' corr.
g. Not only is a man not burdened with the guilt of his forefathers, but he can escape the burden of his own past. Here the idea of individual, and not collective, obedience or disobedience is clearly stated. It is a man's present dispositions, and these only, that determine the judgement of God, cf. 14:12+ and Mt 3:2+.

19 a. This poem is a *qinah*, i.e. a lament characterised rhythmically by an inequality of the lines within each couplet. Cf. Ezk 26:17-18; 27:3-9,25-36. It is clearly allegorical, though it is difficult to find a meaning for all the details.
b. The lioness is the nation of Israel, the kings her whelps.
c. 'combined' corr.
d. King Jehoahaz, deposed and taken back to Egypt by Neco in 609.
e. 'stormed their palaces' corr. following versions.
f. Apparently Jehoiachin, taken captive to Babylon in 597. The prophet does not mention Jehoiakim (609-598) who died a natural death and therefore furnished no lesson for Zedekiah and his contemporaries.
g. 'like' Targ. A second allegory: the vine is the nation, once prosperous and now shortly to be destroyed.
h. 'clouds' corr.; 'ropes' Hebr.
i. 'was broken up' and 'withered away': Greek.

Now it has been transplanted into the desert,
the waterless country of drought;
fire has come out of its stem, 14
consumed its branches and fruit.
No more strong branch for her,
no more kingly sceptre." '

This is a dirge; it was used as such.

16:1+ **An account of Israel's infidelities**

8:1;14:1-5 20 In the seventh year, on the tenth day of the fifth month,[a] some of the 1
elders of Israel came to consult Yahweh and sat down in front of me.
The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, speak to 2/3
the elders of Israel. Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Have you come to
the consult me?" As I live, I am not going to let myself be consulted by them—it is
22:2;23:36 Lord Yahweh who speaks. •Are you ready to judge them? Are you ready to judge 4
them, son of man? Confront them with the filthy practices of their fathers.
Dt 7:6+ Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: On the day when I chose Israel, when I 5
raised my hand over the descendants of the House of Jacob, I told them then
Ex 3:14+ in the land of Egypt; I raised my hand over them[b] and said: I am Yahweh your
Dn 8:10 God. •On that day I raised my hand over them and swore to lead them out 6
of the land of Egypt and bring them into the land I had chosen for them, a land
Ex 3:8+ where milk and honey flow, and the noblest of them all. •I said: Each one of 7
23:3 Lv 19:3 you must reject those horrors that attract you; do not pollute yourselves with
the idols of Egypt; I am Yahweh, your God. •But they rebelled against me and 8
would not listen to me. Not one of them rejected those horrors that attracted
them; they did not give up the idols of Egypt. I resolved to discharge my anger
=20:14; 22: 16; 36:22 on them and exhaust my fury against them in Egypt. •But respect for my 9
Ex 32:12 Lv 26:41 1 S 12:22 own name kept me from allowing it to be profaned in the opinion of the nations
among whom they were living,[c] for I had given them my word that in the sight
of those nations I would lead my people out of the land of Egypt. •So I led 10
Lv 18:5+ them out of Egypt and into the wilderness. •I gave them my laws and taught 11
Ex 20:8+ Lv 26:2 them my observances, which must be practised by all who want to live. •I 12
Rm 7:10 even gave them my sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, so that they
Ex 31:13 might learn that I, Yahweh, am the one who sanctifies them. •The House of 13
Ex 14:11+ Lv 26:41 Israel, however, rebelled against me in the wilderness; they refused to keep my
Ps 78:17 laws, they scorned my observances, which must be practised by all who wish
to live, and they profaned my sabbaths. Then I resolved to discharge my
=20:9 anger on them in the wilderness and to destroy them. •But respect for my 14
20:22,44 Ex 32:12+ own name kept me from allowing it to be profaned in the opinion of the nations,
Nb 14:28-30 Dt 1:34-35 in whose sight I had brought them out. •However, I did raise my hand over 15
Ps 95:11; 106:26 them in the wilderness and swear that I would not lead them to the land which
Dn 8:10 I had given them, a land where milk and honey flow, the noblest of them all,
Lv 26:41 since they had scorned my observances, had refused to keep my laws and had 16
profaned my sabbaths, their hearts being so attached to idols. •In spite of this, 17
I took pity on them; I refrained from destroying them, and I did not kill them
all in the wilderness.

I said to their children in the wilderness: Do not live by your ancestors' 18
standards, do not practise the observances they practised, do not defile
yourselves with their idols. •I am Yahweh your God. Keep my laws, respect my 19
observances and practise them. •Keep my sabbaths holy; let them be a sign 20
between me and you, so that men may learn that I am Yahweh your God.
The sons, however, rebelled against me; they refused to keep my laws, they did 21
Lv 18:5 not respect or practise my observances, which must be practised by all who want
to live; they profaned my sabbaths. I then resolved to discharge my anger on
them and exhaust my fury against them in the wilderness. •But I restrained my 22

hand; respect for my own name kept me from allowing it to be profaned in the 20:14 Ps 78:38
23 opinion of the nations, under whose eyes I had brought them out. •Once again,
however, I raised my hand over them in the wilderness, swearing to scatter
24 them throughout the nations and disperse them in foreign countries, •because
they had not followed my observances but had rejected my laws and profaned Lv 26:41
my sabbaths, and because they had kept their eyes fastened on their ancestors'
25 idols. •I even gave them laws that were not good and observances by which they
26 could never live;[d] •and I polluted them with their own offerings, making them
sacrifice all their first-born; which was to punish them, so that they would learn Lv 18:21+
that I am Yahweh."

27 'For this reason, son of man, speak to the House of Israel. Say to them,
"The Lord Yahweh says this: Here is another way by which your ancestors
28 outraged me, behaving treacherously to me, •even though I led them into the land
which I had solemnly sworn to give them. There they saw all sorts of high hills,
all kinds of leafy trees, and there they performed their sacrifices and made Dt 12:2+
offerings that provoked my anger; there they laid their appeasing fragrance
29 and poured their libations. •I said to them: What is the name of the high
place where you go? And they gave, and still give it, the name of Bamah."[e]
30 Very well, say to the House of Israel, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Since you
insist on defiling yourselves by behaving like your fathers, by whoring with their
31 idols, •by offering your gifts and by burning your children as sacrifices, polluting
yourselves with your pack of idols to this very day, how can I let you consult
me, House of Israel? As I live—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—I am not
32 going to let myself be consulted by you. •And that dream ever haunting your
mind will never come true, when you say: We shall be like the nations, like foreign
33 tribes worshipping wood and stone. •As I live I swear it—it is the Lord Yahweh
who speaks—I am the one who will reign over you, with a strong hand and
34 outstretched arm, through the discharge of my anger. •With a strong hand
and outstretched arm, through the discharge of my anger, I will bring you
out from the peoples and gather you together from foreign countries among
35 which you have been scattered. •I will lead you into the Desert of the Nations[f]
36 and condemn you to your face. •As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land
37 of Egypt, so will I judge you—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. •I mean to
38 make you pass under my crook[g] and I will bring a few of you[h] back; •I will sort Is 4:3+
out the rebels who have rebelled against me. I intend to bring them out of the
country where they are staying, but they shall not enter the land of Israel, and you
39 will learn that I am Yahweh. •House of Israel, the Lord Yahweh says this: 16:59-63
Go on, all of you, worship your idols, but I swear that you will hear me in the 36:20; 43:8 Lv 17:1+
end. You will stop profaning my Holy Name with your offerings and your idols.
40 For on my holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel—it is the Lord Yahweh
who speaks—is where the whole House of Israel, resettled in the country, will
worship me. There I will welcome you, and there expect your presents, your
41 choicest gifts and all your holy offerings. •I will welcome you like[i] an appeasing
fragrance when I bring you out from among the peoples; I mean to gather you
together from the foreign countries in which you have been scattered; through Dt 32:51
42 you I interd to display my holiness for all the nations to see; •and you will learn
that I am Yahweh, when I bring you back to the soil of Israel, to the land I
43 solemnly swore to give to your fathers. •There you will remember your past

20 a. July-August, 591.
b. Like someone taking an oath.
c. The sole reason for Yahweh's forbearance with his people, despite their apostasy, is the honour of his name.
d. Primitive theology ascribed customs and practices to Yahweh for which men themselves were responsible. Here Ezekiel seems to have in mind the commandment to offer the newly born (Ex 22:28-29), often so grossly misconstrued by the Israelites, cf. Lv 18:21+.
e. Play on the word *Bamah*: 'high place' = *habbamah*: '(where) you go' = *habbaim*.
f. The expression indicates the desert of Syria.
g. As the shepherd makes the sheep file past him to count them, cf. Lv 27:32. See Ezk 34:1+.
h. 'a few' Greek.
i. 'like' corr.; 'in' Hebr.

behaviour and all the misdeeds by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the sins that you have committed. •Then you will 44
20:14 Ps 79:9 learn that I am Yahweh, when I treat you as respect for my own name requires,
Ex 32:12 and not as your wicked behaviour and corrupt actions deserve, House of Israel. It is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

Lv 26:25 **The sword of Yahweh**

21 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, turn 1,2 45.46
16:46+ to the right; utter your word towards the south, prophesy against the
Is 9:17; 10: 17-19 Jr 21:14 21:3 forest land of the Negeb. •Say to the forest of the Negeb, "Hear the word of 3 47
Ps 83:14 Lk 23:31 Yahweh. The Lord Yahweh says this: Listen; I am about to kindle a fire in you that will burn up every green tree as well as every dry one; it will be an unquenchable blaze and every face will be scorched by it from the Negeb to the North. •All mankind will see that it was I, Yahweh, who kindled it, and 4 48 it will not be put out." ' •I said, 'Lord Yahweh, they say of me, "What a story- 5 49 teller this man is!" ' •The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, 6 21:1 'Son of man, turn towards Jerusalem, curse their sanctuary[a] and prophesy 7 2 against the land of Israel. •Say to the land of Israel, Yahweh says this: Now 8 3 I set myself against you; I am about to unsheathe my sword and to kill both upright man and sinner.[b] •My sword will leave its sheath to kill upright and sinful 9 4 alike and turn against all mankind from Negeb to the North. •All mankind is 10 5 going to learn that I, Yahweh, am the one who has drawn the sword from its sheath; it will not go back again."

'Son of man, groan as though your heart were breaking. Bitterly utter your 11 6 groans where they can see you. •And if they say, "Why these groans?" reply, 12 7
7:17 Lv 26:36 "The news has made all hearts sink, has numbed hands, troubled spirits, caused knees to tremble. Now it has come, it is here; it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, prophesy. 13,14 8,9 Say, "The Lord says this".[c] Say:

Dt 32:41 Rv 6:4
"The sword, the sword
sharpened and polished!
Sharpened for slaughter, 15 10
polished to flash like lightning...[d]
polished only to be wielded, 16 11
sharpened and polished to fit the slaughterer's hand!
Yes, shout and howl, son of man; 17 12
it is meant for my people,
for all the princes of Israel, doomed like my people to the sword.
Jr 31:19 So beat your breast;[e] •this is no first attempt, 18 13
and what would happen, were there no haughty sceptre?[f]
—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.
Son of man, prophesy and clap your hands. 19 14
Let the sword be twice, three times, as cruel,
the butcher's sword,
the great sword of slaughter, menacing all around.[g]
To make hearts sink and to increase the number of victims 20 15
I have posted a sword at every gate
to flash like lightning, polished for havoc.[h]
Behind! To the right! To the left! In front![i] 21 16
And I too will clap my hands; 22 17
I will exhaust my wrath.
I, Yahweh, have spoken." '

The king of Babylon at the crossroads

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, mark 23,24 18,19

out two roads for the sword of the king of Babylon to come along, making both of them begin from the same country. Put up a signpost where they begin,
20 25 showing the way to a city, •showing the sword the way to Rabbah of the
21 26 Ammonites, and the way to Judah, to the fortress of Jerusalem. •For the king of Babylon has halted at the fork where these two roads diverge, to take the omens. He has shaken the arrows, questioned the teraphim, inspected the liver. Hab 2:18
22 27 Into his right hand the lot for Jerusalem falls; there he must set up battering- 4:2-3
rams, give the word for slaughter, raise the war cry, level battering-rams against
23 28 the gates, cast up earthworks, build entrenchments. •The citizens believe that these omens are idle, whatever oaths have been sworn. But he is evidence of
24 29 their crimes, and these will bring about their capture. •And so, thus says the Lord Yahweh. Since you give evidence of your crimes by parading your Lv 8:9
sins and flaunting your wickedness in everything you do, and since this evidence Is 40:4
25 30 is now produced against you, you will be punished. •As for you, prince of Israel, Gn 49:10
26 31 vile criminal on the last of whose crimes the day is about to dawn, •the Lord Yahweh says this: They will take away your turban and remove your crown;
27 32 everything will be changed; the low will be high and the high brought low. •To ruin, and to ruin on ruin, am I going to bring it, to such ruin as was never known before this man came who is appointed to inflict the punishment which I am determined to impose on it.

The punishment of Ammon[j] 25:1

28 33 'Son of man, prophesy and say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: To the Ammonites with their insults, say: The sword, the sword is drawn for slaughter,
29 34 polished to destroy,[k] to flash like lightning—•while you have empty visions and consult lying omens—to slaughter[l] the vile criminals on the last of whose
30 35 crimes the day is about to dawn. •Put it back in the scabbard. In the place where you were created, in the country where you were born, there I will judge
31 36 you; •I am going to discharge my anger on you, blow the flames of my fury
32 37 against you and hand you over to barbarous men whose trade is destruction. •You will be fuel to the fire, your blood will flow through the country, you will leave no memory behind you; for I, Yahweh, have spoken." '

The crimes of Jerusalem[a]

1 2 22 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, are you prepared to judge? Are you prepared to judge the murderous city? 20:4; 23:36 Ps 55:9
3 Confront her with all her filthy crimes! •Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: City shedding blood inside yourself to bring your hour closer, setting up idols
4 on your soil to defile yourself, •you have incurred guilt by the blood you have shed, you have defiled yourself with the idols you have made, you have brought your hour closer, you have come to the end of your time. And so I have made 5:14
you an object of scorn to the nations and a laughing-stock to every country.
5 Near and far, they will scoff at you, the turbulent city with a tarnished name:
6 where all the princes of Israel live, each one busy shedding blood, and a law 18:5-9
7 to himself;[b] •where people despise their fathers and mothers; where they ill-treat

21 a. 'curse their sanctuary' versions.
b. Ezekiel again enunciates the ancient principle of collective punishment; he confronts it elsewhere, 14:12+, with that of individual responsibility.
c. A poem, in urgent rhythm, on the sword of Yahweh given into the hands of the 'slaughterer', i.e. the Babylonians, to execute God's judgement. The text is badly preserved; many details are difficult to interpret.
d. What follows is unintelligible: 'or we shall rejoice. The sceptre of my son defies every kind of wood.'
e. Lit. 'beat your thigh', gesture of mourning and pain.
f. Text corrupt; translation doubtful.
g. The translation of this verse follows the versions; Hebr. unintelligible.
h. 'victims' Greek; 'stumbling (-blocks)' Hebr. Before and after 'a sword' are two unintelligible words. 'polished' corr.
i. Thus the Greek; Hebr. unintelligible.
j. The lot falls to Jerusalem, v. 27; the Ammonites may think they have escaped, but they too will be punished.
k. 'to destroy' lit. 'destruction' versions.
l. 'to slaughter' corr. following versions.
22 a. The theme is that of ch. 16,20,23. Here, however, the prophet does not speak in parable, nor does he refer to the sins of past generations but to those of the present, listed in vv. 1-16.
b. Lit. 'each according to his arm'.

Ex 22:21-22 Lv 19:3 Dt 27:16 Lv 19:30 Lv 19:16 Dt 12:2+ Lv 18:7 the settler; where they oppress the widow and the orphan; •where you have 8
no reverence for my sanctuaries and profane my sabbaths; •where informers 9
incite to bloodshed; where there are people who eat on the mountains and
couple promiscuously; •where men uncover their father's nakedness; where 10
Lv 18:19 they force women in their unclean condition; •where one man engages in filthy 11
Lv 18:15,20 practices with his neighbour's wife, another defiles himself with his daughter-in-
Lv 18:9 Lv 25:35-37 Dt 27:25 law, another violates his sister, his own father's daughter; •where people take 12
bribes for shedding blood; you charge usury and interest, you rob your neighbour
by extortion, you forget all about me—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

6:11 Now I will clap my hands at your acts of banditry and the blood that 13
flows in you. •Will your heart be able to resist, will your hands be strong on the 14
day I call you to account? I, Yahweh, have spoken, and I will do it.

Lv 26:33 I mean to disperse you throughout the nations, to scatter you in foreign 15
countries, and to take your foulness from you, •I shall be dishonoured[c] by 16
20:9+ you in the opinion of the nations; and so you will learn that I am Yahweh."'

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, the 17 18
Ps 119:119 Is 1:22,25 Jr 6:29-30 House of Israel, as I see it, is base metal; they are all copper, tin, iron, lead, in
the melting-pot; they are base metal.[d] •And so, the Lord Yahweh says this: 19
Since you are all base metal, I will collect you inside Jerusalem.[e] •As silver, 20
Ml 3:2-3 copper, iron, lead and tin are thrown into the melting-pot together, and the
fire is stoked underneath to melt it all down, so I will collect you in my furious
anger and melt you down; •I will collect you and stoke the fire of my fury 21
for you, and melt you down inside the city. •As silver is melted in the melting-pot, 22
so you will be melted down inside the city; and thus you will learn that I,
Yahweh, am the one who has discharged my anger on you.'

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows,[f] •'Son of man, say 23 24
to her, "You are a land that has not received rain[g] or shower on the day of anger,
Zp 3:3-4 and whose princes[h] are like a roaring lion tearing its prey inside her. They have 25
Ex 20:13,15 eaten the people, seized wealth and jewels and widowed many inside her. •Her 26
Lv 19:30 priests have violated my Law and desecrated my sanctuaries; they have drawn
Lv 17-22 no distinction between sacred and profane, they have not taught people the
Lv 11:16 Ex 20:8-11 Lv 23:3 difference between clean and unclean; they have turned their eyes away from my
sabbaths and I have been dishonoured by them. •Her leaders in the city are 27
like wolves tearing their prey, shedding blood and killing people to steal their
13:10-16 possessions. •Her prophets have whitewashed[i] these crimes with their empty 28
visions and lying prophecies. They have said: Yahweh says this; although
Ps 62:10 Yahweh has not spoken. •The people of the country have taken to extortion 29
and banditry; they have oppressed the poor and needy and ill-treated the settler
Gn 18:32 Ps 106:23 Is 59:15-16 for no reason. •I have been looking for someone among them to build a wall 30
and man the breach in front of me, to defend the country and prevent me from
destroying it; but I have not found anyone. •Hence I have discharged my anger 31
on them; I have destroyed them in the fire of my fury. I have made their conduct
recoil on their own heads—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

16:1+ Tb 14:4 Jr 3:6-13 Rv 17:1-6 **An allegorical history of Jerusalem and Samaria**[a]

23 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, 1 2
there were once two women, daughters of the same mother. •They became 3
20:7-8 prostitutes in Egypt, when they were girls. There their nipples were handled,
there their virgin breasts were first fondled. •Their names were: Oholah the 4
elder, Oholibah her sister.[b] They belonged to me and bore sons and daughters.
As regards their names, Samaria is Oholah, Jerusalem Oholibah. •Now Oholah 5
played the whore, although she belonged to me; she lusted for her lovers, her
neighbours the Assyrians, •dressed in purple, governors and nobles, all of them 6
young and desirable, and skilful horsemen. •She granted them her favours— 7
they were all the flower of the Assyrians—and she defiled herself with all the
idols of all those she lusted for. •She did not renounce the whoring begun in 8

Egypt, where men had slept with her[c] from her girlhood, fondling her virgin
breast, debauching her.
9 'And that is why I have handed her over to her lovers, to those Assyrians for
10 whom she lusted. •They uncovered her nakedness, they seized her sons and
daughters and put her to the sword. She became notorious among women for
the justice done on her.
11 'Though her sister Oholibah saw all this, her own lust and whorings were
12 even more shameful than her sister's. •She lusted for her neighbours the Assyrians,
governor and nobles, dressed in sumptuous clothes, skilful horsemen, all young
13 and desirable. •I saw that she was unchaste, that both sisters were as bad as
14 each other. •She began whoring worse than ever; no sooner had she seen wall-
15 carvings of men, paintings of Chaldaeans coloured vermilion, •men with sashes
round their waists and elaborate turbans on their heads, all so imperious of
16 bearing, portraits of Babylonians from Chaldaea, •than she fell in love with them
17 at first sight and sent messengers to them in Chaldaea.[d] •The Babylonians came 2 K 20:12-19
to her, shared her love-bed and defiled her with their debauchery. Once defiled
18 she lost interest in them. •She flaunted her whoring, she stripped naked; then
19 I turned away from her as I had turned away from her sister. •She began whoring
worse than ever, remembering her girlhood, when she had played the whore
20 in the land of Egypt, •when she had been infatuated by profligates big-membered
as donkeys, ejaculating as violently as stallions.
21 'You were hankering for the debauchery of your girlhood, when they used to
22 handle your nipples in Egypt and fondle your young breasts. •And so, Oholibah,
the Lord Yahweh says this: I intend to call up against you those of your lovers
in whom you have lost interest; I will bring them against you from everywhere,
23 the Babylonians and all the Chaldaeans, the men of Pekod and Shoa and Koa,[e]
and all the Assyrians with them, young and desirable, all governors and nobles,
24 all famous officers and horsemen. •They will advance on you from the North,[f]
with chariots and wagons, at the head of a horde of peoples. From every side
they will arm against you with shield, buckler and helmet. I have told them to
25 pass sentence on you; they will pass sentence on you as they think fit. •I
shall direct my jealousy against you; they will treat you with fury; they will
cut off your nose and ears, and what is left of your family will fall by the sword;
they will seize your sons and daughters, and what is left of you will be burnt.
26
27 They will strip off your garments and rob you of your jewels. •I mean to put an Rv 17:16
end to your debauchery and to the whorings you began in Egypt; you will not look
28 to the Egyptians any more, you will never think of them again. •For the Lord Ex 16:3; 17:3
Yahweh says this: I now hand you over to those you hate, to those in whom you
29 have lost interest. •They will treat you with hatred, they will rob you of the
fruit of your labours and leave you completely naked. And thus your shameful
30 whoring will be exposed. Your debauchery and your whorings •are the cause
of these afflictions, since by playing the whore with the nations you have defiled
31 yourself with their idols. •As you have copied your sister's behaviour, I will
32 put her cup in your hand. •The Lord Yahweh says this:

You will drink your sister's cup,[g] Jr 25:15-18
a cup that is wide and deep, Ps 75:8+
Is 51:17+

c. 'I shall be (dishonoured)' versions; 'you will be' Hebr.
d. 'they are base metal' corr.
e. The oracle may have been pronounced when the population of Judah was taking refuge in Jerusalem, i.e. shortly before the siege of 589-587.
f. This third section of the oracle was perhaps written after the city had fallen.
g. 'rain' corr. following Greek.
h. 'whose princes' Greek.
i. Lit. 'daubed with plaster', cf. 13:10-16.

23 a. The allegory of Israel's history, cf. 16:1+, is resumed here and elaborated by a comparison between Samaria and Jerusalem.
b. Oholah: 'her-tent', Oholibah: 'my-tent-(is-)in-her'. The etymology of the words seems to contrast the schismatic cult of Samaria with the authentic cult of Jerusalem. They may, however, allude to events or practices unknown to us. Possibly there is reference to the tents erected on the 'high places'.
c. 'with her' corr.
d. *Possibly an allusion to the friendly relations* between Hezekiah and Merodach-baladan.
e. Peoples living to the E. of Babylonia.
f. 'from the North' Greek.
g. This short poem is probably a popular song or a satirical epigram which Ezekiel applies to Jerusalem.

leading to laughter and mockery,
so ample the draught it holds.
You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow. 33
Cup of affliction and devastation,
the cup of your sister Samaria,
you will drink it, you will drain it; 34
then it will be shattered to pieces
and lacerate your breast.

I have spoken—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

'And so, the Lord Yahweh says this: Since you have forgotten me 35
and have turned your back on me, you too will have to bear the weight of
your debauchery and whorings.' •And Yahweh said to me, 'Son of man, are 36
20:4; 22:2 you willing to judge Oholah and Oholibah and charge them with their filthy
crimes? •They have been adulteresses, their hands are dripping with blood, 37
they have committed adultery with their idols. As for the children they had
Lv 18:21+ borne me, they have made them pass through the fire to be consumed. •And 38
Lv 19:30 here is something else they have done to me: they have defiled my sanctuary
the same day and have profaned my sabbaths. •The same day as sacrificing their 39
children to their idols, they have been to my sanctuary and profaned it. Yes,
this is what they have done in my own house.

'Worse still,[h] these men summoned from distant countries, invited by 40
Jr 4:30 messenger, arrived; you bathed and painted your eyes, put on your jewels •and 41
sat on a sumptuous bed, by which stood a table on which you had put my incense
and my oil. •The revelry of a carefree company re-echoed because of the 42
crowd of men brought in from the desert;[i] they put bracelets on the women's
1 Th 2:19 arms and magnificent crowns on their heads. •I thought: The prostitutes are 43
at work in the house of a woman worn out with adulteries. And she is still playing
the whore too[j], •and men keep visiting her just like a prostitute, just as they 44
went to those profligate women Oholah and Oholibah. •But upright men will 45
Lv 20:10 Dt 22:21,22 judge them as adulteresses and murderesses are judged, since they are adulteresses
and their hands are dripping with blood.

'The Lord Yahweh says this: Summon an assembly to deal with them, and 46
hand them over to terror and pillage; •let the assembly stone them and hack 47
them to death with the sword; let their sons and daughters be slaughtered and
their houses be set on fire. •I mean to purge the land of debauchery; all the women 48
will thus be warned, and ape your debauchery no more. •Your debauchery will 49
recoil on your own heads, and you will bear the weight of your idolatrous sins;
and so you will learn that I am the Lord Yahweh.'

A prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem

24 In the ninth year, on the tenth day of the tenth month,[a] the word of 1
Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, write down today's 2
date, since this is the very day the king of Babylon has laid siege[b] to Jerusalem. •So 3
pronounce a parable for this set of rebels. Say, "The Lord Yahweh says
this:

11:3-12 Put the pot on the fire;
put it on; pour water into it.[c]
Put cuts of meat in too, 4
the best cuts, leg and shoulder.
Fill it with the best bones.
Take the best of the flock. 5
Then heap wood[d] underneath;
make the pot boil and bubble
until even the bones are cooked.

6 For the Lord Yahweh says this:

Trouble for the bloodstained city,
that rusty cooking-pot
whose rust can never be scoured away!
Empty it scrap by scrap, drawing no lots.
7 For her blood is in her; Gn 37:26
she has put it on the naked rock;
she has not shed it on the ground to hide it in dust.
8 To make my anger overflow, to take revenge,
I have put her blood on the naked rock, unhidden. Jb 16:18+

9 So, the Lord Yahweh says this:

Trouble for the bloodstained city! 9:9
I too plan to build a great fire.
10 Heap on the wood, light it,
cook the meat, prepare the spices,
let the bones burn.
11 Set the pot empty to heat on the coals;
let the bronze glow red-hot,
the filth inside melt away,
the rust inside be consumed.

12 13 [e]But all that rust will not disappear in the flames. [•]I have tried to purge you of the filth of your debauchery, but you would not let yourself be purged of your filth. So now you will not be purged until my anger has been exhausted 14 against you. [•]I, Yahweh, have spoken; my word will come true; I shall act and not relent; I shall show no pity, no compassion. I intend to judge you as your 5:11+ Nb 11:23 conduct and actions deserve—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

The personal ordeals of the prophet Jr 18:1+

15 16 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, [•]'Son of man, I am about to deprive you suddenly of the delight of your eyes.[f] But you are not 17 to lament, not to weep, not to let your tears run down. [•]Groan in silence, do Mi 1:8 not go into mourning for the dead, knot your turban round your head, put your sandals on your feet, do not cover your beard, do not eat common bread.'[g] 18 I told this to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening, and the 19 next morning I did as I had been ordered. [•]The people then said to me, 'Are 20 you not going to explain what meaning these actions have for us?' [•]I replied, 21 'The word of Yahweh has been addressed to me as follows, [•]"Say to the House of Israel: The Lord Yahweh says this. I am about to profane my sanctuary, Jr 7:1-15 Lm 2:7 the pride of your strength, the delight of your eyes, the passion[h] of your souls. Those of your sons and daughters whom you have left behind will fall by the 22 sword. [•]And you are to do as I have done;[i] you must not cover your beards or

h. The prophet now addresses his contemporaries directly and blames them for their recent sins; hence the use of the second person. The passage no doubt contains a number of allusions to recent specific political events, but the text is corrupt and not easily understood.

i. Text corr.

j. Doubtful rendering of a probably corrupt text.

24 a. December 589-January 588.

b. Hence, from the data of 2 K 25:1; Jr 52:4 (cf. 39:1), the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem. If the prophet is now in Babylonia, this date, which he sets down in writing, will later serve to verify the accuracy of his revelations.

c. A symbolic action. The prophet ironically mimes the dictum of 11:3 boasting the impregnability of Jerusalem. The details are not all easy to interpret but the general sense is clear; the city is so corrupt that nothing can save it. A transitory ordeal would not be enough; the city must be destroyed. The walls will not protect its people who will be driven out and scattered.

d. 'wood' corr.

e. At the beginning of this verse Hebr. inserts 'She has wearied me (with) her labours'.

f. Term of affection, here designating the prophet's wife, v. 18.

g. Mourning rites. The 'common bread' (lit. 'bread of men') alludes to some unidentified practice.

h. 'passion' some MSS; 'compassion' Hebr.

i. Not that the citizens of Jerusalem are forbidden to lament their sins, but that there will be no time for doing so; the catastrophe will be too sudden and too sharp.

eat common bread; •you must keep your turbans on your heads and your 23
sandals on your feet; you must not lament or weep. You shall waste away owing
to your sins and groan among yourselves. •Ezekiel is to be a sign for you. You 24
12:6+ are to do just as he has done. And when this happens, you will learn that I
am Yahweh."

'And, son of man, on the very day I deprive them of their sons and daughters 25
who are their strength, their pride and glory, the delight of their eyes, the joy
of their hearts, •on that very day a fugitive will come and bring you news of this. 26
3:26; 33:22 On that day your mouth will be opened to speak to the fugitive; you will speak 27
and not be dumb any more; you are to be a sign for them, and they will learn
that I am Yahweh.'

II. ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

21:33-37
Nb 20:23+
Am 1:13-15
Against the Ammonites[a]

25 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, 1 2
Jr 49:1-6 turn towards the Ammonites and prophesy against them. •Say to the 3
Ammonites, "Hear the word of the Lord Yahweh. The Lord Yahweh
says this:

26:2
Ps 35:25 You[b] cried: Aha! over my sanctuary when it was profaned, and over the
land of Israel when it was ravaged, and over the House of Judah when it went
Nb 24:21+ into exile, •and because of that I am going to hand you over to the sons of the 4
East[c]; they will pitch their camps inside your frontiers, they will settle there.
They are going to eat your fruit, and drink your milk. •I intend to turn Rabbah 5
into a camel yard and the towns[d] of Ammon into sheepfolds. And so you will
learn that I am Yahweh.

The Lord Yahweh says this: Since you have clapped your hands and 6
danced for joy, inwardly full of malice against the land of Israel, •I mean to stretch 7
out my hand against you for this; I will hand you over to be looted by the
peoples, obliterate you as a nation, wipe you out as a country. I will reduce
you to nothing, and so you will learn that I am Yahweh.

Nb 20:23+
Jr 48
Am 2:1-3
Against Moab

The Lord Yahweh says this: 8

Is 15:1
Zp 2:8-11 Since Moab and Seir[e] have said: Look at the House of Judah; it is no different
from any other nation; •very well, I will strip the hillsides of Moab bare[f] and 9
destroy her towns throughout the country,[g] including her pride, Beth-jeshimoth,
Baal-meon and Kiriath-aim. •I shall hand her over to the sons of the East, the 10
enemies of the Ammonites; I shall hand her over so that the Ammonites will
not even be remembered as a nation. •Thus shall I punish Moab, and everyone 11
will learn that I am Yahweh.

35
Nb 20:23+
Ps 137:7
Is 34
Jr 49:7-22
Am 1:11
Against Edom

The Lord Yahweh says this: 12

Since Edom has taken revenge on the House of Judah and committed great
crimes in doing so, •very well, the Lord Yahweh says this: I will stretch 13
out my hand against Edom too and wipe out all the men and animals in the
27:15,20; 38:13 country. I shall reduce it to desert; people will be put to the sword from Teman
Is 21:13-14 to Dedan. •I shall unleash my revenge on Edom by means of my people Israel. 14
They will treat Edom as my anger and fury dictate, and everyone will learn
that this is my vengeance—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

Jos 13:2+
Zp 2:4-7
Against the Philistines

The Lord Yahweh says this: 15

Jr 47:1-7 Since the Philistines have acted in revenge and taken revenge maliciously,

16 and with persistent hatred have done their best to destroy, •very well, thus
speaks the Lord Yahweh: I will stretch out my hand against the Philistines;
I shall destroy the Cherethites[h] and wipe out all the rest of coastal peoples.
17 I shall perform frightful acts of vengeance and inflict furious punishments on
them; and when I exact vengeance on them they will learn that I am Yahweh." '

Against Tyre[a] Is 23

1 26 In the eleventh year, on the first of the month,[b] the word of Yahweh was
addressed to me as follows:

2 'Son of man, since Tyre has jeered at Jerusalem,
"Aha! It is shattered, that gate of nations; 25:3 Ps 35:25
it is opening to me; its wealth is ruined",[c]
3 very well, the Lord Yahweh says this:
Now, Tyre, I set myself against you.
I mean to cause many nations to surge against you
like the sea and its waves.
4 They will destroy the walls of Tyre,
they will demolish her towers;
I will sweep away her dust
and leave her a naked rock.[d]
5 She will be a drying-ground in mid-ocean for fishing nets.
For I have spoken—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—
she will be the prey of the nations.
6 As for her daughters on the mainland,
these will be put to the sword,
and everyone will learn that I am Yahweh.
7 For the Lord Yahweh says this.
From the North, I am sending Nebuchadnezzar, 29:17-21
king of Babylon, king of kings, against Tyre
with horses and chariots and horsemen,
a horde of many races.
8 He will put your daughters
on the mainland to the sword.
He will build siege-works against you,
cast up a mound against you, 4:1-3
raise a siege-tower against you;
9 he will break down your walls with his battering-rams,
and demolish your towers with his siege-engines.[e]
10 His horses are so many their dust will hide you.
Noise of his horsemen and his chariots and wagons
will make your walls tremble as he rides through your gates
like a man entering a conquered city.
11 His horses' hoofs will trample through your streets;
he will put your people to the sword,
and throw your massive pillars to the ground.

25 a. The Ammonites, Nb 20:23+, had taken part in the various rebellions against Nebuchadnezzar. Later they deserted their allies and profited from Jerusalem's misfortune.

b. Addressed to Ammon, here personified (the pronoun is in the singular).

c. The nomadic Arabs, cf. Is 11:14; Jr 49:28; Nb 24:21+.

d. 'towns' corr.; 'sons' Hebr.

e. On Moab and Seir (another name for Edom) cf. Nb 20:23+. The mention of Seir-Edom here is perhaps a gloss.

f. Lit. 'open the shoulder'. Meaning doubtful.

g. 'and destroy her towns' corr.

h. Neighbours of, cf. Jos 13:2+, and related to the Philistines, cf. 2 S 8:18+. Here the two names are virtually synonymous.

26 a. Tyre at the beginning of the 6th century was a great commercial city. It played a leading part in all the anti-Babylonian activities before 587, but deserted its ally, Jerusalem, and rejoiced in its downfall.

b. The year 587-586. The Greek reads 'twelfth year' and 'first month', i.e. April 586.

c. 'gate' corr. 'its wealth' versions.

d. Tyre, Sor, was built on a rock, *sur*, lying off the coast.

e. The siege of Tyre, begun by Nebuchadnezzar, lasted 13 years. The city was captured but not completely destroyed until many years later.

Your wealth will be seized, your merchandise looted, 12
your walls razed, your luxurious houses shattered,
your stones, your timbers, your very dust, thrown into the sea.
Is 24:8-9 Jr 25:10 Rv 18:22 I will stop your music and songs; 13
the sound of your harps will not be heard again.
I will reduce you to a naked rock, 14
and make you into a drying-ground for fishing nets,
never to be rebuilt;
for I, Yahweh, have spoken
—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

The Lord Yahweh says this to Tyre: When they hear of your fall, the groans 15
of your wounded and the havoc inside your walls, will not the islands[f] shake?
Jon 3:6 The rulers of the sea will all get off their thrones, lay aside their cloaks and take 16
off their embroidered robes. Dressed in terror they will sit on the ground unable
to stop trembling, terrified at your fate.
Rv 18:9-19 'They will raise a dirge[g] and say to you: 17

"You are destroyed then, swept from the seas,
city of pride,
you who were mighty on the sea,
you and your citizens,
who used to terrorise
the continent[h] far and near.
Now the islands are trembling 18
on the day of your fall;
the islands of the sea are terrified by your end."

'For the Lord Yahweh says this: 19
'When I make you as desolate as any depopulated city, when I bring up the
32:18-32 deep against you and the ocean covers you, •I will cast you down with those 20
who go down to the pit, down to the men of old; I will make you live in the
regions underground, in the eternal solitudes, with those who go down to the
pit, so that you can never come back and be restored to the land of the living.[i]
Rv 18:21 I will make you an object of terror; you will not exist. People will look for you 21
and never find you again—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.'

A lamentation over the fall of Tyre[a]

Rv18:9f 27 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, ½
raise the dirge over Tyre. •Say to Tyre, that city standing at the edge of 3
the sea, doing business with the nations in innumerable islands, "The Lord
Yahweh says this:

Tyre, you used to say: I am a ship[b]
perfect in beauty.
Your frontiers stretched far out to sea; 4
those who built you made you
perfect in beauty.
Cypress from Senir[c] they used 5
for all your planking.
They took a cedar from Lebanon
to make you a mast.
From the tallest[d] •oaks of Bashan 6
they made your oars.
They built you a deck of cedar inlaid with ivory
from the Kittim[e] isles.
Embroidered linen of Egypt was used for your sail 7
and for your flag.

Purple and scarlet from the Elishah islands
formed your deck-tent.
8 Men from Sidon and from Arvad[f]
were your oarsmen.
Your sages, Tyre, were aboard
serving as sailors.
9 The elders and craftsmen of Gebal[g] were there
to caulk your seams.

All the ships[h] of the sea and the sailors in them visited you to trade with you.
10 Men of Persia and Lud and Put served in your army and were your warriors. 38:5 Jr 46:9+ Sg 4:4
11 They hung up shield and helmet in you. They brought you glory. •The sons of Arvad and their army manned your walls all round and kept watch from your bastions.[i] They hung their shields all round your walls and helped to make
12 your beauty perfect. •Tarshish was your client, profiting from your abundant Is 23:1+ wealth. People paid you in silver and iron, tin and lead for your merchandise.
13 Javan, Tubal and Meshech[j] traded with you. For your merchandise they bartered 32:26; 38:2 Jl 4:6
14 men and bronze implements. •The people of Beth-togarmah[k] traded you horses, 38:6
15 chargers, mules. •The sons of Dedan traded with you; many shores were your 25:13
16 clients; you were paid in ivory tusks and ebony. •Edom[l] was your client, because of the variety and quantity of your goods; she exchanged carbuncles, purple,
17 embroideries, fine linen, coral and rubies against your goods. •Judah and the land of Israel also traded with you, supplying you with corn from Minnith,[m] wax, Jg 11:33
18 honey, tallow and balm. •Damascus was your client, because of the plentifulness of your goods and the immensity of your wealth, furnishing you with wine from Ho 14:8
19 Helbon and wool from Zahar.[n] •Dan and Javan, from Uzal onwards,[o] supplied Gn 10:27
20 you with wrought iron, cassia and calamus in exchange for your goods. •Dedan 25:13
21 traded with you in horse-cloths. •Arabia and even the sheikhs of Kedar were
22 all your clients; they paid in lambs, rams and he-goats. •The merchants of Gn 10:7 1 K 10:1+ Sheba and Raamah traded with you; they supplied you with the best quality
23 spices, precious stones and gold against your goods.[p] •Haran, Canneh and Eden, Gn 11:31; 12:5
24 traders of Sheba, Asshur and Chilmad[q] traded with you. •They traded rich clothes, embroidered and purple cloaks, multi-coloured materials and strong plait-
25 ed cords in your markets. •The ships of Tarshish crossed the seas for your trade.

Then you were rich and glorious
surrounded by the seas.
26 Out to the open sea
your oarsmen rowed you.
The east wind has shattered you,
surrounded by the seas.
27 Your riches, your goods, your cargo, Rv 18:17
your crew, your sailors,

f. The term 'islands' means all the distant coastal regions.
g. A *ginah*, cf. 19:1+.
h. 'swept from the seas' versions. 'continent' Syr.
i. 'pit' is a synonym of 'Sheol', cf. Nb 16:33+. 'in the solitudes' some MSS and versions. 'you can never come back' corr. 'and be restored' versions.
27 a. Described allegorically as a shipwreck, the description being in technical terms the meaning of which is not always certain.
b. 'a ship' added.
c. The Amorite name for Hermon.
d. 'From the tallest' corr.
e. 'cedar' corr. Kittim here means the population not only of Cyprus but also of the other islands and coastal towns of the Mediterranean.

f. These two towns of the Phoenician coast more or less recognised the economic suzerainty of Tyre.
g. I.e. Byblos, another Phoenician city.
h. The poem is here interrupted by a detailed list of the commercial interests of Tyre.
i. 'their army' corr. 'kept watch' Greek.
j. Javan, i.e. Ionia, indicates the Greeks or even the western peoples in general. On Tubal and Meshech, cf. 38:2+.
k. Probably Armenia, cf. 38:6.
l. 'Edom' versions; 'Aram' Hebr.
m. A region in the country of Ammon. 'wax' corr.
n. Helbon is N.E. of Damascus, Zahar unknown.
o. An Arab tribe like Sheba and Raamah, v. 22-23, cf. 1 K 10:1+.
p. 'against' corr.
q. Haran is on the upper Euphrates. Canneh and Eden apparently correspond to the Kannu and Bit Adini of the Assyrian texts, towns on the middle Euphrates. For Sheba, cf. 1 K 10:1+. Chilmad is an unknown town, probably near Asshur.

your caulkers, your commercial agents,
all the soldiers
you carry with you, the whole host
who are aboard:
all will sink surrounded by the seas
on the day of your shipwreck.

When they hear the cries of your sailors 28
the coasts will tremble.
Then the oarsmen will all desert 29
their ships.
The sailors and seafaring people
will stay ashore.
↗ Rv 18:19 They will raise their voices for you, 30
and weep bitterly.
Jon 3:7 They will throw dust on their heads,
and roll in ashes;
they will shave their heads for you, 31
and put sackcloth round their waists.
They will raise a bitter dirge over you,
in their despair;
they will raise a dirge and mourn for you, 32
they will bewail you:
↗ Rv 18:18 Who could compare with haughty Tyre
surrounded by the seas?
When you unloaded your goods 33
to satisfy so many peoples,
you made the kings of the earth rich
↗ Rv 18:19 with your excess of wealth and goods.
Now you are shattered by the waves, 34
surrounded by the seas.
Your cargo and all your crew
have foundered with you.
All those who live in the distant islands 35
have been horrified at your fate.
Their kings have been panic-stricken,
their faces quite cast down.
The traders of the nations 36
have whistled at your fate,
since you have become an object of dread,
gone for ever." '

Rv 18:9f **Against the king of Tyre**

28 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, tell ½
the ruler of Tyre, "The Lord Yahweh says this:

Gn 3:5 Being swollen with pride,
Is 14:14 you have said: I am a god;
Is 14:13+ 2 Th 2:4 I am sitting on the throne of God,
surrounded by the seas.
Though you are a man and not a god,
you consider yourself the equal of God.
14:14 You are wiser now than Danel; 3
there is no sage[a] as wise as you.
Ba 3:22 By your wisdom and your intelligence 4
you have amassed great wealth;
you have piles of gold and silver

inside your treasure-houses.
5 Such is your skill in trading,
your wealth has continued to increase,
and with this your heart has grown more arrogant.
6 And so, the Lord Yahweh says this:
Since you consider yourself the equal of God,
7 very well, I am going to bring foreigners against you,
the most barbarous of the nations.
They will draw sword against your fine wisdom,
they will defile your glory;
8 they will throw you down into the pit
and you will die a violent death
surrounded by the seas.
9 Are you still going to say: I am a god,
when your murderers confront you?
No, you are a man and not a god Is 31:3
in the clutches of your murderers!
10 You will die like the uncircumcised
at the hand of foreigners.
For I have spoken—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

The fall of the king of Tyre

11 12 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, raise a dirge over the king of Tyre.[b] Say to him, "The Lord Yahweh says this:

You were once an exemplar of perfection,[c]
full of wisdom,
perfect in beauty;
13 you were in Eden, in the garden of God.
A thousand gems formed your mantle.
Sard, topaz, diamond, chrysolite, onyx,
jasper, sapphire, carbuncle, emerald,
the gold of which your flutes and tambourines are made,[d]
all were prepared on the day of your creation.
14 I had provided you with[e] a guardian cherub; Gn 3:24
you were on the holy mountain of God; Is 14:13
you walked amid red-hot coals.[f] 10:2
15 Your behaviour was exemplary from the day of your creation
until the day when evil was first found in you.
16 Your busy trading
has filled you with violence and sin.
I have thrown you down from the mountain of God,
and the guardian cherub has destroyed you from amid the coals.[g] 10:2,7
17 Your heart has grown swollen with pride
on account of your beauty.
You have corrupted your wisdom
owing to your splendour.

r. 'with haughty Tyre' corr.; 'with Tyre, with the silent one' Hebr.

28 a. 'no sage' corr. following versions; 'no secret' Hebr.

b. At that time Ittobaal II, though the poem is addressed not so much to an individual as to the personified might of the city. Not unnaturally, cf. 28:2, Christian tradition has often applied this text in an 'accommodated' sense to the fall of Lucifer.

c. 'an exemplar of perfection' corr.; 'sealing the model' Hebr.; 'a seal of perfection' Greek.

d. Translation doubtful.

e. 'With' Greek.

f. These verses seem to contain reminiscences not only of the biblical tradition of the garden of Eden but also of elements of eastern mythologies: the mountain of the gods, situated in the farthest north, cf. Ps 48:1-2; Is 14:13, the allusion to the guardian Kerub, cf. Gn 3:24, and to the burning coals, Ezk 10:2, to the fall and annihilation, v. 16. Some details, however, remain obscure.

g. Text corrected, following Greek.

I have thrown you to the ground;
I have made you a spectacle for other kings.
By the immense number of your sins, 18
by the dishonesty of your trading,
you have defiled your sanctuaries.
I have brought fire out of you to consume you.
I have made you ashes on the ground
before the eyes of all who saw you.
Of the nations, all who know you 19
are lost in amazement over you.
You are an object of terror;
gone for ever." '

Against Sidon[h]

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, 20 •'Son of man, turn 21
towards Sidon and prophesy against her. 22 •Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this:

Sidon, now I set myself against you;
I will show my glory through you.
Si 36:3 Men shall learn that I am Yahweh,
since I will execute sentence on her
and display my holiness in her.
I will send the plague to her; 23
blood shall flow in her streets,
and in her the dead will fall
under the sword raised against her on all sides,
and so men will learn that I am Yahweh.

Israel delivered from the nations

No more, for the House of Israel, 24
shall any of the hostile nations surrounding her
be a thorn that wounds or a briar that tears;
and so men will learn that I am the Lord Yahweh.

The Lord Yahweh says this. When I gather the House of Israel from the peoples 25
among whom it is dispersed, this is how I am going to display my holiness in
the sight of the nations. They shall live on the soil that I gave to my servant
=37:25 Jacob. 26 •They shall live there in confidence, build houses, plant vineyards; they
shall live in confidence. When I inflict punishments on all the hostile
surrounding nations, then men will learn that I am Yahweh their God." '

Is 19 Jr 46 Zp 2:12 **Against Egypt**

29 In the tenth year, on the twelfth day of the tenth month,[a] the word of 1
Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, 2 •'Son of man, turn towards
Ps 68:30 Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against the whole of
Egypt. 3 •Speak to him and say, "The Lord Yahweh says this:

Now I set myself against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt,
32:2 Jb 40:25-41:26 you great crocodile wallowing in your Niles,
you have said: My Niles[b] are mine, I made them.
38:4 Jb 40:26 Hab 1:14 I am going to put hooks through your jaws, 4
make your Nile fish stick to your scales,
and pull you out of your Niles
with all your Nile fish sticking to your scales.
I shall drop you in the desert, with all your Nile fish. 5
Jr 25:33 You will fall on open ground
and not be taken up or buried.
I shall give you as food

to the beasts of the earth and the birds of heaven,
6 so that all the inhabitants of Egypt may learn that I am Yahweh,
since they have given no more support than a reed to the House of Israel. 2 K 18:21 Is 36:6 Lm 4:17
7 Whenever they grasped you, you broke in their hands
and cut their hands all over.
Whenever they leaned on you, you broke
and left their loins shaking.[c]

8 For this reason, the Lord Yahweh says this: I am sending the sword against you,
9 to kill your men and your beasts. •Egypt will be reduced to desert and desolation,
and men will learn that I am Yahweh. Since he has said: The Nile is mine,
10 I made it, •very well, now I set myself against you and your Niles. I mean to
reduce Egypt to desert and desolation, from Migdol to Syene and beyond to 30:6
11 the frontiers of Ethiopia.[d] •The feet of men will not pass that way, the feet 30:11
of animals will not pass that way. For forty years it will remain uninhabited.
12 I intend to reduce the land of Egypt to a waste among wasted countries; for forty
years its cities will be a waste among ruined cities. And I shall scatter the
13 Egyptians among the nations, dispersing them throughout the peoples. •And
the Lord Yahweh says this: After forty years have passed, I will gather the
14 inhabitants of Egypt from the nations where they have been scattered.[e] •I will
bring the Egyptian captives back and reinstal them in the land of Pathros,[f] 30:14
15 the land they came from. There they will constitute a weak kingdom. •Egypt
will be the weakest of kingdoms and no longer dominate other nations; I shall
16 reduce her, and she will not rule any more over the nations. •She will no longer
be anything for the House of Israel to trust in, but will be living evidence of
the sins of Israel at the time when Israel turned to her for help. And men will
learn that I am the Lord Yahweh." '

17 In the twenty-seventh year, on the first day of the first month,[g] the word
of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows:

18 'Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon mobilised his army for
a great expedition against Tyre. Their heads have all gone bald, their shoulders
are all chafed, but even so he has derived no profit from the expedition mounted
19 against Tyre either for himself or for his army. •Since this is so, the Lord
Yahweh says this: I am going to hand Egypt over to Nebuchadnezzar king of 30:10,24; 32:11f
Babylon. He will levy his share of riches there instead, will loot it and carry
20 off the booty to pay his army. •In reward for his efforts against Tyre I am
handing the land of Egypt over to him, since he has been working for me—it is Jr 43:10; 44: 30; 46:26
the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

21 'On that day I will cause the House of Israel to sprout a horn,[h] and I shall allow Ps 132:17
you to open your mouth for all to hear.[i] And so they will learn that I am Yahweh.'

Against Egypt: the day of Yahweh

1 2 30 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows,[a] •'Son of man,
prophesy and say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Howl: Alas, the day! Is 13:6 Jl 1:15 Am 5:18+

b. Sidon, one of the principal towns of Phoenicia, but before the Persian period less important than Tyre. According to Jr 27:3, Sidon was party to the policy leading to the ruin of Judah; hence Ezekiel's hostility.

29 a. December 588-January 587.

b. 'My Niles' (the various branches of the river Nile) versions; 'My Nile' Hebr.

c. 'their hands all over' versions. 'shaking' Syr.

d. 'desert' versions. Migdol, a fortress in N. Egypt. Syene (Assuan) a city in the extreme S. near the Ethiopian frontier.

e. The exiles from Egypt thus receive the same promise of return as has been given to Israel, cf. 11: 16-17; here however (unlike the second part of Isaiah, cf. Is 45:14+) they are not to be associated with the chosen people in the restored worship of Yahweh.

f. Pathros, the 'land of the South', i.e. Upper Egypt.

g. March-April 571. Chronologically the last of Ezekiel's oracles; it completes or revises his earlier ones: as compensation for his failure to reduce Tyre completely, v. 18, cf. 26:9+, Nebuchadnezzar is given permission to plunder Egypt. As the agent of divine punishment he deserves his wages.

h. Symbol of power, sometimes of messianic significance, e.g. Ps 132:17.

i. Referring not to Ezekiel's recurrent attacks of dumbness, 3:26; 24:26-27; 33:21-22, but to a silence induced by shame, cf. 16:63, and now to be broken by thanksgiving.

30 a. A supplement, probably late, to the preceding.

For the day is near, the day of Yahweh is near; it will be a day dark with cloud, 3
the end of an epoch for the nations.
The sword will come on Egypt, and terror will visit Ethiopia when the 4
slaughtered fall in Egypt, when her riches are carried away, when her foundations
Jr 46:9+ are destroyed. •Cush and Put and Lud, the whole of Arabia and Cub[b] and the 5
sons of my covenant[c] will fall by the sword along with them.
Yahweh says this: 6
The supports of Egypt will fall; the pride of her strength will crumble; people
29:10 will fall by the sword from Migdol to Syene—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.
They will be laid waste among wasted countries; her cities will rank with 7
other ruined cities. •They will learn that I am Yahweh when I set fire to Egypt 8
and all her supports are shattered.
On that day messengers despatched by me will set out in boats to shake 9
the complacency of Ethiopia. Terror will run through her inhabitants on the
day of Egypt—it is coming now! •The Lord Yahweh says this: I intend to destroy 10
29:19 the huge population of Egypt at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
He and his people, most barbarous of nations, will be sent to ravage the country. 11
29:11-12 They will draw the sword against Egypt and fill the country with corpses.
I am going to dry up the arms of the Nile, hand the country over to brigands. 12
and lay the whole country waste and everything in it, at the hand of foreigners.
I, Yahweh, have spoken.
The Lord Yahweh says this: I mean to destroy the idols, and take the 13
rams[d] away from Noph.[e] The land of Egypt will be left without a ruler. I shall
29:14+ spread terror through the land of Egypt. •I shall lay Pathros waste, set Zoan on 14
fire, inflict my punishments on No. •I shall discharge my fury on Sin, the 15
stronghold of Egypt; I shall wipe out the crowding population of No. •I shall 16
set fire to Egypt; Sin will be racked with anguish; there will be a flood[f] at No,
the waters will inundate it. •The young men of On and Pi-beseth will fall by the 17
sword and the cities themselves go into captivity. •At Tahpanhes day will turn 18
to darkness when I shatter the yoke of Egypt there, when the pride of her strength
ceases. A cloud will cover her, and her daughters will go into captivity. •Such 19
will be the punishments that I am going to inflict on Egypt. And so men will
learn that I am Yahweh." '
In the eleventh year, on the seventh day of the first month,[g] the word of 20
Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, I have broken the arm 21
of Pharaoh king of Egypt; you can see that no one has bound up his wound
to heal it, given it a bandage or a dressing to make the arm strong enough to
wield the sword again.[h] •And so, the Lord Yahweh says this: Now I set myself 22
against Pharaoh king of Egypt; I intend to break his arms, the sound one and the
broken one, and make the sword drop from his hand.[i] •I shall scatter Egypt among 23
the nations and disperse her throughout the countries. •I shall strengthen the 24
29:19 arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand. I shall break
Pharaoh's arms and, confronted with his enemy, he will groan like a dying man.
I shall strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh 25
will fall. And so men will learn that I am Yahweh, when I put my sword into the
hands of the king of Babylon and he wields it against the land of Egypt. •I mean 26
to scatter Egypt among the nations and disperse her throughout the countries;
and men will learn that I am Yahweh.'

The cedar

31 In the eleventh year, on the first day of the third month,[a] the word of 1
Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, say to Pharaoh 2
king of Egypt and to all his subjects:[b]

"To what shall I compare you in your greatness?
Dn 4:7 Surely, to a cedar of Lebanon[c] 3

with noble branches, thick-set needles and lofty trunk.
Its top pierces the clouds.[d]
4 The waters have made it grow, the deep has made it tall,
pouring its rivers round the place where it is planted,
sending its streams to all the other trees.
5 This is why its trunk grew taller than all the other trees;
its branches increased in number, its boughs stretched wide,
because the plentiful waters reached it.
6 All the birds of heaven used to nest in its branches;
under its boughs all wild animals used to drop their young;
in its shade every kind of people sat.
7 It was beautiful in its size, in the span of its boughs;
its roots went deep into plentiful waters.
8 No cedar equalled it in the garden of God,
no cypress had branches such as these;
no plane tree could match its boughs,
no tree in the garden of God could rival its beauty.
9 I had made it lovely with branching green.
It was the envy of every tree in Eden, in the garden of God. Gn 2:8

10 "Very well then, the Lord Yahweh says this:
Since it has raised itself to its full height, has lifted its top to the clouds,[e]
11 and has grown arrogant in its height, •I have handed it over to the prince of the Ps 37:35 Lm 3:33
12 nations,[f] to do with it as its wickedness deserves; I have destroyed it. •Foreigners,
the most barbarous of the nations, have cut it down and felled it. On the
mountains, in all the valleys, lie its branches; its broken boughs fill every ravine
throughout the country; everybody in the country has left its shade and deserted
13 it. •On the wreckage perch all the birds of heaven; all the wild animals have
made their dens under its branches.
14 In future let no tree rise in pride beside the waters, none push its top
through the clouds,[g] no well-watered tree stretch its whole height towards
them. For all of them are doomed to death, to the regions underground, with
the common run of mankind, with those who go down to the pit.
15 The Lord Yahweh says this: On the day it went down to Sheol, I closed Nb 16:33+
the deep over it in sign of mourning. I stopped its rivers, the plentiful waters
dried up; I made Lebanon dark for its sake, and all the trees of the fields wilted
16 for its sake. •With the noise when it fell I made the nations quake, as I hurled 32:17-32
it down to Sheol, with those who go down to the pit. In the regions underground
all the trees of Eden took comfort, all the noble and lovely trees of Lebanon
17 nourished by the waters. •And with it went down to Sheol, to the victims of
the sword,[h] all those nations who used to live in its shade.[i]
18 Was anyone of all the trees of Eden your equal in glory and size, for you to

b. 'Arabia' versions. Cub is not known; the Greek reads 'Lub' (Libya).
c. 'sons of my covenant' Greek; 'sons of the land of the covenant' Hebr.
d. 'rams' Greek; 'vanities' Hebr.
e. I.e. Memphis in Lower Egypt. For Pathros cf. 29:14+. Zoan is Tanis, a city of the Delta. No is Thebes, capital of Upper Egypt, cf. Jr 46:25+. Sin is one of the fortresses in the Delta. On is Heliopolis, Pi-beseth Bubastis, both towns in Lower Egypt. Tahpanhes is a frontier town east of the Delta.
f. 'there will be a . . .' Greek; Hebr. unintelligible.
g. March-April 587.
h. Egypt tried to intervene with a view to raising the siege of Jerusalem, but failed, cf. Jr 37:5-8.
i. Prediction of a further defeat which will destroy the remainder of the Egyptian armies.

31 a. May-June 587.
b. The same images are used in the allegory of ch. 17 but with a different meaning. They describe the magnificence of Egypt which will suddenly be destroyed by divine punishment.
c. 'to a cedar of Lebanon' corr.; Hebr. and versions have 'Surely (lit. 'Behold') Assyria is a cedar of Lebanon'.
d. 'the clouds' Greek.
e. 'to the clouds' Greek.
f. 'the prince of the nations' Greek; 'a ram' Hebr. The reference is evidently to Nebuchadnezzar, cf. Jr 43:12+, or to his successors. The severity of the punishment described even suggests the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses in 525.
g. 'clouds' corr.
h. Hebr. adds 'his arm'.
i. The Pharaoh being the cedar, the other kings are the other trees in the earthly paradise, cf. vv. 7-9. All these 'trees', having gone down to Sheol, will be consoled by the arrival of the Pharaoh, 32:17f.

be hurled with the trees of Eden down to the regions underground? With the uncircumcised there you lie; with the victims of the sword lie Pharaoh and all his subjects—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

The crocodile

32 In the twelfth year, on the first day of the twelfth month,[a] the word of 1
Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, raise the dirge for 2
Pharaoh king of Egypt. Say to him, "Young lion of nations, you have been
wiped out.

29:3-5 Jb 40:25-41:26

"You were like a crocodile in the water;
you snorted through your nostrils,[b]
you churned the water with your feet,
you muddied its streams.

31:12-16 "The Lord Yahweh says this: 3

Hab 1:14

I am going to throw my net over you in a great concourse of nations;
they will drag you ashore in my net.
I mean to leave you on land, drop you on the ground; 4
make all the birds settle on you,
glut all the beasts of the earth with you,
lay your carcase on the mountainside, 5
fill the valleys with your offal.
I intend to water the country with what flows from you, 6
with your blood, on the mountainsides,
and the ravines will be full of it.

Am 8:9+ Mt 24:29

When I extinguish you I will cover the skies, 7
and darken the stars.
I will cover the sun with clouds
and the moon will not give its light.
I will dim every luminary in heaven for you, 8
and cover your country in darkness
—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

I shall grieve the heart of many peoples when I lead your captives[c] among 9
the nations, into countries unknown to you. •[d]I shall stun many peoples with 10
shock at your fate; their kings will be panic-stricken at your fate, when I brandish
my sword before their eyes. On the day of your fall, each will tremble
29:19 continuously for his life. •For the Lord Yahweh says this: The sword of the 11
king of Babylon will follow you. •I shall make your throngs of subjects fall at 12
the swords of my warriors, who are the most barbarous of the nations. They
will annihilate the pride of Egypt, and her whole population will be destroyed.
I shall make all her cattle perish too on the banks of the deep waters. The feet 13
of men will not muddy them again, the feet of animals will not muddy them
again. •Then I shall calm her waters; I shall make her rivers glide like oil—it is 14
the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

When I reduce Egypt to desert and the country is stripped of its contents, 15
when I strike all those who live there, they will learn that I am Yahweh.

Such is the dirge that the daughters of the nations will raise. They will 16
raise it over Egypt and her huge population. This is the dirge they will raise—
it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

Is 14:9-11 **Egypt goes down to Sheol**

31:16 In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the first month,[e] the word of 17
26:19 Jb 3:14 Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, raise the dirge over 18
the huge population of Egypt; send them down, her and the daughters of the

nations in their majesty, to the regions underground, with those who go down to the pit.[f]

20 'With those who have fallen by the sword they too will fall; her strength
21a shall be totally extinguished.[g] •In Sheol the greatest heroes will address her,
19
21b "Do you excel anyone in beauty[h] now? •Come down, make your bed[i] with the uncircumcised who have fallen by the sword."[j]

22 'Assyria is there with all her warriors round her tomb;[k] all killed, all victims
23 of the sword; •their graves have been made in the deepest part of the pit, with her army round her tomb, all killed, all victims of the sword, yet she once spread terror throughout the land of the living.

24 'Elam is there, with all her troops round her tomb; all killed, all victims of the sword, they have gone down uncircumcised to the regions underground, yet she once spread terror throughout the land of the living. They endure the
25 disgrace of those who go down to the pit. •In the middle of the slaughtered a bed has been made for her, with all her troops round her tomb, all of them uncircumcised, put to the sword, yet she once spread terror throughout the land of the living. They endure the disgrace of those who go down to the pit. They have been put among the slaughtered.

26 'Meshech is there, and Tubal, with all her troops round her tomb, all of them uncircumcised, put to the sword for having spread terror throughout the
27 land of the living. •They do not lie with the heroes who fell long ago, those who went fully armed down to Sheol, who had their swords laid under their heads and their shields[l] put under their bones, since the heroes inspired the land
28 of the living with terror. •Instead, you shall lie with the uncircumcised,[m] with those who have fallen to the sword.

29 'Edom is there, her kings and all her princes who, despite their valour, have been laid with those who have fallen by the sword. They lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the pit.

30 'All the princes of the North and all the Sidonians are there, having gone down with the slaughtered, in spite of the terror their power inspired.[n] Uncircumcised they lie with those who were victims of the sword. They endure the disgrace of those who go down to the pit.

31 'Pharaoh will see them and take comfort at the sight of such a host put to the sword, Pharaoh and his whole army—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.
32 He who once spread terror throughout the land of the living now lies[o] with the uncircumcised, with those who were victims of the sword, Pharaoh and his whole army. It is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.'

27:13;38:2, 3; 39:1 Is66:19LXX

III. DURING AND AFTER THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM[a]

The prophet as sentry

3:17-21

1 2 33 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, speak to the members of your nation. Say to them, "When I send the sword against a country, the people of that country select one of themselves
3 and post him as a sentry; •if he sees the sword coming against the country,

32 a. February-March 585.
b. 'your nostrils' corr.
c. 'lead your captives' Greek; 'cause your destruction' Hebr.
d. Vv. 10-15 seem a later addition. The conclusion, v. 16, must originally have been joined to v. 9.
e. 'the first month' Greek. March-April 586.
f. V. 19 is placed after v. 21a as in the Greek.
g. 'her strength shall...totally' Greek: Hebr. unintelligible.
h. Hebr. adds 'come down and make your bed with the uncircumcised'.
i. 'Come down, make your bed' Greek; 'They came down, they made their bed' Hebr.
j. Egypt is welcomed by all the kings of the nations killed in battle before.
k. 'round her tomb' corr.; 'round him his tombs' Hebr.
l. 'long ago' Greek. 'shields' corr.
m. Hebr. adds 'you shall be broken'.
n. Hebr. adds 'ashamed'.
o. 'He...lies' Targ.; 'I...lie' Hebr.
33 a. The third section of the book contains the oracles uttered after Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Palestine (others are found in the second section: the poems against the nations).

Jl 2:1+ he sounds his horn to alert the people.[b] •If someone hears the sound of the 4
horn, but pays no attention, the sword will overtake him and destroy him; he
will have been responsible for his own death. •He has heard the sound of the 5
horn and paid no attention; his death will be his own responsibility. But the
life of someone who pays attention to the warning will be secure.

"If, however, the sentry has seen the sword coming but has not blown his 6
horn, and so the people are not alerted and the sword overtakes them and
destroys one of them, the latter shall indeed die for his sin, but I will hold the
sentry responsible for his death."

=3:17-19 'Son of man, I have appointed you as sentry to the House of Israel. When 7
you hear a word from my mouth, warn them in my name. •If I say to a wicked 8
man: Wicked wretch, you are to die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked
man to renounce his ways, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you
responsible for his death. •If, however, you do warn a wicked man to renounce 9
his ways and repent, and he does not repent, then he shall die for his sin, but
you yourself will have saved your life.

14:12-20+ 18:21-30+ **Conversion and perversity**

18:1 'Son of man, say to the House of Israel, "You are continually saying: Our 10
sins and crimes weigh heavily on us; we are wasting away because of them. How
18:23.31 Ws 1:13; 11:26 Lk 15:7, 10,32 Jn 8:11 are we to go on living?" •Say to them, "As I live—it is the Lord Yahweh 11
who speaks—I take pleasure, not in the death of a wicked man, but in the turning
back of a wicked man who changes his ways to win life. Come back, come back
from your evil ways. Why are you so anxious to die, House of Israel?"

3:20; 18:24 Jn 8:21 'And you, son of man, say to the members of your nation, "The integrity of an 12
upright man will not save him once he has chosen to sin; the wickedness of a
wicked man will no longer condemn him once he renounces wickedness, nor
will an upright man live on the strength of his integrity once he has chosen
to sin. •If I say to an upright man: You are to live,[c] and then, trusting in his 13
own integrity, he turns to evil, all his integrity will no longer be remembered;
because he has sinned, he shall die. •If, however, I say to a wicked man: You 14
are to die, and he renounces his sins and does what is lawful and right, •if he 15
returns[d] pledges, restores what he has stolen, keeps the laws that give life and
=18:22 stops committing sin—he shall live, and will not die. •All his previous sins will 16
no longer be remembered—he has done what is lawful and right; he shall live.

=18:29 "The members of your nation object: What the Lord does is unjust; but 17
it is what you do that is unjust. •When an upright man renounces his integrity 18
and commits sin, he dies for it. •And when a wicked man renounces his 19
wickedness and does what is lawful and right, because of this he lives. •You 20
=18:30 object: What the Lord does is unjust; but I mean to judge each of you by what
he does, House of Israel."'

The taking of the city

In the twelfth year of our captivity, on the fifth day of the tenth month,[e] 21
24:26-27 a fugitive arrived from Jerusalem and said to me, 'The city has been taken'.
Now the hand of the Lord had been on me the evening before the fugitive 22
3:26-27 arrived; he had opened my mouth before the man came to me the next morning;
my mouth had been opened and I was dumb no longer.[f]

The ravaging of the country

The word of Yahweh was then addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, 23 24
the people living in those ruins in the land of Israel say, "Abraham was alone
11:15 when he was given possession of this land. Now we are many and we hold
the country as our domain."[g]

Lv 17:10-14 'Very well, tell them, "The Lord Yahweh says this: You eat blood,[h] you 25
Lv 1:5+ raise your eyes to your idols, you shed blood; are you likely to keep possession

of the land? •You rely on your swords, you engage in filthy practices, you each commit adultery with your neighbour's wife; are you likely to retain possession of the land?" •Tell them this, "The Lord Yahweh says this: As I live, I swear it, those in the ruins will fall to the sword, those in the countryside I will give to wild animals to devour, those in strongholds and caves will die of plague. •I intend to reduce the land to desert and desolation and it will no longer take pride in its strength. The mountains of Israel will be deserted and no one will pass that way again. •And so men will learn that I am Yahweh, when I reduce the land to desert and desolation on account of all their filthy practices."

Lv 18:20

The results of the preaching

'Son of man, the members of your nation are talking about you on the ramparts and in doorways. They keep saying, "Come and hear the word that has come from Yahweh". •They throng towards you; my people sit down in front of you and listen to your words, but they do not act on them. They cannot tell the truth[f] and their hearts are set on dishonest gain. •As far as they are concerned, you are like a love song beautifully sung to music. They listen to your words, but no one puts them into practice. •When the thing takes place—and it is beginning now—they will learn that there has been a prophet among them.'

Mt 7:26
Lk 8:21
↗ Lk 7:32

The shepherds of Israel[a]

34 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them, "Shepherds,[b] the Lord Yahweh says this: Trouble for the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Shepherds ought to feed their flock, •yet you have fed on milk,[c] you have dressed yourselves in wool, you have sacrificed the fattest sheep, but failed to feed the flock. •You have failed to make weak sheep strong, or to care for the sick ones, or bandage the wounded ones. You have failed to bring back strays or look for the lost. On the contrary, you have ruled them cruelly and violently. •For lack of a shepherd they have scattered, to become the prey of any wild animal; they have scattered far. •My flock is straying this way and that, on mountains and on high hills;[d] my flock has been scattered all over the country; no one bothers about them and no one looks for them.

2:5
Dt 18:21+
Jr 28:9
Is 53:6
Jr 23:1-6
Zc 11:4-17
↗ Mt 18:12-14
↗ Lk 15:4-7
↗ Jn 10:1-18+
Sg 1:7
Is 56:11
Mi 2:12; 4:6; 7:14
Zc 9:16; 10:3; 13:1
1 P 5:2-4
Mt 18-12
Lk 15:4

'Well then, shepherds, hear the word of Yahweh. •As I live, I swear it—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—since my flock has been looted and for lack of a shepherd is now the prey of any wild animal, since my shepherds have stopped bothering about my flock, since my shepherds feed themselves rather than my flock, •in view of all this, shepherds, hear the word of Yahweh. •The Lord

Nb 27:18
Is 56:9-12
Zc 10:2
Mt 9:36
Jl 2:13

b. As in 13:10f, the illustration has probably been suggested by the defensive preparations then being made.

c. 'You are to live' versions; 'He is to live' Hebr.

d. Hebr. inserts 'wicked'.

e. December 586-January 585.

f. Ezekiel had been deprived of speech by 'the hand of Yahweh', cf. 3:24-27; 24:27.

g. The observation shows the people's affection for their country but also, even after the disaster of 587, a presumptuous confidence in their future.

h. Translation doubtful. Possibly correct to 'You eat on the mountains', cf. 18:6.

i. 'throng' interpretation uncertain. 'They... truth' following Greek.

34 a. The image of the king-shepherd is deeply rooted in Eastern literary tradition. Jeremiah used it of the kings of Israel to rebuke their slackness in office, Jr 2:8; 10:21; 23:1-3, and to proclaim that God would give his people new shepherds who would pasture them with integrity, Jr 3:15; 23:4, and from these shepherds would come a 'Branch', Jr 23:5-6, i.e. the Messiah. Ezekiel takes up the theme from Jr 23:1-6, later to be resumed in Zc 11:4-17. For their wickedness he rebukes the shepherds, here the kings and lay leaders of the people, vv. 1-10. Yahweh will take from them the flock they have ill-treated and himself become the shepherd of his people (cf. Gn 48:15; 49:24; Is 40:11; Ps 80:1; 95:7 and Ps 23); this is in effect the proclamation of a theocracy, vv. 11-16; and in point of fact the monarchy was not restored after the return from exile. But the time was to come when Yahweh would give his people a shepherd of his own choice, vv. 23-24, a 'prince' (cf. 45:7-8; 46:8-10, 16-18), another David. The terms in which this prince's reign is described, vv. 25-31, and the name 'David' by which he is called (see 2 S 7:1+; cf. Is 11:1+; Jr 23:5), suggest a messianic age in which God himself, by means of his Messiah, rules his people in justice and peace. In this text of Ezekiel we discern the outline of the parable of the Lost Sheep, Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:4-7, but more especially of the allegory of the Good Shepherd, Jn 10:11-18, which by virtue of its original context here is seen to be a claim to messiahship on the part of Jesus. The Good Shepherd is later to become one of the earliest themes of Christian iconography.

b. 'Shepherds' Syr.; 'To the shepherds' Hebr.

c. 'milk' Greek; 'fat' Hebr.

d. Probably alluding to worship on the 'high places'.

Yahweh says this: I am going to call the shepherds to account. I am going to take my flock back from them and I shall not allow them to feed my flock. In this way the shepherds will stop feeding themselves. I shall rescue my sheep from their mouths; they will not prey on them any more.

For the Lord Yahweh says this: I am going to look after my flock myself 11
and keep all of it in view. •As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he 12
stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view.
I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and
darkness. •I shall bring them out of the countries where they are; I shall gather 13
them together from foreign countries and bring them back to their own land.
I shall pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in every
Jn 10:9 inhabited place in the land. •I shall feed them in good pasturage; the high 14
mountains of Israel will be their grazing ground. There they will rest in good
grazing ground; they will browse in rich pastures on the mountains of Israel.
I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest—it is 15
Is 40:11 Lk 15:4-7 the Lord Yahweh who speaks. •I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, 16
bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over[c] the fat and
healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

↗ Mt 25:32-34 As for you, my sheep, the Lord Yahweh says this: I will judge between 17
sheep and sheep, between rams and he-goats. •Not content to graze in good 18
pastures, you trample down the rest; not content to drink clear water, you
muddy the rest with your feet. •And my sheep must graze on what your feet have 19
trampled, drink what your feet have muddied. •Very well then, the Lord Yahweh 20
says this: I myself am now about to judge between fat sheep and lean sheep.
Since you have butted all the weak sheep with your rumps and shoulders and 21
horns, until you have chased them away, •I am going to come and rescue 22
my sheep from being cheated; I will judge between sheep and sheep.

37:24 Ps 78:70 Jn 10:16 I mean to raise up one shepherd, my servant David, and to put him in charge of 23
them and he will pasture them; he will pasture them and be their shepherd.
I, Yahweh, will be their God, and my servant David shall be their ruler. I, Yahweh, 24
Is 11:6-9+ Jr 23:5-6 Ho 2:20 have spoken. •I shall make a covenant of peace with them; I shall rid the country 25
of wild animals. They will be able to live safely in the wilderness and go to sleep
Lv 26:4 Ps 84:6 in the woods. •I shall settle them round my hill;[d] I shall send rain at the proper 26
time; it will be a fertile rain. •The trees of the countryside will yield their fruit 27
and the earth its produce; they will feel safe on their own farms. And men will
Ps 67:6 learn that I am Yahweh when I break their yokestraps and release them from
Tb 14:7 their captors. •No more will they be a prey to foreign countries, no more will 28
they be eaten by wild animals in this country. They will live without fear and
no one will disturb them again. •I shall make splendid vegetation grow for them; 29
no more will they suffer from famine in this land; no more will they have to bear
the insults of other nations. •And men will learn that I, their God, am with them 30
and that they, the House of Israel, are my people—it is the Lord Yahweh who
speaks. •And you, my sheep, are the flock[e] I shall pasture, and I am your God— 31
it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

25:12-14+ Nb 20:23+ Ps 137:7 Am 1:11 **Against the mountains of Edom**[a]

35 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, turn 1 2
towards the mountain of Seir and prophesy against it. •Say to it, "The 3
Lord Yahweh says this: Now I set myself against you, mountain of Seir; I am
stretching out my hand against you; I am going to reduce you to desert and
desolation, •I lay your towns in ruins, and make you a desolation, and so 4
you will learn that I am Yahweh. •Since, nourishing a long-standing hatred, you 5
betrayed the sons of Israel to the sword during their trouble, at the time of their
last crime, •very well, as I live—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—I mean to 6
↗ Rv 16:6 hand you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you. I swear it; you have
sinned[b] by shedding blood, and bloodshed will pursue you. •I intend to reduce 7

the mountain of Seir to desert and desolation, and I will eliminate everyone
8 who travels up and down the country. •I shall fill its mountains with corpses;
people will fall, struck down by the sword on your hills, in your valleys, in
9 every one of your ravines. •I am going to reduce you to desolation, for ever
your towns will remain uninhabited, and so you will learn that I am
Yahweh.
10 Since you said to the two nations, the two countries:[e] You belong to me; we
11 are going to take possession here where Yahweh used to be: •very well, as I live
—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—in anger and fury I will do exactly what
you did because you hated them. I shall make it clear that I am punishing you
12 on their behalf; •then you will know that I, Yahweh, have overheard all the
outrageous things you have said about the mountains of Israel, such as: They have
13 been abandoned, they have been left for us to devour. •You have talked arrogantly
14 about me, too, you have repeatedly slandered me; I have heard! •The Lord
Yahweh says this: To the joy of the whole country, I am going to reduce you to
15 desert. •Since you rejoiced when the domain of the House of Israel became a
desert, I will do the same to you, mountain of Seir; you will become a desert,
and so will the whole of Edom; and so men will learn that I am Yahweh."

Oracle on the mountains of Israel[a]

1 36 'Son of man, prophesy this to the mountains of Israel. Say, "Mountains
2 of Israel, hear the word of Yahweh". •The Lord Yahweh says this: Since
the enemy has insulted you by saying, "Aha! These eternal heights have now
3 become our domain", •you must prophesy. Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this:
Since you have been ravaged and seized on by surrounding countries, and taken
over by the rest of the nations, and made the subject of people's talk and gossip,
4 now, mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Yahweh: The Lord Yahweh
says this to mountains and hills, to ravines and valleys, to abandoned ruins
and the empty plundered cities that have become the laughing-stock of all the
5 surrounding nations. •Yes, the Lord Yahweh says this: I swear it by the
fierceness of my jealousy; I am speaking to the rest of the nations and to the
whole of Edom who so exultantly and contemptuously took possession of my
country and plundered it."
6 'This being so, prophesy this about the land of Israel. Say to the mountains
and hills, to the ravines and valleys, "The Lord Yahweh says this: I am
speaking in my jealousy and rage; because you are enduring the insults of the
7 nations,[b] •very well, the Lord Yahweh says this: I raise my hand and I swear
that the nations round you shall have their own insults to bear.
8 Mountains of Israel, you will grow branches and bear fruit for my people
9 Israel, who will soon return.[c] •Yes, I am coming to you, I have turned to you;
10 you will be tilled and sown. •I shall multiply the men who live on you, the whole
House of Israel, yes, all. The cities will be lived in again and the ruins rebuilt. Ps 69:35
11 I shall multiply the men and animals that live on you; there will be many of them
and they will be fertile. I shall repopulate you as you were before; I shall make you
more prosperous than you were before, and so you will learn that I am Yahweh.
12 Thanks to me, men will tread your soil again, my people Israel; they will have Tb 14:7
you for their own domain, and never again will you rob them[d] of their children.

e. 'I shall watch over' versions; 'I shall destroy' Hebr.
f. Zion. The translation follows the Greek.
g. Hebr. adds 'of men'.

35 a. This oracle against the 'mountain of Seir' (Edom) would find a more natural place among the 'Oracles *against the nations*', but is evidently placed here to balance the subsequent oracle addressed to the mountains of Israel.
b. 'you have sinned' versions; 'you have hated blood' Hebr.
c. After 587 Edom made attempts to overrun not only the kingdom of Judah but the whole of Palestine.

36 a. The revenge of the mountains of Israel on the mountain of Seir, ch. 35.
b. The oracle may have been uttered shortly after 587 when the neighbouring peoples were making forays into Palestine.
c. Such faith in a home-coming in the near future is striking at this time of shock and discouragement. Cf. ch. 37 and Is 40-55.
d. 'never again will you rob' corr.

The Lord Yahweh says this: Since people have said of you: You are 13
a man-eater, you have robbed your nation of its children,[e] •very well, you will 14
eat no more men, never rob your nation of its children again—it is the Lord
Yahweh who speaks. •I shall never again let you hear the insults of the nations, 15
you will never again have to bear the taunts of the foreigners, you will never
again rob the nation of its children—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks." '

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows: •'Son of man, the 16 17
members of the House of Israel used to live in their own land, but they defiled
Lv 15:19-27 Ezr 9:11 it by their conduct and actions; to me their conduct was as unclean as a woman's
menstruation. •I then discharged my fury at them because of the blood they shed 18
11:16 in their land and the idols with which they defiled it. •I scattered them among 19
the nations and dispersed them in foreign countries. I sentenced them as their
20:39+ Ps 106:8 Is 52:5 ✗ Rm 2:24 conduct and actions deserved. •And now they have profaned my holy name 20
among the nations where they have gone, so that people say of them, "These are
the people of Yahweh; they have been exiled from his land". •But I have been 21
concerned about my holy name, which the House of Israel has profaned among
the nations where they have gone. •And so, say to the House of Israel, "The 22
16:60-63; 20:9 Ps 79:9; 115:1 Is 48:11 Ba 2:19 Mt 6:9 Lord Yahweh says this: I am not doing this for your sake, House of Israel,
but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations
where you have gone. •I mean to display the holiness of my great name, which has 23
been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. And
the nations will learn that I am Yahweh—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—
11:17 Tb 14:5 when I display my holiness for your sake before their eyes. •Then I am going to 24
take you from among the nations and gather you together from all the foreign
Ps 51:7 Zc 13:1 Jn 3:5; 4:1+ countries, and bring you home to your own land. •I shall pour clean water over 25
you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all
11:19+ Jr 4:4+; 33:8 your idols. •I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove 26
the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. •I shall 27
Jn 17:3 2 Co 3:3 11:20 Ac 2:33 put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my
observances.[f] •You will live in the land which I gave your ancestors. You shall be 28
my people and I will be your God. •I shall rescue you from all your defilement. 29
I shall summon the corn and make it plentiful, and no more bring famines on you.
I shall increase the yield of fruit trees and fields so that you will no longer have 30
16:61-63 the ignominy of famine among the nations. •Then you will remember your evil 31
Jr 36:31 conduct and actions. You will loathe yourselves for your sins and your filthy
practices. •I assure you that I am not doing this for your sake—it is the Lord 32
Yahweh who speaks. Be ashamed and blush for your conduct, House of Israel.

Zc 3:7 The Lord Yahweh says this: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, 33
Ps 51:18 I will repopulate the cities and cause the ruins to be rebuilt. •Waste land, once 34
desolate for every passer-by to see, will now be farmed again. •Everyone will say: 35
Ps 107:36 Is 51:3 This land, so recently a waste, is now like a garden of Eden, and the ruined cities
once abandoned and levelled to the ground are now strongholds with people
Ps 126:2 living in them. •And the nations left round you will know that I, Yahweh, have 36
rebuilt what was destroyed and replanted what was ruined. I, Yahweh, have
spoken, and I will do it.

The Lord Yahweh says this: To grant them further favour, I shall 37
encourage the House of Israel to look for me, and shall increase them like a
flock of men, •like a flock of sacrificial animals, like the flock in Jerusalem on her 38
Lv 26:11-12 solemn feasts. And so your ruined cities will be filled with a human flock. And
men will learn that I am Yahweh." '

Is 26:19 Ho 6:2 **The dry bones**

3:12+ 37 The hand of Yahweh was laid on me, and he carried me away by the spirit 1
of Yahweh and set me down in the middle of a valley,[a] a valley full of
bones. •He made me walk up and down among them. There were vast quantities 2
of these bones on the ground the whole length of the valley; and they were quite

dried up. •He said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said, 'You know,
Lord Yahweh'. •He said, 'Prophesy over these bones. Say, "Dry bones, hear the
word of Yahweh. •The Lord Yahweh says this to these bones: I am now going to
make the breath[b] enter you, and you will live. •I shall put sinews on you, I shall
make flesh grow on you, I shall cover you with skin and give you breath, and you
will live; and you will learn that I am Yahweh." ' •I prophesied as I had been
ordered. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a sound of clattering; and
the bones joined together.[c] •I looked, and saw that they were covered with sinews;
flesh was growing on them and skin was covering them, but there was no breath
in them. •He said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man. Say to
the breath, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Come from the four winds, breath;
breathe on these dead; let them live!" ' •I prophesied as he had ordered me, and Gn 2:7 Ps 104:30 Rm 8:11 ↗ Rv 11:11; 20:4+
the breath entered them; they came to life again and stood up on their feet,
a great, an immense army.[d]

Then he said, 'Son of man, these bones are the whole House of Israel. They
keep saying, "Our bones are dried up, our hope has gone; we are as good as
dead".[e] •So prophesy. Say to them, "The Lord Yahweh says this: I am now going to
open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you
back to the soil of Israel. •And you will know that I am Yahweh, when I open
your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. •And I shall put my 39:29 1 Th 4:8
spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you
will know that I, Yahweh, have said and done this—it is the Lord Yahweh who
speaks." '

Judah and Israel in one kingdom

Mi 2:12

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, take a
stick and write on it, "Judah and those Israelites[f] loyal to him". Take another
stick and write on it, "Joseph, the wood of Ephraim, and all the House of Israel
loyal to him".[g]

'Join one to the other to make a single piece of wood, a single stick in your
hand. •And when the members of your nation say, "Tell us what you mean",
say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: I am taking the stick of Joseph, now in the
hand of Ephraim, and those tribes of Israel loyal to him, and I am going to put Zc 11:7,14
the stick of Judah with them[h]. I shall make one stick out of the two, and I shall
hold them as one."

'Keep the pieces of wood you have written on in your hand where they
can see, •and say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: I am going to take the sons
of Israel from the nations where they have gone. I shall gather them together
from everywhere and bring them home to their own soil. •I shall make them into

e. Referring either to the poor soil of Palestine which is to be made wonderfully rich, v. 30, or to the practice of infant sacrifice, Lv 18:21+. Possibly both are in the prophet's mind.

f. The spirit (breath) of God, which creates and gives life, Gn 1:2; 2:7+, lays hold on men to endow them with superhuman power, Gn 41:38; Ex 31:3; 1 S 16:13, particularly the prophets, Jg 3:10+. The characteristic of the messianic age is to be an extraordinary outpouring of the spirit, Zc 4:6b; 6:8, on all men, endowing them with special graces, Nb 11:29; Jl 3:1-2; Ac 2:16-21+. But, more mysteriously, for each receiver the spirit will be the principle of an inward renewal making possible a faithful observance of the law of God, Ezk 36:26-27; 37:14; 11:19; Is 32:15-19; Zc 12:10; thus the spirit will be the principle inspiring the new covenant, Jr 31:31+; like life-giving water it will nourish fruits of integrity and holiness, Is 44:3; Jn 4:1+, which in turn will guarantee the favour and protection of God for man, Ezk 39:24,29. This effusion of the spirit will be effected through the Messiah who will be the first recipient of it, to be able to accomplish his saving work, Is 11:1-3; 42:1; 61:1; cf. Mt 3:16+.

37 a. The valley already mentioned in 3:22-23 and 8:4.

b. In Hebr., the one word *ruah* means 'spirit', 'breath', 'wind'.

c. Lit. 'the bones came towards one another' Greek.

d. Here, as in Ho 6:2; 13:14 and Is 26:19, God announces, vv. 11-14, the messianic restoration of Israel after the sufferings of the Exile, cf. Rv 20:4+. But also, by the imagery chosen, he is already preparing minds for the idea of an individual resurrection of the body, vaguely perceived in Jb 19:25+ and explicitly stated in Dn 12:2; 2 M 7:9-14,23-36; 12:43-46; cf. 2 M 7:9+. For the N.T., see Mt 22:29-32 and especially 1 Co 15.

e. This remark suggests that the vision takes place in Babylon, among the discouraged exiles.

f. Here the term is not used in antithesis to Judaeans, but means the whole population of the Southern Kingdom.

g. I.e. the whole Northern Kingdom which vanished after the fall of Samaria and the deportation of 720.

h. 'the stick of Judah with them' corr.

one nation in my own land and[i] on the mountains of Israel, and one king
Jr 3:18+ Jn 10:16 is to be king of them all; they will no longer form two nations, nor be two
separate kingdoms. •They will any longer defile themselves with their idols and 23
their filthy practices and all their sins. I shall rescue them from all the betrayals[j]
they have been guilty of; I shall cleanse them; they shall be my people and I will
34:23 ↗Jn 10:16 ↗28:26 be their God. •My servant David will reign over them, one shepherd for all; 24
they will follow my observances, respect my laws and practise them. •They will 25
Tb 14:7 Jr 17:25 Jl 4:20 live in the land that I gave my servant Jacob, the land in which your ancestors
lived. They will live in it, they, their children, their children's children, for ever.
Jr 31:31+ Heb 13:20 David my servant is to be their prince for ever. •I shall make a covenant of peace 26
with them, an eternal covenant with them. I shall resettle them and increase
43:7 Rv 21:3 them; I shall settle my sanctuary among them for ever. •I shall make my home 27
Lv 26:11-12 above them; I will be their God, they shall be my people. •And the nations will 28
learn that I am Yahweh the sanctifier of Israel, when my sanctuary is with them
for ever." '

Jl 4:9 ↗Rv 20:7-10 **Against Gog, king of Magog**[a]

38 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Son of man, turn 1 2
27:13; 32:26 Gn 10:2 towards Gog and the country of Magog,[b] the prince of Rosh, Meshech
and Tubal,[c] and prophesy against him. •Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: 3
39:1 I am against you, Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. •I will turn you 4
29:4 round, fixing hooks in your jaws,[d] and drag you and your troops along, all the
horses and well-armoured horsemen, and all that great army carrying shields
27:10+ and bucklers, and wielding swords. •Persia and Cush and Put are with them, all 5
27:14 with buckler and helmet; •Gomer and all its troops, northernmost Beth- 6
togarmah and all its troops,[e] and many nations with you. •Be ready, be well 7
prepared, you and all your troops and the others rallying round you, and hold
yourself at my service.[f]

Many days will pass before you are given orders; in years to come you will 8
march against this country. Its inhabitants will have been living undisturbed,[g]
remote from all other peoples, since they escaped the sword and were gathered
in from various nations, here in the long-deserted moutains of Israel. •Like a 9
storm you will come up and onwards, and cover the land like a cloud, you, your
army and many nations with you.

The Lord Yahweh says this: On that day, a thought is going to enter your mind 10
and you will work out a wicked plan.[h] •You will say: I will attack this 11
undefended country and march against this peaceful nation living undisturbed.
They all live in towns that have no walls or bars or gates. •To plunder them for 12
loot, I am going to reach out my hand[i] towards the ruins they live in, against
this nation gathered out of other nations, these stock-breeders and tradesmen
25:13+ 1 K 10:1+ who live at the navel of the earth.[j] •Sheba and Dedan, the traders of Tarshish 13
and all its young lions will ask you: Have you come for plunder? Are you massing
your troops with a view to looting? To make off with gold and silver, seize
cattle and goods, and come away with unlimited spoil?"

'And so, son of man, say in prophecy to Gog, "The Lord Yahweh says this: 14
Is it not true that you are planning to set out[k] at a time when my people Israel
is living undisturbed? •You plan to leave your home in the far north, you and 15
many nations with you, a great army of countless troops all mounted. •You plan 16
to invade Israel, my people. You will be like a cloud covering the earth. I myself
am going to bring you in days to come to attack my country, so that the
nations may learn what I am, when I have used you, Gog, to display my
Ex 14:4 holiness to them.

The Lord Yahweh says this: It was of you[l] that I spoke in the past 17
through my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied and foretold your
invasion.[m] •On the day Gog attacks the land of Israel—it is the Lord Yahweh 18
who speaks—I shall grow angry.[n] In my anger, •my jealousy and the heat of 19

my fury I say it: I swear that on that day there will be a fearful quaking in the
20 land of Israel. •At my presence the fish in the sea and the birds of heaven, the
wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl along the ground, and all men on earth, Am 8:9+
21 will quake. Mountains will fall, cliffs crumble, walls collapse, and •I will confront
him with every sort of terror[o]—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. His men will 2 Ch 20:23 Zc 14:14
22 turn their swords on each other, •I will punish him with plague and bloodshed Ps 11:6 Rv 20:9
and send torrential rain, hailstones, fire and brimstone against him and his
23 hordes and against the many nations with him. •I mean to display my greatness Si 36:3
and holiness and to compel the many nations to acknowledge me; this is how Jl 4:17
they will learn that I am Yahweh."

1 39 [a]"Son of man, prophesy against Gog. Say, "The Lord Yahweh says this: Jl 4:9
Now I set myself against you, Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. 32:26; 38:3-4
2 I will turn you round, lead you on, and bring you from the farthest north to
3 attack the mountains of Israel. •I will break the bow in your left hand and dash
4 the arrows out of your right. •You will be killed on the mountains of Israel, you
and all your hordes, and the nations with you. I shall make you food for carrion
5 birds and wild beasts. •You will fall in the open countryside. I have spoken—it is
6 the Lord Yahweh who speaks. •I will send fire to Magog and on those living un- 38:23
7 disturbed on islands, and they will learn that I am Yahweh. •I am going to see
that my holy name is known among my people Israel, and I will no longer allow
my holy name to be profaned; the nations shall learn that I am Yahweh, holy
in Israel.[b]
8 All this is going to happen, all this is going to take place—it is the Lord
Yahweh who speaks. This is the day I predicted.
9 The citizens of the towns of Israel will go out and use these arms for Ps 46:9
firewood: shields and bucklers, bows and arrows, clubs and javelins. For seven
10 years they will feed the fire with them. •Men will stop looking for wood in the
countryside or cutting it in the forest; they will be feeding the fire with arms.
They will plunder those who plundered them, and take spoil from those who
despoiled them—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.
11 On that day, I shall give Gog a famous spot in Israel forh is grave—the valley Na 3:3
of the Abarim,[c] on the east of the Sea—the valley that turns back the traveller—
and there Gog and his whole army will be buried, and it shall be called the Valley
12 of Hamon-gog.[d] •The House of Israel will take seven months to bury them and

i. 'my own land and' Greek.
j. 'betrayals' Syr.; 'habitations' Hebr.

38 a. Though not a pure apocalypse, this poem already shows a number of apocalyptic features. While the earlier prophets were in the main concerned with contemporary morality and only occasionally looked ahead to a more glorious future, the purpose of an apocalypse, whether written or spoken, is usually to console by the visions the prophet has seen. These visions reveal a future that will eclipse present misery. Often, too, they reveal the forthcoming triumphs of divine judgement and, opening eschatological vistas, unveil mysteries of the world to come. Although this form of literature was particularly cultivated in later Judaism, the Bible contains several examples of its earlier stages of development, cf. Introduction to the Prophets. Ezk 38-39 marks the earliest stage. Further examples occur in Is 24-27; Dn 7-12; Zc 9-14. The most vigorous period of development was the 2nd century B.C. (the *Book of Enoch*, etc.). It is represented in the N.T. by the apocalypse of St John (Rv).

b. 'Gog and the country of Magog' Greek; 'Gog, country of Magog' Hebr.

c. Meshech and Tuba are northern countries on the borders of the Black Sea, cf. 27:13. Magog, not known from other sources, should be assigned to the same area. It seems useless to try to identify Gog. Doubtless deriving features from several contemporary personalities, he figures here as the type of victorious barbarian who in an unspecified distant future will inflict the final ordeals on Israel.

d. Yahweh seizes Gog and will enforce obedience on him.

e. Probably the Cimmerians, also from the N.

f. 'at my service' Greek; 'at their service' Hebr.

g. Hence long after the return to Palestine.

h. Unaware of being the instrument of Yahweh, Gog supposes himself a free agent.

i. 'reach out my hand' Greek.

j. Jerusalem, centre of the world, cf. 5:5.

k. 'you are planning to set out' Greek.

l. 'It was of you' versions; 'Was it of you' Greek.

m. Allusions to a future invasion are found in the earlier prophets, see for example Jr 3-6, but Ezekiel here seems to be thinking of prophets earlier than Jeremiah.

n. So far, Gog has been the instrument of Yahweh who now, however, turns on him to inflict a terrible defeat.

o. 'every sort of terror' Greek; 'all my mountains' Hebr.

39 a. Ch. 39 is not a doublet of ch. 38 but a development of its closing verses—a detailed account of the defeat of Gog and its consequences.

b. Or possibly (versions and some Hebr. MSS) 'the holy one of Israel'.

c. 'famous' versions. 'Abarim' Vulg. The Abarim hills constitute the plateau of Moab. The 'valley' is evidently the deep and precipitous gorge of the Arnon.

d. I.e. 'of the horde of Gog'.

cleanse the country. •All the people of the country will dig their graves, and be 13
honoured for this on the day when I reveal my glory—it is the Lord Yahweh who
speaks. •Men will be selected to go continually up and down the country to 14
bury those left on the ground and cleanse it. For seven months they will go
searching.[e] •If one of them sees any human bones as they go up and down the 15
country he will put a mark beside them until the gravediggers have buried them
Nb 19:16 Dt 21:23 in the valley of Hamon-gog—•the name of the town[f] is to be Hamonah—and 16
so have cleansed the country."

Rv 19:17-18 'Son of man, the Lord Yahweh says this. Speak to every kind of bird and 17
to all wild beasts, "Muster, come here, meet from everywhere around for the
sacrifice I am making for you, a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel; you
will eat flesh and drink blood. •You will eat the flesh of heroes, you will drink the 18
blood of the princes of the world. They are all rams and lambs, goats and fat
bulls of Bashan. •You will feed full on fat, drink yourselves drunk with blood, 19
Rv 19:21 at this sacrifice I am making for you. •You will glut yourselves at my table on 20
horses and chargers, on heroes and common soldiers—it is the Lord Yahweh
who speaks."

Conclusion[g]

Ex 14:4 'That is how I shall display my glory to the nations, and all nations will feel 21
my sentence when I judge, and feel my hand when I strike them. •The House of 22
Israel will know that I am Yahweh their God, from that day forward for ever.
And the nations will learn that the House of Israel was exiled for their sin in 23
behaving so treacherously to me that I had to avert my face from them because
they had rebelled against me, and to hand them over to their enemies; and they all
perished by the sword. •I treated them as their filthy sins deserved and hid my face 24
from them. •And so, thus says the Lord Yahweh: Now I am going to bring 25
back the captives of Jacob, now I am going to take pity on the whole House of
Ps 106:8 Israel and show myself jealous for my holy name.

Tb 14: 'They will forget the disgrace of having so often betrayed me when they were 26
living safely in their own land, with no one to disturb them. •When I bring them 27
home from the peoples, when I bring them back from the countries of their
enemies, when I reveal my holiness in them for many nations to see, •they will 28
know that I am Yahweh their God, when I rescue the captives from the pagans
11:19; 37:14 and reunite them in their own country, not leaving a single one behind. •I shall 29
never hide my face from them again, since I shall pour out my spirit on the House
of Israel—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.'

IV. THE TORAH OF EZEKIEL[a]

The future Temple

Tb 14:6 8:3 40 In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the 1
tenth day of the month, fourteen years after the destruction of the city,[b] the
1:1-3; 37:1 ↗Rv 21:10 hand of Yahweh came on me. •In a divine vision he took me away to the land 2
of Israel[c] and put me down on a very high mountain, on the south of which
there seemed to be built a city.[d] •He took me to it, and there I saw a man[e] who 3
↗Rv 11:1; 21:15 seemed to be made of bronze. He had a flax cord and a measuring rod in his
hand and was standing in the gateway. •The man said to me, 'Son of man, look 4
carefully, listen closely and pay attention to everything I show you, since you
Ex 25:9; 25: 40 have only been brought here for me to show it to you. Tell the House of
Israel everything that you see.'

The outer wall

Ex 27:9-19 The Temple was surrounded with a wall, and the man was holding a measur- 5
Ex 38:9-20 2 Ch 3:3 ing rod that was six cubits long, each cubit a forearm and a handbreadth.[f]

He measured the thickness of this construction—one rod; and its height—one rod.

The east gate[g]

6 He went to the east gate, climbed the steps and measured its threshold: one Ne 3:29
7 rod deep. •Each guardroom one rod by one rod; and the walls between the guardrooms five cubits thick; and the threshold of the gate inwards from the
9 porch of the gate: one rod.[h] •He measured the porch of the gate: eight cubits; its
10 jambs: two cubits; the porch of the gate was at the inner end. •There were three guardrooms on each side of the east gate, all three the same size; the walls
11 between them all the same thickness each side. •He measured the width of the entrance: ten cubits; and the width all down the gateway: thirteen cubits.
12 There was a rail in front of the guardrooms; each rail on either side was one
13 cubit. And the guardrooms on either side were six cubits square. •He measured the width of the gate from the back wall of one guardroom to the back wall of
14 the other;[i] it was twenty-five cubits across from window to window. •He measured
15 the porch: twenty cubits; after the porch of the gate came the outer court.[j] •From
16 the entrance end of the gate to the porch opposite: fifty cubits. •On each side of the gate there were splayed openings[k] both in the guardrooms and in the spaces between, and there were openings all round inside the porch as well, and palm trees decorating the jambs.[l]

The outer court

17 He took me through to the outer court that had rooms and a paved terrace
18 going all the way round; there were thirty rooms on this terrace. •This terrace, which came right up to the sides of the gates and matched their depth, is the
19 Lower Terrace. •He measured across the outer court[m] from the lower gate to the outside of the inner court: a hundred cubits on the eastern and northern sides.

The north gate

20 21 He measured the length and breadth of the north gate of the outer court. •It had three guardrooms on each side; the thickness of the walls between them, and its porch too, all measured the same as those of the first gate: fifty cubits by
22 twenty-five cubits. •Its windows, its porch and its palm-tree decoration all measured the same as those of the east gate. There were seven steps up to it,
23 and its porch was at the inner end.[n] •In the inner court there was, opposite the

e. 'to bury those...' Greek. One corpse left on the ground would have defiled the country; but it would take seven months to bury so many dead.

f. Of the town nearest the burying place.

g. The conclusion to the whole section, not to the oracle against Gog. It sums up the teaching of Ezekiel as expressed 5:8,10; 28:26; 34:30, etc.

40 a. The final section of Ezk, ch. 40-48, is a blueprint for the religious and political rehabilitation of the Israelite nation in Palestine. The prophet is inspired by his profound knowledge of past history, but he does his best to adapt the earlier legislation to new conditions, and take advantage of recent experience to preserve Israel from the temptations and apostasies which have led the nation to ruin. Henceforth Ezekiel assumes the role of organizer intent on realising long-foreseen and long-desired reforms. His earlier promises of restoration and of a covenant animated by the spirit presupposed a reorganisation of the community. Living at a time when the whole structure of Israel needed to be rebuilt enabled Ezekiel to draw up a founding charter for what was shortly to emerge as Judaism, and to provide a basis for all future efforts and aspiration from Ezra to the heavenly Jerusalem of the apocalypse of St John. In all this, the Christian reader will be aware of the high ideal of holiness, 44:23; 43:7, and the sense of the presence of God, 48:35, later to be realised in the Church.

b. September-October 573.

c. 'took me...Israel' Greek.

d. Jerusalem evidently, though a Jerusalem expanded and idealised.

e. This 'man' is clearly an angel who explains the prophet's vision to him. Angelic interpreters are a feature of late prophetic literature, cf. Dn 8:16; 9:21f; 10:5f; Zc 1:8f; 2:2, etc.

f. There seem to have been two cubits: the common cubit of 6 palms, or handbreadths, and the older 'great cubit' of 7 palms. Ezekiel makes it clear that he uses the latter, which measures 'one (common) cubit and a palm'.

g. The three gates of the outer court are alike; only the E. gate is described in detail.

h. V. 8 is not in the versions but, by dittography, added in Hebr.: 'He measured the porch of the gate, on the inside: one rod'.

i. 'to the back wall of the other' corr.

j. 'He measured' corr. 'the porch' Greek. 'the outer court' translation doubtful.

k. Translation uncertain.

l. These elaborate gates, the only openings in the surrounding wall, enable a watch to be kept on those who enter. Ezekiel insists that the Temple shall be kept pure from foreigners and sinners.

m. 'across the outer court' Greek.

n. 'and its porch was at the inner end' Greek. So also v. 26.

north gate, a gate like the one opposite the east gate.[o] He measured the distance from one gate to the other: a hundred cubits.

The south gate

He took me to the south side where there was a south gate; he measured its 24
guardrooms,[p] wall-thicknesses and porch; they were of the same dimensions as
the others. •All round it and its porch were windows, like the other windows; it 25
measured fifty cubits by twenty-five cubits, •and it had seven steps up to it; its 26
porch was at the inner end and had palm-tree decoration on its jambs, one on
each side. •The inner court had a south gate; he measured the distance southwards 27
from one gate to the other: a hundred cubits.

The inner court. The south gate

He then took me into the inner court by the south gate; he measured the south 28
gate which was the same size as the others. •Its guardrooms, wall-thicknesses 29
and porch all measured the same as the others. It and its porch had windows
all round.It measured fifty cubits by twenty-five cubits. •Its porch, measured, 30
in all, all round, was twenty-five cubits by five cubits. •The porch gave on to 31
the outer court. It had palm trees on its jambs, each side, and eight steps
leading up to it.

The east gate

He took me to the east gate[q] and measured it. It was the same size as the 32
others. •Its guardrooms, the thickness of its walls, its porch all measured the 33
same as the others. It and its porch had windows all round. Its area was fifty
cubits by twenty-five cubits. •Its porch gave on to the outer court. There were palm 34
trees on its jambs on either side, and eight steps leading up to it.

The north gate

He took me to the north gate and measured it. •Its guardrooms, the thickness 35 36
of its walls[r] and its porch all measured the same as the others. It had windows
all round. Its area was fifty cubits by twenty-five cubits. •Its porch[s] gave on to 37
the outer court. There were palm trees on its jambs on either side, and eight
steps leading up to it.

Subsidiary buildings at the gate

Lv 1:9 2 Ch 4:6 There was a room entered from the porch of the gates.[t] It was here that they 38
washed the holocaust. •And on either side of the porch of the gate there were 39
two tables for slaughtering the holocaust, the sacrifice for sin and the sacrifice
of reparation. •Going northward up to the gate, there were two tables outside 40
and two more tables at the porch end of the gate. •Four tables on the inside and 41
four tables on the outside of the porch; in all, eight tables on which the sacrifices
were offered. •There were also four tables of dressed stone for holocausts, a 42
cubit and a half long, a cubit and a half wide and a cubit high, on which all the
things necessary for killing the holocaust and the sacrifices were put. •Rims,[u] 43
a handbreadth broad, went all round the top, and on these tables was put the
sacrificial flesh.

He took me into the inner court; there were two lodges in the inner court, 44
one at the side of the north gate, facing south, the other at the side of the south
gate, facing north.[v] •He told me, 'The lodge looking south is for the priests in 45
Nb 3:27-32 charge of the Temple, •and the lodge looking north is for the priests who serve 46
44:15 the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, those of the sons of Levi who approach
Yahweh to serve him.'

The inner court

He measured the inner court. It was a quadrangle, a hundred cubits by a 47
hundred cubits, with the altar in front of the Temple.

The Temple.[w] The Ulam

48 He took me to the Ulam of the Temple and measured its door jambs[x]—five cubits each side; and the width of the entrance was fourteen cubits with a three- 49 cubit wall each side. •The Ulam was twenty cubits by twelve cubits. There were ten steps[y] leading up to it, and there were columns by the door jambs, one on each side. 1 K 6:3 2 Ch 3:4 1 K 7:21 2 Ch 3:15-17

The Hekal

1 41 He took me into the Hekal and measured its door jambs: six cubits deep 2 on the one side, six cubits deep on the other.[a] •The width of the entrance was ten cubits. The walls each side of the entrance were five cubits on the one side and five cubits on the other. He measured its length: forty cubits; and its width: twenty cubits. 1 K 6:3 2 Ch 3:5-7 Tb 14:6

The Debir

3 He went in and measured the door jambs at the entrance: two cubits; then 4 the entrance: six cubits; and the walls each side of the entrance: seven cubits. •He measured its length: twenty cubits; and its width measured across the end wall of the Hekal: twenty cubits. He then said to me, 'This is the most holy place'. 1 K 6:20 2 Ch 3:8-9

The side cells[b]

5 He measured the wall of the Temple: six cubits. The width of the side cells 6 was four cubits, all round the Temple. •The cells were one above the other, thirty of them in three stories.[c] The supports for the surrounding cells were fixed into the Temple wall, so that the cells were not recessed into the wall of the 7 Temple. •The width of the cells increased, story by story, for they surrounded 8 the Temple in the stories that went right round it, and hence...[d] •Then I saw that there was a paved terrace all round the Temple. The height of this, which 9 formed the base of the side cells, was a full rod of six cubits.[e] •The outer wall of the side cells was five cubits thick and the pavement formed a verandah outside 10 the cells of the Temple. •Beyond the rooms came an area twenty cubits wide 11 right round the Temple. •And for getting from the side cells on to the verandah there was one entrance on the north side and one entrance on the south side. The width of the verandah was five cubits right round. 1 K 6:5-6

The building on the west side[f]

12 The building to the west of this surrounding area was seventy cubits by ninety 13 cubits, and the wall of the building was five cubits thick, all round. •He measured the length of the Temple: a hundred cubits. The length of the court plus the 14 building and its walls: a hundred cubits. •The breadth of the facade of the 15 Temple with the quadrangle: a hundred cubits. •He measured the length of the building plus the surrounding area at the back, plus the side depth of its door: a hundred cubits. Jr 31:39 Zc 2:5

Particulars of the Temple itself

16 The inside of the Hekal and the porches of the court, •their thresholds, the 1 K 6:15-18

o. 'like the one opposite the east gate' Greek.
p. 'guardrooms' Greek.
q. 'the east gate' Greek.
r. In the plural with Greek.
s. 'Its porch' Greek.
t. 'from the porch of the gates' Greek. The exact position of these rooms is not clear.
u. 'Rims' versions.
v. The translation follows the Greek.

w. The Temple proper, with its three parts: Ulam or Vestibule, Hekal or Hall (the 'Holy'), Debir or Sanctuary (the 'Holy of Holies'). It is an almost exact replica of the Temple of Solomon, 1 K 6, and hence described with less detail than the surrounding constructions, the arrangement of which is entirely original.
x. 'door jambs' Greek.
y. 'ten steps' Greek.

41 a. Hebr. adds 'the width of the tabernacle'.
b. Similar cells existed in the Temple of Solomon; 1 K 6:5-6. Here, however, their disposition is obscure and their purpose unstated. It has been suggested that they were the 'treasury' of the Temple.
c. 'thirty' Syr.
d. End of verse unintelligible.
e. Hebr. adds an incomprehensible word.
f. Apparently a great roofless hall; its purpose is not known. There seems to have been no such building in the Temple of Solomon. Cf. however 2 K 23:11 and 1 Ch 26:18.

window screens, the three sets of doors, one at each threshold, were all panelled with wood, from floor to windows,[g] and the windows were screened with lattice-work. •From the door to the inner part of the Temple, and right round the 17
1 K 6:29-30 whole wall of the inner room, outside and inside, were carved[h] •cherubs and 18
palm trees, palm trees and cherubs alternating; each cherub had two faces—•the 19
face of a man turned towards the palm tree one side and the face of a lion towards the palm tree the other side, all round the Temple. •The cherubs and palm trees 20
were carved from the floor to above the entrance, as also on the wall of the hall. The pillars of the Temple were square. 21

The wooden altar

Ex 30:1-3
1 K 6:20-21 In front of the Debir, there appeared to be •a wooden altar, three cubits high 22
and two cubits square.[i] Its corners, base and sides were of wood. He said to me, 'This is the table in front of Yahweh'.

The doors

1 K 6:31-35 There was a double door for the Hekal, and a double door for the Debir. 23
These doors had two hinged leaves, two leaves for the one door, two leaves for 24
the other. •On them, on the doors of the Hekal, were carved cherubs and palm 25
trees like those carved on the walls. A wooden screen outside went across the front of the Ulam. •There were screened windows with flanking palm trees on the 26
walls of the Ulam, and of the cells to the side of the Temple and on the screens.

1 Ch 28:12 **Outbuildings of the Temple**[a]

46:19 42 He took me northward into the court and led me to the rooms facing the 1
outer court, those to the north of the building.[b] •They were one hundred 2
cubits long along on the north side and fifty cubits wide. •On the sides facing the 3
porches[c] of the inner court and the paving of the outer court was a gallery in front of the triple gallery, •and in front of the rooms was a walk, ten cubits broad measured 4
inwards and a hundred cubits long;[d] their doors looked north. •The top floor 5
rooms were narrow because the galleries took up part of the width, being narrower than those on the ground floor or those on the middle floor of the building, since these were divided into three stories and had no columns such as the court 6
had. Hence they were narrower than the ground floor ones or the middle floor ones below them. •The outer wall parallel to the rooms, facing them and giving 7
on to the outer court, was fifty cubits long, •the length of the rooms facing the 8
outer court being fifty cubits, while on the side facing the Temple it was a hundred cubits. •Beneath the rooms there was an entrance from the east, leading in from 9
the outer court.

In the thickness of the wall of the court, on the south side[e] fronting the court 10
and the building, were rooms. •A walk ran in front of them, as with the rooms 11
built on the north side; they were of the same length and breadth, and had similar design and doors in and out. •They were like the entrances of the southern 12
rooms; one entrance at the end of each walk, fronting the eastern wall, being the way in. •He said to me, 'The northern and southern rooms giving on to the court 13
are the rooms of the Debir, in which the priests who approach Yahweh will eat
Lv 2:3+ the most holy things. In them will be placed the most holy things: the oblation, the sacrifice for sin and the sacrifice of reparation, since this is a holy place. •Once 14
the priests have entered, they will not go out of the holy place into the outer
Lv 17:1+ court without leaving their liturgical vestments there, since these vestments are holy; they will put on other clothes before going near places assigned to the people.'

45:2 **Measurements of the court**

When he had finished measuring the inside of the Temple, he took me out to 15
the east gate and measured the whole area of the court. •He measured the east 16

side with his measuring rod: a total of five hundred cubits[f] by the measuring rod.
17 He then measured the north side: a total of five hundred cubits by the measuring
18 rod. •He then measured the south side: five hundred cubits by the measuring
19 rod •was the total. On the west side he measured five hundred cubits by the
20 measuring rod. •He measured the entire enclosing wall on all four sides: length five hundred, breadth five hundred, separating the sacred from the profane.

The return of Yahweh[a]

Is 52:8

1 2 43 He took me to the gate, the one facing east. •I saw the glory of the God of Israel approaching from the east. A sound came with it, like the sound of
3 the ocean, and the earth shone with his glory. •This vision was like the one I had seen when I had come for the destruction of the city, and like the one I had seen on the bank of the river Chebar. Then I prostrated myself.

Ps 85:9
Rv 18:1
Rv 1:15
10:18-19; 11:22-23
1

4 5 The glory of Yahweh arrived at the Temple by the east gate. •The spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; I saw the glory of Yahweh fill
6 the Temple. •And I heard someone speaking to me from the Temple[b] while the
7 man stood beside me. •The voice said, 'Son of man, this is the dais of my throne, the step on which I rest my feet. I shall live here among the sons of Israel for ever; and the House of Israel, they and their kings,[c] will no longer defile my
8 holy name with their whorings and the corpses of their kings, •setting their threshold beside my threshold and their pillars beside my pillars, with a party wall shared by them and me.[d] They used to defile my holy name by their filthy
9 practices, and this is why I destroyed them in my anger. •From now on they will banish their whorings and the corpses of their kings from my presence and I shall live among them for ever.

1 K 8:10-11
Rv 21:3
44:4
37:26-27+
Ex 19:12+; 25:8+
Ps 68:16
Lm 2:1
20:39

10 'Son of man, describe this Temple to the House of Israel, to shame them out
11 of their filthy practices. Let them draw up the plan, •and, if they are ashamed of their behaviour, show them the design and plan of the Temple, its exits and entrances, its shape, how all of it is arranged, the entire design and all its principles. Give them all this in writing so that they can see and take note of its
12 design and the way it is all arranged and carry it out. •This is the charter of the Temple: all the surrounding area on top of the mountain is a most holy area. Such is the charter of the Temple.'

The altar

Ex 27:1-8
1 K 8:64
2 Ch 4:1; 7:7

13 Here are the dimensions of the altar, in cubits each of a cubit plus a handbreadth. The base: one cubit high and one cubit wide. The ledge all round
14 it: one span. This is the height[e] of the altar: •from the ground level of the base up to the lower plinth, two cubits high and one cubit wide; from the lesser plinth
15 to the greater plinth, four cubits high and one cubit wide. •The altar hearth: four
16 cubits high, with four horns projecting from the hearth, •the hearth being square:
17 twelve cubits by twelve cubits; •and the square plinth: fourteen cubits by fourteen cubits; and the ledge all round: half a cubit; and the base: one cubit all round. The steps were on the east side.

The consecration of the altar

Ex 29:36-37
Lv 8:10-15
1 M 4:52-56

18 He said to me, 'Son of man, the Lord Yahweh says this: As regards the altar, this is how things are to be done when it has been built for the offering of

g. 'three sets of' translation doubtful. 'from floor' corr.
h. 'were carved' Greek.
i. 'two cubits square' Greek.

42 a. The various data assembled in this chapter are obscure.
b. 'to the north of' Greek.
c. 'the porches' Greek.
d. 'a hundred cubits long' versions.
e. 'on the south side' Greek; 'on the east side' Hebr.
f. 'five hundred cubits' versions.

43 a. The vision of the return of Yahweh corresponds with that of his departure, 10:18-19; 11:22-23.
b. Yahweh himself, not the angel accompanying Ezekiel.
c. Hebr. adds 'their high places'. Greek 'with them'.
d. The previous Temple actually adjoined the palace of David, 1 K 7:8. Ezekiel relegates the palace to another part of the city, reserving the entire E. height of Jerusalem for the Temple.
e. 'the height' Greek; 'the edge' Hebr.

the holocaust and for the pouring of blood. •To those levitical priests of the race 19
44:15+ of Zadok who approach me to serve me—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—you
must give a young bull as a sacrifice for sin. •You are to take some of its blood 20
and put it on the four horns and the four corners of the plinth and the surrounding
ledge. In this way you will purify it and make atonement on it. •Then take the 21
bull of the sacrifice for sin and burn it in that part of the Temple which is cut off
from the sanctuary. •On the second day, you must offer an unblemished he-goat 22
as the sacrifice for sin, and the altar is to be purified again as with the bull. •When 23
you have finished the purification you must offer a young bull without blemish
and an unblemished ram chosen from the flock. •You are to present them before 24
Yahweh, and the priests will sprinkle salt on them and offer them as a holocaust
Lv 8:33-35 to Yahweh. •As a sacrifice for sin, every day for seven days you must offer a 25
he-goat, a bull and an unblemished ram from the flock, •for a week. In this way 26
the altar will be atoned for and will be purified and inaugurated. •At the end of 27
that time, on the eighth day and afterwards, the priest is to offer your holocausts
and your communion sacrifices on the altar, and I will look kindly on you—it is
the Lord Yahweh who speaks.'

The use of the east gate

Ps 24:7 **44** He brought me back to the outer east gate of the sanctuary. It was shut. 1
Yahweh said to me, 'This gate will be kept shut. No one will open it or go 2
through it, since Yahweh the God of Israel has been through it. And so it must
be kept shut. •The prince himself, however, may sit there to take his meal in the 3
presence of Yahweh.[a] He is to enter and leave through the porch of the gate.'

43:6-12 **Rules of admission to the Temple**

He led me through the north gate to the front of the Temple. I looked; I saw 4
the glory of Yahweh filling the Temple of Yahweh, and I prostrated myself.
Yahweh said to me, 'Son of man, pay attention, look carefully and listen closely 5
to everything I explain; these are all the arrangements of the Temple of Yahweh
and all its laws. Be careful about which men are admitted to the Temple and
which are excluded from the sanctuary.[b] •And say to the rebels of the House of 6
Israel, "The Lord Yahweh says this: You have gone beyond all bounds with
11:19; 22:26 Gn 17:10+ Jr 4:4+ Lm 1:10 all your filthy practices, House of Israel, •by admitting aliens, uncircumcised in 7
heart and body, to frequent my sanctuary and profane my Temple, while you
offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and break[c] my covenant with all your
filthy practices. •Instead of performing your duties to me in the Holy Place, 8
you have deputed someone else to perform your duties in my sanctuary.[d] •The 9
Ac 21:28-29 Lord Yahweh says this: No alien, uncircumcised in heart and body, is to enter
my sanctuary, none of those aliens living among the Israelites.[e]

The Levites

As regards the Levites who abandoned me when Israel strayed far from me 10
to follow its idols,[f] they must bear the weight of their own sin. •They are to be 11
servants in my sanctuary, responsible for guarding the Temple gates and serving
the Temple. They will kill the holocaust and the sacrifice for the people, and hold
themselves at the service of the people. •Since they used to be at their service in 12
front of their idols and were an occasion of sin to the House of Israel, very well,
I raise my hand against them—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks; they must bear
the weight of their sin. •They are never to approach me again to perform the 13
Lv 2:3+ priestly office in my presence, or to touch my holy things and my most holy things;
they must bear the disgrace of their filthy practices. •I shall give them the responsi- 14
bility of working in the Temple; I shall make them responsible for serving it and
for everything to be done in it.

The priests

40:46; 48:11 Nb 18:1-19; 25:13 As regards the levitical priests, the sons of Zadok,[g] who did their duty to me 15

in the sanctuary when the Israelites strayed far from me, they may still approach
me to serve me; they may stand in my presence to offer me the fat and blood—it
16 is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. •They may enter my sanctuary and approach
17 my table to serve me; they may perform my liturgy. •Once they enter the gates
of the inner court, they are to wear linen vestments; they are to wear no wool when
18 they serve inside the gates of the inner court and in the Temple. •They are to wear
linen caps on their heads, and linen breeches about their loins; they are not to Lv 6:3-4
19 wear belts of...[h] •When they go out to the people in the outer court,[i] they are
to remove the vestments in which they have performed the liturgy and leave
them in the rooms of the Holy Place, and put on other clothes, so as not to hallow 46:20
20 the people with their vestments.[j] •They are neither to shave their heads nor to let Lv 21:5
21 their hair grow long,[k] but must cut their hair to a reasonable length. •No
22 priest is to drink wine on the day he enters the inner court. •They are not to Lv 10:9
marry widows or divorced women, but only virgins of the race of Israel; they Lv 21:7,14
23 may, however, marry widows, if the widow of a priest. •They are to teach my
people the difference between what is sacred and what is profane and make them
24 understand the difference between what is clean and what is unclean. •They are to
be judges in disputes; they must judge in the spirit of my statutes; they must follow 20:11-12,16, 19-20
25 my laws and ordinances at all my feasts and keep my sabbaths holy. •They are
not to go near[l] a dead man, in case they become unclean, except in these
permissible cases, that is, for father, mother, daughter, son, brother or unmarried Lv 21:1-5
26 27 sister. •After one of them has been purified, seven days must elapse; •then,
on the day when he enters the Holy Place—enters the inner court to minister
in the Holy Place—he is to offer his sacrifice for sin—it is the Lord Yahweh
28 who speaks. •They are to have no inheritance;[m] I myself will be their inheri- Nb 18:20-24 Dt 18:1-2
tance. You are to give them no patrimony in Israel; I myself will be their
29 patrimony. •Their food is to be the oblation, the sacrifice for sin and the
sacrifice of reparation. Everything in Israel put under the ban shall be for them. Lv 7:10; 27:28+
30 The best of all your first-fruits, of every sort of due and of all that you offer,
is to go to the priests; and the best of your dough you are also to give to the
31 priests, so that a blessing may rest on your house. •Priests are not to eat the
flesh of anything that has died a natural death or been savaged, neither of a
bird nor of any other creature.[n]

The division of the country.[a] The portion for Yahweh

1 45 When you divide the country into portions by lot, you are to allocate 48:8-20
the sacred portion of the country to Yahweh: twenty-five thousand cubits
2 long and twenty thousand wide.[b] The whole of this land is to be sacred, •and 42:15-20

44 a. Cf. 46:1-2. Evidently an allusion to a sacred meal, presumably accompanying the communion sacrifice, Lv 7:15; Dt 12:7,18.

b. Translation doubtful. Hebr. 'at the entrance to the Temple and at all the exits from the sanctuary'.

c. 'and break' versions.

d. Probably alluding to the employment of more or less assimilated aliens, cf. Jos 9:27; Dt 29:10, in the service of the Temple of Jerusalem.

e. In the Temple of Herod in the days of Jesus, the following notice was still to be seen: 'Let no alien pass beyond the balustrade and wall surrounding the sanctuary. Whoever is caught doing so will have only himself to blame for the death which will be his penalty.' Several of these stone inscriptions have been unearthed.

f. Text corr. The Levites were frequently employed at the 'high places'. When these shrines were abolished by Dt and the reform under Josiah, these Levites lost their official standing and were forced to live on charity, Dt 12:12,18, etc., or else to reaffiliate themselves to the sanctuary in Jerusalem, Dt 18:6-8. Ezekiel approves the latter course but assigns them a subordinate status; they are to take over the duties of the aliens expelled from the Temple service.

g. The levitical priests, cf. Dt 18:1-5, are those who remained loyal to the service of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. They belonged to the clan of Zadok, the priest appointed by Solomon after the deprivation of Abiathar, 1 K 2:27-35.

h. Hebr. has 'sweat' here. Probably the word has another meaning, or else the text is corrupt.

i. Hebr. repeats 'in the outer court'.

j. The laity are forbidden to touch consecrated objects; they run the risk of being 'hallowed' or 'sanctified', cf. Lv 17:1+.

k. Long, unkempt hair symbolised either a vow, Nb 6:5, or mourning, cf. Ezk 24:17,23.

l. 'They are not to go near' versions.

m. 'They are to have no...' Vulg.

n. According to Lv 7:24 this applies to all Israelites.

45 a. Ezekiel divides the country into regular parallel strips in complete disregard of geographical features or population distribution. This is the most theoretical and impracticable part of Ezekiel's plan.

b. The domain of the priests, the Levites and the prince occupies the entire central part of the country: a strip 25,000 cubits wide (about 7 miles) having the Temple of Jerusalem as its central point and extending from the Jordan to the Mediterranean.

of this an area five hundred by five hundred cubits[c] square is to be for the sanctuary, with a boundary fifty cubits wide right round. •Out of this area you 3
are also to measure a section twenty-five thousand by ten thousand cubits, in which there shall stand the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. •This is to be the 4
sacred portion of the country; it shall belong to the priests who officiate in the sanctuary and approach Yahweh to serve him. There they are to have their houses and also a district set apart for the sanctuary. •An area twenty-five thousand 5
by ten thousand cubits is to be kept for the Levites serving the Temple to own, with towns to live in.[d] •You are to give the city possession of an area five thousand 6
by twenty-five thousand cubits, near the land belonging to the sanctuary; this is to be for the whole House of Israel.

The portion for the prince

The prince is to have a domain either side of the land belonging to the 7
Holy Place and of the land belonging to the city, and adjacent to the land belonging to the Holy Place and the land belonging to the city, stretching westwards from the west and eastwards from the east, its size equal to one of the portions between the west and the east frontiers •of the country. This is to be his 8
possession in Israel. Then my princes will no longer oppress my people; they must leave the rest of the country for the House of Israel, for its tribes.

Jr 22:3-5 The Lord Yahweh says this: Let this be enough for you, princes of Israel! 9
Give up your violence and plundering, practise justice and integrity, crush my
Lv 19:35-36 people no more with taxation—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. •Have scales 10
that are fair, a fair ephah, a fair bath. •Let the ephah and bath be equal, let 11
the bath hold one tenth of a homer and the ephah one tenth of a homer. Let the measures be based on the homer.[e] •The shekel is to be twenty gerahs. Twenty 12
shekels, twenty-five shekels and fifteen shekels are to make one mina.

Offerings for worship

Ex 30:13-16 Mt 23:23 'This is the offering that you are to levy: the sixth of an ephah for every 13
homer of wheat, and the sixth of an ephah for every homer of barley. •The dues 14
on oil: one bath of oil out of every ten baths or out of every cor (which is equal to ten baths or one homer, since ten baths equal one homer). •You are to levy 15
Lv 1:1+; 2: 1+; 3:1+ one sheep on every flock of two hundred from the patrimony[f] of Israel for the oblation, the holocaust and the communion sacrifice. This is to form your atonement—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. •Let all the people of the 16
country be subject to this due for the prince of Israel. •The prince is to make 17
himself responsible for providing the holocausts, oblation and libation for
46:1 feasts, New Moons and sabbaths, for all the solemn festivals of the House of
Ex 23:14+ Lv 23:24+ 2 Ch 31:3 Israel. He is to provide the sacrifice for sin, oblation, holocaust and communion sacrifices atoning for the House of Israel.

Ex 12:1+ **The feast of the Passover**

Lv 16:16 The Lord Yahweh says this: On the first day of the first month, you must 18
take a young bull without blemish, to purify the sanctuary. •The priest is to 19
take blood from the sacrifice for sin and put it on the doorposts of the Temple, on the four corners of the altar plinth and on the doorposts of the gates of the inner court. •You must do the same on the seventh of the month, on behalf of 20
anyone who has sinned through inadvertence or ignorance. This is how you are to make atonement for the Temple. •On the fourteenth day of the first month, 21
you must celebrate the feast of the Passover. For seven days everyone is to eat unleavened loaves. •On that day, the prince must offer a bull as a sacrifice for 22
sin, for himself and all the people in the country. •For the seven days of the 23
feast, he must offer Yahweh a holocaust of seven bulls and seven rams without blemish, daily for a week, and one he-goat daily as a sacrifice for sin, •offering 24

one ephah for each bull and one ephah for each ram, and a hin of oil for every ephah for the oblation.

The feast of Tabernacles Ex 23:14+

25 For the feast that falls on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, he must Nb 29:12
do the same for seven days, offering the sacrifice for sin, the holocaust, oblation and the oil.

The sabbath and the New Moon

1 **46** Thus speaks the Lord Yahweh: The east gate of the inner court must 45:17 Ex 20:8+
be kept shut for the six working days. On the sabbath day it is to be Nb 28:9-14
2 opened, as also on the day of the New Moon; •and the prince is to go in through the porch of the outer gate and take his position by the doorposts of the gate. The priests must then offer his holocaust and his communion sacrifice. He must prostrate himself on the threshold of the gate and go out, and the gate is
3 not to be shut again until the evening. •The people of the country are to prostrate themselves in the presence of Yahweh at the entrance to the gate on sabbaths
4 and days of the New Moon. •The holocaust offered to Yahweh by the prince on the sabbath day is to consist of six unblemished lambs and one unblemished
5 ram, •and an oblation of one ephah for the ram, and such oblation as he pleases
6 for the lambs, and a hin of oil for every ephah. •On the day of the New Moon it is to consist of a young bull without blemish, six unblemished lambs and one
7 unblemished ram, •when he must make an oblation of one ephah for the bull and one ephah for the ram, and what he pleases for the lambs, and a hin of oil for every ephah.

Miscellaneous regulations

8 When the prince goes in, he is to enter by the porch of the gate, and he must
9 leave by the same way. •When the people of the country come into the presence of Yahweh at the solemn festivals, those who have come in by the north gate to Ex 23:14-17
prostrate themselves are to go out by the south gate, and those who have come in by the south gate are to go out by the north gate; no one is to turn back to leave through the gate by which he entered but is to go out on the opposite side.
10 The prince is to come with them, coming in like them and going out like them. •On
11 feast days and solemn festivals the oblation must be one ephah for every bull, one ephah for every ram, what he pleases for the lambs, and a hin of oil for
12 every ephah. •When the prince offers Yahweh a voluntary holocaust or a voluntary communion sacrifice, the east gate is to be opened for him, and he is to offer his holocaust and his communion sacrifice as he does on the sabbath
13 day; when he has gone out, the gate is to be shut after him. •Every day he must offer[a] an unblemished lamb one year old as a holocaust to Yahweh; he must Ex 29:39
14 offer this every morning. •Every morning in addition he is to offer an oblation of one sixth of an ephah and one third of a hin of oil, for mixing with the flour.
15 This is the oblation to Yahweh, an eternal law fixed in perpetuity. •The lamb, the oblation and the oil are to be offered morning after morning for ever.[b]
16 The Lord Yahweh says this. If the prince presents his sons with part of his hereditary portion, the gift is to pass into the ownership of his sons, and
17 become their hereditary property. •If, however, he presents part of his hereditary portion to one of his servants, it shall only belong to the man until the year of liberation[c] and is then to revert to[d] the prince. Only his sons may retain his hereditary

c. These are the dimensions of the Temple.
d. 'with towns to live in' Greek.
e. The *ephah* is a solid, the *bath* a liquid measure. The *homer* and *cor* (v. 14) are the same.
f. 'patrimony' following Greek.

46 a. 'he must offer' some MSS and versions; 'you must offer' Hebr.
b. The daily sacrifice was indeed zealously resumed by post-exilic Judaism, and only ceased in the final days of the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
c. Presumably the jubilee year, occurring every 50 years, cf. Lv 25:1+.
d. 'revert to' Greek.

portion. •The prince may not take any part of the people's hereditary portion 18
and thus rob them of their rightful possessions; he must provide the patrimony
of his sons out of his own property, so that no member of my people is robbed
of his rightful possessions." '

[e]He took me through the entrance at the side of the north gate that leads 19
42:1-9 to the rooms of the Holy Place set apart for the priests. And there before us,
to the west, was a space at the end. •He said to me, 'This is where the priests 20
Lv 4-5 are to boil the slaughtered animals for the sacrifice for sin and the sacrifice of
Lv 2 reparation, and where they are to bake the oblation, without having to carry
44:19 them into the outer court and so run the risk of hallowing the people'. •He took 21
me into the outer court and led me to each of its four corners; in each corner
of the outer court was a compound; •in other words, the four corners of the 22
court contained four small compounds, forty cubits by thirty, all four being
the same size.[f] •Each of the four was enclosed by a wall, with hearths all round 23
the bottom of the wall. •He said, 'These are the kitchens where the Temple 24
servants are to boil the sacrifices offered by the people'.

The spring in the Temple

Zc 13:1; 14:8 Jn 4:1+ ↗Rv 22:1 47 He brought me back to the entrance of the Temple, where a stream came 1
out from under the Temple threshold and flowed eastwards, since the
Jl 4:18 Temple faced east. The water flowed from under the right side of the Temple,
south of the altar. •He took me out by the north gate and led me right round 2
outside as far as the outer east gate where the water flowed out on the right-hand
side. •The man went to the east holding his measuring line and measured off a 3
thousand cubits; he then made me wade across the stream; the water reached
my ankles. •He measured off another thousand and made me wade across the 4
stream again; the water reached my knees. He measured off another thousand
and made me wade across again; the water reached my waist. •He measured 5
off another thousand; it was now a river which I could not cross; the stream
had swollen and was now deep water, a river impossible to cross. •He then 6
said, 'Do you see, son of man?' He took me further, then brought me back to
↗Rv 22:2 the bank of the river. •When I got back, there were many trees on each bank 7
Zc 14:8 of the river. •He said, 'This water flows east down to the Arabah[a] and to the 8
sea; and flowing into the sea it makes its waters wholesome. •Wherever the 9
river flows, all living creatures teeming in it will live. Fish will be very
plentiful, for wherever the water goes it brings health, and life teems wherever
the river flows.[b] •There will be fishermen on its banks. Fishing nets will be 10
spread from En-gedi to En-eglaim. The fish will be as varied and as
plentiful as the fish of the Great Sea.[c] •The marshes and lagoons, however, will 11
not become wholesome, but will remain salt. •Along the river, on either bank, 12
will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that
never fails; they will bear new fruit every month, because this water comes from
↗Rv 22:2 the sanctuary. And their fruit will be good to eat and the leaves medicinal.

The frontiers of the land[d]

Nb 34:1-12 Jos 1:4; 13:1-6 Jg 20:1+ 'The Lord Yahweh says this: Here are the frontiers of the territories to 13
be allotted between the twelve tribes of Israel, with two portions for Joseph.[e]
You must share it out equally between you, since I swore to your fathers that I 14
would give them this land which now falls to you as your inheritance. •Here are 15
the frontiers of the land. On the north, from the Great Sea by way of Hethlon to
the Pass of Hamath[f] and on to Zedad, •Berothah, Sibraim lying between 16
the territories of Damascus and Hamath—and to Hazer-hat-ticon on the
borders of Hauran. •The frontier will extend from the sea to Hazer-enon, 17
marching with the frontier of Damascus to the north of it and the frontier of
Hamath also on the north; so much for[g] the northern frontier. •On the east 18
the Jordan will serve as frontier between Hauran and Damascus, between Gilead

and the land of Israel, down to the Eastern Sea[h] as far as Tamar; so much for
19 the eastern frontier. •On the south, from Tamar southward to the waters of Nb 34:3-5 Jos 15:1-4
Meribah in Kadesh, to the Wadi and the Great Sea; so much for the southern
20 frontier. •On the west the Great Sea will serve as frontier up to the point
21 opposite the Pass of Hamath; so much for the western frontier. •You are to
22 share out this land among yourselves, between the tribes of Israel. •You are to
divide it into inheritances for yourselves and the aliens settled among you who Ex 12:48+
have begotten children with you, since you are to treat them as citizens of Israel. Lv 19:34
They are to draw lots with you for their inheritance, with the tribes of Israel.
23 You must give the alien his inheritance in the tribe in which he is living—it is
the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

The division of the land[a]

1 48 'This is the list of the tribes. In the far north by way of Hethlon to the
Pass of Hamath, to Hazer-enon, with the frontier of Damascus lying
to the north, and marching with Hamath—the land from the eastern frontier
2 to the western frontier:[b] Dan, one portion. •Bordering Dan, from the eastern
3 frontier to the western frontier: Asher, one portion. •Bordering Asher, from
4 the eastern frontier to the western frontier: Naphtali, one portion. •Bordering
Naphtali, from the eastern frontier to the western frontier: Manasseh, one
5 portion. •Bordering Manasseh, from the eastern frontier to the western frontier:
6 Ephraim, one portion. •Bordering Ephraim, from the eastern frontier to the
7 western frontier: Reuben, one portion. •Bordering Reuben, from the eastern
8 frontier to the western frontier: Judah, one portion. •Bordering Judah, from
the eastern frontier to the western frontier, is the part you are to set aside,
twenty-five thousand cubits wide, and as long as each of the other portions
from the eastern frontier to the western frontier. The sanctuary will be in the Nb 1:50
centre of it.
9 'The part you must set aside for Yahweh is to be twenty-five thousand cubits 45:1-6
10 long and ten thousand cubits wide. •This consecrated portion is to belong to
the priests, being, on the north side, twenty-five thousand cubits; on the west
side ten thousand cubits wide, on the east side ten thousand cubits wide and
on the south side twenty-five thousand cubits long, and the sanctuary of Yahweh
11 will be in the centre of it. •This is to belong to the consecrated priests, to those of 44:15-16
the sons of Zadok who maintained my liturgy and did not go astray with the
12 straying Israelites, as the Levites went astray. •And so their portion is to be taken
13 out of the most holy portion of the land, near the territory of the Levites. •The
territory of the Levites, like the territory of the priests, is to be twenty-five Lv 25:32-34 Nb 35:1-2
thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide—the whole length being twenty-five
14 thousand and the width ten thousand. •It will be illegal for them to sell or
exchange any part of it, and the domain can never be alienated, since it is
15 consecrated to Yahweh. •As regards the remainder, an area of five thousand
cubits by twenty-five thousand, this is to be for the common use of the city, for
16 houses and pastures. The city is to stand in the centre. •Here are its ↗ Rv 21:15-17
measurements: on the north side, four thousand five hundred cubits; on the

e. The logical place for this passage is following 42:12.
f. 'small' Greek. Hebr. adds 'of the corners' at the end of the verse.

47 a. Here the term means the deep depression of Jordan. The sea is the Dead Sea whose bitter waters are to be sweetened.
b. The image of miraculous water flowing from the Temple and conferring a marvellous fertility, cf. Jn 4:1+, is later resumed in Rv (22:2).
c. The Mediterranean.
d. Not all the places named are easy to identify. If the N. frontier is to be situated on the latitude of Tripoli-Homs, the ideal country envisaged by Ezekiel extends far beyond the N. and S. limits ever reached since the days of David. On the other hand, the E. frontier makes the country very narrow. Compare the frontiers named in Nb 34:1-12. Cf. Jg 20:1+.
e. 'Here are the frontiers' some MSS and versions. 'with two portions for Joseph' Targ. and Vulg.
f. 'Hamath' transposed from v. 16.
g. Lit. 'This is' corr. So also in v. 18.
h. The Dead Sea.

48 a. Each tribe is assigned a strip of territory running with no exceptions from the Mediterranean to the E. frontier of the country. There are seven tribes to the N. of Jerusalem and the territory reserved for the sanctuary and the prince, and five tribes to the S.
b. 'to the western frontier' corr.

south side, four thousand five hundred cubits; on the east side, four thousand five hundred cubits; on the west side, four thousand five hundred cubits. •And 17
the city pastures are to extend two hundred and fifty cubits to the north, two hundred and fifty to the south, two hundred and fifty to the east, two hundred and fifty to the west. •One strip, contiguous to the consecrated portion, must 18
be left over, consisting of ten thousand cubits to eastward and ten thousand to westward, marching with the consecrated portion; this will bring in a revenue for feeding the municipal workmen. •These municipal workpeople are to be drawn 19
from all the tribes of Israel. •The portion is to have a total area of twenty-five 20
thousand cubits by twenty-five thousand. You are to allocate a quarter of the sacred portion to form the city. •What is left over shall be for the prince, on 21
either side of the sacred portion and of the common land belonging to the city, marching with the twenty-five thousand cubits to eastward[c] to the eastern frontier, and marching with the twenty-five thousand cubits to westward to the western frontier—running parallel with the other portions and belonging to the prince. In the centre will be the consecrated portion and the sanctuary of the Temple. •Thus, apart from the property of the Levites and the property 22
of the city which lie inside the prince's portion, everything between the borders of Judah and the borders of Benjamin is to belong to the prince.

'Here are the rest of the tribes: from the eastern frontier to the western 23
frontier: Benjamin, one portion. •Bordering Benjamin, from the eastern frontier 24
to the western frontier: Simeon, one portion. •Bordering Simeon, from the 25
eastern frontier to the western frontier: Issachar, one portion. •Bordering 26
Issachar, from the eastern frontier to the western frontier: Zebulun, one portion. Bordering Zebulun, from the eastern frontier to the western frontier: Gad, one 27
portion. •The southern border of Gad will be formed by the southern frontier 28
running through Tamar to the waters of Meribah in Kadesh, to the Wadi and the Great Sea. •This is how you are to divide the land into patrimonies for 29
the tribes of Israel; and these are to be their portions—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

The gates of Jerusalem

'Here are the ways out of the city. On the north side, being four thousand 30
↗ Rv 21:12-13 five hundred cubits long, •three gates: the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah, 31
the gate of Levi; the gates of the city are to be named after the tribes of Israel. On the east side, being four thousand five hundred cubits long, three gates: 32
the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin, the gate of Dan. •On the south side, 33
being four thousand five hundred cubits long, three gates: the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar, the gate of Zebulun. •On the west side, being four thousand 34
five hundred cubits long, three gates: the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher, the gate of Naphtali. •Total perimeter: eighteen thousand cubits. 35

Lv 26:11-12 1 K 8:16 Is 1:26+ Jr 3:17 Rv 3:12 'The name of the city in future is to be: Yahweh-is-there.'[d]

48 c. 'to eastward' corr.
d. In Hebr. *Yahweh sham*, possibly intended to suggest the sound of the name 'Jerusalem', but in any case summing up the entire religious and liturgical activity of Ezekiel.

DANIEL

THE YOUNG HEBREWS AT THE COURT OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar
2 king of Babylon marched on Jerusalem and besieged it. •The Lord delivered
Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hands, with some of the furnishings of the
Temple of God. He took them away to the land of Shinar,[a] and stored the sacred
vessels in the treasury of his own gods.

2 K 24:1f
2 Ch 36:5-7
5:2
Gn 10:10

3 The king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to select from the Israelites
4 a certain number of boys of either royal or noble descent; •they had to be
without any physical defect, of good appearance, trained in every kind of wisdom,
well-informed, quick at learning,[b] suitable for service in the palace of the king.
Ashpenaz himself was to teach them the language and literature of the Chaldaeans.
5 The king assigned them a daily allowance of food and wine from his own royal
table. They were to receive an education lasting for three years, after which they
6 were expected to be fit for the king's society. •Among them were Daniel,
7 Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who were Judaeans. •The chief eunuch gave
them other names, calling Daniel Belteshazzar, Hananiah Shadrach, Mishael
8 Meshach, and Azariah Abednego.[c] •Daniel, who was most anxious not to defile
himself with the food and wine from the royal table, begged the chief eunuch to
9 spare him this defilement;[d] •and by the grace of God Daniel met goodwill and
10 sympathy on the part of the chief eunuch. •But he warned Daniel, 'I am afraid
of my lord the king: he has assigned you food and drink, and if he sees you looking
thinner in the face than the other boys of your age, my head will be in danger
11 with the king because of you'. •At this Daniel turned to the guard whom the
chief eunuch had assigned to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He said,
12 'Please allow your servants a ten days' trial, during which we are given only
13 vegetables to eat and water to drink. •You can then compare our looks with
those of the boys who eat the king's food; go by what you see, and treat your
14 servants accordingly.' •The man agreed to do what they asked and put them on
15 ten days' trial. •When the ten days were over they looked and were in better
health than any of the boys who had eaten their allowance from the royal table;
16 so the guard withdrew their allowance of food and the wine they were to drink,
17 and gave them vegetables. •And God favoured these four boys with knowledge
and intelligence in everything connected with literature, and in wisdom; while
18 Daniel had the gift of interpreting every kind of vision and dream. •When the
period stipulated by the king for the boys' training was over, the chief eunuch

2 K 25:29-30
Jdt 12:2
Gn 39:4,21
Est 2:9
↗ Rv 2:10
Gn 41:12

1 a. 'to the land of Shinar' Hebr.: 'to Babylon' Greek. Hebr. adds 'to the temple of his gods'.

b. Not therefore to be trained merely as pages. In eastern courts those destined for the career of 'letters' (scribes, translators, archivists, scholars, astrologers, etc.) were trained from childhood.

c. Probably the copyist has deliberately changed the pagan name Abed Nebu, 'servant of Nebu' (the god whose name occurs in Nebuchadnezzar).

d. To disobey the dietary prohibitions of the Law was equivalent to apostasy, and the enforced hellenisation under Antiochus Epiphanes often put a strain on the Jews, cf. 2 M 6:18—7: 42.

presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. •The king conversed with them, and among 19
all the boys found none to equal Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. So
1 K 10:3-4 they became members of the king's court, •and on whatever point of wisdom 20
or information he might question them, he found them ten times better than
all the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom. •Daniel remained there 21
until the first year of King Cyrus.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM: THE COMPOSITE STATUE

The king questions his sages

2 In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had a 1
series of dreams;[a] his mind was troubled, sleep deserted him. •The king then 2
had magicians and enchanters, sorcerers and Chaldaeans[b] summoned to tell the
king what his dreams meant. They arrived and stood in the king's presence.
The king said to them, 'I have had a dream, and my mind is disturbed by a desire 3
to understand the dream'. •The Chaldaeans answered the king:[c] 4

'O king, live for ever![d] Tell your servants the dream, and we will reveal
its meaning for you.' •The king answered the Chaldaeans, 'This is my firm resolve: 5
if you cannot tell me what my dream was, and what it means, I will have you
torn limb from limb and your houses razed to the ground. •If, on the other hand, 6
5:17 you can tell me what I dreamt and what it means, I will give you presents,
rewards and high honour. So tell me what I dreamt and what it means.' •A 7
second time they said, 'Let the king tell his dream to his servants, and we will
reveal its meaning'. •But the king retorted, 'It is plain to me that you are trying 8
to gain time, knowing my proclaimed and firm resolve. •Your intention is 9
not to interpret my dream, but to make me misleading and tortuous speeches
while the time goes by. So tell me what my dream was, and I shall know whether
you can interpret it or not.' •The Chaldaeans answered the king, 'Nobody in the 10
world could find out the king's trouble; what is more, no other king, governor
or chief would think of putting such a question to any magician, enchanter or
Chaldaean. •The question the king asks is difficult, and no one can find the king 11
Gn 41:16 an answer to it, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with creatures of flesh.'
At this the king flew into a rage and ordered all the Babylonian sages to be put 12
to death. •On publication of the decree to have the sages killed, search was made 13
for Daniel and his companions to have them put to death.

Daniel intervenes

With shrewd and cautious words, however, Daniel approached Arioch, 14
commander of the king's executioners, when he was on his way to kill the Baby-
lonian sages. •He said to Arioch, the royal marshal, 'Why has the king issued 15
such an urgent decree?' Arioch explained matters to Daniel, •and Daniel went 16
off to ask the king for a stay of execution to give him the opportunity of revealing
his interpretation to the king. •Daniel then went home and told his friends 17
Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah what had happened, •urging them to beg the 18
Gn 24:7 Ps 136:26 God of heaven to show his mercy in this mysterious[e] affair, so that Daniel and
his friends might be spared the fate of the other Babylonian sages. •The mystery 19
was then revealed to Daniel in a night-vision, and Daniel blessed[f] the God of
heaven. •This is what Daniel said: 20

Ne 9:5 Ps 41:13 'May the name of God
be blessed for ever and ever,
Jb 12:13 Rv 5:12 since wisdom and power are his alone.
Ac 1:7+ Jb 34:24 Ws 6:3 Rm 13:1 His, to control the procession of times and seasons, 21
to make and unmake kings,

to confer wisdom on the wise,
and knowledge on those with wit to discern;
22 his, to uncover depths and mysteries, Jb 12:22 Ps 134:11f
to know what lies in darkness;
and light dwells with him.[g]
23 To you, God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise
for having given me wisdom and intelligence:[h]
now you have shown me what we asked you,
you have revealed the king's trouble to us.'

24 So Daniel went to see Arioch whom the king had made responsible for putting the Babylonian sages to death. On going in he said, 'Do not put the Babylonian sages to death. Take me into the king's presence and I will reveal the meaning
25 to the king.' •Arioch lost no time in bringing Daniel to the king. 'Among the exiles from Judah,' he said 'I have discovered a man who can reveal the meaning
26 to the king.' •The king said to Daniel (who had been given the name Belteshazzar),
27 'Can you tell me what my dream was, and what it means?' •Facing the king, Daniel replied, 'None of the sages, enchanters, magicians or wizards has been
28 able to tell the king the truth of the mystery which the king propounded; •but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and who has shown King Nebu- 1 Co 2:10-11
chadnezzar what is to take place in the days to come. These, then, are the 4:31 Rv 1:1,19; 4:1; 22:6
dream and the visions that passed through your head as you lay in bed:[i]
29 'O king, on your bed your thoughts turned to what would happen in the future, and the Revealer of Mysteries disclosed to you what is to take place.
30 This mystery has been revealed to me, not that I am wiser than any other man, but for this sole purpose: that the king should learn what it means, and that you should understand your inmost thoughts.
31 'You have had a vision, O king; this is what you saw: a statue, a great statue
32 of extreme brightness, stood before you, terrible to see. •The head of this statue was of fine gold, its chest and arms were of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,
33 34 its legs of iron, its feet part iron, part earthenware. •While you were gazing, a stone broke away, untouched by any hand,[j] and struck the statue, struck its feet 8:25
35 of iron and earthenware and shattered them. •And then, iron and earthenware, bronze, silver, gold all broke into small pieces as fine as chaff on the threshing- Ps 1:4
floor in summer. The wind blew them away, leaving not a trace behind. And the stone that had struck the statue grew into a great mountain, filling the whole
36 earth. •This was the dream; now we will explain to the king what it means.

2 **a.** Cf. the dreams of the Egyptian officials, Gn 40:5-23, and of Pharaoh, Gn 41:1-32. The dream is a true prophecy, but this is not its only purpose: it is made in cryptic terms in order that it may be a means of advancement to God's chosen servant, whose power of interpreting it is evidence that he has the spirit of God living in him.

b. 'Chaldaean' here means all those practising divination, an art commonly believed to have originated in Chaldaea. The various terms used in the lists of Dn 1:20; 2:2,10,27; 4:4; 5:7,11,15 have no precise technical significance.

c. The text here adds 'in Aramaic', meaning that the following chapters are in that language. Hebr. is resumed in 8:1.

d. The greeting is often found in Akkadian texts and was used in the Persian court until the Islamic period.

e. *raz*, mystery, is a word of Persian origin; its biblical use is confined to Dn, but it is found in the Qumran scrolls: its primary meaning is 'secret', but it seems already to possess something of the profundity of the Greek *mysterion* as used by St Paul, cf. Rm 16:25+.

f. The Jewish 'blessing' begins with an invocation to God or to his name, followed by a commemoration of his favours. When used liturgically it ends with a repetition of the initial eulogy, mentioning in abbreviated form the particular favour obtained.

g. The O.T. describes God as surrounded by light, Ex 24:17; Ezk 1:27; Hab 3:4, and as light itself, Is 60:19-20; Ws 7:26. The N.T. expresses this idea more clearly still, cf. for example 1 Jn 1:5-7; 1 Tm 6:16; Jm 1:17. cf. Jn 8:12+. Some early Jewish commentators cite this verse to vindicate the title 'Light' for the expected Messiah.

h. 'intelligence' LXX; 'strength' Aramaic.

i. The allegories in Dn, of which this is the first, are veiled descriptions of the great successive empires of history: Neo-Babylonian, Medan, Persian, Greek (Alexander's Asiatic kingdom governed by his successors). The allegory is here borrowed from ancient speculations on the ages of the world, the symbolism being used of metals in descending scale of value. Last of all comes the messianic kingdom. The empires of earth collapse and give place to a new kingdom which, being founded by God, is everlasting; the 'kingdom' of heaven cf. Mt 4:17+. Jesus will later call himself 'Son of Man', cf. Dn 7:13+ and Mt 8:20+; he will also refer to himself, cf. Mt 21:42-44; Lk 20:17-18, as the keystone formerly rejected, Ps 118:22, and as the foundation stone of Is 28:16, with a clear allusion to the stone which breaks away from the mountain and crushes him on whom it falls, Dn 2:34,44-45.

j. Lit. 'without hands'.

61

Ws 6:3 You, O king, king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given sovereignty, 37
Jdt 11:7 Jr 27:6 power, strength and glory—•the sons of men, the beasts of the field, the birds 38
of heaven, wherever they live, he has entrusted to your rule, making you king
of them all—you are the golden head. •And after you another kingdom will 39
rise, not so great as you, and then a third, of bronze, which will rule the whole
7:7; 8:5, 21; 11:3 world. •There will be[k] a fourth kingdom, hard as iron, as iron that shatters and 40
crushes all. Like iron that breaks everything to pieces, it will crush and break
all the earlier kingdoms. •The feet you saw, part earthenware, part iron, are a 41
kingdom which will be split in two, but which will retain something of the strength
of iron, just as you saw the iron and the clay of the earthenware mixed together.
The feet were part iron, part earthenware: the kingdom will be partly strong and 42
partly weak. •And just as you saw the iron and the clay of the earthenware mixed 43
together, so the two will be mixed together in the seed of man;[l] but they will
not hold together any more than iron will blend with earthenware. •In the time 44
3:33(100); 4: 31; 7:14 of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be
destroyed, and this kingdom will not pass into the hands of another race: it
2 S 7:16 Lk 1:33 will shatter and absorb all the previous kingdoms, and itself last for ever—•just 45
Mt 21:42-44 as you saw the stone untouched by hand break from the mountain and shatter
iron, bronze, earthenware, silver and gold. The great God has shown the king
what is to take place. The dream is true, the interpretation exact.'

The king's profession of faith

At this, King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel; he gave orders 46
Lv 2:1+; 6:8 for Daniel to be offered an oblation and a fragrant sacrifice. •The king said to 47
3:90; 11:36 Dt 10:17 Daniel, 'Your god must be the God of gods, the master of kings, and the Revealer
Est 4:17r Ps 95:3 of Mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery'. •The king conferred 48
Tb 1:16 Est 8:2 high rank on Daniel and gave him many handsome presents. He also made him
governor of the whole province of Babylon and head of all the sages of Babylon.
At Daniel's request, however, the king entrusted the affairs of the province of 49
Babylon to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; Daniel himself remained at
court.

THE ADORATION OF THE GOLDEN STATUE

1 M 2:59 Ws 14:20 **Nebuchadnezzar erects a golden statue**

3 King Nebuchadnezzar had a golden statue made,[a] six cubits tall and three 1
cubits wide,[b] which he erected on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.
King Nebuchadnezzar then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, 2
counsellors, treasurers, judges, men of law, and all the provincial authorities to
assemble and attend the dedication of the statue erected by King Nebuchadnezzar.
Then the satraps, prefects, governors, counsellors, treasurers, judges, men of 3
law and all the provincial authorities assembled for the dedication of the statue
erected by King Nebuchadnezzar; and they stood there in front of the statue
Est 1:22; 3:12 which King Nebuchadnezzar had erected. •The herald then made this 4
Rv 5:9; 7:9; 13:7; 14: 6; 17:15 proclamation: 'Men of all peoples, nations, languages! This is required of you: 5
the moment you hear the sound of horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, or
↗ Rv 13:14-15 any other instrument, you must prostrate yourselves and worship the golden
statue erected by King Nebuchadnezzar. •Those who do not prostrate themselves 6
Jr 29:21-22 and worship shall immediately be thrown into the burning fiery furnace.' •And so, 7
Est 3:12 the instant the people heard the sound of horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe
and all the other instruments, the men of all peoples, nations and languages
prostrated themselves and worshipped the statue erected by King Nebuchadnezzar.

The denunciation and condemnation of the Jews

Est 3:8 Some Chaldaeans then came forward and laid information against the Jews. 8

9 10 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, 'O king, live for ever! •You have issued a
decree, O king, to the effect that everyone on hearing the sound of horn, pipe,
lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe or any other instrument is to prostrate himself
11 and worship the golden statue; •and that anyone who does not prostrate himself
12 and worship is to be thrown into the burning fiery furnace. •Now there are certain
Jews to whom you have entrusted the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach,
Meshach and Abednego; these men have ignored your command, O king; they
do not serve your gods, and refuse to worship the golden statue you have erected.'
13 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar sent for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
14 The men were immediately brought before the king. •Nebuchadnezzar addressed
them, 'Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, is it true that you do not serve Jdt 6:2
15 my gods, and that you refuse to worship the golden statue I have erected? •When
you hear the sound of horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, or any other
instrument, are you prepared to prostrate yourselves and worship the statue I Rv 13:15
have made? If you refuse to worship it, you must be thrown straight away into the
burning fiery furnace; and where is the god who could save you from my power?'
16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to King Nebuchadnezzar, 'Your
17 question hardly requires an answer: •if our God, the one we serve, is able to Ps 37:39-40
save us from the burning fiery furnace and from your power, O king, he will
18 save us; •and even if he does not, then you must know, O king, that we will not
19 serve your god or worship the statue you have erected'. •These words infuriated
King Nebuchadnezzar; his expression was very different now as he looked at
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He gave orders for the furnace to be made
20 seven times hotter than usual, •and commanded certain stalwarts from his army
to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the burning
21 fiery furnace. •They were then bound, fully clothed, cloak, hose and headgear,
22 and thrown into the burning fiery furnace. •The king's command was so urgent
and the heat of the furnace was so fierce, that the men carrying Shadrach,
23 Meshach, and Abednego were burnt to death by the flames from the fire; •the
three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fell, still bound, into the burning
fiery furnace.

The song of Azariah in the furnace 9:3-19+ Ezr 9:6-15

24 [c]And they walked in the heart of the flames, praising God and blessing the Lord.
25 Azariah stood in the heart of the fire, and he began to pray:

26 'All honour and blessing to you, Lord, God of our ancestors, 3:52 1 Ch 29:10, 20
may your name be held glorious for ever. Tb 3:2-6; 8:5
27 In all that you have done your justice is apparent: *Ne 9:33*
your promises are always faithfully fulfilled, 4:34 Tb 3:2
your ways never deviate,
your judgements are always true. Rv 16:7; 19:2
28 You have given a just sentence
in all the disasters you have brought down on us
and on Jerusalem, the holy city of our ancestors,
since it is for our sins that you have treated us like this,
fairly and as we deserved.
29 Yes, we have sinned and committed a crime by deserting you, 9:5-8 Ba 1:17f Is 59:12-13
yes, we have sinned gravely;

k. The text of vv. 40-43 is corrupt and its reconstruction is conjectural.

l. Probably alluding to the intermarriage of Seleucids and Ptolemies which failed, however, to cement any union between these successors of Alexander.

3 a. LXX and Theod. add 'in his eighteenth year'; LXX further adds 'having subdued towns and provinces and all the inhabitants of the world from India to Ethiopia', cf. Est 1:1; 8:9.

b. Aram. 'sixty cubits tall and six cubits wide'.

c. There is little doubt that the long passage that follows (vv. *24-90*) is from an Aramaic original; it is preserved only in the Greek and Syr. versions. We follow Theod.; the LXX has some variant readings and occasional differences in order. In the Aramaic text v.24 corresponds to Greek v. *91*.

Ne 1:7 we have not listened to the precepts of your Law,
we have not observed them,
we have not done what we were told to do
for our own good.
Lv 26:14,38 Dt28:15,63f Yes, all the disasters you have brought down on us, 31
all that you have done to us,
you have been fully justified in doing.
You have delivered us into the power of our enemies, 32
of a lawless people, the worst of the godless,
of an unjust king, the worst in the whole world;
today we dare not even open our mouths, 33
shame and dishonour are the lot of those who serve and worship you.
Ex 32:11f+ 1 S 12:22+ Oh! Do not abandon us for ever, 34
for the sake of your name;
do not repudiate your covenant,
do not withdraw your favour from us, 35
2 Ch 20:7 Is 41:8 Jm 2:23 for the sake of Abraham, your friend,
of Isaac your servant,
and of Israel your holy one,
Gn 15:5; 22:17 to whom you promised descendants as countless as the stars of heaven 36
and as the grains of sand on the seashore.
Dt 28:62 Jr 42:2 Lord, now we are the least of all the nations, 37
now we are despised throughout the world, today, because of our sins.
Lm 2:9 Ho 3:4 We have at this time no leader, no prophet, no prince, 38
no holocaust, no sacrifice, no oblation, no incense,
no place where we can offer you the first-fruits
and win your favour. 39
Ps 51:19 Ho 6:6 Mi 6:7-8 But may the contrite soul, the humbled spirit be as acceptable to you
as holocausts of rams and bullocks, 40
as thousands of fattened lambs:
such let our sacrifice be to you today,
and may it be your will that we follow you wholeheartedly,
Ps 25:3 since those who put their trust in you will not be disappointed.
And now we put our whole heart into following you, 41
into fearing you and seeking your face once more.
Do not disappoint us; 42
treat us gently, as you yourself are gentle
and very merciful.
Grant us deliverance worthy of your wonderful deeds, 43
let your name win glory, Lord.
Confusion seize those who ill-treat your servants: 44
Ps 35:26; 40:14 may they be covered with shame,
deprived[d] of all their power,
and may their strength be broken.
Ps 83:18 Let them learn that you alone are God and Lord, 45
glorious over the whole earth.'

All this time the servants of the king who had thrown the men into the furnace 46
had been stoking it with crude oil, pitch, tow and brushwood •until the flames 47
rose to a height of forty-nine cubits above the furnace •and, leaping out, burnt 48
6:23 Tb 5:4+ those Chaldaeans to death who were standing round it. •But the angel of the 49
Lord came down into the furnace beside Azariah and his companions; he drove
the flames of the fire outwards, •and fanned in to them, in the heart of the 50
furnace, a coolness such as wind and dew will bring, so that the fire did not even
touch them or cause them any pain or distress.

The song of the three young men

51 Then all three in unison began to sing, glorifying and blessing God, there in the furnace, in these words:

52 'May you be blessed, Lord, God of our ancestors, 3:26 Ne 9:5
be praised and extolled for ever.
Blessed be your glorious and holy name,
praised and extolled for ever.
53 May you be blessed in the Temple of your sacred glory, Ps 150:1 Is 6:1
exalted and glorified above all else for ever:
54 blessed on the throne of your kingdom,
praised and exalted above all else for ever.
55 Blessed, you fathomer of the great depths, enthroned on the cherubs, Ex 25:18+ 2 S 6:2
praised and glorified above all else for ever;
56 blessed in the vault of heaven,
exalted and glorified above all else for ever.

57 'All things the Lord has made, bless the Lord: Ps 103:22; 145:10
give glory and eternal praise to him.
58 Angels of the Lord! all bless the Lord: Ps 103:20; 148:2
give glory and eternal praise to him.
59 Heavens! bless the Lord: Ps 148:4
give glory and eternal praise to him.
60 Waters above the heavens! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
61 Powers of the Lord! all bless the Lord: Ps 103:21
give glory and eternal praise to him.
62 Sun and moon! bless the Lord: Ps 148:3
give glory and eternal praise to him.
63 Stars of heaven! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
64 Showers and dews! all bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
65 Winds! all bless the Lord: Ps 148:8
give glory and eternal praise to him.
66 Fire and heat! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
67 Cold and heat![e] bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
68 Dews and sleets! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
69 Frost and cold! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
70 Ice and snow! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
71 Nights and days! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
72 Light and darkness! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
73 Lightning and clouds! bless the Lord:
give glory and eternal praise to him.
74 Let the earth bless the Lord,
give glory and eternal praise to him.
75 Mountains and hills! bless the Lord: Ps 148:9

3 d. 'deprived': insertion required by the sense.

e. Vv. *67-68* are found only in LXX and in one MS of Theod.

give glory and eternal praise to him.
Every thing that grows on the earth! bless the Lord: 76
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Springs of water! bless the Lord: 77
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Seas and rivers! bless the Lord: 78
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Sea beasts and everything that lives in water! bless the Lord: 79
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Birds of heaven! all bless the Lord: 80
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Ps 148:10 Animals wild and tame! all bless the Lord: 81
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Sons of men! bless the Lord: 82
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Ps 135:19 Israel! bless the Lord: 83
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Priests! bless the Lord: 84
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Ps 134:1 Servants of the Lord! bless the Lord: 85
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Spirits and souls of the virtuous! bless the Lord: 86
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Zp 2:3+ Devout and humble-hearted men! bless the Lord: 87
give glory and eternal praise to him.
Ananiah, Azariah, Mishael! bless the Lord: 88
give glory and eternal praise to him.
For he has snatched us from the underworld,
saved us from the hand of death,
saved us from the burning fiery furnace,
rescued us from the heart of the flame.
Ps 106:1; 136:1-2 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, 89
for his love is everlasting.
2:47 All you who worship him, bless the God of gods, 90
praise him and give him thanks,
for his love is everlasting.'

The king acknowledges the miracle

Then King Nebuchadnezzar sprang to his feet in amazement. He said to his 24 91
advisers, 'Did we not have these three men thrown bound into the fire?' They
replied, 'Certainly, O king'. •'But,' he went on 'I can see four men walking about 25 92
freely in the heart of the fire without coming to any harm. And the fourth looks
like a son of the gods.'[f] •Nebuchadnezzar approached the mouth of the burning 26 93
fiery furnace and shouted, 'Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the
Most High God,[g] come out, come here!' And from the heart of the fire out
came Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. •The satraps, prefects, governors, 27 94
and advisers of the king crowded round the three men to examine them:
the fire had had no effect on their bodies: not a hair of their heads had been
singed, their cloaks were not scorched, no smell of burning hung about them.
Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, 'Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and 28 95
Abednego: he has sent his angel to rescue his servants who, putting their trust
in him, defied the order of the king, and preferred to forfeit their bodies[h] rather
than serve or worship any god but their own. •I therefore decree as follows: 29 96
6:27 Est 8:12v Men of all peoples, nations, and languages! Let anyone speak disrespectfully
of the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and I will have him torn
limb from limb and his house razed to the ground, for there is no other god

30 97 who can save like this.' •Then the king showered favours on Shadrach,
Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

THE WARNING DREAM AND THE MADNESS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

31 98 Nebuchadnezzar the king, to men of all peoples, nations and languages, Est 3:13b
32 99 throughout the world: 'May peace be always with you. •It is my pleasure to make
known the signs and wonders with which the Most High God has favoured me.

33 100 'How great are his signs, 6:28 ‖Ps 145:13
how mighty his wonders!
His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty, 2:44; 4:31
his empire lasts from age to age.

Nebuchadnezzar describes his dream

1 4 'I, Nebuchadnezzar,[a] was living at ease at home, prosperous in my palace.
2 I had a dream; it appalled me. Dread assailed me as I lay in bed; the visions Jb 33:15
3 that passed through my head tormented me. •So I decreed that all the sages
4 of Babylon be summoned to explain to me what the dream meant. •Magicians,
enchanters, Chaldaeans and wizards came, and I told them what I had dreamt,
5 but they could not interpret it for me. •Daniel, renamed Belteshazzar after
my own god,[b] and in whom the spirit of God Most Holy[c] resides, then came 5:11,14; 13: 45
into my presence. I told him my dream:
6 'Belteshazzar, I said, chief of magicians, I know that the spirit of God Most
Holy resides in you and that no mystery puts you at a loss. This is[d] the dream
I have had; tell me what it means.
7 'The visions that passed through my head as I lay in bed were these:

'I saw a tree[e] Ezk 31:3-14
in the middle of the world;
it was very tall.
8 The tree grew taller and stronger,
until its top reached the sky,
and it could be seen from the ends of the earth.
9 Its foliage was beautiful, its fruit abundant,
in it was food for all.
For the wild animals it provided shade,
the birds of heaven nested in its branches, ↗Mt 13:31-32 ↗Lk 13:19
all living creatures found their food on it.
10 I watched the visions passing through my head as I lay in bed.
Next a watcher,[f] a holy one came down from heaven.
11 At the top of his voice he shouted,
"Cut the tree down, lop off its branches,

f. The protecting angel, cf. v. 28 *(95)*.
g. The title is found in Ps, but elsewhere only on the lips of non-Jews, cf. Gn 14:18; Nb 24:16; Is 14:14.
h. Theod. adds 'to the fire', a reading used by Paul, 1 Co 13:3.

4 a. Aram.; 'In the seventeenth year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar said, "I was living..." ' LXX. In LXX, despite some omissions, this chapter is a quarter as long again as in the Massoretic text.
b. The god Bel.
c. The same divine inspiration as the pharaoh, for instance, discerns in Joseph from the wisdom of his advice, Gn 41:38; cf. Is 11:2+; 63:10-11+. 'of God Most Holy' Theod., and not 'of the most holy gods': the reference here is not to pagan gods.
d. 'This is' corr.
e For the tree as a symbol of a nation's growing power, cf. Ezk 17:1-10 and 22-24 and especially 31:3-14; also Is 10:33–11:1.
f. An angel, always alert to carry out the commands of God. Compare the wheels 'with eyes all round' in Ezk 1:18, and the 'eyes of the Lord' in Zc 4:10b. The use of the term 'watcher', which in the Bible is confined to Dn, is very common in apocryphal works, notably the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the 'Damascus Document'; it designates the archangels, not infrequently the fallen archangels. In later tradition the 'watchers' are guardian angels.

strip off its leaves, throw away its fruit;
let the animals flee from its shelter
and the birds from its branches.
But leave stump and roots in the ground 12
bound with hoops of iron and bronze
in the grass of the field.
Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,
let him share the grass of the earth with the animals.
Let his heart turn from mankind,[g] 13
let a beast's heart be given him
and seven times[h] pass over him!
Such is the sentence proclaimed by the watchers, 14
the verdict announced by the holy ones,[i]
that every living thing may learn
2:28+ Jb 36:7 Jn 27:5 that the Most High rules over the kingship of men,
he confers it on whom he pleases,
and raises the lowest of mankind."

'This is the dream I had, I, Nebuchadnezzar the king. Now it is for you, 15
Belteshazzar, to pronounce on its meaning, since not one of the sages in my kingdom has been able to interpret it for me; you, however, will be able to, because the spirit of God Most Holy resides in you.'

Daniel interprets the dream

Daniel, known as Belteshazzar, hesitated for a moment in embarrassment. 16
The king said, 'Belteshazzar, do not be alarmed at the dream and its meaning'.
Belteshazzar answered, 'My lord, may the dream apply to your enemies, and its
meaning to your foes! •The tree you saw that grew so tall and strong that it 17
reached the sky and could be seen from the ends of the earth, •the tree with 18
beautiful foliage and abundant fruit, with food for all in it, providing shade for
Lk 13:19 the wild animals, with the birds of heaven nesting in its branches, •that tree 19
is yourself, O king, for you have grown tall and strong; your stature is now so
great that it reaches the sky, and your rule extends to the ends of the earth.

'And the watcher seen by the king, the holy one coming down from 20
heaven and saying, "Cut the tree down and destroy it, but leave stump and
roots in the ground, bound with hoops of iron and bronze in the grass of the
field; let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, let him share with the wild
animals until seven times have passed over him": •the meaning of this, 21
O king, this decree of the Most High passed on my lord the king, is this:

'You are to be driven from human society, 22
and live with the wild animals;
you will feed on grass like the oxen,
you will be drenched by the dew of heaven;
seven times will pass over you
until you have learnt
that the Most High rules over the kingship of men,
and confers it on whom he pleases.

'And the order, "Leave the stump and roots of the tree", means that 23
your kingdom will be kept for you until you come to understand that heaven
Tb 12:9 Si 3:30 rules all. •May it please the king to accept my advice: by virtuous actions 24
break with your sins, break with your crimes by showing mercy to the poor, and
so live long and peacefully.'[j]

The dream comes true

This all happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. •Twelve months later, while 25 26
strolling on the roof of the royal palace in Babylon, •the king was saying, 27

'Great Babylon! Imperial palace! Was it not built by me alone, by my own
28 might and power to the glory of my majesty?'[k] •The boast was not out of his
mouth when a voice came down from heaven:

'King Nebuchadnezzar, these words are for you!
Sovereignty is taken from you,
29 you are to be driven from human society,
and live with the wild animals;
you will feed on grass like oxen,
and seven times will pass over you
until you have learnt
that the Most High rules over the kingship of men,
and confers it on whom he pleases.'

30 The words were immediately fulfilled: Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society and fed on grass like oxen, and was drenched by the dew of heaven; his hair grew as long as eagle's feathers, and his nails became like bird's claws.

31 'When the time was over,[l] I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven: my reason returned. And I blessed the Most High,

'praising and extolling him who lives for ever, — 2:44; 12:7 Si 18:1
for his sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty,
his empire lasts from age to age. — 2:28+.44+

32 The inhabitants of the earth count for nothing: — Is 40:17,22-24
he does as he pleases with the array of heaven,
and with the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can arrest his hand
or ask him, "What are you doing?" — Jb 9:12 Is 45:9 Qo 8:4

33 'At that moment my reason returned, and, to the glory of my royal state, my majesty and splendour returned too. My counsellors and noblemen acclaimed me; I was restored to my throne, and to my past greatness even
34 more was added. •And now I, Nebuchadnezzar,

'praise and extol and glorify the King of heaven,
his promises are always faithfully fulfilled, — 3:27 Dt 32:4
his ways are always just,
and he has power to humble those who walk in pride.'

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST — Is 21:5

1 5 King Belshazzar[a] gave a great banquet for his noblemen; a thousand of — Est 1:10
2 them attended, and he drank wine in company with this thousand. •As he

g. Or possibly 'Let his heart cease to be a human heart'.

h. Here the 'times', or indeterminate periods, are probably years.

i. The Watchers, or Holy Ones merely proclaim what God has determined.

j. From the verb here translated as 'break with' is derived an Aramaic noun meaning 'salvation, redemption'; it is possible, therefore, to translate 'atone for your sins'. The 'virtuous actions' refer here to all that is virtuous ('just') in man's relationship with God; such virtue goes far beyond legal justice or purely human justice. In its narrow sense the word means 'good works', particularly almsgiving, as in Tb 12:9; 14:11.

k. Babylon was one of the wonders of the ancient world. Its name later became a symbol for the imposing, though unstable, achievements of mankind; it then came to symbolise the arrogance of men and demons, the antithesis of the heavenly Jerusalem which is the city of God. Cf. Rv 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,21, drawing on the prophetic tradition, cf. Is 21:9, etc. The whole of Dn 4 is intended to show how such arrogance is humbled: Nebuchadnezzar recovers his wits only when he acknowledges the true God.

l. In LXX the king's recovery is the reward of repentance and prayer: an angel appears to him in his sleep to tell him that his kingdom will be restored to him.

5 a. The Babylonian form is Bel-shar-usur, 'May-Bel-protect-the-king'. The historical personage bearing this name is the son, not of Nebuchadnezzar, but of Nabonidus; he did not bear the title of 'king'. Cf. Introduction to the Prophets.

sipped his wine, Belshazzar gave orders for the gold and silver vessels to be
Ba 1:2 brought which his father Nebuchadnezzar had looted from the sanctuary in
Ba 1:12 Jerusalem, so that the king, his noblemen, his wives and his singing women could
drink out of them. •The gold and silver vessels looted from the sanctuary of the 3
Temple of God in Jerusalem were brought in, and the king, his noblemen,
his wives and his singing women drank out of them. •They drank their wine 4
5:23 and praised their gods of gold and silver,[b] of bronze and iron, of wood and
Rv 9:20 stone. •Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared, and began to write 5
on the plaster of the palace wall, directly behind the lamp-stand; and the king
could see the hand as it wrote. •The king turned pale with alarm: his thigh-joints 6
went slack and his knees began to knock. •He shouted for his enchanters, 7
Chaldaeans and wizards. And the king said to the Babylonian sages, 'Anyone who
5:16,29; 6:2 Est 8:15 can read this writing and tell me what it means shall be dressed in purple, and
have a chain of gold put round his neck, and be third in rank in the kingdom'.
The king's sages all crowded forward, but they could neither read the writing 8
nor explain to the king what it meant. •Greatly alarmed, King Belshazzar 9
turned even paler, and his noblemen were equally disturbed. •Then the queen, 10
attracted by the noise made by the king and his noblemen, came into the
banqueting hall. 'O king, live for ever!' said the queen. 'Do not be alarmed,
4:5+; 13:45 do not look so pale. •In your kingdom there is a man in whom lives the spirit of 11
God Most Holy. In your father's days, he was known for having percipience,
intelligence and wisdom comparable to that of the gods. King Nebuchadnezzar,
your father, made him head of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldaeans and
wizards. •Since such a marvellous spirit, and such knowledge and intelligence 12
in interpreting dreams, solving enigmas and unravelling difficult problems, live
in this man Daniel, whom the king had renamed Belteshazzar, send for Daniel:
he will be able to tell you what this means.'

Ba 1:12 Daniel was brought into the king's presence; the king said to Daniel, 'Are you 13
the Daniel who was one of the Judaean exiles brought by my father the king
4:5+; 13:45 from Judah? •I am told that the spirit of God Most Holy lives in you, and 14
that you are known for your perception, intelligence and marvellous wisdom.
The sages and enchanters have already been brought to me to read this writing 15
and tell me what it means, but they have been unable to reveal its meaning.
As I am told that you are able to give interpretations and to unravel difficult 16
5:7; 6:2 problems, if you can read the writing and tell me what it means, you shall be
dressed in purple, and have a chain of gold put round your neck, and be third
in rank in the kingdom.'

2:6 Then Daniel spoke up in the presence of the king. 'Keep your gifts for 17
yourself,' he said 'and give your rewards to others. I will read the writing to the
king without them, and tell him what it means. •O king, the Most High God 18
gave Nebuchadnezzar your father sovereignty, greatness, glory, majesty. •[c]He 19
made him so great that men of all peoples, nations and languages shook with
dread before him: he killed whom he pleased, spared whom he pleased,[d]
promoted whom he pleased, degraded whom he pleased. •But because his heart 20
grew swollen with pride, and his spirit stiff with arrogance, he was deposed
from his sovereign throne and stripped of his glory. •He was driven from the 21
society of men, his heart grew completely animal; he lived with the wild asses;[e]
he fed on grass like the oxen; his body was drenched by the dew of heaven, until
he had learnt that the Most High rules over the empire of men and appoints
whom he pleases to rule it. •But you, Belshazzar, who are his son, you have 22
not humbled your heart, in spite of knowing all this. •You have defied the 23
Lord of heaven, you have had the vessels from his Temple brought to you, and
5:4 you, your noblemen, your wives and your singing women have drunk your wine
Ps 135:15-17 Is 40:20+ out of them. You have praised gods of gold and silver, of bronze and iron,
of wood and stone, which cannot either see, hear or understand; but you have
Jb 12:10 given no glory to the God who holds your breath and all your fortunes in his

24 hands. •That is why he has sent the hand which, by itself, has written these
25 26 words. •The writing reads: *Mene, Mene, Tekel* and *Parsin.*[f] •The meaning
of the words is this: *Mene*: God has *measured* your sovereignty and put an end
27 28 to it; •*Tekel*: you have been *weighed* in the balance and found wanting; •*Parsin*:
your kingdom has been *divided* and given to the Medes and the *Persians*.'
29 At Belshazzar's order Daniel was dressed in purple, a chain of gold was put 5:7; 6:2 Est 6:9
round his neck and he was proclaimed third in rank in the kingdom.
30, 1 31 That same night, the Chaldaean king Belshazzar was murdered, **6** and
Darius the Mede[a] received the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

DANIEL IN THE LION PIT 1 M 2:60

The satraps resent Daniel's promotion

2 1 It pleased Darius to appoint a hundred and twenty satraps over his kingdom
3 2 for the various parts of the kingdom, •and over them three presidents—of
whom Daniel was one—to whom the satraps were to be responsible. This was to 5:7,16,29
4 3 ensure that no harm should come to the king. •This Daniel, by virtue of the marvellous spirit residing in him, was so evidently superior to the presidents and satraps
5 4 that the king considered appointing him to rule the whole kingdom. •The
presidents and satraps in consequence started hunting for some affair of state
by which they could discredit Daniel; but they could find nothing to his discredit,
and no case of negligence; he was so punctilious that they could not find a single
6 5 instance of maladministration or neglect. •These men then thought, 'We
shall never find a way of discrediting Daniel unless we try something to
7 6 do with the law of his God'. •The presidents and satraps then went in a body to
8 7 the king. 'King Darius,' they said 'live for ever! •We are all agreed, the presidents
of the kingdom, the prefects, satraps, counsellors and governors, that the king
should issue a decree enforcing the following regulation: whoever within the next
thirty days prays to anyone, god or man, other than to yourself O king, is to
9 8 be thrown into the lions' den. •O king, ratify the edict at once by signing
this document, making it unalterable, as befits the law of the Medes and the Est 1:19+
10 9 Persians, which cannot be revoked.' •King Darius accordingly signed the
document embodying the edict.

Daniel's prayer

11 10 When Daniel heard that the document had been signed, he retired to his
house. The windows of his upstairs room faced towards Jerusalem.[b] Three times 1 K 8:44,48 Tb 3:11
each day he continued to fall on his knees, praying and giving praise to God Ps 5:7; 28:2; 55:17; 138:2
12 11 as he had always done. •These men came along in a body and found Daniel Mt 6:6
13 12 praying and pleading with God. •They then came to the king and said, 'Have
you not just signed an edict forbidding any man for the next thirty days to pray Est 1:19
to anyone, god or man, other than to yourself O king, on pain of being thrown
into the lions' den?' 'The decision stands,' the king replied 'as befits the law
14 13 of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.' •Then they said to

b. 'and silver' Theod. and Vulg.
c. Daniel summarises what has already been narrated in ch. 4.
d. 'spared' Aram.; 'struck down' Theod. and Vulg.
e. 'wild asses'; var. 'flocks'.

f. The Aramaic repeats *Mene* (unlike LXX, Theod., Vulg., Josephus; and vv. 26-28 also apparently presume three oracular words, not four). Aram. also reads *Parsin* (not *Phares* as in the textual witnesses just enumerated). These mysterious words may conceal the names of three oriental measures of weight, or coins: a mina, a shekel, and a half-mina *(paras)*, thus lending themselves to the successive play on words in vv. 26-28: *mene* suggesting the verb *mana*, to measure, *teqel* the verb *shaqal*, to weigh out, *parsin* suggesting both the verb *paras*, to divide, and the Persians. The interpretation of the sequence of terms is disputed: allusion to the decreasing influence of the three successive empires (of the Babylonians, 'Medes', and Persians); or of the three kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach and Belshazzar; or else of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and the kings of the 'Medes and Persians'; or an old saying, the point of which eludes us.

6 a. 'Darius the Mede' is unknown to history, and the Persian Cyrus had already conquered Media before he captured Babylon. See Introduction to the Prophets.
b. The custom of praying with the face towards Jerusalem dates at least from the post-exilic period.

the king, 'O king, this man Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, disregards both you and the edict which you have signed: he is at his prayers three times each day'. 15/14 •When the king heard these words he was deeply distressed, and determined 16/15 to save Daniel; he racked his brains until sunset to find some way out. •But the men came back in a body to the king and said, 'O king, remember that in
Est 1:19 conformity with the law of the Medes and the Persians, no edict or decree can be altered when once issued by the king'.

Daniel is thrown to the lions

The king then ordered Daniel to be fetched and thrown into the lion pit. 17/16 The king said to Daniel, 'Your God himself, whom you have served so faithfully, will have to save you'. 18/17 •A stone was then brought and laid over the mouth of the pit; and the king sealed it with his own signet and with that of his noblemen, so that there could be no going back on the original decision about Daniel. The king returned to his palace, spent the night in fasting and refused to receive 19/18 any of his concubines.[c] Sleep eluded him, 20/19 •and at the first sign of dawn he was up, and hurried off to the lion pit. 21/20 •As he approached the pit he shouted in anguished tones, 'Daniel, servant of the living God! Has your God, whom you serve so faithfully, been able to save you from the lions?' 22/21 •Daniel replied,
3:49 Tb 5:4+ 'O king, live for ever! 23/22 •My God sent his angel who sealed the lions' jaws, they did me no harm, since in his sight I am blameless, and I have never done you any wrong either, O king.' 24/23 •The king was overjoyed, and ordered Daniel to be released from the pit. Daniel was released from the pit, and found to be quite unhurt, because he had trusted in his God. 25/24 •The king sent for the men who had accused Daniel and had them thrown into the lion pit, they, their wives and their children: and they had not reached the floor of the pit before the lions had seized them and crushed their bones to pieces.

The king's profession of faith

Est 1:22 King Darius then wrote to men of all nations, peoples and languages 26/25 throughout the world, 'May peace be always with you! 27/26 •I decree: in every kingdom
3:29 of my empire let all tremble with fear before the God of Daniel:

'He is the living God, he endures for ever,
4:31 his sovereignty will never be destroyed
and his kingship never end.
He saves, sets free, and works signs and wonders 28/27
3:32f in the heavens and on earth;
he has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.'

This Daniel flourished in the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the 29/28 Persian.[d]

Rv 12:8f

DANIEL'S DREAM: THE FOUR BEASTS

The vision of the beasts[a]

↗Rv 13:1-18 7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and 1 visions that passed through his head as he lay in bed. He wrote the dream down, and this is how the narrative began: 2 •Daniel said, 'I have been seeing visions in the night. I saw that the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great
Rv 13:1 sea; 3/4 •four great beasts emerged from the sea, each different from the other. •The
Rv 13:2 first[b] was like a lion with eagle's wings; and as I looked its wings were torn off, and it was lifted from the ground and set standing on its feet like a man; and it was given a human heart. 5 •The second beast I saw[c] was different, like a bear, raised up on one of its sides, with three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth. "Up!" came the command "Eat quantities of flesh!" 6 •After this I looked,

and saw another beast,[d] like a leopard, and with four bird's wings on its flanks;
7 it had four heads, and power was given to it. •Next I saw another vision in the visions of the night: I saw a fourth beast,[e] fearful, terrifying, very strong; it had great iron teeth, and it ate, crushed and trampled underfoot what remained. It was different from the previous beasts and had ten horns.

Rv 13:7
2:40
Rv 12:3

8 'While I was looking at these horns, I saw another horn sprouting among them, a little one;[f] three of the original horns were pulled out by the roots to make way for it; and in this horn I saw eyes like human eyes, and a mouth that
9 was full of boasts.[g] •As I watched:

Zc 2:2
Jude 16
↗ Rv 13:5

The vision of the 'Ancient of Days' and of the son of man

'Thrones were set in place[h] ↗ Rv 20:4
and one of great age took his seat.
His robe was white as snow, ↗ Rv 1:14
the hair of his head as pure as wool.
His throne was a blaze of flames,
its wheels were a burning fire.
10 A stream of fire poured out, Ps 50:3
issuing from his presence.
A thousand thousand waited on him, Jude 14
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. ↗ Rv 5:11
A court was held Jn 5:22
and the books were opened.[i] Ps 139:16
↗ Rv 20:12

11 'The great things the horn was saying were still ringing in my ears, and as I watched, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and committed to the ↗ Rv 19:20
12 flames. •The other beasts were deprived of their power, but received a lease of life[j] for a season and a time.

13 'I gazed into the visions of the night.
And I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, 10:16
one like a son of man.[k] ↗ Mt 8:20; 24:30; 26: 64f
He came to the one of great age ↗ Mk 13:26; 14:62
and was led into his presence. ↗ Lk 21:27
14 On him was conferred sovereignty, ↗ Rv 1:7; 14:14
glory and kingship, *Mt* 9:6
and men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants. Lk 1:33
Rv 11:15

c. Translation conj.

d. 'flourished' Aram.; 'was placed over the kingdom' LXX. In LXX the chapter ends with the death of Darius and the accession of Cyrus the Persian.

7 a. The vision corresponds to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in ch. 2: the four metals (the kingdoms) of the dream, shattered by the stone, 2:28+, are now four beasts succeeded by the son of man. The eschatological significance underlying this vision of human history is even more clearly brought out in Rv 13.

b. The Babylonian empire.

c. The kingdom of the Medes: the author sees the Medes as immediate successors to the Babylonians. Cf. 6:1+.

d. The Persian empire.

e. The empire of Alexander (d. 323) and his successors. Cf. 2:40; 8:5; 11:3. The ten horns are kings of the Seleucid dynasty.

f. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163) who came to power only after getting rid of several rival claimants.

g. Referring to the ready and blasphemous tongue of Antiochus, cf. v. 25; 11:36; 1 M 1:21,24,45 and Rv 13:5.

h. For judges. The saints of God are privileged to sit in judgement at his side according to ancient Jewish tradition (the *Book of Enoch*), and the promises of Jesus are even more explicit, Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30; Rv 3:21 and 20:4. The wheeled and blazing throne of God recalls the divine chariot described in Ezk 1.

i. The book in which men's actions, good and bad, are recorded. Cf. Jr 17:1; Ml 3:16; Ps 56:8; Lk 10:20; Rv 20:12+. This image is later used in the *Dies Irae*. On the Book of Life, cf. 12:1+.

j. That the other empires should survive—for an indeterminate period—offers no further danger to the faith, once the people of God cease to be subject to them.

k. Like the Hebr. *ben adam*, the Aram. *bar nasha* used here, has the primary meaning 'man', cf. Ps 8:4. In Ezk, God addresses the prophet thus. But here in Dn the expression signifies a man who is mysteriously more than human. That it indicates an individual is attested by early Jewish apocryphal writings (Enoch, 2 Esd) inspired by this passage, as also by rabbinical tradition from the 2nd to the 9th centuries, and most particularly by Jesus who applies it to himself, cf. Mt 8:20+. That it has a collective sense also is deduced from v. 18 (and v. 22) where the 'son of man' and 'the saints of the Most High' seem more or less identified. But the collective (and equally messianic) sense is an extension of the individual sense: the 'son of man' being leader, representative and exemplar of the 'saints of the Most High'. It was with this in mind that St Ephraim believed that the prophecy applied first to the Jews (the Maccabees), but beyond this, and perfectly, to Jesus.

2:28+,44+ Mt 4:17+ His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty
which shall never pass away,
nor will his empire ever be destroyed.

The interpretation of the vision

'I, Daniel, was deeply disturbed and the visions that passed through my 15
head alarmed me.[l] •So I approached one of those who were standing by and 16
asked him to tell me the truth about all this. And in reply he revealed to me what
these things meant. •"These four great beasts are four kings who will rise from 17
Ac 9:13+ the earth. •Those who are granted sovereignty are the saints[m] of the Most High, 18
and the kingdom will be theirs for ever, for ever and ever." •Then I asked to 19
know the truth about the fourth beast, different from all the rest, very terrifying,
with iron teeth and bronze claws, eating, crushing and trampling underfoot what
remained; •and the truth about the ten horns on its head—and why the other horn 20
sprouted and the three original horns fell, and why this horn had eyes and a mouth
Jude 16 that was full of boasts, and why it made a greater show than the other horns.
✗ Rv 11:7; 13:7 This was the horn I had watched making war on the saints and proving the 21
✗ *Rv 20:4* stronger, •until the coming of the one of great age who gave judgement in favour 22
Mt 9:6; 19:28 of the saints[n] of the Most High, when the time came for the saints to take over the
kingdom. •This is what he said: 23

"The fourth beast
is to be a fourth kingdom on earth,
different from all other kingdoms.
It will devour the whole earth,
trample it underfoot and crush it.
✗ Rv 17:12 As for the ten horns: from this kingdom 24
will rise ten kings, and another after them;
this one will be different from the previous ones
and will bring down three kings;
11:36 he is going to speak words against the Most High, 25
and harass the saints of the Most High.
He will consider changing seasons and the Law,[o]
and the saints will be put into his power
8:14; 12:7, 12 for a time, two times, and half a time.[p]
✗ Rv 12:14 But a court will be held and his power will be stripped from him, 26
consumed, and utterly destroyed.
And sovereignty and kingship, 27
and the splendours of all the kingdoms under heaven
Ps 29:11 will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.
Rv 11:15 His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty
Ws 3:8 and every empire will serve and obey him."

'Here the narrative ends. 28
Gn 37:11 'I, Daniel, was greatly disturbed in mind, and I grew pale; but I kept these things to myself.'

DANIEL'S VISION: THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT

The vision

8 In the third year of King Belshazzar[a] a vision appeared to me, Daniel, 1
after the one that originally appeared to me.[b] •I gazed at the vision, 2
and as I gazed I found myself in Susa,[c] the citadel in the province of Elam;
gazing at the vision I found myself at the Gate of the Ulai. •I raised my eyes 3
to look round me, and I saw a ram[d] standing in front of the river. It had two
horns; both were tall, but one taller than the other, and the one that rose the

4 higher was the second.[e] •I saw the ram thrust westwards, northwards and
southwards. No animal could stand up to it, nothing could escape it. It did as
it pleased and grew very powerful.
5 This is what I observed: a he-goat[f] came from the west, having covered 2:40
the entire earth but without touching the ground, and between its eyes the goat
6 had one majestic[g] horn. •It advanced towards the ram with the two horns,
which I had seen standing in front of the river, and charged at it with all the
7 fury of its might. •I saw it reach the ram, and it was so enraged with the ram,
it knocked it down, breaking both its horns, and the ram had not the strength
to resist; it felled it to the ground and trampled it underfoot; no one was there
8 to save the ram. •Then the he-goat grew more powerful than ever, but at the
height of its strength the great horn snapped, and in its place sprouted four
majestic horns, pointing to the four winds of heaven.[h]
9 From one of these, the small one, sprang a horn which grew to great size
10 towards south and east and towards the Land of Splendour.[i] •It grew right 11:16,41; 12:3 Ezk 20:6,15 Zc 7:14
up to the armies of heaven and flung armies and stars[j] to the ground, and
11 trampled them underfoot. •It even challenged the power of that army's Prince;[k] ↗ Rv 12:4
it abolished the perpetual sacrifice and overthrew the foundation of his sanctuary, 11:31
12 and the army too; it put iniquity on the sacrifice[l] and flung truth to the ground;
the horn was active and successful.
13 I heard a holy one[m] speaking, and another who said to the speaker,[n] 'How
long is this vision to be—of perpetual sacrifice,[o] disastrous iniquity, of sanctuary 12:6 ↗ Rv 6:10
14 and army trampled underfoot?' •The first replied,[p] 'Until two thousand three
hundred evenings and mornings[q] have gone by: then the sanctuary shall have its
rights restored'.[r]

The angel Gabriel interprets the vision

15 As I, Daniel, gazed at the vision and tried to understand it, I saw someone
16 standing before me who looked like a man. •I heard a man's voice cry over[s]
17 the Ulai, 'Gabriel, tell him the meaning of the vision!' •He approached the 9:21-23; 10: 9-11 Lk 1:19,26 *10:15-19* Ezk 1:28; 2:1 Rv 1:17
place where I was standing; as he approached I was seized with terror, and fell
prostrate. 'Son of man,' he said to me 'understand this: the vision shows the
18 time of the End.' •He was still speaking, when I fell senseless to the ground.

l. Two incomprehensible Aramaic words are omitted here as in LXX and Vulg.

m. 'the saints' are the holy people of God as in 8:24; Ps 34:9; Is 4:3; Nb 16:3; cf. Ex 19:6+.

n. Or possibly 'delegated judgement to the saints'.

o. Allusion to the hellenising policy of Antiochus Epiphanes, and in particular to his ban on observance of the sabbath and feastdays, cf. 1 M 1:41f, 43-52.

p. According to 4:13 the 'time' here means 1 year. Three and a half years (the half-week of years of 9:27) correspond approximately to the duration of the persecution under Antiochus. This figure (also expressed as 42 months each of 30 days—or as 1260 days) is adopted in Rv 11:2-3; 12:14; 13:5 for the duration of the Roman persecution; cf. also Lk 4:25 and Im 5:17. In all these texts, as throughout Dn, the figure stands for a period of distress permitted by God for a limited time after which there will be relief for the faithful.

8 a. On Belshazzar cf. 5:1+.

b. The vision of ch. 7, which this elaborates more explicitly.

c. One of the royal residences of the Achmenid dynasty. The river Ulai flows through Susa. 'gate' versions.

d. On the symbolism of rams and he-goats, cf. Ezk 34:17f and Zc 10:3.

e. The taller horn represents the power of the Persians triumphing over the power of the Medes, succeeding and absorbing it, v. 20.

f. Alexander. Cf. v. 21 and 2:40; 7:7; 11:3.

g. Translation conj.

h. Death of Alexander and division of his empire: of his heirs only the Seleucids are considered here as in 7:7; but in this passage, unlike 7:7, only Antiochus Epiphanes is mentioned (v. 9), not his predecessors.

i. Palestine.

j. The stars symbolise the people of God, 12:3. (And cf. Mt 13:43).

k. God himself.

l. The Hebr. is obscure and the translation approximate. It may mean either that 'iniquity' (i.e. the 'abomination of desolation') has been substituted for the sacrifice in the Temple, or else that the persecutor has decided that sacrifice is henceforth to be reckoned a crime.

m. Probably an angel, cf. 4:10.

n. Lit. 'to a certain one who spoke'. The questions which the seer asks himself are presented as part of a mysterious dialogue; for this device see also Zc 1:8-17.

o. LXX adds 'abolished'.

p. Lit. 'said to him'; 'him' versions; 'me' Hebr.

q. That is to say, either 2300 days, or 1150 days. If the expression refers to the two daily sacrifices suspended throughout the persecution, as may be the case, the period would be not 2300 days but 1150. But either figure is remote from the three and a half years (1260 days) of 7:25 and the meaning remains obscure.

r. The phrase has a messianic sense above and beyond the immediate historical one.

s. The text reads 'between', meaning perhaps between the leaves of the Ulai gate (v. 2).

He touched me, however, and raised me to my feet. •'Come,' he said 'I will 19
Am 5:18+ tell you what is going to happen when the wrath[t] comes to an end; this concerns
the appointed End. •As for the ram that you saw, its two horns are the 20
2:40; 11:2+ kings of Media and of Persia. •The hairy he-goat is the king of Javan, the large 21
horn between its eyes is the first king. •The horn that snapped and the four 22
horns that sprouted in its place are four kingdoms rising from his nation but
not having his power.

'And at the end of their reign, when the measure of their sins is full,[u] 23
a king will arise, a proud-faced, ingenious-minded man.
His power will gather strength—but not through power of his own[v]— 24
he will plot[w] incredible schemes,
he will succeed in what he undertakes,
he will destroy powerful men
7:18 and the people of the saints.
Such will be his resourcefulness of mind 25
that all his treacherous activities will succeed.
He will grow arrogant of heart,
take many unawares and destroy them.
He will challenge the power of the Prince of princes
2:34 but, no hand intervening,[x] shall himself be broken.
↗Rv 19:9; 21:5; 22:6 *12:4,9-13* ↗Rv 10:4 This explanation of the vision of the mornings and the evenings is true, 26
but you must keep the vision secret, for there are still many days to go.'[y]

At this I, Daniel, lost consciousness; I was ill for several days. Then I got 27
up to discharge my duties in the king's service, keeping the vision a secret, and
not understanding what it meant.

THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY-TWO WEEKS

3:25-45 Ne 1:5-11; 9 Ba 1-2 **Daniel's prayer**

9 It was the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus, who was of Median stock 1
and ruled the kingdom of Chaldaea.[a] •In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, 2
was perusing the scriptures, counting over the number of years—as revealed
Jr 25:11-12; 29:10 by Yahweh to the prophet Jeremiah—that were to pass before the successive
devastations of Jerusalem would come to an end, namely seventy years. •I turned 3
10:2 my face to the Lord God[b] begging for time to pray and to plead with fasting,
Lv 26:40 sackcloth and ashes. •I pleaded with Yahweh my God and made this confession:[c] 4
Ex 34:6+ Dt 7:9,21 Ne 1:5 'O Lord, God great and to be feared, you keep the covenant and have kind-
ness for those who love you and keep your commandments: •we have sinned, 5
3:30 1 K 8:47 Tb 3:3 Ba 1:17 we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly, we have betrayed your
commandments and your ordinances and turned away from them. •We have not 6
Ne 9:34 Jr 7:25-26+; 44:21 listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings,
our princes, our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. •Integrity, Lord, is 7
Ba 1:15-16 yours; ours the look of shame we wear today, we, the people of Judah, the
Is 57:19 citizens of Jerusalem, the whole of Israel, near and far away, in every country
Dt 28:64 to which you have dispersed us because of the treason we have committed
against you. •To us, Yahweh, the look of shame belongs, to our kings, our 8
princes, our ancestors, because we have sinned against you. •To the Lord our God 9
Ne 9:17,21, 27 *Dt 28:15* Jr 26:4+ mercy and pardon belong, because we have betrayed him, •and have not listened 10
to the voice of Yahweh our God nor followed the laws he has given us through his
servants the prophets. •The whole of Israel has flouted your Law and turned 11
Lv 26:14-39 Dt 28:15-68 Ba 1:20; 2: 1-2 away, unwilling to listen to your voice; and the curse and imprecation written
in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have come pouring down on
us—because we have sinned against him. •He has carried out the threats which 12
he made against us and against the princes who governed us[d]—that he

would bring so great a disaster down on us that the fate of Jerusalem would
13 find no parallel in the whole of the world. •And now all this disaster has
happened to us, just as it is written in the Law of Moses; even so, we have not tried
to appease Yahweh our God by renouncing our crimes and being guided by Jn 8:32 1 Jn 3:19+
14 your truth. •Yahweh has watched[e] for the right moment to bring disaster on us, Ne 9:33
since Yahweh our God is just in all his dealings with us, and we have not
15 listened to his voice. •And now, Lord our God, who by your mighty hand Ba 2:11-13
brought us out of the land of Egypt—the renown you won then endures to Dt 6:21 Jr 32:20-21
16 this day—we have sinned, we have done wrong. •Lord, by all your acts of
justice[f] turn away your anger and your fury from Jerusalem, your own city,
your holy mountain, for as a result of our sins and the crimes of our ancestors,
17 Jerusalem and your own people have become a byword among all around us. •And Ps 144:13 Ba 2:14
now, our God, listen to the prayer and pleading of your servant.[g] For your
18 own sake,[h] Lord, let your face smile again on your desolate sanctuary. •Listen Ps 4:6+
my God, listen to us; open your eyes and look on our plight and on the city 2 K 19:16 Is 37:17 Lm 5:18 *Ba 2:19* *Ne 9:19*
that bears your name. We are not relying on our own good works but on your
19 great mercy, to commend our humble plea to you. •Listen, Lord! Lord, forgive!
Hear, Lord, and act! For your own sake, my God, do not delay, because they Ps 40:17 Ba 2:16
bear your name, this is your city, this is your people.'

The angel Gabriel explains the prophecy

20 I was still speaking, still at prayer, confessing my own sins and the sins of
my people Israel and placing my plea before Yahweh my God for the holy
21 mountain of my God, •still speaking, still at prayer, when Gabriel, the being[i] 8:15-18; 10:9-11
I had seen originally in a vision, flew suddenly down to me[j] at the hour of the
22 evening sacrifice. •He said to me, 'Daniel, you see me; I have come down to Ex 29:39 1 K 18:29
23 teach you how to understand. •When your pleading began, a word was uttered,
and I have come to tell you what it is. You are a man specially chosen.[k] Grasp 10:11,19
the meaning of the word, understand the vision:[l] 10:1

24 'Seventy weeks are decreed[m]
for your people and your holy city,
for putting an end to transgression,
for placing the seals on sin,
for expiating crime, Is 53:11 Rm 3:24-26
for introducing everlasting integrity,

t. The time of distress, being divinely foreseen and willed, is the time of the wrath of God, cf. 11:36; Is 10:25; 26:20; 1 M 1:64.

u. Lit. 'as at the completion of their sins'.

v. The persecutor is the instrument of the wrath of God.

w. 'plot' corr.; 'destroy' Hebr.

x. Possibly a double meaning here: that Antiochus did not die by the sword, 1 M 6:8-16; 2 M 9, and that the death of persecutors, like their triumph, v. 24, is in the hands of God alone; cf. 2:34.

y. Unlike the two prophecies of Ezk 12:21-28 which are fulfilled almost immediately, Daniel's visions are to be realised only after a period the duration of which is not made clear, cf. 12:4,9-13.

9 a. See 7:5+ and 6:1+.

b. 'the Lord God'; var. 'Yahweh', cf. v. 4.

c. The prayer that follows includes many biblical reminiscences. It has affinities with that of Azariah, 3:24-45; Ba 1 and 2 have been modelled on it.

d. Lit. 'the judges who judged us'.

e. In Jr 1:11-12, cf. 31:28; 44:27, the symbol of the almond tree *(sheqed)* introduces the oracle of Yahweh who watches *(shoqed)* for the moment to make his word come true, whether for good or evil.

f. I.e. in the name of the retributive justice manifest in the actions by which you have rescued your people in the past.

g. Cf. 1 K 8:28; Ne 1:6,11; Ps 130:2.

h. 'your own sake' following Theod. and v. 19.

i. Lit. 'the man Gabriel'.

j. Lit. 'flying in flight touched me'.

k. The word 'man' is not in the text, but cf. 10:11,19. The Vulg. translates 'man of desires'; but the word signifies God's approval of Daniel, not Daniel's zeal for God.

l. As in the adjacent chapters the following prophecy refers to the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, but here the style is allusive and enigmatic (no proper names are mentioned, and the figures given are conventional and approximate): this suggests that the text has a reference beyond the immediate historical one. The prophecy, like those of the messianic kingdom, 2:28+; 7:13+, will be fully realised in the days of Christ and the Church. The era of plenty described in v. 24 far exceeds a mere return to peaceful conditions. But the detail in vv. 25-27, describing antecedent periods, remains obscure.

m. 'decreed' Hebr.; 'cut short' Theod. and Vulg. The 'weeks' are 'weeks of years'; the number 70 implies completion. The period is computed from the date of the revelation made to Jeremiah, cf. v. 25, to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the return of the exiles, an event which 2 Ch 36:22-23 (=Ezr 1:1-2) sees as the realisation of Jeremiah's prophecy and dates 538 (the liberating decree of Cyrus).

for setting the seal[n] on vision and on prophecy,
1 Ch 23:13 Mt 3:16+ Ac 10:38 for anointing the Holy of Holies.[o]

'Know this, then, and understand: 25
from the time this message went out:
Ezr 3:1-3 "Return and rebuild Jerusalem"
to the coming of an anointed Prince,[p] seven weeks
and sixty-two weeks,
with squares and ramparts restored and rebuilt,[q]
but in a time of trouble.
And after the sixty-two weeks 26
2 M 4:34 an anointed one[r] will be cut off—and... will not be for him[s]—
the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed
by a prince who will come.
His end will come in catastrophe
and, until the end, there will be war
and all the devastation decreed.[t]
He will make a firm covenant with many[u] 27
for the space of a week;
and for the space of one half-week
1 M 1:45 he will put a stop to sacrifice and oblation,[v]
11:31; 12:11 1 M 1:54 ↗ Mt 24:15p ↗ Mk 13:14 *11:36* and on the wing of the Temple[w] will be the disastrous abomination[x]
until the end, until the doom assigned to the devastator.'

THE GREAT VISION

THE TIME OF WRATH

The vision of the man dressed in linen

10 In the third[a] year of Cyrus king of Persia a revelation was made to Daniel 1
known as Belteshazzar, a true revelation of a great conflict.[b] He grasped
9:23 the meaning of the revelation; what it meant was disclosed to him in a vision.
9:3 At that time, I, Daniel, was doing a three-week penance; 2 I ate no rich 3
food, touched no meat or wine, and did not anoint myself, until these three
weeks were over. 4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I stood on 4
8:2; 12:5-6 the bank of that great river, the Tigris, 5 I raised my eyes to look about me, and 5
this is what I saw:

Ezk 1 ↗ Rv 1:13-15 A man dressed in linen, with a girdle of pure gold round his waist;
his body was like beryl, 6
his face shone like lightning,
his eyes were like fiery torches,
his arms and his legs had the gleam of burnished bronze,
Ezk 1:24 the sound of his voice was like the noise of a crowd.

I, Daniel, alone saw the apparition; the men who were with me did not see 7
the apparition, but so great a trembling overtook them that they fled to hide.
I was left alone, gazing on this great apparition; I was powerless, my appearance 8
altered out of all recognition, what strength I had deserted me.

The apparition of the angel

8:16-18 I heard him speak, and at the sound of his voice I fell unconscious to the 9
9:21-23 ↗ Rv 1:17 ground. 10 I felt a hand touching me, setting my knees and my hands trembling. 10
9:23; 10:19 He said, 'Daniel, you are a man specially chosen; listen carefully to the words 11
Ezk 2:1 that I am going to say; stand up; I have been sent to you and here I am'. He
said this, and I stood up trembling. 12 He said then, 'Daniel, do not be afraid: 12

from that first day when you resolved to humble yourself before God, the better to understand, your words have been heard; and your words are the reason why
13 I have come. •The prince of the kingdom of Persia has been resisting me for twenty-one days, but Michael,[c] one of the leading princes, came to my assistance. Is 14:15; 44:7
14 I have left him[d] confronting the kings of Persia •and have come to tell you what will happen to your people in the days to come. For here is a new vision about those days.' Jude 9 Rv 12:7 Gn 49:1

15 When he had said these things to me I prostrated myself on the ground, Rv 1:17
16 without saying a word; •then someone looking like a son of man came and touched my lips. I opened my mouth to speak, and I said to the person standing in front of me, 'My lord, anguish overcomes me at this vision, and what strength
17 I had deserts me. •How can my lord's servant speak to my lord now that
18 I have no strength left and my breath fails me?' •Once again the person like a
19 man touched me; he gave me strength. •'Do not be afraid,' he said 'you are a man specially chosen; peace be with you; play the man, be strong!' And as he spoke to me I felt strong again and said, 'Let my lord speak, you have given me strength'. 7:13; 8:17 Is 6:7 Jr 1:9 9:23; 10:11

The prelude to the prophecy[e]

20a 21a He said then, 'Do you know why I have come to you? •It is to tell you
20b what is written in the Book of Truth. •I must go back to fight against the prince
21b of Persia: when I have done with him, the prince of Javan will come next. •In all
1 this there is no one to lend me support except Michael your prince, **11** on
2 whom I rely to give me support and reinforce me. •And now I will tell you the truth about these things.

Early struggles between Seleucids and Ptolemies

'Three more kings[a] are going to rise in Persia; a fourth will come and be richer than all the others, and when, thanks to his wealth, he has grown powerful, he will
3 challenge all the kingdoms of Javan. •A mighty king will rise and reign over
4 a vast empire and do whatever he pleases. •But once he has come to power his empire will be broken up and parcelled out to the four winds of heaven, 8:20 2:40

n. 'To seal' means sometimes 'to put an end to', sometimes 'to guarantee'; here it has the comprehensive sense of 'fulfilling'.

o. Either the altar (or Temple) or the high priest, cf. 1 Ch 23:13; the re-establishment of the priesthood is connected with the restoration of altar and Temple: in the prophetic perspective no distinction is made.

p. Or 'Prince Messiah', cf. Ex 30:22+; 1 S 9:26+; Is 45:1. Some of the earliest Fathers of the Church saw in this 'anointed Prince' a prophecy of Jesus, and in v. 26 an allusion to the crucifixion, but there was not universal agreement: some place the last week at the end of time.

q. This is the period of reconstruction in the Persian period.

r. Theod., perhaps rightly, identifies this anointed one with the high priest Onias III, cf. 2 M 4:30-38, deposed in about 175 and assassinated by the supporters of Antiochus Epiphanes; so also the prince of the covenant in 11:22.

s. 'and... will not be for him' text obscure; 'and there is no guilt in him' Theod.; 'and the people who denied him will be no more' Vulg., following the commentary of St Jerome.

t. I.e. by God, cf. 8:25+.

u. 11:30-32 may help to explain this passage, the 'covenant' meaning the desertion of the Jewish renegades to the tyrant Antiochus who had induced them to renounce the true covenant. Cf. 1 M 1:21,43, 52; 2 M 4:10f.

v. The parallel passages show that this is the work of the blasphemers: it does not mean, therefore, the substitution of the new covenant sacrifice for the old.

w. 'of the Temple' added.

x. The phrase *(shiqqusim meshomem)* evokes firstly the idols or 'baals' of antiquity, the worship of which by Israel was condemned by the prophets *(shiqqus*, 'abomination' being a contemptuous designation of Baal, and *shomem* a malicious pun on the title *baal shamen*—'king of the heavens'—used of their gods by the Phoenicians); secondly, Zeus Olympios to whom the Temple of Jerusalem was dedicated by the persecutor, cf. 2 M 6:2

10 a. 'third' Hebr.; 'first' Greek.

b. Lit. a true word 'and a great army'. The reference is apparently to the war waged by the angels, cf. vv. 12-21.

c. The angel of Yahweh who confronts Satan in Zc 3:1-2 is called Michael ('Who-is-like-God?') in Jude 9, where he leaves Satan's condemnation to God. The same conflict is described in Rv 12:7-12. Michael is the guardian angel of the people of God (v. 21 and 12:1), cf. Ex 23:20+. The prince of Persia is apparently one of the guardian angels of the nations. This championing of opposed sides by different angels signifies that the fate of nations is a secret awaiting God's revelation and hidden from the angels themselves.

d. 'I have left him' Greek; 'I was left' Hebr., but the verb form is unusual.

e. The order of the following verses is doubtful. The text is corrected. In 11:1a we omit 'And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede' Hebr.

11 a. Evidently three Persian kings, 'Darius the Mede' being excluded. The 'fourth' is less probably the last of the Achmenids (Darius III Codomannus, 336-331, defeated by Alexander), more probably Xerxes the Great, 486-465, whose expedition against Greece ('Javan') took place in 480.

though not to his descendants:[b] it will not be ruled as he ruled it, for his sovereignty is going to be uprooted and pass to others than his own.

'The king of the South[c] will grow powerful, but one of his princes[d] will 5
grow more powerful still with an empire greater than that of the former.[e] •Some 6
years later, these will form an alliance[f] and, to ratify the agreement, the daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North. Her arm will not, however, retain its strength, nor his posterity endure: she will be handed over, she, her escorts and her child,[g] and he who has had authority over her.[h] In due time •a sprig from her roots will rise in his place, will march on the defences, 7
force the stronghold of the king of the North, and succeed in overcoming them.[i] He will even carry off all their gods, their statues, their precious gold and silver 8
plate to Egypt.[j] For some years he will leave the king of the North in peace, but the latter[k] will invade the kingdom of the king of the South, then retire 9
to his own country. •His sons[l] will next be on the march, mustering a host of 10
powerful forces; and he[m] will advance, deploy, break through and march on his stronghold once again. •The king of the South will fly into a rage and set out 11
to give battle to the king of the North who will have an immense army on his side, and this army will be delivered into his hands. •The army will be annihilated; 12
he will be triumphant; he will overthrow tens of thousands; yet he will have no strength. •The king of the North will come back, having recruited an even 13
larger army than before, and finally, when the time comes, he will advance with a great army and plentiful supplies. •In those times many will rebel against 14
the king of the South; men of violence will also rebel from your own people, thus fulfilling the vision; but they will fail. •The king of the North will then 15
come and throw up siege-works to capture a strongly fortified city. The forces of the South will not stand their ground, its picked troops will not be strong enough to resist. •The invader will treat him as he pleases, no one will be able 16
8:9; 11:41 to resist him: he will take his stand in the Land of Splendour, destruction in his hands. •He will consider conquering his entire kingdom, but will then make 17
a treaty with him and, to overthrow the kingdom,[n] give him a woman's daughter;[o] but this will not last or be to his advantage. •He will next turn to 18
the islands and conquer many of them,[p] but a magistrate will put a stop to his outrages in such a way that he will be unable to repay outrage for outrage.[q]

'He will then turn on the strongholds of his own country, but will stumble, 19
fall, and never be seen again. •In his place there will rise a man [r]who will send an 20
extortioner to despoil the royal splendour;[s] in a few days he will be shattered, though neither publicly nor in battle.[t]

Antiochus Epiphanes

'In his place there will rise a wretch:[u] he will not be given royal honours, but will 21
insinuate himself into them in his own time and gain possession of the kingdom by intrigue. •Armies will be utterly routed and crushed by him, the prince 22
of the covenant too.[v] •Still conspiring, he will go from treachery to treachery, 23
ever growing stronger despite the smallness of his following. •In his own time 24
he will invade the richest provinces, acting as his fathers or his fathers' fathers never acted, distributing plunder, spoil and wealth among them,[w] plotting his stratagems against fortresses—for a time.

1 M 1:17 'He will rouse his strength and his heart against the king of the South[x] with 25
a great army. The king of the South will march to war with a huge and powerful army, but will offer no resistance, since he will be outwitted by trickery. •Those 26
who shared his food will ruin him; his army will be swept away, many will fall in the slaughter.

'The two kings, seated at one table, hearts bent on evil, will tell their lies; 27
but they will not have their way, for the appointed time is still to come. •He 28
will return greatly enriched to his own country, his heart set against the holy covenant; he will take action, and next return to his own country. •In due 29

time he will make his way southwards again,[v] but this time the outcome will
30 not be as before. •The ships of Kittim[z] will oppose him, and he will be worsted.
He will retire and take furious action against the holy covenant and, as before,
will favour those who forsake that holy covenant.[aa]
31 'Forces of his will come and profane the sanctuary citadel;[bb] they will 8:11
abolish the perpetual sacrifice and instal the disastrous abomination there. 9:27; 12:11
32 Those who break the covenant he will corrupt[cc] by his flatteries, but the people 1 M 1:54
33 who know their God will stand firm and take action. •Those of the people who ↗ Mt 24:15
are learned will instruct many; for some days, however, they will be brought 12:3
34 down[dd] by sword and flame, by captivity and by plundering. •And thus brought
down, little help will they receive, though many will be plotting on their side.[ee]
35 Of the learned some will be brought down, as a result of which certain of
them will be purged, purified and made white—until the time of the End, for the 12:10
appointed time is still to come.
36 'The king will do as he pleases, growing more and more arrogant, considering 7:25
himself greater than all the gods;[ff] he will utter incredible blasphemies against Est 4:17r
Is 14:14
↗ 2 Th 2:4
Rv 13:5

11 b. Alexander's empire was not shared out among his sons but among his generals (the 'Diadochoi' or 'successors'), cf. 2:40f; 7:7; 8:8.

c. Ptolemy I Soter (306-285), the first sovereign of the hellenistic dynasty in Egypt.

d. Seleucus I Nicator (301-281) who supported Ptolemy I and with him defeated Antigonus (the battle of Gaza, 312, from which dates the Seleucid era), and subsequently founded his own huge Asiatic empire.

e. Lit. 'than his' corr.

f. Antiochus II Theos (261-246) having made an alliance with Ptolemy II Philadelphos (285-247) married Ptolemy's daughter Berenice, in about 252. Laodice (wife and half-sister of Antiochus) was then divorced, but being later taken back, poisoned her husband; she poisoned Berenice also, with the latter's son by Ptolemy, and her attendants. Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226), Laodice's son, was soon attacked by Ptolemy III Euergetes (247-221) who returned to Egypt loaded with booty but did not press his victory home. Reference is made in v. 9 to a counter-offensive by Seleucus for which there is little evidence in historical sources.

g. 'his posterity' Theod., Symmachus, Vulg.; 'his arm' Hebr. 'her child' corr.; 'he who begot her' Hebr.; 'her children' Syr. and Vulg.

h. Her husband.

i. Lit. 'he will deal with them and will prevail'.

j. The first explicit mention of 'Egypt' in the Hebr., hitherto called 'the South'; for 'the South' LXX reads 'Egypt' throughout.

k. The king of the North.

l. Seleucus III Ceraunus (227-223) and Antiochus III the Great (223-187).

m. The following verses recount the triumphs of Antiochus the Great. In 220 he undertook the conquest of Palestine; Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-203) immediately raised an army of mercenaries and Egyptian troops and marched to the frontier where he inflicted heavy losses on Antiochus (the battle of Raphia, v. 11), but the victory was not pressed home, v. 12, and for 8 years Antiochus waged unrelenting war for the recovery of his Asiatic empire. He mounted an attack in force, v. 13, when Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205-181) came to the throne; this time he was reinforced by an alliance with Philip V of Macedon and by internal revolt in Egypt. The prolonged siege of Gaza is referred to in v. 15. An Egyptian counter-offensive in Judaea only slightly delayed the entry of Antiochus into Jerusalem, vv. 15-16.

n. Lit. 'overthrow her (or 'it')'; the pronoun is feminine here; so also 'she (it) will not last nor will she (it) be to his advantage'; but it is impossible to understand this as referring to Cleopatra: the concluding words of this obscure verse must allude to the renewed outbreak of hostilities owing to the well founded mistrust on the Egyptian side.

o. Lit. 'the daughter of women'. Antiochus, foreseeing intervention from Rome, decided on an alliance with Egypt, becoming betrothed to Cleopatra, Ptolemy's daughter: the marriage took place at Raphia in 194.

p. The towns of the seaboard: taking advantage of the Egyptian treaty, Antiochus made his way back to Asia Minor, and defying Roman threats he occupied Greek and Egyptian towns. But in 190 he suffered an overwhelming defeat at the hands of the consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio (the 'magistrate' of v. 18) at Magnesia.

q. To pay the huge tribute imposed on him, Antiochus undertook an expedition to Elymais to plunder one of the temples of Bel; he was murdered there in 187.

r. Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175), son of Antiochus the Great; he commissioned Heliodorus, one of his ministers, to confiscate the treasures of the Jerusalem Temple; the supernatural vision which thwarted this plan is described in 2 M 3.

s. Translation conj.

t. Heliodorus had him assassinated.

u. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-165) who seized the throne to which Demetrius, the young son of his brother Seleucus IV, was the rightful heir.

v. Possibly the high priest Onias III, cf. 9:26+.

w. Doubtless the supporters of Antiochus.

x. The first campaign of Antiochus against Ptolemy VI Philometor of Egypt (son of his sister Cleopatra); Ptolemy, misled by his advisers, was finally made captive by Antiochus who simulated friendship but plundered Egypt. It was on his way home that Antiochus savagely ill-treated the Jews, v. 28.

y. The second Egyptian campaign of Antiochus was to end in ignominy. The Roman consul Gaius Popilius Laenas arrived at Alexandria and informed Antiochus of the Senate's order to withdraw.

z. The Vulg. translates 'Romans', and this is certainly the meaning here. Originally the term meant Cyprus, but the Bible uses it also of the regions bordering the Mediterranean, particularly in the West. Cf. Gn 10:4; Nb 24:24; Is 23:1,12; Jr 2:10; Ezk 27:6 (Vulg. 'Italia').

aa. The renegade Jews won over to the hellenistic way of life; cf. 1 M 1:11-15,43,52.

bb. Cf. the 'citadel of the Temple' in Ne 2:8. Cf. 1 M 1:31,33.

cc. Lit. 'make hypocrites of'.

dd. In the Hebr. there is a play on the words 'be brought down' (lit. 'stumble', *ksl*) and 'learned' *(skl)*; so also in v. 35.

ee. Possibly referring to the early successes of Judas Maccabaeus in rallying those who remained staunch to Judaism.

ff. Like Alexander, 8:4 and 11:3, and Antiochus the Great, 11:16, but unlike the Achmenids who in their inscriptions consistently ascribe their success to the will of Ahura Mazda. Antiochus in his old age had himself represented on his coins with the features of Zeus Olympios.

Dn 2:47; 8:19 the God of gods, and he will thrive until the wrath reaches bursting point; for what has been decreed will certainly be fulfilled. •Heedless of his fathers' gods, 37 heedless of the one whom women love, heedless of any god whatever, he will consider himself greater than them all.[gg] •Instead of them, he will honour the 38 god of fortresses, will honour a god unknown to his ancestors with gold and silver, precious stones and valuable presents. •He will use the people of an 39 alien god[hh] to defend[ii] the fortresses; he will confer great honours on those who will acknowledge him, by giving them wide authority and by farming out the land at a price.[jj]

THE TIME OF THE END

The end of the persecutor

'When the time comes for the End, the king of the South will try conclu- 40
sions with him; but the king of the North will come storming down on him with chariots, cavalry, and a large fleet. He will invade countries, overrun
8:9; 11:6 them and drive on. •He will invade the Land of Splendour, and many will 41
fall; but Edom, Moab, and what remain[kk] of the sons of Ammon will escape him.

'He will reach out to attack countries: the land of Egypt will not escape him. 42
The gold and silver treasures and all the valuables of Egypt will lie in his power. 43
Libyans and Cushites[ll] will be at his feet:[mm] •but reports coming from the East 44
and the North will worry him, and in great fury he will set out to bring ruin and complete destruction to many. •He will pitch the tents of his royal headquarters 45
between the sea and the mountains of the Holy Splendour. Yet he will come to his end[nn]—there will be no help for him.

Resurrection and retribution

10:13+ Jos 5:14 Jr 30:7 Lm 1:12 Jl 2:2 Mt 24:21 1 S 25:29 2 M 7:9+ Ezk 37:10+ ↗Jn 5:29 Is 66:24 Jr 5:31 Ws 3:7 ↗Mt 13:43 1 Co 15:41-42 8:10 8:26 Am 8:12 ↗Rv 10:4

12 'At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard 1
over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the Book.[a] •Of those 2
who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace.[b] •The learned[c] will shine as brightly 3
as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue,[d] as bright as stars for all eternity.

'But you, Daniel, must keep these words secret and the book sealed until 4
the time of the End. Many will wander this way and that,[e] and wickedness will go on increasing.'[f]

The sealed prophecy

Then I, Daniel, looked on and saw two others standing, one on the near bank 5
10:5 of the river, one on the other. •One said[g] to the man dressed in linen who was 6
8:13 standing further up the stream, 'How long until these wonders take place?'
I heard the man speak who was dressed in linen, standing further up the stream: 7
4:31 ↗Rv 10:5-6 7:25; 8:14 Si 18:1 he raised his right hand and his left to heaven and swore by him who lives for ever, 'A time and two times, and half a time; and all these things are going to happen when he who crushes[h] the power of the holy people meets his end'.
I listened but did not understand. Then I said, 'My lord, what is to be the 8
outcome?' •'Daniel,' he said 'go away: these words are to remain secret and sealed 9
11:35 until the time of the End. •Many will be cleansed, made white and purged; the 10
↗Rv 22:11 wicked will go on doing wrong; the wicked will never understand; the learned
11:31 Mt 24:15 Mk 13:14 will understand. •From the moment that the perpetual sacrifice is abolished 11
and the disastrous abomination erected: one thousand two hundred and
7:25+ Jm 1:12 ninety days. •Blessed is he who stands firm and attains a thousand three hundred 12

13 and thirty-five days.[i] •But you, go away[j] and rest; and you will rise for your share[k] at the end of time.'

SUSANNA AND THE JUDGEMENT OF DANIEL[a]

1 2 13 In Babylon there lived a man named Joakim. •He had married Susanna
3 daughter of Hilkiah, a woman of great beauty; and she was God-fearing,
4 because her parents were worthy people and had instructed their daughter in
the Law of Moses. •Joakim was a very rich man, and had a garden attached
5 to his house; the Jews would often visit him since he was held in greater respect
than any other man. •Two elderly men had been selected from the people that
year to act as judges. Of such the Lord said, 'Wickedness has come to Babylon
6 through the elders and judges posing as guides to the people'.[b] •These men
were often at Joakim's house, and all who were engaged in litigation used to
7 come to them. •At midday, when everyone had gone, Susanna used to take a
8 walk in her husband's garden. •The two elders, who used to watch her every
9 day as she came in to take her walk, gradually began to desire her. •They
threw reason aside, making no effort to turn their eyes to heaven, and forgetting
10 its demands of virtue. •Both were inflamed by the same passion, but they hid their
11 desire from each other, •for they were ashamed to admit the longing to sleep
12 13 with her, •but they still contrived to see her every day. •One day, having parted
with the words, 'Let us go home, it is time for the midday meal', they went off
14 in different directions, •only to retrace their steps and find themselves face to
face again. Obliged then to explain, they admitted their desire and agreed to
15 look for an opportunity of surprising her alone. •So they waited for a favourable
moment; and one day Susanna came as usual, accompanied only by two young
16 maidservants. The day was hot and she wanted to bathe in the garden. •There
was no one about except the two elders, spying on her from their hiding place.
17 She said to the servants, 'Bring me some oil and balsam and shut the garden door
18 while I bathe'. •They did as they were told, shutting the garden door and going
back to the house by a side entrance to fetch what she had asked for;
they knew nothing about the elders, who were hiding.

19 Hardly were the servants gone than the two elders were there after her. 'Look,'
20 they said 'the garden door is shut, no one can see us. We want to have you,
21 so give in and let us! •Refuse, and we will both give evidence that a young
22 man was with you and that was why you sent your maids away.' •Susanna
sighed. 'I am trapped,' she said 'whatever I do. If I agree, that means my death; Lv 20:10 Dt 22:22
23 if I resist, I cannot get away from you. •But I prefer to fall innocent into your Jn 8:4-5
24 power than to sin in the eyes of the Lord.' •Then she cried out as loud as
25 she could. The two elders began shouting too, putting the blame on her, •and

gg. The successors of Seleucus I honoured Apollo as their principal deity; Antiochus Epiphanes was a devotee also of Zeus Olympios, cf. v. 36, whom he identified with Jupiter Capitolinus, v. 38. The 'one whom women love' is Adonis (Tammuz), cf. Ezk 8:14.

hh. Alluding to the Syrians and to the renegade Jews with whom the king had garrisoned the new citadel, or the Akra, cf. 1 M 1:33-34. 'people' corr.; 'with' Hebr.

ii. Lit. 'defenders' corr.; 'fortifications' Hebr.

jj. A reference, perhaps, to the Seleucid agrarian and economic policy for conquered countries.

kk. 'what remain' corr.; 'beginning' or 'chief' Hebr.

ll. The peoples W. and S. of Egypt respectively.

mm. Lit. 'at his heels'.

nn. The death of Antiochus. Cf. 8:25.

12 a. The Book of the Predestinate, or the Book of Life, cf. Ex 32:32-33; Ps 69:28; 139:16; Is 4:3; Lk 10:20; Rv 20:12+. See also Dn 7:10+.

b. One of the key texts of the O.T. on the resurrection of the body, cf. 2 M 7:9+.

c. Cf. 11:35.

d. Lit. 'those who have made (men) virtuous', hence 'teachers of virtue'. The preceding verse suggests that the reference here is not only to the great name that the devout leave behind them, as in Ws 3:7 and Is 1:31, but to an eschatological transformation of the whole person into a glorified state.

e. In search of truth, as it seems; cf. Am 8:12.

f. 'wickedness' LXX; 'knowledge' Theod., Syr., Vulg.

g. Lit. '(he) said' Hebr.; 'I said' LXX.

h. 'who crushes' corr.; 'the crushing' Hebr.

i. There is no satisfactory explanation for the difference between the figures of 8:14 (1150), 12:11 (1290) and 12:12 (1335).

j. Hebr. adds 'to the end', omitted by Greek.

k. The final recompense, Mt 2:5. Cf. Ps 1:5.

13 a. Here the Hebr. text ends and the Greek additions begin, cf. Introduction to the Prophets.

b. The scriptural text cited here is unknown.

one of them ran to open the garden door. •The household, hearing the shouting 26
in the garden, rushed out by the side entrance to see what was happening; •once 27
the elders had told their story the servants were thoroughly taken aback, since
nothing of this sort had ever been said of Susanna.

Next day a meeting was held at the house of her husband Joakim. The two 28
elders arrived, in their vindictiveness determined to have her put to death. •They 29
Nb 5:18-22 addressed the company: 'Summon Susanna daughter of Hilkiah and wife of
Joakim'. She was sent for, •and came accompanied by her parents, her children 30
and all her relations. •Susanna was very graceful and beautiful to look at; •she 31 32
was veiled, so the wretches made her unveil in order to feast their eyes on her
beauty. •All her own people were weeping, and so were all the others who saw 33
her. •The two elders stood up, with all the people round them, and laid their 34
Lv 24:14 hands on the woman's head.[c] •Tearfully she turned her eyes to heaven, her 35
heart confident in God. •The elders then spoke. 'While we were walking by 36
ourselves in the garden, this woman arrived with two servants. She shut the
garden door and then dismissed the servants. •A young man who had been 37
hiding went over to her and they lay down together. •From the end of the 38
garden where we were, we saw this crime taking place and hurried towards
them. •Though we saw them together we were unable to catch the man: he 39
was too strong for us; he opened the door and took to his heels. •We did, 40
however, catch this woman and ask her who the young man was. •She refused 41
to tell us. That is our evidence.'

Since they were elders of the people, and judges, the assembly took their
word: Susanna was condemned to death. •She cried out as loud as she could, 42
Ps 33:13-15 Pr 15:11 Heb 4:13 'Eternal God, you know all secrets and everything before it happens; •you 43
know that they have given false evidence against me. And now have I to die,
innocent as I am of everything their malice has invented against me?'

The Lord heard her cry •and, as she was being led away to die, he roused 44 45
4:5; 5:11,14 Gn 41:38 the holy spirit residing in a young boy named Daniel •who began to shout, 46
'I am innocent of this woman's death!' •At which all the people turned to him and 47
asked, 'What do you mean by these words?' •Standing in the middle of the 48
crowd he replied, 'Are you so stupid, sons of Israel, as to condemn a daughter
of Israel unheard, and without troubling to find out the truth? •Go back to 49
the scene of the trial: these men have given false evidence against her.'

All the people hurried back, and the elders said to Daniel, 'Come and sit 50
Ws 4:8-9 with us and tell us what you mean, since God has given you the gifts that elders
have'. •Daniel said, 'Keep the men well apart from each other for I want to 51
question them'. •When the men had been separated, Daniel had one of them 52
brought to him. 'You have grown old in wickedness,' he said 'and now the
sins of your earlier days have overtaken you, •you with your unjust judgements, 53
Ex 23:7 your condemnation of the innocent, your acquittal of guilty men, when the Lord
has said, "You must not put the innocent and the just to death". •Now then, 54
since you saw her so clearly, tell me what tree you saw them lying under?'
He replied, 'Under a mastic tree'.[d] •Daniel said, 'True enough! Your lie recoils 55
on your own head: the angel of God has already received your sentence from
him and will slash you in half.' •He dismissed the man, ordered the other to be 56
brought and said to him, 'Spawn of Canaan, not of Judah, beauty has seduced
you, lust has led your heart astray! •This is how you have been behaving with 57
the daughters of Israel and they were too frightened to resist; but here is a
daughter of Judah who could not stomach your wickedness! •Now then, tell 58
me what tree you surprised them under?' He replied, 'Under a holm oak'.
Daniel said, 'True enough! Your lie recoils on your own head: the angel of 59
God is waiting, with a sword to drive home and split you, and destroy the pair
of you.'

Then the whole assembly shouted, blessing God, the saviour of those who 60
trust in him. •And they turned on the two elders whom Daniel had convicted 61

62 of false evidence out of their own mouths. •As prescribed in the Law of Moses, Dt 19:16-21
they sentenced them to the same punishment as they had intended to inflict on
their neighbour. They put them to death; the life of an innocent woman was spared
63 that day. •Hilkiah and his wife gave thanks to God for their daughter Susanna,
and so did her husband Joakim and all his relations, because she had been
acquitted of anything dishonourable.
64 From that day onwards Daniel's reputation stood high with the people.

BEL AND THE DRAGON[a]

Daniel and the priests of Bel

1 14 [b]When King Astyages joined his ancestors, Cyrus of Persia succeeded him.
2 Daniel was very close to the king who thought more of him than of any
3 other[c] of his friends. •Now in Babylon there was an idol called Bel,[d] to which
twelve bushels of the finest flour, forty sheep and six measures of wine were
4 offered every day. •The king took part in this cult and used to go and worship
5 the idol every day. Daniel, however, worshipped his own God.• 'Why do you
not worship Bel?' the king asked Daniel. 'I do not worship idols made by the
hands of men,' Daniel replied 'I worship the living God who made heaven and
6 earth and who has power over all living creatures.' •'You believe, then,'
said the king 'that Bel is not a living god? Can you not see how much he eats
7 and drinks every day?' •Daniel laughed. 'My king,' he said 'do not be taken in;
he is clay inside, and bronze outside, and has never eaten or drunk anything.'
8 This made the king angry; he summoned his priests, 'Tell me who eats all
this food,' he said 'or die. Prove to me that Bel really eats it, and I will have
9 Daniel put to death for blaspheming him.' •Daniel said to the king, 'Let it be as
you say'.[e]
There were seventy of these priests, to say nothing of their wives and
10 11 children. •The king went to the temple of Bel, taking Daniel with him.[f] •The
priests of Bel said to him, 'We are now withdrawing, as you can see;
but we will leave you, O king, to set out food and prepare the wine and leave it
there. Then you can shut the door and seal it with your own seal. If, when you
return in the morning, you do not find that everything has been eaten by Bel,
12 then let us be put to death; if not, then Daniel, that slanderer!' •They were
thinking—hence their confidence—of a secret entrance which they had made
under the table, by which they came in daily and took the offerings away.
13 14 When the priests had gone and the king had set out the food for Bel, •Daniel
made his servants bring ashes and spread them all over the temple floor, with no
other witness than the king. Then they left the building, shut the door and,
15 sealing it with the king's seal, went away. •That night, as usual, the priests
came with their wives and children; they ate and drank everything.
16 17 The king was up very early next morning; so was Daniel. •'Daniel,' said
18 the king 'are the seals intact?' 'They are intact, O king' he replied. •The king
then opened the door and taking one look at the table he exclaimed, 'You are
19 great, O Bel! There is no deception in you!' •But Daniel laughed. And restraining
the king from going further in, he said, 'Look at the floor and examine these

c. The whole community took part in stoning and the laying on of hands that preceded it.

d. A slight attempt has been made here, and in vv. 58-59, to reproduce the assonances in the Greek text between the trees mentioned *(schinos, prinos)* and the respective punishments threatened *(schisei, kataprisei)*.

62 14 a. These two narratives are a polemic against idolatry in the manner of Ws 15 and 16. The LXX text is completely independent of the text (Theod.) translated here, and we indicate its more notable variants.

b. LXX has the title 'From the prophecy of Habakkuk son of Joshua of the tribe of Levi'. Cf. v. 33.

c. LXX 'There was a certain man, a priest called Daniel son of Abal, who was very close to the king of Babylon'.

d. One of the names of Marduk, tutelary deity of Babylon. Cf. Is 46:1; Jr 50:2; 51:44.

e. In LXX Daniel himself suggests his own penalty.

f. What follows is told only summarily in LXX.

footprints'. •'I can see footprints of men, of women and of children' said the king, •and angrily ordered the priests to be arrested, with their wives and children. They showed him then the secret door through which they used to come and remove what was on the table. •The king had them put to death and handed Bel over to Daniel who destroyed both the idol and its temple.

20 21 22

Daniel kills the dragon

There was a big dragon in Babylon, and this was worshipped too.[g] •The king said to Daniel, 'You are not going to tell me that this is no more than bronze? Look, it is alive; it eats and drinks; you cannot deny that this is a living god; worship it, then.' •Daniel replied, 'I worship the Lord my God; he is the living God. With your permission, O king, without using either sword or club I will kill this serpent.' •'You have my permission' said the king. Whereupon Daniel took some pitch, some fat and some hair and boiled them up together, rolled the mixture into balls and fed them to the dragon; the dragon swallowed them and burst. Daniel said, 'Now look at the sort of thing you worship!' •The Babylonians were furious when they heard about this and began intriguing against the king. 'The king has turned Jew,' they said 'he has allowed Bel to be overthrown, and the dragon to be killed, and he has put the priests to death.' •So they went to the king and said, 'Hand Daniel over to us or else we will kill you, and your family'. •They pressed him so hard that the king found himself forced to hand Daniel over to them.

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Daniel in the lion pit[h]

They threw Daniel into the lion pit, and there he stayed for six days. •In the pit were seven lions, which were given two human bodies and two sheep every day; but for this period they were not given anything, to make sure they would eat Daniel.

31 32

Now the prophet Habakkuk was in Judaea: he had been making a stew, and breaking up bread small to put in a basket. He was on his way to the fields, taking this to the harvesters, •when the angel of the Lord spoke to him, 'Take the meal you are carrying to Babylon and give it to Daniel in the lion pit'. 'Lord,' replied Habakkuk 'I have not even seen Babylon, and know nothing about this pit.' •The angel of the Lord seized his head and carried him off by the hair to Babylon where, with a great thrust of his spirit, he set Habakkuk down on the edge of the pit. •'Daniel, Daniel,' Habakkuk shouted 'take the meal that God has sent you.' •And Daniel said, 'You have kept me in mind, O God; you have not deserted those who love you'. •Rising to his feet he ate the meal, while the angel of God lost no time in returning Habakkuk to his own country.

33 34 35 36 37 38 39

On the seventh day the king came to lament over Daniel; on reaching the pit he looked inside, and there was Daniel, quite unperturbed. •'You are great, O Lord, God of Daniel,' he exclaimed 'there is no god but you!' •Then he released Daniel from the pit and had the plotters of Daniel's ruin thrown in instead, where they were instantly eaten before his eyes.

40 41 42

14 g. Nothing is known of a dragon-god in Babylon. This story was familiar to early Jewish writers who refer to it when commenting on Jr 51:44.

h. A parallel narrative to that of ch. 6. The means of Habakkuk's transportation may have been suggested by Ezk 8:3.

HOSEA

Heading

1 1 The word of Yahweh that was addressed to Hosea son of Beeri when Uzziah, Lk 3:2
Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were reigning in Judah, and Jeroboam son of
Joash in Israel.[a]

I. THE MARRIAGE OF HOSEA AND ITS SYMBOLISM[b]

Hosea's marriage: his three children

2 When Yahweh first spoke through Hosea, Yahweh said this to him, 'Go, 2:6; 4:12; 5:4
marry a whore,[c] and get children with a whore,[d] for the country itself has Is 54:5
become nothing but a whore by abandoning Yahweh'.

3 So he went; and he took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, who conceived and
4 bore him a son. •'Name him[e] Jezreel', Yahweh told him 'for it will not be long 2:2,4
before I make the House of Jehu pay for the bloodshed at Jezreel[f] and I put an 1 K 18:45+
5 end to the sovereignty of the House of Israel.[g] •When that day comes I will 2 K 9:1-10; 10:1-17; 17: 3-6
break bow Israel's in the Valley of Jezreel.'[h]

6 She conceived a second time and gave birth to a daughter. 'Name her 9:15; 14:5
Unloved'[i] Yahweh told him. 'No more love shall the House of Israel have from 1 P 2:10

1 a. More accurately, it was under the last kings of Israel that Hosea chiefly exercised his prophetic ministry: Menahem (743-738), Pekahiah (738-737), Pekah (737-732), Hoshea (732-724).

b. Subsequent prophets performed many symbolic gestures, cf. Jr 18:1+, but Hosea's whole life with its heartbreaking experiences was a symbol, ch. 1-3. He loved, and still loves a wife who has betrayed him; Yahweh likewise still loves faithless Israel and, when he has made trial of her repentance, will cherish her again. Hosea's conception of a marriage of Yahweh with his people dating from the covenant of Sinai was to become familiar in the prophetic tradition. The prophets denounce idolatry as 'prostitution' or 'adultery' and compare the relationship between Israel and God with the fluctuations of married life. Cf. also Dt 4:24+. Though Isaiah alludes only briefly to this theme (Is 1: 21-26), Jeremiah reverts to it several times (Jr 2:2; 3:1, 6-12); but it is Ezekiel who, in two great allegories, Ezk 16 and 23, develops the theme most fully. In the second part of Is, the restoration of Israel is described as the reconciliation of a wife who has been unfaithful, Is 50:1; 54:6-7, cf. Is 62:4-5. It is possible, also, that this wedded love of God for his people is the subject of Sg and of Ps 45. In the N.T., Jesus speaks of the messianic age as a time of wedding, Mt 22:1-14; 25:1-13, and for St Paul Christian marriage is a symbol of Christ's union with his Church, Ep 5:25-33, cf. 1 Co 6:15-17; 2 Co 11-2. Thus the prophetic image of earlier days is sanctioned and applied to the new Israel of God. Although ch. 1-3 form a clearly defined unity, they are composed of heterogeneous elements: a biographical narrative (Hosea's marriage and the birth of his three children), 1:2-9; a discourse by Yahweh (God's treatment of faithless Israel), 2:4-25; an autobiographical fragment (reconciliation with the unfaithful wife, explanation of this symbolic act), 3:1-5. It is possible that 2:1-3, which read as a conclusion to this section, should not be attributed to Hosea.

c. Lit. 'a wife of prostitution', cf. 4:12; 5:4; either a woman who was already known to be a prostitute or, more probably, one who later became one.

d. Lit. 'children of prostitution'. Not that the children are to be born of an adulterous union but that they take after their unfaithful mother, cf. Ezk 16: 44; Si 41:5.

e. The names of Hosea's children are prophetic, cf. Is 1:26+.

f. Jezreel (*yizreel*, 'God sows', cf. 2:24-25) was one of the residences of the kings of Israel; it was here that Jehu massacred the descendants of Omri.

g. The dynasty of Jehu ended with the assassination of Zechariah in 743.

h. The Valley of Jezreel, or of Megiddo, has always been one of the great battlefields of Palestine. Jg 4: 12-16; 2 K 23:29-30, etc.

i. The meaning of the symbolic name Lo-Ruhamah.

14:4 me in future, no further forgiveness.[j] •(But my love shall go to the House[k] of 7
Ps 20:7 Judah and through Yahweh their God I mean to save them — but not by bow
2:20 or sword or battle, horse or horseman.)'
1 S 17:47
2 K 19:34 She weaned Unloved, conceived again and gave birth to a son. •'Name 8 9
Ps 33:16; 60:11-12 him No-People-of-Mine'[l] Yahweh said. 'You are not my people and I am not
Pr 21:31
Is 30:16; 31:1 your God.'[m]
Mi 5:9
Zc 4:6

Yahweh and his unfaithful wife[a]

Is 50:1 2 Denounce your mother, denounce her, 4 2
for she is not my wife
nor am I her husband.
Let her rid her face of her whoring,
and her breasts of her adultery,[b]
Ezk 16:7 or else I will strip her naked,[c] 5 3
expose her as on the day she was born;
I will make a wilderness of her,[d]
Jr 6:8; 9:11 turn her into an arid land,
and leave her to die of thirst.
I will not love her children, 6 4
1:2+; 4:12; 5:7 since they are the children of whoring.
Yes, their mother has played the whore, 7 5
she who conceived them has disgraced herself.
Jr 2:25; 3:13 'I am going to court[e] my lovers'[f] she said
Am 2:4
Jr 44:17 'who give me my bread and water,
10:1 my wool, my flax, my oil and my drink.'[g]
She would not acknowledge, not she, 10 8
Dt 7:13; 8: 11-18 that I was the one who was giving her
Ps 144:12f the corn, the wine, the oil,
Ezk 16:17 and who freely gave her that silver and gold
of which they have made Baals.

9:2 That is why, when the time comes, I mean to withdraw my corn, 11 9
and my wine, when the season for it comes.
I will retrieve my wool, my flax,
that were intended to cover her nakedness;
Ezk 16:37 5:14 so will I display her shame before her lovers' eyes 12 10
Jn 10:29 and no one shall rescue her from my power.[h]
10:1 I will lay her vines and fig trees waste, 14 12
those of which she used to say,
'These are the pay my lovers gave me';
Ps 80:12-13 Is 5:5-6 I am going to make them into thickets
for the wild beasts to ravage.
Is 1:13-14 Jr 7:34 I will put an end to all her rejoicing, 13 11
Am 5:21-23; 8:10 her feasts, her New Moons, her sabbaths
and all her solemn festivals.
I mean to make her pay for all the days 15 13
when she burnt offerings to the Baals
and decked herself with rings and necklaces
to court her lovers,
Jr 2:37 forgetting me.
It is Yahweh who is speaking.

That is why I am going to block her[i] way with thorns, 8 6
Jr 2:23 and wall her in so that she cannot find her way;
she will chase after her lovers and never catch up with them, 9 7
she will search for them and never find them.

Then she will say, 'I will go back[j] to my first husband,
I was happier then than I am today'. — 6:1-3 Jr 3:22 Lk 15:17-18

16 14 That is why I am going to lure her — 9:10; 12:10; 14:5
and lead her out into the wilderness[k] — Jr 31:2 Ezk 16:60
and speak to her heart.
17 15 I am going to give her back her vineyards,
and make the Valley of Achor[l] a gateway of hope. — Jos 7:24-26 Is 65:10
There she will respond to me as she did when she was young, — *Ps 71:17* Jr 2:2
as she did when she came out of the land of Egypt. — Ex 13:17+

18 16 When that day comes—it is Yahweh who speaks—
she will[m] call me, 'My husband', — Jr 31:22
no longer will she call me, 'My Baal'.[n] — 14:4
19 17 I will take the names of the Baals off her lips,
their names shall never be uttered[o] again.

20 18 When that day comes I will make a treaty on her behalf — Jb 5:23 Ezk 34:25 Zc 9:10
with the wild animals,
with the birds of heaven and the creeping things of the earth;
I will break bow, sword and battle in the country, — 1:7
and make her sleep secure.[p]
21 19 I will betroth[q] you to myself for ever,
betroth you with integrity and justice,
with tenderness[r] and love; — 4:2 Mi 6:8 Lk 15

j. Or 'instead I will hate her bitterly'; or possibly 'I will punish her severely'.

k 'the House' Hebr.; 'the sons' Greek.

l. The meaning of the symbolic name Lo-Ammi. The three children are named in ascending order of the severity of the punishment: with the third, God breaks with Israel entirely.

m. 'I am not your God' some MSS and several of the Fathers; 'I will not be (or: I am not) yours' Hebr. 'I will be their God and they shall be my people' was the formula expressing the covenant between God and his faithful, cf. Jr 31:31+. We read 2:1-3 after 3:5.

2 a. Yahweh speaks as a slighted lover, not rejecting his unfaithful beloved but seeking to bring her back by repeated correction; in this he succeeds; then, having tested her repentance, he welcomes her with all the fervour of his first love and showers gifts on her.

b. By 'whoring' and 'adultery' here we should probably understand the amulets, tattooing and other distinctive marks of a prostitute, cf. Pr 7:10; Gn 38:15.

c. A punishment for shameless women, Ezk 16: 37-39; Is 47:2-3; Jr 13:22; Na 3:5; Rv 17:16.

d. Transference of the symbol from the wife to the country. The wealth of Canaan which had been an occasion of sin for Israel, 10:1; 13:6, is to be removed, 4:3; 5:7; 9:6; 13:15.

e. Lit. 'go after, pursue' in the sense of being devoted to; the expression is taken from the vocabulary of love.

f. The Baals, Canaanite gods of fertility to whom the Israelites offered the produce of their soil, which they believed came as much from the gods of Canaan as from Yahweh.

g. We read vv. 8-9 after v. 15.

h. Vv. 13 and 14 are here interchanged.

i. 'her' Greek and Syr.; 'thy' Hebr.

j. Lit. 'I will go, I will return'.

k. Hosea, like Amos before him (Am 5:25), thinks of Israel's journey through the desert as a time of spiritual idyll (and cf. 12:10); Israel was then childlike (Ho 11:1-4), knowing nothing of pagan gods, loyal to Yahweh whose presence was manifest in the cloud, Ho 2:16-17; Jr 2:2-3. On the Exodus theme in the Prophets, cf. Is 40:3+.

l. 'I will make' corr.; 'from there' Hebr. Achor is one of the gorges near Jericho leading to the uplands of the interior; the name means 'misfortune', cf. Jos 7: 24-26.

m. 'she will' Greek; 'thou wilt' Hebr. So also in the following line.

n. The name *baal* ('master') was also used of husbands. It had been from ancient times an element in certain proper names, cf. 1 S 14:49+; 2 S 2:8, etc.; 1 Ch 8:33; 9:39,40, without any idolatrous significance Yahweh being the 'master' to whom the bearer of the name was thus dedicated. Later, however, the association of the word with the Canaanite divinities (cf. Jg 2:1+) made its use disreputable; hence Hosea forbids it, v. 19.

o. Or 'their names shall be remembered no more'.

p. Justice and holiness will characterise the messianic age, vv. 21-22, and God will again dwell among his people, lavishing his gifts, cf. Lv 26:3-13; Dt 28:1-14. The sky will give rain, the earth will yield abundant harvests, Am 9:13; Ho 2:23-24; 14:8-9; Jr 31:12,14; Ezk 34:26-27,29; 36:29-30; Is 30:23-26; 49:10; Jl 2:19, 22-24; 4:18; Zc 8:12. The crops will be safe from marauders, Am 9:15; Is 65:21-23, cf. Dt 28:30-33, since there will be no more invasion, Mi 5:4; Is 32:17-18; Jl 2:20; Jr 46:27; Is 4:5-6, cf. also 25:4-5. The wild animals will not threaten: God will make a treaty with them, Ho 2:20; Ezk 34:25,28. All the nations, under the rule of the Messiah-King, Is 9:5-6; Zc 9:10, will enjoy peace, Is 2:4 = Mi 4:3; cf. Is 11:6-8+; 65:25. Death itself will be no more, Is 25:7-8; sorrow will give place to joy, Jr 31:13; Is 65:18-19; Ba 4:23,29, cf. Rv 21:4.

q. God takes back his unfaithful wife with the fervour of first love, and showers her (cf. Gn 24:53; 34:12) with spiritual gifts.

r. The primary meaning of this word *(hesed)* is that of a bond, or contract. When used of human relationships it comes to mean friendship, union, loyalty, especially when these are the outcome of a treaty. Used of God, the term means his faithfulness to his covenant and the kindness he therefore shows his chosen people (in Ex 34:6). Used by Hosea in the context of married love, the word assumes and from then on retains a still warmer significance: it means the tender love God has for his people, Ps 136; Jr 31:3, etc., and the benefits deriving from it, Ex 20:6; Dt 5:10; 2 S 22:51; Jr 32:18; Ps 18:50. But this divine

Jn 1:14 I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness, 22/20
and you will come to know Yahweh.[s]

When that day comes[t]—it is Yahweh who speaks— 23/21
Ps 67:6 the heavens will have their answer from me,
the earth its answer from them,
the grain, the wine, the oil, their answer from the earth, 24/22
1:4-9; 2:3 and Jezreel his answer[u] from them.
I will sow him[v] in the country, 25/23
Is 62:4 I will love Unloved;
↗Rm 9:25 ↗1 P 2:10 I will say to No-People-of-Mine, 'You are my people', 24
and he will answer, 'You are my God'.[w]

Hosea takes his unfaithful wife back and tests her fidelity. The symbol explained

3 Yahweh said to me, 'Go a second time, give your love to a woman, loved 1
by her husband but an adulteress in spite of it,[a] just as Yahweh gives his love
Jr 7:18 to the sons of Israel though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes'.[b]
So I bought her[c] for fifteen silver shekels and a bushel-and-a-half of barley,[d] 2
and said to her, 'For many days you must keep yourself quietly for me,[e] not 3
playing the whore or offering yourself to others; and I will do the same for you'.
Ex 23:24+; 28:6+ 1 S 15:23+ Dn 3:38 Hab 2:18 Jr 30:9 For the sons of Israel will be kept for many days without a king, without 4
a leader, without sacrifice or sacred stone, without ephod or teraphim. •After- 5
wards the sons of Israel will come back;[f] they will seek Yahweh their God and
David their king;[g] they will come trembling to Yahweh, come for his good
things[h] in those days to come.

The great future

↗Rm 9:27 2 And the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand 1
on the seashore,
which cannot be measured or counted.
↗Rm 9:26 In the place where they were told, 'You are no people of mine',
Jn 1:12 they will be called, 'The sons of the living God'.
Jr 3:18+ The sons of Judah and of Israel will be one again 2
and choose themselves one single leader,
and they will spread far beyond their country;[z]
1:4-9+ so great will be the day of Jezreel.
1 P 2:10 To your brother say, 'People-of-Mine', 3
2:24-25+ to your sister, 'Beloved'.[y]

II. THE CRIMES AND PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL

General corruption

Jr 2:4 4 Sons of Israel, listen to the word of Yahweh, 1
12:3 Is 3:13-15 Mi 6:1-5 for Yahweh indicts the inhabitants of the country:
there is no fidelity, no tenderness, 2
2:21-22+ no knowledge of God in the country,
only perjury and lies, slaughter, theft, 2
Jr 7:9 adultery and violence, murder after murder.
Jr 4:28 Jl 1:10 This is why the country is in mourning, and all who live in it pine away, 3
Zp 1:3 even the wild animals and the birds of heaven;
the fish of the sea themselves are perishing.[a]

Against the priests

But let no man denounce, no man rebuke; 4
it is you, priest, that I denounce.[b]
Ws 10:12 Day and night[c] you stumble along, 5

the prophet[d] stumbling with you,
and you are the ruin of your people.[e]
6 My people perish for want of knowledge. Jr 5:4
As you have rejected knowledge[f]
so do I reject you from my priesthood; Ml 2:1-9
you have forgotten the teaching of your God,
I in my turn will forget your children.
7 Many as they are, all of them have sinned against me,
they have bartered their glory for shame.[g] 4:18
Jr 2:11+
8 They feed on the sin of my people,
they are all greedy for their iniquity.[h]
9 But as with the people, so let it be with the priest:
I will make them pay for their conduct,
I will pay them out for their deeds.
10 They will eat but never be satisfied, 10:1
Mi 6:14
they will play the whore but still be sterile,[i]
because they have deserted Yahweh
11 to give themselves up •to whoring.

Worship in Israel is now idolatrous and debauched

Wine, new wine addles the wits.[j]
12 My people consult their block of wood, Jr 2:27
a rod answers their questions;[k]

hesed calls for corresponding *hesed* in man (Ho 6:6), consisting of self-giving, loving trust, abandonment, deep affection, 'piety', a love (in short) which is a joyful submission to the will of God and an active charity to fellow men, Ho 4:2; 6:6. This ideal, expressed in many of the Psalms, will later be that of the Hasidim, or 'Hasidaeans', cf. 1 M 2:42+.

s. In Hosea 'knowledge of Yahweh' and *hesed* go together 2:21-22; 4:2; 6:6; this 'knowledge' is therefore not merely intellectual. God 'makes himself known' to man when he engages himself to him by covenant and shows his love *(hesed)* for him by the benefits he confers; similarly, man 'knows God' when he loyally observes God's covenant, shows gratitude for God's gifts, and returns love for love. Cf. Jb 21:14; Pr 2:5; Is 11:2; 58:2. In the wisdom literature 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' are practically synonymous.

t. Hebr. inserts 'I shall answer', absent from Greek and Syr.

u. Lit. 'I shall answer the heavens, they will answer the earth' etc. The name Jezreel no longer recalls the crimes of earlier days, 1:4+, but now justifies its etymology, 'God sows', cf. v. 25, and stands for an Israel restored and prosperous. This Jezreel pleads, as it were, with the produce of the soil, which plea is passed to earth and sky and finally to God who grants it.

v. 'will sow him' corr.; 'will sow her for myself' Hebr.

w. God so loves his people that he will give the lie to the ominous names, 'Unloved' and 'No-People-of-Mine'; the disaster they prophesied will come to an end, and the names with it; the names are replaced by their opposites, cf. 2:1,3.

3 a. 'loved by her husband' Hebr.; 'who loves evil' Greek. The 'woman', it seems, is Gomer herself: Hosea used to love her and evidently still does, though she has betrayed him once and is betraying him now. The prophet's generosity is a symbol of God's persistent love for his faithless people.

b. Or 'to other gods who love raisin cakes', cf. Dn 14:5-8.

c. Hosea buys Gomer back either from her present owner or from a pagan shrine where perhaps she was a sacred prostitute.

d. The total price is approximately that of a slave's ransom, Ex 21:32; Lv 27:4.

e. A period of trial, as v. 4 explains, before the covenant is renewed between Yahweh and Israel, cf. 2:8,9,16.

f. Cf. 2:9; 6:1; 14:2.

g. Cf. Jr 30:9; Ezk 34:23. The Northern and Southern Kingdoms will therefore be reunited, 2:2. The end of v. 5 is perhaps not by Hosea.

h. Probably the produce of the soil. 2:24; 14:6-8; Is 1:19; Jr 31:12-14.

2 x. Or 'and they will return from the country (of their exile)'.

y. New symbolic names, contrary to the first: Ammi ('People-of-Mine'), Ruhamah ('Loved'). 'to your beloved brother', 'to your sister' Greek; 'to your brothers', 'to your sisters' Hebr.

4 a. The passage speaks of a great drought, cf. Am 1:2; 4:7; 7:4; Jl 1:16-20; 2:3. The punishment for man's sins is shared by the whole creation, Gn 3:17-18; Jr 4:23-28; 9:9; 12:4; 14:2-6; Hg 1:6-11; 2:16-17; Zp 1:3; Is 24:4-7, etc., so also is man's redemption, Is 11:6+; Jl 4:18, cf. Rm 8:19-22+.

b. Line corr.; Hebr. 'Thy people is like those who denounce the priest'. The priesthood as a whole is here attacked for ignorance, neglect, greed and even, 6:9, violence. For other attacks, cf. Jr 2:8; 6:13; Mi 3:11; Zp 3:4, and especially Ml 1:6–2:9.

c. Text corr.

d. On the unworthy prophets, cf. Jr 23:13-32; Mi 3:5,11, etc.

e. Line corr.; Hebr. 'I shall be the ruin of your mother'.

f. Knowledge of the Law in which the priests should have instructed the people, Dt 33:10; Ml 2:5-8.

g. 'they have bartered their glory (i.e. Yahweh) for shame (i.e. the Baals)' Targ. and Syr.; 'I will change their glory into shame' Hebr.

h. The priest's share in the sacrifice for sin was considerable, Lv 6:19-22, as it was in the sacrifice of reparation, Lv 7:7; in this way the people's sins were to his advantage, cf. 1 S 2:12-17.

i. To 'play the whore' is to be unfaithful to Yahweh, as in 2:14; 4:18; 9:1, with a possible allusion to sacred prostitution.

j. An isolated proverb, possibly taken out of its original context.

k. The 'block of wood' is apparently a contemptuous term for an *asherah* or sacred pole, Ex 34:13+. The 'rod' is probably a diviner's wand.

1:2; 2:6 for a prostituting spirit leads them astray,
they renounce their God to play the whore.
10:8 Dt 12:2+ They offer sacrifice on the mountain tops, 13
burn their offerings on the hills,
under oak and poplar and terebinth,
so pleasant is their shade.
So, although your daughters prostitute themselves
and your sons' wives commit adultery,
I shall not be hard on your daughters for their whoring 14
or on your sons' wives for their adultery,[l]
Dt 23:19+ when everyone else is wandering off[m] with whores
and offering sacrifice with sacred prostitutes.
Thus does a senseless people run to ruin.

A warning to Judah

Though you, Israel, play the whore, 15
there is no need for Judah to sin too.
12:12 Am 4:4+; 5:8 *10:5* Jos 7:2+ *Am 8:14* Do not go to Gilgal,
do not go up to Beth-aven,[n]
do not take the oath, 'As Yahweh lives!'[o]

Israel the stubborn heifer

10:11 Since Israel is as obstinate 16
Jr 31:18 as a stubborn heifer,
how can Yahweh pasture him
like a lamb in rolling pastures?
14:9 Ephraim is wedded to idols, 17
Am 2:8; 6:4-6 they sprawl •in the company of drunkards; 18
whoring is all they care about,
4:7 they barter their glory for shame.[p]
Jr 4:11-13 Am 1:14 The wind will carry them off on its wings, 19
then all their altars will bring them is disappointment.

Priests, nobles and king are the ruin of the nation

5 Listen to this, priests, 1
attend, House of Israel,
listen, royal household,
you who are responsible for justice,[a]
for you have been a snare at Mizpah,[b]
and a net outspread on Tabor.
They are entrenched in their deceitfulness[c] 2
and so I am going to punish them all.
I know all about Ephraim, 3
Israel has no secrets for me;
yes Ephraim, you[d] have played the whore,
Israel has defiled himself.
Jr 13:23+ Their deeds do not allow them to return to their God, 4
1:2 since a prostituting spirit possesses them;
they do not know Yahweh.
Am 6:8 The arrogance of Israel is his own accuser, 5
14:2 the iniquity of Ephraim knocks him down,[e]
and down comes Judah with him.
Pr 1:28 Is 55:6 Am 5:4+; 8:11-12 Jn 7:34; *8:21* *2:6* Though they go in search of Yahweh with their sheep and oxen, 6
they do not find him;
for he has withdrawn from them.
They have proved unfaithful to Yahweh, 7

they have fathered bastards,
and now the destroyer[f] will devour them, them and their estates.

The brothers' war[g]

8 Sound the horn in Gibeah, 8:1 Jl 2:1+
the trumpet in Ramah,
give the alarm at Beth-aven, 4:15+
call Benjamin to arms![h]
9 Ephraim shall be laid waste when the day comes for punishment;
I pronounce certain doom for the tribes of Israel.[i]
10 The leaders of Judah are like men who displace the boundary mark;[j] Dt 19:14; 27:17 Pr 15:25
I mean to pour my anger out on them in a flood.
11 Ephraim is an oppressor, he tramples on justice,[k]
so set is he on his pursuit of nothingness.[l]
12 Very well, I myself will be the moth of Ephraim, 7:9 Is 50:9+
the canker of the House of Judah.

The folly of foreign alliances

13 Ephraim has seen how sick he is
and Judah the extent of his wound,
so Ephraim has turned to Assyria, 7:11; 8:9; 12:2
Judah has appealed to the Great King;[m] 1 K 15:19; 16:7-9
but he has no power to cure you
nor to heal your wound.[n]
14 For I mean to be like a lion to Ephraim, 13:7 Is 5:29 Am 3:12 Na 2:12
like a young lion to the House of Judah;
I, yes I, will tear to pieces, then go my way,
I will carry off my prey, and no one can snatch it from me. 2:12

Yahweh abandons his people

15 Yes, I am going to return to my dwelling place[o] Dt 4:29-31+ Ps 27:8; 78: 34; 107:6 Jr 29:13 Am 5:4+
until they confess their guilt[p] and seek my face;
6:1 they will search for me in their misery.

Israel's short-lived and shallow repentance[a]

1 6 'Come, let us return to Yahweh. 2:9; 8:2
2 He has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us; Job 5:19

l. Their guilt is less since they are given a bad example by their husbands and fathers.

m. 'wandering off' corr.; 'leading astray' Hebr. 'everyone else', lit. 'they' are the Israelites as a whole, cf. v. 12.

n. Beth-aven ('house of nothingness') is an insulting nickname for Bethel (Beth-el: 'house of God').

o. Perhaps read 'do not take oath by Beersheba', as in Am 5:5; 8:14.

p. Text corr.

5 a. Cf. Mi 3:1; Dt 1:17.

b. Apparently Mizpah near Gerasa in Transjordania, Jg 10:17; 11:11; Gn 31:49.

c. Text corr. Lit. 'They have dug deep the pit of straying'.

d. 'you' (singular) corr.; 'now' Hebr.

e. Text corr.

f. 'the destroyer' corr.; 'the new moon' Hebr.

g. This whole passage, and probably all that follows as far as 6:6, refers, apparently, to the Syro-Ephraimite war (735-734), cf. 2 K 16:5+.

h. Lit. 'set Benjamin in motion' corr.; 'behind you, Benjamin' Hebr.

i. I.e. exile, dismemberment of the kingdom, 2 K 15: 29, the fall of Samaria and the loss of Israel's independence, 2 K 17:5-6.

j. Alluding to the advance of the army of Judah into Israelite territory, perhaps also to earlier encroachments by Judah, 1 K 15:16-22.

k. By concluding an alliance with Damascus and attacking its own brothers of the Southern Kingdom.

l. 'an oppressor' corr. following Greek; 'oppressed' Hebr. 'he tramples on' corr. following Greek; 'crushed' Hebr. 'nothingness' Greek; 'a command' Hebr. All human help is empty (13:4; Is 44:8; Ps 18:31, etc.), but this is especially true of Damascus whose fall is imminent.

m. 'to the Great King' corr.; 'to King Jareb' or 'to an avenging king' Hebr. Reference to the tribute paid by Menahem to Tiglath-pileser III in 738, cf. 2 K 15:19, and to the appeal of Ahaz for help from the same Assyrian king in 735, cf. 2 K 16:7-9.

n. 'heal your wound' corr.

o. Heaven, cf. Is 18:4; 63:15; Jr 25:30; Mi 1:3; Ps 18:6.

p. Or 'atone for their guilt'.

6 a. Hosea composes a penitential prayer (borrowing perhaps from an atonement ritual, 1 K 8:31-53; Jr 3:21-25; Jl 1–2; Ps 85); this he puts into the mouth of the people terrified by God's threat of punishment and desertion, 5:14-15; they exhort one another to return to Yahweh, vv. 1-3, but the return is only temporary; there is no true repentance, vv. 4-6.

he has struck us down, but he will bandage our wounds;
after a day or two he will bring us back to life, 2
13:14 Ezk 37 on the third day[b] he will raise us 3
and we shall live in his presence.
[c]Let us set ourselves to know Yahweh; 3a
that he will come is as certain as the dawn
his judgement will rise like the light,[d] 5b
Dt 11:14; 32:2 Ps 72:6; 143:6 he will come to us as showers come, 3b
like spring rains watering the earth.'

What am I to do with you, Ephraim? 4
What am I to do with you, Judah?[e]
=13:3 Ps 78:36 Ws 11:22 This love of yours is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that quickly disappears.
12:11 Jr 1:10; 5:14 This is why I have torn them to pieces by the prophets, 5a
why I slaughtered them with the words from my mouth,
2:21-22+; 8:13 1 S 15:22 Dn 3:39 Am 5:21+ ✗ Mt 9:13; 12:7 since what I want is love, not sacrifice; 6
knowledge of God, not holocausts.

The past and present sins of Israel

8:1 But they have violated the covenant[f] at Adam,[g] 7
they have proved unfaithful to me there.
12:12 Gilead[h] is a town of evil-doers, 8
full of bloody footprints.
Like so many robbers in ambush 9
Ps 10:8 a band of priests commits murder on the road to Shechem—[i]
appalling behaviour, indeed!
I have seen horrors in Bethel;[j] 10
that is where Ephraim plays the whore
and Israel defiles himself.
Judah, I intend a harvest for you, too, 11
when I restore the fortunes of my people.[k]

7:13 7 Whenever I want to heal Israel, 1
I am confronted by the guilt of Ephraim
14:1 and the wickedness[a] of Samaria;
deceit is their principle of behaviour,
thieves break into houses
and bandits raid outside.
They never pause to consider 2
Ps 90:8 Ml 3:16 that I know about all their wickedness;
yet their actions are all round them,
they stare me in the face.

Conspiracy the order of the day in Israel[b]

Such is their cunning, they beguile the king, 3
and the leaders too, such is their treachery.
[c]But they breathe fury, all of them, 4
as fiery as an oven
which the baker does not need to stoke
from the time he has kneaded the dough until it rises.
They addle the king and leaders with wine fumes 5
as he mixes with these scoundrels.
Their hearts reach oven-heat in the excitement of the plot; 6
their fury smoulders all night
and in the morning blazes like a fierce flame;
all burn at oven-heat 7
and they consume the men who rule them.

Thus have all their kings fallen,
not one of them has ever called on me.

Israel ruined by relying on foreign powers

8 Ephraim mixes with the nations,
Ephraim is a half-baked cake.[d]
9 Foreigners eat his strength away, 5:12
he is unconscious of it; Rv 3:17
grey hairs are scattered on his head:
he is unconscious of it.
10 (The arrogance of Israel is his own accuser;
they will not come back to Yahweh their God; Is 9:12 Am 4:6-11+
in spite of all this they will not seek him.)
11 Ephraim is like a silly, witless dove,[e]
calling on Egypt, turning to Assyria. 5:13; 8:9; 12:2; 14:4
12 Wherever[f] they turn, I will spread my net over them,
I mean to bring them down like the birds of heaven,
I will punish them for their perversity.[g]

The ingratitude and punishment of Israel

13 Trouble is coming to them, for they have strayed from me! Ps 78:9-11
Ruin on them, for they have rebelled against me!
I wanted to redeem them, but they tell lies about me. 7:1
14 Theirs is no heartfelt cry to me
when they lament on their beds.[h]
They gash themselves[i] for the sake of corn and wine,
yet they rebel[j] against me.
15 I it was who gave strength[k] to their arms,
yet all they do is make wicked plots against me.
16 They turn to Baal,[l]
they are like a treacherous bow.
Their leaders will fall by the sword
because of their arrogant talk,
and how they will be laughed at in the land of Egypt!

Sound the alarm!

1 8 Put the trumpet to your lips 5:8+
like a watchman[a] on duty at the house of Yahweh,[b] Jr 6:17 Ezk 3:17

b. The phrase 'after a day or two (lit 'two days') ... on the third day' means 'before long'.

c. Text corr.

d. 'like the light' Greek; 'light' Hebr. 'his judgement' corr.; 'thy judgements' Hebr.; 'my judgement' Greek.

e. The original text may have read 'Israel' in synonymous parallelism with 'Ephraim', cf. 5:3.

f. The Sinaitic covenant.

g. 'at Adam' corr.; 'like a man' or 'like Adam' Hebr. The reference is obscure. There may have been an idolatrous shrine at Adam (near the mouth of the Jabbok) cf. Jos 3:16; or the text may simply mean that Israel's infidelity dates from the earliest days of the settlement in Palestine. On this, see 9:10.

h. The town on the plateau of Gilead in Transjordania, cf. Gn 31:46-48.

i. Text corr. It is not known to what event this refers; some suspect an allusion to the vengeance of Simeon and Levi, Gn 34; 49:5.

j. 'in Bethel' corr.; 'in the House of Israel' Hebr.

k. This mention of Judah is a later addition. 'I intend' corr.

7 a. 'wickedness' Greek; 'wicked deeds' Hebr.

b. From the inception of the Northern Kingdom to the year 737 (assassination of Pekahiah) seven of its kings were murdered. The prophet here draws a picture of a conspiracy in which the traitors, after feigning loyalty, assassinate the king and leaders as they lie drunk after a night of revelling. Elah died thus, 1 K 16:9-10.

c. The text of vv. 4-6 has been corrected.

d. Lit. 'a cake not turned' i.e. useless, because burnt on one side and underdone on the other.

e. Israel, seeking alliance now from Assyria, now from Egypt, is like a terrified dove flying this way and that to escape the hunter.

f. Or 'Whenever', or 'As'.

g. Lit. 'wickedness', corr.

h. Either 'beds' properly speaking, or the carpets or cloaks on which people performed the prostrations when at prayer, cf. Ps 4:4; 149:5.

i. 'gash themselves' corr.; 'sojourn' Hebr. On ritual laceration, cf. 1 K 18:28; Jr 16:6; 41:5.

j. 'rebel against' corr.; 'turn away from' Hebr.

k. Greek. Hebr. reads 'who trained and gave strength'.

l. 'to Baal' corr.; 'not on high' Hebr.

8 a. 'a watchman' corr.; 'an eagle' Hebr.

b. Palestine, cf. 9:15; Jr 12:7; Zc 9:8; 1 Ch 17:14.

because they have violated my covenant
6:7 and rebelled against my Law.
Ps 78:37
6:1-3 Useless now to shout, 'God of Israel, we acknowledge you'.[c] 2
Jr 14:8-9
Israel has rejected the good; 3
the enemy[d] will hunt him down.

Civil anarchy and idolatry

1 S 8:1+; 11:12+ They have set up kings, but not with my consent, 4
and appointed princes, but without my knowledge.
Out of their own silver and gold they have made idols,
which are doomed to destruction.
10:5 I spurn your calf, Samaria, 5
1 K 12:28,32 my anger blazes against it.[e]
(How long will it be before they purge themselves of this,
the sons of Israel?)[f] 6
Ex 20:4; 34:17 A workman made the thing,
this[g] cannot be God!
Yes, the calf of Samaria shall go up in flames.
10:13 They sow the wind, they will reap the whirlwind; 7
Jb 4:8
Pr 22:8 their wheat will yield no ear,
Ga 6:7 the ear will yield no flour,
or, if it does, foreigners will swallow it.

Israel ruined by relying on foreign powers[h]

Israel himself has been swallowed, 8
and is destined now to stay among the nations
like a crock that no one wants,
5:13; 7:11 for making approaches to Assyria 9
—that wild ass living alone.
Ezk 16:32-34 Ephraim is renting lovers.[i]
Right; let them rent them among the nations, 10
I am going to disperse them this minute;
that will soon put a stop to their anointing kings and leaders.[j]

Against the outward show of worship

Ephraim has built altar[k] after altar, 11
they have only served him as occasion for sin.
Were I to write out the thousand precepts of my Law for him, 12
they would be paid no more attention than those of a stranger.
They love sacrificing; right, let them sacrifice! 13
6:6 They love meat; right, let them eat it![l]
Am 5:22
||Jr 14:10 Yahweh takes no pleasure in these.
=9:9 He is now going to remember their iniquity
and punish their sins;
9:3; 11:5 they will have to go back to Egypt.
Dt 28:68+

Against extravagance in building

Dt 32:15, 18+ Israel has forgotten his Maker 14
and has built palaces;
Judah has built fortified town after fortified town;
Am 2:5 right, I will rain fire on his towns,
it will devour his palaces.

The sorrows of exile[a]

9 Let us have no rejoicing, Israel. 1
no exulting like the other peoples;[b]

for you have deserted God to play the whore,
you have enjoyed the prostitute's pay
on every threshing-floor.[c]
2 Neither floor nor vat will nourish them, Hab 3:17
the new wine will disappoint them.[d] 2:11
3 They will no longer live in the land of Yahweh,
Ephraim will have to go back to Egypt, 8:13; 11:5
and in Assyria they will eat food that is unclean.[e]
4 They will pour libations of wine to Yahweh no longer,
nor offer sacrifice to him;
their bread will be like mourners' bread, Dt 26:14
all those who eat it will become unclean;[f]
for their bread will serve only for themselves,
it must not enter the house of Yahweh.[g]
5 What will you do on the day of solemn festival,
the day of the feast of Yahweh?[h]
6 Why, they will have gone, gone from the devastation.
Egypt will receive them, Memphis bury them,
nettles will inherit their treasures of silver,
and brambles invade their tents.

Persecution, the prophet's reward for foretelling the punishment

7 Now the days of reckoning have come, Am 3:2+
the days of reprisals are here.
'The prophet is mad,' Israel protests[i] 'this inspired fellow is raving.' Jn 10:20
—Ah yes, but only because your iniquity is so great,
your apostasy so grave.
8 Ephraim watches the prophet's tent,[j] Jr 6:17
traps are set for him on all his paths, Jr 20:1-6
in the house of his God enmity awaits him. Am 7:10-17
9 These men are as steeped in corruption
as in the days of Gibeah; 10:9
Yahweh will remember their iniquity, Jg 19
he will punish their sins. =8:13

Punishment for the crime at Baal-peor

10 It was like finding grapes in the wilderness when I found Israel, 2:16+
like seeing early fruit[k] on the fig tree when I saw your fathers; Dt 32:10
but when they reached Baal-peor[l] they devoted themselves to shame[m] Nb 25:1-5
and became as hateful as the thing they loved. Jr 11:10
Jr 2:5+

c. Text corr.
d. Assyria.
e. 'I spurn' corr.; 'he spurns' Hebr. 'against it' corr.; 'against them' Hebr.
f. 'the sons of Israel' corr.; 'for from Israel' Hebr.
g. The earliest polemic against idols, to be followed by many another in the prophetic books, cf. Is 40:20+; 41:21+.
h. This passage must be later than the deportation following the Syro-Ephraimite war (734), 2 K 15:29.
i. Allusion to the tribute paid to the kings of Assyria, 5:13; 7:11, possibly also to gifts sent to Egypt, 12:2.
j. 'disperse' corr.; 'gather' Hebr. 'that will soon . . ' Greek; 'and they will suffer for a while under the burden of the king of the leaders' Hebr.
k. Hebr. adds 'for sin'.
l. Text corr.

9 a. Oracle perhaps pronounced at an agricultural festival.
b. Lit. 'do not exult (like the peoples)' some Greek MSS.
c. The 'pay' (the goods of the earth) is polluted, because Israel attributes it to the generosity of the Baalim, 2:7, and also because the festivities marking harvest-home were accompanied by immoral practices.
d. '(will disappoint) them' some Greek MSS; 'her' Hebr.
e. Every foreign country is unclean, since defiled by the presence of idols, cf. Am 7:17; 1 S 26:19.
f. Text corr. Mourners attending the corpse were thereby defiled.
g. The bread will not have been sanctified by the offering of first-fruits, Lv 23:9-21, eating it gives no honour to God, only physical satisfaction.
h. The feast of Tabernacles, Ex 23:14+.
i. 'Israel protests' corr.; 'Israel knows' or 'let Israel know' Hebr.
j. Line corr.; 'The watchman of Ephraim is with my God; the prophet' Hebr.
k. Hebr. adds 'like first-fruits' or 'in its first season'.
l. The infidelity of Israel thus began at the gates of Palestine and had vitiated Israelite history ever since.
m. A disparaging name for the Baals.

The glory of Ephraim will fly away like a bird: 11
Dt 28:18 no giving birth, no pregnancy, no conceiving.
9:16 Dt 32:25 And if they rear sons, I will take these from them before they come to manhood; 12
trouble for them indeed when I abandon them.
Ephraim, I see, has made his sons a prey,[n] 13
Ephraim must lead his sons to the slaughter house.
Lk 23:29 Give them, Yahweh—what are you to give?— 14
give them wombs that miscarry, and dried-up breasts.

Punishment for the crime at Gilgal

12:12 Their wickedness appeared in full at Gilgal,[o] 15
there I came to hate them.
Because of their wicked deeds
I will drive them out of my house;
1:6; 14:5 I will love them no longer,
for their leaders are all rebels.
Ephraim is cut down, 16
Am 2:9 their roots are withered;
Mt 21:20f they will bear no fruit.
9:12 And if they bear children,
I will kill the darlings of their womb.
Dt 28:64-65 Because they have not listened to him, my God will cast them off 17
Gn 4:14 and they will be wanderers throughout the nations.

The destruction of Israel's cultic objects

Is 5:1+ 10 Israel was a luxuriant vine 1
yielding plenty of fruit.[a]
Dt 32:15 The more his fruit increased,
2:7,14; 4:10f the more altars he built;
the richer his land became,
Ex 23 24+ the richer he made the sacred stones.
Their heart is a divided heart;[b] 2
very well, they must pay for it:
Yahweh is going to break their altars down
and destroy their sacred stones.
Then they will say, 3
'We have no king
because we have not feared Yahweh'.
But what can a king do for us?
Words, words![c] False oaths! Alliances! 4
Am 6:12 And judgement is only a poisonous weed that thrives[d]
in the furrows of the field.

Jr 48:13 The inhabitants of Samaria are trembling 5
4:15+; 8:5 for the calf of Beth-aven;
yes, its people mourn for it,
its so-called priests bewail its glory,[e]
Rv 18:14 now this has vanished.
The calf itself shall be carried off to Assyria 6
as tribute to the Great King.
Ephraim will reap the shame,
and Israel blush for his idol.[f]
Samaria has had her day. 7
Her king[g] is like a straw[h] drifting on the water.
4:13 The idolatrous high places shall be destroyed— 8
2 K 23:15f that sin of Israel;

thorn and thistle will grow on their altars.
Then they will say to the mountains, 'Cover us!'
and to the hills, 'Fall on us!'

Is 2:10
↗ Lk 23:30
↗ Lk 6:16
Rv 6:16

Against Gibeah

9 Ever since the days at Gibeah, Israel, you have sinned. 9:9+
Things are still the same.
And will not war overtake the guilty at Gibeah?[i]
10 [j]I shall come and punish them.
The nations will muster against them
to punish them for their double crime.[k]

Threats and an invitation to repentance

11 Ephraim is a well trained heifer 4:16
that loves to tread the threshing-floor;
very well, I myself mean to lay the yoke on that fine neck of hers, Jr 2:20; 5:5 Mt11:29-30
I am going to put Ephraim in harness,
Israel will have to plough,
Jacob must draw the harrow.[l]
12 Sow integrity[m] for yourselves, 2:21+ Mi 6:8 2 Co 9:10
reap a harvest of kindness,
break up your fallow ground: Jr4:3
it is time to go seeking Yahweh Am 5:4
until he comes to rain salvation on you.

The end of Israel

13 Why have you ploughed iniquity, 8:7
reaped injustice,
and eaten the produce, lies?
Because you have trusted in your chariots,[n] Is 31:1
and in your host of warriors,
14 turmoil is going to break out in your towns,[o]
and all your fortresses will be laid waste,
as Shalman[p] laid Beth-arbel waste
on the day of the battle,
when mothers fell, dashed to pieces, on their children.[q]
15 That is what I mean to do to you, House of Israel,
because of your great wickedness;
11:1 and in the storm the king of Israel is going to disappear for ever.[r]

n. Line corr., cf. Greek; Hebr. unintelligible.

o. The monarchy, condemned by Hosea, 8:4+, was instituted at Gilgal, 1 S 11:14-15. There too a curse was subsequently laid on the sovereignty of Saul, 1 S 13:7-14; 15:10-23.

10 a. 'yielding plenty of' corr.; 'setting for him' Hebr.

b. Either divided between Yahweh and the Baals or hesitating between Egypt and Assyria.

c. 'Words, words' corr.; 'they speak words' Hebr.

d. Under the kings of Israel justice was poisoned at the roots, cf. Am 6:12.

e. 'the calf' Greek and Syr.; 'the calves' Hebr. 'bewail' corr.; 'exult' Hebr.

f. 'Great King' corr.; 'King Jareb' or 'avenging king' Hebr. Cf. 5:13+. 'idol' corr.; 'purpose' Hebr.

g. That is, the calf.

h. Or 'like foam'.

i. Interpretation conj. Others find a reference here to the punishment of the Benjaminites, Jg 20.

j. Text corr.

k. The allusion is obscure: possibly to the institution of the monarchy (Mizpah, where it was proclaimed, was near Gibeah, 1 S 10:23-24) and to the crime of Jg 19; but perhaps merely to the single crime at Gibeah, since 'double' can mean 'great', 'disgraceful'.

l. 'lay (the yoke) on'; lit. 'pass (the yoke) over' corr.; 'pass by' Hebr. 'Israel' corr.; 'Judah' Hebr.

m. 'integrity' in the religious sense of conformity to the divine will as expressed in the Law, 8:12.

n. 'Why have you' Greek; 'You have' Hebr. 'your chariots' Greek; 'your way' Hebr.

o. 'towns' corr.; 'peoples' Hebr.

p. Probably Salamanu king of Moab, contemporary of Tiglath-pileser III (745-727), on the occasion of a raid on Beth-arbel (Irbid) in Gilead.

q. Or 'with their children'. Atrocities of this kind were usual when towns were captured, cf. 14:1; 2 K 8:12; Is 13:16; Na 3:10; Ps 137:9.

r. 'I mean to do' corr.; 'he has done' Hebr. 'House of Israel' Greek; 'Bethel' Hebr. 'storm' corr.; 'dawn' Hebr.

God's love despised: his vengeance[a]

Dt 1:31+; 32:5 Ws 18:13 Jr 2:1-9; 31:3 ✗ Mt 2:15

11 When Israel was a child[b] I loved him, 1
and I called my son[c] out of Egypt.
But the more I called to them, the further they went from me; 2
they have offered sacrifice to the Baals
and set their offerings smoking before the idols.[d]
I myself taught Ephraim to walk, 3
I took them in my arms;[e]
yet they have not understood that I was the one looking after them.
I led them with reins of kindness,[f] 4
with leading-strings of love.
Ps 131:2 I was like someone who lifts an infant close against his cheek;[g]
Dt 8:16 stooping down to him I gave him his food.[h]
8:3+ They will have to go back to Egypt, 5
9:3 Assyria must be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.
The sword will rage through their towns, 6
wiping out their children,
glutting itself inside their fortresses.[i]

God's love proves stronger than his vengeance

My people are diseased through their disloyalty; 7
1 K 18:25-29 they call on Baal,
but he does not cure them.[j]
Ps 27:10; 78:38 Is 49:14 Lk 15 Ephraim, how could I part with you? 8
Israel, how could I give you up?
How could I treat you like Admah,
or deal with you like Zeboiim?[k]
Dt 32:36 Is 54:8 Jr 31:20 My heart recoils from it,
my whole being trembles at the thought.[l]
I will not give rein to my fierce anger, 9
I will not destroy Ephraim again,
Nb 23:19+ for I am God, not man:
I am the Holy One in your midst
Ws 1:13+ Ezk 18:23.32 and have no wish to destroy.[m]

The return from exile

They will follow behind Yahweh; 10
he will be roaring like a lion—
how he will roar!—
and his sons will come speeding from the west;
they will come speeding from Egypt like a bird, 11
speeding from the land of Assyria like a dove,
and I will settle them in their homes
—it is Yahweh who speaks.

Israel's religion and policy both alike perverse

12 [a]All round me are the lies of Ephraim 1
and the deceit of the House of Israel. 12
But God still recognises Judah,
and he is still called the people of the Holy One.[b]
Ephraim feeds on[c] the wind, 2
13:15 forever chasing the wind from the East,[d] 1
accumulating falsehood and fraud,[e]
5:13; 7:11; 14:4 Is 30:1f; 31:1f making treaties with Assyria,
sending oil to Egypt.

Against Jacob

3/2 Yahweh has a case against Israel,[f]
he will pay Jacob as his conduct merits, 4:1
and will repay him as his deeds deserve.
4/3 In the very womb he supplanted his brother, Gn 25:26; 27:36
in maturity he wrestled against God.[g] Is 43:27+ Jr 9:3
5/4 He wrestled with the angel and beat him,
he wept and pleaded with him.[h] Gn 32:24-28
He met him at Bethel Gn 28:10-22
and there God spoke to him.[i]
6/5 Yes, Yahweh God of Sabaoth, Yahweh is his name. Am 4:13+
7/6 Turn again, then, to your God,
hold fast to love and justice,
and always put your trust in your God.[j]

Greed and the punishment of Israel

8/7 Canaan[k] holds fraudulent scales in his hands, Dt 25:13-16 Pr 11:1 Am 8:5
to defraud[l] is his delight.
9/8 'How rich I have become!' says Ephraim Lk 12:16-21
'I have amassed a fortune.'
But he will keep nothing of all his profits, ↗ Rv 3:17-18
because of the guilt that he has brought on himself.[m]

The prospect of reconciliation between Yahweh and Israel

10/9 I have been Yahweh, your God, since the days in the land of Egypt. =13:4 Ex 20:2
I will make you live in tents again 2:16+
as on the day of Meeting.[n]
11/10 I will speak to the prophets,[o]
I will increase the visions[p]
and through the prophets I will deal out death.[q] 6:5

11 a. This chapter, on the relationship between Yahweh and Israel and corresponds to 2:4-25, though here Israel is not the beloved, unfaithful wife, but the child ungrateful for all the love he has received (the two images are juxtaposed in Jr 3:19-20).

b. For Hosea, the history of Israel really begins with the Exodus. This whole passage describes the golden age of the desert journey, cf. 2:16+. Hosea seems only to have known, or to have remembered, the less creditable incidents of the patriarchal period, 12:4-5,13.

c. 'my son' Hebr.; 'his sons' Greek.

d. Following Greek.

e. Thus Targ. Syr., and Greek; Hebr. corrupt.

f. Lit 'cords of man'.

g. Text corr.

h. Text corr. '(I gave) him': reading 'him' instead of the 'not' in the Hebr. of the following line.

i. Text corr.

j. Text of these two lines corr.

k. Admah and Zeboiim were two of the five towns of the Pentapolis, Gn 10:19; 14:2,8; Dt 29:22: in the Elohistic tradition they presumably take the place of the Sodom and Gomorrah of the Yahwistic tradition, Is 1:9-10.

l. Lit. 'My heart recoils within me, my bowels are in a ferment'.

m. 'I have no wish to destroy' corr.; 'I shall not come into the town' Hebr.

12 a. A difficult chapter: references to contemporary events alternate with references to episodes from the patriarchal age. For Hosea, the faults of Jacob the Ancestor still weigh heavily on the present generation.

b. 'But ... Holy One' Greek; 'But Judah is rebellious (?) towards God and towards the Holy One (?) who is (?) faithful' Hebr. These two lines are a later addition.

c. Or 'is friendly with', 'has to do with'.

d. The scorching wind from the desert lying between Palestine and Assyria: it symbolises the Assyrian invasion, cf. 13:15; Jr 18:17; Ezk 17:10.

e. 'fraud' cf. Greek; 'violence' Hebr.

f. 'Israel' corr.; 'Judah' Hebr.

g. Ambition and arrogance innate and persistent. Hosea interprets these episodes unfavourably here, as in vv. 13-14.

h. Gn 32:24-28 does not speak of tears and entreaties: Hosea is probably hinting at some trick on Jacob's part.

i. 'to him' corr.; 'to us' Hebr.

j. These words are not a divine admonition addressed to Jacob but a warning from the prophet to his contemporaries.

k. 'Canaanite' was the usual term for a merchant. Here 'Canaan' is used pejoratively of Israel, infected by the spirit of commercialism characteristic of the people whom he has supplanted.

l. 'to defraud' corr.; 'to oppress' Hebr.

m. The translation follows the Greek.

n. Reference to the halt at Sinai when Yahweh 'met' his people, Ex 5:3; 19:9,17; 33:17; Dt 9:10; 18:16.

o. 'I will speak ... I will make'; or 'I spoke ... I made'. 'to the prophets' Greek; 'on' or 'against the prophets' Hebr.

p. Prophecy and vision are a sign of God's favour, Dt 18:9-22; Ps 74:9; Lm 2:9; Nb 12:2-8; Ex 33:11.

q. As in the case of Elijah, 1 K 18:40. See also Ho 6:5a; Jr 1:10; Is 6:9-13; Ezk 3:17-20, etc. Alternative translation 'I shall speak (or 'I spoke') in parables'.

New threats

Gilead is nothing but iniquity, 12/11
6:8 they are falsehood, nothing else;
4:15; 9:15 at Gilgal they sacrifice to bulls;[r]
their altars shall be reduced to heaps of stones
in a ploughed field.

Against Jacob and Ephraim

Jacob fled to the plains of Aram, 13/12
Gn 29 Israel worked to win a wife,
to win a wife he looked after sheep.
Ex 3:7-10 Dt 18:15,18 Ws 11:1 But Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt by a prophet, 14/13
and a prophet looked after Israel.
Ephraim has given bitter provocation 15/14
and Yahweh means to bring his bloodshed down on him,
his Lord will repay him for his insults.

Idolatry punished

13 When Ephraim spoke, all trembled, 1
so great was he in Israel,[a]
but through Baal he brought guilt on himself and perished.
And now they add sin to sin, 2
they smelt images from their silver,
idols of their own manufacture,
smith's work, all of it.
1 K 12:27,32 'Sacrifice to them' they say.[b]
1 K 19:18 Men blow kisses to calves![c]
Therefore they will be like morning mist, 3
=6:4 Ws 11:22 like the dew that quickly disappears,
Is 17:13; 41:16 like the chaff whirled[d] from the threshing-floor,
Zp 2:2 like smoke escaping through the window.

The punishment for ingratitude

=12:10 Yet I am Yahweh, your God since the days in the land of Egypt;[e] 4
you know no God but me,
Is 43:11+ there is no other saviour.
Dt 32:10 I pastured[f] you in the wilderness; 5
in the land of drought
Ps 78:29 I pastured them, and[g] they were satisfied; 6
once satisfied, their hearts grew proud,
Dt 32:15+ and so they came to forget me.
5:14 Very well, I will be[h] a lion to them, 7
a leopard lurking by the way;
2 S 17:8 like a bear robbed of her cubs I will pounce on them, 8
and tear the flesh round their hearts;
the dogs shall eat their flesh,[i]
the wild beasts tear them to pieces.

The end of the monarchy

[j]I mean to destroy you, Israel; 9
Ps 121:2 who can come to your help?
Your king, where is he now, to save you,[k] 10
where are your leaders to champion you?
Those of whom you used to say,
1 S 8:5 'Give me a king and leaders'.

11 In my anger I gave you a king
and in my wrath I take him away. 1 S 8:7,22 10:15

The inevitability of ruin

12 The iniquity of Ephraim is carefully hoarded,
his sin is safely stored away. Dt 32:34-35
13 Pangs as of childbirth overtake him, Is 26:17-18
and a stupid child it is,
its time is up but it does not leave the womb.[l] Is 37:3
14 And am I to save them from the power of Sheol? 6:2
Am I to rescue them from Death? Ps 91:6 Is 26:19 Ezk37:1-14+
Where is your plague, Death? ↗ *1 Co 15:55*
Where are your scourges, Sheol?[m] Is 25:8+
I have no eyes for pity.
15 Ephraim may flourish among the reeds,[n]
but the wind from the East will come, 12:2+
the breath of Yahweh will rise from the desert
to dry his water-sources, to parch his springs,
to strip his land of all its treasures.[o]

1 14 Samaria must atone
for rebelling against her God. 7:1
They shall fall by the sword,
their little children be dashed to pieces, Ps 137:9
their[a] pregnant women disembowelled. 10:14+ Am 1:13

III. THE REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION OF ISRAEL. A PROMISE OF FUTURE HAPPINESS[b]

The sincere conversion of Israel to Yahweh

2 Israel, come back to Yahweh your God;
your iniquity was the cause of your downfall. 5:5
3 Provide yourself with words[c]
and come back to Yahweh.
Say to him, 'Take all iniquity away Ps 32:1+; 50:14
so that we may have happiness again Heb 13:15
and offer you our words of praise.[d]

r. Reading 'Gilead' for 'If Gilead', 'to bulls' corr.; 'bulls' Hebr.

13 a. 'spoke' Hebr.; 'taught' Greek. 'so great was he' corr ; 'he carried' Hebr. On the political importance of Ephraim in the early days, see Jos 24:30; Jg 8:1-3; 12:1-6. Some commentators, accepting the Greek reading, think that religious primacy is here referred to; of this there are traces in Ex 33:11 (the part played by the Ephraimite Joshua) and 1 S 1–4 (the shrine of the ark at Shiloh in Ephraim).

b. 'Sacrifice' corr.

c. An act of homage.

d. 'whirled' corr.

e. For this line the Greek has 'I am the Lord your God who set the heavens firm and establish the earth; my hands have created the whole array of heaven, but I have not shown these to you for you to follow (the worship of) them. I it was who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.' When the calf-idols of Dan and Bethel were installed, Jeroboam had said, 'Here are your gods, Israel, these brought you up out of the land of Egypt', 1 K 12:28.

f. 'pastured' Greek; 'knew' Hebr., cf. Am 3:2.

g. 'I pastured them and' corr.; 'According to their pasture' Hebr

h. 'I shall be' Greek; 'I have been' Hebr.

i. Line corr.; 'there I will eat them like a lion' Hebr.

j. Vv. 9-10 corr.

k. Possibly an ironic allusion to King Hoshea (732-724), whose name means 'Yahweh-is-saviour'.

l. 'its time is up' corr. The saying is probably proverbial, indicating a disastrous situation.

m. 'Where is', 'where are' corr.; 'I will be' Hebr. Hosea is thinking of the survival of the nation; St Paul is later to apply the text to the resurrection of individuals.

n. Symbolising luxuriant growth.

o. Text corr., cf. Greek.

14 a. Corr.; Hebr. has the pronoun in the singular.

b. The prophecy ends on a note of hope, already heard in 2:16-25; 3:5; 11:8-11; 12:10. A liturgical prayer expressing sincere repentance, corresponding to 6:1-6, is followed by a firm promise of God's blessing.

c. With words of true repentance (unlike 6:1-3) and not with sacrifices, 6:6.

d. Lit. 'the fruit of our lips': text corr.

7:11; 12:2 Assyria cannot save us, 4
1:7 we will not ride horses any more,[e]
Is 31:1 Mi 5:9 or say, "Our God!" to what our own hands have made,
2:18-19 for you are the one in whom orphans find compassion.'
—I will heal their disloyalty, 5
1:6; 9:15 I will love them with all my heart,
2:16-25 for my anger has turned from them.
Ps 72:16; 133:3 I will fall like dew on Israel. 6
Is 26:19 Mi 5:6 He shall bloom like the lily,
and thrust out roots like the poplar,[f]
Is 27:6 his shoots will spread far; 7
he will have the beauty of the olive
Sg 4:11 and the fragrance of Lebanon.
Am 9:14 They will come back to live in my shade; 8
they will grow corn that flourishes,
they will cultivate vines
Ezk 27:18 as renowned as the wine of Helbon.[g]
4:17 What has Ephraim to do with idols any more[h] 9
2 Co 6:16 when it I is who hear his prayer and care for him?
I am like a cypress ever green,[i]
all your fruitfulness[j] comes from me.

Concluding admonition[k]

Ps 107:43 Pr 4:7 Let the wise man understand these words. 10
Let the intelligent man grasp their meaning.
Dt 32:4 For the ways of Yahweh are straight,
and virtuous men walk in them,
but sinners stumble.

14 e. 'To ride horses' is perhaps a synonym here for concluding an alliance with Egypt, cf. Is 31:1.
f. Line corr.
g. Text corr.
h. 'What has Ephraim to do' corr.; 'Ephraim, what have I to do' Hebr.
i. The cypress was a symbol of life.
j. There is a play on words here: the verb 'to be fruitful' forms part of the name 'Ephraim'.
k. Later addition in the style of the wisdom literature.

JOEL

Title

1 **1** The word of Yahweh that was addressed to Joel son of Pethuel.[a]

I. THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

A. A LITURGY OF MOURNING AND ENTREATY

a. Lamentation over the ruin of the country — Rv 9:3

2 Listen to this, you elders;
all inhabitants of the country, attend.
Has anything like this ever happened in your day,
or in your fathers' days?

3 Tell it to your sons, — Dt 4:9
let your sons tell it to their sons,
and their sons to a generation after them.

4 What the gnawer has left, the grown locust has devoured, — Dt 28:38 Am 4:9; 7:1f Ml 3:11 *Ps 105:34-35*
what the grown locust has left, the hopper has devoured,
what the hopper has left, the shearer has devoured.[b]

5 Awake, drunkards, and weep! — Is 5:11+
All you who drink wine, lament
for that new wine: it has been dashed from your lips. — Dt 28:39

6 For a nation has invaded my country, — Jg 7:12 Jr 46:23
mighty and innumerable;
its teeth are the teeth of lions, — ✗ Rv 9:8
it has the fangs of a lioness.

7 It has laid waste my vines — Is 5:1+ Na 2:3
and torn my fig trees to pieces;
it has stripped them clean and cut them down,[c]
their branches have turned white.

8 Mourn[d] like a virgin wearing sackcloth[e] — 1:13
for her young man betrothed to her.

9 Oblation and libation[f] have vanished

1 a. Greek, Vet. Lat. and Syr. read 'Bathuel'.
b. An invasion of locusts has devastated the country. Of the four terms used here for the insect, *arbeh*, or 'destroyer', (translated 'grown locust' in this place) is the commonest, indicating the species as a whole. The exact meaning of the other three is disputed. They may be used for the various subspecies, but more probably they signify successive stages of growth: *yeleq* ('hopper'), *chasil* (shearer'), *gazam* ('gnawer').
c. Text corr.
d. The prophet is addressing the community.
e. Sackcloth symbolises grief and repentance.
f. The daily oblation, cf. Lv 2, and libation were offerings from the produce of the soil: corn, wine and oil, cf. Ex 29:38-42; Nb 28:3-8.

from the house of Yahweh.
The priests, the ministers of Yahweh,
are in mourning.
Ho 4:3+ Wasted lie the fields, 10
the fallow is in mourning.
For the corn has been laid waste,
the wine fails,
the fresh oil dries up.

Stand dismayed, you farmers, 11
wail, you vinedressers,
for the wheat, for the barley;
the harvest of the field has been ruined.
The vine has withered, 12
the fig tree wilts away;
pomegranate, and palm, and apple,
Am 4:7-9 every tree in the field is drooping.
Is 16:10 Jr 25:10 Yes, gladness has faded
among the sons of men.

b. A call to repentance and prayer

1:8+ Priests, put on sackcloth[g] and lament. 13
Ministers of the altar, wail.
Come,[h] pass the night in sackcloth,
you ministers of my God.
For the house of our God has been deprived
of oblation and libation.
2:15 2 Ch 20:3 Order[i] a fast, 14
proclaim a solemn assembly;
elders, call together
all the inhabitants of the country
to the house of Yahweh your God.
Cry out to Yahweh,
'Oh, what a day! 15
2:1 Ezk 30:2-3 For the day of Yahweh is near,
Is 13:6 it comes as a devastation from Shaddai.'[j]

Has not the food disappeared 16
before our eyes?
Have not joy and gladness vanished
from the house of our God?
Seeds shrivel 17
under their clods;[k]
the barns are broken down,
the granaries lie in ruins,
for lack of harvest.
What mourning from the beasts! 18
The herds of cattle wander bewildered[l]
because they have no pasture.
Ho 4:3+ Even the flocks of sheep must bear their punishment.

To you, Yahweh, I cry: 19
2:3 fire has devoured the pastures on the heath,
flame has burnt up
every tree in the orchard.[m]
Even the wild beasts wait anxiously for you, 20
for the watercourses have run dry,

and fire has devoured the pastures on the heath.

c. The day of Yahweh and the present calamity[a] Ex 10:1-20 Am 5:18+ Rv 9:3

The alarm

1 2 Sound the trumpet[b] in Zion,
give the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the country tremble,
for the day of Yahweh is coming,
yes, it is near. 1:15

2 Day of darkness and gloom, Dn 12:1 ||Zp 1:15 Jn 8:12+
day of cloud and blackness.[c]
Like the dawn[d] there spreads[e] across the mountains
a vast and mighty host, Jdt 2:20
such as has never been before,
such as will never be again
to the remotest ages.

The invading army

3 In their van the fire devours, 1:19
in their rear a flame consumes.
The country is like a garden of Eden ahead of them Gn 2:8 Am 7:1f
and a desert waste behind them.
Nothing escapes them.
4 They look like horses, ↗ Rv 9:7,9
like chargers they gallop on,[f]
5 with a racket like the clatter of chariots
they hurtle over the mountain tops,
with a crackling like a blazing fire
devouring the stubble,
a mighty army in battle array.

6 At the sight of them the peoples are appalled Is 13:8
and every face grows pale. Na 2:11
7 Like fighting men they press forward,
like warriors scale the walls,
each marching straight ahead,
not turning from[g] his path;
8 they never jostle each other,
each marches straight ahead:

g. This and the following verses are used in the Lenten liturgy.

h. Into the Temple. Cf. 2:17.

i. Lit. 'sanctify'. Similar exhortations to repentance and prayer recur in 2:12-13, 15-17; cf. Jon 3:5-9. The interest that Joel displays in formal observances and the liturgy, 1:9,13,16; 2:14, contrasts markedly with the attitude of Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Jeremiah, cf. Am 5:21+; but Joel, too, insists on the need for inward conversion, 2:13.

j. There is a play on the words *shod* (devastation) and Shaddai (a name of God, cf. Gn 17:1+). The plague of locusts heralds the 'day of Yahweh', which is a day of terror, cf. 2:1-2,11; Am 5:18+, even though, in the context of Jl 3-4, cf. Ob 15, it brings the ultimate triumph of Israel.

k. Hebr. uncertain.

l. Hebr. uncertain.

m. Fire, cf. 2:3, and flame are symbolic of drought, cf. Am 7:4.

2 a. The invasion of locusts is here, vv. 1-11, described again, this time in terms of the day of Yahweh, 1:15.

b. A warning of imminent danger, Am 3:6; Ho 5:8; Ezk 33:3,6, the sound of trumpet or horn heralds the punishment of Israel, Is 18:3; Ho 8:1; Jr 4:5; 6:1, and the coming of the day of wrath, Jl 2:1; Zp 1:16, cf. Rv 8:6-9. It is also used to summon Israel to religious gatherings, Nb 10:2-10; Jl 2:15; hence it is to be the signal for the gathering of all the elect on the last day, Is 27:13; 1 Th 4:16-17; 1 Co 15:52.

c. These images correspond to the approach of the cloud of locusts which darken the sky, cf. Rv 9:2.

d. The comparison is either with the speed of the invasion of locusts or with the yellowish gleam of the sun on their bodies.

e. 'Like the dawn there spreads (a host)' Greek; 'As the dawn spreads' Hebr.

f. The comparison of locusts with horses is not uncommon. Here, vv. 4-9, it is elaborated into a description of the advancing locusts in terms of an invading army; cf. Na 2:4-7,11; 3:2-3,15-17, where the context is apocalyptic.

g. 'turning from' Greek and Vulg.; 'entangling' Hebr.

arrows fly, they still press forward,
without breaking ranks.
They hurl themselves at the city, 9
they leap on to its walls,
climb to the housetops,
and make their way through windows
like marauders.

A vision of the day of Yahweh

3:4; 4:15-16 Jb 9:5 As they come on, the earth quakes, 10
the skies tremble,
=4:5 sun and moon grow dark,
the stars lose their brilliance.[h]
3:4 Yahweh makes his voice[i] heard 11
at the head of his army,
Jdt 2:20 and indeed his regiments are innumerable,
all-powerful is the one that carries out his orders,
Ml 3:2,23 for great is the day of Yahweh,
Na 1:6 ↗ Rv 6:17 and very terrible—who can face it?

d. A call to repentance

'But now, now—it is Yahweh who speaks— 12
Dt 4:29 come back to me with all your heart,
fasting, weeping, mourning.'
Is 58:5-7 Am 5:21+ Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn, 13
turn to Yahweh your God again,
Ezk 34:6-7+ for he is all tenderness and compassion,
slow to anger, rich in graciousness,
and ready to relent.
Am 5:14f Jon 3:9 Who knows if he will not turn again, will not relent, 14
will not leave a blessing[j] as he passes,
oblation and libation
for Yahweh your God?

2:1+ Sound the trumpet in Zion! 15
1:14 Order a fast,
proclaim a solemn assembly,
call the people together, 16
summon[k] the community,
assemble the elders,
gather the children,
even the infants at the breast.
Dt 24:5 Let the bridegroom leave his bedroom
and the bride her alcove.
Jdt 4:14 1 M 7:36-38 Between vestibule and altar[l] let the priests, 17
the ministers of Yahweh, lament.
Let them say,
Ex 32:11-12+ 'Spare your people, Yahweh!
Do not make your heritage a thing of shame,
a byword for the nations.
Why should it be said among the nations,
Ps 42:3,10; 79:10 Mi 7:10 "Where is their God?" '

B. THE PRAYER ANSWERED

Dt 4:24+ Then Yahweh, jealous on behalf of his land, 18
took pity on his people.

The plague ceases

19 Yahweh spoke in answer to his people,
'Now I send you
corn and wine and oil, Dt 11:14
until you have enough.
Never again shall I make you
a thing of shame for the nations.
20 I will drive the invader from the north[m] far away from you
and drive him into an arid, desolate land,
his vanguard to the eastern sea,
his rearguard to the western sea.
He will give off a stench, Is 34:3 Am 4:10
give off a foul stink.'
(For he has done great things.)

A vision of plenty

21 O soil, do not be afraid;
be glad, rejoice,
for Yahweh has done great things.

22 Beasts of the field, do not be afraid; Ps 65:9-10
the pastures on the heath are green again,
the trees bear fruit,
vine and fig tree yield abundantly.

23 Sons of Zion, be glad,
rejoice in Yahweh your God;
for he has given you
the autumn rain, since he is just,[n] Ps 147:8
and has poured the rains down for you,
the autumn and spring rain as before.[o] Dt 11:14
24 The threshing-floors will be full of grain,
the vats overflow with wine and oil.

25 'I will make up to you for the years
devoured by grown locust and hopper 1:4+
by shearer and young locust,
my great army
which I sent to invade you.'

26 You will eat to your heart's content, will eat your fill,
and praise the name of Yahweh your God
who has treated you so wonderfully.
(My people will not be disappointed any more.)

27 And you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, 4:17 Is 42:8+
that I am Yahweh your God, with none to equal me.
My people will not be disappointed any more.

2 h. Cosmic phenomena mark the day of Yahweh, cf. Am 8:9+.

i. The thunder, cf. 4:16; Ex 19:16+; Am 1:2; Ps 18:13; 29:3-9; Jb 37:4,5. The locusts are the 'army'.

j. I.e. of good harvests, cf. Dt 7:13-14; 16:10,15,17, etc.; cf. Hg 2:15-19, making sacred offerings possible again, cf. 1:9.

k. 'Order' and 'summon': lit. 'sanctify', cf. 1:14.

l. I.e. in the courtyard to the E. of the sanctuary, cf. 1 K 6:3; Ezk 40:48-49, between the vestibule (Ulam) and the altar of holocaust, 1 K 8:64; 2 Ch 8:12. The priests pray facing the sanctuary.

m. Lit. 'the northerner'. The army of locusts is here compared with the enemy which, in the prophetic literature, always 'comes from the North' to execute the judgements of God, cf. Jr 1:13-15+; Ezk 26:7, etc.

n. Line uncertain. 'since he is just', lit. 'for justice', possibly a gloss: God gives rain to his repentant people 'since he is just' (i.e. faithful to his covenant promises), or 'in due measure', or 'for the vindication (of Israel)' as a sign of restoration to divine favour. Vulg. makes the text messianic, translating 'has given you a teacher of justice', cf. Ho 10:12 Hebr. and Jr 23:6; 33:15. This title is used in the Dead Sea scrolls for the spiritual leader of the Covenant Sect, the 'Teacher of Righteousness'.

o. 'as before' Greek and Vulg.; 'in the first (month?)' Hebr.

II. THE NEW AGE AND THE DAY OF YAHWEH

A. THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT[a]

Si 1:9
↗ Ac 2:17-21
Nb 11:25-30

3 'After this 1/28
I will pour out my spirit[b] on all mankind.
Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men see visions.
Even on the slaves,[c] men and women, 2/29
will I pour out my spirit in those days.
Rv 8:7 I will display portents[d] in heaven and on earth, 3/30
blood and fire and columns of smoke.'

2:10
↗ Rv 6:12
The sun will be turned into darkness, 4/31
and the moon into blood,
2:11
before the day of Yahweh dawns,
that great and terrible day.
Ac 2:39; 4:12
↗ Rm 10:13
Ob 17
Rv 14:1
All who call on the name of Yahweh will be saved, 5/32
for *on Mount Zion there will be some who have escaped,*
as Yahweh has said,
and in Jerusalem some survivors whom Yahweh will call.[e]

B. THE JUDGEMENT OF THE NATIONS[a]

The judgement announced

Jdt 16:17
Zc 12
4 'For in those days and at that time, 1/3
when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,[b]
Zc 14:2
↗ Rv 16:13f
4:14
I am going to gather all the nations 2
and take them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;[c]
there I intend to put them on trial
for all they have done to Israel,[d] my people and my heritage.
For[e] they have scattered them among the nations
and have divided up my land among themselves.
Na 3:10 They have cast lots for my people; 3
they have bartered the boys for prostitutes,
have sold the girls for wine and drunk it.'

Am 1:6-10 **Charges against the Phoenicians and Philistines[f]**

'And you, Tyre and Sidon, what do you expect from me? 4
You too, regions of Philistia?[g]
Do you want to take revenge on me?
If you were to take revenge on me,
I would make it recoil promptly and swiftly on your own heads.[h]
You who have taken my silver and my gold, 5
who have carried off my rich treasures to your temples,
Ezk 27:13 you who have sold to the people of Javan[i] 6
the sons of Judah and Jerusalem,
to remove them far from their own frontiers.
Now I mean to summon them from wherever you have sold them, 7
now I intend to make your crime recoil on your own heads.
I am going to sell your sons and daughters 8
into the hands of the sons of Judah,
and they will sell them to the Sabaeans,[j]
to a distant nation;
Is 22:25
Ob 18
Yahweh has spoken!'

A summons to the nations[k] — Zc 14

9 'Proclaim this among the nations. — Ezk 38-39
"Prepare for war![l]
Muster the champions!
Warriors, advance,
quick march!
10 Hammer your ploughshares into swords, — Is 2:4 Mi 4:3
your sickles into spears,[m]
let the weakling say, 'I am a fighting man'.
11 Come quickly,
all you surrounding nations,
assemble there!"[n]
(Yahweh, send down your champions!)[o]

12 'Let the nations rouse themselves, let them march — Zc 14:2
to the Valley of Jehoshaphat,
for I am going to sit in judgement there
on all the nations round.
13 Put the sickle in: — Is 17:5; 63: 1-6 Mt 13:39 Mk 4:29 ↗ Rv 14:14f
the harvest is ripe;
come and tread:
the winepress is full, — Lm 1:15
the vats are overflowing,
so great is their wickedness!'

14 Host on host — Is 17:12
in the Valley of Decision![p] — Jl 4:2+
For the day of Yahweh is near
in the Valley of Decision!

The day of Yahweh

15 Sun and moon grow dark, — =2:10 Jb 9:5
the stars lose their brilliance.

3 a. The oracle of vv. 1-3, the fulfilment of which is assigned by vv. 4-5 to the day of Yahweh, promises an outpouring of the spirit when that day comes, cf. Ezk 36:27+. Peter's discourse in Ac 2:16-21+ identifies the miracle of Pentecost as the fulfilment of this prophecy.

b. 'my spirit' Hebr.; '(a portion) of my spirit' Greek.

c. 'slaves' Hebr.; 'my servants' Greek and Vulg., cf. Ac 2:18.

d. Heralding the final judgement on the day of Yahweh, cf. 1:15; 2:1-2,10 and Am 8:9+.

e. 'in Jerusalem' transposed from the second line of the verse. 'survivors': Hebr. 'among the survivors'.

4 a. The restoration of Israel involves the punishment of the oppressor-nations, cf. Ob 15-21. The day of Yahweh here becomes full of menace for the enemy nations. As in the previous chapter the words of Yahweh, vv. 1-8,12-13,17 (21a?), are intermingled with those of the prophet, 9-11,14-16,18-20,21b.

b. 'I restore' *qere*. Alternative translation; 'when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem'.

c. Jehoshaphat 'Yahweh-judges', cf. v. 12, is the symbolic name for the place where Yahweh is to judge the nations, cf. Jr 25:31; Is 66:16, called in v. 14 'the Valley of Decision'. V. 16 (cf. v. 11) suggests that it is near Jerusalem, though it is unnecessary to identify it with the present 'Valley of Jehoshaphat' (the Valley of the Kidron to the S.E. of the Temple), a name traceable only to the 4th century A.D.

d. Lit. 'in the matter of Israel'. Israel here is not the Northern Kingdom but all the people of Yahweh, cf. 2:23,27; 4:1.

e. Alluding to the deportations of 597 and 586, and to the treatment of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans and by Judah's neighbours, cf. Ezk 21:23-37; 25; Ob 11-14; cf. Na 3:10.

f. Unlike the peoples of vv. 2-3, these two are mentioned by name and charged with plundering, v. 5, and of trafficking in Jewish slaves (possibly victims of the disasters of 597 and 586).

g. 'regions of Philistia' Hebr.; 'Galilee of the foreigners' Greek.

h. In accordance with the *lex talionis*, Ex 21:25+, applied in vv. 5-8, cf. Ob 15; Ps 7:14-16.

i. Javan, or 'Ionia', is Greece.

j. A mercantile people in S. Arabia, cf. Jr 6:20; Jb 6:19, cf. 1 K 10:1+.

k. Resumption of the theme of judgement, vv. 1-3. The nations may declare war on Yahweh and march on Zion, cf. Zc 14:2; 12:3-4, but there in the Valley of Decision, vv. 11-14, they will meet their judgement and final defeat, vv. 15-17.

l. Lit. 'sanctify war'; war is regarded as a sacred undertaking, cf. Is 13:3; Jr 6:4; 22:7.

m. Reversal of the paradisal conditions, Is 2:4; 11:6+, which follow the judgement in Jl 4:18,21.

n. Text corr.

o. Probably a gloss, meaning uncertain. The 'champions' of the heavenly army are the angels (the 'holy ones' in Zc 14:5).

p. The word also means the drag with sharp wheels or stones used for threshing, cf. Is 28:27; 41:15; Am 1:3; the figure is suggested by the 'harvest' in v. 13; one may therefore translate 'Valley of the Drag'. The same word is used for an incisive decision or verdict.

Jr 25:30 ||Am 1:2+
Yahweh roars from Zion,
makes his voice heard from Jerusalem;
heaven and earth tremble. 16

Ps 46:1-2
But Yahweh will be a shelter for his people,
a stronghold for the sons of Israel.

2:27 Is 4:5 Ezk 38:23
'You will learn then that I am Yahweh your God, 17
dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain.
Jerusalem will be a holy[q] place,
no alien will ever pass through it again.'

C. THE GLORIOUS FUTURE OF ISRAEL

When that day comes, 18
Am 9:13
the mountains will run with new wine
and the hills flow with milk,
and all the river beds of Judah
Is 30:25 Ezk 47:1-12 Zc 14:8 Jn 4:1+
will run with water.
A fountain will spring from the house of Yahweh
to water the wadi of Acacias.[r]
Egypt will become a desolation, 19
Edom a desert waste
Ob 10
on account of the violence done to the sons of Judah
whose innocent blood they shed in their country.
Jr 17:25 Ezk 37:25
But Judah will be inhabited for ever, 20
Jerusalem from age to age.
'I will avenge their blood and let none go unpunished',[s] 21
and Yahweh shall make his home in Zion.

4 q. That is to say, inviolable, cf. Jr 31:40; Na 2:1; Is 51:23; 52:1; Ob 17; Zc 9:8; 14:21.
r. Location uncertain in this apocalyptic context in which the Holy Land is renewed.
s. Line corr. Probably a gloss.

AMOS

Title

1 1 Words of Amos who was one of the shepherds of Tekoa. The visions he had about Israel in the time of Uzziah king of Judah and of Jeroboam[a] son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. 8:8; 9:5 Zc 14:5

Introduction

2 He said:

Yahweh roars from Zion,[b] ||Jr 25:30 ||Jl 4:16
and makes his voice heard from Jerusalem;
the shepherds' pastures mourn, Is 33:9 Na 1:4
and the crown of Carmel withers.

I. JUDGEMENT ON THE NEIGHBOURS OF ISRAEL AND ON ISRAEL ITSELF[c]

Damascus Is 17:1-3 Jr 49:23-27

3 Yahweh says this:

For the three crimes, the four crimes,[d] of Damascus Is 17:1
I have made my decree and will not relent:[e]
because they have thrashed Gilead[f] with iron threshing-sledges,[g] 2:13 2 K 8:12; 10: 32-33; 13: 3,7
4 I am going to hurl fire on the House of Hazael
5 to burn up Ben-hadad's[h] palaces;
I am going to break the gate bars of Damascus,
and cut down the one enthroned[i] at Bikath-aven
and the sceptred one at Beth-eden;[j]
and the people of Aram shall go captive to Kir, says Yahweh. 2 K 16:9

1 a. Jeroboam II, king of Israel from 783-743.

b. Where his dwelling is, 2 S 5:9+. The observation is of Judaean origin. The 'roaring' suggests thunder, the voice of Yahweh, Ex 19:16+. It heralds a disastrous storm, or rather a judgement of Yahweh, Is 30:30, the first manifestation of which is a severe drought, Am 7:4; 4:7-8.

c. This section assembles oracles pronounced at various times against seven nations (an added oracle against Judah is probably of later date). The structure of these oracles is the same throughout and the same stereotyped formulas recur. The oracles emphasise the justice of Yahweh that punishes wrong-doing in whatever nation it is found. Israel is dealt with last to show that this punishment, so little expected, will strike Israel as it has struck others, and that it will be the supreme manifestation of divine justice.

d. Lit. 'For three crimes of Damascus and for four' (so also in 1:6,9,11,13; 2:1,4). These two consecutive numbers together indicate an indefinite quantity (small or large according to the context), cf. 4:8; Is 17:6; Jr 36:23 and the 'numerical proverbs', Pr 30:15+.

e. Lit. 'I will not withdraw it' (i.e. the decree). Others translate 'I will not thrust him back' (i.e. the Assyrian invader).

f. 'Gilead' Hebr.; 'the pregnant women of Gilead' Greek.

g. Dragged over the threshing-floor to separate husks from wheat, cf. Is 21:10; 28:27; 41:15; Mi 4:12-13; 2 K 8:12; 13:7. Cf. Jl 4:14+.

h. Hazael and his son Ben-hadad III were bitter enemies of Israel.

i. Or 'the one who dwells' (i.e. the whole population); so too v. 8.

j. Bikath-aven and Beth-eden, difficult to identify, are possibly merely symbolic names for Damascus ('valley of wickedness' and 'house of pleasure').

Jos 13:2+ Jr 47 Jl 4:4 Zp 2:4-7 **Gaza and Philistia**

Yahweh says this: 6

For the three crimes, the four crimes, of Gaza
I have made my decree and will not relent:
2 Ch 21:16-17 because they have deported entire nations
as slaves to Edom,[k]
I am going to hurl fire on the walls of Gaza 7
to burn up her palaces.
2 Ch 26:6 I am going to cut down the one enthroned at Ashdod 8
and the sceptred one at Ashkelon;
I am going to turn my hand against Ekron[l]
until the last of the Philistines is dead,
says Yahweh.[m]

Is 23 Ezk 26:28 **Tyre and Phoenicia**

Yahweh says this: 9

For the three crimes, the four crimes, of Tyre
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because they have deported entire nations as slaves to Edom
1 K 5:26; 9:11-14 and have not remembered the covenant of brotherhood,
I am going to hurl fire on the walls of Tyre 10
to burn up her palaces.

Nb 20:23+ Is 34 Jr 49:7-22 Ezk 25:12-14; 35 Ob 10 **Edom**

Yahweh says this: 11

For the three crimes, the four crimes, of Edom
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because he has persecuted his brother[n] with the sword,
stifling his pity,
Gn 27:41 Nb 20:14-21 persistently nursing his fury[o]
and ever cherishing his rage,
I am going to hurl fire on Teman[p] 12
to burn up the palaces of Bozrah.

Nb 20:23+ Jr 49:1-6 Ezk 25:1-7 Zp 2:8-11 **Ammon**

Yahweh says this: 13

For the three crimes, the four crimes, of the sons of Ammon
I have made my decree and will not relent:
2 K 8:12; 15:16 Ho 14:1 because they have disembowelled the pregnant women of Gilead
in order to extend their own frontiers,
I am going to light a fire against the wall of Rabbah 14
to burn up her palaces,
to the sound of war-cries on the day of battle,
Is 28:2 Ho 4:19 amid storms on a day of hurricane;
and their king[q] shall go into exile, 15
he and his princes with him,
says Yahweh.

Nb 20:23+ Is 15-16 Jr 48 Ezk 25:8-11 Zp 2:8-11 **Moab**

2 Yahweh says this: 1

For the three crimes, the four crimes, of Moab
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because they have burnt the bones of the king[a] of Edom for lime,
I am going to hurl fire on Moab 2

to burn up the palaces of Kerioth,[b]
and Moab shall die in tumult,
to the sound of warcries and the blare of trumpets;
3 I will cut down the chieftain inside her
and slaughter all her princes with him,
says Yahweh.

Judah[c]

4 Yahweh says this:

For the three crimes, the four crimes, of Judah
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because they have rejected the Law of Yahweh — Is 5:24; Jr 7:28; *Lv 26:14-15*
and failed to keep his precepts,
because the false gods[d] which their ancestors followed — Jr 2:25; Ho 2:7
have led them astray,
5 I am going to hurl fire on Judah — Ho 8:14
to burn up the palaces of Jerusalem.

Israel — 8:4

6 Yahweh says this:

For the three crimes, the four crimes, of Israel
I have made my decree and will not relent:
because they have sold the virtuous man for silver
and the poor man for a pair of sandals,[e]
7 because they trample on the heads of ordinary people[f] — Is 3:15
and push the poor out of their path,
because father and son have both resorted to the same girl,[g] — Dt 23:19; 27:20
profaning my holy name,
8 because they stretch themselves out by the side of every altar
on clothes acquired as pledges, — Dt 24:12-13
and drink the wine of the people they have fined — Ho 4:18
in the house of their god...[h]
9 Yet it was I who overthrew the Amorites when they attacked, — Dt 7:1+; 9:1-2
men tall as cedars and strong as oaks,
I who destroyed them,
both fruit above ground — Ho 9:16
and root below.[i] — Jb 18:16
10 It was I who brought you out of the land of Egypt
and for forty years led you through the wilderness — Dt 2:7
to take possession of the Amorite's country.
11 I raised up prophets from your sons — Dt 18:18+
and nazirites from your young men. — Nb 6:1+
Is this not true, sons of Israel?
—it is Yahweh who speaks.

k. For 'Edom' perhaps read 'Aram'; so too v. 9.
l. Gath, the fifth Philistine town, is not mentioned: there was no need: it had been destroyed by Hazael, 2 K 12:18; cf. Am 6:2.
m. 'Yahweh' Greek; 'the Lord Yahweh' Hebr.
n. Israel, 'brother' of Edom, Gn 25:21-24,29-30.
o. Following Syr. and Vulg.; 'his fury tears perpetually' Hebr.
p. Either an Edomite tribe, or a small town probably in the neighbourhood of Petra, or else used for Edom in general, Jr 49:7,20; Ob 9.
q. 'their king' Hebr.; 'Milcom' Greek, cf. 1 K 11:5+.

2 a. To ensure the suffering of the soul. To the Semite an appalling crime.
b. Possibly Kir Moab (the modern Kerak).
c. This oracle, general in tone and deuteronomic in style, is perhaps a later addition.
d. Lit. 'their lies'.
e. The prophets often protest against legal corruption: Am 5:7; 6:12; Is 1:23; Mi 3:1-3, 9-11; 7:1-3; etc.
f. Text corr. The avarice of men in power is another preoccupation of the prophets: Am 8:5-6; Is 1:17,23; 3:14; Mi 2:1-2,8-11; 3:9-11; 6:9-12; Zp 1:9; Jr 2:34; Ezk 22:29.
g. Sacred prostitution, Dt 23:19+, a feature of Canaanite worship which contaminated Israel.
h. At the sacred banquets which followed the sacrifices. 'their god', because the 'god' thus worshipped has nothing to do with the true God.
i. Apparently a proverbial expression for complete and final destruction.

Nb 6:4 But you have forced the nazirites to drink wine 12
and given orders to the prophets,
7:12-13,16 'Do not prophesy'.
1 K 22:8,27
Is 30:10
Jr 11:21
Mi 2:6
1:3+ See then how I am going to crush you into the ground 13
as the threshing-sledge crushes when clogged by straw;
flight will not save even the swift, 14
Jr 46:5 the strong man will find his strength useless,
6:9; 9:1 the mighty man will be powerless to save himself.
The bowman will not stand his ground, 15
the fast runner will not escape,
the horseman will not save himself,
5:18+ the bravest warriors will run away naked that day. 16
It is Yahweh who speaks.

II. ISRAEL WARNED AND THREATENED

Election and punishment

3 Listen, sons of Israel, to this oracle Yahweh speaks against you, against the 1
whole family I brought out of the land of Egypt:[a]

Dt 7:6+ You alone, of all the families of earth, have I acknowledged,[b] 2
Ho 9:7
Mt 11:20-24p therefore it is for all your sins that I mean to punish[c] you.

The prophetic call cannot be resisted[d]

7:14 Do two men take the road together 3
if they have not planned to do so?[e]
Does the lion roar in the jungle 4
if no prey has been found?
Does the young lion growl in his lair
if he has captured nothing?
Does the bird fall to the ground[f] 5
if no trap[g] has been set?
Does the snare spring up from the ground
if nothing has been caught?
Jl 2:1+ Does the trumpet sound in the city 6
without the populace becoming alarmed?
Does misfortune come to a city
Is 45:7 if Yahweh has not sent it?
No more does the Lord Yahweh do anything 7
4:13 without revealing his plans to his servants the prophets.[h]
Gn 18:17
Jr 7:25
Rv 10:7; 11:18 The lion roars: who can help feeling afraid? 8
7:14-15 The Lord Yahweh speaks: who can refuse to prophesy?
Jr 20:7-9

Samaria will perish for her corruption

Proclaim it in the palaces of Assyria[i] 9
and in the palaces in the land of Egypt;[j]
Zp 3:8 saying, 'Assemble on Samaria's mountain
and see what great disorder there is in that city,
2:6-8 what oppression is found inside her'.
Hab 1:3
They know nothing of fair dealing 10
—it is Yahweh who speaks—
they cram their palaces full by harshness and extortion.
Therefore, the Lord Yahweh says this: 11
An enemy[k] is going to invade the country,
2 K 17:3-6 your power will be brought low,[l]
your palaces looted.

12 Yahweh says this:
Like a shepherd rescuing a couple of legs or a bit of an ear — Gn 31:39 Ex 22:12 Ho 5:14
from the lion's mouth,
so will these sons of Israel
be rescued,[m] who now loll in Samaria — Ba 2:13
on the corner-pillows of their divans.[n]

Against Bethel and domestic luxury

13 Listen, and then testify it against the House of Jacob[o]
—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks, the God of Sabaoth: — 1 S 1:3+
14 On the day I punish Israel for his crimes — 1 K 12:29-30+
I will punish the altars of Bethel;
the horns of the altar are going to be broken off — 1 K 13:1-5
and dropped on the ground. — Ex 27:2+
15 I mean to pull down both winter houses and summer houses,
the houses of ivory will be destroyed, — 6:4 1 K 22:39
the houses of ebony[p] will vanish.
It is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

Against the women of Samaria — 8:4 Is 3:16-24; 32:9-14

1 4 Listen to this word, you cows of Bashan[a]
living in the mountain of Samaria,
oppressing the needy, crushing the poor,
saying to your husbands, 'Bring us something to drink!' — Is 5:11-12+
2 The Lord Yahweh swears this by his holiness: — 6:8 Lv 17:1+ Ps 89:35
The days are coming to you now — *8:11*
when you will be dragged out with hooks,
the very last of you with prongs.[b]
3 Out you will go, each by the nearest breach in the wall,
to be driven all the way to Hermon.[c]
It is Yahweh who speaks.

The self-deception, obstinacy and punishment of Israel

4 Go to Bethel, and sin,
to Gilgal, and sin your hardest![d] — 5:5 2 K 2:1+ Ho 4:15
Offer your sacrifices each morning — *5:21*
and your tithes on the third day,[e]

3 a. Here the prophet is apparently addressing all twelve tribes.

b. Lit. 'known' in the biblical sense of chosen, loved: Gn 18:10; Jr 1:5; Ho 13:4; Dt 9:24; Ws 10:5. This privilege, according to Amos, is not an unconditional promise of divine protection, Am 9:10, cf. Mi 3:11, it imposes moral obligations.

c. Lit. 'visit'. The divine 'visit', cf. Ex 3:16+, is here a punishment.

d. In all this passage the prophet is justifying his intervention. There is neither effect without cause, vv. 3-5b, nor cause without effect, vv. 5c-6,8a. If the prophet exercises his office, it is because Yahweh has spoken; if God speaks, the prophet cannot but prophesy, vv. 7-8b. The images chosen suggest that the message will be one of disaster.

e. Or 'without having met'; Greek 'without knowing each other'.

f. Hebr. adds 'in the snare', omitted by Greek.

g. Or 'no bait', or 'no sling'.

h. This verse may be a gloss.

i. 'Assyria' Greek; 'Ashdod' Hebr.

j. Israel's two great hostile neighbours are summoned as witnesses to her crimes, as heaven and earth are summoned in Is1:2, cf. Dt 30:19.

k. Assyria; though never named, her threat pervades the whole prophecy of Amos.

l. 'will invade' corr.; 'and all round' Hebr. 'will be brought low' corr.; 'he (or one) will bring low' Hebr.

m. The first mention of the 'remnant' of the saved, cf. 5:15; 9:8 and Is 4:3+.

n. Conj. translation.

o. The phrase apparently means all twelve tribes, 9:8-9.

p. 'ebony' conj., cf. Ezk 27:15; 'many (houses)' Hebr.

4 a. Bashan in Transjordania was famous for its pasture lands and cattle. In Ps 22:12 'bulls of Bashan' symbolise frightening power; here the 'cows' symbolise the reckless luxury of the women of Samaria.

b. Like a herd of cattle led by a 'hook' in the muzzle and urged along with a goad or 'prong'.

c. 'be driven' Greek; 'driven' Hebr. 'To Hermon': i.e. towards Assyria. The translation is conj.

d. The sin consists not in worshipping at these places but in combining ceremonial worship with immoral and unjust actions, 5:21+.

e. Perhaps: on the third day after arrival at the sanctuary. The tithe, Dt 14:22+, was a very ancient custom; it was offered by Jacob at Bethel, Gn 28:22. Some render 'each morning' or 'every three days'; the prophet is being ironical about the extravagance of the formal cult; cf. Dt 14:28; 26:12.

burn leavened dough as a sacrifice with praise, 5
Lv 7:11+ Mt 6:2; 23: 5f announce your voluntary offerings, make them public,
for this is what makes you happy, sons of Israel.
It is the Lord Yahweh who speaks.

Lv 26:14-39 Ws 12:2.10 Is 1:5; 42:25 And that is why[f] I left your teeth clean[g] in all your towns, 6
left you without bread in all your villages;
Zp 3:2,7 and yet you never came back to me.
It is Yahweh who speaks.

Jr 14:1-6 I kept your rain back with harvest still three months away; 7
I let rain fall on one town and none on another,
Jl 1:12 one field was rained on and the next dried up because I sent it no rain;[h]
two towns, three towns, went tottering to the next for drinking-water, 8
but their thirst had to stay unquenched;
and yet you never came back to me.
It is Yahweh who speaks.

Dt 28:22 1 K 8:37 I struck you with burning and scorching, 9
and withered[i] your gardens and vineyards;
Jl 1:4 the locusts devoured your fig trees and olives;
and yet you never came back to me.
It is Yahweh who speaks.

Ex 9:1-7 Dt 8:15 I sent you a plague like Egypt's plague; 10
I slaughtered your young men with the sword,
while your horses were captured for plunder;
Is 34:2-3 Jl 2:20 I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camps;
and yet you never came back to me,
It is Yahweh who speaks.

Gn 19:1+ Zc 3:2 I overthrew you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,[j] 11
and you were like a brand snatched from the blaze;
and yet you never came back to me.
It is Yahweh who speaks.

This therefore, Israel, is what I plan to do to you, 12
and because I am going to do this to you,
5:17 Mi 3:1-2 Israel, prepare to meet your God![k]

Doxology[l]

For he it was who formed the mountains, created the wind, 13
3:7 reveals his mind to man,[m]
makes both dawn and dark,[n]
Mi 1:3 and walks on the top of the heights of the world;[o]
5:8,27; 9:6 Jr 32:18 Ho 12:6 Yahweh, God of Sabaoth, is his name.

Lament for Israel

5 Listen to this oracle I speak against you, 1
it is a dirge, House of Israel:
She is down and will rise no more, 2
the virgin of Israel.[a]
There she lies all alone on her own soil,
with no one to lift her up;
for thus says the Lord Yahweh to the House of Israel:[b] 3
The town which used to put a thousand in the field
will be left with a hundred,
and the one which used to put a hundred
will be left with ten.[c]

No salvation without repentance

4 For Yahweh says this to the House of Israel. Zp 2:3
Seek me and you shall live.[d] Ps 55:5; Ho 10:12
5 Do not seek Bethel, 4:4; Jr 48:13; *Ho 4:15*
do not go to Gilgal,
do not journey to Beersheba,[e] 8:14
since Gilgal is going to be exiled[f]
and Bethel brought to nothing.
6 Seek Yahweh and you shall live,
or else he will rush like fire on the House of Joseph
and burn it up, with none at Bethel[g] able to put out the flames.[h]

Doxology 4:13+

8 It is he who made the Pleiades and Orion, Jb 9:9; 38:31
who turns the dusk to dawn
and day to darkest night.
He summons the waters of the sea =9:6
and pours them over the land.[i]
Yahweh is his name.
9 He blazes out ruin on the stronghold
and brings destruction to the fortress.[j]

Threats

7 Trouble[k] for those who turn justice into wormwood, 6:12
throwing integrity to the ground; Mi 3:9
10 who hate the man dispensing justice[l] at the city gate
and detest those who speak with honesty.
11 Well then, since you have trampled on the poor man,
extorting levies on his wheat—
those houses you have built of dressed stone, Dt 28:30, 33+
you will never live in them; Zc 5:3-4
and those precious vineyards you have planted,

f. The following passage, vv. 6-12, is a short poem with a refrain indicating the lesson God wanted the people to learn from these events. As a father punishes his child, Dt 8:5+, so God wants to bring back his people to himself (here the seven strokes of his rod are listed in crescendo, Am 4:6-11; Lv 26:14-39; Dt 28: 15-68); but all is in vain, Is 9:12; 42:25; Jr 2:30; 5:3; Ho 7:10; Zp 3:2,7; Hg 2:17, cf. Rv 9:20,21; 16:9,11; Ex 7-11. Israel is hardened in sin and God is about to strike him down.

g. I.e. by sending famine.

h. Text corr. following Greek.

i. 'withered' corr.; 'to multiply' Hebr.

j. Probably alluding to an earthquake, cf. 1:1.

k. Enigmatic announcement of the final punishment, 'and because ... you' is perhaps a gloss.

l. This doxology, cf. 5:8-9; 9:5-6, may have been added for use in the liturgy. In its present context it makes the threat still more impressive.

m. Or 'reveals man's thoughts', cf. Jr 11:20; Ps 94:11; 2 K 5:25-26 etc.

n. Following Greek: Hebr. 'changes dawn to darkness'.

o. Either an allusion to the storm, Ps 18:7-15, or preferably an expression symbolising the omnipotence of God, Mi 1:3-6; Ps 18:33; Dt 32:13; Jb 9:8; Is 58:14.

5 a. The nation itself, compared to a virgin carried off by death before she has known the joys of married life.

b. 'to the House of Israel' transposed here from the end of the verse.

c. A great disaster but leaving a 'remnant', cf. 3:12; 5:15; 9:8 and Is 4:3+.

d. The sanctuaries will be destroyed, v. 5, and sacrifice in them is not sufficient means of salvation; a man must 'seek Yahweh', i.e. seek to know his will and do it, 'seek good and not evil', 5:14. Hence men 'seek' Yahweh (verb: *darash*) by visiting his sanctuaries, Am 5:5; 2 Ch 1:5; Dt 12:5, but also by 'questioning' him (cf. 1 S 14:41+) through the medium of a man of God, Gn 25:22; Ex 18:15; 1 S 9:9; 1 K 22:8, or again by 'seeking the word', 1 K 22:5; cf. 14:5, either in a book, Is 34:16, or through the mediation of a prophet, 1 K 22:7. A similar expression (the verb being normally *biqqesh*) means rather to seek the face, i.e. the presence, of Yahweh, Ho 5:15; 2 S 21:1; 1 Ch 16:11 (=Ps 105:4); Ps 24:6; 27:8 and (probably in the same sense) Zp 1:6; Ho 3:5; 5:6; Ex 33:7+, etc. But the two expressions are related: a man seeks 'the face' of Yahweh in order to learn his will, whose presence is often manifested by way of oracles. In the O.T. this 'seeking Yahweh' is an imperative necessity of man's religious life; in the N.T. the equivalent is to 'seek the kingdom', Mt 6:33.

e. A famous shrine in patriarchal times, Gn 21: 31-33; 26:23-25.

f. *Gilgal galoh yigleh*, pun on Gilgal; so too on Bethel (=house of God, now 'house of nothing').

g. 'at Bethel' Hebr.; 'in the House of Israel' Greek.

h. We put v. 7 after v. 9.

i. Either to swamp the earth, Jb 12:15, and reduce it to its primeval state, Ps 104:5-9, or to water it with beneficent rain, Jb 36:27-28.

j. Translation following Greek.

k. 'Woe', added here, cf. 5:18 and 6:1.

l. Either the truthful witness or the just judge.

you will never drink their wine.
For I know that your crimes are many, 12
and your sins enormous:
Pr 17:23 persecutors of the virtuous, blackmailers,
turning away the needy at the city gate.
No wonder the prudent man keeps silent, 13
||Mi 2:3 the times are so evil.

Exhortation

5:4+ Ps 34:12-14; 37:27 Jl 2:14 Seek good and not evil 14
so that you may live,
and that Yahweh, God of Sabaoth, may really be with you
as you claim[m] he is.
Hate evil, love good, 15
maintain justice at the city gate,
Jon 3:9 and it may be that Yahweh, God of Sabaoth, will take pity
Is 4:3+ on the remnant of Joseph.[n]

Impending punishment

Therefore Yahweh says this, 16
the God of Sabaoth, the Lord.
In every public square there will be lamentation,
in every street wails of 'Alas! Alas!'
Peasants will be called on to lament
as well as the professional mourners[o]
and there will be wailing in every vineyard, 17
4:12 Ex 12:12 Ml 3:1-2 for I am going to pass through you,
says Yahweh.

The day of Yahweh

Ezk 7:1f; 13:5 Jr 13:16; 14:19 Lm 2:16 Dn 8:19 Mt 3:7 Jn 8:12+ Trouble for those who are waiting so longingly for the day of Yahweh![p] 18
What will this day of Yahweh mean for you?
It will mean darkness, not light,[q]
as when a man escapes a lion's mouth, 19
only to meet a bear;
he enters his house and puts his hand on the wall,
only for a snake to bite him.
Will not the day of Yahweh be darkness, not light? 20
It will all be gloom, without a single ray of light.

Against formalism in religion[r]

4:4-5 Is 1:11; 48:1 Jr 6:20 Mi 6:8+ Mt 23:23 Mk 12:33 Rm 2:17f I hate and despise your feasts, 21
I take no pleasure in your solemn festivals.
When you offer me holocausts, 22
.....[s]
Is 1:11+ Ho 8:13 I reject your oblations,
and refuse to look at your sacrifices of fattened cattle[t].
Let me have no more of the din of your chanting, 23
no more of your strumming on harps.[u]
Mi 6:8 But let justice flow like water, 24
and integrity like an unfailing stream.
Ac 7:37, 42-43 Did you bring me sacrifice and oblation in the wilderness[v] 25
for all those forty years, House of Israel?
Now you must shoulder Sakkuth your king 26
and Kaiwan your god,
those idols you have made for yourselves;[w]

27 for I mean to take you far beyond Damascus[z] into exile,
says Yahweh—God of Sabaoth is his name. 4:13+

Against the self-indulgent and their false sense of security Is 5:8

1 6 Woe to those ensconced so snugly in Zion 9:10
and to those who feel so safe on the mountain of Samaria, Pr 1:32
those famous men of this first of nations Lk 6:24
to whom the House of Israel goes as client.[a] *Jr 5:12-13*
2 Make a journey to Calneh and look,
go on from there to Hamath the great,
then down to Gath in Philistia.[b]
Are they any better off than these kingdoms?
Is their territory larger than yours?
3 You think to defer the day of misfortune,
but you hasten the reign of violence.[c]
4 Lying on ivory beds 3:15
and sprawling on their divans, Ho 4:18
they dine on lambs from the flock,
and stall-fattened veal;
5 they bawl[d] to the sound of the harp, 1 Ch 23:5
they invent new instruments of music like David, Ne 12:36
6 they drink wine by the bowlful, Jb 21:12
and use the finest oil for anointing themselves,
but about the ruin of Joseph[e] they do not care at all.
7 That is why they will be the first to be exiled; 7:11
the sprawlers' revelry[f] is over. Rv 18:14

The punishment and its horrors

8 The Lord Yahweh swears it by his own self 4:2

m. Relying on its special place as the Chosen Nation, Israel has been counting on Yahweh's unconditional protection, 5:18; 9:10; Mi 3:11.

n. I.e. on the Northern Kingdom depleted by successive punishments from Yahweh, 4:6-11, not yet finished, 5:3. The 'remnant' of Israel appears here in the Prophets for the first time, cf. Is 4:3+.

o. Inverting the Hebr. order of words.

p. Confident in its election, Dt 7:6+, Israel serenely awaits God's intervention which is bound to be in its favour. To this expected 'day of Yahweh' Amos opposes the prophetic concept of it: the day of Yahweh is a day of wrath, Zp 1:15; Ezk 22:24; Lm 2:22, against an Israel hardened in sin; a day of darkness, tears, massacre, terror, Am 5:18-20; 2:16; 8:9-10,13; Is 2:6-21; Jr 30:5-7; Zp 1:4-18, cf. Jl 1:15-20; 2:1-11. All these texts contain threats of a disastrous invasion (Assyrian or Chaldaean). During the Exile, the day of Yahweh becomes an object of hope; the wrath of God will now turn against Israel's oppressors, Ob 15; Babylon, Is 13:6,9; Jr 50:27; 51:2; Lm 1:21; Egypt, Is 19:16; Jr 46:10,21; Ezk 30:2; Philistia, Jr 47:4; Edom, Is 34:8; 63:4. This day, therefore is to bring Israel's recovery, a sense found even in Amos 9:11, and also in Is 11:11; 12:1; 30:26; cf. Jl 3:4; 4:1. After the Exile, the 'day of Yahweh' becomes more and more a day of 'judgement' ensuring the triumph of the virtuous and the destruction of sinners, Ml 3:19-23; Jb 21:30; Pr 11:4, with the whole world for its theatre, Is 26:20–27:1; 33:10-16. See also Mt 24:1+. On the cosmic signs that are to accompany the day of Yahweh, cf. Am 8:9+.

q. Cf. Jl 2:1-2; Zp 1:14-18.

r. The prophets often attack religious hypocrisy, the conviction that all is well, provided external forms like sacrifice and fasting are observed, though the most elementary principles of social justice and neighbourly love are neglected, 1 S 15:22; Is 1:10-16; 29:13-14; 58:1-8; Ho 6:6; Ml 6:5-8; Jr 6:20; Jl 2:13; Zc 7:4-6; cf. Ps 40:6-8; 50:5-15; 51:16-17. The Psalmists lay emphasis on the inner dispositions that must lie behind acceptable sacrifice: obedience, gratitude, contrition; the Books of Chronicles, too, insist on the part played in sacrificial worship by the liturgical chant as an expression of inward sentiments; these authors also protest against a religion of mere form. The N.T. will formulate the distinction definitely: Lk 11:41-42; Mt 7:21; Jn 4:21-24.

s. A line is missing here.

t. The reference is to 'communion sacrifice', cf. Lv 3:1+.

u. Religious ceremonies were accompanied by vocal and instrumental music, 1 S 10:5; 2 S 6:5,15.

v. Amos, like Hosea, 2:16-17; 9:10, and Jeremiah, 2:2-3, regarded the period in the desert as a time of perfect union between Yahweh and his people, cf. Ho 2:16+. The material circumstances of a nomadic people and the undeveloped legislation gave small opportunity for elaborate worship, cf. Jr 7:22; Yahweh could therefore be pleased by worship which, though simple, was sincere.

w. Text corr. and translation conj. With them into exile the Israelites will take, cf. Jr 48:7; 49:3; Is 46:1, the images of the false gods they have adored. Sakkuth and Kaiwan are apparently Babylonian deities

x. I.e. to Assyria.

6 a. In order to pay homage, seek counsel, ask for justice.

b. At present, under Jeroboam II the conqueror, Israel is powerful, but Amos warns it of cities once prosperous, now in ruins. Calneh, cf. Is 10:9, N. of Aleppo, was to be captured by the Assyrians in 738, Hamath on the Orontes in 720, Gath in the N. of Philistia in 711, but all three had already suffered much destruction, 2 K 12:18; 14:28; 2 Ch 26:6. 'These kingdoms' are Israel and Judah.

c. I.e. of enemy occupation.

d. Meaning uncertain.

e. The impending collapse of the kingdom of Israel.

f. Or 'company'.

—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks, the God of Sabaoth.
Is 28:1 Ho 5:5 I detest the pride of Jacob,
Jr 22:13 I hate his palaces.
I mean to abandon the city[g] and all it contains.
2:14-16 And if ten men are left in a single house, they shall die. 9
Only a few will escape[h] 10
8:3 to carry the bones out of the house;
and if a man should say to another one in a corner of the house,
'Is there anyone left with you?'
Hab 2:20 Zp 1:7 Zc 2:17 he will reply, 'No! Hush! The name of Yahweh must not be mentioned.'[i]
For see, Yahweh himself orders it; 11
as he strikes, the great house falls to pieces,
the small house crumbles.
Ho 10:4 Do horses gallop on rocks, 12
do men plough the sea[j] with oxen,
for you to change justice into poison,
5:7 and the fruit of integrity into wormwood?
You rejoice over Lo-debar,[k] 13
Dt 8:17 Jg 7:2 'Was it not by our own strength' you say
'that we took Karnaim?'
Now see, you House of Israel, how I am stirring up against you 14
—it is Yahweh who speaks, the God of Sabaoth—
a nation[l] that will harry you
from the Pass of Hamath
right down to the wadi of the Arabah.[m]

III. THE VISIONS

First vision: the locusts

Dt 28:38 Jl 1:4-7; 2: 3-9 7 This is what the Lord Yahweh showed me: 1
it was a swarm of locusts
at the time when the second crop was starting to grow,
a swarm of full-grown locusts, when the king's cutting[a] was over.
They were about to devour[b] all the greenstuff in the land, 2
Ezk 9:8 but I said, 'Lord Yahweh, forgive, I beg you.[c]
How can Jacob survive, being so small?'
And Yahweh relented;[d] 3
'This shall not happen' said Yahweh.

Second vision: the drought

This is what the Lord Yahweh showed me: 4
the Lord Yahweh himself summoning fire in punishment;[e]
it had devoured the great Abyss[f]
and was already encroaching on the land.
Ezk 9:8 Then I said, 'Stop, Lord Yahweh, I beg you. 5
How can Jacob survive, being so small?'
And Yahweh relented; 6
'This will not happen either' said the Lord Yahweh.

Third vision: the plumb-line

This is what the Lord Yahweh showed me: 7
a man standing by a wall,
2 K 21:13 plumb-line in hand.[o]
'What do you see, Amos?' Yahweh asked me. 8

'A plumb-line' I said.
Then the Lord said to me,
'Look, I am going to measure my people Israel by plumb-line;
no longer will I overlook their offences.
9 The high places of Isaac are going to be ruined, Dt 12:2+
the sanctuaries of Israel destroyed,
and, sword in hand, I will attack the House of Jeroboam.' 7:11 2 K 15:8-10

The intervention of Amaziah: Amos expelled from Bethel

10 Amaziah the priest of Bethel then sent word to Jeroboam king of Israel as follows. 'Amos is plotting against you in the heart of the House of Israel; the Ho 9:8
11 country can no longer tolerate what he keeps saying. •For this is what he says,
"Jeroboam is going to die by the sword, and Israel go into exile far from its 5:27; 6:7; 7:9; 9:4
12 country".' •To Amos, Amaziah said, 'Go away, seer;[h] get back to the land of
13 Judah; earn your bread[i] there, do your prophesying there. •We want no more 2:12+ 1 K 12:29
14 prophesying in Bethel; this is the royal sanctuary, the national temple.' •'I was
no prophet, neither did I belong to any of the brotherhoods of prophets,'[j] Amos
15 replied to Amaziah 'I was a shepherd,[k] and looked after sycamores: •but it 3:3-8+ 2 S 7:8
was Yahweh who took me from herding the flock, and Yahweh who said, "Go, Ps 78:70-71
16 prophesy to my people Israel". •So listen to the word of Yahweh. You say:

"Do not prophesy against Israel, 2:12+
utter no oracles against the House of Isaac".
17 Very well, this is what Yahweh says,
"Your wife will be forced to go on the streets,[l]
your sons and daughters will fall by the sword,
your land be parcelled out by measuring line, Dt 28:30-33 2 K 17:24
and you yourself die on unclean soil[m] Ho 9:3
and Israel will go into exile far distant from its own land".'

Fourth vision:[a] the basket of ripe fruit

1 8 This is what the Lord Yahweh showed me: 7:7-9
a basket of ripe fruit:
2 'What do you see, Amos?' he asked.
'A basket of ripe fruit' I said.
Then Yahweh said,

g. Samaria, or else all the cities of the Northern Kingdom.

h. Text corr. following Greek; Hebr. unintelligible.

i. Out of respect, or possibly superstitious fear, at this act of God. Perhaps v. 11 should be read after v. 8 and v. 10 after v. 11.

j. '(do men plough) the sea' corr.; '(do men plough) there' Hebr.

k. 'Lo-debar' corr.; 'that which is nothing' Hebr. Lo-debar and Karnaim, both in Transjordania, had been reconquered either by Jeroboam II or by his father Joash, cf. 2 K 13:25; 14:25.

l. Assyria.

m. N. and S. boundaries of Israel, cf. Jg 20:1+.

7 a. 'It was a swarm' Greek; 'He was forming' Hebr. 'of full-grown locusts' Greek; 'and behold the second crop' Hebr. Presumably the king exacted a part of the first growth for his horses.

b. 'They were about to devour' corr.; 'When they had devoured' Hebr.

c. For prophets interceding on behalf of the people, cf. Ex 32:11+; Jr 15:1; 18:20; cf. 2 M 15:14+; Ezk 9:8; Dn 9:15-19.

d. I.e. agreed not to carry out his intention.

e. 'summoning fire in punishment' corr.; 'calling in order to punish by fire' Hebr. The 'fire' is drought, Am 1:2; 4:6-8, that devours everything, cf. Jl 1:19-20; 2:3. Others translate 'he called for a judgement by fire', i.e. fire from heaven such as destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Gn 19:24-25,28.

f. The nether ocean whence rain and rivers come.

g. 'the Lord Yahweh' added, following 7:1 and 8:1. 'A man' Greek; 'The Lord' Hebr. 'by a wall'; Hebr. adds '(built with) a plumb-line'. Translation conj. The image of the plumb-line suggests, apparently, that this symbolic wall is bulging or leaning over and about to collapse, cf. Is 30:13. The plumb-line can also signify destruction, 2 K 21:13; Is 28:17; 34:11; Lm 2:8.

h. Here the term is possibly contemptuous ('visionary').

i. Amaziah speaks as if Amos were one of the professional prophets for whom prophecy was a livelihood, cf. 1 S 9:7+.

j. 'neither did I belong...': lit. 'nor the son of a prophet', cf. 2 K 2:3+.

k. 'shepherd' corr., cf. 1:1; 'herdsman' Hebr.

l. Forced to this for her living.

m. All foreign countries are unclean on account of their idols, Ho 9:3-4; the land of Israel where Yahweh resides, Ho 8:1; Zc 9:8; Jr 12:7, is pure, 2 K 5:17, and 'holy', Ex 19:12+; Zc 2:16; 2 M 1:7.

8 a. Despite the interruption of the Bethel episode, 7:10-17, this fourth vision is connected with the third, 7:7-9, to which it is similar in structure and idea.

Rv 14:15-18
'My people Israel is ripe for destruction;[b]
I will no longer overlook its offences.
The palace singing girls[c] will wail that day 3
—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks—
so many will be dead,
6:10+ all thrown down anywhere.[d] Hush!'

2:6-8; 4:1 **Against swindlers and exploiters[e]**

Listen to this, you who trample on[f] the needy 4
and try to suppress the poor people of the country,
you who say, 'When will New Moon be over[g] 5
so that we can sell our corn,
and sabbath, so that we can market our wheat?
Lv 19:35 Dt 25:13-16 Pr 11:1 Ho 12:8 Mi 6:10-11 Then by lowering the bushel, raising the shekel,
by swindling and tampering with the scales,
2:6 we can buy up the poor for money, 6
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
and get a price even for the sweepings of the wheat.'
Yahweh swears it by the pride of Jacob,[h] 7
'Never will I forget a single thing you have done'.
1:1 Is this not the reason for the earthquakes, 8
=9:5 for its inhabitants all mourning,
and all of it heaving, like the Nile,
then subsiding, like the river of Egypt?[i]

Prediction of a mysterious punishment: darkness and mourning

'That day—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks— 9
Is 24:18 Ezk 38:20 Zp 1:18 I will make the sun go down at noon,
and darken the earth in broad daylight.[j]
Tb 2:6 Ho 2:13 I am going to turn your feasts into funerals, 10
all your singing into lamentation;
Is 3:24 Ezk 7:18 I will have your loins all in sackcloth,
your heads all shaved.[k]
Jr 6:26 Zc 12:10 I will make it a mourning like the mourning for an only son,
as long as it lasts it will be like a day of bitterness.

Famine and drought of the word of God

4:2 'See what days are coming—it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks— 11
days when I will bring famine on the country,
Dt 8:3+ Si 51:24 Mt 5:6 a famine not of bread, a drought not of water,
but of hearing the word[l] of Yahweh.
They will stagger from sea to sea, 12
wander from north to east,
Dn 12:4 Ho 5:6+ seeking the word of Yahweh
and failing to find it.

Fresh prediction of punishment

Zc 9:17 That day, delicate girl 13
and stalwart youth shall faint from thirst.
5:5 Ho 4:15 All who swear by Samaria's Ashimah,[m] 14
those who swear, "By your god's life, Dan!"[n]
and, "By your Beloved's[o] life, Beersheba!"
these shall all fall, never to rise again.'

Fifth vision: the fall of the sanctuary[a]

9 I saw the Lord standing at the side of the altar. 1
'Strike the capitals'[b] he said 'and let the roof tumble down!

I mean to break their heads, every one,[c]
and all who remain I will put to the sword;
not one shall get away, 2:13-16; 9:9-10
not one escape.
2 Should they burrow their way down to Sheol, Jb 14:13; 26:6
my hand shall haul them out; Ps 139:7-12
should they scale the heavens, Si 16:17
I will drag them down; Jr 23:23-24
3 should they hide on Carmel's peak,
there I will track them down and catch them;
should they hide from my sight on the sea bed, Ps 135:6
I will tell the Dragon to bite them there;[d] Jb 3:8+; 7:12+
4 should they go into exile driven before their enemies, 7:11
I will order the sword to slaughter them there;
and my eyes will be on them
for their misfortune, not their good.'

Doxology 4:13; 5:8

5 The Lord Yahweh of Sabaoth—
he touches the earth and it melts,
and all its inhabitants mourn; =8:8
it all heaves, like the Nile, 1:1
and subsides, like the river of Egypt.
6 He has built his high dwelling place[e] in the heavens
and supported his vault on the earth;
he summons the waters of the sea =5:8
and pours them over the land. Ps 104:3
Yahweh is his name. 4:13+

No special privileges for Israel

7 'Are not you and the Cushites[f] all the same to me,[g]
sons of Israel?—it is Yahweh who speaks.
Did not I, who brought Israel out of the land of Egypt,
bring the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Aramaeans from Kir? Jos 13:2+ Zp 2:5
8 Now, my eyes[h] are turned on the sinful kingdom,
to wipe it off the face of the earth.

Only sinners will perish

'Yet I am not going to destroy 3:12+ Is 4:3+

b. Lit. 'The end has come for my people Israel'. The translation is an attempt to reflect the Hebr. play on the very similar words for 'end' and 'ripe fruit'.

c. 'singing girls' corr.; 'sons' Hebr. 'palace'; or 'temple'.

d. Text uncertain; translation conj.

e. The three following oracles, vv. 4-14, separate somewhat awkwardly the fourth from the fifth vision.

f. 'trample on' corr.

g. The New Moon, Lv 23:24+, like the sabbath, halted business.

h. The 'pride of Jacob' may either be an epithet of Yahweh, 1 S 15:29; or, as in 6:8, the arrogance of Israel, fit matter for oath since it is so constant; or perhaps Palestine, land of Yahweh, Ps 47:4.

i. The prophet compares the disturbance of the country to the rise and fall of the Nile. We omit 'and be tossed about'. 'subsiding' corr.; 'being drowned' Hebr.

j. The day of Yahweh, 5:18+, is accompanied by cosmic signs; earthquake, Am 8:8; Is 2:10; Jr 4:24, solar eclipse, Am 8:9; Jr 4:23; the later prophets enlarge on this, using conventional imagery that must not be taken literally, Zp 1:15; Is 13:10,13; 34:4; Ezk 32:7,8; Hab 3:6; Jl 2:10,11; 3:3,4; 4:15,16; cf. Mt 24:29; Rv 6:12-14, and see Mt 24:1+.

k. Signs of mourning.

l. 'the word' Greek; 'the words' Hebr.

m. 'Ashimah' corr., cf. 2 K 17:30; 'sin' Hebr.

n. Where Jeroboam had one of his golden calves, 1 K 12:30.

o. 'your Beloved's' corr. (doubtless a local god); 'your way's' Hebr.

9 a. Probably the shrine at Bethel.

b. An angel is perhaps addressed.

c. 'at the side of' or 'on'. 'the roof (tumble down)' corr.; 'the thresholds (be shaken)' Hebr. 'I will break' corr.; 'break them' Hebr.

d. 'there' corr.; 'from there' Hebr.

e. 'high dwelling place' corr.; 'upper storeys' Hebr.

f. The Ethiopians, mentioned precisely because their country is so remote.

g. The Israelites cannot presume on their election, 2:9-11; 3:2; 7:8,15; 8:2; 9:10; cf. Dt 7:6+; they owe it entirely to the free will of Yahweh, Lord of nations, cf. Dt 2:9-12,18-23; 9:4-6; Jg 11:24. See 1 Co 4:7.

h. 'my eyes' corr.; 'the eyes of the Lord Yahweh' Hebr.

the House of Jacob completely—it is Yahweh who speaks.
For now I will issue orders 9
and shake the House of Israel among all the nations,[i]
as you shake a sieve
so that not one pebble can fall on the ground.[j]
All the sinners of my people are going to perish by the sword, 10
all those who say,
6:1-6 Is 28:15 Jr 5:12 "No misfortune will ever touch us, nor even come anywhere near us".[k]

IV. PROSPECTS OF RESTORATION AND OF IDYLLIC PROSPERITY[l]

Tb 13:10 ↗ Ac 15:16-17 'That day I will re-erect the tottering hut of David, 11
make good the gaps in it, restore its ruins[m]
and rebuild it as it was in the days of old,
Gn 22:17 Nb 24:18 so that they can conquer the remnant of Edom 12
and all the nations that belonged to me.[n]
It is Yahweh who speaks, and he will carry this out.

5:11 'The days are coming now—it is Yahweh who speaks— 13
Ps 65:11; 72:16 when harvest will follow directly after ploughing,
Lv 26:5 the treading of grapes soon after sowing,
when the mountains will run with new wine
↗ Jl 4:18 and the hills all flow with it.
Dt 30:3-5 I mean to restore the fortunes of my people Israel;[o] 14
Is 65:21-22 Jr 31:5 Ho 14:8 they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them,
plant vineyards and drink their wine,
dig gardens and eat their produce.
I will plant them in their own country, 15
never to be rooted up again
out of the land I have given them,
says Yahweh, your God.'

9 i. This oracle dates possibly from the time of the first Israelite deportation (734). See 2 K 15:29.

j. Either the sieve that holds the small stone (the sinners) allowing the fine sand (the virtuous) to pass through, or the sieve that holds the grain (the virtuous), the chaff being blown away; (in this second case we should translate 'without one grain falling on the ground').

k. The translation follows Greek.

l. These promises include the restoration of the Davidic kingdom, vv. 11-12; material prosperity vv. 13-14; the homeland recovered for ever, v. 15. On the happiness of messianic days, cf. Ho 2:20+. This passage is apparently of a later date, see Introduction to the Prophets.

m. 'gaps', 'ruins' corr.

n. Lit. 'over which my name has been pronounced'.

o. Or 'I mean to bring back those of my people Israel who have been held captive'.

OBADIAH

Title and prologue

1a Vision of Obadiah: about Edom. Nb 20:23+

1c I have received a message[a] from Yahweh, ||Jr 49:14
a herald has been sent throughout the nations,[b]
'Up! Let us march against this people.
Into battle!'

Sentence pronounced on Edom[c]

1b The Lord Yahweh says this:
2 Now I am going to reduce you among the nations, ||Jr 49:15-16
and make you utterly despised.

3 Your pride of heart has led you astray, Is 14:13f
you whose home is in the holes in the rocks,[d]
who make the heights[e] your dwelling,
who say in your heart,
'Who will bring me down to the ground?'

4 Though you soared like the eagle, Hab 2:9
though you set[f] your nest among the stars,
I would still fling you down again—it is Yahweh who speaks.

The annihilation of Edom

5 If robbers came to you, ||Jr 49:9
or plunderers at night,
they would steal to their heart's content.
If grape-gatherers came to you,
they would leave no gleanings behind them.[g]

How you have been pillaged![h]
6 How Esau has been looted, ||Jr 49:10

a. Lit. 'I have heard (corr. with Greek and Jr 49:14; 'We have heard' Hebr.) what was heard'.

b. Metaphorical description of a confederacy in process of formation against Edom. Cf. Jr 4:5; 50:2.

c. The time will come when Edom in turn will be despised, 2, 10c, and so become an object of derision to Israel, 12; the collapse will be the punishment of arrogance. On this doctrine of pride and fall see Pr 16:18; 29:23 and (applied to nations) Is 14; Jr 50–51; Ezk 29–32; 26–28; Zc 10:11.

d. The 'rock' (*sela*) in which Edom is ensconced is a term chosen, perhaps, to suggest the name of the capital of Edom, Has-sela, 'The Rock', cf. 2 K 14:7; the Greek name of this capital, Petra, preserves the same sense.

e. 'make the heights' versions.

f. 'you set' corr. with Greek.

g. This is explained by vv. 6-7: Edom has been despoiled more thoroughly than by common brigands, who always leave something behind, or by the ordinary grape-gatherer who would leave a few grapes for the gleaner, cf. Dt 24:21.

h. This line is found in the Hebr. after 'or plunderers at night'.

his hidden treasures rifled!
They have driven you[i] right to the frontiers, 7
Jr 38:22 they have misled you, all your allies.
They have deceived you, your fine friends.
Ps 41:9 Those who ate your bread now set traps for you,
'He has no intelligence now'.[j]

When that day comes[k]—it is Yahweh who speaks— 8
Is 19:11-15; 29:14 Jr 8:8-9; ||49:7 shall I not deprive Edom of sages,[l]
the Mount of Esau[m] of intelligence?

||Jr 49:22 Your warriors, Teman,[n] will be seized with terror 9
until not a single one is left
in the Mount of Esau.

The guilt of Edom[o]

Jl 4:19 Am 1:11-12 For the slaughter, •for the violence 10
done to your brother Jacob,[p]
shame will cover you
and you will vanish for ever.

On the day[q] you stood by 11
as strangers carried off his riches,
as barbarians passed through his gate
Ps 137:7 and cast lots for Jerusalem,
you behaved like the rest of them.

Do not gloat over your brother[r] 12
on the day of his misfortune.
Do not exult over the sons of Judah
on the day of their ruin.
Do not play the braggart
on the day of distress.

Do not pass through the gate of my people 13
on the day of its misfortune.
Do not, in your turn, gloat over its disaster
on the day of its misfortune.
Do not lay a finger on its treasures
on the day of its misfortune.

Do not take your stand at the crossroads 14
to cut off its fugitives.
Do not hand over its survivors
on the day of distress.

For the day of Yahweh is near 15
for all the nations.
As you have done, so will it be done to you:
your deeds will recoil on your own head.[s]

The day of Yahweh. Israel revenged on Edom[t]

Lm 4:21 [u] Yes, as you have drunk[v] on my holy mountain, 16
so will all the nations drink unsparingly;
they will drink, and drink deep,
and will be as if they had never been.

Jl 3:5 Rv 14:1 But on Mount Zion there will be some who have escaped[w] 17
—it shall become a holy place—

and the House of Jacob will despoil
its own despoilers.[z]

18 The House of Jacob shall be a fire,
the House of Joseph[v] a flame,
the House of Esau stubble.
They will set it alight and burn it up, Ex 15:7
and no member of the House of Esau shall survive.
Yahweh has spoken. Jl 4:8

The new Israel

19 Men from the Negeb will occupy the Mount of Esau,
men from the Lowlands the country of the Philistines;
they will occupy the land of Ephraim and the land of Samaria,
and Benjamin will occupy Gilead.[z]

20 The exiles from this army, the sons of Israel,
will occupy Canaan[aa] as far as Zarephath;
and the exiles from Jerusalem now in Sepharad
will occupy the towns of the Negeb.

21 Victorious, they will climb Mount Zion Mi 4:7
to judge the Mount of Esau,[bb]
and the sovereignty shall belong to Yahweh.[cc] ||Ps 22:28

i. The Edomites in turn are betrayed by their allies who drive the inhabitants from their own territory.

j. Ironical observation by the false friends of Edom. 'Those who ate' is added following Ps 41:9; 'Those who eat with you' Vulg. 'traps' corr., cf. Jb 19:6; the meaning of Hebr. is uncertain.

k. The day of the judgement of Edom is considered as part of the day of Yahweh, 15, cf. Am 5:18+, when God punishes Edom and the other nations, 16-17, but rescues and restores Israel, 17-21.

l. Edom was renowned for wisdom, cf. Jb 2:11+.

m. Here and in 9,19,21 an expression for the mountainous country of Edom, also called 'Mount Seir', cf. Gn 32:4; 33:14,16; 36:8-9; Dt 2:4,5,12. The territory referred to is S. Transjordania.

n. N. district of Edom. Here as elsewhere the term is used to indicate the whole country.

o. The behaviour of Edom at the time of the fall of Jerusalem is repeatedly rebuked in biblical tradition: Ezk 25:12-14; 35; Lm 4:21-22; Ps 137:7. From Ezk 35: 5-12 and 36:2,5 it would seem that at that time Edom occupied Judah, at least partially. For similar complaints against the Ammonites see Ezk 25:1-7, cf. 21: 23-27, and against the Philistines, see Ezk 25:15-17.

p. On the relationship and quarrels between Edom and Israel cf. Gn 25:22-28; 27:27-29; 32:4–33:16; Dt 23:8; Nb 20:23+. Here 'Jacob' indicates the land of Judah, cf. 18; Jl 4:19, as opposed to 'Joseph'.

q. The 'day of Jerusalem', Ps 137:7, is that on which the Chaldaeans entered the city, 2 K 25:3-4, or else that of the burning of the Temple, 2 K 25:8-9, in 587 B.C.

r. 'your brother' corr.; 'the day of your brother' Hebr.

s. The *lex talionis*, Ex 21:25+, is applied here to Edom. The same retribution is called down on Babylon, Jr 50:15,29, cf. Rv 18:6-7, on the enemies of Jerusalem, Lm 3:64, and on Tyre, Sidon and the Philistines, Jl 4:4,7.

t. The perspective broadens to include 'the day of Yahweh' who will judge all the nations, cf. Am 5:18+; hitherto oppressed, Zion now becomes the centre of salvation and the power passes into its hands. The hostile pagan nations are defeated; Edom in particular suffers lasting ruin.

u. From now on the prophet is addressing the Israelites.

v. Of the cup of the wrath of God, cf. Is 51:17+, 'drink deep' sense uncertain.

w. Text cited in Jl 3:5 as an oracle from scripture. For the preserved 'remnant' of Judah, cf. Is 4:3+, the day of Yahweh no longer holds any terror, but gives assurance of salvation on Mount Zion, an inviolable sanctuary through which 'no alien will ever pass again', Jl 4:17.

x. 'its own despoilers' (lit. 'those who despoiled it') versions; 'its spoliations' Hebr.

y. The 'House of Jacob', cf. 10, is Judah, 'the House of Joseph' the Northern Kingdom, cf. Am 5:6; Zc 10:6, associated with Judah at the time of final salvation, cf. Jr 3:18+. The two kingdoms reconquer, vv. 19-20, the empire of David, here defined in ideal rather than geographical terms, cf. 1 K 8:65; 2 K 14:25.

z. Translation supported by Greek and Vulg.

aa. Lit. 'the Canaanites', i.e. Phoenicia. Zarephath, between Tyre and Sidon, marks the frontier of the new Northern Kingdom. Sepharad is unknown.

bb. 'victorious' corr. (lit. 'those who have been saved'); 'the saviours' Hebr. 'judge', i.e. rule over, govern.

cc. The triumphant slogan of Israelite eschatology, Ps 22:28; 103:19; 145:11-13; cf. Ps 10:16; 47:8; 93:1; 97:1; 99:1. The rule of Israel is the rule of Yahweh and the fulfilment of history.

JONAH

Jonah rebels against his mission

1 The word of Yahweh was addressed to Jonah son of Amittai: •'Up!' he said 1
'Go to Nineveh, the great city, and inform them that their wickedness has 2
4:2 become known to me.' •Jonah decided to run away from Yahweh, and to go to 3
Tarshish.[a] He went down to Joppa and found a ship bound for Tarshish; he
paid his fare and went aboard, to go with them to Tarshish, to get away from
Ps 107:23-30 Yahweh. •But Yahweh unleashed a violent wind on the sea, and there was such 4
a great storm at sea that the ship threatened to break up. •The sailors took 5
Ac 27:18 fright, and each of them called on his own god,[b] and to lighten the ship they
threw the cargo overboard. Jonah, however, had gone below and lain down in
Mt 8:24-25p the hold and fallen fast asleep. •The boatswain came upon him and said, 'What 6
do you mean by sleeping? Get up! Call on your god! Perhaps he will spare us
a thought, and not leave us to die.' •Then they said to each other, 'Come on, 7
let us draw lots to find out who is responsible for bringing this evil on us'.[c]
So they cast lots, and the lot fell to Jonah. •Then they said to him, 'Tell us,[d] 8
what is your business? Where do you come from? What is your country? What
Ac 27:23 is your nationality?' •He replied, 'I am a Hebrew, and I worship Yahweh, the 9
God of heaven, who made the sea and the land'. •The sailors were seized with 10
terror at this and said, 'What have you done?' They knew that he was trying to
escape from Yahweh, because he had told them so. •They then said, 'What are 11
we to do with you, to make the sea grow calm for us?' For the sea was growing
rougher and rougher. •He replied, 'Take me and throw me into the sea, and 12
then it will grow calm for you. For I can see it is my fault this violent storm has
happened to you.' •The sailors rowed hard in an effort to reach the shore, but 13
Ps 107:28 Jr 26:15 in vain, since the sea grew still rougher for them. •They then called on Yahweh 14
and said, 'O Yahweh, do not let us perish for taking this man's life; do not hold
us guilty of innocent blood; for you, Yahweh, have acted as you have thought
right'. •And taking hold of Jonah they threw him into the sea; and the sea grew 15
calm again. •At this the men were seized with dread of Yahweh; they offered 16
a sacrifice to Yahweh and made vows.[e]

Jonah is saved

2 Yahweh had arranged that a great fish should be there to swallow Jonah;[a] 1
↗ Mt 12:40 and Jonah remained in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.
From the belly of the fish he prayed to Yahweh, his God; he said:[b] 2

Ps 120:1; 130:1 'Out of my distress I cried to Yahweh 3
and he answered me;
Ps 116:3 Lm 3:55 from the belly of Sheol I cried.
and you have heard my voice.
You cast me into the abyss, into the heart of the sea, 4

and the flood surrounded me.
All your waves, your billows, ||Ps 42:7
washed over me.
5 And I said: I am cast out Ps 31:22
from your sight.
How shall I ever look again Ps 5:7
on your holy Temple?
6 The waters surrounded me right to my throat, Ps 69:1
the abyss was all around me.
The seaweed was wrapped round my head
7 at the roots of the mountains.[c]
I went down into the countries underneath the earth,
to the peoples of the past.[d]
But you lifted my life from the pit, Ps 30:3; 16:10
Yahweh, my God.
8 While my soul was fainting within me,
I remembered Yahweh,
and my prayer came before you
into your holy Temple.
9 Those who serve worthless idols
forfeit the grace that was theirs.

10 'But I, with a song of praise,
will sacrifice to you.
The vow I have made, I will fulfil. Ps 22:25; 116:18
Salvation comes from Yahweh.'

||Ps 3:8

11 Yahweh spoke to the fish, which then vomited Jonah on to the shore.

The conversion of Nineveh and God's pardon

Ezk 3:6
↗ Mt 12:41
↗ Lk 11:30, 32

1 2 3 The word of Yahweh was addressed a second time to Jonah: •'Up!' he said
3 'Go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach to them as I told you to.' •Jonah
set out and went to Nineveh in obedience to the word of Yahweh. Now Nineveh
4 was a city great beyond compare:[a] it took three days to cross it. •Jonah went
on into the city, making a day's journey. He preached in these words, 'Only
5 forty days more[b] and Nineveh is going to be destroyed'. •And the people of
Nineveh believed in God;[c] they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the
6 greatest to the least. •The news reached the king of Nineveh, who rose from his Ezk 26:16
7 throne, took off his robe, put on sackcloth and sat down in ashes.[d] •A procla- Ezk 27:30-31

1 a. For the Hebrews, 'Tarshish', cf. 1 K 10:1+; Ps 48:7+, represented the end of the world: Jonah goes as far as he can to escape his duty.

b. The sailors are from different countries: each has his own god but believes in the power of other gods as well.

c. The belief that a ship is endangered by having a guilty man on board is found elsewhere among the Ancients.

d. Hebr. inserts 'who is responsible for bringing this evil on us', a gloss from v. 7; Greek omits.

e. The author emphasises the piety of the pagan sailors: they are scandalised that Jonah should disobey Yahweh, v. 10, fear to offend Yahweh by sacrificing Jonah, v. 14, and offer worship to Jonah's God whose power they recognise.

2 a. On this fish and the other prodigies, of which the author is fond, see Introduction to the Prophets.

b. This song is a mosaic of Psalm-texts and is constructed on the conventional pattern of thanksgiving psalms: description of sufferings undergone, account of deliverance from them. For the psalmists, grave danger is a 'death' and deliverance a 'resurrection'; cf. here vv. 6,7,8. The sea, God's primordial 'enemy', cf. Jb 7: 12+, is seen either as the kingdom of death itself or at least as the way that leads to it. Hence the dramatic expressions of this song which enable Jesus, Mt 12:40; Lk 11:30, to use the episode of Jonah as a figure of his own three-days' stay 'in the heart of the earth' (Sheol rather than the tomb, cf. Jon 2:2-3); the kingdom of death is depicted as a greedy monster that cannot hold Christ but must let him go (the resurrection). The analogy between Christian baptism and the resurrection of Christ has led to the use of the figure of Jonah in baptismal typology.

c. Probably the sea bed: this was thought to be the foundation on which the earth rested.

d. Text obscure. Others translate 'I went down to a land whose bars closed on me for ever'.

3 a. Lit. 'great before God', the strongest form of the superlative in Hebr.; there is a similar hyperbole in the 'it took three days to cross it', to evoke the fabulous size of Nineveh.

b. The 'forty days' suggest the 40 days of the Flood or the 40 years of Israel in the desert; cf. also 1 K 19:8. The Greek has 'Only three days more', cf. 2:1.

c. The same contrast is drawn in the gospels between the conversion of the Ninevites and the incredulity of the Jews.

d. This whole description of repentance and conversion is the antithesis of Jr 36, cf. Introduction to the

mation was then promulgated throughout Nineveh, by decree of the king and
Jdt 4:10 his ministers, as follows: 'Men and beasts, herds and flocks, are to taste nothing;
they must not eat, they must not drink water. •All[e] are to put on sackcloth and 8
call on God with all their might; and let everyone renounce his evil behaviour
Jl 2:14 Am 5:15 and the wicked things he has done. •Who knows if God will not change his 9
mind and relent, if he will not renounce his burning wrath, so that we do not
Gn 6:6+ Jr 26:3 perish?' • God saw their efforts to renounce their evil behaviour. And God relented: 10
he did not inflict on the disaster which he had threatened.

The grievance of the prophet and God's answer

Lk 15:28 4 Jonah was very indignant at this; he fell into a rage. •He prayed to Yahweh ½
and said, 'Ah! Yahweh, is not this just as I said would happen when I was
1:3 still at home? That was why I went and fled to Tarshish: I knew that you were
Ex 34:6-7+ Ps 103:8-10 a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness, relenting
1 K 19:4 Tb 3:6 from evil. •So now Yahweh, please take away my life, for I might as well be dead 3
as go on living.' •Yahweh replied, 'Are you right to be angry?' •Jonah then 4 5
went out of the city and sat down to the east of the city. There he made himself
a shelter and sat under it in the shade, to see what would happen to the city.
Then Yahweh God arranged that a castor-oil plant should grow up over Jonah 6
to give shade for his head and soothe his ill-humour; Jonah was delighted with
the castor-oil plant. •But at dawn the next day, God arranged that a worm 7
should attack the castor-oil plant—and it withered. •Next, when the sun rose, 8
God arranged that there should be a scorching east wind; the sun beat down
1 K 19:4 so hard on Jonah's head that he was overcome and begged for death, saying,
'I might as well be dead as go on living'. •God said to Jonah, 'Are you right 9
to be angry about the castor-oil plant?' He replied, 'I have every right to be
angry, to the point of death'. •Yahweh replied, 'You are only upset about 10
a castor-oil plant which cost you no labour, which you did not make grow,
which sprouted in a night and has perished in a night. •And am I not to feel 11
sorry for Nineveh, the great city, in which there are more than a hundred and
twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, to say
nothing of all the animals?'[a]

Prophets; it is furthermore full of phrases characteristic of Jeremiah.

e. Hebr. adds 'and beasts'.

4 a. This final chapter ends the note of God's mercy on all his creatures. He has mercy on Jonah in the sea, 2:7, on repentant Nineveh, on the prophet in his self-pity; and now, 4:10-11, he explains with gentle irony how he is thoughtful even for the brute creation, still more for men and little children, 'who cannot tell their right hand from their left'. The whole book thus prepares the way for the revelation of the gospel: God is love; cf. Introduction to the Prophets.

MICAH

1 1 The word of Yahweh that was addressed to Micah of Moresheth in the time Is 1:1
of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
His visions of Samaria and Jerusalem.

I. ISRAEL ON TRIAL

THREAT AND CONDEMNATION

The judgement of Samaria[a] Is 28:1-4

2 Listen, you peoples, all of you. Ps 49:1 Is 1:2
Attend, earth, and everything in it.
Yahweh[b] is going to give evidence against you,
the Lord, as he sets out from his sacred palace.
3 For look, Yahweh sets out from his holy place, Is 26:21 Am 4:13
he comes down, he treads the heights of earth.
4 The mountains melt as he goes, Zc 14:4
the valleys are torn apart,
like wax before the fire, Ps 97:5
like water poured out on a steep place.

5 All this is because of the crime of Jacob,
the sin of the House of Israel.
What is the crime of Jacob?
Is it not Samaria?
What is the sin of the House of Judah?[c]
Is it not Jerusalem?
6 I mean to make Samaria a ruin in the open country, 3:12
a place where vines will be planted.
I will set her stones rolling into the valley,
I will lay her foundations bare.
7 All her images are going to be shattered, Ezk 6:6
all her earnings[d] consumed by fire,
all her idols broken in pieces,
for they have been collected[e] with prostitutes' earnings
and prostitutes' earnings they will be again.

1 a. This oracle against Samaria, uttered before the fall of the city in 721, has been subsequently applied to Jerusalem.
b. 'Yahweh' some Greek MSS; 'The Lord Yahweh' Hebr.
c. 'the sin of the House of Judah' Greek, Targ.; 'the high places of Judah' Hebr.
d. The wages of the sacred prostitutes in the religion of Samaria, Am 2:7-8; Ho 4:14, of Dt 23:19+. To Micah the whole of Samaria is a prostitute as Israel is for Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, cf. Ho 1:2+.
e. 'they have been collected' Targ., Syr., Vulg.; 'she has collected' Hebr.

Lament for the lowland cities[f]

This is why I am going to mourn and lament, 8
2 S 15:30 Is 20:2-4 Ezk 24:17-23 go barefoot and naked,
howl like the jackals,
wail like the ostriches.
For there is no healing for the blow Yahweh strikes;[g] 9
it reaches into Judah,
it knocks at the very door of my people,
reaches even into Jerusalem.

2 S 1:20 Is 10:27 *Do not announce it in Gath,*[h] 10
in...[i] shed no tears.
In Beth-leaphrah
Jr 25:34 roll in the dust.
Sound the horn, 11
you who live in Shaphir.
She has not left her city,
Jos 15:37 she who lives in Zaanan.
Beth-ezel is torn from its foundations,
from its strong supports.[j]
What hope has she[k] of happiness, 12
Rt 1:20 she who lives in Maroth?
For doom has come down from Yahweh
to the very gate of Jerusalem.
Harness the horse to the chariot, 13
Jos 15:39 2 K 14:19 you who live in Lachish.
(This was the beginning of sin for the daughter of Zion,
for Israel's crimes were to be found in you.)
So you must provide a dowry 14
for Moresheth-gath.
Jos 15:44 Beth-achzib[l] will prove a snare
for the kings of Israel.
The plunderer will come[m] to you again, 15
Jos 15:44 you who live in Mareshah.
1 S 22:1 2 S 23:13 ...to Adullam will go
the glory of Israel.[n]

Jr 7:29 Off with your hair, shave your head, 16
for the sons that were your joy.
Is 22:12 Make yourselves bald like the vulture,
for they have gone from you into exile.

Against the tyranny of the rich

Zc 7:10 Ps 36:4; 58:2 2 Woe to those who plot evil, 1
who lie in bed planning mischief!
No sooner is it dawn than they do it
—their hands have the strength for it.
Is 5:8 Seizing the fields that they covet, 2
they take over houses as well,
owner and house they confiscate[a] together,
taking both man and inheritance.
So Yahweh says this: 3
Now it is I who plot
such mischief against this breed
as your necks will not escape;
nor will you be able to walk proudly,
||Am 5:13 so evil will the time be.

4 On that day they will make a satire on you,
sing a dirge and say,
'We are stripped of everything; Hab 2:6
my people's portion is measured out and shared, Dt 28:30-33
no one will give it back to them,[b]
our fields are awarded to our despoiler'.[c]

5 Therefore you will have no one
to measure out a share
in the community of Yahweh.[d]

The prophet of misfortune[e]

6 'Do not rave,' they rave Is 30:10 Am 2:12
'do not rave like this.
No shame is going to overtake us.[f]
7 Can the House of Jacob be accursed?
Has Yahweh lost patience?
Is that his way of going to work?
Surely his words are words of kindness
for his people Israel?'[g]
8 It is you who play the enemy
to my people.
From the innocent man you snatch his cloak, Dt 24:12-13
on the man who thinks himself safe you inflict the damage of war.[h]
9 The women of my people you drive out
from the homes they loved;
their[i] children you rob for ever
of the honour I gave them,[j] 2 K 4:1
10 'Get up! Be off! There is no resting here.'
For a worthless thing, you exact
an extortionate pledge.[k] Ex 22:25

f. Foretelling disaster for twelve cities to the S.W. of Judah. Seven of these are known: Gath, Moresheth-gath, Caanan, Lachish, Achzib, Mareshah, Adullam, cf. Jos 15:35-44; the name of one city has been lost, v. 10; the remaining four must have been in the same region. The general meaning is clear: an invasion affecting the prophet's native place serves here as a warning for Jerusalem. The reference is evidently to Sennacherib's invasion of Philistia and Judah in 701.

g. 'the blow of Yahweh strikes' corr.; 'the blows she has received' Hebr.

h. As in Is 10:28-32, the text plays on the names of the twelve cities. The assonances are: Gath and *tagiddu* 'announce', Beth-leaphrah and *aphar* 'dust', (possibly Shaphir and *shophar* 'horn'), Zaanan and *yazeah* 'she has gone out', Lachish and *rechesh* 'steed'. Maroth means 'bitterness'. The name Moresheth (the prophet's home, 1:1) suggests the betrothed, *meorashah*: the city with its marriage gifts is to be handed over to its new master. Achzib plays on *achzab* 'deception'; Mareshah on *yoresh* 'he who takes possession'.

i. The Hebr., here corrupt, must have given the name of a town.

j. 'Sound the horn' text corr. (by adding *shophar*); 'pass on for you (?)' Hebr. 'is torn' Greek, Targ. 'from its foundations' corr.; 'mourning' Hebr. 'from its supports' corr.; 'from you' Hebr.

k. Corr. following Targ.; 'for she was sick' Hebr.

l. 'Beth-achzib' corr.; 'The houses of Achzib' Hebr.

m. 'will come again' corr.; 'I shall bring (?)' Hebr.

n. David in flight took refuge in Adullam. A correction would give the reading 'For ever from Adullam the glory of Israel will depart', i.e. Yahweh will abandon the very place that saw the beginnings of the Davidic dynasty.

2 a. Confiscation for debt: the creditors thus take advantage to enlarge their estates.

b. 'give it back to them (lit. 'him') conj.; 'he takes it from me' Hebr.

c. Text corr., cf. Greek. The punishment, inflicted by a foreign invader, affects the whole nation. There is assonance between 'our fields' (*sadenu*), 'our despoiler' (*shobenu*), and 'we are stripped' (*neshadunu*).

d. 'you' (plural) corr.; 'you' (singular) Hebr. The monopolists will be excluded from the division of the land in the restored kingdom.

e. The prophet's listeners object, on the strength of the covenant, to his threats, vv. 6-7. Micah retorts, vv. 8-10, that this covenant has been violated by the very ones who hypocritically appeal to it and who ask their prophets to promise them earthly prosperity, v. 11.

f. The verb here rendered 'rave', and, in v. 11, 'prophesy', means literally 'to cause to flow, to foam at the mouth', and is usually employed in a damaging sense. 'No shame is going to overtake us' corr.

g. 'accursed' corr.; 'said' Hebr. 'his words' Greek; 'my words' Hebr. 'his people Israel' corr.; 'with the upright man who walks' Hebr.

h. Text corr., cf. Greek; Hebr. 'And yesterday my people played the enemy; from in front, you took the precious garment from those returned from battle who pass by trustingly'.

i. 'they', 'their': Greek; Hebr. has 'she', 'her'.

j. I.e. of being free men in Israel.

k. 'a worthless thing (a nothing)' corr.; 'uncleanness' Hebr. 'you exact a pledge' corr. of Greek; 'you (singular) destroy and grief' Hebr.

Were there a man of inspiration who would invent[l] this lie, 11
'I prophesy you wine and strong drink',[m]
Is 5:11 Jr 5:31 he would be the prophet for a people like this.

Promises of restoration[n]

Jr 3:18+ Yes, I am going to gather all Jacob together, 12
Is 4:3+ I will gather the remnant of Israel,
Dt 30:3-5 Ezk 34:1+; 37:15-28 bring them together like sheep in the fold;
like a flock in its pasture
they will fear no man.[o]
Jn 10:4 He who walks at their head will lead the way in front of them; 13
he will walk at their head,[p] they will pass through the gate
and go out by it;
their king will go on in front of them,
Yahweh at their head.

Against the rulers who oppress the people

3 Then I said: 1
Listen now, you princes of the House of Jacob,[a]
rulers of the House of Israel.
Are you not the ones who should know what is right,
Is 5:20,23 you, enemies of good and friends of evil?[b] 2
Is 9:11 When they have devoured the flesh of my people 3
and torn off their skin
and crushed their bones;
when they have shredded them like flesh[c] in a pot
and like meat in a cauldron,
1 S 8:18 Jr 11:11+ then they will cry out to Yahweh. 4
But he will not answer them.
Dt 31:17 Is 1:15 He will hide his face at that time
because of all the crimes they have committed.

Against venal prophets[d]

Yahweh says this against the prophets 5
who lead my people astray:
So long as they have something to eat
they cry 'Peace'.
But on anyone who puts nothing into their mouths
they declare war.
And so the night will come to you: an end of vision; 6
darkness for you: an end of divination.
Ezk 7:26 The sun will set for the prophets,
the day will go black for them.
Then the seers will be covered with shame, 7
the diviners with confusion;
they will all cover their lips,
because no answer comes from God.
Not so with me, I am full of strength 8
(of the breath of Yahweh),
of justice and courage
to declare Jacob's crime to his face
and Israel's to his.

To the guilty ones: prophecy of the ruin of Zion

Now listen to this, you princes of the House of Jacob, 9
rulers of the House of Israel,

you who loathe justice
and pervert[e] all that is right, Am 5:7
10 you who build[f] Zion with blood, Hg 2:12
Jerusalem with crime.[g]
11 Her princes pronounce their verdict for bribes, Is 1:23
her priests take a fee for their rulings,[h] 1 S 9:7+
her prophets make divinations for money.
And yet they rely on Yahweh. They say,
'Is not Yahweh in our midst?
No evil is going to overtake us.' Jr 7:3-4
12 Because of this, since the fault is yours,
Zion will become ploughland,
Jerusalem a heap of rubble, 1:6
and the mountain of the Temple a wooded height. ↗Jr 26:18

II. PROMISES TO ZION

The future reign of Yahweh in Zion[a]

1 4 In the days to come ||Is 2:2-4+
the mountain of the Temple of Yahweh
will be put on top of the mountains
and be lifted higher than the hills.
The peoples will stream to it, 1 K 8:41f
2 nations without number will come to it; and they will say, Tb 13:11
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh,
to the Temple of the God of Jacob
so that he may teach us his ways
and we may walk in his paths;
since from Zion the Law will go out,
and the oracle of Yahweh from Jerusalem.'
3 He will wield authority over many peoples
and arbitrate for mighty nations;[b]
they will hammer their swords into ploughshares, Jl 4:10
their spears into sickles.
Nation will not lift sword against nation,
there will be no more training for war.
4 Each man will sit under his vine and his fig tree, 1 M 14:12
with no one to trouble him. Jr30:10
The mouth of Yahweh Sabaoth has spoken it. ||Is 1:20

5 For all the peoples go forward, each in the name of its god;
but we, we go forward in the name of Yahweh, our God, Is 2:5
for ever and evermore.[c]

l. 'who would invent' corr.; 'he has invented' Hebr.
m. The oracle of the lying prophet plays on the double meaning of the verb: 'prophesy' and 'cause to flow', of 2:6+.
n. The attribution to Micah of these promises of reunion and return is debated.
o. 'all Jacob together' Greek; 'all of you, O Jacob' Hebr; 'they will fear' corr.
p. 'he will walk at their head' corr.; Hebr. has plural.
3 a. 'the House of Jacob' Greek and v. 9; 'Jacob' Hebr.
b. Hebr. adds 'tearing the skin off them and the flesh off their bones', a gloss on v. 3.
c. 'like flesh' Greek, Syr.; 'like' Hebr.
d. On gifts to prophets, cf. Is 9:7-8; 1 K 14:3; 2 K 4:42; 5:15,22; 8:8-9; Am 7:12.
e. '(you) pervert' corr.; 'they pervert' Hebr.
f. 'you who build' versions; 'build' Hebr.
g. The prophet's first thought as he surveys the imposing buildings of the capital is of all the extortion that paid for them (so, too, Am 3:10,15; 5:11; 6:8; Jr 22:13-15).
h. Referring to the decisions of the priests *(toroth)*, cf. Ex 22:8; Dt 17:8-13; Jr 18:18; Ezk 7:26; Hg 2:11-14; Ml 2:7.
4 a. The source of this oracle, which recurs in Is 2:2-4, is doubtful. Like Is 60 it speaks of the coming of the converted heathen to Zion, cf. Is 45:14+.
b. Hebr. adds 'far off'.
c. A liturgical addition (as in Is 2:5).

The gathering of the scattered flock in Zion[d]

Ezk 34:1+ Zp 3:19
That day—it is Yahweh who speaks— 6
I will finally gather in the lame,
and bring together those that have been led astray
and those that have suffered at my hand.
Is 4:3+
Out of the lame I will make a remnant, 7
and out of the weary[e] a mighty nation.
Then will Yahweh reign over them
Ob 21
on the mountain of Zion
from now and for ever.

And you, Tower of the Flock, 8
Ophel of the daughter of Zion,[f]
to you shall be given back your former sovereignty,
and royal power over the House of Israel.[g]

The siege, exile, and liberation of Zion[h]

Why are you crying aloud? 9
Is there no king within you?
Are your counsellors lost
Jn 16:21 Rv 12:2
that pains should grip you like a woman in labour?
Writhe, cry out,[i] daughter of Zion, 10
like a woman in labour,
for now you have to leave the city
and live in the open country.
To Babylon you must go
and there you will be rescued;
there Yahweh will ransom you
out of the power of your enemies.

The pagans crushed on the threshing-floor in Zion[j]

Now many nations 11
are mustered against you.
'Let her be desecrated,' they say
'let our eyes feast on the ruins of Zion.'
Is 55:8-9
But they do not know Yahweh's thoughts, 12
they have failed to understand his purpose,
he has collected them like sheaves on the threshing floor.
Up, daughter of Zion, and thresh; 13
for I will give you horns of iron,
hoofs of bronze,
for you to trample down many peoples.
You will dedicate their plunder to Yahweh,
their treasures to the Lord of the whole earth.

The distress and glory of the Davidic dynasty[k]

Now look to your fortifications, Fortress.[l] 14 / 1
They have laid siege against us;
with a rod they strike on the cheek
the judge of Israel.
Gn 49:10 Rt 1:2 ↗Mt 2:6 ↗Jn 7:42 Is 9:5
5 But you, (Bethlehem) Ephrathah, 1 / 2
the least[a] of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.[b]

2 3 Yahweh is therefore going to abandon them
till the time when she who is to give birth[c] gives birth. Is 7:14
Then the remnant of his brothers will come back
to the sons of Israel.
3 4 He will stand and feed his flock
with the power of Yahweh,
with the majesty of the name of his God.[d]
They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power
to the ends of the land.
4a 5a 5b 6b He himself will be peace.
He will deliver us from Assyria should it invade our country,
should it set foot inside our frontiers.

The confidence of the people of Judah[e]

4b 5b As for Assyria, should it invade our country,
should it set foot on our soil,[f]
we will raise seven shepherds against it, Am 1:3+
eight leaders of men;
5a 6a they will shepherd Assyria with the sword, Ps 2:9LXX
and the land of Nimrod with the sword blade.[g]

The future role of the remnant among the nations[h]

6 7 Then among the many peoples, Is 4:3+
the remnant of Jacob will be
like a dew from Yahweh, Ho 14:6
like raindrops on the grass,
putting no hope in men,
expecting nothing from mankind.
7 8 Then among the many peoples,
the remnant of Jacob will be[i]
like a lion among beasts of the forest, Na 2:12

d. Under the image of the good shepherd, cf. Ezk 34:1+, the promise is made that Israel will be restored to Zion when the punishment is over.

e. 'weary' Vulg.; 'outcasts' Hebr.

f. 'Tower of the Flock', in Hebr. Migdal-eder; this ancient place-name, cf. Gn 35:21, here indicates Jerusalem, comparing it to a sheepfold. Ophel is the district where the king lived.

g. 'over the House of Israel' corr.; 'to the daughter of Jerusalem' Hebr.

h. This oracle foretells the deportation. The mention of Babylon, v. 10, must be a later elucidation.

i. 'cry out' corr.; 'gush forth' Hebr.

j. This oracle, unlike the preceding, describes the liberation of Zion itself, besieged by the nations. Isaiah, the prophet's contemporary, made similar prophecies, Is 10:24-27,32-34; 14:24-27; 29:1-8; 30:27-33; 31:4-9. In all these oracles the reference is probably to Sennacherib's invasion in 701 and its mysterious failure. At a later date the nations' assault on Jerusalem (and their final defeat) will become a notable feature of eschatological literature, Ezk 38–39; Jl 4; Zc 14.

k. The oracle contrasts the king, 'the judge of Israel', now humiliated (by Sennacherib: 2 K 18:13-16), with the messianic king whose birth inaugurates the new era of glory and peace (as in Is 9:5). Micah, in the way traditionally favoured by the prophets of Judah, sees this Messiah as a victorious king in Zion, so also Gn 49:10-12; Nb 24:15-19; Ps 110; Is 9:1-6; 11:1-9; 32:1.

l. 'look to your fortifications, Fortress' following Greek; 'cut yourself deep, daughter of the troop' Hebr. 'Fortress', Hebr. Beth-gader (lit. 'house of the rampart'), applied to Zion, is a name similar to 'Tower of the Flock' in v. 8. The prophet contrasts the pride of the fortified capital with the humble state of Ephrathah from which salvation is to come.

5 a. 'the least' Greek; 'small' Hebr.; Hebr. and Greek add 'to be'.

b. Ephrathah (to which Micah apparently attaches the etymological meaning of 'fruitful', connecting it with the birth of the Messiah) originally indicated a clan related to Caleb, 1 Ch 2:19,24,50, and settled in the district of Bethlehem, 1 S 17:12; Rt 1:2; the name later came to be used of the town itself, Gn 35:19; 48:7; Jos 15:59; Rt 4:11, hence the gloss in the text. Micah is thinking of the ancient origin of the dynasty of David, 1 S 17:12; Rt 4:11,17,18-22; in '(Bethlehem) Ephrathah' the evangelists will recognise an indication of the Messiah's birthplace.

c. Reference to the mother of the Messiah. Micah is perhaps thinking of the famous oracle of the *alma*, Is 7:14+, delivered by Isaiah about 30 years earlier.

d. 'his God'; Hebr. 'Yahweh his God'.

e. This brief passage perhaps expresses the presumptuous self-assurance of the prophet's contemporaries in contrast to the authentic messianic hope.

f. 'our soil' Greek, Syr.; 'our palaces' Hebr.

g. 'Assyria' Greek; 'the land of Assyria' Hebr. 'with the sword blade' one Greek MS, Lat.; 'in its entrances' Hebr.

h. Passage consisting of two symmetrical strophes. The second describes the triumph of the 'remnant' over the nations; the first is either a promise of blessing to these same nations or else, more probably, a prophecy of blessing for Israel alone (in which case Israel is not the 'dew' but the 'grass').

i. Hebr. adds 'among the nations'.

like a young lion among flocks of sheep
trampling as he goes,
mangling his prey which no one takes from him.

Yahweh will withdraw the temptation to rely on men[j]

Let your hand be raised against your foes 8
and all your enemies shall be cut off. 9
This is how it will be, that day 9
—it is Yahweh who speaks— 10
Ho 1:7; 14:4 Zc 9:10 I will tear away your horses from you,
and destroy your chariots;
tear the towns of your country from you, 10
bring down all your strongholds; 11
tear the charms from your hands, 11
and you will have no more soothsayers;
tear from you your images 12a
and your pillars;
Ex 23:24+; 34:13+ tear from you your sacred poles, 13
and demolish your idols;[k]
and no longer will you bow down 12b
before the work of your hands.
I will take revenge in anger and fury 14
on the nations that would not obey.

III. ISRAEL ON TRIAL

DENUNCIATION AND THREAT

Yahweh puts his people on trial[a]

Is 3:13-15; 5:3-4 Ho 4:1-5 6 Now listen to what Yahweh is saying: 1
Stand up and let the case begin in the hearing of the mountains
and let the hills hear what you say.[b]
Listen, you mountains, to Yahweh's accusation, 2
give ear,[c] you foundations of the earth,
for Yahweh is accusing his people,
pleading against Israel:
My people, what have I done to you, 3
how have I been a burden to you? Answer me.[d]
Dt 5:6 I brought you out of the land of Egypt, 4
I rescued you from the house of slavery;
1 S 12:6 Ps 77:20 I sent Moses to lead you,
with Aaron and Miriam.
My people, remember: 5
what did Balak plot, that king of Moab?
Nb 22:24 What did Balaam answer, that son of Beor?
. . . . . .
7:9 ...from Shittim to Gilgal,
for you to know the rightness of the ways of Yahweh.[e]
—'With what gift shall I come into Yahweh's presence 6
and bow down before God on high?
Shall I come with holocausts,
with calves one year old?
Dn 3:39 Will he be pleased with rams by the thousand, 7
with libations of oil in torrents?
Lv 18:21 Jg 11:30-31 Must I give my first-born for what I have done wrong,

the fruit of my body for my own sin?'[f]
8 —What is good has been explained to you,[g] man; Am 5:21+
this is what Yahweh asks of you:
only this, to act justly, Am 5:24
to love tenderly Ho 2:21+
and to walk humbly with your God. Ps 131:1 Is 7:9; 30:15

Against tricksters in the city

9 The voice of Yahweh. He is calling to the city:[h]
Listen, tribe, and assembly of the city[i]
12 whose rich men are crammed with violence,
whose citizens are liars.[j]
10 Must I put up with fraudulent measure,[k] Dt 25:13-16 Pr 11:1
or that abomination the short-weight bushel? Am 8:5
11 Must I hold the man honest who measures with false scales
and a bag of faked weights?[l]
13 I have therefore begun[m] to strike you down,
to bring you to ruin for your sins.
15 You will sow but never reap, Dt 28:30-33+
press the olive but never rub yourself with oil,
press the grape but never drink wine from it;
14 you will eat but never be satisfied,[n] Ho 4:10
store away but never preserve—
and what is preserved I shall give to the sword.[o]

The example of Samaria

16 You keep the laws of Omri
and follow all the practices of the House of Ahab;[p]
you are guided by their standards,
and they force me to make a terrible example of you,
and to turn your inhabitants into a laughing-stock,
to suffer the scorn of the peoples.[q]

Universal injustice

1 7 I am in trouble! I have become
like a harvester in summer time,

j. The oracle of vv. 9-13 declares that Yahweh will tear (lit. 'cut off') from his people all their spurious human supports (cf. Ho 3:4; 8:14; 14:4; Is 2:7-8; 30:1-3,15-16; 31:1-3); military power, apparatus of divination and of the cult on the 'high places'. But the threat also implies an era of peace and of true faith. This oracle is applied by vv. 8 and 14, to the pagans, enemies of Yahweh; it is a subsequent adjustment.

k. 'your idols' corr.; 'your cities' Hebr.

6 a. After Yahweh's accusation in which he recalls his goodness to Israel, vv. 3-5, his repentant worshipper enquires what his God demands of him, vv. 6-7. The prophet replies, v. 8.

b. The mountains are God's favourite place of meeting with his people (Sinai, Nebo, Ebal and Gerizim, Zion, Carmel, etc.). They are changeless witnesses, often personified, Gn 49:26; 2 S 1:21; Ezk 35–36; Ps 68:15-16, etc.

c. 'give ear' corr.; 'and the deeps (?)' Hebr.

d. 'have I been a burden to you' *(heleethika)* and 'I brought you up' *(heelithika)* are similar in sound. Yahweh is about to remind the people, who claim that he has abandoned them, of his past kindnesses. The text is used in the *Improperia* of the Good Friday liturgy.

e. There is a lacuna in the Hebr. text. The reference is to the crossing of the Jordan. 'you to know' versions; 'knowledge of' Hebr. The 'rightness of the ways' (lit. 'uprightnesses') of Yahweh are the climacteric events of sacred history by which Yahweh showed his loyalty to the people he had chosen. Since the covenant itself was the issue of a divine initiative, this 'uprightness' ('righteousness', 'justice') is freely given.

f. In answer to Yahweh's complaint against his people, the worshipper now replies, which shows clearly the personal nature of the prophet's religion. The worshipper suggests lawful and forbidden sacrifices. The prophet rejects them all, v. 8, replacing them with a religion of the spirit the demands of which have already been made known to man, namely, justice (Amos), love (Hosea), humility before God (Isaiah).

g. 'has been explained' Greek; 'He has explained' Hebr.; 'I will make known' Syr., Vulg.

h. Hebr. adds 'wisdom to fear your name (?)'.

i. 'assembly of the city' conj. following Greek.

j. Hebr. adds 'their tongue in their mouth is deceit' cf. Ps 120:2-3.

k. Text conj. restored.

l. 'Must I hold the man honest' Vulg.; 'Shall I be honest' Hebr. V. 12 is transposed to follow v. 9.

m. 'begun' versions; 'made sick' Hebr.

n. The Hebr. adds two words, the first not known.

o. V. 15 is transposed to precede v. 14.

p. Referring either to the worship of Baal or, more probably, to the luxury of the upper classes, and social injustice.

q. 'You keep' versions; 'he keeps himself' Hebr. 'you (singular) are guided'; Hebr. has plural. 'your (inhabitants), corr.; 'his' Hebr. 'of the peoples' Greek; 'of my people' Hebr.

like a gleaner at the vintage:
not a single cluster to eat,[a]
not one of the early figs I so long for.
Ps 14:1-3 Jr 5:1 Hab 1:4 The devout have vanished from the land: 2
there is not one honest man left.
All are lurking for blood,
every man hunting down his brother.[b]
Jr 4:22 Their hands are skilled in evil:[c] 3
the official demands...,
the judge gives judgement[d] for a bribe,
the man in power pronounces as he pleases.[e]
Put no trust in a neighbour, 5
have no confidence in a friend;
to the woman who shares your bed
do not open your mouth.
✗Lk 12:53 ✗Mt 10:35-36p For son insults father, 6
daughter defies mother,
daughter-in-law defies mother-in-law;
a man's enemies are those of his own household.
...among them, the best is like a briar, 4
the most honest a hedge of thorn.[f]
Today will come their ordeal from the North,[g]
now is the time for their confusion.

For my part, I look to Yahweh, 7
Ps 62:5 my hope is in the God who will save me;
my God will hear me.[h]

IV. HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Zion insulted by her enemy[i]

Do not gloat over me, my enemy: 8
though I have fallen, I shall rise;
Jn 8:12+ though I live in darkness,
Yahweh is my light.
Rm 1:18 I must suffer the anger of Yahweh, 9
for I have sinned against him,
until he takes up my cause
and rights my wrongs;
he will bring me out into the light
6:5+ and I shall rejoice to see the rightness of his ways.
When my enemy sees it, 10
she will be covered with shame,
Ps 42:3,10 Jl 2:17 she who said to me, 'Where is Yahweh your God?'
My eyes will gloat over her;
she will be trampled underfoot
like mud in the streets.

An oracle of restoration[j]

The day is coming for rebuilding your walls. 11
Your frontiers will be extended that day,
men will come to you that day 12
from Assyria as far as to Egypt,
from Tyre as far as to the river,
from sea to sea, from mountain to mountain.[k]
The earth will become a desert 13

by reason of its inhabitants, in return for what they have done.[l]

A prayer for the confusion of the pagans

14 With shepherd's crook lead your people to pasture, Ps 23:1-2; 95:7 Ezk 34:1+
the flock that is your heritage,
living confined in a forest
with meadow land all around.[m]
Let them pasture in Bashan and Gilead
as in the days of old.
15 As in the days when you came out of Egypt
grant us to see[n] wonders.
16 The pagans, seeing it, will be confounded Is 26:11
for all their power;
they will lay their hands to their mouths,
their ears will be deafened by it.
17 They will lick the dust like serpents, Ps 72:9
like things that crawl on the earth.
They will come trembling from their lairs,[o]
in terror and fear before you.

A plea for God's forgiveness[p]

18 What god can compare with you: taking fault away, Ps 130:4 Jr 50:20
pardoning crime,[q]
not cherishing anger for ever Ex 34:6-7 Ps 103:9
but delighting in showing mercy?
19 Once more have pity on us, Tb 13:9
tread down our faults,
to the bottom of the sea
throw all our sins.[r]
20 Grant Jacob your faithfulness,
and Abraham your mercy, ↗ Lk 1:73
as you swore to our fathers Gn 22:16-18; 28:13-15
from the days of long ago.[s]

7 a. 'a harvester' Greek; 'the harvest' Hebr. 'a gleaner' corr.; 'gleanings' Hebr. 'cluster' *(eshkol)* and 'to eat' *(ekol)*: note the assonance.

b. Hebr. adds 'with a net'.

c. Restored, following Greek; Hebr. 'Against evil, hands to prosper'.

d. 'the judge gives judgement' corr.; 'the judge' Hebr.

e. Hebr. adds 'he and they weave it'. V. 4 is transposed to follow v. 6.

f. Lit. 'the most honest like a hedge' Symmachus, Vulg.; 'an honest man outside a hedge' Hebr. 'a hedge of thorn' *(mesukah)* and 'confusion' *(mebukah)* are similar in sound.

g. Text corr.; 'On the day of your watchmen your ordeal comes' Hebr. The north is the traditional invasion route, cf. Jr 1:13-14, etc. 'ordeal', lit. 'visit', cf. Is 10:3+.

h. This verse, in which the prophet proclaims his confidence in God's power to save, may have been the conclusion of his book; it presented a suitable opportunity for the addition of the poems of hope that follow; these probably date from the time of the Exile.

i. This enemy would seem to be Edom rather than Babylon, cf. Ezk 35; 25:12-14; Ob 10-15; Ps 137:7; Is 34:5-8, etc.

j. An oracle possibly dating from the Persian period (after 538); it foretells the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem and the widening of frontiers to accommodate a great number—either of the dispersed of Israel or converted pagans.

k. Text corr., cf. Greek.

l. This verse, in isolation, may have been directed against Judah. In its present context it is directed against the heathen peoples, primarily (it would seem) the 'people of the country', the Jews' immediate neighbours who were hostile to the community returned from exile.

m. Lit. 'in the midst of a garden'. The nation is isolated in unproductive land—the situation of the Jews in the region of Jerusalem after their return from exile.

n. 'grant us to see' corr.; 'I shall grant him to see' Hebr.

o. The Hebr. adds 'to Yahweh our God'.

p. This prayer is a psalm of which similar examples occur in the prophetic collections.

q. The Hebr. adds 'for the remnant of his inheritance'.

r. In Hebr. the first two verbs of this verse are in the third person. 'our sins' versions; 'their sins' Hebr.

s. The salvation of Israel is the fulfilment of the covenant and of the Promise, the foundations of hope and the focus of faith for the people of God.

NAHUM

Tb 14:4.15 1 Oracle on Nineveh. Book of the vision of Nahum of Elkosh. 1

PRELUDE

Psalm. The wrath of Yahweh[a]

Ex 20:5-6 Dt 4:24+ Ps 94:1 *Aleph* Yahweh is a jealous and vengeful God, 2
Yahweh avenges, he is full of wrath;
Yahweh takes vengeance on his foes,
he stores up fury for his enemies.
Ex 34:6-7+ Yahweh is slow to anger but immense in power. 3
Most surely Yahweh will not leave the guilty unpunished.[b]
Beth In storm and whirlwind he takes his way,
the clouds are the dust stirred up by his feet.
Ps 77:16-17; 106:9 Is 50:2 *Ghimel* He rebukes the sea and drains it, 4
he dries up all the rivers.
Am 1:2 *Daleth* ...[c]Bashan and Carmel wither,
the green of Lebanon fades.
He The mountains tremble before him, 5
Jr 4:24 the hills reel;
Wau the earth collapses before him,
the world and all who live in it.[d]
Ps 76:7; 130:3 Jl 2:11 ↗ Rv 6:17 *Zain* His fury—who can withstand it? 6
Who can endure his burning wrath?
Heth His anger pours out like fire
and the rocks break to pieces before him.
Teth Yahweh is good; he is a stronghold 7
in the day of distress;
Yod he calls to mind those who trust in him
Gn 6:7f; 8:1 when the flood[e] overtakes them. 8
Kaph Those who defy him he will destroy utterly,[f]
he will pursue his foes into the darkness.

Prophecies addressed alternately to Judah and Nineveh

to Judah How do you imagine Yahweh?[g] 9
1 S 2:6 He it is who utterly destroys:
oppression will not lift its head a second time.
Ex 15:7 Ps 58:9 They will be consumed like a thicket of thorns,[h] 10
like dry straw, utterly.

11 *to Assyria*
From you has sprung
one who plots evil against Yahweh,
a man with the mind of Belial.[f]
2:1 Dt 13:14+ Ps 18:5+

12 *to Judah*
Yahweh says this:
Equipped and many though they be,
they are going to be cut down, annihilated.
Though I have disciplined you,
I will discipline you no more.
2 K 19:35-36

13
And now I am going to break that yoke of his that weighs you down,
and I will burst your chains.
Is 9:3

14 *to the king of Nineveh*
For you, here is Yahweh's decree:
There will be no more offspring to bear your name;
from the temple of your gods I mean to take away
the carved and the cast image,
and I intend to make your tomb an object of shame.[j]
Is 14:19-21 Jr 8:1-2

1/15 2 *to Judah*
See, over the mountains the messenger hurries!
'Peace!' he proclaims.
Judah, celebrate your feasts,
carry out your vows,
for Belial will never pass through you again;
he is utterly annihilated.[a]
Ps 10:16 Is 52:7-10 Ac 10:36
1:11+

3/2
Yes, Yahweh is restoring the vineyard[b] of Jacob
and the vineyard of Israel.
For the plunderers had plundered them,
they had broken off their branches.
Is 5:1+ Jl 1:7

THE FALL OF NINEVEH

The assault

2
A destroyer advances against you.
Mount guard on the rampart,
watch the road, tuck up your cloaks;
muster all your forces.
Is 5:26-30 Jr 5:15-17; 6:22-30

4/3
The shields of his fighting men show red,
his warriors are dressed in scarlet;
all the steel of the chariots flashes
as they are thrown into battle;
the horsemen[c] are impatient for action;

5/4
the chariots storm through the streets,
they hurtle across the squares;
they look like blazing flames,

1 a. This alphabetical psalm, cf. Ps 31:10+, (though the alphabetic series is incomplete) develops the traditional theme of the wrath of Yahweh (Nb 11:33; 2 S 6:7; 21:14; 24:1; Ps 2:12; 60:1; 79:5; 110:4, etc.) and is therefore an apt prelude to the oracle against Nineveh.

b. The last four lines are apparently a later commentary on v. 2a, intended to forestall misunderstanding of the nature of God's anger.

c. The beginning of the verse is missing.

d. 'collapses' corr.; 'rises' Hebr. To describe the wrath of God, the poet combines themes from the ancient cosmogonies (the creation as a divine victory over the waters, Jb 7:12+) and from salvation history (Red Sea; Sinai; cf. Ps 114:3-8; Is 51:10, etc.).

e. Probable allusion to the Flood (according to Gn 5:29 Noah was, like Nahum, a 'comforter'). The divine anger has a purpose, vv. 7-8; it is not a blind fury but a deliberate judgement distinguishing between the faithful and the godless.

f. 'those who defy him' Greek; 'her place' Hebr.

g. Or possibly translate 'What do you plot against Yahweh?'

h. 'like a thicket' corr.; 'for until' Hebr. The Hebr. adds 'and like men drunk with their drink' (?).

i. This godless man from Assyria may be Sennacherib, cf. 2 K 18–19.

j. 'an object of shame' corr.; 'for you are light' Hebr.

2 a. We read v. 2 after v. 3.

b. 'vineyard' corr.; 'magnificence' Hebr.

c. 'horsemen' Greek, Syr.; 'cypresses' Hebr.

like lightning they dash to and fro.
The picked troops are called out;[d] 6/5
the columns clash,
they hurl themselves against the rampart,
the mantelet is already in place.[e]
The gates that give on the river are opened, 7/6
in the palace all is panic.
The Lady[f] is carried off, taken into exile, 8/7
her handmaids raise the dirge, with sighs
like the moaning of doves,
and beat their breasts.
Nineveh is like a pool 9/8
whose waters[g] are draining away.
'Stop! Stop!'
But no one turns back.
'Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold!' 10/9
There are endless treasures,
tons[h] of valuables.
Raid and ravage and ruin![i] 11/10
Is 13:7 Jr 30:6 Jl 2:6 Heart fails and knees give way,
fear is in the loins of all
and every face grows pale.

The Lion of Assyria threatened

Jr 4:7 Ho 5:14 Mi 5:7 Where is the lions' den, 12/11
the cave[j] of the lion's whelps?
When the lion made his foray the lioness stayed behind,
the lion's cubs too; and no one molested them.
The lion clawed enough for his whelps, 13/12
and tore up prey for his lionesses;
he filled his caves with his spoil,
and his dens with the prey.
=3:5 I am here! Look to yourself!—It is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks. 14/13
I mean to send your chariots up in smoke;
the sword shall devour your lion's whelps.
I will wipe the earth clean of your plunder,
the voice of your envoys shall be heard no more.

Nineveh threatened for its crimes[a]

3 Woe to the city soaked in blood, 1
full of lies,
stuffed with booty,
whose plunderings know no end!
The crack of the whip! 2
The rumble of wheels!
Galloping horse,
jolting chariot,
charging cavalry, 3
flash of swords,
gleam of spears...
a mass of wounded,
Ezk 39:11-16 hosts of dead,
countless corpses;
they stumble over the dead.
So much for all the whore's debauchery, 4
for that wonderful beauty, for that cunning witch

who enslaved[b] nations by her debauchery
and tribes by her spells.
5 I am here! Look to yourself! It is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks. =2:14
I mean to lift your skirts as high as your face
and show your nakedness to nations, Ho 2:5+
your shame to kingdoms.
6 I am going to pelt you with filth,
shame you, make you a public show.[c]
7 And all who look on you
will turn their backs on you and say,
'Nineveh is a ruin'.
Could anyone pity her? Jr 15:5
Where can I find anyone to comfort her?[d] Is 51:19

The lesson of Thebes

8 Are you mightier than No-amon[e]
who had her throne beside the river,[f]
who had the sea for outer wall,
the waters for rampart?[g]
9 Her strength was Ethiopia,
Egypt too; she had no boundaries.
Men of Put and the Libyans were her auxiliaries.[h] Jr 46:9+
10 And yet she was forced into exile,
she went into captivity;
her little ones, too, were dashed to pieces Ho 10:14+
at every crossroad;
lots were drawn for her nobles, Jl 4:3
all her great men were loaded with chains.
11 You too will be encircled,
you will be overwhelmed;
you too will have to search
for a refuge from the enemy.

Nineveh's preparations useless[i]

12 Your fortresses are all fig trees
laden with early-ripening figs:
shake, and they fall
into any mouth that wants to eat them.
13 Look at your people: Is 19:16 Jr 51:30
your inhabitants are women.

d. 'are called out' following Greek; 'he remembers' Hebr.

e. 'protector' (?); presumably a machine to shelter the besiegers attacking the rampart.

f. 'is carried off' corr.; 'is set in place' Hebr. The 'Lady' may be the queen with her entourage, but more probably the reference is to the statue of the goddess Ishtar, 'queen of Nineveh', the 'handmaids' being her sacred prostitutes.

g. 'whose waters', following Greek; 'from the days of her; and they' Hebr.

h. 'heaps' Syr. (lit. 'all weighing'); 'weight more than all' Hebr.

i. Assonance: *buqa, umebuqa, umebullaqa.*

j. 'the cave' corr.; 'the pasture' Hebr.

3 a. Another picture of the destruction of Nineveh supplemented by a verdict on the crimes that called down this punishment.

b. Lit. 'who sold nations'; the metaphor is the opposite of redemption, 'buying back' meaning liberation.

c. When Nahum describes Nineveh as a prostitute who is to undergo the punishment meted out to adulterers, he is thinking less of her idolatry (Israel, not Nineveh, is the 'spouse' of Yahweh) or of her practice of ritual prostitution than of the rapacity and cunning by which she has established her ascendancy over every nation, to plunder them.

d. 'her' Greek; 'you' Hebr.

e. Probably Thebes in Upper Egypt, 'the city of Amon'; in 663 it was sacked by the armies of Assurbanipal, who may already have attacked the city in 667.

f. Hebr. adds 'waters surrounded her'.

g. 'who had... for outer wall' corr. (lit. 'her outer wall'). 'the waters' corr.; 'of the sea' Hebr. The 'sea' is evidently the Nile in flood.

h. 'her auxiliaries' Greek, Syr.; 'your auxiliaries' Hebr.

i. This oracle appears to allude to reverses already suffered by the Assyrian armies (capture of Tarbis and of Assur in 614?).

The gates of your country
stand wide open to the foe;
fire has burnt up your locking beams.
Draw water for the siege, 14
strengthen your bulwarks,
tread the mud, tread down the clay,
set your hand to the brick mould.
There the fire will burn you up, 15
the sword will cut you down.[j]

The locusts fly away[k]

Increase like the locust,
increase like the grasshopper;
multiply your traders 16a
to exceed the stars of heaven;[l]
your guards are like grasshoppers, 17a
your scribes like a cloud of insects.
They settle on the walls
when the day is cold.
The sun appears,
and the locusts spread their wings; they fly away, 16b
they are gone, no one knows where. 17b

A funeral lament

Alas![m] •Are your shepherds asleep, then, 18
king of Assyria?
Ps 76:4 Your picked troops slumber,[n]
1 K 22:17 your people are scattered on the mountains
with no one to rally them.
There is no remedy for your wound, 19
your injury is past healing.
All who hear the news of you
clap their hands at your downfall.
For who has not felt
your unrelenting cruelty?

3 j. Hebr. adds 'it will devour you like the locust'.
k. The incursion of Assyrians (traders, soldiers, officials) into the occupied countries is compared to that of myriads of locusts. The same image is used in the prophecy of their sudden and complete disappearance.
l. 'multiply' corr.; 'you are multiplied' Hebr. V. 16b is transposed.
m. 'Alas! . . .' corr., following Greek; 'Where are they?' Hebr.
n. 'slumber' Greek; 'they remain' Hebr.

HABAKKUK

Title

1 1 The oracle[a] that Habakkuk the prophet received in a vision.

I. DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PROPHET AND HIS GOD

First complaint of the prophet: lawlessness prevails[b]

2 How long, Yahweh, am I to cry for help
while you will not listen;
to cry 'Oppression!' in your ear — Jb 19:7 Ps 18:41 Jr 14:9
and you will not save?

3 Why do you set injustice before me, — 1:13 Ps 55:9-11 Jr 6:7; 9:2f Am 3:9-10
why do you look on where there is tyranny?
Outrage and violence, this is all I see,
all is contention, and discord flourishes.

4 And so the law loses its hold,
and justice never shows itself.
Yes, the wicked man gets the better of the upright, — Is 59:14 Mi 7:2-3
and so justice is seen to be distorted.

First oracle. The Chaldaeans the instrument of God's justice[c]

5 Cast your eyes over the nations, look, — ✗ Ac 13:41
and be amazed, astounded. — Is 29:9
For I am doing something[d] in your own days
that you would not believe if you were told of it.

6 For now I am stirring up the Chaldaeans,
that fierce and fiery people[e]
who march miles across country
to seize the homes of others.

1 a. Lit. 'burden', cf. Is 13:1, etc., and Jr 23:33-40.

b. Speaking in the name of his people, cf. Jr 10:23-25; 14:2-9,19-22; Is 59:9-14, the prophet complains to Yahweh about the miseries they suffer. This passage, similar to the laments in Ps and in Jr, could refer, if taken by itself, to internal dissension; but there is no doubt that, given the context of vv. 12-17, it relates to the tyranny of the Chaldaeans. Why does the justice and kindness of Yahweh (and his holiness, v. 13) allow the wicked to triumph? After all, Judah, though sinful, is still on the side of 'justice' since it has the knowledge of the true God; yet God permits the heathen to triumph. The answer lies with Yahweh, cf. 2:1.

c. First reply. The Chaldaean scourge is the present instrument of God's justice. Cf. Am 3:11; Is 10:5-27; Jr 5:14-19; 25:1-13; 27:6-22; 51:20-23; Dt 28:47f; 2 K 24:2-4. Cf. Nebuchadnezzar, 'my servant', Jr 25:9; 27:6; 43:10.

d. Following Greek; the Hebr. could also be translated '(a deed) is being done'.

e. The dramatic images in this description of invasion occur frequently in the prophetic books, cf. Is 5:26-29; 13:17-18; Jr 4:5-7,13,16-17; 5:15-17; 6:22-24; Na 3:2-3; Ezk 23:22-26; 28:7-10.

A people feared and dreaded, 7
1:11 from their might[f] proceeds their right, their greatness.

Their horses are swifter than leopards, 8
Zp 3:3 fiercer than wolves in the dark;
their horsemen gallop on,
their horsemen advance from afar,
swooping like an eagle to stoop on its prey.

They come for plunder, all of them, 9
their faces scorching like an east wind;[g]
they scoop up[h] prisoners like sand.

They are a people that scoff at kings,[i] 10
and laugh at princes.
They make light of all fortresses:
they heap up earth[j] and take them.

Then the wind changes and is gone...[k] 11
1:7 Is 10:13 Sinful, he who makes his own strength his god.

Second complaint of the prophet: the tyranny of the conqueror[l]

Lv 17:1+ Dt 33:27 Ps 90:1-2 Are not you, from ancient times[m] Yahweh, 12
my God, my Holy One, who never dies?[n]
Yahweh, you have made this people[o] an instrument of justice,
set it firm as a rock[p] in order to punish.[q]

1:3 Ps 5:5-6 Your eyes are too pure to rest on wickedness, 13
you cannot look on at tyranny.
Why do you look on while men are treacherous,
Ps 35:22f Is 9:11 and stay silent while the evil man swallows a better man than he?

Jr 16:16 Ezk 12:13; 17:20; 29: 4f; 32:3 You treat mankind like fishes in the sea, 14
like creeping, masterless things.

A people, these, who catch all on their hook,[r] 15
who draw them with their net,
in their dragnet gather them,
and so, triumphantly, rejoice.

At this, they offer a sacrifice to their net, 16
and burn incense to their dragnet,
for providing them with luxury
and lavish food.[s]

Are they then to empty their net unceasingly,[t] 17
2:10 slaughtering nations without pity?

Second oracle: the upright man will live by faithfulness

Nb 23:1-6 2 I will stand on my watchtower, 1
and take up my post on my battlements,
watching to see what he will say to me,
what answer he will make to my complaints.[a]

Then Yahweh answered and said, 2
Is 8:1 Jr 30:2 Rv 1:19 'Write the vision down,
inscribe it on tablets
to be easily read,
since this vision is for its own time only:[b] 3
eager for its own fulfilment,[c] it does not deceive;

if it comes slowly, wait,
for come it will, without fail.

Nb 23:19
2 P 3:4-10

4 'See how he flags,[d] he whose soul is not at rights,
but the upright man will live by his faithfulness.'[e]

↗ Rm 1:17
↗ Ga 3:11
↗ Heb 10:38

II. CURSES ON OPPRESSORS

Prelude

5 Wealth[f] is indeed a treacherous thing.
Haughty and unable to rest is he
who is as greedy as Sheol,
who is like death, insatiable,
who assembles all the nations for his own ends,
collects all the peoples to his own advantage.

Pr 27:20
Is 5:14

6 On him, will not all men make satires,
and turn an epigram against him?
They will say:[g]

Is 14:4
Mi 2:4

Five imprecations

I

Trouble[h] is coming to the man who amasses goods that are not his,
(for how long?)
and loads himself with pledges.

Is 5:8+
Rv 8:13+

f. Lit. 'from itself'. The Chaldaeans do not acknowledge God or any human master: they attribute their victories to their own valour. Cf. v. 11b.

g. Text uncertain. 'their faces scorching' conj.; 'the scorching (or: eagerness) of their faces' Hebr. 'an east wind' with 1 QpHab (the commentary on Habakkuk discovered at Qumran in 1947) and Vulg.; 'to the east' M.T. The scorching wind from the eastern desert sometimes symbolises invasions from the east, cf. Ho 12:2; 13:15; Jr 18:17; Ezk 17:10f.

h. 'they scoop up' cf. Greek, Vulg.; 'he scooped up' Hebr.

i. Lit. 'It scoffs at kings'.

j. Ramps or earthworks used in sieges.

k. The invasion comes like a storm and passes on, leaving ruin behind. Others interpret 'Then the spirit passes by and is gone' (referring to the passing of a period of prophetic inspiration), or 'Then he (the invader) changes his mind, having exceeded (his mission?)'.

l. This passage resumes the complaint of vv. 2-4; if it is true that the Chaldaean triumph is ultimately due to Yahweh, vv. 5-6, this only moves the problem back to Yahweh himself who must give the answer. How is it that a just and holy God, the custodian of justice, vv. 12a,b, 13, can treat nations thus, v. 14, and the chosen people in particular? Will he allow the wicked to engulf the virtuous? V. 13, cf. v. 4 and vv. 15-17.

m. From the time of the Exodus, referred to in ch. 3, the event on which Habakkuk builds his confidence.

n. 'who never dies' corr.; 'We shall never die' Hebr.

o. Lit. 'it'. The Chaldaeans.

p. Lit. 'and a rock'. Or possibly 'O Rock!', cf. Dt. 32:4.

q. The Chaldaeans, charged with a mission of justice which they must not exceed, cf. 1:5+. Others take this to refer either to Israel, appointed arbiter of the nations, or to Jehoiakim king of Judah who betrayed his mission, to whom 1:2-4, 12-17 and 2:6-19 would then refer.

r. Lit. 'It takes all with a hook'.

s. 'lavish' corr.

t. 'unceasingly' 1 QpHab; 'and unceasingly slaughtering' M.T.

2 a. 'my watchtower' 1 QpHab; 'the watchtower' M.T. 'he will make' corr. following Peshitto; 'Is hall make' M.T. The prophet keeps watch like a sentry on behalf of his people, cf. Ho 9:8; Is 21:6-12; Jr 6:17; Ezk 3:17; 33:1-9; Ps 5:3.

b. Hence the command to write it down. The vision will be fulfilled 'at the appointed time', cf. Dn 8:19,26; 10:14; 11:27,35; the written document pledges the word of Yahweh to fulfil it at this appointed time, cf. 2 P 3:2, and will later stand as a witness to its veracity. Cf. Is 8:1,3; 30:8.

c. The vision has an energy of its own, since it is the expression of a divine word moving to fulfilment, cf. Is 55:10-11. The Advent liturgy uses this verse to express expectation of the Messiah. See also Heb 10:37.

d. 'he flags, he' corr.; M.T. 'It is distended (=full of pride?), it is not at rights, his soul within him'; Vulg. 'He who is unbelieving'. Greek 'If he flags, my soul is not pleased with him; but the upright man will have life for his faith in me'.

e. This maxim, of universal application, cf. Is 3:10-11, here sums up the content of the vision. 'Faithfulness' to God (cf. Ho 2:22; Jr 5:1,3; 7:28; 9:2, etc.), i.e. to his word and to his will, is characteristic of the 'upright' man, and assures him security and life here on earth (cf. Is 33:6; Ps 37:3; Pr 10:25, etc.). The wicked man, who does not have this 'uprightness', runs to ruin. The upright and the wicked in this context (1:2-4,12-17; 2:5-18) are respectively Judah and the Chaldaeans; the former will live, the others perish. In the LXX, where 'faithfulness' is rendered 'faith', St Paul finds the doctrine of justification by faith.

f. 'Wealth' 1 QpHab; 'Wine' M.T.

g. 'turn an epigram' corr. 'They will say' 1 QpHab and Greek; 'He will say' M.T. The 'satire', *mashal*, is a mocking couplet form using metaphor. The 'epigram', *melisah*, is a riddle demanding interpretation. The two words describe the literary form of the five imprecations: their style has the solemn form of prophecy but the terms are enigmatic.

h. An attack on the cupidity of the conquerors. There is an ironical change of situation: the Chaldaeans become debtors to the nations they plundered and the prey of these same nations who now become creditors —an application of the *lex talionis*, Ex 21:25+.

Will not your creditors suddenly rise, 7
will not your duns awake?
Then you will be their victim.

Is 33:1 Since you have plundered many nations, 8
all that remains of the peoples[i] will plunder you;
=2:17 for you have shed men's blood and ravished the country,
the city and all who live in it.

II

3:13 Jr 22:13-17 Is 14:13+ Jr 49:16 Ob 4 Trouble[j] is coming to the man who grossly exploits others for 9
the sake of his House,
to fix his nest on high
and so evade the hand of misfortune.

You have contrived to bring shame on your House: 10
1:17 by making[k] an end of many peoples
Is 14:20 you have worked your own ruin.

For the stone from the very walls cries out, 11
and the beam responds from the framework.[l]

III

Jr 22:13 Mi 3:10 Trouble[m] is coming to the man who builds a town with blood 12
and founds a city on crime.

Is it not[n] the will of Yahweh Sabaoth 13
Si 14:19 ||Jr 51:58 that the labouring of peoples should end in fire,
and the toiling of nations come to nothing?

Nb 14:21+ Is 11:9 *For the country shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh* 14
as the waters swell the sea.

IV

Trouble[o] is coming to the man who makes his neighbours drink, 15
who pours his poison[p] until they are drunk,
Gn 9:20-25 to look at their nakedness.
You are drunk with ignominy, not with glory. 16

Lm 4:21 Your turn now to drink and show your foreskin.[q]
Ps 75:8+ Is 51:17+ The cup from Yahweh's right hand comes round to you,
and disgrace will overshadow your glory.

For the violence done to Lebanon[r] is going to overwhelm you, 17
so will the slaughter of terrified beasts,
=2:8 for you have shed men's blood and ravished the country,
the city and all who live in it.[s]

V

Is 40:20+ Trouble[t] is coming to the man who says to the piece of wood, 19
'Wake up!'
to the dumb stone, 'On your feet!'
(And that is the oracle.)[u]
Plated it may be with gold and silver,
but not a breath of life inside it.

What is the use of a carved image, or for its maker to carve it at all? 18
Ezk 21:26 Ho 3:4 Zc 10:2 It is a thing of metal, a lying oracle.
What is the use of its maker trusting this
and fashioning dumb idols?

But Yahweh is in his holy Temple:[v]
let the whole earth be silent before him.[w]

||Ps 11:4
Am 6:10
Zp 1:7
Zc 2:17
Rv 8:1

III. PLEA TO YAHWEH FOR DELIVERANCE

1 3 A prayer[a] of Habakkuk the prophet;[b] tone as for dirges. Ps 29

2 Yahweh, I have heard of your renown,[c] Dt 2:25
your work,[d] Yahweh, inspires me with dread. Ps 8:1,9; 76:1,3
Repeat it in our own time,[e]
reveal it in our time.[f] Is 51:9
For all your wrath, remember to be merciful. Is 54:8

3 Eloah is coming from Teman,
and the Holy One from Mount Paran.[g] *Pause* Dt 33:2 Jg 5:4
His majesty veils the heavens,
the earth is filled with his glory. Nb 14:21+ Ps 18:7; 68:7

4 His brightness[h] is like the day,
rays[i] flash from his hands,
that is where his power lies hidden.

5 Plague goes in front of him,
fever[j] follows on his heels.

6 When he stands up he makes the earth tremble,
with his glance he makes the nations quake. Ex 15:14-16

Then the ancient mountains are dislodged,

i. Not 'of the oppressed peoples' nor 'of the peoples who have escaped oppression' but of every race, other than the Chaldaeans, whether oppressed or not.

j. The fate of the Chaldaeans will be that of the man who has built his fortune on ill-gotten gains: final impoverishment.

k. 'by making' versions; 'to make' M.T.

l. The Chaldaean dynasty or 'House' paid for by extortion: its stone and wood call down vengeance on the occupier.

m. Against rule by violence.

n. 'Is it not' (versions; 'Behold' M.T): formula prefacing a quotation, cf. 2 Ch 25:26; here introducing a word of Yahweh in the two following lines.

o. The cynicism of the conqueror is like that of a man who encourages others to get drunk, to degrade them; their shame will soon be his. In Jr 51:7 Babylon does the same and, in Na 3:4-7, Nineveh.

p. 'his neighbours' 1 QpHab; 'his neighbour' M.T. 'pours' meaning uncertain. 'his poison' (cf. Dt 32:24,33; Ps 58:4; 140:3; or 'his anger') 1 QpHab, Symmachus and Vulg.; 'thy poison' M.T.

q. The uncircumcised and debauched Chaldaean is himself made drunk and disgraced.

r. Lebanon despoiled, cf. Is 37:4, its cedars felled by Nebuchadnezzar for building purposes, cf. Is 14:8, may also symbolise Israel, cf. Is 33:9; Jr 21:14; 22:6-7, 20-23.

s. We read v. 18 after v. 19.

t. Against Chaldaean idolatry.

u. Possibly a gloss on 18b transposed to 19.

v. The Temple in Jerusalem, but primarily the heavenly palace, whence Yahweh will come, cf. 3:3f.

w. This silence preludes the theophany of 3:3-15. Cf. Is 41:1; Ps 76:8-9.

3 a. As in many of the Psalms, this prayer combines supplication with a hymn to the omnipotence of God. The word 'Pause' and the note of v. 19d show that it was used in the liturgy.

b. As in Ps, the inscription may indicate not the author of the prayer but the fact that it belongs to a collection, in this case Hab.

c. Lit. 'what you make heard'.

d. All the exploits of Yahweh on behalf of his people in Mosaic times (cf. 1:12). Cf. Ps 44:1-8; 77:11-12; 95:9; Jg 2:7; Dt 11:7.

e. Lit. (here and in next line) 'in the middle of years'.

f. For this and the preceding line Greek has 'In the middle of two living things you will make yourself known; when the years draw near you will be recognised; when the time comes you will appear', a text which, in conjunction with Is 1:3, gave rise to the tradition of the two animals by the crib at Bethlehem.

g. 'Eloah', an ancient name for God. Teman, a N. district of Edom. Paran, a mountain in Edom. The theophany, cf. Ex 19:16+, now begins: it describes the coming, vv. 3-7, and battle, vv. 8-15, of Yahweh. Several details in this epic vision suggest the victorious march of Yahweh at the head of his people during the Exodus, a type, cf. Is 40:3+, of the deliverance to come. Yahweh ('the Holy One', cf. Dt 33:3; Is 6:3+) advances from Sinai, cf. Ex 24:9-11, towards Canaan, cf. Nb 20:14f, through the region S.S.E. of Palestine from which the storms also come. His coming is described, vv. 3f, in terms of an advancing storm cloud, cf. Ps 18:7f; 29. The expressions refer sometimes to the cloud, sometimes to Yahweh who is present in it.

h. 'His brightness' versions; 'The brightness' Hebr.

i. Strictly 'horns', but cf. Ex 34:29-30,35.

j. *resheph;* the word is derived from the name of the Phoenician god of lightning and means thunderbolt, hailstone, calamity and, here (being parallel with 'plague', and cf. Dt 32:24) burning fever.

the everlasting hills[k] sink down,
his pathway from of old.

I have seen the tents of Cushan terrified, 7
the pavilions of the land of Midian shuddering.[l]

Ps 18:7-9 Yahweh, is your anger blazing against the rivers,[m] 8
or your fury against the sea,[n]
that you come mounted on your horses,
on your victorious chariots?

You uncover your bow, 9
you ply its string with arrows.[o] *Pause*

You trench the soil with torrents;[p]
the mountains shiver when they see you; 10
Ps 77:16-17 great floods sweep on their way,
the abyss[q] roars aloud,
high it lifts its hands.

Jos 10:13 Sun and moon stay in their houses, 11
Ps 29:7 avoiding the flash of your arrows,
the gleam of your glittering spear.

Raging, you stride the earth, 12
in anger you trample the nations.

You have marched to save your people, 13
to save your own anointed;[r]
2:9-11 you have beaten down the wicked man's house,
bared its foundations to the rock.[s] *Pause*

With your shafts you have pierced the leader of his warriors 14
who stormed out with shouts of joy to scatter us,[t]
Ps 10:7-9; 17:12 Zc 9:4 as if they meant to devour some poor wretch in their lair.

Ps 77:19 Is 43:16-17 You have trampled the sea with your horses, 15
the surge of great waters.

Jr 4:19 I have heard.[u] My whole body trembles, 16
my lips quiver at the sound;
decay creeps into my bones,
my steps falter beneath me.

Calmly I await the day of anguish
which is dawning on the people now attacking us.[v]

Jr 5:17 Ho 9:2 (For the fig tree is not going to blossom, 17
nor will there be any fruit on the vine,
the yield of the olive will fail,
the fields afford no food;
the sheep will vanish from the fold,
nor will there be any cattle in the stalls.)[w]

But I will rejoice in Yahweh, 18
↗ Lk 1:47 I will exult in God my saviour.

Yahweh my Lord is my strength, 19
Ps 18:33 he makes my feet as light as a doe's,
Dt 32:13 Is 58:14 he sets my steps on the heights.[x]

For the choirmaster; on stringed instruments.[y]

3 k. 'ancient mountains and 'everlasting hills' have here a cosmic sense, cf. Ps 90:2; Pr 8:25; Jb 15:7; in Gn 49:26; Dt 33:15 they indicate the places where the patriarchs once lived.

l. Midian, cf. Ex 2:15+. Cushan is apparently an ancient name for the same region.

m. Hebr. 'Is it against the rivers there blazes, Yahweh, against the rivers your anger?'

n. As in Jg 5:4-5; Ps 77:16-19; 114:3-7, cosmic disturbances accompany an intervention of Yahweh, cf. Am 8:9+. (Use is perhaps made here of ancient traditions of the creation conceived as a struggle between God and the rebellious elements, the Abyss, the Sea, the River, etc.), cf. Jb 7:12+. Here the struggle ends in defeat for 'the wicked', the Chaldaeans, vv. 13-15.

o. 'ply its string with arrows' corr. The arrows are the lightning flashes, cf. v. 4 and Ps 29:7; 77:17. For Yahweh as bowman, cf. Dt 32:23; Ex 5:16, etc. The bow is a symbol of strength, cf. Gn 49:24; Jb 29: 20, etc.

p. The torrential rain accompanying the storm, cf. Ps 77:16-18; Jg 5:4.

q. The Abyss under the earth, the primordial Ocean, which unites its waters with the rain from above. Its 'hands' are the waves.

r. Here the nation, cf. Ps 28:8 (Ex 19:6) rather than its king. 'to save ...' Greek; 'to salvation, your own anointed' Hebr.

s. Text corr.

t. Text corr.

u. Cf. v. 2 and Is 21:3-4; Jr 23:9; Dn 8:18,27; 10:8. The supernatural awe and the anguish of the prophet, as he watches the battle of Yahweh and the concurrent calamities, vv. 16-17, are replaced by joy in the rescue and security coming from Yahweh, vv. 18-19, cf. 16e.

v. Text corr.

w. This verse which, despite a context of cosmic struggle, paints a picture of agricultural depression, may well be a gloss (to emphasise the lesson of trust in Yahweh); possibly, however, it is meant to describe the effects of the war as felt in Judah.

x. 'the heights' Greek; 'my heights' Hebr.

y. 'On' corr.; 'My' Hebr. Indications of this kind usually appear at the beginning of Psalms.

ZEPHANIAH

Jr 1:2 1 The word of Yahweh that was addressed to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of 1
Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the reign of Josiah son of
Amon, king of Judah.

I. THE DAY OF YAHWEH FOR JUDAH

Prelude: judgement on all creation

I mean to sweep away everything 2
off the face of the earth
—it is Yahweh who speaks.
Mt 13:41 I mean to sweep away men and beasts, 3
Ho 4:3+ the birds of the air and the fish of the sea,
I mean to send the wicked staggering,[a]
and wipe man off the face of the earth
—it is Yahweh who speaks.

Against the worship of alien gods

I am going to raise my hand against Judah 4
and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
2 K 23:4f,12 and from this place I will wipe out Baal,
to the very last vestige of him,
even to the name of his spurious priests,[b]
Dt 4:19 those who prostrate themselves on the roofs 5
2 K 21:3-5 before the array of heaven,
those who prostrate themselves before Yahweh[c]
1 K 11:7,33 but swear by Milcom,[d]
2 K 23:13 those who turn aside from Yahweh, 6
who do not seek Yahweh,
who will not bother with him.
Am 6:10 Silence before the Lord Yahweh! 7
Hab 2:20 For the day of Yahweh is near.
Zc 2:17 Yes, Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice,
Rv 8:1 he has consecrated his guests.[e]

Against the dignitaries of the court[f]

On the day of Yahweh's sacrifice, 8
Ex 3:16+ I will punish the ministers,
the royal princes,
and all those who dress themselves

in foreign style.
9 On that day I mean to punish
all those who are near the throne,[g]
those who fill the palace of their lord
with violence and deceit.

Against the merchants of Jerusalem

10 On that day—it is Yahweh who speaks—
a shout will be raised from the Fish Gate, Ne 3:3
from the new town, howls,
from the hills, a great uproar.
11 Men of the Mortar,[h] howl!
For the whole brood of Canaan[i] has been destroyed,
the weighers of silver are all wiped out.

Against unbelievers

12 When that time comes
I will search Jerusalem by torchlight,
and punish the men
who are stagnating on their lees, Jr 48:11
those who say in their hearts,
'Yahweh has no power Ps 10:4; 14:1
for good or for evil'. Jr 5:12+
13 Then their wealth will be given up to looting,
their households to plundering.
They built houses, did they? They will not live in them. Dt 28:30-33+
They planted vineyards, did they? They will not drink their wine.

The day of Yahweh[j] Am 5:18+

14 The great day of Yahweh is near, Rm 2:5
near, and coming with all speed.
How bitter the sound of the day of Yahweh,
the day when the warrior shouts his cry of war.[k] Nb 10:5+ Is 42:13
15 A day of wrath, that day, Rm 1:18
a day of distress and agony,
a day of ruin and of devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom, ||Jl 2:2
a day of cloud and blackness,
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry Jl 2:1+
against fortified town
and high corner-tower.
17 I am going to bring such distress on men
that they will grope like the blind

1 a. 'I mean to send... staggering' corr.; 'the stumbling-blocks' Hebr.

b. The word translated 'spurious priests' is used only of the priesthood of idols. Hebr. adds 'and the priests'.

c. Hebr. adds 'and who swear'.

d. 'Milcom' some Greek MSS, Syr., Vulg.; 'their king' Hebr. Zephaniah denounces the vestiges of Canaanite religion, v. 4, the star worship of Assyria, and finally the combination of Yahwism with the worship of neighbouring gods (Milcom, god of the Ammonites).

e. 'Silence before the Lord Yahweh' is a liturgical command, the day of Yahweh being represented as a sacrifice in which the people of Judah are the victims. As in the great religious massacres of Elijah, 1 K 18:19-40, and Jehu, 2 K 10:18-27, the guests are 'consecrated' for the slaughter.

f. The regents, subservient to Assyria, during the minority of King Josiah.

g. Lit. 'those who ascend the step' (here probably the dais of the throne).

h. The precise location of this quarter of Jerusalem is unknown.

i. The 'Canaanites' are the merchants, Ho 12:8; Is 23:8; Pr 31:24, etc.

j. As in Amos, 5:18-20+, and Isaiah, 2:6-22, the day is a terrifying manifestation of the power of Yahweh. God is represented as a warrior (cf. Ex 15:3; 2 S 5:24; Ps 18:7-14, etc.) but here he fights against his own people. This poem inspired Joel, 2:1-11, and the mediaeval author of the *Dies Irae*.

k. A common translation is 'even the hero utters cries of fear'.

(because they have sinned against Yahweh);
Ps 79:3 their blood will be scattered like dust,
Jr 9:21 their corpses like dung.
Ezk 7:19 Neither their silver nor their gold 18
will have any power to save them.

Dt 4:24 On the day of the anger of Yahweh,
in the fire of his jealousy,
Am 8:9+ all the earth will be consumed.
For he means to destroy, yes, to make an end
of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Conclusion: a call to conversion[a]

2 .....[b] 1
nation without desire,[c]
before you are driven[d] 2
Ho 13:3 like chaff that is blown away in a day,
before there descends on you
the fierce anger of Yahweh
(before there descends on you
the day of the anger of Yahweh).
Am 5:4-6 Seek Yahweh, 3
Est 1:1k all you, the humble of the earth,[e]
Ps 72:3-4
Si 3:20; 11:12 who obey his commands.
Dn 3:87
Jm 2:5 Seek integrity,
Is 57:15 seek humility:
you may perhaps find shelter
on the day of the anger of Yahweh.

II. AGAINST THE PAGANS

Jos 13:2+
Is 14:28-32
Jr 47
Ezk 25:15-17
Am 1:6-8 **The enemy to the west: the Philistines**[f]

Yes, Gaza is going to be reduced to desert, 4
Ashkelon to waste.
Ashdod will be stormed in broad daylight,
and Ekron rooted out.
Woe to the members of the Confederacy of the Sea, 5
Dt 2:23 to the nation of the Cherethites!
Jr 47:4
Am 9:7 This is the word of Yahweh against you:
I mean to bring you down,[g] land of the Philistines,
I am going to ruin you, empty you of inhabitants;
and you will be reduced[h] to pasture land, 6
to grazing grounds for the shepherds,
to folds for the sheep.
It will be included in the property 7
of the remnant of the House of Judah;
they will lead flocks there to pasture;
among the houses of Ashkelon they will rest at evening;
for Yahweh their God is going to deal kindly with them
and restore their fortunes.

Nb 20:23+
Is 15,16
Jr 48:1–49:6
Ezk 25:1-11
Am 1:13–2:3
Ps 79:4 **The enemies to the east: Moab and Ammon**

I have heard the taunts of Moab 8
and the insults of the sons of Ammon
as they laughed at my people,
and boasted of their own domains.

9 For this, as I live—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks,
the God of Israel—
Moab shall become like Sodom Gn 19:1+
and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah:[i]
a realm of nettles, a heap of salt,
a desolation for ever.
What is left of my people will plunder them, Is 14:2
those of my nation who survive will take their heritage. Zc 2:13
10 This will be the price of their pride,
of their taunts, of their boasts
against the people of Yahweh Sabaoth.
11 Full of terror will Yahweh be for them.
When he has utterly destroyed all the gods of the earth,
the nations will prostrate themselves before him,
each on its own soil,
all the islands of the nations.[j]

The enemy to the south: Ethiopia[k] Is 18-20 Jr 46 Ezk 29-32

12 And as for you, Ethiopians:
They will be run through with my sword.

The enemy to the north: Assyria[l]

13 He is going to raise his hand against the north
and bring Assyria down in ruins;
he will make Nineveh a waste,
dry as the desert.
14 In the middle of her the flocks will rest;
all the beasts of the valley,
even the pelican and the heron
will roost round her cornices at night;
the owl will hoot at the window
and the raven croak on the doorstep.[m]
. . . . . .
15 Is this the joyful city,
so confident on her throne,
who said in her heart,

2 a. The threat of the day of Yahweh does not preclude hope of conversion. Salvation is promised to the 'humble' (or the 'poor'), v. 3.

b. Text obscure and variously interpreted 'Assemble together', 'Enter into yourselves', 'Bow down', 'Heap yourselves up', i.e. for the threshing, v. 2.

c. Meaning uncertain.

d. 'before you are driven' corr.; 'the birth of the decree' Hebr.

e. The 'humble' or 'poor', *anawim* in Hebr. These play a large part in the Bible. Though wisdom literature looks on poverty, *resh*, as the result of idleness, Pr 10:4, the prophets are aware that the poor are usually the oppressed, *aniyyim*; they demand justice for the weak and lowly, *dallim*, and for those in need, *ebionim*, Am 2:6f; Is 10:2; cf. Jb 34:28f; Si 4:1f; Jm 2:2f. The humane legislation of Dt shows the same attitude of mind, Dt 24:10f. With Zephaniah 'poverty' assumes a moral and eschatological significance, 3:11f, cf. Is 49:13; 66:2; Ps 22:26; 34:2f; 37:11f; 69:33; 74:19; 149:4, and see Mt 5:3+; Lk 1:52; 6:20; 7:22. In short, the *anawim* are those Israelites who submit to the will of God. In the LXX period, the word *anaw* (or *ani*) has the added meaning of thoughtfulness for others, Zc 9:9, cf. Si 1:27. It is to the 'poor' that the Messiah will be sent, Is 61:1, cf. Lk 4:18. He himself will be humble and gentle, Zc 9:9, cf. Mt 21:5, and the victim of oppression, Is 53:4; Ps 22:24.

f. Except for Gath (perhaps already in ruins) the federated Philistine towns are listed, the 'Confederacy of the Sea'. Following the precedent of Is 10:29-31 and Mi 1:10-15, Zephaniah plays on the names 'Gaza' and 'Ekron', making them omens of disaster.

g. 'I meanto bring you down' corr.; 'Canaan' Hebr.

h. 'you will be' corr.; 'she will be' Hebr. Hebr. inserts 'Confederacy of the Sea, absent from Greek.

i. According to Gn 19:30-38, Lot became father of Ammon and Moab after his escape from Sodom.

j. This promise of conversion for the 'islands' is probably an addition, since it envisages a wider horizon than Moab and Ammon. It seems to be based on Is 41:1,5; 42:4,10,12; 49:1; 51:5.

k. Ethiopia is used here for Egypt where an Ethiopian dynasty ruled shortly before the time of Zephaniah (from 715 to 663: the 25th dynasty). The oracle seems to be incomplete.

l. The great enemy and oppressor of Judah for nearly a century.

m. 'the valley' corr.; 'the people' Hebr. 'the owl' corr.; 'a voice' Hebr. 'the raven' Greek; 'desolation' Hebr. The line that follows is, in this context, obscure: 'for he has torn up the cedar' or, after correction, 'for I shall destroy the city'.

||Is 47:8,10 'Here am I, with none to equal me'?
What a ruin she is now,
a lair for beasts!
Jr 18:16; 19:8; 49:17 All those who pass by her
whistle and shake their fists.

III. AGAINST JERUSALEM

Against the leaders of the people

Ps 55:9 3 Trouble is coming to the rebellious, the defiled, 1
the tyrannical city!
She would never listen to the call, 2
Am 4:6f would never learn the lesson;
she has never trusted in Yahweh,
never drawn near to her God.
Ezk 22:25-26 The leaders she harbours 3
are roaring lions,
Hab 1:8 her judges, wolves at evening
that have had nothing to gnaw that morning;
her prophets are braggarts, 4
they are impostors;
her priests profane the holy things,
they do violence to the Law.
Dt 32:4 Yahweh is in her, he is just and honourable; 5
he never does wrong;
Ps 101:8+ morning by morning he makes his law known,
each dawn unfailingly;
he knows no injustice.[a]

The pagans punished

I have wiped out nations, 6
their corner-towers lie in ruins;
I have emptied their streets,
no one walks there;
their towns have been sacked:
no one left there, no more inhabitants.
Am 4:6f 'At least,' I used to say 'you will fear me now, 7
you will learn the lesson;
she cannot lose sight[b]
of the many times I have punished her.'
But no, it only made them more anxious
to see that all they did was corrupt.

Therefore, expect me—it is Yahweh who speaks— 8
on the day I stand up to make my accusation;
for I am determined to gather the nations,
to assemble the kingdoms,
and to pour out my fury on you,
the whole heat of my anger.[c]

IV. PROMISES

Conversion of the pagans

Yes, I will then give the peoples 9
lips that are clean,

so that all may invoke the name of Yahweh
and serve him under the same yoke.[d]
10 From beyond the banks of the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants
will bring me offerings.[e]

The humble remnant of Israel[f] 2:3+

11 When that day comes
you need feel no shame for all the misdeeds
you have committed against me,
for I will remove your proud boasters
from your midst;
and you will cease to strut
on my holy mountain.
12 In your midst I will leave Rv 14:1
a humble and lowly people,
13 and those who are left in Israel will seek refuge in the name of Yahweh. Is 4:3
They will do no wrong,
will tell no lies; Is 53:9 ↗ Rv 14:5
and the perjured tongue will no longer
be found in their mouths.
But they will be able to graze and rest
with no one to disturb them.

Psalms of joy in Zion[g]

14 Shout for joy, daughter of Zion, Ps 47:1 Is 12:6; 54:1 Zc 2:14
Israel, shout aloud!
Rejoice, exult with all your heart,
daughter of Jerusalem!
15 Yahweh has repealed your sentence; Is 40:2
he has driven your enemies away.
Yahweh, the king of Israel, is in your midst;
you have no more evil to fear.

16 When that day comes, word will come to Jerusalem:
Zion, have no fear,
do not let your hands fall limp.
17 Yahweh your God is in your midst,
a victorious warrior.
He will exult with joy over you, Is 62:5 Jr 32:41
he will renew you[h] by his love;
he will dance with shouts of joy for you
18 as on a day of festival.[i] Lm 2:6

Return of the exiles[j]

I have taken away your misfortune,

3 a. 'he knows no injustice' corr.; 'the unjust man knows no shame' Hebr.

b. Lit. 'from her eyes cannot be cut off', 'from her eyes' Greek, Syr.; 'her dwelling' Hebr.

c. 'to accuse' Greek, Syr.; 'for plunder' (or 'for ever') Hebr. 'to gather' Greek, Syr.; 'that I may gather' Hebr. 'on you' corr.; 'on them' Hebr. Hebr. adds at the end 'for by the fire of my jealousy the whole earth will be consumed', cf. 1:18. This emended text of v. 8 makes a conclusion to vv. 6-7 by declaring that Judah will be punished before the eyes of the pagans, as in Am 3:9-11. The Hebr. text as it stands speaks of the punishment of the nations.

d. Thus Greek and Syr.; Hebr. lit. 'with one shoulder'.

e. After 'my suppliants', Hebr. adds 'my Dispersion'. This promise of the conversion of Ethiopia, cf. Is 18:7; 19:18-25; 45:14, is probably not authentic. The Hebr. gloss ('my Dispersion') turns it into a promise to the Jews in exile.

f. This oracle prophesies that the ideal proposed in 2:3 will become a reality, and is one of the most perfect descriptions of 'the spirit of poverty' in the O.T.

g. The oracles of Zephaniah originally ended with these two psalms.

h. 'he will renew you' Greek, Syr.; 'he will be silent' Hebr.

i. The ritual dance played a large part in ancient ceremonial. 'as on a day of festival' Greek, Syr.; 'grieved far from the festival' Hebr.

j. V. 20 is a variant of v. 19, the latter being based on Mi 4:6. These oracles probably date from the exilic period.

no longer need you bear the disgrace of it.[k]
I am taking action here and now 19
against your oppressors.
Mi 4:6 When that time comes I will rescue the lame,
and gather the strays,
and I will win them praise and renown
when I restore their fortunes.[l]

When that times comes, I will be your guide, 20
when that time comes,[m] I will gather you in;
I will give you praise and renown
among all the peoples of the earth
when I restore your fortunes under your own eyes,
says Yahweh.

3 k. 'misfortune' corr.; 'they were' Hebr. 'no longer need you bear' following Greek, Syr., Targ.; 'a burden on her' Hebr.

l. 'when I restore their fortunes' corr.; 'their shame' Hebr.

m. Lit. 'at that time' corr.; 'at the time' Hebr.

HAGGAI

The movement to rebuild the Temple

1 In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month,[a] the word of Yahweh was addressed through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, high commissioner of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, as follows, •'Yahweh Sabaoth says this, "This people says: The time has not yet come[b] to rebuild the Temple of Yahweh. •(And the word of Yahweh was addressed through the prophet Haggai, as follows:) •Is this a time for you to live in your panelled houses, when this House lies in ruins? So now, Yahweh Sabaoth says this: Reflect carefully how things have gone for you. •You have sown much and harvested little; you eat but never have enough, drink but never have your fill, put on clothes but do not feel warm. The wage earner gets his wages only to put them in a purse riddled with holes. •So go to the hill country,[c] fetch wood, and rebuild the House: I shall then take pleasure in it, and be glorified there, says Yahweh. •Yahweh Sabaoth says this: Reflect carefully how things have gone for you. •The abundance you expected proved to be[d] little. When you brought the harvest in, my breath spoilt it. And why?—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks. Because while my House lies in ruins you are busy with your own, each one of you. •That is why the sky has withheld the rain[e] and the earth withheld its yield. •I have called down drought on land and hills, on wheat, on new wine, on oil and on all the produce of the ground, on man and beast and all their labours." '

Zc 4:6-10
Zc 3:1-9
2 S 7:2
Ho 4:3+
Lv 26:19-20

12 Now Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and all the remnant[f] of the people, paid attention to the voice of Yahweh their God and to the words of the prophet Haggai, Yahweh having sent him to them.[g] And the people were filled with fear before Yahweh. •Haggai, the messenger of Yahweh, passed on the message of Yahweh to the people, as follows, 'I am with you—it is Yahweh who speaks'. •And Yahweh roused the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, high commissioner of Judah, the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and set to work on the Temple of Yahweh Sabaoth their God. This was on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

Zc 8:9

The glory that is to come to the Temple

1 In the second year of King Darius, **2** on the twenty-first day of the seventh month,[a] the word of Yahweh was addressed through the prophet Haggai,

1 a. August 520.
b. 'has not yet come' Greek, Vulg.; Hebr. unintelligible.
c. Probably the hill country of Judah.
d. Lit. 'and it was' Greek, Syr., Targ.; 'and behold' Hebr.
e. 'the rain' Targ.; 'the dew' Hebr.
f. In Hg and Zc 'the remnant of the people' means the faithful grouped round Jerusalem. Cf. Is 4:3+.
g. Lit. 'as Yahweh had sent him to them' Greek; 'as Yahweh their God had sent him' Hebr.
2 a. October 520, the last day of the feast of Tabernacles.

as follows, •'You are to speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the high 2
commissioner of Judah, to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to all[b]
Ezr 3:10-13 Tb 14:5 the remnant of the people. Say this, •"Who is there left among you that saw 3
this Temple in its former glory? And how does it look to you now? Does it
seem nothing to you? •But take courage now, Zerubbabel—it is Yahweh who 4
speaks. Courage, High Priest Joshua son of Jehozadak! Courage, all you people
of the country!—it is Yahweh who speaks. To work! I am with you—it is
Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks—•[c] and my spirit remains among you. Do not 5
↗ Heb 12:26 be afraid! •For Yahweh Sabaoth says this: A little while now,[d] and I am going 6
to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.[e] •I will shake all 7
Is 60:7-11 the nations and the treasures of all the nations shall flow in,[f] and I will fill this
Temple with glory, says Yahweh Sabaoth. •Mine is the silver, mine the gold! 8
Tb 13:16; 14:5 —it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks. •The new glory of this Temple is going to 9
surpass the old, says Yahweh Sabaoth, and in this place I will give peace—it is
Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks." '[g]

The prophet consults the priests

On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius,[h] 10
the word of Yahweh was addressed to the prophet Haggai as follows, •'Yahweh 11
Sabaoth says this: Ask the priests for a decision on this question, •"If a man 12
carries consecrated meat in the fold of his gown and with this fold touches
bread, broth, wine, or food of any kind, does such food become holy?" ' The
priests answered, 'No, it does not'. •Haggai then said, 'If a man made unclean 13
Lv 22:4-7 by contact with a corpse touches any of this, does it become unclean?' The
priests answered, 'Yes, it does'.[i] •Haggai then spoke out. 'It is the same with 14
this people,' he said 'the same with this nation as I see it—it is Yahweh who
speaks—the same with everything they turn their hands to;[j] and what they offer
here[k] is unclean.[l]

A promise of agricultural prosperity[m]

Zc 8:9 'Reflect carefully from today onwards. Before one stone had been laid on 15
Ho 4:3+ another in the sanctuary of Yahweh, •what state were you in? A man would 16
come to a twenty-measure heap and there would be ten; he would come to a vat
Am 4:6+ to draw fifty measures and there would be twenty.[n] •I struck with blight and 17
mildew and hail everything you turned your hands to. And still you would not
return to me[o]—it is Yahweh who speaks. •Reflect carefully from today onwards 18
(from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day the foundation
of the sanctuary of Yahweh was laid, think carefully)[p] •if grain is still short 19
in the barn, and if vine and fig tree, pomegranate and olive, still bear no fruit.[q]
From today onwards I intend to bless you.'

The promise to Zerubbabel

On the twenty-fourth day of the month the word of Yahweh was addressed 20
a second time to Haggai, as follows, •'Speak to Zerubbabel, the high commis- 21
sioner of Judah. Say this, "I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. •I will 22
overturn the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kings of the
nations. I will overthrow the chariots and their charioteers; horses and their
riders will be brought down; they shall fall,[r] each to the sword of his fellow.
Zc 6:12-13 When that day comes—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks—I will take[s] you, 23
Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, my servant—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks—
Jr 22:24 and make you like a signet ring.[t] For I have chosen you—it is Yahweh Sabaoth
who speaks." '

2 b. 'all' Greek.

c. Hebr. here inserts a gloss, absent from Greek 'This is the covenant (corr.) which I made with you when you went out of Egypt'.

d. Hebr. adds 'soon'.

e. For Haggai, God is the sole master of history. While the prophet is foretelling the disaster, cf. Am 5:18+; 8:9+, which is to introduce the new era, the world is at peace under the rule of Darius. The imminent worldwide catastrophe and the rebuilding of the Temple will herald the messianic age.

f. The Vulg. translation alludes to the Messiah 'And the Desired of all nations will come'; hence the liturgical use of this text during Advent.

g. The Temple, cf. 2 S 7:13+, has become a focal point of the messianic hope, as for Ezekiel. And in fact it was in this second Temple, restored by Herod, that Christ taught. Greek adds 'and peace of soul, to save all those who laid the foundations for the rebuilding of this Temple'.

h. December 520.

i. 'Uncleanness' is apparently more contagious than holiness, i.e. from the ritual point of view.

j. I.e. the harvests.

k. Worship continued on the site of the Temple, where the altar of holocausts had been rebuilt since 538. Haggai points the lesson from the ruling of v. 13: the nation is unclean, and its sacrificial offerings are too. This accusation, contrasting with 2:1-9 in its severity, may possibly be directed against the Samaritans, cf. Ezr 4:1-5.

l. Greek adds 'because of their quickly won gains, they will suffer for their labours, and you hated those dispensing justice at the city gate' (cf. Am 5:10).

m. This passage, which completes 1:1-15, should perhaps be read after 1:15a.

n. 'What state were you in?' Greek. 'A man (lit. 'they') would come' corr.; 'He would come' Hebr.; 'You would come' Greek. After 'vat', Hebr. adds 'press'.

o. 'I struck' corr.; 'I struck you' Hebr. 'And ... to me' Greek.

p. A partly inaccurate gloss, cf. 1:15.

q. We insert 'is short'. 'and if still' Greek.

r. 'kings' Greek; 'kingdoms' Hebr. 'they shall fall' corr.

s. The expression implies election to a notable function in the history of salvation. Thus Yahweh 'takes' Abraham, Jos 24:3, the Levites, Nb 3:12, David, 2 S 7:8. Zerubbabel, a successor of David, is now associated with traditional royal messianism, cf. 2 S 7:1+; Is 7:14+, and the messianic expectation takes shape about his person. Cf. Zc 6:12.

t. The signet ring, used for the sealing of documents or letters, 1 K 21:8, was kept carefully hung from the neck, Gn 38:18, or worn on the finger, Jr 22:24.

ZECHARIAH

FIRST PART

A summons to conversion

1 In the second year of Darius, in the eighth month,[a] the word of Yahweh 1
was addressed to the prophet Zechariah (son of Berechiah),[b] son of Iddo,
Hg 1:12+ as follows,[c] •'Cry out to the remnant of this people and say to them, "Yahweh 3
||Ml 3:7 Jm 4:8 Sabaoth says this: Return to me,[d] and I will return to you, says Yahweh Sabaoth.
Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the prophets in the past cried: Yahweh 4
Is 55:7 Lk 15:20 Sabaoth says this: Turn back from your evil ways and evil deeds. But—it is
Yahweh who speaks—they would not listen or pay attention to me. •Where are 5
your ancestors now? Are those prophets still alive? •Did not my words and my 6a
7:7-14 orders, with which I charged my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?[e]
Yahweh was stirred to anger against your ancestors." ' •This reduced them to 2 6b
such confusion[f] that they said, 'Yahweh Sabaoth has treated us as he resolved
to do, and as our ways and deeds deserved.'

6:2-7 Rv 6:2-8 First vision: the horsemen

On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month (the month of Shebat), 7
in the second year of Darius,[g] the word of Yahweh was addressed to the prophet
Zechariah (son of Berechiah), son of Iddo, as follows, •'I saw a vision during 8
the night. It was this: a man was standing[h] among the deep-rooted myrtles;
6:4f behind him were horses, red and sorrel and black and white.[i] •I said: What are 9
these, my lord? (And the angel who was talking to me said,' "I will explain to
you what they are".) •The man standing among the myrtles answered, "They 10
are those whom Yahweh has sent to patrol throughout the world". •They then 11
↗ Rv 5:6 spoke to the angel of Yahweh[j] standing among the myrtles; they said, "We have
been patrolling the world, and see, the whole world is at peace and rest".[k] •The 12
Ezr 1:1+ Tb 12:12 Rv 6:10 angel of Yahweh then spoke and said, "Yahweh Sabaoth, how long will you
wait before taking pity on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, on which you have
inflicted your anger for the past seventy years?" •Yahweh then replied with very 13
consoling words to the angel who was talking to me. •The angel who was talking 14
8:2 to me then said to me, "Make this proclamation: Yahweh Sabaoth says this:
I feel most jealous love for Jerusalem and Zion, •but very bitter anger against 15
Is 10:6; 47:6 the proud nations;[l] for my part I was only a little angry, but they have over-
Is 54:6-10 stepped all limits. •Yahweh, then, says this. I turn again in compassion to 16
Tb 13:10 Jerusalem; my Temple there shall be rebuilt—it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks—
2:5-9 Jb 38:5 and the measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem. •Make this proclamation 17
too: Yahweh Sabaoth says this: My cities are once more going to be very
2:15-16; 13:9 prosperous. Yahweh will again take pity[m] on Zion, again make Jerusalem his
very own." '

Second vision: the horns and the smiths

1 / 18 2 / 19 2 Then, raising my eyes, I saw a vision. It was this: there were four horns.[a] Ps 75:4-5
I said to the angel who was talking to me, 'What are these horns, my lord?'[b] Dt 33:17 Dn 7:8
He said to me, 'These are the horns which have scattered Judah (Israel) and
3,4 / 20,21 Jerusalem'. •Yahweh then showed me four smiths.[c] •And I said, 'What are
these coming to do?' He said to me, '(Those are the horns which have so scattered
Judah that no one has dared to raise his head; but) these have come to lay them
low[d] (to strike down the horns of the nations who lifted their hands against Jr 48:25
the land of Judah, in order to scatter it)'.

Third vision: the measurer

5 / 1 Then, raising my eyes, I saw a vision. It was this: there was a man with a
6 / 2 measuring line in his hand. •I asked him, 'Where are you going?' He said, 'To 1:16 Jr 31:38-39
7 / 3 measure Jerusalem, to find out her breadth and her length'.[e] •And then, while Ezk 41:13 Rv 11:1; 21:15
the angel who was talking to me stood still,[f] another angel came forward to
8 / 4 meet him. •He said to him, 'Run, and tell that young man[g] this, "Jerusalem is Is 49:19-20; 54:2-3
to remain unwalled, because of the great number of men and cattle there will be Jr 31:27
9 / 5 in her. •But I—it is Yahweh who speaks—I will be a wall of fire for her all
round her, and I will be her glory in the midst of her." '[h] Rv 21:3; 22:3

Two exhortations to the exiles

10 / 6 Up, up, and leave the land of the North (it is Yahweh who speaks)! Is 48:20 Jr 50:8; 51:6
(For to the four winds of heaven
I have scattered you—it is Yahweh who speaks.)
11 / 7 Zion,[i] up! Dweller in[j] Babylon, flee!
12 / 8 For Yahweh Sabaoth says this
(he whose glory has sent me here)
as regards the nations who despoiled you
(for whoever touches you touches the apple of my eye):[k] Dt 32:10 Ps 17:8
13 / 9 See now, I raise my hand over them,
for them to be plunder for their slaves. Is 14:2 Zp 2:9
(And you will know that Yahweh Sabaoth has sent me.)
14 / 10 Sing, rejoice, Ps 87:2 Zp 3:14
daughter of Zion;
for I am coming
to dwell in the middle of you
—it is Yahweh who speaks.

1 a. October-November 520, two months after the first prophecy of Haggai.
b. A gloss suggested by Is 8:2. According to Ezr 5:1; 6:14; Ne 12:16, Zechariah was the son of Iddo.
c. Read v. 2 between 6a and 6b.
d. 'Cry out to the remnant of this people' corr., cf. 8:6,11,12. After 'Return to me' Hebr. adds 'it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks' (lit. 'oracle of Yahweh Sabaoth'), absent from Greek.
e. Man dies but the word of God remains (here personified as in Ps 147:15; Is 55:11; Ws 18:14-15). Cf. Is 40:7-8.
f. Hebr. 'This brought them to conversion'.
g. The middle of February, 519.
h. Hebr. adds 'was riding a red horse'.
i. 'black' corr. The vision makes a monotheistic use of certain elements the origins of which seem to be mythological. The myrtle trees appear to have their roots in the depths of the abyss. The standing man is the angel of Yahweh. The horses, a symbol representing the angels who have the world under their surveillance, probably form four groups (cf. 6:2f) associated with the four points of the compass or the four winds; according to v. 11, they have riders.
j. In the ancient texts, cf. Gn 16:7+, the 'angel of Yahweh' was Yahweh himself in visible form; subsequently this 'angel' became, as here, a separate individual to whom men and angels must have recourse for access to God.
k. In February 519, under the rule of Darius, there is worldwide peace. Israel finds this peace disquieting since the new era is to be heralded by great disturbances.
l. Those especially who were neighbours of Judah.
m. 'will take pity' Greek; 'will comfort' Hebr.

2 a. The horns, symbolic of strength, Ps 75:4+, are the nations hostile to Judah. The number four symbolises their universality.
b. 'my lord' Greek and Syr.
c. Symbolising the angelic powers.
d. 'to lay them low' corr.; 'to terrify them' Hebr.
e. As in Ezk 41:13, the measurements are taken with a view to rebuilding. The measurer is an angel.
f. 'stood still' Greek; 'came forward' Hebr.
g. The angel with the measuring line.
h. The messianic Jerusalem will be defended by Yahweh himself, having returned to his Temple, cf. Ezk 43:1f.
i. Zion here means the exiles, as in Is 51:16.
j. Hebr. has 'Dweller with the daughter of Babylon'.
k. 'he whose glory has sent me here' corr.; 'after the glory (i.e. the vision) he has sent me here' Hebr. 'my eye' corr.; 'his eye' Hebr.

Is 45:22 Many nations will join Yahweh, 15 11
on that day;
they will become his people.[l]
(But he will remain[m] among you,
and you will know that Yahweh Sabaoth has sent me to you.)
But Yahweh will hold Judah 16 12
1:17 as his portion in the Holy Land,[n]
and again make Jerusalem his very own.
Hab 2:20 Zp 1:7 Rv 8:1 Let all mankind be silent before Yahweh! 17 13
For he is awaking and is coming from his holy dwelling.[o]

Fourth vision: the investiture of Joshua

Jb 1:6+; 30:12 Hg 1:1 3 He[a] showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of Yahweh, 1
with Satan standing on his right to accuse him.[b] •The angel of Yahweh[c] 2
↗Jude 9 said to Satan, 'May Yahweh rebuke you, Satan, may Yahweh rebuke you, he
Am 4:11 who has made Jerusalem his very own. Is not this man a brand snatched from the
fire?'[d] •Now Joshua was dressed in dirty clothes[e] as he stood before the angel 3
of Yahweh.[f] •The angel said these words to those who stood before him, 'Take 4a
Rv 19:8 off his dirty clothes and clothe him[g] in splendid robes of state, •and put a clean 5
turban on his head'. They clothed him in splendid robes of state and put a clean
turban on his head.[h] The angel of Yahweh was standing there and said to him,
Is 6:7 Jr 31:34 Ezk 36:33 'Look, I have taken away your iniquity from you'. •The angel of Yahweh then 4b 6
proclaimed to Joshua: •'Yahweh Sabaoth says this, "If you walk in my ways 7
and keep my ordinances, you shall govern my house, you shall watch over my
Ml 2:7 courts,[i] and I will give you free access among those who stand here.[j] •For this 9a
is the stone[k] which I am placing before Joshua; on this single stone there are
4:10 Ps 118:22 ↗Rv 5:6 seven eyes; and I myself intend to cut the inscription on it—it is Yahweh Sabaoth
who speaks.

The coming of the 'Branch'

Is4:2;8:18 "Now listen, High Priest Joshua, you and the friends who sit before you—for 8
6:12 Ps 132:17 Jr 23:5+ you are men of good omen.[l] I now mean to raise my servant Branch,[m] •and 9b
I intend to put aside the iniquity of this land in a single day. •On that day—it is 10
1 M 14:12 Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks—you will entertain each other under your vine
and fig tree." '

Fifth vision: the lamp-stand and the olive trees

4 The angel who was talking to me came back and roused me as a man is 1
roused from his sleep. •And he asked me, 'What can you see?' I answered,[a] 2
Ex25:31-40 'As I look, this is what I see: there is a lamp-stand entirely of gold with a bowl
at the top of it; seven lamps are on the lamp-stand, and seven lips for the lamps
Rv 11:4 on it.[b] •By it are two olive trees, one to the right of it[c] and one to the left.' 3
Speaking again, I said to the angel who was talking to me, 'What do those things 4
mean, my lord?' •The angel who was talking to me replied, 'Do you not know 5
what these things mean?' I said, 'No, my lord'. •He then gave me this answer,[d] 6a
3:9 Tb 12:15 Ezk 1:18 ↗Rv 5:6 'These seven are the eyes of Yahweh;[e] they cover the whole world'. •In reply 10b 11
to this I asked him, 'What is the meaning of these two olive trees, to the right
and to the left of the lamp-stand?' •(Speaking again, I asked him, 'What is the 12
meaning of the two olive branches pouring the oil[f] through the two golden
pipes?') •He replied, 'Do you not know what these things mean?' I said, 'No, 13
6:13 Ps 52:8 ↗Rv 11:4 my lord'. •He said, 'These are the two anointed ones who stand before the 14
Lord of the whole world.[g]

Three sayings about Zerubbabel

Ho 1:7+ Hg 1:1 'This is the word of Yahweh with regard to Zerubbabel, "Not by might and 6b
not by power, but by my spirit, says Yahweh Sabaoth.

7 "What are you, you great mountain?[h] Before Zerubbabel, be a plain! He will pull out the keystone to shouts of: Blessings on it, blessings on it!" ' Jb 38:7 Ps 118:22

8 9 The word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this Temple; his hands will finish it.

10a (And you will learn that Yahweh Sabaoth has sent me to you.) •A day for little Ezr 5:1 things, no doubt, but who would dare despise it?[i] People will rejoice when they see the chosen stone[j] in the hands of Zerubbabel.'

Sixth vision: the flying scroll

1 2 5 Again I raised my eyes, and this is what I saw: a flying scroll. •The angel who was talking to me[a] said, 'What can you see?' I replied, 'I can see a flying Ezk 2:9-10 Rv 10:9-11

3 scroll; it is twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad'.[b] •He then said to me, 'This is the Curse sweeping across the face of the whole country. According Am 5:11 to what it says, every thief will be banished; according to what it says, everyone Ex 20:15

4 who swears falsely by my name will be banished.[c] •I am going to let it loose[d] Ex 20:7 —it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks—to enter the house of the thief and the house of anyone who swears falsely by my name, to settle in his house and to consume it, timber, stone and all.'

Seventh vision: the woman in the bushel

5 The angel who was talking to me came forward and said to me, 'Raise your

6 eyes, and see what this is, moving forward'. •I said, 'What is it?' He said, 'This is a bushel[e] moving forward'. He went on, 'This is their iniquity[f] throughout

7 the country'. •At this, a disc of lead was raised, and I saw[g] a Woman sitting

8 inside the bushel. •He said, 'This is Wickedness'. And he forced her back into

9 the bushel and closed its mouth with the mass of lead. •I raised my eyes, and

l. 'his' Greek; 'my' Hebr. The covenant is here extended to all the nations: Jerusalem is to be the religious centre of the whole world, cf. Is 45:14+.

m. 'he will remain' corr.; 'I shall remain' Hebr.; 'they will remain' Greek.

n. The first occurrence of this expression in the Bible. Cf. 2 M 1:7.

o. Yahweh will return from his heavenly temple to his earthly one. Cf. Ezk 43:1f.

3 a. Yahweh.

b. At the gate of heaven the angel of Yahweh presides over a court of justice. At the right hand of the High Priest Joshua stands a malevolent angel, Satan (lit. 'the *satan*', i.e. 'the accuser'), who is the enemy of man, cf. Jb 1:6+.

c. 'The angel of Yahweh' Syr.; 'Yahweh' Hebr.

d. Joshua represents the Jewish people.

e. A sign of mourning, either for one dead or for a national calamity; in the latter case it implies admission of guilt, cf. v. 4b.

f. 'of Yahweh' Greek and Syr.

g. 'clothe him' Greek; 'I shall clothe you' Hebr.

h. Following the Greek. 'splendid' corr. The national mourning since 587 is now over.

i. Here Joshua is no longer addressed as the representative of the people: the promise is made to Joshua personally and to a future priesthood which he portends, cf. 3:8.

j. The priests are to have access to God, sharing the mediating function of the angels, cf. Ml 2:7. V. 8 is read between 9a and 9b.

k. This stone presumably stands for the Temple. The seven eyes are symbolic of the watchful presence of Yahweh, 4:10. The inscription ('Sacred to Yahweh') has not yet been cut: the building is not finished.

l. 'you are' Syr.; 'they are' Hebr. The reconstitution of the priesthood is an omen of the messianic age.

m. This messianic title, cf. Jr 23:5+, does not yet seem to be applied to Zerubbabel, as it is in 6:12. For 'Branch', Greek reads 'rising Sun', cf. Lk 1:78.

4 a. 'I answered' Greek and *qere*; 'he answered' *ketib*.

b. The upper part of the lamp-stand was a bowl with a broad rim on which were seven lamps of clay or metal, each with seven protuberances ('lips') where the wicks rested. Possibly the bowl was filled with water to extinguish the falling pieces of wick.

c. 'to the right of it' (i.e. of the lamp-stand) corr.; 'to the right' (of the bowl) Hebr.

d. Vv. 6b-10a are read after v. 14.

e. Symbol of the omniscience and watchfulness of God.

f. 'the oil' corr.; 'the gold' Hebr.

g. Man is frequently compared to a tree, Jr 11:19; Ps 1:3; Jb 29:19; Ezk 31. The two anointed ones (lit. 'sons of the oil') are Joshua and Zerubbabel, representing the spiritual and temporal power respectively. Joshua is anointed to the priesthood, Lv 4:3,5,16, and Zerubbabel, it is hoped, will be anointed king. This will fulfil Jr 33:14-18: the spiritual and the temporal power are to be closely associated in the messianic age.

h. Possibly the mountain of debris from which the keystone of the old Temple will be recovered, cf. vv. 9-10.

i. The day Zerubbabel re-lays the foundations, Hg 2:3, Zerubbabel will also complete the building by placing the stone of v. 7.

j. 'the chosen stone' corr.; 'the stone, the plummet' Hebr.; 'the plummet stone' Greek.

5 a. 'The angel who was talking to me' corr.

b. The scroll is of immense size: its measurements are those of the Ulam or vestibule of the Temple of Solomon, 1 K 6:3.

c. 'falsely by my name' added in accordance with v. 4. The curse is conceived as having a force of its own. It overtakes all sinners, of whom the Holy Land will be free in the messianic age.

d. 'I am going to let it loose' Greek; 'I did let it loose' Hebr.

e. Lit. 'an *ephah*'. But here it is much larger than the common *ephah*.

f. 'their iniquity' Greek; 'their eyes' Hebr.

g. 'I saw' corr. following Greek.

this is what I saw: two women appearing. The wind caught their wings—they had wings like a stork's; they raised the bushel midway between earth and heaven. •I then said to the angel who was talking to me, 'Where are they taking 10
the bushel?' •He replied, 'They mean to build a temple for it in the land of 11
Shinar, and to make a plinth on which to place it'.[h]

Eighth vision: the chariots

6 Again I raised my eyes, and this is what I saw: four chariots coming out 1
between the two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze.[a]
↗Rv 6:2-8 The first chariot had red horses, the second chariot had black horses, •the 2 3
third chariot had white horses and the fourth chariot had (vigorous) piebald
horses. •I asked the angel who was talking to me, I said, 'What is the meaning 4
1:8+ Rv 7:1 of these, my lord?' •The angel answered, 'These are going out to[b] the four winds 5
of heaven after standing before the Lord of the whole world. •The red horses 6
are going out to the country of the East; the black horses are going out to the
country of the North; the white are going out to the country of the West[c] and
the piebald are going out to the country of the South.' •They came out vigorously, 7
eager to patrol the world. He said to them, 'Go and patrol the world'. And they
patrolled the world. •He called me and said to me, 'See, those going northward 8
will make the spirit of Yahweh[d] descend on the country of the North.[e] •And 15
those who are far away will come and rebuild the sanctuary of Yahweh. (And
Dt 28:1 you will learn that Yahweh Sabaoth has sent me to you.) (This will happen
if you listen carefully to the voice of Yahweh your God.)'

The votive crown

And the word of Yahweh was addressed to me as follows, •'Take the offerings 9 10
of the captives,[f] of Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, and go to the house of Josiah
‖Heb 10:21 son of Zephaniah, who has arrived from Babylon.[g] •Take the silver and gold, 11
make a crown[h] and set it on the head of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high
3:8+ Is 4:2 priest.[i] •And say this to him, "Yahweh Sabaoth says this: Here is a man whose 12
Jr 23:5+ name is Branch; where he is, there will be a branching out[j] (and he will rebuild
the sanctuary of Yahweh). •It is he who is going to rebuild the sanctuary of 13
Yahweh. It is he who is going to wear the royal insignia. He will sit on his throne
4:14+ as ruler. And a priest shall be at his right hand.[k] Perfect peace will reign between
these two; •while the crown will be a glorious memorial to Heldai, Tobijah 14
and Jedaiah, and to Josiah, son of Zephaniah, in the sanctuary of Yahweh." '[l]

A question on fasting

8:18 7 In the fourth year of King Darius (the word of Yahweh was addressed to 1
Zechariah), on the fourth day of the ninth month[a] (the month of Chislev),
Bethel sent Sharezer and his men to entreat the favour of Yahweh •and to say to 2 3
the priests in the Temple of Yahweh Sabaoth, and to his prophets, 'Ought I to
go on mourning and fasting in the fifth month as I have been doing for so many
years past?'[b]

The nation's past surveyed[c]

Then the word of Yahweh Sabaoth was addressed to me as follows, •'Say 4 5
to all the people of the country, and to the priests, "While you have been fasting
and mourning in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was
Am 5:21+ it for my sake you fasted so rigorously? •And when you were eating and drinking, 6
were not you the eaters and you the drinkers?[d] •Do you not know the words 7
which Yahweh proclaimed through the prophets in the past, when Jerusalem
was inhabited and secure, with her surrounding towns, and when the Negeb
and the Lowlands were inhabited? (•The word of Yahweh was addressed to 8
Is 1:17 Zechariah as follows: •Yahweh Sabaoth says this.) He said: Apply the law 9
Jn 7:24 fairly, and practise kindness and compassion towards each other. •Do not

10 oppress the widow and the orphan, the settler and the poor man, and do not Ex 22:20-21+ Mi 2:1
11 secretly plan evil against one another. •But they would not pay attention; they
12 turned a petulant shoulder; they stopped their ears rather than hear;• they made Ex 32:9+ Is 48:4
their hearts adamant rather than listen to the teaching and the words that Yahweh Ezk 11:19
Sabaoth had sent by his spirit through the prophets in the past. This aroused
13 great anger on the part of Yahweh Sabaoth. •And this is what happened, since
he kept calling them and they would not listen (similarly they will call and
14 I shall not listen, says Yahweh Sabaoth): •he scattered them[c] throughout nations Dt 4:27 Dn 8:10
unknown to them; hence the country was reduced to desolation behind them,
and no one came or went. They turned a land of delights into a desert." '

A prospect of messianic salvation

1 8[a] The word of Yahweh Sabaoth was addressed to me as follows:

2 'Yahweh Sabaoth says this.
I am burning with jealousy for Zion, 1:14
with great anger for her sake.

3 'Yahweh Sabaoth says this.[b]
I am coming back to Zion
and shall dwell in the middle of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem will be called Faithful City Is 1:26+
and the mountain of Yahweh Sabaoth, the Holy Mountain.

4 'Yahweh Sabaoth says this.
Old men and old women will again sit down 1 M 14:9
in the squares of Jerusalem; Dt 4:40 Is 65:20
every one of them staff in hand
because of their great age.
5 And the squares of the city will be full
of boys and girls
playing in the squares.

6 'Yahweh Sabaoth says this.
If this seems a miracle
to the remnant of this people (in those days),
will it seem one to me?
It is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks. Jr 32:27

h. Text corr. following Greek. In the messianic age the Holy Land will be rid of Wickedness (impiety personified). Wickedness now becomes a false goddess for whom a temple is built in Shinar (Babylon), which here symbolises the centre of the pagan world.

6 a. The image is borrowed from Babylonian mythology; these mountains flanked the approach to the abode of the gods.

b. 'to' conj. in accordance with the following verses.

c. 'The red are going out to the country of the East' and 'to the country of the West'; corr.

d. 'the spirit of Yahweh' corr.; 'my spirit' Hebr.

e. Where the exiles are. Impelled by the spirit of Yahweh, these will return and rebuild the Temple, cf. v. 15, which must be transposed here.

f. With the Greek. Hebr. 'Take from the captives'. These are the exiles who have come back to Palestine.

g. These people are otherwise unknown. Hebr. inserts 'and go the same day' before 'and go to the house'.

h. Hebr. 'crowns', but cf. v. 14.

i. It is evident from vv. 12-13 that the original text read 'Zerubbabel', 'Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest' having been substituted at a later period when the high priest had become head of the community.

j. Playing on the messianic title, 'Branch', Jr 23:5+, and promising successors to Zerubbabel who is now associated with the dynastic messianism of 2 S 7, cf. Hg 2:23+. The prophet foresees the future of the Royal House and presumably of the Temple.

k. 'at his right hand' Greek; 'on his throne' Hebr.

l. 'the crown' Greek; 'the crowns' Hebr. 'Heldai' Syr.; 'Helem' Hebr. 'Josiah' conj., cf. v. 10; 'Hen' Hebr. For v. 15 cf. after v. 8.

7 a. November 518.

b. The destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple in June-July 587 had been commemorated by a fast in the month of July. Now that the rebuilding has begun fasting seems out of place, hence the question put to the authorities in Jerusalem. The answer is apparently not given until 8:18-19.

c. This oracle has been arbitrarily attached to the incident of the embassy from Bethel because of the mention of fasting, v. 5. The September fast commemorated the murder of Gedaliah, 2 K 25:25; Jr 41:1f.

d. Whether fasting or feasting they were motivated by self-interest.

e. Hebr. 'and I scattered them'.

8 a. This chapter is a collection of short independent oracles; with the exception of 8:16-17, which is an instruction, they all deal with the messianic age, described as an age of simple happiness and of peace under the blessing of Yahweh, present in Zion. The perspective is widened in vv. 20f.

b. 'Yahweh Sabaoth' Greek and Vulg.

'Yahweh Sabaoth says this. 7
Dt 30:3-5 Now I am going to save my people
Ps 107:3 from the countries of the East
and from the countries of the West.
I will bring them back[c] 8
to live inside Jerusalem.
Jr 31:31+ They shall be my people
and I will be their God
in faithfulness and integrity.

'Yahweh Sabaoth says this. Let your hands be strong, you who here and 9
now listen to these words from the mouths of the prophets who have been
prophesying since[d] the day when the Temple of Yahweh Sabaoth had its
Hg 1:15 foundation laid for the rebuilding of the sanctuary. •For before the present 10
day men were not paid their wages and nothing was paid for the animals either;
and because of the enemy there was no security for a man to go about his business;
I had set[e] every man against everyone else. •But now, with the remnant of this 11
people, I am not as I was in the past. It is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks. •For 12
1 M 14:8 Ps 85:12 I mean to spread peace everywhere;[f] the vine will give its fruit, the earth its
increase, and heaven its dew. I am going to bestow all these blessings on the
remnant of this people. •Just as once you were a curse among the nations, you 13
Gn 12:3+ Ps 72:17 House of Judah (and House of Israel), so I mean to save you for you to become
a blessing. Do not be afraid; let your hands be strong.

For Yahweh Sabaoth says this. Just as I once resolved to inflict evil on you 14
when your ancestors provoked me—says Yahweh Sabaoth—and as I did not
then relent, •so now I have another purpose, and I intend in the present day to 15
confer benefits on Jerusalem and on the House of Judah. Do not be afraid.

Ep 4:25 'These are the things that you must do. Speak the truth to each another; 16
Mt 5:9 let the judgements at your gates be such as conduce to peace; •do not secretly 17
plot evil against one another; do not love false oaths; since all this is what
I hate. It is Yahweh who speaks.'

7:1-3 **The answer to the question on fasting**

The word of Yahweh Sabaoth was addressed to me as follows: 18

Is 35:10 Jr 31:13 Mt 9:14-15 'Yahweh Sabaoth says this. The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the 19
fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth are to become gladness and
happiness and days of joyful feasting for the House of Judah.[g] But love the
truth and peace!

1 K 8:43 Is 2:2 **A prospect of messianic salvation**

'Yahweh Sabaoth says this. There will be other peoples yet, and citizens of 20
great cities. •And the inhabitants of one city will go to the next and say, "Come, 21
let us go and entreat the favour of Yahweh, and seek Yahweh Sabaoth; I am
going myself". •And many peoples and great nations will come to seek Yahweh 22
Tb 13:11 Sabaoth in Jerusalem and to entreat the favour of Yahweh.

'Yahweh Sabaoth says this. In those days, ten men of nations of every language 23
will take a Jew by the sleeve and say, "We want to go with you, since we have
1 Co 14:25 learnt that God is with you".'

SECOND PART

9 An oracle. 1

The new promised land[a]

Yahweh has passed[b]
through the land of Hadrach

and Damascus is his dwelling place;
for the cities of Aram[c] belong to Yahweh
no less than all the tribes of Israel;
2 Hamath too, which borders on it, Is 23:1 Ba 3:22
(Tyre) and Sidon also, despite her acumen.
3 Tyre has built herself a rampart,
has heaped up silver like dust
and gold like the dirt of the streets.
4 And now the Lord is going to take possession of her;
he will topple her power into the sea;
she herself will be consumed by fire.
5 Seeing this, Ashkelon will be terrified,
and Gaza be seized with trembling,
so will Ekron, at the ruin of her prospects;
the king will vanish from Gaza
and Ashkelon remain unpeopled,
6 but the bastard[d] will live in Ashdod! Dt 23:3+
I mean to destroy the arrogance of the Philistine;
7 I intend to take his blood out of his mouth
and his abomination from between his teeth.[e]
He too will become a remnant for our God Is 4:3+
and be like a family[f] in Judah:
Ekron shall be like the Jebusite.[g]
8 Near my house[h] I will take my stand
like a watchman on guard against prowlers;
the tyrant shall pass their way no more,
because I have now taken notice of its distress.[i]

The Messiah

9 Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion!
Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem!
See now, your king comes to you; Gn 49:10 Ps 72 Is 9:5 Jr 17:25 ✗*Mt 11:29; 21:5* ✗Jn 12:15
he is victorious, he is triumphant,[j]
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.[k]
10 He[l] will banish chariots from Ephraim Is 2:4 Mi 5:9
and horses from Jerusalem;
the bow of war will be banished. Is 11:6+ Ho 2:20

c. Not, as in 2:10f, the exiles from Babylon only, but the Jews scattered throughout the world. Their return will be followed by a renewal of the covenant, cf. Jr 31:31+.

d. 'since' Greek; 'on' Hebr.

e. 'I had set' corr.; 'I shall set' Hebr.

f. 'I mean to spread peace everywhere' corr.; 'sowing of peace' Hebr.

g. To the fasts of the 5th and 7th months, cf. 7:3,5, there are here added those of the 4th and 10th which commemorated the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem, 2 K 25:1,4, and the beginning of the siege.

9 a. The Promised Land will embrace not only Israelite territory, cf. Jg 20:1+, but Aramaean, Phoenician and Philistine cities. The oracle alludes to a victorious campaign (probably that of Alexander after Issus, 333) interpreted as a campaign of Yahweh himself as prelude to the messianic age.

b. 'Yahweh has passed' corr.; 'Word of Yahweh' Hebr.

c. 'the cities of Aram' corr.; 'the eye of Adam (or, 'of man')' Hebr.

d. A mixed population resulting from forced colonisation.

e. Alluding to the pagan practice of eating flesh with the blood in it, cf. Lv 1:5+, and of eating forbidden meat, such as pork, cf. Is 65:4; 66:17.

f. 'a family' corr.; 'a tribal chief' Hebr.

g. I.e. incorporated into Israel like the Jebusites in antiquity.

h. The 'house' of Yahweh here means the whole country, cf. Ho 8:1; 9:15; Jr 12:7f.

i. 'like a watchman' corr.; 'before an army' Hebr. 'its distress' corr.; 'with my eyes' Hebr.

j. The first adjective (lit. 'upright', 'just') does not mean that he dispenses justice, cf. Is 11:3-5, but that he is the recipient of God's 'justice', i.e. of God's powerful protection, cf. Is 45:21-25. The second (lit. 'saved') has much the same meaning here.

k. The Messiah is to be 'humble' (*anî*), a characteristic attributed in Zp 3:12 to the future people of God, cf. Zp 2:3+. Renouncing the panoply of the historic kings, Jr 17:25; 22:4, the messianic king will ride the traditional mount of princes, Gn 49:11; Jg 5:10; 10:4; 12:14. Compare also 1 K 1:38 with 1 K 1:5. With this prophecy in mind Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

l. 'He will' Greek; 'I shall' Hebr. The northern tribes will be reunited with Judah in the messianic kingdom, cf. Jr 3:18+.

Ps 85:13
Ep 2:17
Ps 72:8

He will proclaim peace for the nations.
His empire shall stretch from sea to sea,
from the River to the ends of the earth.[m]

The restoration of Israel

Ex 24:4-8
Mt 26:28
||Heb 13:20

As for you, because of the blood of your covenant[n] 11
I am sending back your prisoners from the pit
(in which there is no water).
To you, daughter of Zion, 12
the hopeful captives will return.
In compensation for your days of banishment
I will give you back double.[o]

Ps 149:7

For I bend my bow; it is Judah; 13
I make Ephraim its arrow.
I am going to brandish your children, Zion,
(against your children, Javan);[p]
I mean to make you like the sword of a hero.

Dt 33:2
Ps 18:14
Hab 3:4

Yahweh will appear above them 14
and his arrow will flash out like lightning.
(The Lord) Yahweh will sound the trumpet
and advance in the storms of the south.
Yahweh (Sabaoth) will protect them! 15
They will trample[q] sling stones underfoot,
they will drink blood like wine,[r]

Ex 27:2+

they will be soaked in it[s] like the horns of an altar.
Yahweh their God will give them victory 16
when that day comes;

Ezk 34:1+

he will pasture his people like a flock
(like the flashing jewels of a diadem)
on his land.
What joy and what beauty shall be theirs! 17

Jr 31:12-13
Am 8:13

Corn will make the young men flourish,
and sweet wine the maidens.

Faithfulness to Yahweh

Dt 11:14
Ps 135:7

10 Ask Yahweh for rain 1
at the time of the spring rains.
For it is Yahweh who sends the lightning
and gives the showers of rain;
he gives bread to man,
and grass to the cattle.[a]

1 S 15:22+
Hab 2:18

Because the teraphim utter futile words 2
and the diviners have lying visions[b]
and publish empty dreams
and voice misleading nonsense,

zk 34:5
EMt 9:36

naturally the people stray like sheep;
they wander because they have no shepherd.[c]

Israel's deliverance and return[d]

Ezk 34:2

'My anger burns against the shepherds, 3
and I mean to punish the he-goats.'
Yes, Yahweh (Sabaoth) will take care of[e] his flock
(the House of Judah),
he will make it his proud steed (in battle).
From him will issue Cornerstone and Tent-peg,[f] 4
from him the Bow of battle,

from him all the Leaders.
5 Together •they will be like heroes
trampling the dirt of the streets (in battle);
they will fight, since Yahweh is with them,
and the riders of horses will be thrown into confusion.

6 And I will make the House of Judah mighty,
and the House of Joseph victorious.
I am going to restore them, because I have taken pity on them,
and they shall be as though I had never cast them off
(for I am Yahweh their God and I mean to answer their prayer). Is 41:17

7 Ephraim will be like a hero.
Their hearts will be cheered as though by wine. Ps 104:15
Their sons will look on this in gladness,
their hearts will exult in Yahweh.

8 I am going to whistle to them and gather them in
(for I have redeemed them);[g]
they will be as numerous as they used to be.
9 I have scattered them among the peoples
but from far away they will remember me Dt 30:1-3 Lk 15:17
(they will teach their sons, and these will return).[h]
10 I mean to bring them back from the land of Egypt,
and gather them from Assyria;
I shall lead them into the land of Gilead (and Lebanon),[i]
and even that will not be large enough for them.
11 They will pass through the sea of Egypt[j]
(and he will strike the waves on the sea);
all the depths of the Nile will be dried up.
The arrogance of Assyria will be cast down
and the sceptre of Egypt be taken away.

12 Their strength will be in Yahweh;
in his name they will glory:[k]
it is Yahweh who speaks.
1 **11** Open your gateways, Lebanon,
and let the fire burn down your cedars.[a]
2 (Wail, cypress,
for felled is the cedar,

m. That is, from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea and from the Euphrates to the extreme south.

n. Allusion either to the ceremony at Sinai, Ex 24:5f, or to the sacrifices offered in the temple.

o. 'To you... return' corr.; 'Return to your stronghold' Hebr. 'In compensation for your days of banishment' corr. following Greek. 'Today I declare' Hebr.

p. 'The Greeks'. This gloss refers to the conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander.

q. Hebr. 'They will devour and trample'.

r. Text corr. following Greek; Hebr. 'they will drink, they will be turbulent like wine'.

s. Hebr. inserts 'like a libation bowl'.

10 a. 'and gives...' corr.; 'he will givet hem showers of rain, to everyone grass in the field' Hebr.

b. The *teraphim* here are instruments of divination, cf. Ezk 21:26. For the practice of divination after the Exile, cf. Ml 3:5, compare Lv 19:31; 20:6.

c. 'voice' corr.; 'console with' Hebr. 'stray' corr.; 'go their way' Hebr. 'wander' corr.; 'reply' Hebr.; 'are distressed' Greek.

d. This passage is a mixture of fragments in which Yahweh speaks, vv. 3a,6,8-11, and others in which Yahweh is spoken of in the third person, vv. 3b,5,7,12, 11:1-3.

e. 'will take care of' Greek; 'has taken care of' Hebr. The verb (often translated 'visit') in this line has a favourable sense, though in the preceding line the sense of 'punishment': the 'shepherds', cf. Is 44:28; Jr 25:34f; Na 3:18, and 'he-goats', cf. Dn 8:5f, are the foreign tyrants ruling the people of God.

f. Metaphors for the leaders who will eventually rise from the people.

g. 'have redeemed' Hebr.; 'will redeem' Greek.

h. 'have scattered' corr.; 'will scatter' Hebr. 'will teach' corr.; 'will rear' Greek.

i. Assyria and Egypt here represent oppressors in general. Gilead was the first territory to be conquered after the Exodus, cf. Is 40:3+.

j. 'They' Greek; 'He' Hebr. 'the sea of Egypt' corr.; 'the sea, the distress' Hebr.; 'the narrow sea' Greek.

k. 'Their strength will be' corr.; 'I shall make them strong' Hebr. 'glory' Greek; 'walk' Hebr.

11 a. Symbols of the great powers, cf. Is 10:33f; Ezk 31, or of their kings.

the mighty ones have been brought low!)
Wail, oaks of Bashan,
for the impenetrable forest has been felled!
The wailing of the shepherds is heard; 3
their glorious pastures[b] have been ruined.
The roaring of the young lions is heard;
the thickets of the Jordan have been laid waste.

Ezk 34:1+ **The two shepherds[c]**

Jr 12:3 This is how Yahweh spoke to me,[d] 'Pasture the sheep bred for slaughter, •whose 4
5 buyers kill them and go unpunished, whose sellers say of them, "Blessed be Yahweh; now I am rich!" and their shepherds handle[e] them without kindness.
6 (For no longer am I going to show kindness to the inhabitants of the world—it is Yahweh who speaks. But instead I mean to hand over every man to the next, and to his king. They shall devastate the world and I will not deliver them
7 from their hands.)'[f] •Then I began to pasture these sheep bred for slaughter for
Ezk 37:19 the sheepdealers.[g] I took two staves: one I called Goodwill, the other Union.
8 And so I began to pasture the sheep. •I dismissed the three shepherds in one
9 month.[h] But I began to dislike the sheep, and they equally detested me.[i] •I then said, 'I am going to pasture you no longer; let those that wish to die, die; let those that wish to perish, perish; and let those that are left devour each other's
10 flesh!' •I then took my staff, Goodwill, and broke it in half, to break the covenant Yahweh had made with all the peoples.[j] •When it was broken, that day the
11 dealers, who were watching me, realised that this had been a word of Yahweh.
12 I then said to them, 'If you think it right, give me my wages; if not, never mind'.
↗Mt 26:15; ↗27:3-10 And they weighed out my wages: thirty shekels of silver.[k] •But Yahweh told me,
13 'Throw it into the treasury, this princely sum at which they have valued me'.[l] Taking the thirty shekels of silver, I threw them into the Temple of Yahweh,
Ezk 37:19 into the treasury. •I then broke my second staff, Union, in half, to break the
14 brotherhood between Judah and Israel.[m]

15 Next, Yahweh said to me, 'Now take the gear of an incompetent
Ezk 34:2-4 shepherd.[n] •For I am now going to raise an incompetent shepherd in this country.
16 Is 42:3 Mt 12:20 He will not bother about the lost; he will not look for the stray; he will not heal the wounded; he will not support the weary; but he will only eat the flesh *of the fat beasts and tear off their hoofs.*

↗Jn 10:12-13
17 'Trouble is coming to the worthless shepherd
who deserts the flock!
May the sword strike his arm
and his right eye!
May his arm wither entirely,
may his eye be totally blinded!'

Jl 4:1 **The deliverance and restoration of Jerusalem**

12 An oracle. The word of Yahweh about Israel. It is Yahweh who speaks, 1
Gn 2:7 Ps 33:15 Is 42:5 who spread out the heaven and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him:

Is 51:17+ 'Look, I am going to make Jerusalem an intoxicating cup to all the surrounding 2
peoples. . .[a]

'When that day comes, I mean to make Jerusalem a stone to be lifted by all 3
the peoples; all who try to lift it will hurt themselves severely. (And all the nations of the earth will mass against her.) •When that day comes—it is Yahweh 4
who speaks—I intend to strike all the horses with confusion and their riders with madness. (But on the House of Judah I will open my eyes.) And I will strike all the horses of the peoples with blindness. •Then the clans of Judah will say 5
in their hearts, "Strength for the citizens of Jerusalem is in Yahweh Sabaoth

6 their God".[b] •When that day comes I mean to make the clans of Judah like a
brazier burning in a pile of wood, like a flaming torch in stubble; and they will
consume the peoples round them to right and left. And Jerusalem shall stand =14:10
7 firm in her place.[c] •Yahweh will save the tents of Judah first to forestall the
arrogance of the House of David and the arrogance of the citizens of Jerusalem
8 from rising to the detriment of Judah. •When that day comes, Yahweh will
spread his protection over the citizens of Jerusalem; the one among them who
was about to fall will be like David on that day, and the House of David[d] will
be like God (like the angel of Yahweh) at their head.

9 'When that day comes, I shall set myself to destroy all the nations who 14:3
10 advance against Jerusalem. •But over the House of David and the citizens of Mt 24:30
Jerusalem I will pour out a spirit of kindness and prayer. They will look on the Jn 3:14+; ↗19:37 ↗Rv 1:7
one whom they have pierced;[e] they will mourn for him as for an only son, and
11 weep for him as people weep for a first-born child. •When that day comes, there Am 8:10 Jn 3:16 Col 1:15,18
will be great mourning in Judah, like the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the
12 plain of Megiddo. •And the country will mourn clan by clan; the clan of the
13 House of David apart, with their wives by themselves; •the clan of the House
of Nathan[f] apart, with their wives by themselves; the clan of the House of Levi
apart, with their wives by themselves; the clan of Shimei[g] apart, with their
14 wives by themselves. •All the clans that remain, clan by clan, with their wives
1 by themselves. 13 When that day comes, a fountain will be opened for the House Ezk 36:25; 47:1 Jn 7:38f; 19:34
of David and the citizens of Jerusalem, for sin and impurity.

2 'When that day comes—it is Yahweh (Sabaoth) who speaks—I am going to
root out the names of the idols from the country, and they shall never be Ws 14:11
mentioned again; and I will also rid the country of the prophets,[a] and of the Ne 6:14
3 spirit of impurity. •If anyone still wants to prophesy, his father and the mother
who gave him birth shall say to him, "You have no right to live, since you utter

b. 'glorious pastures' corr., cf. Jr 25:36; 'glory' Hebr.

c. This section on the shepherds, cf. Ezk 34:1+, ends with a messianic prophecy, in 13:7-9. Here, in vv. 4-14, recent events are reviewed allegorically and Providence is vindicated. The prophet acts the part of Yahweh, whose sovereign pastoral charge he has, as it were, taken on himself. But Israel has not understood the benefits God wanted to confer; Yahweh will therefore give them a wicked shepherd, whom the prophet is ordered to mime, vv. 15-17, acting the return to former infidelities.

d. 'Yahweh spoke to me' corr.; 'Yahweh my God spoke' Hebr.

e. 'say', 'handle' corr.; Hebr. reads the singular. The buyers and sellers are the Jewish ruling classes: money and intrigue give them control over the 'shepherds' of the people.

f. This verse, referring to international catastrophe, is a gloss alien to the context.

g. Lit. 'for the Canaanites (a term often used for dealers) of the sheep' following Greek; 'certainly the most wretched of the sheep' Hebr.

h. Alluding to a succession of high priests deposed by Yahweh, whose part is here acted and spoken by the prophet. After the Exile the priests were the heads of the Jewish community. The 'month' symbolises the time of God's favour of which the Jews have not taken advantage.

i. The nation proves to be ungovernable.

j. 'the covenant Yahweh had made' corr.; 'my covenant that I had made' Hebr. Yahweh will no longer protect the Jewish nation from its neighbours.

k. A ruler has a right to remuneration, cf. Ne 5:15. In this allegory the wages given by the ruling classes to the prophet (who represents Yahweh) are insultingly small—the price of a slave, Ex 31:32. In brief, they are laughing at Yahweh. Mt 27:3-10 applies vv. 12-13 to Jesus of whom the prophet (playing the part of Yahweh) is the antetype.

l. 'into the treasury' Syr., Targ.; 'to the potter' Hebr.; 'into the furnace' Greek. According to 2 M 3:4f, private as well as public funds could be deposited in the Temple treasury.

m. This passage may be the earliest evidence we have of the Samaritan schism. According to Josephus, it was in about the year 328 that the Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. In this case, the breaking of the staves symbolises the recrudescence of foreign oppression (v. 10) and the definitive schism at home.

n. 'incompetent' conj.

12 a. Hebr. adds a sentence which is practically untranslatable. It may be considered a double gloss, wrongly inserted here, on the title of v. 1: 'and also about Judah, (which) will be besieged'; 'with regard to Jerusalem'. The Greek harmonises 'And in Judah there will be siege-works against Jerusalem'.

b. 'clans' corr.; 'leaders' Hebr.; so also in v. 6, 'for the citizens' corr.; 'for me, the citizens' Hebr.

c. Hebr. adds 'in Jerusalem'.

d. In the messianic age the Davidic dynasty will be restored.

e. 'the one' Theodotian, Jn 19:37; 'me' Hebr. The death of the Pierced One occurs in an eschatological context (cf. Rv 1:7), cf. the raising of the siege of Jerusalem, the national mourning, vv. 10-14, the opening of a fountain of salvation, 13:1. The messianic age thus depends on a passion and a mysterious death comparable to the sufferings of the servant in Is 52:13–53:12. Jn 19:37 sees in this passage the figure of the Passion of Christ, the 'only son' and the 'first-born', cf. Jn 1:18; Col 1:15, whose pierced body will be 'looked on' with the saving eye of faith, cf. Jn 3:14+; Nb 21: 8-9, and whose opened side is a fountain of salvation cf. Jn 19:34; 7:38.

f. I.e. Nathan son of David, 2 S 5:14f.

g. I.e. Shimei, a descendant of Gershom son of Levi, cf. Nb 3:21.

13 a. Prophecy as an institution is to cease, the false prophets having discredited it by their abuses, cf. Jr 23:9f; Ezk 13.

lies in the name of Yahweh". And while he is prophesying, his father and the mother who gave him birth shall run him through. •When that day comes, 4
2 K 1:8 Mt 3:4 every prophet shall be ashamed of his prophetic vision; they will no longer put on their hair cloaks to utter their lies, •but they will all say, "I am no prophet. 5
I am a peasant; the land has been my living[b] ever since I was a boy." •And if 6
1 K 18:28 anyone asks him, "Then what are these wounds on your body?" he will reply, " These I received in the house of my friends".[c]

Invocation to the sword; the new people[d]

Ezk 34:1+ 'Awake, sword, against my shepherd 7
and against the man who is my companion—
it is Yahweh Sabaoth who speaks.
Ezk 34:1+ / Mt 26:31 / Mk 14:27 / Jn 16:32 I am going to strike[e] the shepherd
so that the sheep may be scattered,
and I will turn my hand against the weak.
And it will happen throughout this territory— 8
it is Yahweh who speaks—
that two-thirds in it will be cut off ('will be killed')
and the remaining third will be left.
I will lead that third into the fire, 9
Is 1:25; 48:10 and refine them as silver is refined,
test them as gold is tested.
Ps 91:15 Is 65:24 They will call on my name
and I shall listen;
1:17 and I shall say:[f] These are my people;
Jr 31:31+ and each will say, "Yahweh is my God!"'

The eschatological battle; the splendour of Jerusalem[a]

14 See, a day is coming for Yahweh when the spoils taken from you will 1
be divided among you. •Yahweh will[b] gather all the nations to Jerusalem 2
Jl 4:2,12 for battle. The city will be taken, the houses plundered, the women ravished.
Half the city will go into captivity, but the remnant of the people will not be
12:9 cut off from the city. •Then Yahweh will take the field; he will fight against 3
Mi 1:4 Ac 1:11 these nations as he fights in the day of battle. •On that day, his feet will rest on 4
the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem from the east. The Mount of Olives
will be split in half from east to west, forming a huge gorge; half the Mount
will recede northwards, the other half southwards. •And the Vale of Hinnom will 5
J 31:39 be filled up from Goah to Jasol;[c] it will be blocked as it was[d] by the earthquake
Am 1:1 in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Yahweh your God will come, and all the
Mt 16:27p 1 Th 3:13 holy ones with him.[e]
When that day comes, there will be no more cold, no more frost.[f] •It will 6 7
Rv 21:23 be a day of wonder—Yahweh knows it—with no alternation of day and night;
Ezk 47:1+,8 Jl 4:18 in the evening it will be light. •When that day comes, running waters will issue 8
Jn 4:1+ from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea, half of them to the western
Ps 22:28 Rv 11:15 sea; they will flow[g] summer and winter. •And Yahweh will be king of the whole 9
world. When that day comes, Yahweh will be unique and his name unique.[h] •The 10
=12:6 entire country will be transformed into plain, from Geba to Rimmon
in the Negeb. And Jerusalem will be raised higher, though still in the same
place; from the Gate of Benjamin to the site of the First Gate, that is to say to
the Gate of the Corner and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepress,[i]
Jr 31:40 / Rv 22:3 people will make their homes. The ban will be lifted; Jerusalem will be safe to 11
live in.
And this is the plague with which Yahweh will strike all the nations who 12
Is 66:24 have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh will moulder[j] while they are still
standing on their feet; their eyes will rot in their sockets; their tongues will
rot in their mouths. •And such will be the plague on the horses and mules, 15

13 camels and donkeys, and all the animals to be found in that camp. •When that
day comes, a great terror will fall on them from Yahweh; each man will grab
14 his neighbour's hand and they will hit out at each other. •Even Judah will fight Ezk 38:21
against Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be heaped
together: gold, silver, clothing, in vast quantity.[k]
16 All who survive[l] of all the nations that have marched against Jerusalem will Is 2:2
go up year by year to worship the King, Yahweh Sabaoth, and to keep the feast
17 of Tabernacles.[m] •Should one of the races of the world fail to go up to Jerusalem Ex 23:14+ Jn 7:2
18 to worship the King, Yahweh Sabaoth, there will be no rain for that one. •Should
the race of Egypt fail to go up and pay its visit, on it will[n] fall the plague which
Yahweh will inflict on each one of those nations that fail to go up to keep the
19 feast of Tabernacles. •Such shall be the punishment for Egypt and for all the
20 nations that fail to go up to keep the feast of Tabernacles. •When that day
comes, the horse bells will be inscribed with the words, 'Sacred to Yahweh', and
in the Temple of Yahweh the very cooking pots will be as fine as the sprinkling
21 bowls at the altar. •And every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall Ex 28:36
become sacred to Yahweh Sabaoth; all who want to offer sacrifice will come
and help themselves from them for their cooking; there will be no more traders Jn 2:16
in the Temple of Yahweh Sabaoth, when that day comes.[o]

b. 'the land has been my living' (lit. 'possession') corr.; 'A man has made me his possession' Hebr.

c. 'on your body', lit. 'between your hands'. The prophets of antiquity used to gash their bodies, cf. 1 K 18:28, etc.; the man who bears such scars is accused here of being a prophet; he defends himself by claiming that the wounds were inflicted in a brawl with his companions.

d. A messianic passage. The 'shepherd' here is neither the good shepherd of 11:4-14 nor the bad one of 11:15-16, but, without further definition, the leader of the people, the vicegerent of Yahweh. The sword which is about to strike him will hand over the whole nation to the final ordeal which must precede the messianic age. This ordeal is described in the traditional imagery of the sheep without a shepherd, Ezk 34:5, the 'remnant', Is 4:3+, the 'one-third', Ezk 5:1-4, the refining fire, Jr 6:29-30. The nation will then be ready for the new covenant, cf. Jr 31:31+.

e. 'I am going to strike' conj., cf. some Greek MSS and Mt 26:31; 'Strike' Hebr.

f. 'I shall say' Greek; 'I said' Hebr.

14 a. This chapter is a tissue of elaborations on the eschatological struggle, vv. 1-5,12-15, and descriptions of the new order which is to follow it.

b. 'Yahweh will' corr.; 'I shall' Hebr.

c. Text corr.

d. 'it will be blocked as it was' Greek; 'you will flee as you fled' Hebr.

e. 'your (thy) God' corr.; 'my God' Hebr. 'with him' Greek; 'with thee' Hebr.

f. Text corr. from Greek: 'there will be no light, no cold, no frost'; Hebr. 'there will be no light; the precious things will be heaped up'.

g. Lit. 'they will be living' corr.; 'it will be' Hebr. Gihon is the only source of fresh water in Jerusalem.

h. Repetition for the sake of solemnity: the 'name' of Yahweh is Yahweh himself. The adoption of monotheism by all the nations of the world is one of the characteristics of the messianic age, cf. Ml 1:11.

i. 'to Rimmon in (of) the Negeb. And Jerusalem' corr.; 'to Rimmon. The Negeb of Jerusalem' Hebr. 'of the Corner' corr. 'from the Tower' corr.

j. 'will moulder' Greek.

k. V. 15 is placed after v. 12.

l. 'all who survive' Greek; 'every one who survives' Hebr.

m. The feast of Tabernacles has been chosen presumably because it celebrates the sovereignty of Yahweh.

n. 'will' Greek; 'will not' Hebr.

o. The author, remembering Ezekiel, foresees the sanctification of everything in the land of Israel in the messianic age.

MALACHI

1 An oracle.
The word of Yahweh to Israel through the ministration of Malachi.[a] 1

The love of Yahweh for Israel

Dt 4:37; 7:7f
Is 54:8+
Ezk 16
Ho 11:1
I have shown my love for you, says Yahweh. But you ask, 'How have you 2
shown your love?' Was not Esau[b] Jacob's brother?—it is Yahweh who speaks;
Gn 25:23
↗ Rm 9:13
yet I showed my love for Jacob •and my hatred for Esau. I turned his towns into 3
a wilderness and his heritage into desert pastures.[c] •Should Edom say, 'We 4
have been struck down but we will rebuild our ruins', this is the reply of Yahweh
Sabaoth: Let them build! I will pull down. They shall be known as Unholy
Land and Nation-with-which-Yahweh-is-angry-for-ever. •Your eyes are 5
going to see this and you will say, 'Yahweh is mighty beyond the borders
of Israel'.

An indictment of the priests

Ex 20:12
Dt 1:31; 32:6
Is 29:13
The son honours his father, the slave respects[d] his master. If I am indeed 6
father, where is my honour? If I am indeed master, where is my respect? Yahweh
Sabaoth asks this of you, priests, you who despise my name. You ask, 'How
have we despised your name?' •By putting polluted food on my altar. You ask, 7
'How have we polluted it?' By holding the table of Yahweh in contempt.[e] •When 8
Lv 22:18-25
you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you bring the
lame and the diseased, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your high commis-
sioner, and see if he is pleased with this[f] or receives you graciously, says Yahweh
Sabaoth. •Now try pleading with God to take pity on us (this is your own fault);[g] 9
do you think he will receive you graciously? says Yahweh Sabaoth. •Oh, is 10
there no one among you who will shut the doors and stop you from lighting
Jr 6:20
Am 5:21+
useless fires on my altar? I am not pleased with you, says Yahweh Sabaoth;
from your hands I find no offerings acceptable. •But from farthest east to farthest 11
Ps 48:10;
138:4
Zp 3:9
west my name is honoured among the nations and everywhere a sacrifice of
incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering[h] too, since my name is
honoured among the nations, says Yahweh Sabaoth. •But you, you profane it 12
by thinking of the Lord's table as defiled and by holding in contempt[i] the food
placed on it. •'How tiresome it all is!' you say; and you sniff disdainfully at 13
Lv 22:18-25
me, says Yahweh Sabaoth. You bring a stolen, lame or diseased animal, you
bring that as an offering! Am I to accept this from your hand? says Yahweh
Sabaoth.[j] •Cursed be the rogue who owns a male which he has vowed to offer 14
Ps 102:15
from his flock, and instead sacrifices a blemished animal to me![k] For I am a great
king, says Yahweh Sabaoth, and my name is feared throughout the nations.
Ho 4:6
2 And now, priests, this warning is for you. •If you do not listen, if you do ½
not find it in your heart to glorify my name, says Yahweh Sabaoth, I will

send the curse on you and curse your very blessing.[a] Indeed I have already Dt 28:15
3 cursed it, since there is not a single one of you who takes this to heart. •Now
watch how I am going to paralyse your arm and throw dung in your face—the
4 dung from your very solemnities—and sweep you away with it.[b] •Then you
shall learn that it is I who have given you this warning of my intention to abolish Nb 25:12f Dt 18:1-8; 33:8-11
5 my covenant with Levi,[c] says Yahweh Sabaoth. •My covenant was with him:
it stood for life and peace, and these were what I gave him; it stood for fear
6 and trembling,[d] and he respected me and stood in awe of my name. •The teaching Dt 33:9-10
of truth was in his mouth, falsehood was not to be found on his lips; he walked
7 with me in integrity and virtue; he converted many from sinning. •The
lips of the priest ought to safeguard knowledge; his mouth is where instruction Dt 21:5
8 should be sought, since he is the messenger of Yahweh Sabaoth. •But you,
you have strayed from the way; you have caused many to stumble by your Mt 23:13,15
teaching.[e] You have destroyed the covenant of Levi, says Yahweh Sabaoth.
9 And so I in my turn have made you contemptible and vile in the eyes of the
whole people in repayment for the way you have not kept to my paths but have
shown partiality in your administration.

Mixed marriage and divorce

Ezr 9:1

10 Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why, then, do we Ep 4:6
11 break faith with one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors? •Judah
has broken faith: a detestable thing has been done (in Israel and) in Jerusalem.
Yes, Judah has profaned the sanctuary that Yahweh loves.[f] He has married
12 the daughter of an alien god.[g] •The man who does this—whoever he be[h]—may
Yahweh cut him off from the tents of Jacob and from the company of those
13 who present the offering[i] to Yahweh Sabaoth. •And here is something else you
do: you cover the altar of Yahweh with tears, with weeping and wailing, because
14 he now refuses to consider the offering or to accept it from your hands. •And
you ask, 'Why?' It is because Yahweh stands as witness between you and the
wife of your youth, the wife with whom you have broken faith, even though
15 she was your partner and your wife by covenant. •Did he not create a single
being that has flesh and the breath of life? And what is this single being destined Gn 2:24 Mt 5:31-32p Ep 5:24-32
for? God-given offspring. Be careful for your own life, therefore, and do not
16 break faith with the wife of your youth.[j] •For I hate divorce, says Yahweh the
God of Israel, and I hate people to parade their sins on their cloaks,[k] says

1 a. Greek 'through the ministration of his messenger' ('Malachi' means 'my messenger'); Targ. adds 'whose name is Ezra the scribe'. Greek adds 'Lay (that) therefore to your hearts'.

b. Esau is the eponymous ancestor of Edom, cf. Nb 20:23+.

c. 'towns' corr.; 'mountains' Hebr. 'pastures' Greek, Syr.; 'for dragons' (jackals?) Hebr.

d. 'respects' Greek, Targ.

e. 'have we polluted it' Greek, Targ.; 'have we polluted you' Hebr. 'By holdin'g, lit. 'By saying'.

f. 'this' Greek; 'you' Hebr.

g. A gloss inserted to correct a possible impression that the prophet shares responsibility for the sufferings of Judah.

h. 'everywhere... pure offering' Greek; 'everywhere there is burnt sacrifice, there is offering to my name, and a pure offering' Hebr. The form of worship of which the prophet speaks here as addressed to Yahweh is not so much the widespread cult in the Persian empire (cf. Ezr 1:2+) of the 'God of heaven' (Ne 1:4f; 2:4,20; Ezr 1:2; 5:11f; 6:9f; 7:12,21,23; Dn 2:18; 4:34; 5:23), as the perfect sacrifice of the messianic age. The Council of Trent endorsed this interpretation.

i. 'by thinking', lit. 'by saying'. 'the food in contempt'; Hebr. 'and its fruit is contemptible, its food'.

j. 'me' some versions; 'him' Hebr. 'bring that as an offering' corr.; 'bring the offering' Hebr. 'Sabaoth' Greek.

k. 'he has vowed' following Greek. 'sacrifices to me' corr.; 'sacrifices to the Lord' Hebr.

2 a. 'blessing' Greek; 'blessings' Hebr. The 'blessing' referred to here is the levitical revenue.

b. 'paralyse' lit. 'break'; 'break your arm' Greek, Vulg.; 'rebuke (curse) your offspring' Hebr. '(I will) sweep (lit. 'take') you away with it' Syr.; 'and he shall take you away towards him' Hebr.

c. Lit. '...warning, so that my covenant with Levi may no longer hold' corr.; 'may hold' Hebr.

d. 'and trembling' corr.

e. 'by your teaching' lit. 'by the Law'.

f. The crimes of the nation defile the Temple.

g. 'Judah', hitherto understood collectively, is now used in the distributive sense: individual members of Judah marry the 'daughters' of an alien god, i.e. idolatresses.

h. Lit. 'witness (corr.) and respondent'. The phrase indicates 'all without exception'.

i. 'and from the company of those who present the offering' Greek.

j. 'Did he not create' Vulg. 'that has flesh and the breath of life' corr.; 'having a residue of life' Hebr. 'do not break faith' lit. 'do not be faithless'; 'do not' corr.; 'let him not' Hebr.

k. 'I hate' corr.; 'he hates' Hebr. 'people to parade' lit. 'that one should parade' corr.; 'he has paraded' Hebr.

Yahweh Sabaoth. Respect your own life, therefore, and do not break faith like this.

The day of Yahweh

You weary Yahweh with your talk. You ask, 'How do we weary him?' When 17
Jb 21:7-8 Ps 37:1; 42: 3; 58-11 you say, 'Any evil-doer is good as far as Yahweh is concerned; indeed he likes them best'; or when you say, 'Where is the God of justice now?' 3 Look, I am 1
↗ Mt 11: 10+ Mk 1:2 Lk 1:76 going to send my messenger to prepare a way before me.[a] And the Lord you are seeking will suddenly enter his Temple; and the angel of the covenant[b] Jn 2:15 Ac 13:25 whom you are longing for, yes, he is coming, says Yahweh Sabaoth. •Who will be 2
Jl 2:11 Zp 1:14 able to resist the day of his coming? Who will remain standing when he ap-pears?
1 P 1:7 For he is like the refiner's fire and the fullers' alkali. •He will take his seat 3
1 S 6:20 Jr 6:29+ as refiner and purifier;[c] he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and then they will make the offering to Yahweh as it should be made. •The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will then be welcomed by Yahweh 4
as in former days, as in the years of old. •I mean to visit you for the 5
judgement and I am going to be a ready witness against sorcerer, adulterer
Ex 22:20-21+ and perjurer, against those who oppress the wage-earner, the widow and the
Dt 24:14-15 orphan, and who rob the settler of his rights—no need for you to be afraid of me, says Yahweh Sabaoth.

Temple tithes[d]

Nb 23:19+ Ps 77:10 No; I, Yahweh, do not change; and you, sons of Jacob, you are not ruined 6
yet! •Since the days of your ancestors you have evaded my statutes and not 7
‖Zc 1:3 observed them. Return to me and I will return to you, says Yahweh Sabaoth.
You ask, 'How are we to return? •Can a man cheat[e] God?' Yet you are cheating 8
me. You ask, 'How are we cheating you?' In the matter of tithes and
Dt 28:15 dues.[f] The curse lies on you because you, yes you the whole nation, are cheating 9
Pr 3:9-10 me. •Bring the full tithes and dues[g] to the storehouse so that there may be food 10
Dt 28:8.12 Ps 78:23-24 in my house, and then see if I do not open the floodgates of heaven for you and pour out blessing for you in abundance. •For your sake I will lay a strict 11
Jl 1:4 injunction on the locust not to destroy the fruits of your soil nor to make the
Is 61:9 vine in your fields barren, says Yahweh Sabaoth. •All the nations will call 12
you blessed, for you will be a land of delights, says Yahweh Sabaoth.

The triumph of the virtuous on the day of Yahweh

You say harsh things about me, says Yahweh. You ask, 'What have we said 13
Jb 21:14-15 Ps 73:13 Is 58:3 against you?' •You say, 'It is useless to serve God; what is the good of keeping 14
his commands or of walking mournfully before Yahweh Sabaoth? •Now we 15
have reached the point when we call the arrogant blessed; yes, they prosper,
these evil-doers; they try God's patience and yet go free.' •This is what those 16
who fear Yahweh used to say to one another. But Yahweh took note and heard
Ps 139:16 Dn 7:10+ them: a book of remembrance was written in his presence recording those who
Ps 115:11 fear him and take refuge in his name.[h] •On the day which I am preparing, says 17
Yahweh Sabaoth, they are going to be my own special possession. I will make
Ps 103:13 allowances for them as a man makes allowances for the son who obeys him.
Jb 21:8 Ps 58:11 Then once again you will see the difference between an upright man and a wicked 18
one, between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve him.
Am 5:18+ For the day is coming now, burning like a furnace;[i] and all the arrogant and 19 *4:1*
the evil-doers will be like stubble. The day that is coming is going to burn them
up, says Yahweh Sabaoth, leaving them neither root nor stalk. •But for you 20 *2*
Ws 19:9 who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will shine out with healing in its rays;[k]
↗ Lk 1:78 Jn 8:12+ you will leap like calves going out to pasture. •You will trample on the wicked, 21 *3*
who will be like ashes under your feet on the day I am preparing, says Yahweh Sabaoth.

Appendices

22 4 Remember the Law of my servant Moses to whom at Horeb I prescribed
23 5 laws and customs for the whole of Israel. •Know that I am going to send you
24 6 Elijah the prophet before my day[l] comes, that great and terrible day.[m] •He shall
turn the hearts of fathers towards their children and the hearts of children
towards their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a curse.[n]

↗ Si 48:10 Mt 11:14; 17:10-13p Mk 9:11-12 ↗ Lk 1:17

Jos 6:17+

l. On the problem set by the prosperity of the wicked at a time when only earthly sanctions were envisaged, see Jb, Ps 37 and 73, and Introduction to Wisdom Books.

3 a. The precursor of Yahweh, already spoken of in Is 40:3, will be identified with Elijah, Ml 3:23, Mt 11:10 applies this text to John the Baptist, the new Elijah, Mt 11:14.

b. The angel of the new covenant is not the precursor spoken of above, since his arrival at the Temple is simultaneous with that of Yahweh. It is probably an enigmatic designation of Yahweh himself, derived from Ex 3:2; 23:20, cf Gn 16:7+. Mt 11:10 implies its application to Jesus.

c. Hebr. adds 'of silver'.

d. This passage should perhaps be linked with 1:2-5, in which case it would provide the answer to the sceptical question of 1:2.

e. 'cheat' corr.; 'rob' Hebr.

f. On tithes cf. Dt 14:22+. According to the 'Priestly' passages, Lv 27:30f; Nb 18:21-31, they are a tax imposed for the upkeep of those who serve the one, single, sanctuary; see also Ne 10:36f; 12:44.

g. 'and dues' corr.

h. 'This is what' lit. 'Thus' Greek; 'Then' Hebr. 'take refuge in' corr.; 'think on' Hebr.; 'reverence' Greek.

i. For the fire on the day of Yahweh, cf. Is 10:16f; 30:27; Zp 1:18; 3:8; Jr 21:14.

j. 'righteousness' here implies power and triumph as in Is 41:2+. The title 'sun of righteousness' applied to Christ has to some extent conditioned the liturgy of Christmas and Epiphany.

k. Lit. 'in its wings'.

l. 'my day' corr.; 'the day of Yahweh' Hebr.

m. Elijah, taken up to heaven, 2 K 2:11-13, will return. This return, predicted in this passage, was to remain an important feature of Jewish eschatology, cf. the *Book of Enoch*. Jesus explained that Elijah had indeed come—in the person of John the Baptist, Mt 17: 1-13, Mk 9:2-13; Mt 11:7-14.

n. Lit. 'strike the land with a ban'; cf. Jos 6:17+.

THE
NEW TESTAMENT

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

INTRODUCTION TO
THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Of the four canonical books that record the 'Good News' (*evangelium*, gospel) brought by Jesus Christ, the first three are so alike that they can, in many passages, be placed side by side and viewed as it were at a glance: for this reason they are called 'synoptic' ('with one eye').

Tradition dating from the 2nd century assigns them respectively to Saints Matthew, Mark and Luke. According to the same ecclesiastical tradition Matthew the publican, himself one of the apostles (Mt 9:9; 10:3), was the first to write; he wrote his gospel in Palestine for Christians converted from Judaism. His work, composed in 'the Hebrew tongue', i.e. in Aramaic, was then translated into Greek. John Mark, a disciple from Jerusalem (Ac 12:12) who assisted Paul in his apostolic work (Ac 12:25; 13:5,13; Phm 24; 2 Tm 4:11), and Barnabas his cousin (Ac 15:37,39; Col 4:10) and Peter (1 P 5:13), whose 'interpreter' he was, put Peter's preaching down in writing at Rome. Another disciple, Luke, a medical man (Col 4:14) and, unlike Matthew and Mark, of pagan origin (Col 4:10-14), born at Antioch according to some authorities, accompanied Paul on the latter's second (Ac 16:10f) and third (Ac 20:5f) missionary journeys and was with him during his two Roman captivities (Ac 27:1f; 2 Tm 4:11). For this reason his gospel, the third to be written, could claim the authority of Paul (cf. perhaps 2 Co 8:18) as that of Mark could claim the authority of Peter. Luke composed also a second work—the 'Acts of the Apostles'. The original language of the second and third gospels is Greek.

These traditional data are confirmed and amplified by an internal examination of the three gospels; but before going on with this, it is necessary to say something about the problem of the literary relations between these gospels, i.e. 'The Synoptic Problem'.

All the many solutions offered so far prove inadequate if taken separately, though each contributes an element of truth to the complete solution. In the first place it is highly probable, even certain, that a *common oral tradition* was committed to writing by each of the three Synoptics independently, and consequently with variations. By itself this tradition would never have been able to account for the many striking similarities which exist not only between details in the text but also in the sequence of passages, resemblances which cannot be explained even by the extraordinary memory of people in the ancient Middle East. As for a *written tradition*, in one or many forms, this would be a far better explanation. But even supposing the three evangelists did draw independently on some such written source or sources, that could never explain passages where these likenesses and divergencies show that the evangelists were aware of each other, as is obvious from the fact that at times they copy

or correct each other. There must have been some direct interdependence and it is clear that Luke depends on Mark. It is not so clear however that Mark depends on Matthew: though this was held for a long time, a number of indications now suggest the reverse. As for Matthew and Luke, no direct dependence in either direction can be considered probable, and the non-Marcan passages common to these two probably have their common source or sources outside the second gospel.

Starting from these textual considerations modern critics have worked out a *'Two Source Theory'* according to which these sources are: 1. Mark, on whom Matthew and Luke depend for their narrative sections; 2. a source the existence of which is inferred purely from the textual evidence, and which is called 'Q' (initial of the German word *Quelle*, source). From Q, both the first and third gospels draw the 'Sayings' or discourses of Jesus ('Logia'), which in Mark are reduced to a minimum. This hypothesis is a step towards the solution but it involves some grave difficulties. 1. It abandons the traditional belief in the Aramaic origin of the first gospel and in its priority over Mark. Moreover it does not take sufficient account of textual facts which confirm this tradition, facts which suggest that Matthew is not entirely dependent, even in narrative sections, on Mark and that there are times when Matthew appears to represent an even more primitive text than Mark. 2. As for Q, it is hard to see how such a document could have existed at all (at least in any of the many forms suggested) and if it did it would never have accounted sufficiently for all the complicated relationships that can be established between the first and third gospels.

Particularly in Catholic circles, recent criticism has attempted to answer these two difficulties (the evidence of an Aramaic original and the inadequacy of Q). It maintains: 1. that a primitive form of the first gospel in Aramaic existed as distinct from its later Greek form: this, it is claimed, is a far better explanation of the complicated relationship between Matthew and Mark, because it allows Matthew Greek to depend on Mark, and Mark to depend on Matthew Aramaic, which explains how the first gospel, which usually follows Mark, sometimes deserts him and seems to retain a more primitive flavour—the reason being that Matthew Greek is in these cases closer than Mark to Matthew Aramaic, their common source; 2. that Q is an inadequate hypothesis and to help to supply for this inadequacy, in a way that does not conflict with the literary data, it is necessary to distinguish two different sources for the Logia common to Matthew and Luke. a. Matthew Aramaic which, besides narrative matter, contained Logia (of which Mark omitted the greater part) and was therefore a gospel in the true sense of the word; b. the Supplementary Collection of Logia: supplementary, that is, to Matthew Aramaic, because it was meant either to preserve matter omitted from that gospel or to preserve in some different and more desirable form matter which that gospel already contained. To these two sources, both Matthew Greek and Luke are indebted; they are drawing from Matthew Aramaic when the narrative context in which the Logia are grouped is the same in each gospel, and they are drawing from the Supplementary Collection when each makes use of the Logia in its own characteristic way: Luke, keeping them together, inserts them in blocks in his 'great intercalation' (9:51–18:14); Matthew splits them up and distributes them throughout his gospel in his five main sections. One notable result of

this complicated literary process is what are called 'doublets': i.e. the same saying or group of sayings occurs twice in Matthew or in Luke because on each occasion they are quoted from the two different sources, i.e. Matthew Aramaic (either immediately or through the medium of Mark) and the Collection. It should be noticed that both Matthew and Luke would have used these two sources not in their primitive Aramaic but in two different Greek translations, which would sometimes agree with each other and sometimes not; this would explain why the parallel texts of the first and third gospels are at times extraordinarily alike, at other times markedly unlike.

Having stated the purely literary considerations of this view, it is now possible to describe each of the steps in *the formation of the first three gospels.* This can be done with some degree of probability, but not with complete certainty.

At the heart of the oral preaching of the apostles lies the 'Kerygma' proclaiming the redemptive death and resurrection of the Lord. Peter's discourses in the Acts of the Apostles provide us with typical summaries of this apostolic preaching which would in practice have included more detailed narratives: principally the story of the Passion which must have assumed its stereotyped pattern very early, as the close similarity of the four gospel accounts shows, but also many anecdotes taken from the Master's life, and throwing light on his person, his mission and his power, or else illustrating his teaching by means of some well-remembered episode, saying, miracle, pronouncement or parable etc. In addition to the apostles themselves there were professional narrators like the evangelists (those who enjoyed a special *charisma* not limited to the writers of our four gospels; cf. Ac 21:8; Ep 4:11; 2 Tm 4:5), who tended to stereotype the anecdotes by constant repetition. Before long, and particularly when the witnesses who had been in touch with the events themselves began to disappear, measures would have been taken to commit this oral tradition to writing. Episodes originally narrated separately and independently of each other would naturally be grouped together either chronologically (e.g. Mk 1:16-39, the Day of Capernaum) or logically (e.g. Mk 2:1–3:6, the Five Disputes); the groupings would be small at first, but would later grow into more extensive collections. This was the stage at which an author intervened who, according to tradition, which there is no reason to doubt, was Matthew the apostle. He was the first to compose a 'gospel' which drew together Christ's deeds and words into a continuous narrative covering the earthly ministry of Jesus from baptism to resurrection. Shortly afterwards a 'Collection', of unknown authorship, appeared side by side with this early gospel; its purpose was to preserve sayings of the Lord which were either not contained in Matthew Aramaic, or were presented there in a different form. This early gospel and this Collection, both written in Aramaic, were soon put into Greek, and eventually various forms of these translations came to exist. Now Peter's preaching of the catechesis (or 'instruction') was probably based on the same Palestinian tradition that Matthew had committed to writing. Consequently, when Peter's disciple Mark set himself to record this catachesis, it was most natural that he should make use of Matthew Aramaic in whatever Greek translation was familiar to him. This would not have prevented Mark from putting into his narratives some of the vivid realism that had come to him from the preaching of his master Peter, which was itself full of that living quality that comes from personal experience of events. It is this realism, loaded

with picturesque and true-to-life detail, which endears Mark's narratives to us in spite of his rough Greek style. True to his purpose (of which we shall speak later) Mark decided to put in very few of the Sayings. He shortened or omitted the ones in the early gospel and passed over in silence those in the Collection of which, presumably, he knew nothing. This silence of his was to be remedied by two new gospel editions (though which of them preceded the other it is difficult to say). An anonymous editor, Matthew Greek, decided to rewrite the first Aramaic gospel, which was known to him in one of its Greek translations. This he filled out and made more detailed, using for his narrative parts of the work of Mark his predecessor, to which he added one thing only of importance, i.e. the two chapters of the Infancy Narrative. In general Matthew Greek corrected and followed Mark's text, but at times he went back to the earlier gospel and on these occasions his style, unlike anything in Mark, becomes both original and archaic. For the Sayings, he referred to the earlier gospel in order to record many that Mark omitted, adding to them from the wealth of Sayings in the Supplementary Collection. Hence the impressive blocks of material, each built round some central theme, which make his gospel the remarkable thing it is. But these were not his only sources. The author had access to some information not so generally available, and this not only for his narratives but also for the Sayings: this accounts for the material which is peculiarly his own, notably in the narrative of the Infancy. By setting out to supplement the primitive Aramaic gospel, Matthew Greek clearly did not aim at being a mere translation of it, but at the same time he only developed it according to its own spirit and purpose. The Church has recognised that his work was inspired by accepting his Greek gospel as canonical.

Luke undertook something similar but used a completely different approach. There are three points to notice: 1. like Matthew he also took from the primitive gospel tradition many Sayings that Mark omits, though unlike Matthew he preferred to omit Sayings that would have little interest for his readers who were pagans by birth; moreover, since the Sayings in Luke are derived through channels independent of Matthew Greek they often assume forms in his gospel noticeably different from those they assume in Matthew's. 2. Luke is more careful than Matthew to preserve the order given by his sources: thus, side by side with 'Marcan' sections, in which he follows the second gospel almost exactly (4:31–6:19; 8:4–9:50; 18:15–21:38), he places the Supplementary Collection which he inserts en bloc in a special section that he presents as an ascent to Jerusalem (9:51–18:14). 3. Luke resembles Matthew since, like him, he also has drawn on special sources but he has done this to a greater extent. These special sources of his he discovered by careful enquiry (1:3); to them he owes not only his narrative of the Infancy but many passages that enrich the gospel: the good Samaritan, Martha and Mary, the parables of the prodigal son, of the Pharisee and the publican, etc., which occur for the most part in Luke's Central Section (9:51–18:14), and it is not impossible that this combination of the Collection with the material he has been at pains to find for himself was a stage of Luke's editorial activity independent of, and perhaps prior to, his use of Mark.

The literary process just outlined respects and makes use of the broad data from tradition but is able to fill in details. It does not however make it possible, any more than tradition does, to assign an exact *date* to each of the Synoptics

with complete certainty: at a guess however, the interval required for the development of the oral tradition would make it probable that the primitive Aramaic gospel and the later Supplementary Collection were composed between the years 40 and 50. This early date would be definite if it could be proved that Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians, written about 51-52, made use of the first gospel's Apocalyptic Discourse. If Mark wrote towards the end of Peter's life (according to Clement of Alexandria) or shortly after Peter's death (according to Irenaeus) the date of his gospel would be c. 64; in any case it should be dated before 70 as it does not seem from this gospel that Jerusalem has yet been destroyed. Matthew Greek and Luke are later than Mark but their precise date is more difficult to determine. The existence of Luke's gospel is presupposed by the Acts (Ac 1:1) but the date of Acts is itself uncertain (cf. Introduction to Acts) and can provide no criterion. It is true that neither Matthew Greek nor Luke suggests that the destruction of Jerusalem has already taken place (not even Lk 19:42-44; 21:20-24 which employ clichés from the prophetical books to describe an event that cannot have been hard to foresee) but this is not decisive. If neither of them knew of the destruction, then they would have to be put before 70, but if they deliberately aimed at scrupulously preserving the archaic quality of their respective literary sources, then their works might quite well have been composed after the destruction, say about A.D. 80.

In any case, the apostolic origin, direct or indirect, together with their involved literary formation confirm the *historical value* of the Synoptics, and not only that but at the same time help us to understand the nature of that historical value, and since the gospels stem from an oral preaching that goes back to the beginnings of the primitive community, their guarantee in this way would ultimately rest on eyewitness. Neither the apostles themselves, however, nor any of the other preachers of the gospel message and tellers of the gospel story ever aimed at writing or teaching history in the modern technical sense of that word; their concern was sacred and theological: they preached to convert and edify, to infuse faith, to enlighten it and defend it against its opponents. For this purpose they could and did appeal to solid evidence that could be checked, and this appeal was demanded quite as much by their own sincerity as by their anxiety not to leave any loopholes for hostile argument. Those who finally composed the gospels, collecting the evidence and putting it into writing, had the same objective fidelity, and equal respect for their sources of information as is suggested by the simple and archaic quality of their work. In this there are no theological developments characteristic of subsequent decades (cf. Paul for example); much less is there any trace of the sort of extravagant legends that are frequent in the apocryphal gospels. The three Synoptics may not be history books but they do set out to give us historical fact.

This does not mean that each of the events or discourses which they record corresponds exactly to what in fact took place. The laws governing witnesses and the spread of evidence warn us against looking for that material sort of precision. Obvious examples can be found in the gospels themselves where the same events or the same discourses are sometimes recorded in different ways. This is true not only of the content of some episodes, but it is even truer of the order in which these episodes are arranged, which is not the same order in each gospel. This is only to be expected in view of their complex origins.

Their component parts, which at first existed separately, were only gradually collected together into groups; and these groups were later joined together or split up more for reasons of logic or neatness than for anything to do with chronology. In this way many of the gospel events or Sayings have been shifted from their proper time or place. For this reason it is often impossible to take editorial connective phrases like 'then', 'after this', 'on that day', 'at that time', etc., in their literal sense.

The belief of Christians in the authority of these inspired books is not of course affected by this. That there was no perfect agreement in detail among those chosen by the Holy Spirit to speak for him merely implies that he attaches no importance, in the sphere of faith, to that sort of material exactitude; it suggests indeed that he actually willed this difference of evidence. Heraclitus said, 'Implicit agreements are worth more than explicit ones' and it is obvious that a fact which comes to us by a variety of discordant traditions (e.g. the apparitions after the resurrection) appears more real and probable than it would if vouched for by witnesses whose evidence was identical in both detail and vocabulary. It is a further advantage when these discrepancies occur, not just accidentally and unavoidably, but as the result of deliberate correction. It is certain that the gospel writers often presented their material in deliberately different ways, and in any case the earlier oral tradition which they inherited did not only hand down reminiscences of the gospel story passively, but at the same time both interpreted them and adapted them in all sorts of ways to the actual requirements of the living faith they taught. This intervention by the community in forming the tradition was directed by responsible members of that community: there is no reason, therefore, to suspect the fidelity of the tradition. On the positive side, this intervention is instructive: since the community was the Church, its intervention shows how the magisterium was exercised from the beginning. Before inspiring the authors of the gospels, the Holy Spirit supervised the preparation of the material, adapted it to the diffusion of the faith and also secured its inerrancy—i.e. guaranteed as inerrant, not so much the facts and the precise circumstances in which facts occurred, but rather the spiritual meaning conveyed by those facts. All this work of the Spirit was only concerned with the provision of food for the spirit in a form that could be digested by the faithful. In particular it was to the writers of the synoptic gospels that he gave the gift of expressing in completely personal terms the message common to all three of them.

The Gospel according to Saint Mark

The *plan* Mark follows is the least systematic of all the Synoptics. The preaching of John the Baptist plus the baptism and temptation of Jesus make up his prelude (1:1-13); next comes a period of ministry which according to occasional hints was in Galilee (1:14-7:23), then a journey by Jesus and his apostles to the district of Tyre and Sidon, the Decapolis, the neighbourhood of Caesarea Philippi and back to Galilee (7:24–9:50); then lastly the final journey through Peraea and Jericho to Jerusalem where the Passion and resurrection take place (10:1–16:8). Apart from individual sequences of fact, this broad outline itself is purely conventional since it is historically probable, and to judge by the fourth gospel fairly certain, that Jesus visited Jerusalem several times before the last Passover of his life. All the same, this outline,

broad as it is, does trace for us an important development which is both factually and theologically significant. The general public received Jesus warmly at first but their enthusiasm waned as they found that his meek and otherworldly conception of the Messiah did not fulfil their hopes. As a result, Jesus left Galilee to devote himself to the instruction of a small group of faithful followers, and the profession of faith at Caesarea Philippi showed that he had secured their absolute allegiance. This was a decisive turning-point: after it Jerusalem became the focus of attention, and it was there that further opposition continued mounting only to end in the drama of the Passion and in the final triumph of the resurrection.

This paradox provides the central interest of the second gospel i.e. how Jesus, while remaining misunderstood and rejected by men, was at the same time God's triumphant envoy. The gospel is not particularly concerned with elaborating the Master's teaching and it records few of his Sayings: the real point of its message is the *manifestation of the crucified Messiah.* On the one hand Jesus is the Son of God, acknowledged as such by the Father (1:11; 9:7), by the devils (1:24; 3:11; 5:7) and even by men (15:39); he is the Messiah claiming divine rank (14:62), higher than the angels (13:32), taking on himself the forgiveness of sin (2:10), vindicating his power and his mission by miracle (1:31; 4:41 etc.) and by exorcism (1:27; 3:23f etc.). On the other hand the gospel puts great emphasis on his apparent frustration at the hands of men: the mockery or refusal of the public (5:40; 6:2f), the antagonism of the Jewish leaders (2:1-3:6 etc.), the lack of understanding even on his disciples' part (4:13+)—all the hostile activities that were to lead to the shame of the cross. It is this 'scandal', this refusal, that the gospel is intent on explaining. This it does not merely by contrasting it with the crowning triumph of the resurrection but also by showing that the hostility was itself an integral part of God's mysterious plan. It was necessary that Christ should suffer and so redeem man (10:45; 14:24), since this had been foretold by the scriptures (9:12; 14:21,49). Both for himself (8:31; 9:31; 10:33f) and for his own followers (8:34f; 9:35; 10:15,24f,29f,39; 13:9-13) Jesus laid down a way of humility and suffering; but the Jews, expecting a victorious warrior-Messiah, were ill prepared for this answer to their hope, and the reason why Jesus wanted silence about his miracles (5:43 etc.) and his identity (7:24; 9:30) was to avoid an enthusiasm which would have been as ill-advised as it would have been mistaken. Rather than call himself Messiah, 8:29f, which would have been too suggestive of human dignity, he took the modest and mysterious title 'Son of Man' (2:10 etc.; cf. Mt 8:20+). This cautionary measure is what is called 'the messianic secret' (Mk 1:34+) and is a basic idea of Mark's gospel. It was not something Mark had invented: it corresponded to that underlying reality in Christ's life of suffering which, in the light of a faith finally and fully established by the Easter event, the evangelist was able to perceive and to place before us for our understanding.

The Gospel according to Saint Matthew

The same light of faith and the same broad outline of Christ's life naturally occur in Matthew as well as in Mark, but with quite a different emphasis. To begin with, the *plan* is not the same and is much more elaborate: Matthew is divided into five books each consisting of a discourse introduced and led up to by painstakingly selected narrative matter; these five books, plus the

stories of the Infancy and of the Passion, are combined to form a well-knit whole of seven sections. It is possible that this arrangement, which is so clear in Matthew, goes back to the Aramaic gospel and that it is traceable also in Mark's brief account; but whether this is so or not, it remains true that, as we have already seen, Matthew used his sources with great freedom in order to reach his carefully mapped out ensemble which is so brilliantly adapted for teaching purposes. The fact that this gospel also reports Christ's teaching much more fully than Mark, and stresses specially the theme of 'the kingdom of heaven' (4:17+), makes it a *dramatic account in seven acts of the coming of the kingdom of heaven.* These acts are as follows: 1. The preparation of the kingdom in the person of the child-Messiah, ch. 1-2. 2. The formal proclamation of the charter of the kingdom to the disciples and the public, i.e. the Sermon on the Mount, ch. 3-7. 3. The preaching of the kingdom by missionaries whose credentials (the 'signs' which are to confirm the word) are now hinted at by several miracles done by Jesus himself; the missionaries receive their instructions, ch. 8-10. 4. The obstacles with which the kingdom will meet from men, and which are part of God's deliberate design that the kingdom should come without show, even imperceptibly, as illustrated in the parables of the concluding Instruction, 11:1–13:52. 5. Its embryonic existence in the group of disciples with Peter at their head; the rules for this Church in the making are outlined in the concluding Instruction on the Community, 13:53–18:35. 6. The crisis, provoked by the increasing hostility of the Jewish leaders, which is to prepare the way for the definitive coming of the kingdom and which is the subject of the concluding Eschatological Instruction, ch. 19-25. 7. Lastly, the coming itself, a coming effected through suffering and triumph, through the Passion and resurrection, ch. 26-28.

The kingdom of God (of the 'heavens' in Matthew) is the reassertion of God's dominion as King over men who at last know him, serve him and love him. This kingdom was prepared and foretold in the Old Testament. Matthew therefore, writing among Jews for Jews, makes a special point of demonstrating that *the scriptures are fulfilled* in the person and work of Jesus. In every significant passage of his work he makes use of the Old Testament to prove that Law and prophets are 'fulfilled'—a phrase which means that their hopes have been not only realised but have also been perfected, ennobled, surpassed. As applied to the person of Jesus: he appeals to Old Testament texts for his Davidic descent (1:1-17), for his virgin birth (1:23) at Bethlehem (2:6), for his stay in Egypt and his settling at Capernaum (4:14-16), for his messianic progress into Jerusalem (21:5,16); as applied to the work of Jesus: he appeals to Old Testament texts for cures (11:4-5); and finally as applied to the teaching of Jesus: this 'fulfils' the Law (5:17) while raising it to further heights (5:21-48; 19:3-9, 16-21). Matthew asserts equally strongly that the scriptures are also fulfilled in the lowliness of Christ's person and in what humanly seems to be the frustration of his work. In this way God's plan contains, and the Old Testament foretells: the massacre of the Innocents (2:17f), the hidden life at Nazareth (2:23), the gentle compassion of the 'servant of God' (12:17-21; cf. 8:17; 11:29; 12:7), the disciples' desertion (26:31), the paltry price of betrayal (27:9-10), the arrest (26:54) and the three days' burial (12:40); in this way too the Old Testament foretold the unbelief of the Jews (13:13-15), too tenacious of their man-made traditions (15:7-9), who could be approached only by teaching

through the veil of parables (13:14-15,35); Matthew is not the only one of the three Synoptics to make use of arguments from the Old Testament, but even apart from the fact that they might have been copying Matthew Aramaic in this, Matthew relies so heavily on this argument that he has made it one of the chief characteristics of his gospel. Remembering this and recalling the gospel's systematic structure, the work can be aptly described as *the great charter of the new order which, in Christ, completes God's plan.* For Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew emphasises this more than Mark; cf. 14:33; 16:16; 22:2; 27:40,43) and as his teaching is the new Law that fulfils the old, so the Church which he built on Peter (16:18), and of which he is the keystone rejected by the builders (21:42), is the same messianic community as that of the Old Testament, but universalised, since God has allowed those who were first invited to decline (23:34-38; cf. 10:5-6,23; 15:24); this was so that he might throw open the gate of salvation to all nations (8:11-12; 21:33-46; 22:1-10; cf. 12:18,21; 28:19). It is easy to see why a gospel as complete and as neatly arranged as this and written more grammatically (though less attractively) than Mark's should have appealed to the early Church and been used by it in preference to others.

The Gospel according to Saint Luke

The third gospel's distinguishing quality is due to the attractive personality of its author which shines through all his work. Luke is at once a most gifted writer and a man of marked sensibility. He set to work in his own way with an eye to exact information and orderly narrative (1:3), but respect for his sources, together with his method of juxtaposing them, meant that even Luke was not in a position to arrange his traditional material in a more chronological way than Matthew or Mark. His *plan* follows Mark's outline though some episodes are displaced (3:19-20; 4:16-30; 5:1-11; 6:12-19; 22:31-34, etc.). This he did sometimes in the interests of clarity and logical sequence, sometimes under the influence of other streams of tradition including, it should be noted, a tradition traceable also in the fourth gospel. Other episodes are omitted altogether for various reasons: they were not interesting for Luke's non-Jewish readers (Mk 9:11-13), or they were already to be found in the Supplementary Collection (Mk 12:28-34; cf. Lk 10:25-28), or above all (as in the case of Luke's great omission of Mk 6:45–8:26) because it was not in Luke's copy of Mark or because, if it was there, Luke regarded it as unnecessarily repetitive. Luke's most obvious difference from Mark is his great intercalation (cf. 9:51–18:14) which, as has been seen, combines Logia or Sayings from some Collection with information he had found out for himself. This central section uses a journey to Jerusalem for its framework (cf. the reiterated indications, elaborating the datum of Mk 10:1, in Lk 9:51; 13:22; 17:11). But it is not a reminiscence of actual journeys; it is rather a device by which Luke is able to bring out one of his chief theological notions: namely that the Holy City is the predestined stage for the drama of salvation (9:31; 13:33; 18:31; 19:11). Because it is from Jerusalem that the evangelisation of the world must begin (24:47; Ac 1:8), his gospel had to start there (1:5f) and there he will have to bring it to a close (24:52f)—the post-resurrection apparitions and conversations recorded by Luke do not take place in Galilee (cf. 24:13-51 and cf. 24:6 with Mk 16:7; Mt 28:7,16-20).

Comparing Luke and his two sources, a. Mark, the best known, and b. the

sources behind the Matthew passages which are parallelled in Luke, it becomes apparent that Luke was a craftsman whose concentration never slackened. His changes are very slight—just small omissions and additions—but through them he gives his work a character peculiarly his own. He avoids or whittles down anything he or his readers found offensive (8:43, cf. Mk 5:26; he omits Mk 9:43-48; 13:32; etc.) or anything they could not be expected to understand (he omits Mt 5:21f,33f; Mk 15:34; etc.). He omits anything derogatory to the dignity of the apostles (Mk 4:13; 8:32f; 9:28f; 14:50) and makes excuses for them (Lk 9:45; 18:34; 22:45). He explains obscure phrases (6:15) and clears up points of topography (4:31; 19:28f,37; 23:51), etc. In these innumerable small corrections, and even more especially in the fresh material he found by personal enquiry, it is possible to see what Luke's preferences were and to see the way his mind worked. Or, to put it more theologically, the Holy Spirit used Luke as his instrument to put the gospel into a completely new shape, packed with doctrine. The originality of Luke is not in his key ideas (they are identical with those of Mark and of Matthew) but in his *religious mentality* which, apart from slight traces of Paul's influence, is overwhelmingly distinctive of Luke's personal temperament. Luke, in Dante's phrase, is the '*scriba mansuetudinis Christi*', the faithful recorder of Christ's lovingkindness. He is anxious to stress his Master's love of sinners (15:1f,7,10); to record his acts of forgiveness (7:36-50; 15:11-32; 19:1-10; 23:34,39-43); and to contrast his tenderness for the lowly and the poor with his severity towards the proud and towards those who abuse their wealth (1:51-53; 6:20-26; 12:13-21; 14:7-11; 16:15,19-31; 18:9-14). But in spite of this severity, the wicked however deserving of punishment will not be condemned till the period set aside for mercy has come to an end (13:6-9; cf. Mk 11:12-14). The one thing necessary is repentance, abdication of self, and on this the gentle, tolerant Luke takes a firm stand, insisting on unflinching and complete detachment (14:25-34), especially from riches (6:34f; 12:33; 14:12-14; 16:9-13). Another group of passages which are also found only in the third gospel is on the necessity of prayer (11:5-8; 18:1-8), of which Jesus set the example (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:28). Finally, Luke is the only one of the Synoptics to give the Holy Spirit the prominence we find in Paul and in Acts (Lk 1:15,35,41,67; 2:25-27; 4:1,14,18; 10:21; 11:13; 24:49). These qualities, combined with that joy in God and that gratitude to him for his gifts which fill the third gospel (2:14; 5:26; 10:17; 13:17; 18:43; 19:37; 24:51f), are the ones that go to make Luke's achievement the warm and human thing it is.

Style

Mark's Greek is rough, strongly Aramaic, and often faulty; but it is fresh, lively and appealing. Matthew's Greek is also rather Aramaic but smoother than Mark's as well as less picturesque and more correct. Luke's is mixed: when writing independently it is excellent but out of respect for his sources he incorporates their imperfections—after polishing them a little. Occasionally he goes out of his way to give a good imitation of Septuagint Greek.

This translation

As far as possible this translation preserves stylistic nuances, and aims at reproducing in detail all similarities and differences between the three Synoptics, which betray their literary relationships.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW

I. THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS

The ancestry of Jesus

||Lk 3:23-38

1 **1** A genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:[a] 9:27+ Ga 3:16+ Heb 7:14

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac,
Isaac the father of Jacob,
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, Tamar being their mother, Gn 38:29 Rt 4:18 1 S 2:8
Perez was the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,

4 Ram was the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,

5 Salmon was the father of Boaz, Rahab being his mother, Jos 2:1
Boaz was the father of Obed, Ruth being his mother,
Obed was the father of Jesse;

6 and Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
Abijah the father of Asa,[b]

8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Joram,
Joram the father of Azariah,

9 Azariah was the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,[c]

1 a. Matthew, though stressing the foreign element on the female side, vv. 3,5,6, limits his genealogy to Christ's Israelitic descent. Its aim is to show how Jesus is connected with the leading recipients of the messianic promises, i.e. with Abraham and David and with the latter's royal line. Luke's genealogy is universal in scope and goes back to Adam, head of the human race. The two lists, from David down to Joseph, have only two names in common. There are two possible explanations: either Matthew has preferred dynastic succession to physical descent, or else legal descent (levirate law, Dt 25:5+) has been reckoned equivalent to physical. In Mt, moreover, the systematic nature of the genealogy is brought out by the division of Christ's ancestors into three series of 2 × 7 names (cf. 6:9+), a device which forces the omission of three kings between Joram and Azariah. It also compels the double reckoning of Jeconiah (vv. 11-12); this is made possible by the fact that the same Greek name can translate the two similar Hebr. names Joiaqim and Joiakin. The lists of both Mt and Lk end with Joseph who was Christ's legal father only; the reason is that according to ancient mentality legal paternity (adoption, levirate etc.) is sufficient, by itself, to confer all hereditary rights; the rights here are those of the messianic line. This does not mean that Mary did not belong to that line, though the evangelists do not say that she did.

b. Var. 'Asaph'.

c. Var. 'Amos'.

Amon the father of Josiah;
and Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers. 11
Then the deportation to Babylon took place.

After the deportation to Babylon: 12
Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud, 13
Abiud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor,
Azor was the father of Zadok, 14
Zadok the father of Achim,
Achim the father of Eliud,
Eliud was the father of Eleazar, 15
Eleazar the father of Matthan,
Matthan the father of Jacob;
and Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary; 16
of her was born Jesus[d] who is called Christ.

The sum of generations is therefore: fourteen from Abraham to David; 17
fourteen from David to the Babylonian deportation; and fourteen from the
Babylonian deportation to Christ.

The virginal conception of Christ

Lk 1:27; 2:5,11

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed 18
to Joseph;[e] but before they came to live together she was found to be with child
through the Holy Spirit. •Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and 19
wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally.[f] •He had 20
2:13,19; 28:2 Gn 16:7+ Lk 1:11; 2:9 Jn 5:4 made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord[g] appeared to him in
a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home
Lk 1:35 as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. •She 21
Lk 1:31 will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who
Ps 130:8 Lk 2:11 Ac 3:16+; 4:12 is to save[h] his people from their sins.' •Now all this took place to fulfil the words 22
spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

Is 7:14

> *The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son* 23
> *and they will call him Emmanuel,*

a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. •When Joseph woke up he did what the 24
angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home •and, though 25
Lk 2:7 he had not had intercourse with her, she gave birth[i] to a son; and he named him
Jesus.

The visit of the Magi

Lk 2:1-17

2 After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King 1
Herod,[a] some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. •'Where is the infant 2
Nb 24:17 king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose[b] and have come to do him
homage.' •When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole 3
of Jerusalem. •He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people,[c] 4
Jn 7:42 and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. •'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' 5
they told him 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

Mi 5:1

> *And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,* 6
> *you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,*
> *for out of you will come a leader*
> *who will shepherd my people Israel'.*

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the 7
exact date on which the star had appeared, •and sent them on to Bethlehem. 8

'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him,
9 let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' •Having listened to
what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star
they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child
10 11 was.[d] •The sight of the star filled them with delight, •and going into the house
they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him Ps 72:10-15 Is 49:23; 60:5f
homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and
12 frankincense and myrrh.[e] •But they were warned in a dream not to go back to
Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way. 1 K 13:9f

The flight into Egypt. The massacre of the Innocents

13 After they had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream 1:20+
and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt,
and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and
14 do away with 'him'. •So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother
15 with him, left that night for Egypt, •where he stayed until Herod was dead. This
was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet:

I called my son out of Egypt.[f] Nb 23:22 Ho 11:1

16 Herod was furious when he realised that he had been outwitted by the
wise men, and in Bethlehem and its surrounding district he had all the male
children killed who were two years old or under, reckoning by the date he
17 had been careful to ask the wise men. •It was then that the words spoken
through the prophet Jeremiah were fulfilled:[g]

18 *A voice was heard in Ramah,* Jr 31:15
sobbing and loudly lamenting:
it was Rachel weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted
because they were no more.

From Egypt to Nazareth

19 After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in 1:20+
20 Egypt •and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to
21 the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead'. •So Joseph got Ex 4:19
up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel.

d. Several Greek and Lat. authorities, more explicitly 'Joseph, to whom was betrothed the Virgin Mary who gave birth to Jesus'. It is probably due to a misunderstanding of this reading that Syr. Sin. has this text 'Joseph, to whom was betrothed the Virgin Mary, begot Jesus'.

e. The force of Jewish betrothal was such that the fiancé was already called 'husband' and could release himself from the engagement only by an act of repudiation, v. 19.

f. It would appear that Joseph's integrity did not only consist in wanting to withhold his name from a child whose father he did not know, but also, since he was convinced of Mary's virtue, in refusing to expose to the rigour of the Law (Dt 22:20f) a mystery he did not understand.

g. The 'angel of the Lord' in the early texts (Gn 16:7+) means Yahweh himself. With the development of the doctrine of angels (cf. Tb 5:4+) their distinction from God becomes clearer; they retain their function as heavenly messengers and often appear as such in the narratives of the Infancy (Mt 1:20,24; 2:13,19; Lk 1:11; 2:9; cf. also Mt 28:2; Jn 5:4; Ac 5:19; 8:26; 12:7,23).

h. 'Jesus' (Hebr. Yehoshua) means 'Yahweh saves'.

i. Lit. 'and he did not know her until the day she gave birth'. The text is not concerned with the period that followed and, taken by itself, does not assert Mary's perpetual virginity which, however, the gospels elsewhere suppose and which the Tradition of the Church affirms. On the 'brothers' of Jesus, cf. 12:46+.

2 a. About 5 or 4 B.C. Herod was king of Judaea, Idumaea and Samaria from 37-4 B.C. Cf. Lk 2:2+.

b. Alternative translation (Vulg.) 'in the east'. Same alternative for v. 9.

c. Doctors of the Law; usually, but not always, from the ranks of the Pharisees (3:7+). Together with the high priests and the elders they constituted the Great Sanhedrin.

d. Obviously the evangelist is thinking of a miraculous star; it is futile to look for a natural explanation.

e. The wealth and perfumes of Arabia (Jr 6:20; Ezk 27:22). The Fathers see in them symbols of the royalty (gold), divinity (incense), Passion (myrrh) of Christ. The adoration of the Magi fulfils the messianic prophecies of the homage paid by the nations to the God of Israel, cf. Nb 24:17; Is 49:23; 60:5f; Ps 72:10-15.

f. Israel, therefore, the 'son' of the prophet's text, prefigured the Messiah.

g. In its original setting this text means that Rachel, their ancestress, weeps for the men of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin, massacred or deported by the Assyrians. Matthew's application was perhaps suggested to him by a tradition which localised Rachel's tomb in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem (Gn 35:19f).

But when he learnt that Archelaus[h] had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of 22
Judaea he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he left for the
13:54; 26:71 Lk 2:39; 4:34; 18:37; 24:19 Ac 2:22; 3:6; 6:14; 22:8; 24:5; 26:9 region of Galilee.[i] •There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the 23
words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled:

He will be called a Nazarene.[j]

II. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PROCLAIMED

A. NARRATIVE SECTION

||Mk 1:1-8 ||Lk 3:1-18 **The preaching of John the Baptist**

4:17+; 10:7 Ezk 18:32 Ac 2:38+ 3 In due course[a] John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of 1
Judaea and this was his message: •'Repent,[b] for the kingdom of heaven[c] is 2
close at hand'. •This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said: 3

Is 40:3+ Jn 1:23

A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.

11:8-9 2 K 1:8+ Zc 13:4 This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his 4
waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. •Then Jerusalem and all Judaea 5
11:7 and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, •and as they were baptised 6
21:25,32 by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins.[d] •But when he saw a 7
Jn 5:35 number of Pharisees[e] and Sadducees[f] coming for baptism he said to them,
12:34; 23:33 Is 59:5 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming?[g] 8
Am 5:18+ But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, •and do not presume to 9
Jn 8:33-40 Rm 9:7-8 Ga 4:21-31 tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father", because, I tell you, God can
raise children for Abraham from these stones. •Even now the axe is laid to the roots 10
=7:19p of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down
Jn 1:26,33 and thrown on the fire. •I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who 11
follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he
Jn 1:27,33 Ac 1:5+ will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.[h] •His winnowing-fan is in his hand; 12
Is 41:16 Jr 15:7 he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff
13:42,50 he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'[i]

||Mk 1:9-11 ||Lk 3:21-22 **Jesus is baptised**

Then Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by 13
Jn 13:6 John. •John tried to dissuade him. 'It is I who need baptism from you' he said 14
'and yet you come to me!' •But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; 15
it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands'.[j] At this,
John gave in to him.[k]

As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the 16
Is 11:2 Dn 9:24 heavens opened[l] and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming
Jn 1:32-34 *12:18; 17:5* down on him.[m] •And a voice spoke from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; 17
Is 42:1; 49:3 my favour rests on him'.[n]

||Mk 1:12-13 ||Lk 4:1-13 **Temptation in the wilderness**[a]

Heb 2:18 4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit[b] out into the wilderness to be tempted by the 1
Ex 24:18; 34:28 devil. •He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very 2
1 K 19:8 *Heb 12:2* hungry, •and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God,[c] tell 3
these stones to turn into loaves'. •But he replied, 'Scripture says: 4

Dt 8:3

Man does not live on bread alone
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'.

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of 5

6 the Temple. •'If you are the Son of God' he said 'throw yourself down; for
scripture says:

He will put you in his angels' charge,
and they will support you on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone'. Ps 91:11-12

h. Son of Herod by Malthake (like Herod Antipas); ethnarch of Judaea from 4 B.C. to 6 A.D.

i. Territory of Herod Antipas, cf. Lk 3:1+.

j. Nazoraios: this is the form used by Mt, Jn and Ac (translated 'Nazarene' throughout this version). Nazarenos ('of Nazareth' in this version) is used by Mk. Lk uses both forms. These two synonyms were current transcriptions of an Aramaic adjective (*nasraya*) itself derived from the name of the town 'Nazareth' (Nasrath). Applied to Jesus, whose origin it indicated (26:69,71), and later to his followers (Ac 24:5), the term became common in the semitic world for the disciples of Jesus; the name 'Christian' (Ac 11:26) prevailed in the Graeco-Roman world. It is not clear which prophetic oracles Mt alludes to; possibly to the *nazir* of Jg 13:5,7.

3 a. Lit. 'in those days'. Stereotyped expression, merely a formula of transition.

b. *Metanoia*, rendered 'repentance', implies a change of heart; 'conversion' in the technical ascetical sense.

c. Instead of 'kingdom of God', cf. 4:17+. The phrase is proper to Mt and reflects the Jewish scruple which substituted metaphor for the divine name.

d. The rite of immersion, symbolic of purification or of renewal, was familiar to the ancient religions and to Judaism (baptism of proselytes, Essene purifications). John's baptism though suggested by these practices is distinct from them for three main reasons: it is directed to moral, not ritual, purification (3:2,6,8,11; Lk 3:10-14); it takes place once only and for this reason appears as a ceremony of initiation; it has an eschatological value in so far as it enrols its recipients among the number of those who professedly and actively prepare themselves for the imminent coming of the Messiah and who are, therefore, the messianic community in anticipation (3:2,11; Jn 1: 19-34). It produces a real effect upon the soul but this effect is not produced sacramentally since it depends on something that has not yet taken place: this future event is God's Judgement embodied in the coming Messiah whose 'fire' will purify or consume according to the good or bad dispositions it meets with; he alone, and not John, will baptise 'in the Holy Spirit' (3:7,10-12). John's baptism continued to be administered by the disciples of Jesus (Jn 4:1-2) until it was absorbed by the new rite which he had instituted (Mt 28:19; Ac 1:5+; Rm 6:4+).

e. A Jewish sect, rigid observers of the Law; undue attachment to the oral tradition of their rabbis led, however, to an extravagant and artificial casuistry.

f. In opposition to the outlook of the Pharisees these rejected all tradition not contained in the written Law. They came for the most part from the great priestly families. They were less devout than the Pharisees and more politically minded.

g. The retribution of the day of Yahweh (Am 5:18+), which was to inaugurate the messianic era.

h. In the O.T. fire, a purifying element more refined and efficacious than water, was already a symbol of God's supreme intervention in history and of his Spirit which comes to purify hearts, cf. Is 1:25; Zc 13:9; Ml 3:2-3; Si 2:5, etc.

i. The fire of Gehenna which for ever goes on consuming what has defied purification (Is 66:24; Jdt 16:17; Si 7:17; Zp 1:18; Ps 21:9, etc.).

j. Though sinless (Jn 8:46), Jesus is determined to submit to John's baptism because he sees it as a part of God's design (Lk 7:29-30) and the last act preparatory to the messianic era (Mt 3:6+); by accepting it he expresses his wish to satisfy the saving 'righteousness' of God that governs the whole plan of salvation. Matthew is probably thinking not only of the act of baptism but of the new 'righteousness' which, through Christ, is going to fulfil and perfect that of the old Law, cf. 5:17,20.

k. At this point an apocryphal legend has been inserted into two MSS of Vet. Lat. 'And while he was being baptised a great light came out of the water so that all the bystanders were filled with fear'.

l. Add. 'for him', i.e. before his eyes.

m. The Spirit which hovered over the waters at the first creation (Gn 1:2) now appears at the beginning of the new creation. It has two functions: it anoints Jesus for his messianic mission (Ac 10:38) which it is to guide (Mt 4:1p; Lk 4:14,18; 10:21; Mt 12:18,28), and, according to the patristic view, it sanctifies the water, thus preparing the way for Christian baptism, cf. Ac 1:5+.

n. The immediate purpose of this sentence is to declare that Jesus is in truth the servant foretold by Isaiah, but the substitution of 'Son' for 'servant' (made possible by the double sense of the Greek word *pais*) underlines the relationship of Jesus with the Father which is that of anointed Son, cf. 4:3+.

4 a. That these diabolical suggestions were actually made is quite compatible with Christ's sinlessness. Jesus was faced with the idea of being a material and political Messiah with its accompanying human privileges of wealth, glory, power. He chose instead utter dependence on God, humility, obedience to God's will, cf. Mt 16:21-23; 26:36-46; Heb 5:7-9; 12:2.

b. The Holy Spirit. The temptation was therefore willed by God.

c. The biblical title 'Son of God' does not necessarily mean natural sonship but may imply a sonship which is merely adoptive, i.e. which as a result of God's deliberate choice sets up a very intimate relationship between God and his creature. In this sense the title is given to angels (Jb 1:6), to the Chosen People (Ex 4:22; Ws 18:13), to individual Israelites (Dt 14:1; Ho 2:1; cf. Mt 5:9,45, etc.), to their leaders (Ps 82:6). When therefore it is attributed to the royal Messiah (1 Ch 17:13; Ps 2:7; 89:26) it does not necessarily imply that he is more than man; nor need we suppose that it has any deeper significance when used by Satan (Mt 4:3,6) or by the possessed (Mk 3:11; 5:7; Lk 4:41), still less when used by the centurion (Mk 15:39; cf. Lk 23:47). By itself the sentence at the baptism (Mt 3:17) and at the transfiguration (17:5) suggests no more than the divine predilection for the Messiah-servant, and in all probability the High priest's question (26:63) concerns messiahship only. Nevertheless the title 'Son of God' can bear a further, more profound meaning of sonship in the full sense of the word. Jesus clearly insinuated this meaning when he spoke of himself as 'the Son' (21:37), ranked above the angels (24:36), having God for his 'Father' in a way others had not (Jn 20:17 and cf. 'my Father' in Mt 7:21 etc.), enjoying with the Father an altogether singular relationship of knowledge and love (Mt 11:27). These assertions coupled with others that speak of the Messiah's divine rank (22:42-46), of the heavenly origin of the 'Son of Man' (8:20+), assertions finally confirmed by the triumph of the resurrection, have endowed the expression 'Son of God' with that strictly divine significance which will later be found, e.g. in Paul (Rm 9:5+). During the lifetime of Christ, it is true, his disciples had no clear conception of his divinity—the texts of Mt 14:33 and 16:16 which add the title 'Son of God' to the more primitive text of Mk reflect, in all probability, a later stage in the faith's development. But it is equally true that Jesus expressed with his own lips, and with as much clarity as his audience could support, his own consciousness of being Son of the Father in the fullest sense. On these historical utterances the faith of the disciples rested, a faith that reached its perfection after the resurrection with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says: 7

Dt 6:16 *You must not put the Lord your God to the test'.*

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms 8
of the world and their splendour. •'I will give you all these' he said, 'if you fall at 9
16:23 my feet and worship me.' •Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says: 10

Dt 6:13 *You must worship the Lord your God,*
and serve him alone.'

Heb 1:14 Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him. 11

||Mk 1:14-15 ||Lk 4:14 **Return to Galilee**

Hearing that John had been arrested he went back to Galilee, •and leaving 12 13
Jn 2:12 Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of
Zebulun and Naphtali. •In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled: 14

Is 8:23–9:1 *Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!* 15
Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan,
Galilee of the nations!
Jn 8:12+ *The people that lived in darkness* 16
has seen a great light;
on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death
a light has dawned.

3:2+ From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for 17
Dn 7:14 Lk 17:20 the kingdom of heaven[d] is close at hand'.

||Mk 1:16-20 ||Lk 5:1-11 **The first four disciples are called**

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who 18
Jn 1:35-42 was called Peter and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake
Jn 21:3 with their net, for they were fishermen. •And he said to them, 'Follow me and I 19
13:47-50 will make you fishers of men'. •And they left their nets at once and followed him. 20
8:19-22,27 Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee 21
and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending
their nets, and he called them. •At once, leaving the boat and their father, they 22
followed him.

||Mk 1:39; 3:7-8 ||Lk 4:14-15, 44;6:17-18 **Jesus preaches and heals the sick**

He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming 23
=Mt 9:35 the Good News of the kingdom[e] and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness
among the people.[f] •His fame spread throughout Syria,[g] and those who were 24
suffering from diseases and painful complaints of one kind or another, the
possessed, epileptics,[h] the paralysed, were all brought to him, and he cured them.
Large crowds followed him, coming from Galilee, the Decapolis,[i] Jerusalem, 25
Judaea and Transjordania.

B. THE EVANGELICAL DISCOURSE[a]

||Lk 6:20-23 **The Beatitudes**

5 Seeing the crowds, he went up the hill.[b] There he sat down and was joined by 1
his disciples. •Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: 2

19:21,29 2 Co 8:9 'How happy are the poor in spirit;[c] 3
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Ps 37:11 Happy *the gentle:*[d] 4
Gn 13:15 Pr 2:21 *they shall have the earth for their heritage.*

5 Happy those who mourn:
they shall be comforted. Ps 126:5 Is 61:2-3

6 Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right:
they shall be satisfied. Pr 21:21 Is 51:1 Am 8:11 *Pr 9:5* Si 24:21

7 Happy the merciful:
they shall have mercy shown them.

8 Happy the pure in heart:
they shall see God. Ps 24:3-4 Pr 22:11 *Ex 33:20+*

9 Happy the peacemakers:
they shall be called sons of God. Ps 34:14 Pr 12:20; 15:18 Zc 8:16

10 Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ↗1 P 3:14

11 'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds
12 of calumny against you on my account. •Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven; this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.[e] Ws 2:16 Ac 5:41 *23:34* Ph 1:29 Col 1:24 Heb 10:34 Jm 1:2

Salt of the earth and light of the world

13 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it ‖Mk 9:50 ‖Lk 14:34-35

d. The sovereignty of God over the Chosen People, and through them over the world, is at the heart of Christ's preaching as it was of the theocratic ideal of the O.T. It implies a kingdom of 'saints' where God will be truly King because they will acknowledge his royal rights by knowing and loving him. This sovereignty, jeopardised by rebellious sin, is to be reasserted by an act of supreme intervention on the part of God and of his Messiah (Dn 2:28+). This is the intervention which Jesus, following John the Baptist (3:2), declares imminent (4:17,23; Lk 4:43). It is to take the form not, as was commonly expected, of a successful nationalist rising (Mk 11:10; Lk 19:11; Ac 1:6) but of a purely spiritual movement (Mk 1:34+; Jn 18:36). The redemptive work of Jesus as 'Son of Man' (Mt 8:20+) and as 'servant' (Mt 8:17+; 20:28+; 26:28+) sets man free from Satan's rule which opposes God's (4:8; 8:29+; 12:25-26). Before it achieves its final eschatological realisation when the elect will be with the Father in the joy of the heavenly banquet (8:11+; 13:43; 26:29) the kingdom makes an unimpressive entrance (13:31-33). Its modest beginning is mysterious (13:11) and arouses opposition (13:24-30), it has come unnoticed (12:28; Lk 17:20-21); the development of the kingdom on earth is slow (Mk 4:26-29) and is effected by the Church (Mt 16:18+). By the judgement of God that falls on Jerusalem it is established with power as the kingdom of Christ (Mt 16:28; Lk 21:31) and is preached throughout the world by apostolic missionaries (Mt 10:7; 24:14; Ac 1:3+). When the time comes for the final Judgement (13:37-43,47-50; 25:31-46) the return of Christ in glory (16:27; 25:31) will be the final act that establishes the kingdom which Christ will then present to the Father (1 Co 15:24). Until that time the kingdom appears as a free gift of God (20:1-16; 22:9-10; Lk 12:32) accepted by the humble (Mt 5:3; 18:3-4; 19:14,23-24) and the generous (13:44-46; 19:12; Mk 9:47; Lk 9:62; 18:29f), refused by the proud and selfish (21:31-32,43; 22:2-8; 23:13). There is no entering it without the wedding garment which is the new life (22:11-13; Jn 3:3,5) and not all men are admitted (Mt 8:12; 1 Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:21). One must stay awake so as to be ready when it comes unexpectedly (Mt 25:1-13). On Matthew's treatment of the kingdom as the guiding idea of his arrangement see Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels.

e. The etymological sense of the word *euanggelion* (gospel) is 'Good News'. The news is of the impending coming of the kingdom of God, cf. v. 17 and 3:2.

f. Miraculous cures are the distinctive sign that the messianic age has dawned, cf. 10:1,7f; 11:4f.

g. The word is not here used in a precise sense and actually means Galilee with its surrounding districts, cf. Mk 1:28.

h. Lit. 'moon-struck, lunatic' (cf. 17:15).

i. The Decapolis was a loose federation of 10 free towns with their surrounding territories, scattered for the most part on the E. side of Jordan and as far N.E. as to include Damascus.

5 a. Jesus sketched the new spirit of the kingdom of God (4:17+) in an inaugural discourse which Mark has omitted (Mk 3:19+) and which Matthew and Luke (6:20-49) present in two different forms. Luke eliminates passages referring to Jewish laws and practices (Mt 5:17–6:18) which are unlikely to interest his readers; Matthew for his part inserts sayings pronounced on other occasions (cf. their parallels in Lk) to make his programme of the new kingdom more complete. In the resultant composite discourse five main subjects are dealt with: 1. The spirit that should animate the 'children of the kingdom' (5:3-48). 2. The spirit in which they are to 'fulfil' the laws and practices of Judaism, 6:1-18. 3. Detachment from riches, 6:19-34. 4. Relations with one's neighbour, 7:1-12. 5. The decisive act of choice that must be made (and the practical consequences that must be accepted) in order to enter the kingdom, 7:13-27.

b. One of the hills near Capernaum.

c. Jesus uses the word 'poor' with the moral shade of meaning already noticeable in Zp (2:3+) but here made explicit by the phrase 'in spirit', absent from Lk 6:20. Because they are destitute and oppressed the 'poor', or the 'lowly', are apt subjects for the kingdom of God—this is the theme of the Beatitudes (cf. Lk 4:18; 7:22; Mt 11:5; Lk 14:13; Jm 2:5). 'Poverty' goes hand in hand with the 'spiritual childhood' required for entrance into the kingdom, Mt 18:1f = Mk 9:33f, cf. Lk 9:46f; Mt 19:13fp; 11:25fp—the mystery revealed to 'little ones', *nepioi*, cf. Lk 12,32; 1 Co 1:26f. They are the 'poor', *ptochoi* the 'lowly', *tapeinoi* (Lk 1:48, 52; 14:11; 18:14; Mt 23:12; 18:4) and both are the 'last' as opposed to the 'first' (Mk 9:35), the 'little ones' as opposed to the 'great' (Lk 9:48; cf. Mt 19:30p; 20:26p—cf. Lk 17:10). Although the formula of Mt 5:3 stresses the spirit of poverty for the rich as for the poor, Jesus usually has in mind actual poverty, especially for his disciples (Mt 6:19f, cf. Lk 12:33f; Mt 6:25p; 4:18fp, cf. Lk 5:1f) 9:9p; 19:21p; 19:27; cf. Mk 10:28p; cf. Ac 2:44f; 4:32f. He himself sets the example of poverty (Lk 2:7; Mt 8:20p) and of lowliness (Mt 11:29; 20:28p; 21:5; Jn 13:12f; cf. 2 Co 8:9; Ph 2:7f). He identifies himself with the little ones and the wretched (Mt 25:45, cf. 18:5fp).

d. Or 'the lowly'; the word is taken from the Greek version of the Psalm. V. 4 is possibly only a gloss on v. 3; its omission would reduce the number of Beatitudes to 7, cf. 6:9+.

e. Christ's disciples are the successors of the prophets, cf.10:41; 13:17;23:34.

Lv 2:13 Nb 18:19 salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

Si 20:30 Jn 8:12+ ||*Mk 4:21* ||Lk 8:16; 11:33 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. 14 No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where 15 it shines for everyone in the house. •In the same way your light must shine in the 16 sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.

Jn 3:21; 15:8 1 Co 10:31

The fulfilment of the Law

Rm 3:31; 10:4 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have 17 come not to abolish but to complete them.[f] •I tell you solemnly, till heaven 18 and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. •Therefore, the man who infringes even 19 one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

||Lk 16:17

Jm 2:10

The new standard higher than the old

Rm 10:3 Ph 3:9 'For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper[g] than that of the scribes and 20 Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

Ex 20:13 Si 10:6 'You have learnt[h] how it was said to our ancestors: *You must not kill;* and if 21 anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. •But I say this to you: 22 anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother "Fool"[i] he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin;[j] and if a man calls him "Renegade"[k] he will answer for it in hell fire. •So then, if you are bringing 23 your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, •leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with 24 your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. •Come to terms 25 with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. •I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have 26 paid the last penny.

Ep 4:26 Jm 1:19-20; 3:6

Si 28:2 Mk 11:25

Pr 17:14 Lk 12:58-59

Ex 20:14 Jb 31:1 *Si 9:5* =18:8-9 'You have learnt how it was said: *You must not commit adultery.* •But I say 27 28 this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. •If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out 29 and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. •And if your right hand should cause 30 you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

Dt 24:1 Ml 2:14-16 =*19:9*+ ||Mk 10:11-12 ||Lk 16:18 1 Co 7:10 'It has also been said: *Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of* 31 *dismissal.* •But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the 32 case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Ex 20:7 Nb 30:3 Dt 23:22 'Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: *You must not break* 33 *your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord.* •But I say this to you: do not 34 swear at all, either by *heaven*, since that is God's throne; •or by *the earth*, since 35 that is *his footstool;* or by Jerusalem, since that is *the city of the great king.* •Do not 36 swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black.

Ps 11:4 Si 23:9 Is 66:1 *Ps 48:2*

Si 5:10 2 Co 1:17-19 All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more 37 than this comes from the evil one.

Ex 21:24+ 'You have learnt how it was said: *Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.* •But I say 38 39 this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance.[l] On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; •if a man takes you to law 40 and would have your tunic,[m] let him have your cloak as well. •And if anyone 41 orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. •Give to anyone who asks, 42 and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

Lm 3:30 ||Lk 6:29 Rm 12:19,21

Lk 6:30

43 'You have learnt how it was said: *You must love your neighbour* and hate your
44 enemy.[n] •But I say this to you: love your enemies[o] and pray for those who
45 persecute you;[p] •in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he
causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest
46 and dishonest men alike. •For if you love those who love you, what right have
47 you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors[q] do as much, do they not? •And
if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional?
48 Even the pagans do as much, do they not? •You must therefore be perfect just as
your heavenly Father is perfect.

Lv 19:18
Jb 31:29
‖*Lk 6:27-36;* 23:24
Ac 7:60
Rm 12:20
Pr 22:2; 29:13
Si 12:6
Lk 6:32
Lk 3:12
Lv 19:2+; 11:44
Jm 1:4
1 P 1:16
1 Jn 3:3

Almsgiving in secret

1 6 'Be careful not to parade your good deeds[a] before men to attract their notice;
2 by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven. •So when
you give alms, do not have it trumpeted before you; this is what the hypocrites do
in the synagogues and in the streets to win men's admiration. I tell you
3 solemnly, they have had their reward. •But when you give alms, your left hand
4 must not know what your right is doing; •your almsgiving must be secret, and
your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

23:5
Lk 16:14-15
Pr 20:6
Jn 5:44; 12:43
Am 4:5
15:7; 22:18; 23:13-15
Ps 139:2-3

Prayer in secret

5 'And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their
prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see
6 them. I tell you solemnly, they have had their reward. •But when you
pray, *go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray* to your
Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in
secret will reward you.

Pr 20:6
Jm 4:3
2 K 4:33
Tb 3:10f
Is 26:20
Dn 6:11

How to pray. The Lord's Prayer

7 'In your prayers do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using
8 many words they will make themselves heard. •Do not be like them; your Father
9 knows what you need before you ask him. •So you should pray like this:[b]

Qo 5:1
Si 7:14

'Our Father in heaven,
may your name be held holy,
10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Tb 13:4
‖Lk 11:2-4
Jn 17:6,26
Mt 26:39,42p

f. I.e. 'to bring to perfection'. Jesus is speaking not of carrying into effect each single injunction of the old Law but of bestowing on that Law a new and definitive form by raising it to a higher place through the spirit of the gospel, cf. vv. 21-48. It is in this sense that no detail of the Law is to be neglected, vv. 18-19; each has its part to play in the unfolding of the divine plan.

g. Or 'does not greatly surpass'.

h. Lit. 'you have heard' i.e. (normally) in the synagogues where the teachings of tradition were given orally.

i. The Aramaic word *raqa*, transliterated in Mt, translated here, means: empty-head, nitwit.

j. Here the Great Sanhedrin which met in Jerusalem, as opposed to the minor courts (vv. 21-22) of the country districts.

k. To the first meaning ('fool') of the Greek word, Jewish usage added the much more insulting one of 'impious'.

l. This deals (cf. the examples in vv. 39-40) with an injustice of which we ourselves are the victims: we are forbidden to resist it by returning evil for evil in the way laid down by the Jewish law of *talio* (v. 38). Christ does not forbid us to resist unjust attack in due measure (Jn 18:22f), still less to strive to eliminate injustice from the world.

m. As a surety, cf. Ex 22:25f; Dt 24:12f. It is clear that the sentence is deliberately hyperbolic, cf. 19:24.

n. The second part of this commandment is not, and could not, be found thus formulated in the Law. It is the brusque expression of a language (the original Aramaic) which has few half-tones and is equivalent to 'There is less obligation to love one's enemy'. Cf. Lk 14:26 with its parallel Mt 10:37.

o. Add. 'do good to those who hate you'.

p. Add. 'and for those who treat you badly'. cf. Lk 6:27f.

q. They were employed by the occupying power, and this earned them popular contempt, cf. 9:10.

6 a. Lit. 'perform your righteousness' (var. 'perform almsgiving'), i.e. perform good works which make a man righteous in the sight of God. For the Jews these works were principally: almsgiving (vv. 2-4), prayer (vv. 5-6), fasting (vv. 16-18).

b. The Lord's Prayer in its Matthaean form has 7 petitions. The number is a favourite of Matthew's: 2 × 7 generations in the Genealogy (1:17), 7 Beatitudes (5:4+), 7 parables (13:3+), forgiveness not 7 but 77 times (18:22), 7 'alas' for the Pharisees (23:13+), 7 sections into which the gospel is divided (cf. Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels).

Pr 30:8-9
Jn 6:32,35
18:21-35
Pr 24:29
Si 28:2
26:41p
Jn 17:11,15
2 Th 3:3
1 Jn 2:14+

Give us today our daily[c] bread. 11
And forgive us our debts, 12
as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.
And do not put us to the test, 13
but save us from the evil one.[d]

Si 28:1-5
||Mk 11:25
5:7
Pr 21:13
Jm 2:13

Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you 14
yours; •but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your 15
failings either.

Fasting in secret

Pr 20:6

'When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do: they pull 16
long faces to let men know they are fasting. I tell you solemnly, they have
had their reward. •But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 17
Is 58:3 so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is 18
done in secret; and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.

Jb 22:24-26
||Lk 12:33-34

True treasures

19:21
Ps 62:10
Si 29:8-12
Jm 5:2-3
Tb 4:9

'Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moths and 19
woodworms destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. •But store up 20
treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworms destroy
them and thieves cannot break in and steal. •For where your treasure is, there 21
will your heart be also.

Lk 11:34-35

The eye, the lamp of the body

Pr 20:27

'The lamp of the body is the eye. It follows that if your eye is sound, your 22
whole body will be filled with light. •But if your eye is diseased, your whole body 23
will be all darkness. If then, the light inside you is darkness, what darkness
that will be![e]

5:3-4; 19:21:26
||Lk 16:13
Jb 31:24
Ps 62:10
Ep 5:5

God and money

'No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love 24
the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot
be the slave both of God and of money.

||Lk 12:22-31

Trust in Providence

Ps 145:15f
Si 11:23
Ph 4:6

'That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to 25
eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. Surely life means more than
Ps 147:9 food, and the body more than clothing! •Look at the birds in the sky. They do not 26
sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you
not worth much more than they are? •Can any of you, for all his worrying, add 27
one single cubit to his span of life? •And why worry about clothing? Think of the 28
flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; •yet I assure you 29
1 K 10:1-29 that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. •Now if that 30
is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the
furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith?
So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How 31
are we to be clothed?" •It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. 32
1 K 3:13
2 Ch 1:12
Ws 1:1; 7:11
Is 51:1
Jm 4:3
Jm 4:13-14

Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. •Set your hearts on his kingdom 33
first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well.
So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day 34
has enough trouble of its own.

||Lk 6:37-42
Rm 2:1-2

Do not judge

1 Co 4:5
Pr 11:25
Ws 12:22
||Mk 4:24

7 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged;[a] •because the judgements you give ½
are the judgements you will get, and the amount you measure out is the

amount you will be given. •Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? •How dare you say to your brother, "Let me take the splinter out of your eye", when all the time there is a plank in your own? •Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take the splinter out of your brother's eye.

Ps 36:2
Jn 8:7

Do not profane sacred things

'Do not give dogs what is holy;[b] and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, or they may trample them and then turn on you and tear you to pieces.

Pr 23:9
Si 22:9-10

Effective prayer

||Lk 11:9-13

'Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. •For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. •Is there a man among you who would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? •Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish? •If you, then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

18:19
Dt 4:30+
Pr 8:17
Mk 11:24
Lk 18:1-8
Jn 14:13
Jm 1:5+
Jm 1:5,17
1 Jn 3:22; 5:14-15

The golden rule

||Lk 6:31

'So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets.

Tb 4:15
Pr 3:27
Rm 13:8-10

The two ways

Dt 30:15f+
Ps 1:1+
||Lk 13:24
Si 21:10
Si 4:17
Jn 10:9-10
19:24p

'Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious,[c] and many take it; •but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

False prophets

Rv 13:11; 19-20

'Beware of false prophets[d] who come to you disguised as sheep but underneath are ravenous wolves. •You will be able to tell them by their fruits. Can people pick grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? •In the same way, a sound tree produces good fruit but a rotten tree bad fruit. •A sound tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a rotten tree bear good fruit. •Any tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown on the fire. •I repeat, you will be able to tell them by their fruits.

2 P 2:1-3
Si 27:6
||Lk 6:43-44
Jm 3:12
=12:33
Ga 5:19-24
=3:10p
Jn 15:6

The true disciple

Is 29:13
Am 5:21+
||Lk 6:46

'It is not those who say to me, "Lord, Lord", who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven. •When the day comes[e] many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, work many miracles in your name?" •Then I shall tell them to their faces: I have never known you; *away from me, you evil men!*'

Jm 2:14-17
1 Jn 3:18
25:11-12
||Lk 13:26-27
Ps 5:5; 6:8

'Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them

Pr 10:8
||Lk 6:47-49

c. The Greek word is obscure; this traditional rendering is a probable one. Other possibilities: 'necessary for subsistence' or 'for tomorrow'. Whatever the exact translation the sense is that we must ask God for the sustenance we need in this life but for no more—not for wealth or luxury. The Fathers applied this text to the bread of the Holy Eucharist.

d. Or 'from evil'. Add. 'For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen' (a reading introduced into text through liturgical influence).

e. According as the eye is sound or diseased it gives or refuses material light to the body; to this light the spiritual light that emanates from the soul is compared; if this light is itself dimmed the blindness is much worse than physical.

7 a. Do not judge others if you do not wish to be judged by God. So also in the following verse.

b. Consecrated meat from animals sacrificed in the Temple, cf. Lv 22:14; Ex 22:30. Similarly sacred teaching of great worth must not be set before those who, incapable of receiving it with profit, may even abuse it. It is not clear whether the reference is to Jews or (cf. 15:26) to pagans.

c. Var. 'the gate that leads to perdition is wide, and the road spacious'.

d. Lying teachers who charm the public by their show of piety while pursuing their own selfish ends, cf. 24:4f, 24.

e. The day of the final Judgement.

will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. •Rain came down, floods 25
Pr 10:25; 12:3,7 rose, gales blew and hurled themselves against that house, and it did not fall:
Ezk 33:31 1 Jn 2:17 it was founded on rock. •But everyone who listens to these words of mine and does 26
Jb 8:15 not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. •Rain 27
Ezk 13:10-14 came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell; and what a fall it had!'

The amazement of the crowds

||Lk 7:1 Jn 7:15 Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and his teaching made a deep 28
||*Mk 1:22* ||Lk 4:32 impression on the people •because he taught them with authority, and not like 29
their own scribes.*f*

III. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS PREACHED

A. NARRATIVE SECTION: TEN MIRACLES

||Mk 1:40-45 ||Lk 5:12-16 **Cure of a leper**

8 After he had come down from the mountain large crowds followed him. 1
A leper now came up and bowed low in front of him.' Sir,' he said 'if you want 2
9:25; 11:5; 14:14,36; 15:31,36 to, you can cure me.' •Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said, 'Of 3
course I want to! Be cured!' And his leprosy was cured at once.*a* •Then Jesus said 4
Mk 1:34+ to him, 'Mind you do not tell anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest
Lv 14:1-32 Lk 17:14 and make the offering prescribed by Moses, as evidence for them'.

Cure of the centurion's servant

||Lk 7:1-10 ||Jn 4:46-53 When he went into Capernaum a centurion came up and pleaded with him. 5
'Sir,' he said *'my servant is lying at home paralysed, and in great pain.'* •'I will 6,7
Lk 5:8 come myself and cure him' said Jesus. •The centurion replied, 'Sir, I am not 8
Ps 33:9; 107:20 worthy to have you under my roof; just give the word and my servant will be
cured. •For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say 9
to one man: Go, and he goes; to another: Come here, and he comes; to my
9:2,22,28 Lk 1:20; 5:5, 20; 7:9,50 servant: Do this, and he does it.' •When Jesus heard this he was astonished and 10
said to those following him, 'I tell you solemnly, nowhere in Israel have
Is 25:6+ ||Lk 13:28-29 *Rm 11:12* I found faith*b* like this. •And I tell you that many will come from east and west 11
to take their places with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast*c* in the kingdom
13:42,50; 22: 13; 24:51; 25:30 Jn 8:12+ of heaven; •but the subjects of the kingdom*d* will be turned out into the dark, 12
where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.'*e* •And to the centurion Jesus 13
said, 'Go back, then; you have believed, so let this be done for you'. And the
servant was cured at that moment.

||Mk 1:29-31 ||Lk 4:38-39 **Cure of Peter's mother-in-law**

And going into Peter's house Jesus found Peter's mother-in-law in bed with 14
9:25p Mk 9:27 Ac 3:7 fever. •He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began 15
to wait on him.

||Mk 1:32-34 ||Lk 4:40-41 **A number of cures**

That evening they brought him many who were possessed by devils. He cast 16
out the spirits with a word and cured all who were sick. •This was to fulfil the 17
prophecy of Isaiah:

Is 53:4 Jn 1:29 *He took our sicknesses away and carried our diseases for us.f*

||Lk 9:57-60 **Hardships of the apostolic calling**

When Jesus saw the great crowds all about him he gave orders to leave for the 18
other side.*g* •One of the scribes then came up and said to him, 'Master, I will 19

20 follow you wherever you go'. •Jesus replied, 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man[h] has nowhere to lay his head'.
21 Another man, one of his disciples, said to him, 'Sir, let me go and bury my
22 father first'. •But Jesus replied, 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their dead'.

Ps 84:3
11:19
2 Co 8:9
Gn 50:5
Tb 4:3
4:18f;
10:37p

The calming of the storm

||Mk 4:35-41
||Lk 8:22-25

23 Then he got into the boat followed by his disciples. •Without warning
24 a storm broke over the lake, so violent that the waves were breaking right over
25 the boat. But he was asleep. •So they went to him and woke him saying, 'Save us,
26 Lord, we are going down!' •And he said to them, 'Why are you so frightened, you men of little faith?' And with that he stood up and rebuked the winds and the
27 sea; and all was calm again. •The men were astounded and said, 'Whatever kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him.'

Ac 27:9f
14:30
Jon 1:6
6:30; 8:10+
Ps 107:29
Ps 65:7+

The demoniacs of Gadara

||Mk 5:1-20
||Lk 8:26-39

28 When he reached the country of the Gadarenes[i] on the other side, two demoniacs came towards him out of the tombs—creatures so fierce that no one

f. These always sought support for their teaching in the 'tradition' of the ancients. Add. 'and the Pharisees'.

8 a. By his miracles Jesus shows his power over nature (8:23-27; 14:22-33p), especially over sickness (8:1-4, 5-13,14-15; 9:1-8,20-22,27-31; 14:14,36; 15:30; 20:29-34 and p; Mk 7:32-37; 8:22-26; Lk 14:1-6; 17:11-19; Jn 5:1-16; 9:1-41), over death (Mt 9:23-26p; Lk 7:11-17; Jn 11:1-44), over devils (Mt 8:29+). Christ's miracles are not elaborate: in this they differ from the fantastic prodigies reported of the hellenistic world and from those attributed to the Jewish rabbis, but they are most notably different by reason of the spiritual and symbolic significance that Jesus attaches to them. They declare the judgements of the messianic age (21:18-22p) as also the privileges it brings (11:5+; 14:13-21; 15:32-39p; Lk 5:4-11; Jn 2:1-11; 21:4-14); they are the first signs of the triumph of the Spirit over Satan's empire (8:29+) and over all the powers of evil whether sin (9:2+) or disease (8:17+). The motive is sometimes compassion (20:34; Mk 1:41; Lk 7:13) but they are directed principally to the strengthening of faith (8:10+; Jn 2:11+). Thus it is only with great deliberation that Jesus works any miracles at all, demanding secrecy for any he does agree to work (Mk 1:34+), and leaving it for his resurrection to be the miraculous event that was to force decision (12:39-40). When he sent his apostles to preach the kingdom he gave them his own healing power (10:1,8p) and for this reason Matthew recounts before the Missionary Discourse (ch. 10) a series of ten miracles (ch. 8-9) as signs accrediting the missionary (Mk 16:17f; Ac 2:22; cf. 1:8+).

b. The faith that Jesus asks for from the outset of his public life (Mk 1:15) and throughout his subsequent career, is that act of trust and of self-abandonment by which people no longer rely on their own strength and policies but commit themselves to the power and guiding word of him in whom they believe. (Lk 1:20,45; Mt 21:25p,32). Christ asks for this faith especially when he works his miracles (8:13; 9:2p,22p,28-29; 15:28; Mk 5:36p; 10:52p; Lk 17:19) which are not so much acts of mercy as signs attesting his mission and witnessing to the kingdom (8:3+, cf. Jn 2:11+); hence he cannot work miracles unless he finds the faith without which the miracles lose their true significance (13:58p; 12:38-39; 16:1-4). Since faith demands the sacrifice of the whole man, mind and heart, it is not an easy act of humility to perform; many decline it, particularly in Israel (8:10p; 15:28; 27:42p; Lk 18:8), or are half-hearted (Mk 9:24; Lk 8:13). Even the disciples are slow to believe (8:26p; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20p) and are still reluctant after the resurrection (28:17; Mk 16:11-14; Lk 24:11,25,41). The most generous faith of all, of the 'Rock' (16:16-18), the disciples' leader, was destined to be shaken by the outrage of the Passion (26:69-75p) though it was to triumph in the end (Lk 22:32). When faith is strong it works wonders (17:20p; 21:21p; Mk 16:17) and its appeal is never refused (21:22p; Mk 9:23) especially when it asks for forgiveness of sin (9:2p; Lk 7:50) and for that salvation of which it is the necessary condition (Lk 8:12; Mk 16:16, cf. Ac 3:16+).

c. Basing their idea on Is 25:6, the Jews often described the joyous messianic era as a banquet (cf. 22:2-14; 26:29p; Lk 14:15; Rv 3:20; 19:9.

d. Lit. 'the sons of the kingdom', that is to say the Jews, natural heirs of the promises. Their place will be taken by the pagans, who prove more worthy.

e. Scriptural image for the dismay and frustration of the wicked at seeing the virtuous rewarded, cf. Ps 35:16; 37:12; 112:10; Jb 16:9. In Mt it is used as a description of damnation.

f. As described by Is the servant 'took' our sorrows on himself in the sense that his own suffering was expiatory. Matthew takes the phrase to mean that Jesus 'took away' these sorrows by his healing miracles. This interpretation, at first sight forced, is in fact profoundly theological. It was to take on himself the expiation of sin that Jesus, the 'servant', came on earth; that is why he could relieve men of their bodily ills which are the consequence and the penalty of sin.

g. The E. bank of Lake Tiberias.

h. With the exception of Ac 7:56; Rv 1:13; 14:14, this title appears only in the gospels. There is no doubt that Jesus used it of himself, and indeed preferred it to others. At times he uses it to express his lowly state, 8:20; 11:19; 20:28, especially the humiliation of the Passion, 17:22 etc. At other times it is used to proclaim the definitive triumph of his resurrection, 17:9, of his return in glory, 24:30, of his coming in judgement, 25:31. That this title, Aramaic in flavour, could bring together these seemingly opposed qualities is clear from the following considerations. The phrase originally meant 'man', Ezk 2:1+, and by reason of its unusual and indirect form it underlined the lowliness of man's state. But the title suggested glory, too. It was used in Dn 7:13+, and later in the Jewish apocalyptic Book of Enoch, to indicate the transcendent figure, heavenly in origin, who was to receive from God's hand the eschatological kingdom (the kingdom 'at the end of times'). In this way therefore the title both veiled and hinted at (cf. Mk 1:34+; Mt 13:13+) the sort of Messiah Jesus was. Moreover, the explicit avowal in the presence of the Sanhedrin, 26:64+, should have removed all ambiguity.

i. The district got its name from the town of Gadara to the S.E. of the Lake. The Var. 'Gerasenes' (Mk, Lk and Vulg. Mt) derives from the name of another town (Gerasa or possibly Chorsia); the variant 'Gergesenes' is the result of a conjecture of Origen.

could pass that way. •They stood there shouting, 'What do you want with us, 29
Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before the time?'[j] •Now some 30
distance away there was a large herd of pigs feeding, •and the devils pleaded 31
with Jesus, 'If you cast us out, send us into the herd of pigs'. •And he said to them, 32
'Go then', and they came out and made for the pigs; and at that the whole herd
charged down the cliff into the lake and perished in the water. •The swineherds 33
ran off and made for the town, where they told the whole story, including what
had happened to the demoniacs. •At this the whole town set out to meet Jesus; 34
and as soon as they saw him they implored him to leave the neighbourhood.

Cure of a paralytic

9 He got back in the boat, crossed the water and came to his own town.[a] •Then 1 2
some people appeared, bringing him a paralytic stretched out on a bed. Seeing
their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'Courage, my child, your sins are forgiven'.[b]
And at this some scribes said to themselves, 'This man is blaspheming'. •Knowing 3 4
what was in their minds Jesus said, 'Why do you have such wicked thoughts in
your hearts? •Now, which of these is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven", 5
or to say, "Get up and walk"? •But to prove to you that the Son of Man has 6
authority on earth to forgive sins,'—he said to the paralytic—'get up, and pick up
your bed and go off home'. •And the man got up and went home. •A feeling of 7 8
awe came over the crowd when they saw this, and they praised God for giving
such power to men.[c]

The call of Matthew

As Jesus was walking on from there he saw a man named Matthew[d] sitting by the 9
customs house, and he said to him, 'Follow me'. And he got up and followed him.

Eating with sinners

While he was at dinner in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors 10
and sinners[e] came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples. •When the 11
Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your master eat with
tax collectors and sinners?' •When he heard this he replied, 'It is not the healthy 12
who need the doctor, but the sick. •Go and learn the meaning of the words: 13
What I want is mercy, not sacrifice.[f] And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous,
but sinners.'

A discussion on fasting

Then John's[g] disciples came to him and said, 'Why is it that we and the 14
Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?' •Jesus replied, 'Surely the bridegroom's 15
attendants would never think of mourning as long as the bridegroom[h] is still with
them? But the time will come for the bridegroom to be taken away[i] from them,
and then they will fast. •No one puts a piece of unshrunken cloth on to an old 16
cloak, because the patch pulls away from the cloak and the tear gets worse. •Nor 17
do people put new wine into old wineskins; if they do, the skins burst, the wine
runs out, and the skins are lost. No; they put new wine into fresh skins and both
are preserved.'[j]

Cure of the woman with a haemorrhage. The official's daughter raised to life

While he was speaking to them, up came one of the officials,[k] who bowed low 18
in front of him and said, 'My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand
on her and her life will be saved'. •Jesus rose and, with his disciples, followed him. 19
Then from behind him came a woman, who had suffered from a haemorrhage 20
for twelve years, and she touched the fringe of his cloak, •for she said to herself, 21
'If I can only touch his cloak I shall be well again'. •Jesus turned round and saw 22
her; and he said to her, 'Courage, my daughter, your faith has restored you to
health'. And from that moment the woman was well again.

23 When Jesus reached the official's house and saw the flute-players, with the
24 crowd making a commotion[l] he said, •'Get out of here; the little girl is not dead, Jn 11:11-13
25 she is asleep'. And they laughed at him. •But when the people had been turned
26 out he went inside and took the little girl by the hand; and she stood up. •And the 8:15+
news spread all round the countryside. 8:3+

Cure of two blind men 20:29-34

27 As Jesus went on his way two blind men followed him shouting, 'Take pity 12:23; 15-22; 21:9
28 on us, Son of David'.[m] •And when Jesus reached the house the blind men came Lk 1:32
up with him and he said to them, 'Do you believe I can do this?' They said, 'Sir, 8:10+
29 we do'. •Then he touched their eyes saying, 'Your faith deserves it, so let this
30 be done for you'. •And their sight returned. Then Jesus sternly warned them,
31 'Take care that no one learns about this'. •But when they had gone, they talked Mk 1:34+
about him all over the countryside.

Cure of a dumb demoniac =12:22-24 ||Lk 11:14-15

32 They had only just left when a man was brought to him, a dumb demoniac.
33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke and the people were 8:29+
34 amazed. 'Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel' they said. •But the Mk 7:37
Pharisees said, 'It is through the prince of devils that he casts out devils'.[n] 10:25

The distress of the crowds

35 Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their =4:23
synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds Lk 8:1
of diseases and sickness.

36 And when he saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed 14:13
37 and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.[o] •Then he said to his disciples, Jr 50:6
'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to Zc 10:2
send labourers to his harvest'. ||Mk 6:34
||Lk 10:2
Jn 4:35-38

i. Until the day of Judgement the demons are to some extent free to work their mischief on earth, Rv 9:5; they do this normally by taking possession of men, 12:43-45+. Such possession often brings disease with it because disease—consequence of sin, 9:2+—is another manifestation of Satan's domination, Lk 13:16. It is for this reason that the gospel exorcisms, though sometimes described simply as expulsions, cf. 15:21-28p; Mk 1:23-28p; Lk 8:2, often take the form of cures, 9:32-34; 12:22-24p; 17:14-18p; Lk 13:10-17. By his power over the devils Jesus destroys Satan's empire, 12:28p; Lk 10:17-19; cf. Lk 4:6; Jn 12:31+, and inaugurates the messianic era of which, according to the prophets, the gift of the Holy Spirit is the distinctive mark, Is 11:2+; Jl 3:1f. Man may refuse to recognise it, 12:24-32, but the demons see it all too well, cf. this passage and Mk 1:24p; 3:11p; Lk 4:41; Ac 16:17; 19:15. This power to exorcise is given by Jesus to his disciples simultaneously with the power of miraculous healing, 10:1,8p, with which it is connected, 8:3+; 4:24; 8:16p; Lk 13:32.

9 a. Capernaum, cf. 4:13.

b. Jesus puts the cure of the soul before that of the body; when he heals the body it is because he has the good of the soul in mind. Nevertheless his words in this verse contain a promise of bodily healing since sickness was regarded as the result of a sin committed either by the sufferer or by his parents, cf. 8:29+; Jn 5:14; 9:2.

c. Note the plural: Matthew is probably thinking of the Church's ministers who received this power from Christ, 18:18.

d. Called Levi by Mk and Lk.

e. Those whose moral conduct or disreputable profession, cf. 5:46+, rendered 'unclean' and socially outcast.

f. To the exact performance of the Law's external demands God prefers the inward quality of genuine compassion. It is a favourite theme of the prophets, Am 5:21+.

g. John the Baptist. Like the Pharisees, John's disciples used to observe fasts not prescribed by the Law in the hope that their devotion would hasten the coming of the kingdom.

h. The bridegroom is Jesus. His companions cannot fast because, with his coming, the messianic age has dawned.

i. Christ's death clearly foretold.

j. The old garment and the old wineskins stand for Judaism in so far as it contains elements which (in the scheme of salvation) are to pass away. The new cloth and the new wine represent the new spirit of the kingdom of God. The superadded devotional practices of John's disciples and of the Pharisees, intended to give new life to the old order, in fact are only leading to its downfall. Jesus declines either to add or to patch: his purpose is to produce something quite new—even the spirit of the Law is to be raised to a new plane, cf. 5:17f.

k. The head of the synagogue; called Jairus in Mk and Lk.

l. The loud wailing of the oriental mourner.

m. Messianic title, 2 S 7:1+; cf. Lk 1:32; Ac 2:30; Rm 1:3. It was familiar as such to the Jews, Mk 12:35; Jn 7:42, and Matthew in particular emphasises its application to Jesus (1:1; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30p; 21:9,15) who was slow to welcome the title because it involved a purely human notion of the Messiah, Mt 22:41-46; cf. Mk 1:34+. He preferred the more obscure title 'Son of Man', 8:20+.

n. Verse omitted by representatives of the Western Text.

o. Familiar biblical metaphor: Nb 27:17; 1 K 22:17; Jdt 11:19; Ezk 34:5.

B. THE APOSTOLIC DISCOURSE

The mission of the Twelve

||Mk 3:14; 6:7 ||Lk 9:1 *Mt 8:29+*

10 He summoned his twelve disciples,[a] and gave them authority over unclean spirits with power to cast them out and to cure all kinds of diseases and sickness. 1

||Mk 3:16-19 ||Lk 6:13-16 ||Ac 1:13

These are the names of the twelve apostles:[b] first, Simon who is called Peter, 2
and his brother Andrew; James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; •Philip 3
and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of
Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; •Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot,[c] the one who 4
was to betray him. •These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them as follows: 5

15:24 Lk 9:53 Jn 4:9

'Do not turn your steps to pagan territory, and do not enter any Samaritan
town; •go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.[d] •And as you go, 6 7
3:2+; 4:17+ Lk 10:9,11 *Is 55:1* Ac 8:20

proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. •Cure the sick, raise the 8
dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. You received without charge, give without
||*Mk 6:8-9* ||Lk 9:3; 10:4 ||*Lk 10:7* ↗1 Co 9:14 3 Jn 8

charge. •Provide yourselves with no gold or silver, not even with a few coppers 9
for your purses, •with no haversack for the journey or spare tunic or footwear 10
or a staff, for the workman deserves his keep.

||*Mk 6:10-11* ||Lk 9:4-5; 10:5-12

'Whatever town or village you go into, ask for someone trustworthy and stay 11
with him until you leave. •As you enter his house, salute it,[e] •and if the house 12 13
deserves it, let your peace descend upon it; if it does not, let your peace come back

Ac 13:51; 18:6

to you. •And if anyone does not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, 14
as you walk out of the house or town shake the dust from your feet.[f] •I tell you 15

=11:24 Lk 12:48 ||*Lk 10:3* Jude 7 *7:15* 1 Co 14:20

solemnly, on the day of Judgement it will not go as hard with the land of
Sodom and Gomorrah as with that town. •Remember, I am sending you out 16
like sheep among wolves; so be cunning as serpents and yet as harmless as doves.

||Mk 13:9-13 ||Lk 21:12-19

The missionaries will be persecuted[g]

Jn 16:1-4 Ac 5:40 *Jn 15:27*

'Beware of men: they will hand you over to sanhedrins[h] and scourge you in 17
their synagogues. •You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, 18

||Lk 12:11-12

to bear witness before them and the pagans. •But when they hand you over, do 19

Ex 4:10-12 Jr 1:6-10 Jn 15:26 Ac 4:8,31

not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to
you when the time comes; •because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit 20
of your Father will be speaking in you.

'Brother will betray brother to death, and the father his child; children will 21

=24:9 *Jn 15:18-19, 25 =24:13*

rise against their parents and have them put to death. •You will be hated by all 22
men on account of my name; but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved.
If they persecute you in one town, take refuge in the next; and if they persecute 23

16:28; 24:34

you in that, take refuge in another.[i] I tell you solemnly, you will not have gone
the round of the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.[j]

||Lk 6:40 ||Jn 13:16; 15:20

'The disciple is not superior to his teacher, nor the slave to his master. •It is 24 25
enough for the disciple that he should grow to be like his teacher, and the slave

9:34; 12:24

like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, what will
they not say of his household?

||Lk 12:2-7

Open and fearless speech

||Mk 4:22 ||Lk 8:17 1 Tm 5:25

'Do not be afraid of them therefore. For everything that is now covered will 26
be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. •What I say to 27
you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from
the housetops.[k]

Heb 10:31 1 P 3:14 Rv 2:10; 14:7

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him 28
rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. •Can you not buy two 29
sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father
knowing. •Why, every hair on your head has been counted. •So there is no 30 31
need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

32 'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself ||Lk 12:8-9
33 for him in the presence of my Father in heaven.[l] •But the one who disowns ||Mk 8:38 ||Lk 9:26 2 Tm 2:12 Rv 3:5
me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in
heaven.

Jesus, the cause of dissension[m] ||Lk 12:51-53

34 'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I Lk2:34
35 have come to bring, but a sword. •For I have come to set *a man against his father,* Lk 22:36 *Mi 7:6*
a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.
36 *A man's enemies will be those of his own household.*

Renouncing self to follow Jesus Ex 32:27

37 'Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone 8:22 ||Lk 14:26-27
38 who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. •Anyone who does not *Dt 33:9 =16:24-25*
39 take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. •Anyone who ||*Mk 8:34-35* ||Lk 9:23-24; 17:33
finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.[n] ||Jn 12:25

Conclusion of the apostolic discourse

40 'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me =18:5 ||Mk 9:37 ||Lk 9:48; 10:16
welcome the one who sent me.
41 'Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have ||Jn 12:44-45; 13:20
a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man because he is a holy 25:40,45
man will have a holy man's reward.[o]
42 'If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones[p] Pr 11:25 ||Mk 9:41
because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose
his reward.'

IV. THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A. NARRATIVE SECTION

1 11 When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples he moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns.[a]

10 a. Matthew supposes that the reader already knows about the choice of the Twelve; Mark and Luke mention it expressly and distinguish the choice from the mission.

b. Apostle means 'one sent'.

c. 'Thaddaeus' (var. 'Lebbaeus') corresponds to 'Judas (son) of James' in the lists of Lk 6:16 and Ac 1:13. 'Iscariot' is commonly taken to mean 'man of Kerioth' (a town in Judah, Jos 15:25).

d. Hebraism common in the Bible: the people of Israel. As heirs to the Choice and the Promise, the Jews are to be the first to receive the offer of the Messiah's saving work; but cf. Ac 8:5; 13:5+.

e. The oriental greeting is a wish of peace. In v. 13 this wish is treated in concrete fashion as an entity which, if it fails to secure its effect, nevertheless remains in being and returns to its original owner.

f. The phrase is Jewish in origin. The dust of any country other than the Holy Land is reckoned unclean; in this passage the impurity attaches to any place that refuses the word.

g. The instructions of vv. 17-39 clearly suppose a horizon wider than that of this first mission of the Twelve: they must have been issued at a later date (note their situation in Mk and Lk). Matthew puts them here to complete his missionary's handbook.

h. The small provincial sanhedrins and also the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem; cf. 5:21-22.

i. Om. 'and if.....another'.

j. The coming which is here foretold is not concerned with the world at large but with Israel: it took place at the moment when God 'visited' his now faithless people and brought the O.T. era to an end by the destruction of Jerusalem and of its Temple in 71 A.D., cf. 24:1+.

k. Jesus was obliged to obscure his message: 1. his hearers would have misunderstood a clearer teaching, Mk 1:34+; 2. he himself had not yet completed—by death and resurrection—the work which alone could explain the message. Later on it will be the duty of his disciples to deliver the message in its entirety and without fear. These same words are found in Lk but with an entirely different meaning: the disciples are not to imitate Pharisaic hypocrisy; whatever they may try to hide will certainly come to light eventually; they must therefore speak openly.

l. When the last Judgement takes place and the Son commits the elect to his Father, cf. 25:34.

m. Christ is a 'sign that is rejected', Lk 2:34; his aim is not to provoke dissension, but this becomes inevitable as a result of the strict alternative he offers.

n. In Mt this dictum is given in a more archaic form than in Mk or Lk: 'find' covers the idea of 'winning', 'securing for oneself', cf. Gn 26:12; Ho 12:9; Pr 3:13; 21:21. See Mt 16:25+.

o. 'Prophet' and 'holy (or 'righteous') man', cf. also 13:17 and 23:29, are a familiar biblical pair; here they serve to indicate the missionary and the ordinary Christian.

p. The apostles whom Jesus is sending on their mission, cf. Mk 9:41 and Mt 18:1-6,10,14.

11 a. 'their', i.e. the Jews'.

||Lk 7:18-28 **The Baptist's question. Jesus commends him**

Now John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his 2
Dt 18:15 Jn 1:21+ disciples[b] to ask him, •'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for 3
8:3+ Is 26:19; 29: 18f; 35:5f; 61:1 someone else?'[c] •Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; 4
the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, 5
13:57 Jn 6:61 and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor;[d]
and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me'. 6

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 7
3:1,5-6 Jn 5:33 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze?
No? •Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those 8
who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. •Then what did you go out for? 9
16:14+ Lk 1:76-79 To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: •he is the one 10
of whom scripture says:

Ml 3:1 *Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;*
he will prepare your way before you.

'I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John 11
the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is
greater than he is.[e] •Since John the Baptist came, up to this present time, the 12
||Lk 16:16 kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence[f] and the violent are taking it
by storm. •Because it was towards John that all the prophecies of the prophets 13
17:11-13 Ml 3:23 and of the Law were leading; •and he, if you will believe me, is the Elijah who 14
was to return.[g] •If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen! 15

||Lk 7:31-35 **Jesus condemns his contemporaries**

'What description can I find for this generation? It is like children shouting to 16
each other as they sit in the market place:

"We played the pipes for you, 17
and you wouldn't dance;
we sang dirges,
and you wouldn't be mourners".

3:4 Lk 1:15 'For John came, neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He is possessed". 18
8:20+ 9:10:11 The Son of Man came, eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and 19
Jn 6:35+ a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners". Yet wisdom has been proved
right by her actions.'[h]

||Lk 10:13-15 **Lament over the lake-towns**

13:58 Am 3:2 Jn 12:37; 15:24 Then he began to reproach the towns in which most of his miracles had been 20
worked, because they refused to repent.

'Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in 21
you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in
sackcloth and ashes. •And still, I tell you that it will not go as hard on Judgement 22
day with Tyre and Sidon as with you. •And as for you, Capernaum, did you 23
Is 14:13,15 want to be exalted as high as heaven? *You shall be thrown down to hell.* For if the
miracles done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have been standing yet.
=10:15 And still, I tell you that it will not go as hard with the land of Sodom on Judgement 24
day as with you.'

||Lk 10:21-22 **The Good News revealed to the simple. The Father and the Son**

Jn 10:15 At that time Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of 25
13:11 Jn 7:48-49 1 Co 1:26 4:3+; 16:17 Ws 9:17 Jn 1:18; 3: 35+; 10:15 Ws 2:13 Jn 3:11+ earth, for hiding these things[i] from the learned and the clever and revealing them
to mere children. •Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. •Everything 26 27
has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the
Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the
Son chooses to reveal him.[j]

The gentle mastery of Christ

28 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened,[k] and I will give you
29 rest. •Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
30 *and you will find rest for your souls.* •Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Si 24:19
Jr 2:20; 5:5
Pr 3:17
Jr 6.16
Ho 10:11
Ac 15:10
Ga 5:1

Picking corn on the sabbath

Ex 20:8+
||Mk 2:23-28
||Lk 6:1-5
Jn 7:22

1 12 At that time Jesus took a walk one sabbath day through the cornfields.
His disciples were hungry and began to pick ears of corn and eat them.
2 The Pharisees noticed it and said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing
3 something that is forbidden on the sabbath'.[a] •But he said to them, 'Have you
4 not read what David did when he and his followers were hungry— •how he went
into the house of God and how they ate the loaves of offering which neither he
nor his followers were allowed to eat, but which were for the priests alone?
5 Or again, have you not read in the Law that on the sabbath day the Temple
6 priests break the sabbath without being blamed for it?[b] •Now here, I tell you,
7 is something greater than the Temple. •And if you had understood the meaning
of the words: *What I want is mercy, not sacrifice*, you would not have condemned
8 the blameless. •For the Son of Man is master of the sabbath.'[c]

1 S 21:4-7
Lv 24:5-9
Nb 28:9
12:41
Jn 2:20
=9:13
1 S 15:22
Ho 6:6
Jn 5:16-17

Cure of the man with a withered hand

||Mk 3:1-6
||Lk 6:6-11

9 He moved on from there and went to their synagogue, •and a man was there
10 at the time who had a withered hand. They asked him, 'Is it against the law to
11 cure a man on the sabbath day?' hoping for something to use against him. •But he
said to them, 'If any one of you here had only one sheep and it fell down a hole
12 on the sabbath day, would he not get hold of it and lift it out? •Now a man is far
more important than a sheep, so it follows that it is permitted to do good on the
13 sabbath day.' •Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand'. He stretched it
14 out and his hand was better, as sound as the other one. •At this the Pharisees
went out and began to plot against him, discussing how to destroy him.

Lk 20:20
Jn 8:6; 9:14
†Lk 14:5
Jn 7:22-23
Ex 20:8+
Jn 5:18; 11:53

Jesus the 'servant of Yahweh'

15 Jesus knew this and withdrew from the district. Many followed him and he
16 17 cured them all, •but warned them not to make him known. •This[d] was to fulfil
the prophecy of Isaiah:

Mk 3:7
Mk 1:34+; ||3:12

b. Var. 'two of his disciples'.

c. John the Baptist is not expressing complete doubt about Jesus, but he is surprised to find that he is a very different sort of Messiah from what he had expected, cf. 3:10-12.

d. This allusion to the oracles of Is assures John that the messianic era is being inaugurated, even though Jesus confines himself to beneficent and saving miracles, without resorting to violence and retribution. Cf. Lk 4: 17-21.

e. Simply because he is a member of the kingdom, whereas John, as the Precursor, remains at its gates. The sentence contrasts epochs rather than persons: the era of the kingdom immeasurably transcends that which preceded and prepared for it.

f. Various interpretations have been offered. The 'violence' may be: 1. the praiseworthy violence, the bitter self-sacrifice, of those who would take possession of the kingdom; 2. the misguided violence of those who would establish the kingdom by force (the Zealots); 3. the tyrannical violence of the powers of evil, or of their agents on earth, who seek to maintain their dominion in this world and to thwart the advance of the kingdom of God. 4. A possible translation 'The kingdom of heaven clears a way for itself by violence', i.e. is powerfully establishing itself despite all obstacles.

g. John brings the O.T. era to its close; he carries on where Malachi, the last of the prophets, left off, and fulfils Malachi's last prediction, Ml 3:23.

h. Var. 'by her children', cf. Lk 7:35. Like petulant children who will play none of the games suggested (in this case they refuse to play either at weddings or at funerals), the Jews reject all God's advances whether through the stern penance of John or through the gentle courtesy of Jesus. In spite of this, God's wise design carries through, independently of anything extrinsic to itself, and so its success is its own vindication.

i. Vv. 25-27 are not closely connected with the context in which Matthew has placed the passage (cf. its different position in Lk). Hence, 'these things' refers not to what precedes but to the 'mysteries of the kingdom', 13:11, which are revealed to the 'little ones'—i.e. to the disciples, cf. 10:42—but hidden from the 'wise men'—i.e. from the members and teachers of the Pharisee group.

j. V. 27 has a Johannine flavour: awareness of Christ's divine sonship exists in the deepest stratum of the synoptic tradition as well as in Jn.

k. The burden of the Law and of the additional Pharisaic observances. The 'yoke of the Law' is a current rabbinic metaphor; see also Si 51:26; Zp 3:9 (LXX); Lm 3:27; Jr 2:20; 5:5; cf. Is 14:25.

12 a. The disciples are not attacked for picking the ears as they walked (this was allowed, Dt 23:26) but for doing so on the sabbath. Casuistry saw in this one of the 'works' forbidden by the Law, Ex 34:21.

b. Far from stopping, the work of the sacred ministry actually increased on the sabbath.

c. Jesus here claims authority even over Israel's God-given institutions.

d. I.e. Christ's avoidance of publicity for his work of healing.

Is 42:1-4
Here is my servant whom I have chosen, 18
my beloved, the favourite of my soul.
3:16+ *I will endow him with my spirit,*
and he will proclaim the true faith[e] *to the nations.*
He will not brawl or shout, 19
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.
Zc 11:16
2 Tm 2:24 *He will not break the crushed reed,* 20
nor put out the smouldering wick
till he has led the truth to victory:
in his name the nations will put their hope. 21

Jesus and Beelzebul

8:29+; =9:32-34 Then they brought to him a blind and dumb demoniac; and he cured him, 22
Tb 8:3 ||Lk 11:14-15 so that the dumb man could speak and see. •All the people were astounded and 23
9:27 said, 'Can this be the Son of David?' •But when the Pharisees heard this they 24
10:25 said, 'The man casts out devils only through Beelzebul,[f] the prince of devils'.
||Mk 3:23-30 ||Lk 11:17-23 Knowing what was in their minds he said to them, 'Every kingdom divided 25
against itself is heading for ruin; and no town, no household divided against
Jb 1:6+ itself can stand. •Now if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; 26
so how can his kingdom stand? •And if it is through Beelzebul that I cast out 27
devils, through whom do your own experts[g] cast them out? Let them be your
3:16+ Lk 11:20 judges, then. •But if it is through the Spirit of God that I cast devils out, then 28
8:29+ know that the kingdom of God has overtaken you.
Is 49:25 Jn 12:31 'Or again, how can anyone make his way into a strong man's house and 29
burgle his property unless he has tied up the strong man first? Only then can he
burgle his house.
Mk 9:40 Lk 11:23 'He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me 30
1 Jn 5:16 scatters. •And so I tell you, every one of men's sins and blasphemies will be for- 31
||Lk 12:10 Heb 10:30 given, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. •And anyone who 32
says a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but let anyone speak against
the Holy Spirit and he will not be forgiven either in this world or in the next.[h]

=7:16-20 ||Lk 6:43-45 **Words betray the heart**

'Make a tree sound and its fruit will be sound; make a tree rotten and its 33
3:7; 23:33 fruit will be rotten. For the tree can be told by its fruit. •Brood of vipers, how 34
15:11,18 can your speech be good when you are evil? For a man's words flow out of what
Pr 10:14 fills his heart. •A good man draws good things from his store of goodness; a bad 35
man draws bad things from his store of badness. •So I tell you this, that for 36
Jm 3:1-6 every unfounded word[i] men utter they will answer on Judgement day, •since it 37
is by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words condemned.'

||Mk 8:11-12 ||Lk 11:29-32 **The sign of Jonah**

=16:1-4 Ezk 3:7; 5:7 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees spoke up. 'Master,' they said 'we 38
Jn 4:48 1 Co 1:22 should like to see a sign[j] from you.' •He replied, 'It is an evil and unfaithful[k] 39
generation that asks for a sign! The only sign it will be given is the sign of the
Jon 2:1 prophet Jonah. •For as Jonah *was in the belly of the sea-monster for three* 40
days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for
three days and three nights.[l] •On Judgement day the men of Nineveh will stand 41
up with this generation and condemn it, because when Jonah preached they
12:6 Rm 2:27 repented; and there is something greater than Jonah here. •On Judgement day 42
1 K 10:1-10 the Queen of the South will rise up with this generation and condemn it, because
Jn 6:35+ she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there
is something greater than Solomon here.

8:29+ ||Lk 11:24-26 **The return of the unclean spirit**

Tb 8:3 'When an unclean spirit goes out of a man it wanders through waterless 43

44 country looking for a place to rest,[m] and cannot find one. •Then it says, "I will return to the home I came from". But on arrival, finding it unoccupied, swept and
45 tidied, •it then goes off and collects seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and set up house there, so that the man ends up by being worse than he was before. That is what will happen to this evil generation.' Mk 5:9 Lk 8:2 *Jn 5:14* 2 P 2:20

The true kinsmen of Jesus

||Mk 3:31-35 ||Lk 8:19-21

46 He was still speaking to the crowds when his mother and his brothers[n] 13:55-56 1 Co 9:5
appeared; they were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with
48 him.[o] •But to the man who told him this Jesus replied, 'Who is my mother? Lk 2:49-50
49 Who are my brothers?' •And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said,
50 'Here are my mother and my brothers. •Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.'[p]

B. THE PARABOLIC DISCOURSE

Introduction

||Mk 4:1-2 ||Lk 8:4

1/2 13 That same day,[a] Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, •but such
crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people
3 all stood on the beach, •and he told them many things in parables[b].

Parable of the sower

||Mk 4:3-9 ||Lk 8:5-8

4 He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. •As he sowed, some seeds fell
5 on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. •Others fell on
patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because
6 there was no depth of earth; •but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched
7 and, not having any roots, they withered away. •Others fell among thorns, and
8 the thorns grew up and choked them. •Others fell on rich soil and produced their Jn 15:8,16
9 crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. •Listen, anyone who has Is 42:19 Rv 2:7; 13:9
ears![c]

Why Jesus speaks in parables

||Mk 4:10-12, 25 ||Lk 8:9-10, 18

10 Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in
11 parables?' •'Because' he replied 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are
12 revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. •For anyone who has will be =25:29
given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, ||Lk 19:25

e. 'true faith': this gives the meaning of the Hebr. term *mishpat* (and of its LXX translation *krisis*), often rendered 'judgement', which signifies the divine statute that governs the relationship of God with man in so far as it is known through revelation and the true religion that is founded on it.

f. Canaanite divinity. The name means 'Baal the Prince' (not 'Baal of the dunghill' as is sometimes asserted), and so orthodox monotheism naturally interpreted it as 'Prince of devils'. The form 'Beelzebub' (Syr. and Vulg.) is a contemptuous play on words (already found in 2 K 1:2f) which makes the name mean 'Baal (Lord) of the flies'.

g. Lit. 'your children', a semitism.

h. There is some excuse for not recognising Christ's divine nature since it is hidden under the appearance of an ordinary 'son of man', but there is no excuse for blinding oneself to the manifest works of the Spirit. The man who denies these is resisting God's most direct appeal and putting himself outside the range of God's saving grace, cf. Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-31.

i. Not a merely 'idle' word but a malicious and baseless assertion, a calumny.

j. A miracle that would prove Jesus had authority and show what sort of authority it was, cf. Is 7:11f; Lk 1:18+; Jn 2:11+. He refuses to give any other sign but the decisive one which is his resurrection, here obscurely foretold.

k. Lit. 'adulterous': a biblical metaphor, cf. Ho 1:2+.

l. A ready-made expression borrowed from Jon 2:1 and only approximately indicating the space of time between Christ's death and resurrection.

m. The ancients thought of desert places as inhabited by demons, cf. Lv 16:8+; 17:7+; Is 13:21; 34:14; Ba 4:35; Rv 18:2; Mt 8:28. Nevertheless, the devils much prefer to dwell in man, Mt 8:29+.

n. Not Mary's children but near relations, cousins perhaps, which both Hebr. and Aramaic style 'brothers', cf. Gn 13:8; 14:16; 29:15; Lv 10:4; 1 Ch 23:22f.

o. V. 47 ('Someone said to him: Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to speak to you') is omitted by some important textual witnesses. It is probably a restatement of v. 46 modelled on Mk and Lk.

p. The claims of physical relationship come after those of spiritual, cf. 8:21f; 10:37.

13 a. A merely transitional cliché of no chronological significance.

b. Making a total of 7, cf. 6:9+, Mt adds 5 parables to the 2 he shares with Mk.

c. Lit. 'He who has ears, let him hear'. As in 11:15 and 13:43 some authorities have 'He who has ears to hear, let...'

Jn 9:39
Rm 11:8
even what he has will be taken away.[d] •The reason I talk to them in parables is 13
that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding.[e] •So in 14
their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

Is 6:9-10+
Jn 12:40
Ac 28:26
You will listen and listen again, but not understand,
see and see again, but not perceive.
For the heart of this nation has grown coarse, 15
their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes,
for fear they should see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their heart,
and be converted
and be healed by me.

||Lk 10:23,24
Ac 22:15
Ep 3:5
1 P 1:12
'But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! 16
I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men[f] longed to see what you see, and 17
never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.

||Mk 4:13-20
||Lk 8:11-15
Jn 12:47
The parable of the sower explained

'You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower. •When anyone hears 18,19
the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries
off what was sown in his heart: this is the man who received the seed on the edge
of the path. •The one who received it on patches of rock is the man who hears 20
the word and welcomes it at once with joy. •But he has no root in him, he does 21
not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he
falls away at once. •The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who 22
hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word
and so he produces nothing. •And the one who received the seed in rich soil is the 23
Jn 15:8,16
Ga 5:22
man who hears the word and understands it; he is the one who yields a harvest
and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.'

Parable of the darnel

He put another parable before them, 'The kingdom of heaven may be 24
compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. •While everybody was 25
asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. •When 26
the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. •The owner's 27
servants went to him and said, "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your
field? If so, where does the darnel come from?" •"Some enemy has done this" 28
he answered. And the servants said, "Do you want us to go and weed it out?"
But he said, "No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the 29
wheat with it. •Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall 30
Jn 15:6
3:12
say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then
gather the wheat into my barn." '

||Mk 4:30-32
||Lk 13:18-19
Parable of the mustard seed

He put another parable before them, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard 31
Si 11:3
seed which a man took and sowed in his field. •It is the smallest of all the seeds, 32
Ezk 17:23
Dn 4:9,18
but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that
the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.'

||Lk 13:20-21
Parable of the yeast

He told them another parable, 'The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast 33
a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened
all through'.[g]

||Mk 4:33-34
Jn 16:25
The people are taught only in parables

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak 34
to them except in parables. •This was to fulfil the prophecy: 35

I will speak to you in parables
and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world.[h] Ps 78:2

The parable of the darnel explained

36 Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house; and his disciples came to
37 him and said, 'Explain the parable about the darnel in the field to us'. •He said
38 in reply, 'The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. •The field is the world;
the good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the evil 1 Jn 3:10
39 one;[i] •the enemy who sowed them, the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; Jl 4:13 Rv 14:15-16
40 the reapers are the angels. •Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and burnt
41 in the fire, so it will be at the end of time. •The Son of Man will send his angels Zp 1:3
and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that provoke offences and all
42 who do evil, •and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be 3:12 Rv 21:8
43 weeping and grinding of teeth. •Then the virtuous will shine like the sun in the *8:12+ Jg 5:31* Ws 3:7 Dn 12:3
kingdom of their Father.[j] Listen, anyone who has ears!

Parables of the treasure and of the pearl[k]

44 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has Pr 2:4 Si 51:28 *19:21* Pr 4:7
found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the
field.
45 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls;
46 when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

Parable of the dragnet

47 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings 22:10
48 in a haul of all kinds. •When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting
down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no
49 use. •This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate
50 the wicked from the just •to throw them into the blazing furnace where there
will be weeping and grinding of teeth. 8:12+

Conclusion

51 'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes'. •And he said to them, Mk 4:13+
52 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like
a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old'.[l]

13 d. For those of good will, what they have learnt from the old covenant will be added to and perfected by the new, cf. 5:17,20. The ill-disposed will even lose what they have, namely, that Jewish Law which, without the perfection Christ brings to it, is destined to become obsolete.

e. A deliberate and culpable insensibility which is both the cause and the explanation of the withdrawal of grace. The preceding narratives, all of which throw light on this 'hardening', 11:16-19,20-24; 12:7,14,24-32, 34,39,45, prepare the way for the parable discourse. Those who saw so dimly could only be further blinded by the light of full revelation, Mk 1:34+. Jesus, therefore, does not reveal with complete clarity the true nature of the messianic kingdom which is unostentatious. Instead he filters the light through symbols, the resulting half-light is nevertheless a grace from God, an invitation to ask for something better and accept something greater.

f. The prophets and holy men of the O.T. Paul speaks more than once of the time when the 'mystery' was not revealed: Rm 16:25; Ep 3:4-5; Col 1:26. Cf. also 1 P 1:11-12.

g. The kingdom, like the mustard seed and the leaven, is unpretentious in its beginnings but destined for enormous growth.

h. Several authorities omit 'of the world'.

i. Lit. 'the children of the kingdom' and 'the children of the evil one', (semitisms).

j. To the kingdom of the Son (the messianic kingdom) of v. 41 there succeeds the kingdom of the Father to whom the Son commits the elect whom he has saved. Cf. Mt 25:34; 1 Co 15:24.

k. If a man discovers the kingdom of heaven he cannot enter unless he leaves all behind, cf. 19:21.

l. The Jewish teacher who becomes a disciple of Christ has at his disposal all the wealth of the Old Testament as well as the perfection of the New, v. 12. This picture of a 'scribe who becomes a disciple' sums up the whole ideal of Matthew the evangelist and may well be a self-portrait.

V. THE CHURCH, FIRST-FRUITS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A. NARRATIVE SECTION

||Mk 6:1-6 ||Lk 4:16-24 **A visit to Nazareth**

When Jesus had finished these parables he left the district; 53 •and, coming 54
2:23 Jn 1:46 to his home town,[m] he taught the people in their synagogue in such a way that
Jn 6:42; 7:46 they were astonished and said, 'Where did the man get this wisdom and these
Mt 27:56 Lk 3:23 miraculous powers? 55 •This is the carpenter's son, surely? Is not his mother the
12:46 woman called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Jude?
His sisters, too, are they not all here with us? So where did the man get it all?' 56
16:14+ Ex 4:1 ||Jn 4:44 And they would not accept him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only 57
despised in his own country and in his own house', 58 •and he did not work
8:10+ many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

||Mk 6:14-16 ||Lk 9:7-9 **Herod and Jesus**

Lk 3:1+ 14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the reputation of Jesus, •and 1/2
Mt 16:14+ Lk 23:8-12 said to his court, 'This is John the Baptist himself; he has risen from
the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him'.

||Mk 6:17-29 Lk 3:19-20 **John the Baptist beheaded**

Now it was Herod who had arrested John, chained him up and put him in 3
Lv 18:16; 20:21 prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's[a] wife. 4 •For John had told him,
'It is against the Law for you to have her'. 5 •He had wanted to kill him but
21:26 was afraid of the people, who regarded John as a prophet. 6 •Then, during the
celebrations for Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias[b] danced before the
company, and so delighted Herod 7 •that he promised on oath to give her anything
she asked. 8 •Prompted by her mother she said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head,
here, on a dish'. 9 •The king was distressed but, thinking of the oaths he had
sworn and of his guests, he ordered it to be given her, 10 •and sent and had John
beheaded in the prison. 11 •The head was brought in on a dish and given to the girl
who took it to her mother. 12 •John's disciples came and took the body and buried
it; then they went off to tell Jesus.

15:32-38p ||Mk 6:31-44 ||Lk 9:10-17 ||Jn 15:32-38p **First miracle of the loaves**

When Jesus received this news he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where 13
they could be by themselves. But the people heard of this and, leaving the towns,
9:36; 15:32 went after him on foot.[c] 14 •So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and
8:3+ he took pity on them and healed their sick.

When evening came, the disciples went to him and said, 'This is a lonely place, 15
and the time has slipped by; so send the people away, and they can go to the
villages to buy themselves some food'. 16 •Jesus replied, 'There is no need for them
to go: give them something to eat yourselves'. 17 •But they answered, 'All we have
1 K 19:21 with us is five loaves and two fish'. 18 •'Bring them here to me' he said. 19 •He gave
orders that the people were to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves
Jn 11:41; 17:1 and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And breaking
the loaves he handed them to his disciples who gave them to the crowds.[d] 20 •They
all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected the scraps remaining,
16:9 twelve baskets full. 21 •Those who ate numbered about five thousand men, to say
nothing of women and children.

||Mk 6:45-52 ||Jn 6:16-21 **Jesus walks on the water and, with him, Peter**

Directly after this he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead 22

23 to the other side while he would send the crowds away. •After sending the crowds
away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there Mk 1:35+ Jn 6:15
24 alone, •while the boat, by now far out on the lake,[e] was battling with a heavy Jn 7:21
25 sea, for there was a head-wind. •In the fourth watch of the night[f] he went towards
26 them, walking on the lake, •and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake
27 they were terrified. 'It is a ghost' they said, and cried out in fear. •But at once
28 Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' •It was Peter[g]
who answered. 'Lord,' he said 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.'
29 'Come' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards
30 Jesus across the water, •but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright
31 and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. •Jesus put out his hand at once and 8:25-26
32 held him. 'Man of little faith,' he said 'why did you doubt?' •And as they got into 8:10+
33 the boat the wind dropped. •The men in the boat bowed down before him and
said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God'. 4:3+; 16:16+

Cures at Gennesaret ||Mk 6:53-56

34 35 Having made the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret. •When the local
people recognised him they spread the news through the whole neighbourhood
36 and took all that were sick to him, •begging him just to let them touch the fringe 9:20-22
of his cloak. And all those who touched it were completely cured. 8:3+

The traditions of the Pharisees ||Mk 7:1-13

1 2 15 Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem then came to Jesus and said, •'Why Rm 14:14 Ga 1:14 Col 2:8
do your disciples break away from the tradition of the elders?[a] They do not
3 wash their hands when they eat food.'[b] •'And why do you' he answered 'break Lk 11:38
4 away from the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? •For God Ex 20:12; 21:17
said: *Do your duty to*[c] *your father and mother* and: *Anyone who curses father or* Lv 20:9 Dt 5:16
5 *mother must be put to death.* •But you say, "If anyone says to his father or mother: Si 3:12
6 Anything I have that I might have used to help you is dedicated to God",[d] •he Pr 20:25
is rid of his duty to father or mother.[e] In this way you have made God's word
7 null and void by means of your tradition. •Hypocrites! It was you Isaiah meant 6:2; 23:13f
when he so rightly prophesied:

8 *This people honours me only with lip-service,* Is 29:13
while their hearts are far from me. Ps 78:36f
9 *The worship they offer me is worthless;* Col 2:23
the doctrines they teach are only human regulations.'

On clean and unclean[f] ||Mk 7:14-23

10 11 He called the people to him and said, 'Listen, and understand. •What goes

m. Nazareth, where he lived as a child, cf. 2:23.

14 a. Om. (Vulg.) 'Philip'; the omission is due to the difficulty the name seemed to create. But in fact this Philip is not the tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lk 3:1; cf. Mt 16:13; he is another son of Herod the Great by Mariamne II and therefore half-brother of Antipas; Josephus himself calls him Herod. Antipas' fault lay not so much in having married his niece as in having taken her from his brother who was still living; moreover, he had repudiated his first wife.

b. According to Josephus, the girl's name was Salome.

c. On shore the crowd hurried to the place the boat was making for.

d. This miraculous bread, though not the Holy Eucharist, clearly prefigures and leads up to it. This is the view of the Fathers and indeed of the evangelists before them: cf. v. 19 with 26:26, and cf. Jn 6:1-15,51-58.

e. Cf. Mk 6:47; var. 'some furlongs from land', cf. Jn 6:19.

f. 3 to 6 a.m.

g. Matthew deliberately punctuates the narrative section of his 'ecclesiastical book' with three episodes featuring Peter: this passage, 16:16-20 and 17:24-27.

15 a. Oral tradition which, to safeguard the observance of the written Law, made many additions to it. According to the rabbis this tradition went back through the 'elders' to Moses himself.

b. Lit. 'eat bread'.

c. Lit. 'Honour', but implying a reverence shown in practical ways.

d. Vulg. interprets 'Every gift I make (to God) is useful to you'.

e. Because property thus made over by vow assumes a sacred character which precludes all claims made by the parents. Such a vow was in fact only a legal fiction involving no sacrifice of ownership; it was no more than a despicable way of escaping the duty of filial piety. Though the rabbis acknowledged its impiety they sustained its validity.

f. The Pharisees had objected to eating with unpurified hands, v. 2, but Jesus passes to the larger question of the legal impurity of certain foods, Lv 11. Legal impurity, he teaches, is secondary to moral which is the only impurity that really matters, Ac 10:9-16,28; Rm 14:14f.

12:34 Ep 4:29 1 Tm 4:4 Tt 1:15 into the mouth does not make a man unclear; it is what comes out of the mouth that makes him unclear.'

Then the disciples came to him and said, 'Do you know that the Pharisees 12
were shocked when they heard what you said?' •He replied, 'Any plant my 13
23:16,19 ||Lk 6:39 Jn 15:2 Ac 5:39 Jn 9:40 heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. •Leave them 14
alone. They are blind men leading blind men; and if one blind man leads another,
both will fall into a pit.'

At this, Peter said to him, 'Explain the parable for us'. •Jesus replied, 'Do 15 16
Mk 4:13+ even you not yet understand? •Can you not see that whatever goes into the 17
mouth passes through the stomach and is discharged into the sewer? •But the 18
12:34 Tt 1:15 Jm 3:6 things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and it is these that make
a man unclean. •For from the heart come evil intentions: murder, adultery, 19
fornication, theft, perjury, slander. •These are the things that make a man 20
unclean. But to eat with unwashed hands does not make a man unclear.'

||Mk 7:24-30 The daughter of the Canaanite woman healed

Jesus left that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. •Then 21 22
9:27+ out came a Canaanite woman from that district[g] and started shouting, 'Sir, Son
8:29+ of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' •But he 23
Lk 11:8 answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give
her what she wants,'[h] they said 'because she is shouting after us.' •He said in 24
10:6 Rm 15:8 reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel'. •But the woman 25
had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' •He replied, 26
'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs'.[i] •She 27
retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their
8:10+ master's table'. •Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let 28
your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.

Cures near the lake

Mk 7:31 Jesus went on from there and reached the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and 29
he went up into the hills. He sat there, •and large crowds came to him bringing 30
the lame, the crippled, the blind, the dumb and many others; these they put
8:3+ Mk 7:37 down at his feet, and he cured them. •The crowds were astonished to see the 31
dumb speaking, the cripples whole again,[j] the lame walking and the blind with
their sight, and they praised the God of Israel.

14:13-21p ||Mk 8:1-10 Second miracle of the loaves

But Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 'I feel sorry for all these people; 32
they have been with me for three days now and have nothing to eat. I do not
want to send them off hungry, they might collapse on the way.' •The 33
disciples said to him, 'Where could we get enough bread in this deserted place
to feed such a crowd?' •Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves have you?' 'Seven' 34
they said 'and a few small fish.' •Then he instructed the crowd to sit down on the 35
ground, •and he took the seven loaves and the fish, and he gave thanks and 36
8:3+ broke them and handed them to the disciples who gave them to the crowds.
They all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected what was left of the 37
16:10 scraps, seven baskets full. •Now four thousand men had eaten, to say nothing 38
of women and children. •And when he had sent the crowds away he got into the 39
boat and went to the district of Magadan.

=12:38-39 ||Mk 8:11-13 ||Lk 11:16,29 19:3 The Pharisees ask for a sign from heaven

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked if he would 1
Jn 6:30-31 show them a sign from heaven. •He replied, 'In the evening you 2
||Lk 12:54-56 say, "It will be fine; there is a red sky", •and in the morning, "Stormy weather 3
today; the sky is red and overcast". You know how to read the face of the sky,
Lk 19:44 but you cannot read the signs of the times.[a] •It is an evil and unfaithful generation 4

that asks for a sign! The only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah.' And leaving them standing there, he went away. 12:39+ 8:10+

The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

||Mk 8:14-21 ||Lk 12:1

5 The disciples, having crossed to the other shore, had forgotten to take any food.
6 Jesus said to them, 'Keep your eyes open, and be on your guard against the yeast
7 of the Pharisees and Sadducees'. •And they said to themselves, 'It is because we
8 have not brought any bread'. •Jesus knew it, and he said, 'Men of little faith, 8:10+
9 why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? •Do you not yet Mk 4:13
understand? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand and the 14:21
10 number of baskets you collected? •Or the seven loaves for the four thousand 15:38
11 and the number of baskets you collected? •How could you fail to understand
that I was not talking about bread? What I said was: Beware of the yeast of the
12 Pharisees and Sadducees.' •Then they understood that he was telling them to be
on their guard, not against the yeast for making bread, but against the teaching
of the Pharisees and Sadducees.[b]

Peter's profession of faith; his pre-eminence

||Mk 8:27-30 ||Lk 9:18-21

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to
14 his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' •And they said, 'Some 8:20+
say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the 14:2
15 16 prophets'.[c] •'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' •Then Simon Peter spoke Jn 6:69
17 up, 'You are the Christ,' he said 'the Son of the living God'.[d] •Jesus replied, 4:3+; 14:33
'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood[e] Rm 7:5+ Ep 6:12 Heb 2:14
18 that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. •So I now say to you: You
are Peter[f] and on this rock I will build my Church,[g] And the gates of the under- Is 28:16 Jn 1:42 =18:18 Is 22:22 Lk 22:32 Jn 20:23 Rv 3:7
19 world[h] can never hold out against it. •I will give you the keys of the kingdom

g. Since the woman has left pagan territory it is in Israel that Jesus grants his favour.

h. Not 'send her away' simply: the Greek verb here means 'let her go with her request granted', as in 18:27; 27:15.

i. Christ must first devote himself to the salvation of the Jews ('children' of God and of the promises) before turning to the pagans who, to the Jewish mind, were 'dogs'. Much of the sting is taken out of the epithet here by the fact that Jesus is using a term blunted by repeated use; moreover, he adopts its diminutive form (little or pet dogs).

j. Om. 'the cripples whole again'.

16 a. Om. 'In the evening...of the times'. The 'times' are the messianic age; the 'signs' are the miracles worked by Jesus: cf. 11:3-5; 12:28.

b. As leaven ferments the dough, 13:33, but can also make it go bad, cf. 1 Co 5:6; Ga 5:9, so the perverse doctrine of the Jewish leaders threatens to misguide those for whom they are responsible, cf. 15:14.

c. Jesus claimed the title 'prophet' for himself only indirectly and obscurely, Mt 13:57p; Lk 13:33, but the public openly hailed him as such, Mt 16:14p; 21:11,46; Mk 6:15p; Lk 7:16,39; 24:19; Jn 4:19; 9:17. The title had messianic significance because the Jews confidently expected a revival of the spirit of prophecy (extinct since Malachi) as a sign of the messianic era. It was to revive either in the person of Elijah, Mt 17:10-11p, or in the form of a general outpouring of the Spirit, Ac 2:17-18,33. Many (false) prophets did actually arise in Christ's time, Mt 24:11,24p, etc. John the Baptist was himself a prophet, Mt 11:9p; 14:5; 21:26p; Lk 1:76, precisely because he was the Precursor who had come 'in the spirit of Elijah', Mt 11:10p,14; 17:12p. Nevertheless he denied (Jn 1:21+) that he was 'the prophet' foretold by Moses, Dt 18:15. This prophet, the early Christians believed, was Jesus and no other, Ac 3:22-26; Jn 6:14; 7:40. From Pentecost onwards, however, prophecy became a familiar charismatic phenomenon in the early Church, Ac 11:27+; for this reason the title prophet as applied to Christ soon dropped out and was replaced by others more suited to his unique function and person.

d. In Mt Peter acknowledges not only that Jesus is the Messiah but also that he is Son of God; this second is not found in Mk and Lk. Cf. also 14:33 with Mk 6:51f. Cf. Mt 4:3+.

e. The expression indicates man, emphasising his material, limited nature as opposed to that of the spirit world, Si 14:18; Rm 7:5+; 1 Co 15:50; Ga 1:16; Ep 6:12; Heb 2:14; cf. Jn 1:13.

f. Neither the Greek word *petros* nor even, as it seems, its Aramaic equivalent *kepha* ('rock') was used as a person's name before Jesus conferred it on the apostles' leader to symbolise the part he was to play in the foundation of the Church. This change of name had possibly been made earlier, cf. Jn 1:42; Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14.

g. The Hebr. *qahal* which the Greek renders *ekklesia* means 'an assembly called together'; it is used frequently in the O.T. to indicate the community of the Chosen People, especially the community of the desert period, cf. Ac 7:38. Certain Jewish groups (among them the Essenes of Qumran) regarded themselves as the chosen remnant of Israel (Is 4:3+) which was to survive in 'the latter days'. These had also used the term that Jesus now adopts to indicate the messianic community, the community of the 'new alliance' sealed with his blood, Mt 26:28+; Ep 5:25. By using the term 'assembly' side by side with that of 'kingdom of heaven', Mt 4:17+, Jesus shows that this eschatological community (community of the 'end-times') is to have its beginnings here on earth in the form of an organised society whose leader he now appoints. Cf. Ac 5:11+; 1 Co 1:2+.

h. Greek: *Hades*; Hebrew: *Sheol*, the dwelling place of the dead, cf. Nb 16:33+. Here, its personified 'gates' suggest the powers of evil which first lead man into that death which is sin and then imprison him once for all in eternal death. The Church's task will be to rescue the elect from death's dominion, from the death of the body and above all from eternal death, so that

of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven;
whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'[i] •Then he 20
Mk 1:34+ gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.[j]

‖Mk 8:31-33 ‖Lk 9:22 **First prophecy of the Passion**

17:12,22-23; 20:17-19 Lk 2:38+; 13:33 Ac 10:40+ From that time[k] Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was 21
destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and
chief priests and scribes, to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day.
Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. 'Heaven preserve 22
you, Lord;' he said 'this must not happen to you'. •But he turned and said to 23
4:10 Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle[l] in my path, because the way
Mk 4:13+ you think is not God's way but man's.'

‖Mk 8:34-9:1 ‖Lk 9:23-27 **The condition of following Christ**

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, 24
=10:38-39 ‖Lk 14:27; 17:33 ‖Jn 12:25-26 let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. •For anyone who 25
wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will
find it.[m] •What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his 26
life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for his life?

25:31f Jb 34:11 Ps 62:12 Jr 17:10 Zc 14:5 2 Th 1:7 10:23; 24:30, 34; 26:64 'For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his 27
angels, and, when he does, he will reward each one according to his behaviour.[n]
I tell you solemnly, there are some of these standing here who will not taste 28
death before they see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom.'[o]

‖Mk 9:2-8 ‖Lk 9:28-36 2 P 1:16-18 **The transfiguration**

17 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John 1
and led them up a high mountain[a] where they could be alone. •There in 2
their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes
28:3 became as white as the light.[b] •Suddenly Moses and Elijah[c] appeared to them; 3
they were talking with him. •Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is 4
wonderful for us to be here;[d] if you wish, I will make[e] three tents here, one for
24:30+ Ex 13:12+; 19:16+ 2 P 1:17 you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' •He was still speaking when suddenly 5
a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice
3:17 which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.'
When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. •But 6 7
Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' •And 8
when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

‖Mk 9:9-13 **The question about Elijah**

Mk 1:34+ As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell 9
8:20+ no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead'. •And the 10
16:14+ Si 48:10 Ml 3:23-24 Lk 1:17 disciples put this question to him, 'Why do the scribes say then that Elijah has
to come first?'[f] •'True;' he replied 'Elijah is to come to see that everything is 11
once more as it should be; •however, I tell you that Elijah has come already and 12
16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19 they did not recognise him but treated him as they pleased; and the Son of Man
will suffer similarly at their hands.' •The disciples understood then that he had 13
11:10-14 been speaking of John the Baptist.

‖Mk 9:14-29 ‖Lk 9:37-43 **The epileptic demoniac**

As they were rejoining the crowd a man came up to him and went down on 14
his knees before him. •'Lord,' he said 'take pity on my son: he is a lunatic and 15
in a wretched state; he is always falling into the fire or into the water. •I took 16
him to your disciples and they were unable to cure him.' •'Faithless and perverse 17
Ac 2:40 generation!' Jesus said in reply 'How much longer must I be with you? How much
longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me.' •And when Jesus rebuked 18
8:29+ it the devil came out of the boy who was cured from that moment.

19 Then the disciples came privately to Jesus. 'Why were we unable to cast it
20 out?' they asked. •He answered, 'Because you have little faith.[g] I tell you 8:10+
solemnly, if your faith were the size of a mustard seed you could say to this ||Mk11:22-23 ||Lk 17:6
mountain, "Move from here to there", and it would move; nothing would be =*21:21* 1 Co 13:2
impossible for you.'[h]

Second prophecy of the Passion

||Mk 9:30-32 ||Lk 9:44-45

22 One day when they were together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, 'The Son 8:20+
23 of Man is going to be handed over into the power of men; •they will put him to 16:21; 17:12; 20:17-19
death, and on the third day he will be raised to life again'. And a great sadness Ac 10:40+
came over them.

The Temple tax paid by Jesus and Peter

24 When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel[i] came to Ex 30:15
25 Peter and said, 'Does your master not pay the half-shekel?' •'Oh yes' he replied,
and went into the house. But before he could speak, Jesus said, 'Simon, what is
your opinion? From whom do the kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From
26 their sons[j] or from foreigners?' •And when he replied, 'From foreigners', Jesus
27 said, 'Well then, the sons are exempt. •However, so as not to offend these
people, go to the lake and cast a hook; take the first fish that bites, open its
mouth and there you will find a shekel; take it and give it to them for me and
for you.'

it may lead them into the kingdom of heaven, cf. Col 1:13; 1 Co 15:26; Rv 6:8; 20:13. In this the Church follows its Master who died, descended into the underworld, cf. 1 P 3:19+, and rose again, Ac 2:27,31.

i. The City of God, like the City of Death, has its gates too; they grant entrance only to those who are worthy of it. Peter has the keys. It is his function, therefore, to open or close to all who would come to the kingdom of heaven through the Church. 'bind' and 'loose' are technical rabbinic terms; primarily they have a disciplinary reference; one is 'bound' (condemned to) or 'loosed' (absolved from) excommunication. Their secondary usage is connected with doctrinal or juridical decisions: an opinion is 'bound' (forbidden) or 'loosed' (allowed). Of the household of God Peter is controller (the keys symbolise this, cf. Is 22:22). In that capacity he is to exercise the disciplinary power of admitting or excluding those he thinks fit; he will also, in his administration of the community, make necessary decisions in questions of doctrinal belief and of moral conduct. The verdicts he delivers and the pronouncements he makes will be ratified by God in heaven. Catholic exegetes maintain that these enduring promises hold good not only for Peter himself but also for Peter's successors. This inference, not explicitly drawn in the text, is considered legitimate because Jesus plainly intends to provide for his Church's future by establishing a régime that will not collapse with Peter's death. Two other texts, Lk 22:31f and Jn 21:15f, on Peter's primacy emphasise that its operation is to be in the domain of faith; they also indicate that this makes him head not only of the Church after the death of Christ but of the apostolic group then and there.

j. Vulg. 'Jesus Christ'.

k. Jesus has just elicited from his disciples the first explicit profession of faith in him as Messiah. At this crucial moment he tells them for the first time of his coming Passion: he is not only the glorious Messiah, he is also the suffering servant. Within the next few days this teaching method will be pursued in a similar situation: the glorious transfiguration will be followed by an injunction to silence and a prediction of Passion, 17:1-12. It is Christ's way of bracing the disciples' faith for the approaching crisis of death and resurrection.

l. By blocking the Messiah's appointed way, Peter becomes an 'obstacle' (primary sense of the Greek *skandalon*) to Christ and becomes, though unwittingly, the tool of Satan, cf. 4:1-10.

m. Paradox. This dictum and those immediately following oscillate between two senses of human 'life': its present stage and its future. The Greek *psyche*, here equivalent to the Hebr. *nephesh*, contains all three senses of 'life', 'soul', 'person'.

n. 'his behaviour'; var. 'his works'.

o. In vv. 27-28 two sayings of Christ, each dealing with a different event, have been grouped together because they have a common reference to the coming of the kingdom of God: v. 27 refers to the Last Judgement which inaugurates the kingdom of the Father; v. 28 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem which demonstrates the presence of the kingdom of Christ, cf. 24:1+.

17 a. Tabor, according to the traditional opinion. Some favour Great Hermon.

b. Var. 'as snow', cf. 28:3.

c. Respectively representing Law and prophets, they do homage to the founder of the 'new alliance', cf. 5:17; Lk 22:20. As once they were privileged at Sinai with God's revelation, Ex 33:20+; cf.1 K 19:9-13, so now they are made witnesses of the anticipated revelation of the Son of Man, cf. 24:30.

d. An alternative translation 'It is a good thing for us to be here'.

e. Vulg. 'let us make', cf. Mk and Lk.

f. The disciples know that the Messiah has already come 16:16, and have seen him in his glory, 17:1-7; they are therefore surprised that Elijah has not played the part of Precursor assigned to him by Malachi. Jesus replies that Elijah has in fact performed that function, though unrecognised, in the humble person of the Baptist.

g. Var. 'no faith'.

h. Add. v. 21 'As for this kind (of devil), it is cast out only by prayer and fasting', cf. Mk 9:29.

i. A yearly tax levied on individuals fort he upkeep of the Temple.

j. I.e. 'their subjects', cf. 13:38. Christ makes a pun on this semitic metaphorical use of 'son' in order to indicate himself, who is the Son, cf. 3:17; 17:5 and 10:32f; 11:25-27, etc., together with his disciples who are his brothers, 12:50, and sons of the same Father, 5:45, etc. Cf. Mt 4:3+.

B. THE DISCOURSE ON THE CHURCH

Who is the greatest?

||Mk 9:33-36 ||Lk 9:46-47

18 At this time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in 1
the kingdom of heaven?' •So he called a little child to him and set the child 2
19:14 Ps 131:2 in front of them. •Then he said, 'I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become 3
||Mk 10:15 ||Lk 18:17 Jn 3:5 23:12 like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. •And so, the 4
one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

On leading others astray

=10:40 ||Mk 9:37 ||Lk 9:48 25:40

'Anyone who welcomes a little child like this[a] in my name welcomes me. 5
||Mk 9:42 ||Lk 17:1-2 But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have 6
faith in me would be better drowned in the depths of the sea with a great millstone round his neck. •Alas for the world that there should be such obstacles! 7
Obstacles indeed there must be, but alas for the man who provides them!

=5:29-30 ||Mk 9:43-47

'If your hand or your foot should cause[b] you to sin, cut it off and throw it 8
away: it is better for you to enter into life[c] crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. •And if your eye should cause 9
Lk 12:5 you to sin, tear it out and throw it away: it is better for you to enter into life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into the hell of fire.[d]

'See that you never despise any of these little ones, for I tell you that their 10
Heb 1:14 angels in heaven are continually in the presence of[e] my Father in heaven.[f]

The lost sheep

Ezk 34:1+ ||Lk 15:3-7

'Tell me. Suppose a man has a hundred sheep and one of them strays; will 12
Ezk 34:4,16 he not leave the ninety-nine on the hillside and go in search of the stray? •I tell 13
you solemnly, if he finds it, it gives him more joy than do the ninety-nine that did not stray at all. •Similarly, it is never the will of your Father in heaven that 14
one of these little ones should be lost.

Brotherly correction

||Lk 17:3

Lv 19:17 Ga 6:1 Tt 3:10

'If your brother does something wrong,[g] go and have it out with him alone, 15
between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.
Dt 19:15 2 Co 13:1 1 Tm 5:19-20 If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: *the evidence of two* 16
or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. •But if he refuses to listen to 17
Rm 16:17 1 Co 5:11 these, report it to the community;[h] and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or a tax collector.[i]

16:19+ Jn 20:23

'I tell you solemnly, whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in 18
heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.[j]

Prayer in common

7:7-8 Jn 15:7,16

'I tell you solemnly once again, if two of you on earth agree to ask anything 19
at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. •For where two or three 20
28:20 1 Co 5:4 meet in my name, I shall be there with them.'

Forgiveness of injuries

6:12 Si 10:6 ||Lk 17:4 Col 3:12

Then Peter went up to him and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my 21
Gn 4:24 brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' •Jesus answered, 'Not seven, 22
I tell you, but seventy-seven times.[k]

Parable of the unforgiving debtor

Si 28:4

25:19

'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided 23
to settle his accounts with his servants. •When the reckoning began, they 24
brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents;[l] •but he had no means of 25

paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife
26 and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. •At this, the servant threw
himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time" he said "and I will pay the
27 whole sum." •And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go
28 and cancelled the debt. •Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow
servant who owed him one hundred denarii;[m] and he seized him by the throat
29 and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me" he said. •His fellow servant
fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you".
30 But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison
31 till he should pay the debt. •His fellow servants were deeply distressed when
they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the
32 whole affair to him. •Then the master sent for him. "You wicked servant," he
33 said "I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. •Were you not
bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" 1 Jn 4:11
34 And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay
35 all his debt. •And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you 6:12 Jm 2:13
each forgive your brother from your heart.'

VI. THE APPROACHING ADVENT OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

A. NARRATIVE SECTION

The question about divorce Mk 10:1-12

1 19 Jesus had now finished what he wanted to say, and he left Galilee and Lk 9:51 Jn 10:40
2 came into the part of Judaea which is on the far side of the Jordan. •Large
crowds followed him and he healed them there.
3 Some Pharisees approached him, and to test him they said, 'Is it against the 16:1 Lk 11:54 Jn 8:6
4 Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?' •He answered, 'Have
5 you not read that the creator from the beginning *made them male and female* •and Gn 1:27
that he said: *This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife,* Gn 2:24 Ep 5:31
6 *and the two become one body*? •They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. 1 Co 6:16; 7:10
So then, what God has united, man must not divide.'[a]
7 They said to him, 'Then why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal Dt 24:1
8 should be given in cases of divorce?' •'It was because you were so unteachable'
he said 'that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this
9 from the beginning. •Now I say this to you: the man who divorces his wife— =5:32 ||Lk 16:18
I am not speaking of fornication[b]—and marries another, is guilty of adultery.'

18 a. That is to say, one who through the virtue of simplicity becomes a child again. cf. v. 4.

b. Lit. 'a scandal' in the primary sense of the Greek word (something to trip over, cf. 16:23+) not in the common English sense of the word. Vv. 8-9 (already cited in 5:29-30) have been inserted into this passage at the expense of the context and solely because the word 'scandal' (seduction of others) in vv. 6-7 has suggested another dictum on 'scandal' (in the sense of obstacles within oneself).

c. Eternal life.

d. Hebr. Gehinnom, a valley in Jerusalem once polluted by infant sacrifice, Lv 18:21+. Later the name was used for the place of damnation and punishment of the wicked—what we call 'hell'.

e. Lit. 'always gaze on the face', a biblical phrase meaning that the courtier is in the king's presence, cf. 2 S 14:24; 2 K 25:19; Tb 12:15.

f. Add. v. 11 'For the Son of Man has come to save what was lost', cf. Lk 19:10.

g. Many authorities add the specifying phrase 'to you', but it is probably to be omitted. The fault in question is grave and notorious; it has not necessarily been committed against the one whose duty it is to correct it. In v. 21 the case is different.

h. The *ekklesia*, i.e. the *qahal* or gathering of the brethren.

i. I.e. 'outcast', 'excommunicate'.

j. One of the powers conferred on Peter is here conferred on the Church's ministers, to whom this discourse is primarily addressed.

k. Others render 'seventy-times-seven times'. cf. 6:9+.

l. About £3,000,000, $9,000,000: the amount is deliberately fantastic.

m. Less than £5, $15.

19 a. Uncomprising assertion of the indissolubility of marriage.

b. This exceptive clause (Mt only) does not mean that Jesus allows full divorce (i.e. with power to remarry) in cases of adultery. If this were so, he would be supporting the very concession he is criticising. Attempts have been made to understand 'fornication'

Continence

The disciples said to him, 'If that is how things are between husband and wife, 10
it is not advisable to marry'. •But he replied, 'It is not everyone who can accept 11
what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted. •There are eunuchs born 12
that way from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs made so by men and
1 Co 7:1, 7-8,32-34 there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom
of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.'[c]

||Mk 10:13-16 ||Lk 18:15-17 Lk 9:47 **Jesus and the children**

People brought little children to him, for him to lay his hands on them and 13
1 Tm 4:14+ say a prayer. The disciples turned them away, •but Jesus said, 'Let the little 14
18:3-4 *1 P 2:1-2* children alone, and do not stop them coming to me; for it is to such as these that
the kingdom of heaven belongs'. •Then he laid his hands on them and went on 15
his way.

||Mk 10:17-22 ||Lk 18:18-23 **The rich young man**

And there was a man who came to him and asked, 'Master,[d] what good deed 16
Lk 10:25-28 must I do to possess eternal life?' •Jesus said to him, 'Why do you ask me about 17
what is good? There is one alone who is good.[e] But if you wish to enter into
Ex 20:12-16 Dt 5:16-20 life, keep the commandments.' •He said, 'Which?' 'These:' Jesus replied '*You* 18
must not kill. You must not commit adultery. You must not bring false witness.
Jn 13:34 *Honour your father and mother*, and: *you must love your neighbour as yourself.*' 19
The young man said to him, 'I have kept all these.[f] What more do I need to do?' 20
5:3+ Si 29:8-13 *6:19-21; 13:44-46* Jesus said, 'If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the 21
money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow
me'. •But when the young man heard these words he went away sad, for he was 22
a man of great wealth.

||Mk 10:23-27 ||Lk 18:24-27 **The danger of riches**

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you solemnly, it will be hard for a 23
rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. •Yes, I tell you again, it is easier 24
7:14 1 Co 1:26 for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the
kingdom of heaven.' •When the disciples heard this they were astonished. 25
'Who can be saved, then?' they said. •Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he told 26
Gn 18:14 Lk 1:37 them 'this is impossible; for God everything is possible.'

||Mk 10:28-31 ||Lk 18:28-30 4:20,22 **The reward of renunciation**

Then Peter spoke. 'What about us?' he said to him 'We have left everything 27
and followed you. What are we to have, then?' •Jesus said to him, 'I tell you 28
Dn 7:22 ||Lk 22:30 1 Co 6:2 Rv 3:21; 20:4 solemnly, when all is made new[g] and the Son of Man sits on his throne of glory,
you will yourselves sit on twelve thrones to judge[h] the twelve tribes of Israel.
Lk 14:26 *5:3+* And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children[i] 29
or land for the sake of my name will be repaid a hundred times over, and also
inherit eternal life.
20:16 ||Lk 13:30 'Many who are first will be last, and the last, first. 30

Parable of the vineyard labourers[a]

20 'Now the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak 1
to hire workers for his vineyard. •He made an agreement with the workers 2
for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard. •Going out at about the 3
third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place •and said to them, 4
"You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage". •So they went. At 5
about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the
same. •Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing 6
round, and he said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?"
"Because no one has hired us" they answered. He said to them, "You go into 7

my vineyard too". •In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first". •So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each. •When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each. •They took it, but grumbled at the landowner. •"The men who came last" they said "have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day's work in all the heat." •He answered one of them and said, "My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? •Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay you. •Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?" •Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.'[b]

Lv 19:13
Dt 24:14-15
Rm 9:19-21
19:30
||Lk 13:30

Third prophecy of the Passion

||Mk 10:32-34
||Lk 18:31-33

Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, and on the way he took the Twelve to one side and said to them, •'Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man is about to be handed over to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn him to death •and will hand him over to the pagans to be mocked and scourged and crucified; and on the third day he will rise again.'

16:21; 17:12, 22-23
Ac 10:40+

The mother of Zebedee's sons makes her request

||Mk10:35-40

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came with her sons to make a request of him, and bowed low; •and he said to her, 'What is it you want?' she said to him, 'Promise that these two sons of mine may sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your kingdom'.[c] •'You do not know what you are asking' Jesus answered. 'Can you drink the cup[d] that I am going to drink?' They replied, 'We can'. •'Very well,' he said 'you shall drink my cup,[e] but as for seats at my right hand and my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted by my Father.'[f]

19:28
Mk 4:13+
26:39
Jn 18:11
Ac 12:2

Leadership with service

When the other ten heard this they were indignant with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that among the pagans the rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. •This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, •and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, •just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom[g] for many.'[h]

||Mk 10:41-45
||Lk 22:25-27
Si 3:18
Mk 9:35
Jn 13:4-15
8:20+
26:28
Rm 5:6-21
1 Tm 2:6

in the sense of an illegitimate union, concubinage, but the severance of such a union is so obvious an obligation as not to deserve mention. The explanation seems rather to be that this text of Mt creates a special category for cases of infidelity in marriage since these require their own solution—but nowhere does he suggest what the solution is. This solution, which was not required at the time when full divorce was allowed, was destined to take shape in the Church and emerge as a 'separation' of the parties that carried with it no permission to remarry, cf. 1 Co 7:11.

c. Christ invites to perpetual continence those who would consecrate themselves entirely to the kingdom of God.

d. Var. 'Good Master', cf. Mk and Lk.

e. I.e. God (explicit in Mk and Lk and Vulg. Mt). Another reading, borrowed from Mk and Lk, is 'Why do you call me good? None is good but God alone.'

f. Add. 'from my earliest days', cf. Mk and Lk.

g. The reference is to the messianic 'renewal of all things' which is to be revealed when the world ends but which, on the spiritual plane, will already have begun when Christ rises from the dead as *Kyrios* in the Church.

h. In the biblical sense of 'govern'. The 'twelve tribes' stand for the new Israel, the Church.

i. Add. 'wife'.

20 a. The owner of the vineyard goes on into the evening hiring workmen and yet gives all a full day's pay. He is generous to some without being unjust to the others. So God acts. Into his kingdom he brings late-comers—sinners and pagans. Those who were called first (the Jewish people who, from Abraham's time, had been privileged with the covenant) have no right to be offended.

b. Add. 'For many are called, but few are chosen', probably borrowed from 22:14.

c. The apostles expect Christ's kingdom to be manifested very shortly and in all its glory, but this is reserved for Christ's second coming, cf. Mt 4:17+; Ac 1:6+.

d. Biblical metaphor, cf. Is 51:17+, here referring to the approaching Passion.

e. James son of Zebedee was put to death by Herod Agrippa about the year 44, Ac 12:2. His brother John may not indeed have suffered martyrdom but he had no less a share in his Master's sufferings.

f. Christ's mission on earth is not to apportion men's rewards but to suffer for man's salvation, cf. Jn 3:17; 12:47.

g. By sin man incurs, as a debt to the divine justice, the punishment of death demanded by the Law, cf. 1 Co

||Mk 10:46-52 ||Lk 18:35-43 9:27

The two blind men of Jericho

As they left Jericho a large crowd followed him. 29 •Now there were two blind 30
men sitting at the side of the road. When they heard that it was Jesus who was
passing by, they shouted, 'Lord! Have pity on us, Son of David.' 31 •And the crowd
scolded them and told them to keep quiet, but they only shouted more loudly,
'Lord! Have pity on us, Son of David.' 32 •Jesus stopped, called them over and
said, 'What do you want me to do for you?' 33 •They said to him, 'Lord, let us
8:3+ have our sight back'. 34 •Jesus felt pity for them and touched their eyes, and immed-
iately their sight returned and they followed him.

||Mk 11:1-11 ||Lk 19:28-38 ||Jn 12:12-16

The Messiah enters Jerusalem

21 When they were near Jerusalem and had come in sight of Bethphage on the 1
Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 •saying to them, 'Go to the village
facing you, and you will immediately find a tethered donkey and a colt with her.
Untie them and bring them to me. 3 •If anyone says anything to you, you are to
say, "The Master needs them and will send them back directly".' 4 •This took place
to fulfil the prophecy:

Is 62:11 Zc 9:9 11:29 Gn 49:11

> *Say to the daughter of Zion:* 5
> *Look, your king comes to you;*
> *he is humble, he rides on a donkey*
> *and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.*[a]

So the disciples went out and did as Jesus had told them. 6 •They brought 7
1 K 1:33 the donkey and the colt, then they laid their cloaks on their backs and he sat on
2 K 9:13 them. 8 •Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others
were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path. 9 •The crowds
who went in front of him and those who followed were all shouting:

9:27+ Ps 118:26 Ac 2:33+

> '*Hosanna*[b] to the Son of David!
> *Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!*
> *Hosanna* in the highest heavens!'

And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil. 'Who is this?' 10
16:14+ people asked, 11 •and the crowds answered, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth
in Galilee'.

||Mk 11:11, 15-17 ||Lk 19:45-46 ||Jn 2:14-16

The expulsion of the dealers from the Temple

Ne 13:8 Jesus then went into the Temple and drove out all those who were selling and 12
buying there; he upset the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those
Is 56:7 who were selling pigeons.[c] 13 •'According to scripture' he said '*my house will be called*
Jr 7:11 *a house of prayer;* but you are turning it into a *robbers' den.*' 14 •There were also blind
2 S 5:8 LXX and lame people who came to him in the Temple, and he cured them. 15 •At the sight
of the wonderful things he did and of the children shouting, 'Hosanna to the
Jn 12:19 Son of David' in the Temple, the chief priests and the scribes were indignant. 16 •'Do
you hear what they are saying?' they said to him. 'Yes,' Jesus answered 'have you
never read this:

Ps 8:2 LXX Ws 10:21

> *By the mouths of children, babes in arms,*
> *you have made sure of praise?*'

Lk 21:37 With that he left them and went out of the city to Bethany where he spent the 17
night.

||Mk 11:12-14,20-24

The barren fig tree withers. Faith and prayer

Is 5:1 Jr 8:13 Lk 13:6-9 8:3+ Ho 9:16

As he was returning to the city in the early morning, he felt hungry. 18 •Seeing 19
a fig tree by the road, he went up to it and found nothing on it but leaves.
And he said to it, 'May you never bear fruit again'; and at that instant the fig tree
withered.[d] 20 •The disciples were amazed when they saw it. 'What happened to the

21 tree' they said 'that it withered there and then?' •Jesus answered, 'I tell you solemnly, if you have faith and do not doubt at all, not only will you do what I have done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, "Get up and throw 22 yourself into the sea", it will be done. •And if you have faith, everything you ask for in prayer you will receive.'

8:10+; =17:20 ‖Lk 17:6 Jn 14:12 Jm 1:6 7:7-11

The authority of Jesus is questioned

‖Mk 11:27-33 ‖Lk 20:1-8

23 He had gone into the Temple and was teaching, when the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him and said, 'What authority have you for acting 24 like this?[e] And who gave you this authority?' •'And I' replied Jesus 'will ask you a question, only one; if you tell me the answer to it, I will then tell you my 25 authority for acting like this. •John's baptism: where did it come from: heaven or man?' And they argued it out this way among themselves, 'If we say from 26 heaven, he will retort, "Then why did you refuse to believe him?"; •but if we say from man, we have the people to fear, for they all hold that John was a prophet'. 27 So their reply to Jesus was, 'We do not know'. And he retorted, 'Nor will I tell you my authority for acting like this.

28:18 Jn 2:18 3:6 Jn 3:27 21:32 14:5; 16:14+

Parable of the two sons

28 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, 29 "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today". •He answered, 'I will not go', 30 but afterwards thought better of it and went. •The man then went and said the 31 same thing to the second who answered, 'Certainly, sir', but did not go. •Which of the two did the father's will?' 'The first' they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into 32 the kingdom of God before you. •For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness,[f] but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.

Si 3:8 ‖Lk7:29-30; 18:9-14 3:6; 8:10+ Lk 7:37-50; 19:1-10

Parable of the wicked husbandmen[g]

‖Mk 12:1-12 ‖Lk 20:9-19 Jn 8:37

33 'Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he 34 leased it to tenants and went abroad. •When vintage time drew near he sent his 35 servants to the tenants to collect his produce. •But the tenants seized his servants, 36 thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. •Next he sent some more servants, 37 this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. •Finally

Is 5:1-7+ 22:3 22:6

15:56; 2 Co 3:7,9; Ga 3:13; Rm 8:3-4, with notes. To ransom them from this slavery of sin and death, Rm 3:24+, Christ is to pay the ransom and discharge the debt with the price of his blood, 1 Co 6:20; 7:23; Ga 3:13; 4:5, with notes. By thus dying in place of the guilty, he fulfils the prophesied function of the 'servant of Yahweh' (Is 53). The Hebr. word translated 'many', Is 53:11f, contrasts the enormous crowd of the redeemed with the one Redeemer: it does not imply that the number of redeemed is limited, Rm 5:6-21. Cf. Mt 26:28+.

h. At this point some authorities insert the following passage, derived probably from some apocryphal gospel 'But as for you, from littleness you seek to grow great and from greatness you make yourselves small. When you are invited to a banquet do not take one of the places of honour, because someone more important than you may arrive and then the steward will have to say, "Move down lower", and you would be covered with confusion. Take the lowest place, and then if someone less important than you comes in, the steward will say to you, "Move up higher", and that will be to your advantage.' Cf. Lk 14:8-10.

21 a. In thus describing the messianic king's humble mount the prophet had in mind the unpretentious, unwarlike nature of his rule. Jesus, by performing this action, deliberately took to himself both the words of the prophecy and their deeper meaning.

b. A word of Hebr. origin; its first meaning is 'Pray, save' but it became a mere shout of acclaim.

c. They provided pilgrims with the coinage and sacrificial victims necessary for oblations: a practice which, however legitimate, lends itself to abuse.

d. 'It was not the season for figs', Mk says. But Jesus wished to perform a symbolic action, cf. Jr 18:1+, in which the fig tree represents Israel punished for its fruitlessness.

e. The unusual events that Jesus has just allowed to take place in the very precincts of the Temple: the messianic ovation, expulsion of the merchants, miraculous cures.

f. Lit. 'in the way of righteousness'. Biblical expression: John practised and preached that conformity with the divine will which makes a man 'righteous'.

g. More exactly an 'allegory' because every detail of the story has its own significance: the proprietor is God; the vineyard the Chosen People, Israel, cf. Is 5:1+; the servants the prophets; the son Jesus, put to death outside the walls of Jerusalem; the murderous farmers the faithless Jews; the nation to which the vineyard will be entrusted, the pagans.

Jn 3:16-17
1 Jn 4:9
Ga 3:16; 4:7
Heb 1:2
Heb 13:12
he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son" he said. 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance." 39 So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' 41 They answered, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives'. 42 Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

Ps 118:22-23
Dn 2:45
Ac 2:33+; 4:11
Is 28:16
1 P 2:4-7
It was the stone rejected by the builders
that became the keystone.
This was the Lord's doing
and it is wonderful to see?

Ac 13:5+
Rm 11:11
I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to 43 a people who will produce its fruit.'[a]

When they heard his parables, the chief priests and the scribes realised he was 45 speaking about them, 46 but though they would have liked to arrest him they were afraid of the crowds, who looked on him as a prophet.

16:14+

8:11+
Pr 9:1-6
||Lk 14:16-24
Parable of the wedding feast[a]

Ezk 16:1+
Rv 19:9
21:34
22 Jesus began to speak to them in parables once again, 1/2 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come. 3 Next he sent some more servants. "Tell those who have been invited" he said 4 "that I have my banquet all prepared, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, everything is ready. Come to the wedding." 5 But they were not
21:35
interested: one went off to his farm, another to his business, 6 and the rest seized his servants, maltreated them and killed them. 7 The king was furious. He despatched his troops, destroyed those murderers and burnt their town. 8 Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, 9 go to the crossroads in the town and invite everyone
Rv 19:7
you can find to the wedding". 10 So these servants went out on to the roads and
13:38,47
collected together everyone they could find, bad and good alike; and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 When the king came in to look at the guests he noticed one man who was not wearing a wedding garment, 12 and said to him, "How did
Rv 19:8
you get in here, my friend, without a wedding garment?" And the man was silent. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot and throw him 13
8:12+
out into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth". 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.'[b]

||Mk 12:13-17
||Lk 20:20-26
Jr 18:18
Lk 11:54
On tribute to Caesar

Then the Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap him 15 in what he said. 16 And they sent their disciples to him, together with the
Rm 13:1-7
Herodians,[c] to say, 'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing to you. 17 Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' 18 But Jesus was aware of their malice and replied,
6:2
'You hypocrites! Why do you set this trap for me? 19 Let me see the money you pay the tax with.' They handed him a denarius, 20 and he said, 'Whose head is this? Whose name?' 21 'Caesar's' they replied. He then said to them, 'Very well, give
Rm 13:7
back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar—and to God what belongs to God'.[d] This reply took them by surprise, and they left him alone and went away. 22

||Mk 12:18-27
||Lk 20:27-40
Jn 11:25
Ac 23:8
Gn 38:8
Dt 25:5+
The resurrection of the dead

That day some Sadducees—who deny that there is a resurrection[e]—approached 23 him and they put this question to him, 24 'Master, Moses said that if a man dies childless, his brother is to marry the widow, his sister-in law, to raise

children for his brother. •Now we had a case involving seven brothers; the first married and then died without children, leaving his wife to his brother; •the same thing happened with the second and third and so on to the seventh, •and then last of all the woman herself died. •Now at the resurrection to which of those seven will she be wife, since she had been married to them all?' •Jesus answered them, 'You are wrong, because you understand neither the scriptures nor the power of God. •For at the resurrection men and women do not marry; no, they are like the angels in heaven. •And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you never read what God himself said to you: •*I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob?* God is God, not of the dead, but of the living.' And his teaching made a deep impression on the people who heard it.

Ex 3:6

Ac 13:12
||Mk 12:28-31
||Lk 10:25-28
Jn 13:34-35+

The greatest commandment of all

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees they got together •and, to disconcert him, one of them[f] put a question, •'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?' •Jesus said, '*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul,* and with all your mind. •This is the greatest and the first commandment. •The second resembles it: *You must love your neighbour as yourself.* •On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'

1 Jn 4:21
Dt 6:5
1 Jn 2:7
Lv 19:18
Jm 2:8
Rm 13:8-10
Ga 5:14

Christ not only son but also Lord of David

||Mk 12:35-37
||Lk 20:41-44

While the Pharisees were gathered round, Jesus put to them this question, 'What is your opinion about the Christ? Whose son is he?' 'David's' they told him. 'Then how is it' he said 'that David, moved by the Spirit, calls him Lord, where he says:

9:27+
2 S 7:1+

> *The Lord said to my Lord:*
> *Sit at my right hand*
> *and I will put your enemies*
> *under your feet?*

26:64p
Ps 110:1
Ac 2:33+, 34f
Heb 1:13

'If David can call him Lord, then how can he be his son?' •Not one could think of anything to say in reply,[g] and from that day no one dared to ask him any further questions.

Lk 20:40

The scribes and Pharisees: their hypocrisy and vanity

Ws 2:12
Jr 8:8-9
Rm 2:19-20

23 Then addressing the people and his disciples Jesus said, •'The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. •You must therefore do what they

b. Add. v. 44 'He who falls on this stone will be dashed to pieces; anyone it falls on will be crushed', probably a gloss taken from Lk 20:18.

22 a. A parable with allegorical features; in this, as in the lesson it teaches, it resembles the one that precedes it. The king is God; the wedding feast is the happiness of the messianic age and the king's son the Messiah; those sent with invitations are the prophets and the apostles; the invited who ignore them or do them violence are the Jews; those called in from the street are the sinners and the pagans; the burning of the city is the destruction of Jerusalem. At v. 11 the scene changes to that of the Last Judgement. Matthew, it seems, has combined two parables: one akin to Lk 14:16-24 and another whose concluding verses are found in vv. 11f; these verses explain that the man who accepted the invitation should have been dressed for the occasion —in other words, good works must go with faith, cf. 3:8; 5:20; 7:21f; 13:47f; 21:28f.

b. This sentence appears to refer to the first part of the parable rather than to the second. It is a question not of the elect as a whole but of the Jews, the first to be invited. The parable (of vv. 1-10) neither asserts nor denies that some (a 'few') of the Jewish people have accepted the invitation and are 'chosen', cf. 24:22+.

c. Supporters of the Herodian dynasty, Mk 3:6+, the most suitable people to report to the Roman authorities what they hoped to induce Jesus to say against Caesar.

d. In practice they acknowledge the authority and accept the benefits of Roman government of which this coin is a symbol. Hence it is permissible, indeed it is a duty, for them to pay that government the tribute of their obedience and of their property so long as this does not encroach on what they owe to the overriding authority of God.

e. This sect, 3:7+, adhered rigidly to the written tradition, especially as contained in the Pentateuch; its members were confident that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, cf. 2 M 7:9+, was not to be found in that tradition. On this point the Pharisees were opposed to the Sadducees. Cf. Ac 4:1+; 23:8+.

f. Add. 'a lawyer' probably borrowed from Lk 10:25.

g. The appropriate answer would have been that though tracing his human origin back to David, cf. 1:1-17, there would be something divine about the Messiah to set him above David.

Dt 17:10 Rm 2:17-24 *11:30* ‖Lk 11:46 Ac 15:10
tell you and listen to what they say;[a] but do not be guided by what they do: since they do not practise what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they! 5 Everything they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader phylacteries and longer tassels,[b] 6 like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues, 7 being greeted obsequiously in the market squares and having people call them Rabbi.[c]

6:1-8 Nb 15:38 Am 4:5 ‖*Mk 12:38-39* ‖Lk 11:43; 20:46 *Lk 14:7* Jm 3:1
'You, however,[d] must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers. 9 You must call no one on earth your father,[e] since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. 10 Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. 11 The greatest among you must be your servant. 12 Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted.

=20:26 *18:4* Lk 1:52-53; ‖14:11; 18:14

6:9+ ‖Lk 11:39-48,52 *Is 5:8-25* Jr 8:8 Mi 2:8
The sevenfold indictment of the scribes and Pharisees

'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who shut up the kingdom of heaven in men's faces, neither going in yourselves nor allowing others to go in[f] who want to.[g] 13

'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who travel over sea and land to make a single proselyte,[h] and when you have him you make him twice as fit for hell as you are. 15

15:14 Jn 9:38-41 Rm 2:19
'Alas for you, blind guides! You who say,[i] "If a man swears by the Temple, it has no force; but if a man swears by the gold of the Temple, he is bound". 16 Fools and blind! For which is of greater worth, the gold or the Temple that makes the gold sacred? 17 Or else, "If a man swears by the altar it has no force; 18 15:14 but if a man swears by the offering that is on the altar, he is bound". 19 You blind men! For which is of greater worth, the offering or the altar that makes the 5:33-37 Si 23:9 offering sacred? 20 Therefore, when a man swears by the altar he is swearing by that and by everything on it. 21 And when a man swears by the Temple he is swearing by that and by the One who dwells in it. 22 And when a man swears by heaven he is swearing by the throne of God and by the One who is seated there.

Dt 14:22+ Ezk 45:13 Am 5:21+
'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who pay your tithe of mint and dill and cummin[j] and have neglected the weightier matters of the Law—justice, mercy, good faith! These you should have practised, without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides! Straining out gnats and swallowing camels! 23

Mk 7:4 Lk 11:39-40 Tt 1:15
'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who clean the outside of cup and dish and leave the inside full[k] of extortion and intemperance. 25 Blind Pharisee! Clean the inside of cup and dish first so that the outside may become clean as well. 26

Ac 23:3
'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who are like whitewashed tombs that look handsome on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of corruption. 28 In the same way you appear to people from the outside like good honest men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. 27

Lk 16:15; 18:9
'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who build the 29 13:17 Lk 11:47 sepulchres of the prophets and decorate the tombs of holy men, 30 saying, "We would never have joined in shedding the blood of the prophets, had we lived in our fathers' day". 31 So! Your own evidence tells against you! You are the sons of Ac 7:52 *1 Th 2:16* those who murdered the prophets! 32 Very well then, finish off the work that your fathers began.[l]

Their crimes and approaching punishment

3:7; 12:34 2 Ch 36:16 ‖Lk 11:49-51
'Serpents, brood of vipers, how can you escape being condemned to hell? 33 This is why, in my turn, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes:[m] 34

some you will slaughter and crucify, some you will scourge in your synagogues 5:12 1 Th 2:14-16
35 and hunt from town to town; •and so you will draw down on yourselves the blood 27:25 Gn 4:10
of every holy man that has been shed on earth, from the blood of Abel the Holy Heb 11:4 Rv 16:6; 18:24
to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah[n] whom you murdered between the
36 sanctuary and the altar. •I tell you solemnly, all of this will recoil on this
generation.

Jerusalem admonished

||Lk 13:34-35

37 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are 21:35; 22:6
sent to you! How often[o] have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers Ps 17:8; 91:4
38 her chicks under her wings, and you refused! •So be it! Your house will be left Jr 7:14; 18; 7; 26:4-6
39 to you desolate,[p] •for, I promise, you shall not see me any more until you say: Ezk 11:23 Jn 2:19-21

Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!'[q] *Ps 118:2y* Ac 2:33+

B. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCOURSE[a]

Jr 26 ||Mk 13 ||Lk 21:5-33

Introduction

1 **24** Jesus left the Temple, and as he was going away his disciples came up to ||Mk 13:1-4 ||Lk 21:5-7
2 draw his attention to the Temple buildings. •He said to them in reply,
'You see all these? I tell you solemnly, not a single stone here will be left

23 a. In so far as they hand on the traditional doctrine that goes back to Moses. Christ in this does not speak of their own interpretations; he has shown elsewhere how these are to be assessed, cf. 15:1-20; 16:6; 19:3-9.

b. The phylactery is a small receptacle containing the most important words of the Law; the Jews attach it to arm or forehead, carrying out the injunction of Ex 13:9,16; Dt 6:8; 11:18 literally. The four tassels were sewn one at each corner of the cloak, cf. Nb 15:38+.

c. Aramaic word meaning 'my master', the usual title of the Jewish teacher. Jesus himself was thus addressed by his disciples, 26:25,49.

d. Vv. 8-12, addressed to the disciples only, probably did not belong originally to this discourse.

e. *Abba* in Aramaic; another title of honour.

f. The exacting casuistry of the rabbis made observance of the Law impossible.

g. Add. v. 14 'Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who devour the property of widows, though you make a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence you receive'; this is an interpolation taken from Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47 and making eight maledictions instead of the deliberate total of seven, cf. 6:9+.

h. A pagan convert to Judaism. Jewish propaganda was extremely active in the Graeco-Roman world.

i. The question of oaths; to release from those that had been hastily made the rabbis had to invoke tortuous reasoning.

j. The Mosaic Law levied tithe on agricultural produce; the rabbis piously applied the precept to the most insignificant of plants.

k. Var. 'inside you are full'. 'intemperance': var. 'iniquity', 'impurity', 'cupidity'.

l. Allusion to Christ's own death soon to take place, cf. 21:38f.

m. Terms of Jewish origin but here applied to Christian missionaries, cf. 10:41; 13:52.

n. The one referred to is probably the Zechariah of 2 Ch 24:20-22. His murder is the last one to be described in the Bible (2 Ch being the last book of the Jewish Canon) while Abel's, Gn 4:8, is the first. It is possible that 'son of Barachiah' is the result of confusion with another Zechariah, cf. Is 8:2 (LXX); Zc 1:1. Alternatively, the words may be a copyist's gloss.

o. Allusion to repeated visits to Jerusalem on which the Synoptics are silent but which are reported by Jn.

p. Om. 'desolate'. In a little while Jesus will be with them no longer, he is to be rejected by his own people; so also will God abandon Jerusalem and its Temple.

q. In Lk 13:35 Christ seems to mean that the Jews will not see him again until the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Lk 19:28f). In Mt's context the words probably refer to a later coming than this, perhaps the triumphant coming at the end of time: the reconciled Jews will acclaim this return, cf. Rm 11:25f.

24 a. This discourse operates at two levels: that of the destruction of Jerusalem (in 70 A.D.) and that of the end of the world. In the course of his preaching, Jesus probably distinguished these two levels more clearly (in Lk 17:22-37 there is a separate discourse on Christ's return at the end of time and its elements are inserted here in vv. 26-27,28,37-39,40-41). But in the text of Mt as it stands, as also in Mk 13 and Lk 21, no sharp distinction is drawn between the two levels. Their fusion in this way is a theological expression of truth: though separated in time, these two are inseparable in the sense that the first is the inevitable forerunner and prefiguration of the second. The destruction of Jerusalem marks the end of the Old Covenant—Christ has thus manifestly returned to inaugurate his kingly rule. Such a decisive intervention in the history of salvation will not occur again until the end of time when God will judge the whole human race, now chosen in Christ, with the same judgement he pronounced (in 70 A.D.) upon the first chosen people. For this reason the destruction of Jerusalem is here described in terms of the 'day of Yahweh' foretold by the prophets, cf. Am 5:18+; 8:9+. No other intervention of God in history so involves the whole cosmos or prophesies its end as this one does, and the actual end of the world will be no more than the climax of all this. Since the end of Jerusalem is seen as a divine intervention, there are to be found in this discourse phrases and metaphors characteristic of theophanies, Ex 13:22+, and of the 'visitations' of Yahweh, namely, war, famine, earthquake, unprecedented distress and the 'birthpangs', cosmic catastrophe, the lightning and the 'cloud' (see the references given in the notes). These conventional images are to be interpreted symbolically, as in the prophetic literature from which they are derived. They refer, like the discourse as a whole, both to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the end of the world which follows and is prefigured by it.

on another: everything will be destroyed.' •And when he was sitting on the 3
Mount of Olives the disciples came and asked him privately, 'Tell us, when is
13:39 1 Jn 2:28 this going to happen, and what will be the sign of your coming[b] and of the end
of the world?'

‖Mk 13:5-13 ‖Lk 21:8-19 **The beginning of sorrows**

2 Tm 3:5 And Jesus answered them, 'Take care that no one deceives you; •because 4 5
Jn 5:43 many will come using my name and saying, "I am the Christ",[c] and they will
Jr 51:46 deceive many. •You will hear of wars and rumours of wars; do not be 6
alarmed, for this is something that must happen, but the end will not be yet.
For nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will 7
Jn 16:21 Rm 8:22 1 Th 5:3 Rv 12:2 be famines[d] and earthquakes here and there.[e] •All this is only the beginning of 8
the birthpangs.[f]
1 Jn 3:13 'Then they will hand you over to be tortured and put to death; and you will 9
=10:22 be hated by all the nations on account of my name. •And then many will fall 10
10:21.35-36 away; men will betray one another and hate one another. •Many false prophets 11
16:14+ 2 Th 2:3 Lk 18:8 =10:22 will arise; they will deceive many, •and with the increase of lawlessness, love in 12
most men will grow cold; •but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved. 13
'This Good News of the kingdom will be proclaimed to the whole world[g] as 14
Rm 10:18 a witness to all the nations. And then the end[h] will come.

‖Mk 13:14-23 ‖Lk 21:20-24 **The great tribulation of Jerusalem**

Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 1 M 1:54 Ezk 7:15 'So when you see *the disastrous abomination*, of which the prophet Daniel 15
spoke, set up in the Holy Place[i] (let the reader understand), •then those in 16
Lk 17:31 Judaea must escape to the mountains; •if a man is on the housetop, he must not 17
come down to collect his belongings; •if a man is in the fields, he must not 18
turn back to fetch his cloak. •Alas for those with child, or with babies at the 19
breast, when those days come! •Pray that you will not have to escape in winter 20
Lm 1:12 Dn 12:1 Rv 7:14 or on a sabbath. •For then there will be *great distress such as, until now, since* 21
the world began, there never *has been*, nor ever will be again.[j] •And if that time 22
had not been shortened, no one would have survived; but shortened that time
shall be, for the sake of those who are chosen.[k]

Ps 75:6 Lk 17:23-24 2 Th 2:3-4,9 2 P 2:1-3 1 Jn 4:1 Rv 13 'If anyone says to you then, "Look, here is the Christ" or, "He is there", 23
do not believe it; •for false Christs and false prophets will arise and produce great 24
signs and portents, enough to deceive even the chosen, if that were possible.
There; I have forewarned you. 25

‖Lk 17:23-24 **The coming of the Son of Man will be evident**

'If, then, they say to you, "Look, he is in the desert", do not go there; 26
"Look, he is in some hiding place", do not believe it; •because the coming of the 27
Son of Man will be like lightning striking in the east and flashing far into the
Jb 39:30 ‖Lk 17:37 west.[l] •Wherever the corpse is, there will the vultures gather. 28

‖Mk 13:24-27 ‖Lk 21:25-27 **The universal significance of this coming**

Is 13:9-10; 34:4 Am 8:9+ Ac 2:20 16:28; 17:5 Zc 12:10-12 Rv 1:7 'Immediately after the distress of those days[m] the sun will be darkened, the 29
moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of
heaven will be shaken.[n] •And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear 30
in heaven;[o] then too all the peoples of the earth will beat their breasts; and they
8:20+; 26:64 Dn 7:13-14 1 Th 4:16 will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great
glory.[p] •And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet[q] to gather his chosen 31
from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.[r]

‖Mk 13:28-32 ‖Lk 21:29-33 **The time of this coming**

'Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves 32
come out, you know that summer is near. •So with you when you see all these 33
10:23; 16:28 Jm 5:8 things: know that he[s] is near, at the very gates. •I tell you solemnly, before 34

35 this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place.[t] •Heaven Is 40:8; 51:6
36 and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. •But as for that day *Heb 12:27*
and hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son,[u] no one Ac 1:7
but the Father only.

Be on the alert ||Lk 17:26-27,34-35

37 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. •For in Gn 6:5
38 those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking Heb 11:7
39 husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, •and they suspected nothing Gn 7:11-23
till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man 2 P 3:6
40 comes. •Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; •of two women at *1 Th 5:3*
41 the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left.

42 'So stay awake, because you do not know the day[v] when your master is coming. 25:13
43 You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time Rv 3:3
of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would ||*Lk 12:39-40*
44 not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. •Therefore, you 1 Th 5:1+
too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not 1 Th 5:2-6
expect. 2 P 3:10

Parable of the conscientious steward[w] ||Lk 12:42-46

45 'What sort of servant, then, is faithful and wise enough for the master to Pr 14:35
place him over his household to give them their food at the proper time?
46 Happy that servant if his master's arrival finds him at this employment. •I tell
47 you solemnly, he will place him over everything he owns. •But as for the 19:28; 25:21
48 dishonest servant who says to himself, "My master is taking his time", •and sets
49

24 b. The Greek word is *parousia;* it means 'presence' and in the Graeco-Roman world was used for official visits by royalty. The Christians adopted it as a technical term for the glorious coming of Christ, cf. 1 Co 15:23+. It is not inevitably linked up with Christ's *final* coming; it can also refer to the power he will display when he comes to establish his messianic kingdom (the Church) on the ruins of Judaism; cf. 16:27-28. In this passage Matthew clearly implies that the has combined the two themes.

c. Before the year 70 several impostors posed as messiahs.

d. Add. 'plagues', cf. Lk 21:11.

e. Cf. Is 8:21; 13:13; 19:2; Jr 21:9; 34:17; Ezk 5:12; Am 4:6-11; 8:8; 2 Ch 15:6.

f. Cf. Is 13:8; 26:17; 66:7; Jr 6:24; 13:21; Ho 13:13; Mi 4:9-10. Jewish literature uses this metaphor to describe the coming of the messianic kingdom.

g. The 'inhabited world' *(oikoumené)*, i.e. the Graeco-Roman world. All the Jews of the empire are destined to hear the Good News before punishment comes to Israel, cf. Rm 10:18. The earliest 'witness' will be directed against the faithlessness of Judaism, cf. Mt 10:18. Before 70 A.D. the gospel had already reached the main parts of the Roman empire, cf. 1 Th 1:8; Rm 1:5,8; Col 1:6,23.

h. The fall of Jerusalem.

i. Daniel seems to refer to the statue of Zeus set up in the Jerusalem Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes (in 168 B.C.; cf. 1 M 1:54). Jesus applies the prophecy to the siege and capture of the Holy City by the pagan armies from Rome, cf. Lk 21:20.

j. Cf. Ex 10:14; 11:6; Jr 30:7; Ba 2:2; Jl 2:2; Dn 12:1; 1 M 9:27; Rv 16:18.

k. Those among the Jews who are called to enter the kingdom of God: the 'remnant', cf. Is 4:3+; Rm 11:5-7.

l. The coming of the Messiah will be as unmistakable as lightning. Lightning is a characteristic phenomenon that goes with divine judgement, cf. Is 29:6; 30:30; Zc 9:14; Ps 97:4; etc.

m. Join with v. 25; vv. 26-28 are a digression.

n. Cf. Jr 4:23-26; Ezk 32:7f; Am 8:9; Mi 1:3-4; Jl 2:10; 3:4; 4:15 and especially Is 13:9-10; 34:4; the text repeats the phrases of the last two references. The 'powers of heaven' are the stars and all the other celestial forces.

o. For the Fathers this 'sign' was Christ's cross, but possibly it is Christ himself proving by the triumph of his kingdom on earth that he has truly risen and is in glory.

p. In these words Daniel foretold the establishment of the messianic kingdom by a Son of Man coming on the clouds. The cloud is the usual accompaniment of both O.T. and N.T. theophanies: Ex 13:22+; 19:16+; 34:5+; Lv 16:2; 1 K 8:10-11; Ps 18:11; 97:2; 104:3; Is 19:1; Jr 4:13; Ezk 1:4; 10:3f; 2 M 2:8. For N.T. cf. Mt 17:5; Ac 1:9,11; 1 Th 4:17; Rv 1:7; 14:14.

q. Add. 'and a voice'.

r. Lit. 'from the four winds, from the ends of the heavens to their ends', a composite formula from Zc 2:10 and Dt 30:4, texts which treat of the reunion of scattered Israel, cf. Ezk 37:9 and Ne 1:9. See also Is 27:13. Here therefore as in vv. 22 and 24, the 'chosen' are those Jews that Yahweh will rescue from the ruin of their nation in order to admit them, along with the pagans, into his kingdom v. 30.

s. The Son of Man coming to establish his kingdom.

t. This statement refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and not to the end of the world. In the course of his preaching Jesus probably made the distinction between these two things clearer, cf. 24:1+ and 16:28+.

u. Om. (Vulg.) 'nor the Son', probably for theological reasons. Christ as man received from the Father the knowledge of everything that had to do with his mission but, as he explicitly asserts in this passage, he could be ignorant of certain elements in the divine plan.

v. Vulg. 'hour'.

w. After the discourse foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the visible coming of the messianic reign in the Church, Matthew adds three parables dealing with the ultimate fate of individuals. The first presents one of Christ's servants who, like the apostles, is given a task to perform in the Church; he is judged on the way he performs it.

about beating his fellow servants and eating and drinking with drunkards, •his 50
master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know.
The master will cut him off[z] and send him to the same fate as the hypocrites, where 51
8:12+ there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

Lk 12:35-38 **Parable of the ten bridesmaids**[a]

Ezk 16:1+ 25 'Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their 1
lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.[b] •Five of them were foolish and five 2
were sensible: •the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, 3
whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. •The bride- 4 5
groom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. •But at midnight there 6
was a cry, "The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him." •At this, all those 7
bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, •and the foolish ones said to 8
the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out". •But 9
they replied, " There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go
to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves". •They had gone off to buy 10
it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the
7:22 Lk 13:25 wedding hall and the door was closed. •The other bridesmaids arrived later. 11
"Lord, Lord," they said "open the door for us." •But he replied, "I tell you 12
24:42 Mk 13:33 solemnly, I do not know you". •So stay awake, because you do not know either 13
the day or the hour.

Lk 19:12-27 **Parable of the talents**[c]

Mk 13:34 'It is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted 14
his property to them. •To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third 15
one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out. •The man who had received 16
the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. •The 17
man who had received two made two more in the same way. •But the man who 18
had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's
18:23 2 Co 5:10 money. •Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went 19
through his accounts with them. •The man who had received the five talents came 20
forward bringing five more. "Sir," he said "you entrusted me with five talents;
here are five more that I have made." •His master said to him, "Well done, good 21
19:28; 24:47 Lk 16:10 and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will
trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness".[d] •Next the man 22
with the two talents came forward. " Sir," he said "you entrusted me with two
talents; here are two more that I have made." •His master said to him, "Well 23
done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small
Jn 15:11; 17:24 *things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness".*
Last came forward the man who had the one talent. "Sir," said he "I had heard 24
you were a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where
you have not scattered; •so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in 25
the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back." •But his master answered 26
him, "You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown
and gather where I have not scattered? •Well then, you should have deposited 27
my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have recovered my capital
with interest. •So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has 28
=13:12+ Lk 8:18 the five talents. •For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more 29
than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away.
As for this good-for-nothing servant, throw him out into the dark, where there 30
8:12+ will be weeping and grinding of teeth."

The Last Judgement

8:20+; 16:27 2 Co 5:10 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory,[e] escorted by all the angels, then 31
he will take his seat on his throne of glory. •All the nations[f] will be assembled 32
Ex 34:17 before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates

sheep from goats. •He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats
on his left. •Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world.[g] •For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me."[h] •Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? •When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; •sick or in prison and go to see you?" •And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me". Next he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. •For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; •I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." •Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" •Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me". •And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'

Is 58:6-8
Rm 8:17
Ep 1:4
Tb 4:16
Jb 31:17
Si 7:34
Ezk 18:7
Heb 13:3
10:40; 18:5
Pr 19:17
Lk 10:16
Ac 9:5
Jm 2:14-17
Jb 22:7
10:41
Dn 12:2
Jn 5:29

VII. PASSION AND RESURRECTION

The conspiracy against Jesus

||Mk 14:1-2
||Lk 22:1-2

26 Jesus had now finished all he wanted to say, and he told his disciples, 'It will be Passover, as you know, in two days' time, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified'.

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, •and made plans to arrest Jesus by some trick and have him put to death. •They said, however, 'It must not be during the festivities; there must be no disturbance among the people'.

Ps 2:1-2
Ws 2:12
Jn 11:47-53
Ac 4:25-27

The anointing at Bethany[a]

||Mk 14:3-9
||Jn 12:1-8

Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, when •a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of the most expensive ointment, and poured it on his head as he was at table. •When they saw this, the disciples were indignant; 'Why this waste?' they said. •'This could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.' •Jesus noticed this. 'Why are you upsetting the woman?' he said to them. 'What she has done for me is one of the good works[b] indeed!

x. A word of uncertain meaning; probably to be taken metaphorically: 'he will cut him off', a sort of 'excommunication'. cf. 18:17.

25 a. The bridesmaids (lit. 'virgins') represent Christians waiting for Christ. Even if he is slow to come, they must be watchful, i.e. keep their lamps ready.

b. Add. 'and the bride'.

c. Christians are servants expected by Jesus, their master, to make full use of any gifts he has given them so that his kingdom may grow on earth; they must give an account of this administration. The parable of the pounds, Lk 19:12-27 has a similar form but a rather different moral.

d. The happiness of the heavenly banquet. Mt 8:11+. 'I will trust you with greater things' implies an active sharing with Christ in his reign.

e. The perspective changes: it is now a question of Christ's last coming at the end of the world.

f. Every human being of every period of history. The resurrection of the dead is presupposed though not mentioned. cf. 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:41f.

g. Christ, the Messiah-King, ushers the elect from his own kingdom to that of his Father, 13:43+.

h. Men are judged by their works of mercy (here described in O.T. terms. cf. Is 58:7· Jb 22:6f; Si 7:35f etc.) not by their occasional exploits, cf. 7:22f. In addition to these meritorious acts we find in 10:32f the profession of faith.

26 a. The woman of this episode is Mary the sister of Lazarus (as Jn mentions); the event described in Lk 7:36-50 is not the same.

b. The Jews divided 'good works' into 'almsgiving' and 'charitable deeds'; the latter were reckoned superior and included, among other pious acts, the burial of the dead. The woman therefore, by making provision for Christ's burial has performed a 'work' greater than almsgiving. Jesus seems to suggest, v. 12, that some loving instinct has given her a presentiment of the real significance of her action.

Dt 15:11 You have the poor with you always, but you will not always have me. 11 •When she 12
poured this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. 13
•I tell you solemnly, wherever in all the world this Good News is proclaimed, what she has done will be told also, in remembrance of her.'

||Mk 14:10-11 ||Lk 22:3-6
Judas betrays Jesus

Then one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 14
and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They 15
27:3f Gn 37:28 Zc 11:12 paid him thirty silver pieces,[c] •and from that moment he looked for an 16
opportunity to betray him.

||Mk 14:12-16 ||Lk 22:7-13 *Jn 13:1; 18:28; 19:14*
Preparations for the Passover supper

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread[d] the disciples came to Jesus to 17
say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the passover?' •'Go to so-and-so in the city' he replied 'and say to him, "The Master 18
Jn 2:4+ says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my
disciples." ' •The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover. 19

||Mk 14:17-21 ||Lk 22:14, 21-23 ||Jn 13:21-30
The treachery of Judas foretold

When evening came he was at table with the twelve disciples. 20
•And while they 21
Ps 55:13-14 were eating[e] he said, 'I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me'. •They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, 'Not I, Lord, 22
Ps 41:9 Jn 13:18 surely?' •He answered, 'Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me, 23
will betray me. •The Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he 24
Jb 3:3 Jn 17:12 will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!' •Judas, who was to betray him, asked in his 25
turn, 'Not I, Rabbi, surely?' 'They are your own words' answered Jesus.

||Mk 14:22-25 ||Lk 22:19-20 ||1 Co 11:23-25
The institution of the Eucharist

Jn 6:51-58 Now as they were eating,[f] Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the 26
blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples. 'Take it and eat;' he said 'this is
1 Co 10:16 my body.' •Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it 27
Ex 24:8 Zc 9:11 to them. 'Drink all of you from this,' he said •'for this is my blood, the blood 28
20:28+ Is 53:12 of the[g] covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of
8:11+ sins.[h] •From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink 29
the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.'[i]

||Mk 14:26-31 ||Lk 22:31-34 ||Jn 13:36-38; 16:32
Peter's denial foretold

After psalms had been sung[j] they left for the Mount of Olives. 30
•Then Jesus said 31
to them, 'You will all lose faith in me this night,[k] for the scripture says:
Zc 13:7 *I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered,* •but after my 32
28:7 resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee'. •At this, Peter said, 'Though all 33
lose faith in you, I will never lose faith'. •Jesus answered him, 'I tell you 34
solemnly, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned
26:69-75 me three times'. •Peter said to him, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never 35
disown you'. And all the disciples said the same.

||Mk 14:32-42 ||Lk 22:40-46 ||Jn 18:1
Gethsemane

Jn 12:27-30 Heb 5:7-10 Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane;[l] and he said 36
to his disciples, 'Stay here while I go over there to pray'. •He took Peter and the 37
two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over him, and great distress.
Then he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful to the point of death.[m] Wait here and 38
2 Co 12:8 keep awake with me.' •And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. 39
6:10 'My Father,' he said 'if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it
Jn 4:34; 6:38 Rm 5:19 Ph 2:8 be as you, not I, would have it.'[n] •He came back to the disciples and found them 40
sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'So you had not the strength to keep awake with

me one hour? •You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' •Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: 'My Father,' he said 'if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done!' •And he came again back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. •Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words. •Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, 'You can sleep on now and take your rest.[o] Now the hour has come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. •Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is already close at hand.'

Ps 69:20b
Rm 7:5+ 2 Co 12:8
Heb 10:9
2Co 12:8
Jn 14:30-31

||Mk 14:43-52
||Lk 22:47-53
||Jn 18:2-11

The arrest

He was still speaking when Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. •Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them. 'The one I kiss,' he had said 'he is the man. Take him in charge.' •So he went straight up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi', and kissed him. •Jesus said to him, 'My friend, do what you are here for'.[p] Then they came forward, seized Jesus and took him in charge. •At that, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. •Jesus then said, 'Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. •Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence? •But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?' •It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds, 'Am I a brigand, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple[q] day after day and you never laid hands on me.' •Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away.

Pr 27:6
26:23
Jn 18:36
Lk 24:26-27
Jn 18:20

26 c. Thirty shekels—and not thirty *denarii* as is commonly said. It was the price the Law fixed for a slave's life, Ex 21:32.

d. The 'first day' of the week during which unleavened loaves (azymes) were eaten, cf. Ex 12:1+; 23:14+, was normally that which followed the Passover supper, i.e. the 15th of Nisan; the Synoptics however give this title to the preceding day, thus attesting a wider use of the term. Further, if we take account of Jn 18:28 and of other details connected with the Passion, it seems fairly certain that in this particular year the Passover supper was celebrated on the evening of the Friday (or 'Preparation Day', Mt 27:62; cf. Jn 19:14, 31,42). Christ's Last Supper, which the Synoptics put on the day before, i.e. on the Thursday evening, must therefore be explained in one of two ways: either a whole section of the Jewish people thus anticipated the rite, or (and this is preferable) Christ anticipated it on his own initiative. In this second hypothesis Jesus, unable to celebrate the Passover on the Friday (though, indeed, he celebrated it in his own person on the cross, Jn 19:36+; 1 Co 5:7), instituted his new rite in the course of a supper which, in consequence, became endowed with the characteristics of the old Passover. Nisan 14th (the day of the Passover supper) fell on a Friday in 30 and 33 A.D.; interpreters therefore take one or other of these years as the date of Christ's death according as they assign his baptism to 28 or to 29 and reckon a longer or shorter public ministry. Note: The Dead Sea Scrolls have recently revealed a community which, following a solar calendar, always celebrated the Passover supper on a Tuesday evening. It is possible that Jesus did the same. If so, the Synoptics have fitted into a few hours juridical processes which in fact took days.

e. The first course; it preceded the Passover supper properly so called.

f. They have come to the Passover supper itself. The rubrics for this solemn blessing of bread and wine are laid down exactly; on to this ceremony Jesus grafts the sacramental rites of the new religious order of things which he institutes.

g. Add. (Vulg.) 'new', cf. Lk 22:20; 1 Co 11:25.

h. As at Sinai, the blood of victims sealed the covenant of Yahweh with his people, Ex 24:4-8+, so on the cross the blood of Jesus, the perfect victim, is about to seal the 'new' covenant, cf. Lk 22:20, between God and man—the covenant foretold by the prophets, Jr 31:31+. Jesus takes on himself the task of universal redemption that Isaiah assigns to the 'servant of Yahweh', Is 42:6; 49:6; 53:12, cf. 41:8+. Cf. Heb 8:8; 9:15; 12:24.

i. Allusion to the eschatological banquet, cf. 8:11; 22:1f. Jesus and his disciples will never meet at table again.

j. The psalms of the Hallel, Ps 113-118, with which the Passover meal closed.

k. Lit. 'be brought down'; it will be an obstacle for their faith when they see the one they believe to be Messiah, 16:16, and whose approaching triumph they expect, 20:21f, passively yield to his enemies. For a time it will make them lose courage and even faith, cf. Lk 22:31-32.

l. The name means 'oilpress'. It lies in the Kedron valley at the foot of the Mt. of Olives.

m. The turn of phrase recalls Ps 42:5 and Jon 4:9.

n. Jesus feels the full force of the human fear of death; he feels the instinctive urge to escape, gives expression to it and then stifles it by his acceptance of the Father's will.

o. Gently ironical reproach: The hour you should have stayed awake with me has slipped by. Now the testing-time has begun and Jesus must go through it alone; the disciples may go on sleeping if they wish.

p. Lit. 'Friend, for what you are here'. To a question ('Why are you here?') or a reproach ('For what purpose are you here!') one may prefer to see in this a stereotyped phrase meaning 'do what you are here for', 'to your work!' Jesus cuts short the empty show of greeting; it is time for action. Cf. Jn 13:27.

q. Var. (Vulg.) 'I used to sit among you in the Temple', cf. Mk 14:49.

||Mk 14:53-65 ||Lk 22:54-55,66-71 ||Jn 18:24 ||*Jn 18:15-16,18*

Jesus before the Sanhedrin[r]

The men who had arrested Jesus led him off to Caiaphas the high priest, 57
where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 Peter followed him at
a distance, and when he reached the high priest's palace, he went in and sat down
with the attendants to see what the end would be.

Ps 35:11 Jr 26 Ac 25:7

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against 59
Jesus, however false, on which they might pass the death-sentence. 60 But they could
not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward. Eventually two
stepped forward 61 and made a statement, 'This man said, "I have power to
Jn 2:19 Ac 6:14 destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up" '.[s] 62 The high priest
then stood up and said to him, 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence
27:14 Is 53:7 these men are bringing against you?'[t] 63 But Jesus was silent. And the high priest
4:3+ said to him, 'I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ,
8:20+ the Son of God'. 64 'The words are your own' answered Jesus. 'Moreover, I tell
8:20+; 24:30 Ps 110:1 Dn 7:13 Ac 2:33+; 7:55 you that from this time onward you will see the *Son of Man seated at the right*
hand of the Power and *coming on the clouds of heaven.*'[u] 65 At this, the high priest
tore his clothes and said, 'He has blasphemed.[v] What need of witnesses have
we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. 66 What is your opinion?'
They answered, 'He deserves to die'.

Ws 2:19 Is 50:6; 52:14

Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they 67
struck him, 68 'Play the prophet, Christ! Who hit you then?'

||Mk 14:66-72 ||Lk 22:56-62 ||Jn 18:17, 25-27

Peter's denials

Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came 69
up to him and said, 'You too were with Jesus the Galilean'. 70 But he denied it in
8:10+ front of them all. 'I do not know what you are talking about' he said. 71 When he
went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there,
2:23+ 'This man was with Jesus the Nazarene'.[w] 72 And again, with an oath, he denied
it, 'I do not know the man'. 73 A little later the bystanders came up and said to
Jg 12:6 Peter, 'You are one of them for sure! Why, your accent[x] gives you away.' 74 Then
he started calling down curses on himself and swearing, 'I do not know the man'.
26:34 At that moment the cock crew, 75 and Peter remembered what Jesus had said,
'Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times'. And he went
outside and wept bitterly.

||Mk 15:1 ||Lk 22:66; 23:1

Jesus is taken before Pilate

26:57+ Jn 18:28 Lk 3:1+

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met 1
in council to bring about the death of Jesus. 2 They had him bound, and
led him away to hand him over to Pilate,[a] the governor.

The death of Judas

When he found that Jesus had been condemned, Judas his betrayer was filled 3
26:15 with remorse and took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and elders.
'I have sinned;' he said 'I have betrayed innocent blood.'[b] 'What is that to us?' 4
they replied 'That is your concern.' 5 And flinging down the silver pieces in the
Ac 1:18 sanctuary he made off, and went and hanged himself. 6 The chief priests picked
up the silver pieces and said, 'It is against the Law to put this into the treasury;
it is blood-money'. 7 So they discussed the matter and bought the potter's field
with it as a graveyard for foreigners, 8 and this is why the field is called the Field
of Blood[c] today. 9 The words of the prophet Jeremiah[d] were then fulfilled: *And*
Zc 11:12-13 *they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced*
by children of Israel, 10 *and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord*
directed me.[e]

||Mk 15:2-15 ||Lk 23:2-5, 13-25 ||Jn 18:28-40; 19:4-16

Jesus before Pilate

Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to him 11

this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say 27:29
12 it'.[f] •But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to Ws 2:19
13 answer at all. •Pilate then said to him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they
14 have brought against you?' •But to the governor's complete amazement, he 26:63 Is 53:7
offered no reply to any of the charges.

15 At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the Jn 18:39
16 people, anyone they chose. •Now there was[g] at that time a notorious prisoner
17 whose name was Barabbas.[h] •So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them,
'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called
18 Christ?' •For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.
19 Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message,
'Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had
about him'.

20 The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand
21 the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. •So when the governor spoke
and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they
22 said, 'Barabbas'. •'But in that case,' Pilate said to them 'what am I to do with Jesus
23 who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' •'Why?' he asked 'What
harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!'
24 Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was
imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands[i] in front of the crowd and
25 said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood.[j] It is your concern.' •And the people, Ac 18:6
26 to a man, shouted back, 'His blood be on us and on our children!'[k] •Then he 23:35 Ac 5:28
released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged[l] and then
handed over to be crucified.

Jesus is crowned with thorns

||Mk 15:16-20 ||Jn 19:1-3

27 The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium[m] and
28 collected the whole cohort round him. •Then they stripped him and made

r. The accounts of Luke and of John enable us to distinguish: a preliminary trial before Annas, at night time, and a solemn session of the Sanhedrin on the following morning, Mt 27:1. Matthew and Mark describe the night episode in terms of the morning one which was the only formal and decisive meeting. But for an alternative chronology, cf. 26:17+.

s. What Jesus had in fact foretold was the destruction of the Temple and of the Jewish cult of which it was the symbol, ch. 24. A new temple was to be substituted for the old one, and this was to be, in the first place, his own body risen after three days, 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Jn 2:19-22, but beyond that, it was to be the Church, 16:18.

t. Vulg. presents this as one question 'Do you make no answer to the evidence these men are bringing against you?'

u. 'The Power' is equivalent to 'Yahweh'. At this critical moment Jesus abandons his policy of the 'messianic secret', cf. Mk 1:34+, and unequivocally acknowledges—as he had already acknowledged to his intimates, Mt 16:16—that he is the Messiah. But he goes further and reveals himself not as the human Messiah of traditional expectation but as the Lord of Ps 110, cf. Mt 22:41f, and the mysterious personage of heavenly origin whom Daniel had seen in vision, cf. Mt 8:20+. Henceforth the Jews will not see him except in his glory which will be manifested first in the victory of the resurrection and subsequently in the victory of the Church. Cf. 23:39 and 24:30.

v. The 'blasphemy' lay not in Jesus' claim to be Messiah but in his claim to divine rank.

w. Nazoraios; var. (cf. Vulg.) Nazarenos.

x. The Galilean accent.

27 a. Var. 'Pontius Pilate'. Cf. Lk 3:1+. In Judaea, as in all the provinces of the Empire, Rome reserved to itself power of life and death; the Jews had to approach this magistrate for confirmation and execution of the sentence they had pronounced.

b. Var. 'righteous blood', cf. 23:35.

c. In Aramaic Hakeldama (cf. Ac 1:19 and Vulg. in this place). A 4th century tradition, probably reliable, locates it in the Valley of Gehinnom.

d. Om. 'Jeremiah'. Actually this is a free quotation from Zc 11:12-13 combined with the idea of the purchase of a field, an idea suggested by Jr 32:6-15. This, plus the fact that Jeremiah speaks of potters (18:2f) who lived in the Hakeldama district (19:1f), explains how the whole text could by approximation be attributed to Jeremiah.

e. Yahweh complained that, in the person of his prophet Zechariah, he had received from the Israelites a wage that was nothing but an insult. The sale of Jesus for the same paltry sum appeals to Matthew as a fulfilment of this oracle of the prophet.

f. By these words Jesus acknowledges as correct, at least in a sense, what he would never have said on his own initiative. See above 26:25,64; and cf. Jn 18:33-37+.

g. Vulg. 'he had'.

h. Here and in v. 17, var. 'Jesus Barabbas', which would give peculiar point to Pilate's question but appears to have its origin in an apocryphal tradition.

i. The significance of this gesture must have been well understood by the Jews, cf. Dt 21:6f; Ps 26:6; 73:13.

j. Var. 'of the blood of this just man'.

k. Traditional O.T. phrase, 2 S 1:16; 3:29, cf. Ac 18:6, by which they accept responsibility for the death they demand.

l. In Roman practice the normal prelude to crucifixion.

m. The Praetorium, or residence of the praetor, was probably the former palace of King Herod the Great in which the procurator used to reside whenever he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. This palace,

Is 52:14 him wear a scarlet cloak,[n] •and having twisted some thorns into a crown they 29
put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they
27:11 Is 50:6 knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' •And they spat on him and took 30
the reed and struck him on the head with it. •And when they had finished making 31
fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led
him away to crucify him.

||Mk 15:21-27 ||Lk 23:26-34,38 ||Jn 19:17-24 **The crucifixion**

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, 32
and enlisted him to carry his cross. •When they had reached a place called 33
Ps 69:21 Pr 31:6 Golgotha,[o] that is, the place of the skull, •they gave him wine to drink mixed 34
with gall,[p] which he tasted but refused to drink. •When they had finished 35
Ps 22:18 crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots,[q] •and then sat down 36
and stayed there keeping guard over him.

Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, 37
Is 53:9,12 Lk 22:37 the King of the Jews'. •At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, 38
one on the right and one on the left.

||Mk 15:29-32 ||Lk 23:35-37 **The crucified Christ is mocked**

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads •and said, 'So you 39 40
Ps 22:7 Jr 18:16 Lm 2:15 26:61 would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If
you are God's son, come down from the cross!' •The chief priests with the 41
scribes and elders mocked him in the same way. •'He saved others;' they said 42
'he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the
Ps 22:8 Ws 2:18-20 cross now, and we will believe in him. •He puts his trust in God; now let God 43
4:3+ rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am the son of God".' •Even the 44
robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

||Mk 15:33-41 ||Lk 23:44-49 **The death of Jesus**

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.[r] 45
And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabach- 46
Ps 22:1 thani?' that is, '*My God, my God, why have you deserted me?*'[s] •When some of 47
those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah',[t]
||Lk 23:36 ||Jn 19:29 and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar[u] and, 48
Ps 69:21 putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. •'Wait!' said the rest of them 'and 49
see if Elijah will come to save him.' •But Jesus, again crying out in a loud 50
voice, yielded up his spirit.

Heb 6:19 At that, the veil of the Temple[v] was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth 51
1 P 3:19+ quaked; the rocks were split;[w] •the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men 52
rose from the dead, •and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, 53
entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. •Meanwhile the centur- 54
ion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that
4:3+ Mk 15:39+ Lk 8:2-3 Jn 19:25 was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this was a son of God.'

And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same 55
13:55 women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him. •Among 56
them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the
mother of Zebedee's sons.

||Mk 15:42-47 ||Lk 23:50-55 ||Jn 19:38-42 **The burial**

When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, 57
who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. •This man went to Pilate and asked 58
for the body of Jesus. Pilate thereupon ordered it to be handed over. •So Joseph 59
Is 53:9+ took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud •and put it in his own new tomb 60
which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance
of the tomb and went away. •Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were 61
there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

The guard at the tomb

62 Next day, that is, when Preparation Day[z] was over, the chief priests and the
63 Pharisees went in a body to Pilate •and said to him, 'Your Excellency, we
recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, "After three days I shall 16:21 Jn 7:12
64 rise again". •Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the Ac 10:40+
third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people,
"He has risen from the dead". This last piece of fraud would be worse than what
65 went before.' •'You may have your guard'[y] said Pilate to them. 'Go and make
66 all as secure as you know how.' •So they went and made the sepulchre secure,
putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard.

The empty tomb. The angel's message

||Mk 16:1-8 ||Lk 24:1-10

1 **28** After the sabbath,[a] and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Jn 20:1
2 Magdala and the other Mary[b] went to visit the sepulchre. •And all at once 1 Co 16:2
there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from 1:20+
3 heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. •His face was like lightning, 17:2
4 his robe white as snow. •The guards were so shaken, so frightened of him, that
5 they were like dead men. •But the angel spoke; and he said to the women,
'There is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was
6 crucified. •He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would. Come and see
7 the place where he[c] lay, •then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has risen
from the dead and now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will 26:32 Jn 21:1
8 see him". Now I have told you.' •Filled with awe and great joy the women came
quickly away from the tomb[d] and ran to tell the disciples.

Appearance to the women

Jn 20:14f

9 And there, coming to meet them, was Jesus. 'Greetings' he said. And the
10 women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. •Then Lk 24:9-10 Jn 20:1
Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave Ac 1:3 1 Co 15:4
for Galilee; they will see me there'.[e]

situated in the W. quarter of the city, was not the family residence of the Hasmonaeans; this was near the Temple and in it Herod Antipas probably received Jesus, sent to him by Pilate, Lk 23:7-12. Some commentators think that the Praetorium was in the fortress called Antonia, to the N. of the Temple.

n. The Roman soldier's cloak *(sagum)*; being red it suggested the imperial purple to the mocking soldiery.

o. Approximate transliteration of the Aramaic word *Gulgoltha*, 'a place of the skull', in Lat. *Calvaria* (whence 'Calvary').

p. A narcotic which sympathetic Jewish women (cf. Lk 23:27f) used to offer the condemned to diminish their sufferings. The wine was mixed with 'myrrh' (cf. Mk 15:23) rather than with 'gall'. The 'gall' in Mt (like the correction of 'wine' to 'vinegar' in the Antiochene recension) is due to a reminiscence of Ps 69:21. Jesus refuses the palliative.

q. Add. 'that the saying of the prophet might be fulfilled: they divided my garments between them and for my robe they cast lots' (Ps 22:18), a gloss taken from Jn 19:24.

r. From noon to three in the afternoon.

s. A cry of real distress but not of despair: this lament which Jesus takes from the scriptures is a prayer to God and is followed in the Psalm by an expression of joyful confidence in final victory.

t. Malicious play on words based on the expectation of Elijah as the Messiah's precursor, cf. 17:10-13+.

u. Sour drink of the Roman soldier. Probably the gesture was sympathetic, cf. Jn 19:28f; the Synoptics regard it as malevolent (Lk 23:36) and describe it in terms that recall Ps 69:21.

v. Either the curtain which hung in front of the Holy Place or, more probably, the one which divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, cf. Ex 26:31f. Following Heb 9:12; 10:20, Christian tradition saw in this tearing of the veil the abrogation of the old Mosaic cult and the way opened up by Christ into the messianic sanctuary.

w. These remarkable phenomena, like the darkness mentioned in v. 45, were foretold by the prophets as unmistakable signs of the 'day of Yahweh', cf. Am 8:9+.

x. Greek *paraskeué* ('preparation') meaning Friday, i.e. the day when preparations were made for the sabbath.

y. Lit. 'You have a guard', i.e. I now put one at your disposal.

28 a. And not 'On the sabbath evening' (Vulg.). Since the sabbath was the day of rest, the 'first day of the (Jewish) week' corresponds to our Sunday (Rv 1:10), *dies dominica*, or the 'day of the Lord' so named in memory of the resurrection. Cf. Ac 20:7+; 1 Co 16:2.

b. 'Mary of James', Mk 16:1; Lk 24:10; cf. Mt 27:56 and 61.

c. 'he'; var. 'the Lord'.

d. Var. 'came quickly out of the tomb', cf. Mk 16:8.

e. Though they agree in recording the initial apparition of the angel (or angels) to the women (Mt 28:5-7; Mk 16:5-7; Lk 24:5-7; Jn 20:12-13), the four gospels show divergencies when it comes to the appearances of Christ. Setting Mark aside (his abrupt conclusion presents a special problem, cf. Mk 16:8+, and his 'longer ending' recapitulates the data of the other gospels) all the gospels make a clear distinction, both literary and doctrinal, between: 1. Appearances to individuals that help to prove the fact of the resurrection; to Mary Magdalen, either alone (Jn 20:14-17; cf. Mk 16:9), or accompanied (Mt 28:9-10); to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-32; cf. Mk 16:12), to Simon (Lk 24:34), to Thomas (Jn 20:26-29). 2. A collective

Precautions taken by the leaders of the people

While they were on their way, some of the guard went off into the city to tell 11
the chief priests all that had happened. •These held a meeting with the elders 12
and, after some discussion, handed a considerable sum of money to the soldiers
with these instructions, 'This is what you must say, "His disciples came during 13
the night and stole him away while we were asleep". •And should the governor 14
come to hear of this, we undertake to put things right with him ourselves and
to see that you do not get into trouble.' •The soldiers took the money and carried 15
out their instructions, and to this day that is the story among the Jews.

Appearance in Galilee. The mission to the world

Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where 16
Jesus had arranged to meet them. •When they saw him they fell down before 17
8:10+ Lk 24:9-10 *Jn 3:35+* him, though some hesitated.[f] •Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All 18
authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. •Go, therefore, make 19
Mk 16:15-16 Lk 24:47 *Ac 1:8+; 2:38+; 18:20* Ps 125:2 Jn 14:18-21 disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Spirit,[g] •and teach them to observe all the commands I 20
gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

appearance that is coupled with an apostolic mission (Mt 28:16-20; Lk 24:36-49; Jn 20:19-23; cf. Mk 16:14-18). As well as this distinction there are two traditions as to where the appearances took place: 1. all in Galilee (Mk 16:7; Mt 28:10,16-20); 2. all in Judaea (Lk and Jn 20). By way of appendix, Jn 21 adds an appearance in Galilee which though it bears the character of an appearance to individuals (it is for Peter and John predominantly) is nevertheless coupled with an apostolic mission (given to Peter). The primitive apostolic preaching that Paul reproduces in 1 Co 15:3-7 lists 5 appearances (apart from the appearance to Paul himself) which are not easily harmonised with the gospel accounts; in particular he mentions an appearance to James of which the *Gospel to the Hebrews* also speaks. All this gives the impression that different groups, which cannot now be easily identified, have given rise to different strands of tradition. But these very divergencies of tradition are far better witnesses than any artificial or contrived uniformity to the antiquity of the evidence and the historical quality of all these manifestations of the risen Christ.

28 f. An alternative translation, with less grammatical support: 'those who had hesitated'. On the doubts Mt mentions here cf. Mk 16:11,14; Lk 24:11,41; Jn 20:24-29.

g. It may be that this formula, so far as the fulness of its expression is concerned, is a reflection of the liturgical usage established later in the primitive community. It will be remembered that Ac speaks of baptising 'in the name of Jesus', cf. Ac 1:5+. But whatever the variation in formula, the underlying reality remains the same.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

I. PRELUDE TO THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS

The preaching of John the Baptist

||Mt 3:1-12
||Lk 3:3-17

1 2 **1** The beginning of the Good News[a] about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.[b] •It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: 10:29 Lk 1:19

> *Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;* Mt 3:1
> *he will prepare your way.*
> 3 *A voice cries in the wilderness:* Is 40:3 Jn 1:23
> *Prepare a way for the Lord,*
> *make his paths straight,*

4 and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming[c]
5 a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. •All Judaea and all the people Mt 3:6+
of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river
6 Jordan they confessed their sins. •John wore a garment of camel-skin,[d] and
7 he lived on locusts and wild honey. •In the course of his preaching he said, Jn 1:27
'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am
8 not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. •I have baptised you
with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.' Jn 1:26,33 Ac 1:5; 11:16

Jesus is baptised

Mt 3:13-17
||Lk 3:21-22

9 It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised
10 in the Jordan by John. •No sooner had he come up out of the water than he
saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. Jn 1:32-34
11 And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests
on you'.

Temptation in the wilderness

||Mt 4:1-11
||Lk 4:1-13

12 13 Immediately afterwards the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness •and he
remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild Jb 1:6+
beasts, and the angels looked after him.

II. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

Jesus begins to preach

||Mt 4:12-17
||Lk 4:14-15

14 After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed
15 the Good News from God. •'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of Rm 1:1 Ep 1:10 *Mt 3:2+*; 8:10+
God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

1 **a.** Good News, Old English 'god-spel', Greek *euaggellion*, hence Lat. *evangelium*. The word is used in the N.T. to mean, not a book, but the Good News of salvation, Jesus himself being both its messenger and its message.

b. Om. 'Son of God'.

c. Var. 'John appeared, baptising in the wilderness and proclaiming...'

d. Var. 'John wore a garment of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist', cf. Mt 3:4.

||Mt 4:18-22 ||Lk 5:1-11 **The first four disciples are called**

As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother 16
Andrew casting a net in the lake — for they were fishermen. •And Jesus said to 17
them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men'. •And at once they 18
left their nets and followed him.

Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; 19
they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once •and, 20
leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went
after him.

||Lk 4:31-37 **Jesus teaches in Capernaum and cures a demoniac**

They went as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the sabbath came he went 21
||Mt 7:28f to the synagogue and began to teach. •And his teaching made a deep impression 22
on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

In their synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit, 23
Mt 8:29+ *Mt 2:23+* and it shouted, •'What do you want with us,[e] Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come[f] 24
Ac 3:14+ to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.'[g] •But Jesus said 25
Mk 1:34+ sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' •And the unclean spirit threw the man into 26
convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. •The people were so astonished 27
that they started asking each other what it all meant. 'Here is a teaching that is
4:41 new' they said 'and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean
spirits[h] and they obey him.' •And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, 28
through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.

||Mt 8:14-15 ||Lk 4:38-39 **Cure of Simon's mother-in-law**

7:24; 13:3 On leaving the synagogue, he went with James and John straight to the house 29
of Simon and Andrew. •Now Simon's mother-in-law had gone to bed with fever, 30
and they told him about her straightaway. •He went to her, took her by the hand 31
and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to wait on them.

||Mt 8:16 ||Lk 4:40-41 **A number of cures**

That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those 32
who were possessed by devils. •The whole town came crowding round the door, 33
3:12; 9:30 Mt 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 17:9 Lk 5:14; 8:56; 9:21 and he cured many who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another; 34
he also cast out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they
knew who he was.[i]

||Lk 4:42-44 **Jesus quietly leaves Capernaum and travels through Galilee**

Mt 14:23p; 26:36p Lk 3:21+ In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went 35
off to a lonely place and prayed there. •Simon and his companions set out in 36
search of him, •and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for 37
you'. •He answered, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, 38
Lk 4:44 Jn 18:37 ||*Mt 4:23* Lk 4:14-15; ||8:1 so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came'.[j] •And he went all 39
through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.

||Mt 8:2-4 ||Lk 5:12-16 **Cure of a leper**

A leper came to him and pleaded on his knees: 'If you want to' he said 'you 40
5:30+ can cure me'. •Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched 41
him. 'Of course I want to!' he said. 'Be cured!' •And the leprosy left him at once 42
and he was cured. •Jesus immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, 43
1:34+ Lk 17:14 Lv 14:1-32 'Mind you say nothing to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest, and 44
make the offering for your healing prescribed by Moses as evidence of your
recovery'. •The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and 45
telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town,
but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived. Even so, people from
all around would come to him.

Cure of a paralytic

||Mt 9:1-8
||Lk 5:17-26

2 When he returned to Capernaum some time later, word went round that he was back; •and so many people collected that there was no room left, even 3:20; 6:31
in front of the door. He was preaching the word to them •when some people
came bringing him a paralytic carried by four men, •but as the crowd made
it impossible to get the man to him, they stripped the roof over the place where
Jesus was; and when they had made an opening, they lowered the stretcher on
which the paralytic lay. •Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'My child, Mt 8:10+
your sins are forgiven'. •Now some scribes were sitting there, and they thought
to themselves, •'How can this man talk like that? He is blaspheming. Who can
forgive sins but God?' •Jesus, inwardly aware that this was what they were
thinking, said to them, 'Why do you have these thoughts in your hearts?
Which of these is easier: to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven" or to
say, "Get up, pick up your stretcher and walk"? •But to prove to you that the
Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,'—•he said to the paralytic—
'I order you: get up, pick up your stretcher, and go off home.' •And the man
got up, picked up his stretcher at once and walked out in front of everyone, so
that they were all astounded and praised God saying, 'We have never seen Mt 9:33
anything like this'.

The call of Levi

||Mt 9:9
||Lk 5:27-28

He went out again to the shore of the lake;[a] and all the people came to him, 4:1
and he taught them. •As he was walking on he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus,
sitting by the customs house, and he said to him, 'Follow me'. And he got up and
followed him.

Eating with sinners

||Mt 9:10-13
||Lk 5:29-32

When Jesus was at dinner in his house, a number of tax collectors and sinners 7:24
were also sitting at the table with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many of
them among his followers. •When the scribes of the Pharisee party saw him eating
with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with
tax collectors and sinners?' •When Jesus heard this he said to them, 'It is not the
healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. I did not come to call the virtuous,
but sinners.'

A discussion on fasting

||Mt 9:14-17
||Lk 5:33-39

One day when John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, some people
came and said to him, 'Why is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the
Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?' •Jesus replied, 'Surely the bridegroom's
attendants would never think of fasting while the bridegroom is still with them?
As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they could not think of fasting.
But the time will come for the bridegroom to be taken away from them, and then,
on that day, they will fast. •No one sews a piece of unshrunken cloth on an old
cloak; if he does, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and the tear

e. Lit. 'What is there to us and to you?' cf. Jn 2:4+.

f. Var. 'You have come'.

g. God is the 'Holy One' par excellence, and all that belongs to him is holy, Lv 17:1+; this is pre-eminently true of Jesus who is God's Son and his chosen Messiah, 1:10f, the appointed head of 'the nation of saints', Dn 7:18+, i.e. of the company of the elect, the Christian community, Ac 9:13+. Cf. Lk 1:35; 4:34; Jn 6:69; Ac 3:14+; 4:27, 30; Rv 3:7.

h. Or punctuate 'Here is a teaching that is new; with authority he gives orders even to unclean spirits'.

i. Jesus forbids the news that he is the Messiah to be spread by the devils, 1:25, 34; 3:12, by those he cured, 1:44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26, even by the apostles, 8:30; 9:9. The silence is not to be broken till after his death, Mt 10:27+. Since the prevailing idea of the Messiah was nationalistic and warlike, in sharp contrast with his own ideal, Jesus had to be very careful, at least on Israelite soil, cf. 5:19, to avoid giving a false and dangerous impression of his mission, cf. Jn 6:15; Mt 13:13+. This policy of silence ('the messianic secret') is not an invention of Mk's, as some have claimed, but is in fact Christ's own, though Mk has given it special emphasis. With the exception of Mt 9:30, Mt and Lk record the injunction to silence only in passages which are parallel with Mk, frequently omitting it even in these cases.

j. Lit. 'came out' i.e. from Capernaum, v. 35. This is the primary sense, but it is possible that another lies behind it, namely, the 'coming forth' of Jesus from God, Jn 8:42; 13:3; 16:27f, 30. Cf. Lk 4:43.

2 a. The 'Sea of Galilee' ('Lake of Tiberias').

gets worse. •And nobody puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine 22
will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins too. No! New wine, fresh
skins!'

||Mt 12:1-8 ||Lk 6:1-5 **Picking corn on the sabbath**

One sabbath day he happened to be taking a walk through the cornfields, and 23
his disciples began to pick ears of corn as they went along. •And the Pharisees 24
said to him, 'Look, why are they doing something on the sabbath day that is
forbidden?' •And he replied, 'Did you never read what David did in his time of 25
1 S 21:2-7 need when he and his followers were hungry—•how he went into the house of 26
Lv 24:5-9 God when Abiathar[b] was high priest, and ate the loaves of offering which only
the priests are allowed to eat, and how he also gave some to the men with him?'
Dt 5:14 2 M 5:19 And he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the 27
sabbath; •so the Son of Man is master even of the sabbath'. 28

||Mt 12:9-14 ||Lk 6:6-11 **Cure of the man with a withered hand**

3 He went again into a synagogue, and there was a man there who had a withered 1
hand. •And they were watching him to see if he would cure him on the sabbath 2
day, hoping for something to use against him. •He said to the man with the 3
withered hand, 'Stand up out in the middle!' •Then he said to them, 'Is it 4
against the law on the sabbath day to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to
Lk 14:4 Ep 4:18 kill?' But they said nothing. •Then, grieved to find them so obstinate, he looked 5
angrily round at them, and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand'. He stretched
it out and his hand was better. •The Pharisees went out and at once began to 6
plot with the Herodians[a] against him, discussing how to destroy him.

||Lk 6:17-19 **The crowds follow Jesus**

||Mt 4:23,25; 12:15-16 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lakeside, and great crowds from 7
Galilee followed him. From Judaea,[b] •Jerusalem, Idumaea, Transjordania and 8
the region of Tyre and Sidon, great numbers who had heard of all he was doing
came to him. •And he asked his disciples to have a boat ready for him because 9
of the crowd, to keep him from being crushed. •For he had cured so many that all 10
5:30+ who were afflicted in any way were crowding forward to touch him. •And the 11
Mt 8:29+ ||Lk 4:41 *1:34+* ||Mt 12:16 unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, would fall down before him and shout,
'You are the Son of God!' •But he warned them strongly not to make him known. 12

||Mt 10:1-4 ||Lk 6:12-16 **The appointment of the Twelve**

He now went up into the hills and summoned those he wanted. So they came 13
=6:7 to him •and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent 14
Mt 10:2-5 out to preach, •with power to cast out devils. •And so he appointed the Twelve: 15 16
Mt 16:18+ Jn 1:42 Simon to whom he gave the name Peter, •James the son of Zebedee and John 17
Lk 9:54 the brother of James, to whom he gave the name Boanerges or 'Sons of Thunder';
then Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of 18
Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot •and Judas Iscariot, the man who 19
was to betray him.[c]

His relatives are concerned about Jesus

2:2; 6:31 He went home again, and once more such a crowd collected that they could 20
not even have a meal. •When his relatives heard of this, they set out to take 21
Jn 10:20 charge of him, convinced[d] he was out of his mind.

||Mt 12:24-32 ||Lk 11:15-23 **Allegations of the scribes**

The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying, 'Beelzebul is 22
in him' and, 'It is through the prince of devils that he casts devils out'. •So he called 23
them to him and spoke to them in parables, 'How can Satan cast out Satan?
If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot last. •And if 24 25

26 a household is divided against itself, that household can never stand. •Now if
Satan has rebelled against himself and is divided, he cannot stand either—it is
27 the end of him. •But no one can make his way into a strong man's house and
burgle his property unless he has tied up the strong man first. Only then can he
burgle his house.
28 'I tell you solemnly, all men's sins will be forgiven, and all their
29 blasphemies; •but let anyone blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and he will never Lk 12:10
30 have forgiveness: he is guilty of an eternal sin.' •This was because they were
saying, 'An unclean spirit is in him'.

The true kinsmen of Jesus

||Mt 12:46-50
||Lk 8:19-21

31 His mother and brothers now arrived and, standing outside, sent in a message
32 asking for him. •A crowd was sitting round him at the time the message was passed
to him, 'Your mother and brothers and sisters are outside asking for you'.
33
34 He replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' •And looking round at
those sitting in a circle about him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers.
35 Anyone who does the will of God, that person is my brother and sister and
mother.'

Parable of the sower

||Mt 13:1-9
||Lk 8:4-8

1 4 Again he began to teach by the lakeside, but such a huge crowd gathered 2:13
round him that he got into a boat on the lake and sat there. The people were Lk 5:1,3
2 all along the shore, at the water's edge. •He taught them many things in parables,
3 and in the course of his teaching he said to them, •'Listen! Imagine a sower
4 going out to sow. •Now it happened that, as he sowed, some of the seed fell on
5 the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate it up. •Some seed fell on rocky
ground where it found little soil and sprang up straightaway, because there was
6 no depth of earth; •and when the sun came up it was scorched and, not having
7 any roots, it withered away. •Some seed fell into thorns, and the thorns
8 grew up and choked it, and it produced no crop. •And some seeds fell into rich
soil and, growing tall and strong, produced crop;[a] and yielded thirty, sixty,
9 even a hundredfold.' •And he said, 'Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!'

Why Jesus speaks in parables

||Mt13:10-15
||Lk 8:9-10

10 When he was alone, the Twelve, together with the others who formed his 7:17
11 company, asked what the parables meant. •He told them, 'The secret of the Rm 16:25
kingdom of God is given to you, but to those who are outside everything comes Col 4:3,5
12 in parables, •so that[b] *they may see and see again, but not perceive; may hear and* Is 6:9-10+
hear again, but not understand; otherwise they might be converted and be forgiven'.

The parable of the sower explained

||Mt 13:18-23
||Lk 8:11-15

13 He said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you Jn 12:16
14
15 understand any of the parables?[c] •What the sower is sowing is the word. •Those
on the edge of the path where the word is sown are people who have no sooner

b. The high priest of 1S 21:1-7 was in fact Ahimelech. Either his son Abiathar is named here because, as high priest in David's reign, 2S 20:25, he was the better known, or else Mk is following a different tradition according to which Abiathar was Ahimelech's father (2 S 8:17 Hebr.).

3 a. The term signifies not officials of the court of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, cf. Lk 3:1+, but politically minded Jews actively supporting his dynasty and enjoying his favour.

b. Punctuation uncertain. 'From Judaea ... Sidon' may be read with what precedes or with what follows.

c. Here Mk omits the discourse of Mt 5-7 and Lk 6:20-49, evidently assuming that his readers would be interested more in what Christ was and did than in the minutiae of his teaching with regard to the Jewish Law.

d. Lit. 'because they said'. Others translate 'because it was told (them)'.

4 a. Var. (Vulg.) 'produced its crop which grew tall and strong'.

b. The conjunction (Mt avoids it) is equivalent to 'in order that the scripture might be fulfilled that says...'

c. The apostles' incomprehension of Christ's works and words is a favourite theme of Mk: 6:52; 7:18; 8:17-18,21,33; 9:10,32; 10:38. With the exception of certain parallel places (Mt 15:16; 16:9,23; 20:22; Lk 9:45) and of Lk 18:34; 24:25,45, Mt and Lk often pass such remarks over in silence, or even emend them: compare Mt 14:33 with Mk 6:51-52, and see Mt 13:51. Cf. Jn 14:26+.

heard it than Satan comes and carries away the word that was sown in them.
Similarly, those who receive the seed on patches of rock are people who, when 16
first they hear the word, welcome it at once with joy. •But they have no root 17
in them, they do not last; should some trial come, or some persecution on
account of the word, they fall away at once. •Then there are others who receive 18
the seed in thorns. These have heard the word, •but the worries of this world, 19
the lure of riches and all the other passions come in to choke the word, and so
it produces nothing. •And there are those who have received the seed in rich 20
soil: they hear the word and accept it and yield a harvest, thirty and sixty and a
hundredfold.'

‖Lk 8:16-17 **Parable of the lamp**

‖Mt 5:15 ‖Lk 11:33 He also said to them, 'Would you bring in a lamp to put it under a tub or 21
under the bed? Surely you will put it on the lamp-stand? •For there is nothing 22
‖Mt 10:26 ‖Lk 12:2 hidden but it must be disclosed, nothing kept secret except to be brought to light.
If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to this.' 23

‖Lk 6:38 **Parable of the measure**

‖Mt 7:2 He also said to them, 'Take notice of what you are hearing. The amount you 24
‖Mt 13:12 ‖Lk 8:18; 19:26 measure out is the amount you will be given—and more besides; •for the man 25
who has will be given more; from the man who has not, even what he has will be
taken away.'[a]

Parable of the seed growing by itself

Jm 5:7 He also said, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on 26
the land. •Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting 27
and growing; how, he does not know. •Of its own accord the land produces first 28
the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. •And when the crop is ready, 29
Jl 4:13 Rv 14:15-16 he loses no time: he starts to reap because the harvest has come.'[e]

‖Mt 13:31-32 ‖Lk 13:18-19 **Parable of the mustard seed**

He also said, 'What can we say the kingdom of God is like? What parable can 30
we find for it? •It is like a mustard seed which at the time of its sowing in the 31
soil is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; •yet once it is sown it grows into the 32
Dn 4:9.18 biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air
can shelter in its shade.'

‖Mt 13:34-35 **The use of parables**

Using many parables like these, he spoke the word to them, so far as they were 33
capable of understanding it. •He would not speak to them except in parables, 34
but he explained everything to his disciples when they were alone.

‖Mt 8:18, 23-27 ‖Lk 8:22-25 **The calming of the storm**

With the coming of evening that same day, he said to them, 'Let us cross over 35
to the other side'. •And leaving the crowd behind they took him, just as he was, 36
in the boat; and there were other boats with him. •Then it began to blow a gale 37
and the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was almost swamped. •But 38
he was in the stern, his head on the cushion, asleep. •They woke him and said 39
to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are going down!' And he woke up and
rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' And the wind
dropped, and all was calm again. •Then he said to them, 'Why are you so 40
Mt 8:10+ frightened? How is it that you have no faith?'[f] •They were filled with awe and said 41
1:27 to one another, 'Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.'

‖Mt 8:28-34 ‖Lk 8:26-39 **The Gerasene demoniac**

5 They reached the country of the Gerasenes[a] on the other side of the lake, •and ½
no sooner had he left the boat than a man with an unclean spirit came out

3 from the tombs towards him. •The man lived in the tombs and no one could
4 secure him any more, even with a chain; •because he had often been secured
with fetters and chains but had snapped the chains and broken the fetters, and no
5 one had the strength to control him. •All night and all day, among the tombs
6 and in the mountains, he would howl and gash himself with stones. •Catching
7 sight of Jesus from a distance, he ran up and fell at his feet •and shouted at the
top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, son of the Most High God?
8 Swear by God you will not torture me!'•—For Jesus had been saying to him,
9 'Come out of the man, unclean spirit'. •'What is your name?' Jesus asked. 'My
10 name is legion,' he answered 'for there are many of us.' •And he begged him Mt 12:45 Lk 8:2; 11:26
11 earnestly not to send them out of the district. •Now there was there on the
12 mountainside a great herd of pigs feeding, •and the unclean spirits begged
13 him, 'Send us to the pigs, let us go into them'. •So he gave them leave. With that,
the unclean spirits came out and went into the pigs, and the herd of about two
thousand pigs charged down the cliff into the lake, and there they were drowned.
14 The swineherds ran off and told their story in the town and in the country round
15 about; and the people came to see what had really happened. •They came to
Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his full senses—the very
16 man who had had the legion in him before—and they were afraid. •And those
who had witnessed it reported what had happened to the demoniac and what had
17 become of the pigs. •Then they began to implore Jesus to leave the neighbourhood.
18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed begged to be
19 allowed to stay with him. •Jesus would not let him but said to him, 'Go home 1:34+
to your people and tell them all that the Lord in his mercy has done for you'.
20 So the man went off and proceeded to spread throughout the Decapolis all that Mt 4:25+
Jesus had done for him. And everyone was amazed.

Cure of the woman with a haemorrhage. The daughter of Jairus raised to life ‖Mt 9:18-26 ‖Lk 8:40-56

21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd 2:13
22 gathered round him and he stayed by the lakeside. •Then one of the synagogue
23 officials came up, Jairus by name, and seeing him, fell at his feet •and pleaded
with him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter is desperately sick. Do come and
24 lay your hands on her to make her better and save her life.' •Jesus went with him
and a large crowd followed him; they were pressing all round him.
25 Now there was a woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for
26 twelve years; •after long and painful treatment under various doctors, she had Tb 2:10
spent all she had without being any the better for it, in fact, she was getting
27 worse. •She had heard about Jesus, and she came up behind him through the crowd 6:56
28 and touched his cloak. •'If I can touch even his clothes,' she had told herself
29 'I shall be well again.' •And the source of the bleeding dried up instantly, and she
30 felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint. •Immediately aware that
power had gone out from him,[b] Jesus turned round in the crowd and said, 'Who
31 touched my clothes?' •His disciples said to him, 'You see how the crowd is
32 pressing round you and yet you say, "Who touched me?" ' •But he continued
33 to look all round to see who had done it. •Then the woman came forward,
frightened and trembling[c] because she knew what had happened to her, and she
34 fell at his feet and told him the whole truth. •'My daughter,' he said 'your faith Mt 8:10+
has restored you to health; go in peace and be free from your complaint.'
35 While he was still speaking some people arrived from the house of the
synagogue official to say, 'Your daughter is dead: why put the Master to any

d. Two proverbs (vv. 24f) are here used to illustrate the attitude required of those who would listen to Christ's word.

e. The kingdom will achieve its full development in virtue of its own hidden, intrinsic power.

f. Var. 'Have you no faith yet?'

§ a. Var. 'Gadarenes', cf. Mt, or 'Gergesenes'.

b. This power is regarded as a physical emanation that heals, cf. Lk 6:19, by contact: cf. Mk 1:41; 3:10; 6:56; 8:22.

c. Not only from a sense of shame but also because the complaint involved legal impurity, Lv 15:25.

further trouble?' •But Jesus had overheard this remark of theirs and he said to 36
Mt 8:10+ the official, 'Do not be afraid; only have faith'. •And he allowed no one to go 37
with him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.[d] •So they came 38
to the official's house and Jesus noticed all the commotion, with people weeping
and wailing unrestrainedly. •He went in and said to them, 'Why all this 39
Ac 20:10 commotion and crying? The child is not dead, but asleep.' •But they laughed 40
Ac 9:40 at him. So he turned them all out and, taking with him the child's father and
mother and his own companions, he went into the place where the child lay.
And taking the child by the hand he said to her, 'Talitha, kum!'[e] which means, 41
'Little girl, I tell you to get up'. •The little girl got up at once and began to walk 42
about, for she was twelve years old. At this they were overcome with astonishment,
1:34+ and he ordered them strictly not to let anyone know about it, and told them 43
to give her something to eat.

‖Mt 13:53-58 ‖Lk 4:16-30 **A visit to Nazareth**

6 Going from that district, he went to his home town and his disciples accompa- 1
nied him. •With the coming of the sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue 2
and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, 'Where did
the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these
15:40 miracles that are worked through him? •This is the carpenter, surely, the son 3
Mt 12:46+ Jn 6:42 of Mary, the brother of James and Joset[a] and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are
they not here with us?' And they would not accept him. •And Jesus said to them, 4
'A prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and
7:32 in his own house'; •and he could work no miracle there, though he cured a few 5
1 Tm 4:14+ Mt 8:10+ sick people by laying his hands on them. •He was amazed at their lack of faith. 6

‖Mt 10:1, 9-14 ‖Lk 9:1-6; 10:4-11 **The mission of the Twelve**

He made a tour round the villages, teaching. •Then he summoned the Twelve 7
=3:14f and began to send them out in pairs, giving them authority over the unclean spirits.
And he instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff[b]—no bread, 8
no haversack, no coppers for their purses. •They were to wear sandals but, he 9
added, 'Do not take a spare tunic'. •And he said to them, 'If you enter a house 10
anywhere, stay there until you leave the district. •And if any place does not 11
welcome you and people refuse to listen to you, as you walk away shake off
the dust from under your feet as a sign to them.' •So they set off to preach 12
Jm 5:14f repentance; •and they cast out many devils, and anointed many sick people with 13
oil and cured them.

‖Mt 14:1-2 ‖Lk 9:7-9 **Herod and Jesus**

Meanwhile King Herod had heard about him, since by now his name was well- 14
known. Some were saying,[c] 'John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that
is why miraculous powers are at work in him'. •Others said, 'He is Elijah'; 15
Mt 16:14+ others again, 'He is a prophet, like the prophets we used to have'. •But when 16
Herod heard this he said, 'It is John whose head I cut off; he has risen from the
dead'.

‖Mt 14:3-12 Lk 3:19-20 **John the Baptist beheaded**

Now it was this same Herod who had sent to have John arrested, and had 17
him chained up in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife whom he
had married. •For John had told Herod, 'It is against the law for you to have 18
your brother's wife'. •As for Herodias, she was furious with him and wanted to 19
Ac 24:25 kill him; but she was not able to, •because Herod was afraid of John, knowing 20
him to be a good and holy man, and gave him his protection. When he had heard
him speak he was greatly perplexed,[d] and yet he liked to listen to him.

An opportunity came on Herod's birthday when he gave a banquet for the 21
nobles of his court, for his army officers and for the leading figures in Galilee.

22 When the daughter of this same Herodias came in and danced, she delighted
Herod and his guests; so the king said to the girl, 'Ask me anything you like
23 and I will give it you'. •And he swore her an oath, 'I will give you anything you Est 5:3
24 ask, even half my kingdom'. •She went out and said to her mother, 'What shall
25 I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the Baptist'. •The girl hurried straight
back to the king and made her request, 'I want you to give me John the Baptist's
26 head, here and now, on a dish'. •The king was deeply distressed but, thinking
of the oaths he had sworn and of his guests, he was reluctant to break his word
27 to her. •So the king at once sent one of the bodyguard with orders to bring
28 John's head. •The man went off and beheaded him in prison; then he brought
the head on a dish and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.
29 When John's disciples heard about this, they came and took his body and laid
it in a tomb.

First miracle of the loaves

||Mt 14:13-21
Mk 8:1-10
||Lk 9:10-17
||Jn 6:1-13

30 The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught.
31 Then he said to them, 'You must come away to some lonely place all by yourselves
and rest for a while'; for there were so many coming and going that the apostles 2:2; 3:20
32 had no time even to eat. •So they went off in a boat to a lonely place where they
33 could be by themselves. •But people saw them going, and many could guess where;
and from every town they all hurried to the place on foot and reached it before
34 them. •So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them Mt 9:36
because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he set himself to teach them
35 at some length. •By now it was getting very late, and his disciples came up to him
36 and said, 'This is a lonely place and it is getting very late, •so send them away,
and they can go to the farms and villages round about, to buy themselves
37 something to eat'. •He replied, 'Give them something to eat yourselves'. They
answered, 'Are we to go and spend two hundred denarii on bread for them to
38 eat?' •'How many loaves have you?' he asked 'Go and see.' And when they had
39 found out they said, 'Five, and two fish'. •Then he ordered them to get all the
40 people together in groups on the green grass, •and they sat down on the ground
41 in squares of hundreds and fifties. •Then he took the five loaves and the two fish,
raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing; then he broke the loaves and
handed them to his disciples to distribute among the people. He also shared out
42 43 the two fish among them all. •They all ate as much as they wanted. •They
44 collected twelve basketfuls of scraps of bread and pieces of fish. •Those who had
eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

Jesus walks on the water

||Mt 14:22-33
||Jn 6:16-21

45 Directly after this he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to Lk 9:10
46 Bethsaida,[e] while he himself sent the crowd away. •After saying good-bye to
47 them he went off into the hills to pray. •When evening came, the boat was far out
48 on the lake, and he was alone on the land. •He could see they were worn out
with rowing, for the wind was against them; and about the fourth watch of the
night he came towards them, walking on the lake. He was going to pass them by,
49 but when they saw him walking on the lake they thought it was a ghost and cried
50 out; •for they had all seen him and were terrified. But he at once spoke to them,
51 and said, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' •Then he got into the boat with them,
52 and the wind dropped. They were utterly and completely dumbfounded, •because
they had not seen what the miracle of the loaves meant; their minds were closed. 4:13+

d. These are to be privileged witnesses of the transfiguration, 9:2, and of the agony, 14:33; cf. 1:29; 13:3.
e. Aramaic; Christ's native tongue.

6 a. Var. 'Jose' or 'Joseph'.
b. In Mt and Lk the staff is forbidden, but the sense is the same: the missionary must be detached.
c. Var. 'He was saying'.
d. Var. (Vulg.) 'he did many things'. Alternative, but less probable, translation '... gave him his protection. He heard him speak and asked him all kinds of questions and liked to listen to him.'
e. Add. 'on the other side', cf. Mt 14:22.

||Mt 14:34-36 **Cures at Gennesaret**

Having made the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret and tied up. •No 53
sooner had they stepped out of the boat than people recognised him, •and started 54 55
hurrying all through the countryside and brought the sick on stretchers to wherever
they heard he was. •And wherever he went, to village, or town, or farm, they 56
5:27-28 Ac 5:15 laid down the sick in the open spaces, begging him to let them touch even the
fringe of his cloak. And all those who touched him were cured.

||Mt 15:1-9 Ac 21:21 **The traditions of the Pharisees**

7 The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered 1
round him, •and they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with 2
Lk 11:38 unclean hands, that is, without washing them. •For the Pharisees, and the Jews 3
Jn 2:6 Ga 1:14 in general, follow the tradition of the elders[a] and never eat without washing their
arms as far as the elbow; •and on returning from the market place they never 4
eat without first sprinkling[b] themselves. There are also many other observances
which have been handed down to them concerning the washing of cups and pots
and bronze dishes. •So these Pharisees and scribes asked him, 'Why do your 5
disciples not respect the tradition of the elders but eat their food with unclean
hands?' •He answered, 'It was of you hypocrites that Isaiah so rightly prophesied 6
in this passage of scripture:

Is 29:13
> *This people honours me only with lip-service,*
> *while their hearts are far from me.*
> *The worship they offer me is worthless,* 7
> *the doctrines they teach are only human regulations.*

You put aside the commandment of God to cling to human traditions.' •And 8 9
he said to them, 'How ingeniously you get round the commandment of God
Ex 20:12; 21:17 Lv 20:9 Dt 5:16 in order to preserve your own tradition! •For Moses said: *Do your duty to your* 10
father and your mother and, *Anyone who curses father or mother must be put to*
death. •But you say, "If a man says to his father or mother: Anything I have 11
that I might have used to help you is Corban[c] (that is, dedicated to God), •then 12
he is forbidden from that moment to do anything for his father or mother".
In this way you make God's word null and void for the sake of your tradition 13
which you have handed down. And you do many other things like this.'

||Mt 15:10-20 **On clean and unclean**

He called the people to him again and said, 'Listen to me, all of you, and 14
understand. •Nothing that goes into a man from outside can make him unclean; 15
it is the things that come out of a man that make him unclean. •If anyone has 16
ears to hear, let him listen to this.'[d]

4:10 When he had gone back into the house, away from the crowd, his disciples 17
4:13+ questioned him about the parable.[e] •He said to them, 'Do you not understand 18
either? Can you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot
Ac 10:9-16 Rm 14 make him unclean, •because it does not go into his heart but through his stomach 19
Col 2:16, 21-22 and passes out into the sewer?' (Thus he pronounced all foods clean.)[f] •And he 20
went on, 'It is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean. •For it is from 21
Jr 17:9 Rm 1:29+ within, from men's hearts, that evil intentions emerge: fornication, theft, murder,
adultery, avarice, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, pride, folly. •All these 22 23
evil things come from within and make a man unclean.'

III. JOURNEYS OUTSIDE GALILEE

||Mt 15:21-28 **The daughter of the Syrophoenician woman healed**

He left that place and set out for the territory of Tyre.[g] There he went into 24
1:29; 2:15; 9:33; 10:10 a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not pass

unrecognised. •A woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard about
him straightaway and came and fell at his feet. •Now the woman was a pagan,
by birth a Syrophoenician, and she begged him to cast the devil out of her Mt 8:29+
daughter. •And he said to her, 'The children should be fed first, because it is not
fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs'. •But she spoke
up: 'Ah yes, sir,' she replied 'but the house-dogs under the table can eat the
children's scraps'. •And he said to her, 'For saying this, you may go home happy:
the devil has gone out of your daughter'. •So she went off to her home and found
the child lying on the bed and the devil gone.

Healing of the deaf man

Returning from the district of Tyre, he went by way of Sidon towards the Sea Mt 15:29
of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. •And they brought him a deaf
man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on 6:5; 8:23 1 Tm 4:14+
him. •He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the
man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. •Then looking up to heaven he
sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened'. •And his ears were Mt 8:3+
opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly.
And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the 1:34+
more widely they published it. •Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done 9:25 Mt 9:33; 15:31
all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

Second miracle of the loaves ||Mt 15:32-39

8 And now once again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat. 6:30-44
So he called his disciples to him and said to them, •'I feel sorry for all these
people; they have been with me for three days now and have nothing to eat.
If I send them off home hungry they will collapse on the way; some have come
a great distance.' •His disciples replied, 'Where could anyone get bread to feed
these people in a deserted place like this?' •He asked them, 'How many loaves
have you?' 'Seven' they said. •Then he instructed the crowd to sit down on the
ground, and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and
handed them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them among the
crowd. •They had a few small fish as well, and over these he said a blessing and
ordered them to be distributed also. •They ate as much as they wanted, and they
collected seven basketfuls of the scraps left over. •Now there had been about four
thousand people. He sent them away •and immediately, getting into the boat
with his disciples, went to the region of Dalmanutha.[a]

The Pharisees ask for a sign from heaven ||Mt 12:38-39; 16:1-4

The Pharisees came up and started a discussion with him; they demanded Lk 11:16
of him a sign from heaven, to test him. •And with a sigh that came straight from
the heart he said, 'Why does this generation demand a sign? I tell you solemnly,
no sign shall be given to this generation.' •And leaving them again and re-embarking he went away to the opposite shore.

The yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod ||Mt 16:5-12

The disciples had forgotten to take any food and they had only one loaf with
them in the boat. •Then he gave them this warning, 'Keep your eyes open; be ||Lk 12:1
on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod'. •And

7 a. The 'tradition of the elders' comprises the injunctions and practices added by the rabbis to the Mosaic Law.
b. Var. 'bathing'. Or 'they never eat what comes from the market without having sprinkled it'.
c. *Corban*, Aramaic word meaning an offering, especially to God. See Mt 15:6+.
d. Om. v. 16.
e. 'Parable' in the Hebr. sense of *mashal* which includes even brief enigmatic sayings.
f. Lit. 'making all foods clean'; the clause (possibly a gloss) is obscure and variously interpreted.
g. Add. 'and Sidon', cf. Mt 15:21.

8 a. Either a place-name, unidentified like the 'Magadan' of Mt 15:39, or possibly a transliteration of some Aramaic expression.

they said to one another, 'It is because we have no bread'. •And Jesus knew it, 17
and he said to them, 'Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you not
4:13+ yet understand? Have you no perception? Are your minds closed? •Have you 18
Jr 5:21 Ezk 12:2 *eyes that do not see, ears that do not hear?* Or do you not remember? •When 19
I broke the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of scraps
did you collect?' They answered, 'Twelve'. •'And when I broke the seven loaves 20
for the four thousand, how many baskets full of scraps did you collect?'
And they answered, 'Seven'. •Then he said to them, 'Are you still without 21
perception?' [b]

Cure of a blind man at Bethsaida

5:30+ They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought to him a blind man whom 22
7:33; 9:27 they begged him to touch. •He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside 23
Jn 9:6 1 Tm 4:14+ the village. Then putting spittle on his eyes and laying his hands on him, he asked,
'Can you see anything?' •The man, who was beginning to see,[c] replied, 'I can see 24
people; they look like trees to me, but they are walking about'. •Then he laid 25
Mt 8:3+ his hands on the man's eyes again and he saw clearly; he was cured, and he could
1:34+ see everything plainly and distinctly. •And Jesus sent him home, saying, 'Do 26
not even go into the village'.

||Mt 16:13-20 ||Lk 9:18-21 **Peter's profession of faith**

Jesus and his disciples left for the villages round Caesarea Philippi. On the 27
way he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say I am?' •And they 28
told him. 'John the Baptist,' they said 'others Elijah; others again, one of the
prophets.' •'But you,' he asked 'who do you say I am?' Peter spoke up and said 29
1:34+ to him, 'You are the Christ'. •And he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone 30
about him.

||Mt 16:21-23 ||Lk 9:22 **First prophecy of the Passion**

9:9-10, 31-32; 10:32-34 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man was destined to suffer 31
grievously, to be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and
to be put to death, and after three days to rise again; •and he said all this quite 32
openly. Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. •But, 33
turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said to him, 'Get behind
4:13+ me, Satan! Because the way you think is not God's way but man's.'

||Mt10:38-39; 16:24-28 ||Lk 9:23-27; 14:26-27 **The condition of following Christ**

He called the people and his disciples to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be 34
a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow
||Jn 12:25 me. •For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his 35
life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. •What gain, then, is 36
it for a man to win the whole world and ruin his life? •And indeed what can 37
a man offer in exchange for his life? •For if anyone in this adulterous and sinful 38
Mt 10:33 ||Lk 12:8 generation is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man will also be
ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

||Lk 9:27; 21:32 Rm 1:4 9 And he said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, there are some standing here who 1
will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power'.

||Mt 17:1-8 ||Lk 9:28-36 **The transfiguration**

5:37+ Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them 2
up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in
16:5 their presence he was transfigured: •his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter 3
than any earthly bleacher could make them. •Elijah appeared to them with 4
14:40 Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. •Then Peter spoke to Jesus: 'Rabbi,' 5
he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for
you, one for Moses and one for Elijah'. •He did not know what to say; they were 6

so frightened. •And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' •Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

The question about Elijah ||Mt 17:9-13

As they came down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what 'rising from the dead' could mean. •And they put this question to him, 'Why do the scribes say that Elijah has to come first?' •'True,' he said 'Elijah is to come first and to see that everything is as it should be; yet how is it that the scriptures say about the Son of Man that he is to suffer grievously and be treated with contempt? •However, I tell you that Elijah has come and they have treated him as they pleased, just as the scriptures say about him.' 1:34+ 8:31 4:13+ Ml 3:23-24 1 K 19:2,10

The epileptic demoniac ||Mt 17:14-21 ||Lk 9:37-42

When they rejoined the disciples they saw[a] a large crowd round them and some scribes arguing with them. •The moment they saw him the whole crowd were struck with amazement and ran to greet him. •'What are you arguing about with them?' he asked. •A man answered him from the crowd, 'Master, I have brought my son to you; there is a spirit of dumbness in him, •and when it takes hold of him it throws him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and goes rigid. And I asked your disciples to cast it out and they were unable to.' •'You faithless generation' he said to them in reply. 'How much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me.' •They brought the boy to him, and as soon as the spirit saw Jesus it threw the boy into convulsions, and he fell to the ground and lay writhing there, foaming at the mouth. •Jesus asked the father, 'How long has this been happening to him?' 'From childhood,' he replied •'and it has often thrown him into the fire and into the water, in order to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.' •'If you can?' retorted Jesus. 'Everything is possible for anyone who has faith.' •Immediately the father of the boy cried out, 'I do have faith. Help the little faith I have!' •And when Jesus saw how many people were pressing round him, he rebuked the unclean spirit. 'Deaf and dumb spirit,' he said 'I command you: come out of him and never enter him again.' •Then throwing the boy into violent convulsions it came out shouting, and the boy lay there so like a corpse that most of them said, 'He is dead'. •But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him up, and he was able to stand. •When he had gone indoors his disciples asked him privately, 'Why were we unable to cast it out?' •'This is the kind' he answered 'that can only be driven out by prayer.'[b] Mt 8:29+ Mt 8:10+ 7:37 8:23 Mt 8:15+

Second prophecy of the Passion ||Mt 17:22-23 ||Lk 9:43-45

After leaving that place they made their way through Galilee; and he did not want anyone to know, •because he was instructing his disciples; he was telling them, 'The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men; they will put him to death; and three days after he has been put to death he will rise again'. But they did not understand what he said and were afraid to ask him. Jn 7:1 1:34+ 8:31+ 4:13+

Who is the greatest? ||Mt 18:1-5 ||Lk 9:46-48

They came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, 7:24+

b. Jesus asks the disciples to forget their material needs and give their minds to the spiritual nature of his mission to which the miracles point.
c. Others translate 'raising his eyes'.

9 a. Var. 'he saw'.
b. Var. 'by prayer and fasting'.

'What were you arguing about on the road?' •They said nothing because they 34
had been arguing which of them was the greatest. •So he sat down, called the 35
Mt 20:27 Twelve to him and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last
of all and servant of all'. •He then took a little child, set him in front of them, 36
‖Mt 10:40+; 18:5 ‖Lk 10:16 Jn 13:20 put his arms round him, and said to them, •'Anyone who welcomes one of 37
these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me
welcomes not me but the one who sent me'.

‖Lk 9:49-50 **On using the name of Jesus**

John said to him, 'Master, we saw a man who is not one of us casting out 38
Nb 11:28 devils in your name; and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him'.
Ac 3:16+ 1 Co 12:3 But Jesus said, 'You must not stop him: no one who works a miracle in my name 39
Mt 12:30 is likely to speak evil of me. •Anyone who is not against us is for us. 40

‖Mt 10:42 **Charity shown to Christ's disciples**

1 Co 3:23+ 'If anyone gives you a cup of water to drink just because you belong to Christ, 41
then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.

‖Mt 18:6-9 ‖Lk 17:1-2 **On leading others astray**

'But anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who 42
have faith,[c] would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone round
his neck. •And if your hand should cause you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you 43
to enter into life crippled, than to have two hands and go to hell, into the fire that
cannot be put out.[d] •And if your foot should cause you to sin, cut it off; it is 45
better for you to enter into life lame, than to have two feet and be thrown into
hell. •And if your eye should cause you to sin, tear it out; it is better for you to 47
enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown
Is 66:24+ Si 7:17 into hell •where *their worm does not die nor their fire go out.* •For everyone will 48 49
Lv 2:13+ ‖*Mt 5:13* ‖Lk 14:34 Rm 12:18 Col 4:6 be salted with fire.[e] •Salt is a good thing, but if salt has become insipid, how can 50
you season it again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.'

‖Mt 19:1-9 **The question about divorce**

Lk 9:51 Jn 10:40-41 10 Leaving there, he came to the district of Judaea and the far side of the 1
Jordan. And again crowds gathered round him, and again he taught them,
as his custom was. •Some Pharisees approached him and asked, 'Is it against 2
the law for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him. •He answered 3
Dt 24:1 them, 'What did Moses command you?' •'Moses allowed us' they said 'to draw 4
up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' •Then Jesus said to them, 'It was 5
because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you.
Gn 1:27 But from the beginning of creation *God made them male and female.* •*This is why* 6 7
Gn 2:24 *a man must leave father and mother,*[a] •*and the two become one body.* They are no 8
longer two, therefore, but one body. •So then, what God has united, man must not 9
7:24+ divide.' •Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, •and 10 11
‖Mt 5:32 ‖Lk 16:18 he said to them, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of
adultery against her. •And if a woman divorces her husband and marries 12
another she is guilty of adultery too.'

‖Mt 19:13-15 ‖Lk 18:15-17 **Jesus and the children**

Lk 9:47 People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The 13
disciples turned them away, •but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said 14
to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as
‖Mt 18:3 these that the kingdom of God belongs. •I tell you solemnly, anyone who 15
does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'
Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his 16
blessing.

The rich young man ||Mt 19:16-22 ||Lk 18:18-23

17 He was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and
put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'
18 Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.
19 You know the commandments: *You must not kill; You must not commit adultery;* Ex 20:12-16 Dt 5:16-20
You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Dt 24:14
20 *Honour your father and mother.*' •And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all
21 these from my earliest days'. •Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and
he said, 'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give
the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow
22 me.' •But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man
of great wealth.

The danger of riches ||Mt 19:23-26 ||Lk 18:24-27

23 Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for those who Pr 11:28
24 have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' •The disciples were astounded by
these words,[b] but Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them 'how hard it is to
25 enter the kingdom of God! •It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of
26 a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' •They were more
astonished than ever. 'In that case' they said to one another 'who can be saved?'
27 Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he said 'it is impossible, but not for God: because
everything is possible for God.'

The reward of renunciation ||Mt 19:27-30 ||Lk 18:28-30

28 Peter took this up. 'What about us?' he asked him. 'We have left everything
29 and followed you.' •Jesus said, 'I tell you solemnly, there is no one who has left 1:1+
house, brothers, sisters, father, children or land for my sake and for the sake of
30 the gospel •who will not be repaid a hundred times over, houses, brothers, sisters,
mothers, children and land—not without persecutions—now in this present time
and, in the world to come, eternal life.
31 'Many who are first will be last, and the last first.' ||Lk 13:30

Third prophecy of the Passion ||Mt 20:17-19 ||Lk 18:31-33

32 They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem; Jesus was walking on ahead Jn 11:16
of them; they were in a daze, and those who followed were apprehensive. Once
more taking the Twelve aside he began to tell them what was going to happen 8:31+
33 to him: •'Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man is about
to be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him
34 to death and will hand him over to the pagans, •who will mock him and spit at
him and scourge him and put him to death; and after three days he will
rise again.'

The sons of Zebedee make their request ||Mt 20:20-23

35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached him. 'Master,' they said
36 to him 'we want you to do us a favour.' •He said to them, 'What is it you want
37 me to do for you?' •They said to him, 'Allow us to sit one at your right hand
38 and the other at your left in your glory'.[c] •'You do not know what you are asking' 4:13+
Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptised Lk 12:50

c. Add. 'in me'.
d. Omitting, with the best MSS, vv. 44 and 46 (Vulg.), merely repetitions of v. 48.
e. This 'seasoning' fire means either penalties by which the sinner is punished and at the same time preserved, or (preferably) the purifying fire of trials by which the faithful become sacrifices pleasing to God, cf. Lv 2:13 (to this alludes an add. 'and every victim must be salted with salt'). It appears that v. 50, cf. Mt 5:13, has been inserted here for no other reason than the recurrence of the word 'salt'.
10 a. Add. 'and cling to his wife', cf. Gn 2:24 and Mt 19:5.
b. Wealth and prosperity were considered signs of God's favour, cf. Introduction to Wisdom Books.
c. When, as messianic King, your triumph is assured.

with the baptism with which I must be baptised?'[d] •They replied, 'We can'. 39
Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the
baptism with which I must be baptised you shall be baptised, •but as for seats 40
at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those
to whom they have been allotted'.

‖Mt 20:24-28
‖Lk 22:24-27 **Leadership with service**

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and 41
John, •so Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that among the 42
pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their
authority felt. •This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to become 43
great among you must be your servant, •and anyone who wants to be first 44
among you must be slave to all. •For the Son of Man himself did not come to 45
be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

‖Mt 20:29-34
‖Lk 18:35-43 **The blind man of Jericho**

They reached Jericho; and as he left Jericho with his disciples and a large 46
crowd, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting at the
side of the road. •When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout 47
and to say, 'Son of David, Jesus, have pity on me'. •And many of them scolded 48
him and told him to keep quiet, but he only shouted all the louder, 'Son of David,
have pity on me'. •Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him here'. So they called the 49
blind man. 'Courage,' they said 'get up; he is calling you.' •So throwing off his 50
cloak, he jumped up and went to Jesus. •Then Jesus spoke, 'What do you want 51
Jn 20:16 me to do for you?' 'Rabbuni,'[e] the blind man said to him 'Master, let me see
Mt 8:10 again.' •Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has saved you'. And immediately 52
his sight returned and he followed him along the road.

IV. THE JERUSALEM MINISTRY

‖Mt 21:1-11
‖Lk 19:28-38
‖Jn 12:12-16 **The Messiah enters Jerusalem**

11 When they were approaching Jerusalem, in sight of Bethphage and Bethany, 1
close by the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples •and said to them, 2
'Go off to the village facing you, and as soon as you enter it you will find a tethered
colt that no one has yet ridden. Untie it and bring it here. •If anyone says to 3
you, "What are you doing?" say, "The Master needs it and will send
it back here directly".' •They went off and found a colt tethered near a door in 4
the open street. As they untied it, •some men standing there said, 'What are you 5
doing, untying that colt?' •They gave the answer Jesus had told them, and the 6
men let them go. •Then they took the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on its 7
back, and he sat on it. •Many people spread their cloaks on the road, others green- 8
ery which they had cut in the fields. •And those who went in front and those who 9
Ps 118:25-26 followed were all shouting, '*Hosanna! Blessings on him who comes in the name*
2 S 7:16 *of the Lord!* •Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! *Hosanna* 10
‖Mt 21:12
Lk 21:37 in the highest heavens!' •He entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple. He 11
looked all round him, but as it was now late, he went out to Bethany with the
Twelve.

‖Mt 21:18-19 **The barren fig tree**

Next day as they were leaving Bethany, he felt hungry. •Seeing a fig tree in 12 13
leaf some distance away, he went to see if he could find any fruit on it, but when
he came up to it he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season for figs.
And he addressed the fig tree. 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again' he 14
said. And his disciples heard him say this.

The expulsion of the dealers from the Temple

||Mt 21:12-17 ||Lk 19:45-48 ||Jn 2:14-16

15 So they reached Jerusalem and he went into the Temple and began driving
out those who were selling and buying there; he upset the tables of the money
16 changers and the chairs of those who were selling pigeons. •Nor would he allow
17 anyone to carry anything through the Temple. •And he taught them and said,
'Does not scripture say: *My house will be called a house of prayer for all* Is 56:7
18 *the peoples?*[a] But you have turned it into *a robbers' den.*' •This came to the ears Jr 7:11
of the chief priests and the scribes, and they tried to find some way of doing
away with him; they were afraid of him because the people were carried away
19 by his teaching. •And when evening came he went out of the city. Lk 21:37

The fig tree withered. Faith and prayer

||Mt 21:20-22

20 Next morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered to the roots.
21 Peter remembered. 'Look, Rabbi,' he said to Jesus 'the fig tree you cursed has
22 23 withered away.' •Jesus answered, 'Have faith in God. •I tell you solemnly, Mt 8:10+; ||17:20-21
if anyone says to this mountain, "Get up and throw yourself into the sea", with no ||Lk 17:6
hesitation in his heart but believing that what he says will happen, it will be done
24 for him. •I tell you therefore: everything you ask and pray for, believe that you Mt 7:7-8 Jn 11:22
25 have it already, and it will be yours. •And when you stand in prayer, forgive
whatever you have against anybody, so that your Father in heaven may forgive Mt 5:23-24; 6:14-15
your failings too.'[b]

The authority of Jesus is questioned

||Mt 21:23-27 ||Lk 20:1-8

27 They came to Jerusalem again, and as Jesus was walking in the Temple, the
28 chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, •and they said to him,
'What authority have you for acting like this? Or who gave you authority to do
29 these things?' •Jesus said to them, 'I will ask you a question, only one; answer
30 me and I will tell you my authority for acting like this. •John's baptism: did it
31 come from heaven, or from man? Answer me that.' •And they argued it out
this way among themselves: 'If we say from heaven, he will say, "Then why did
32 you refuse to believe him?" •But dare we say from man?'—they had the people
33 to fear, for everyone held that John was a real prophet. •So their reply to Jesus
was, 'We do not know'. And Jesus said to them, 'Nor will I tell you my authority
for acting like this'.

Parable of the wicked husbandmen

||Mt 21:33-46 ||Lk 20:9-19

1 12 He went on to speak to them in parables, 'A man planted a vineyard; he Is 5:1+
fenced it round, dug out a trough for the winepress and built a tower; then
2 he leased it to tenants and went abroad. •When the time came, he sent a servant
to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce from the vineyard.
3 4 But they seized the man, thrashed him and sent him away empty-handed. •Next
he sent another servant to them; him they beat about the head and treated
5 shamefully. •And he sent another and him they killed; then a number of others,
6 and they thrashed some and killed the rest. •He had still someone left: his beloved
7 son. He sent him to them last of all. "They will respect my son" he said. •But
those tenants said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him, and the
8 inheritance will be ours." •So they seized him and killed him and threw him out
9 of the vineyard. •Now what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and
10 make an end of the tenants and give the vineyard to others. •Have you not read
this text of scripture:

d. To drink the cup, cf. 14:36, and to be baptised are symbols of the approaching Passion: Jesus is to be 'immersed' (Greek: *baptizein*) in suffering.

e. Aramaic 'My master' or 'Master'; cf. Jn 20:16.

11 a. Of the Synoptics only Mk quotes, no doubt deliberately, these last four words of Isaiah's text; they foretell the worldwide worship of the messianic age.

b. Add. v. 26 'But if you do not forgive, your Father in heaven will not forgive your failings either' cf. Mt 6:15.

Ps 118:22-23

It was the stone rejected by the builders
that became the keystone.
This was the Lord's doing 11
and it is wonderful to see?

And they would have liked to arrest him, because they realised that the parable 12
was aimed at them, but they were afraid of the crowds. So they left him alone
and went away.

‖Mt 22:15-22
‖Lk 20:20-26
Mk 3:6+

On tribute to Caesar

Next they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to catch him out 13
in what he said. •These came and said to him, 'Master, we know you are an honest 14
man, that you are not afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing
to you, and that you teach the way of God in all honesty. Is it permissible to
pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay, yes or no?' •Seeing through their 15
hypocrisy he said to them, 'Why do you set this trap for me? Hand me a
denarius and let me see it.' •They handed him one and he said, 'Whose head 16
is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's' they told him. •Jesus said to them, 'Give back 17
to Caesar what belongs to Caesar—and to God what belongs to God'. This
reply took them completely by surprise.

‖Mt 22:23-33
‖Lk 20:27-40
Dt 25:5f+

The resurrection of the dead

Then some Sadducees—who deny that there is a resurrection—came to 18
him and they put this question to him, •'Master, we have it from Moses in 19
writing, if a man's brother dies leaving a wife but no child, the man must
marry the widow to raise up children for his brother. •Now there were seven 20
brothers. The first married a wife and then died leaving no children. •The second 21
married the widow, and he too died leaving no children; with the third it was
the same, •and none of the seven left any children. Last of all the woman herself 22
died. •Now at the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be, 23
since she had been married to all seven?'

Jesus said to them, 'Is not the reason why you go wrong, that you understand 24
neither the scriptures nor the power of God? •For when they rise from the dead, 25
men and women do not marry; no, they are like the angels in heaven. •Now 26
about the dead rising again, have you never read in the Book of Moses, in the
Ex 3:6 passage about the Bush,[a] how God spoke to him and said: *I am the God of*
Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? •He is God, not of the dead, 27
but of the living. You are very much mistaken.'

‖Mt 22:34-40
‖Lk 10:25-28

The greatest commandment of all

One of the scribes who had listened to them debating and had observed how 28
well Jesus had answered them, now came up and put a question to him, 'Which
Dt 6:4-5 is the first of all the commandments?' •Jesus replied, 'This is the first: *Listen,* 29
Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, •*and you must love the Lord your God with* 30
all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and *with all your strength.*
Lv 19:18 The second is this: *You must love your neighbour as yourself.* There is no com- 31
mandment greater than these.' •The scribe said to him, 'Well spoken, Master; 32
Dt 4:35; 6:4 what you have said is true: that he is one and there is no other. •To love him with 33
all your heart, with all your understanding and strength, and to love your
1 S 15:22
Ps 40:6-8
Am 5:21+ neighbour as yourself, this is far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice.'
Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken, said, 'You are not far from the kingdom 34
‖Mt 22:46
‖Lk 20:40 of God'. And after that no one dared to question him any more.

‖Mt 22:41-46
‖Lk 20:41-44

Christ not only son but also Lord of David

Later, while teaching in the Temple, Jesus said, 'How can the scribes maintain 35
Mt 9:27+ that the Christ is the son of David? •David himself, moved by the Holy Spirit, 36
said:

The Lord said to my Lord:
Sit at my right hand
and I will put your enemies
under your feet. Ps 110:1

37 David himself calls him Lord, in what way then can he be his son?' And the great majority of the people heard this with delight.

The scribes condemned by Jesus ||Mt 23:6-7 ||Lk 11:43; 20:45-47

38 In his teaching he said, 'Beware of the scribes who like to walk about
39 in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, •to take
40 the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets; •these are the men who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive.'

The widow's mite ||Lk 21:1-4

41 He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money Jn 8:20
42 into the treasury,[b] and many of the rich put in a great deal. •A poor widow came
43 and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. •Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has
44 put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; •for they have all put in money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on'.

The eschatological discourse: introduction ||Mt 24-25

1 13 As he was leaving the Temple one of his disciples said to him, 'Look at the ||Mt 24:1-3 ||Lk 21:5-7
2 size of those stones, Master! Look at the size of those buildings!' •And Jesus said to him, 'You see these great buildings? Not a single stone will be left on another: everything will be destroyed.'
3 And while he was sitting facing the Temple, on the Mount of Olives, Peter, 1:29
4 James, John and Andrew questioned him privately, •'Tell us, when is this going 5:37+ to happen, and what sign will there be that all this is about to be fulfilled?'

The beginning of sorrows

5 Then Jesus began to tell them, 'Take care that no one deceives you. •Many will ||Mt 24:4-14
6 come using my name and saying, "I am he", and they will deceive many. •When ||Lk 21:8-19
7 you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed, this is something that
8 must happen, but the end will not be yet. •For nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes here and there; there will be famines. This is the beginning of the birthpangs.
9 'Be on your guard: they will hand you over to sanhedrins; you will be beaten ||Mt 10:17-22
10 in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them, •since the Good News must first be proclaimed to all the nations.
11 'And when they lead you away to hand you over, do not worry beforehand ||Lk 12:11-12
12 about what to say; no, say whatever is given to you when the time comes, because it is not you who will be speaking: it will be the Holy Spirit. •Brother will betray brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise against their parents
13 and have them put to death. •You will be hated by all men on account of my name; but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved.

The great tribulation of Jerusalem ||Mt 24:15-25 ||Lk 21:20-24

14 'When you see *the disastrous abomination* set up where it ought not to be Dn 9:27; 11: 31; 12:11
(let the reader understand), then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains; 1 M 1:54

12 a. I.e. in which the burning bush incident is narrated.

b. Evidently the treasure chamber inside the Temple enclosure had an alms box outside.

||Lk 17:31 if a man is on the housetop, he must not come down to go into the house to 15
collect any of his belongings; •if a man is in the fields, he must not turn back 16
to fetch his cloak. •Alas for those with child, or with babies at the breast, when 17
those days come! •Pray that this may not be in winter. •For in those days there 18 19
Dn12:1 ||Lk 21:23-24 Rv 16:18 will be *such distress as, until now, has not been* equalled since the beginning when
God created the world, nor ever will be again. •And if the Lord had not shortened 20
that time, no one would have survived; but he did shorten the time, for the sake
of the elect whom he chose.

||Lk 17:23 'And if anyone says to you then, "Look, here is the Christ" or, "Look, he 21
is there", do not believe it; •for false Christs and false prophets will arise and 22
produce signs and portents to deceive the elect, if that were possible. •You 23
Jn 16:4 therefore must be on your guard. I have forewarned you of everything.

Mt 24:29-31 Lk 21:25-27 **The coming of the Son of Man**

'But in those days, after that time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the 24
moon will lose its brightness, •the stars will come falling from heaven and the 25
14:62 Dn 7:13-14 Mt 8:20+ powers in the heavens will be shaken. •And then they will see the Son of Man 26
coming in the clouds with great power and glory; •then too he will send the angels 27
to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends
of heaven.

||Mt 24:32-36 ||Lk 21:29-33 **The time of this coming**

'Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves 28
come out, you know that summer is near. •So with you when you see these things 29
happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. •I tell you solemnly, 30
before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken
place. •Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 31

'But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, 32
nor the Son; no one but the Father.

||Mt 24:42; 25:13-15 ||Lk 19:12-13; 12:38, 40 Rv 3:3 **Be on the alert**

'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will 33
Mt 25:14 come. •It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his 34
servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to
||Lk 12:38,40 stay awake. •So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the 35
house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; •if he comes unexpectedly, 36
he must not find you asleep. •And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!' 37

V. PASSION AND RESURRECTION

||Mt 26:2-5 ||Lk 22:1-2 **The conspiracy against Jesus**

Mt 26:17+ 14 It was two days before the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread, and 1
the chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by
some trick and have him put to death. •For they said, 'It must not be during 2
the festivities, or there will be a disturbance among the people'.

||Mt 26:6-13 ||Jn 12:1-8 **The anointing at Bethany**

Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper; he was at dinner when 3
a woman came in with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, pure nard. She
broke the jar and poured the ointment on his head. •Some who were there said 4
to one another indignantly, 'Why this waste of ointment? •Ointment like this 5
could have been sold for over three hundred denarii and the money given to the
poor'; and they were angry with her. •But Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. Why 6
are you upsetting her? What she has done for me is one of the good works.
You have the poor with you always, and you can be kind to them whenever you 7

8 wish, but you will not always have me. •She has done what was in her power to
9 do: she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. •I tell you solemnly,
wherever throughout all the world the Good News is proclaimed, what she has
done will be told also, in remembrance of her.'

Judas betrays Jesus ||Mt 26:14-16 ||Lk 22:3-6

10 Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, approached the chief priests with an offer
11 to hand Jesus over to them. •They were delighted to hear it, and promised to
give him money; and he looked for a way of betraying him when the opportunity
should occur.

Preparations for the Passover supper ||Mt 26:17-19 ||Lk 22:7-13

12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed,
his disciples said to him, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations
13 for you to eat the passover?' •So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,
'Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, 1 S 10:2-5
14 and say to the owner of the house which he enters, "The Master says: Where
15 is my dining room in which I can eat the passover with my disciples?" •He will
show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the
16 preparations for us there.' •The disciples set out and went to the city and
found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

The treachery of Judas foretold ||Mt 26:20-25 ||Lk 22:14, 21-23

17 18 When evening came he arrived with the Twelve. •And while they were at
table eating, Jesus said, 'I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray Jn 13:21
19 me, one of you eating with me'. •They were distressed and asked him, one after
20 another, 'Not I, surely?' •He said to them, 'It is one of the Twelve, one who is
21 dipping into the same dish with me. •Yes, the Son of Man is going to his fate,
as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man
is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!'

The institution of the Eucharist ||Mt 26:26-29 ||Lk 22:15-20 ||1 Co 11: 23-25

22 And as they were eating he took some bread, and when he had said the blessing
23 he broke it and gave it to them. 'Take it,' he said 'this is my body.' •Then he took
a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from
24 it, •and he said to them, 'This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is
25 to be poured out for many. •I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine ||Lk 22:18
until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.' Mt 8:11+

Peter's denial foretold ||Mt 26:30-35 ||Lk 22:39, 31-34 ||Jn 13:36-38

26 27 After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. •And Jesus Jn 18:1-2
said to them, 'You will all lose faith, for the scripture says: *I shall strike*
28 *the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered,* •however after my resurrection I shall Zc 13:7
29 30 go before you to Galilee'. •Peter said, 'Even if all lose faith, I will not'. •And
Jesus said to him, 'I tell you solemnly, this day, this very night, before
31 the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times'. •But he repeated
still more earnestly, 'If I have to die with you, I will never disown you'. And
they all said the same.

Gethsemane ||Mt 26:36-46 ||Lk 22:40-45

32 They came to a small estate called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, Jn 18:1
33 'Stay here while I pray'. •Then he took Peter and James and John with him. 5:37+
34 And a sudden fear came over him, and great distress. •And he said to them, 'My
35 soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here, and keep awake.' •And going
on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were
36 possible, this hour might pass him by. •'Abba (Father)!' he said 'Everything

is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.' •He came back and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'Simon, 37
are you asleep? Had you not the strength to keep awake one hour? •You should 38
Rm 7:5+ be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' •Again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. •And 39 40
once more he came back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy; and
9:6 they could find no answer for him. •He came back a third time and said to them, 41
'You can sleep on now and take your rest. It is all over. The hour has come. Now the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. •Get up! Let us go! 42
My betrayer is close at hand already.'

‖Mt 26:47-56 ‖Lk 22:47-53 ‖Jn 18:2-11 **The arrest**

Even while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up with 43
a number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. •Now the traitor had arranged a signal with them. 44
'The one I kiss,' he had said 'he is the man. Take him in charge, and see he is well guarded when you lead him away.' •So when the traitor came, he went 45
straight up to Jesus and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. •The others seized him 46
and took him in charge. •Then one of the bystanders drew his sword and struck 47
out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear.

Then Jesus spoke. 'Am I a brigand' he said 'that you had to set out to 48
capture me with swords and clubs? •I was among you teaching in the Temple day 49
after day and you never laid hands on me. But this is to fulfil the scriptures.' And they all deserted him and ran away. •A young man who followed him had 50 51
nothing on but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, •but he left the cloth 52
in their hands and ran away naked.[a]

‖Mt 26:57-68 ‖Lk 22:54, 63-71 ‖Jn 18:15-16,18 **Jesus before the Sanhedrin**

They led Jesus off to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders 53
and the scribes assembled there. •Peter had followed him at a distance, right 54
into the high priest's palace, and was sitting with the attendants warming himself at the fire.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against 55
Jesus on which they might pass the death-sentence. But they could not find any. Several, indeed, brought false evidence against him, but their evidence was 56
conflicting. •Some stood up and submitted this false evidence against him, 57
15:29 2 Co 5:1 'We heard him say, "I am going to destroy this Temple made by human hands, 58
and in three days build another, not made by human hands" '. •But even on 59
this point their evidence was conflicting. •The high priest then stood up before 60
the whole assembly and put this question to Jesus, 'Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?'[b] •But he was silent 61
and made no answer at all. The high priest put a second question to him, 'Are you the Christ,' he said 'the Son of the Blessed One?'[c] •'I am,' said Jesus 'and 62
13:26 Dn 7:13 Ps 110:1 you will see *the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power* and *coming with the clouds of heaven.*' •The high priest tore his robes, 'What need of witnesses have 63
we now?' he said. •'You heard the blasphemy. What is your finding?' And they 64
all gave their verdict: he deserved to die.

‖Lk 22:63-65 Some of them started spitting at him and, blindfolding him, began hitting 65
him with their fists and shouting, 'Play the prophet!' And the attendants rained blows on him.

‖Mt 26:69-75 ‖Lk 22:55-62 ‖Jn 18:15-18, 25-27 **Peter's denials**

While Peter was down below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's 66
servant-girls came up. •She saw Peter warming himself there, stared at him and 67
Mt 2:23+ said, 'You too were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth'. •But he denied it. 68
'I do not know, I do not understand, what you are talking about' he said. And

69 he went out into the forecourt.[a] •The servant-girl saw him and again started
70 telling the bystanders, 'This fellow is one of them'. •But again he denied it.
A little later the bystanders themselves said to Peter, 'You are one of them for
71 sure! Why, you are a Galilean.' •But he started calling down curses on himself
72 and swearing, 'I do not know the man you speak of'. •At that moment the
cock crew for the second time, and Peter recalled how Jesus had said to him,
'Before the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times'. And
he burst into tears.

Jesus before Pilate

||Mt 27:1-2, 11-26
||Lk 22:66; 23:1-5, 13-25
||Jn 18:28-40; 19:4-16
Mt 26:57+

1 15 First thing in the morning, the chief priests together with the elders and
scribes, in short the whole Sanhedrin, had their plan ready. They had
Jesus bound and took him away and handed him over to Pilate.
2 Pilate questioned him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'It is you who say it'
3 he answered. •And the chief priests brought many accusations against him.
4 Pilate questioned him again, 'Have you no reply at all? See how many accusations
5 they are bringing against you!' •But, to Pilate's amazement, Jesus made no
further reply.
6 At festival time Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, anyone they asked
7 for. •Now a man called Barabbas was then in prison with the rioters who had
8 committed murder during the uprising. •When the crowd went up and began to
9 ask Pilate the customary favour, •Pilate answered them, 'Do you want me to
10 release for you the king of the Jews?' •For he realised it was out of jealousy that
11 the chief priests had handed Jesus over. •The chief priests, however, had incited
12 the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas for them instead. •Then
Pilate spoke again. 'But in that case,' he said to them 'what am I to do with the
13 14 man you call king of the Jews?' •They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' •'Why?' Pilate
asked them 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify
15 him!' •So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them and,
having ordered Jesus to be scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

Jesus crowned with thorns

||Mt 27:27-31
||Jn 19:1-3

16 The soldiers led him away to the inner part of the palace, that is, the Prae-
17 torium, and called the whole cohort together. •They dressed him up in purple,
18 twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on him. •And they began saluting
19 him, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' •They struck his head with a reed and spat on him;
20 and they went down on their knees to do him homage. •And when they had
finished making fun of him, they took off the purple and dressed him in his own
clothes.

The way of the cross

||Mt 27:32-33
||Lk 23:26
||Jn 19:17

21 They led him out to crucify him. •They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene,
father of Alexander and Rufus,[a] who was coming in from the country, to carry
22 his cross. •They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means the
place of the skull.

The crucifixion

||Mt 27:34-38
||Lk 23:33-34
Jn 19:18-24

23 24 They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. •Then they
crucified him, and shared out his clothing, casting lots to decide what each should
25 26 get. •It was the third hour[b] when they crucified him. •The inscription giving the

Ps 22:18

14 a. Some commentators identify this young man with the evangelist.

b. Here, and in Mt 26:62, some translate 'Do you make no reply to the charges these men are bringing against you?'

c. 'The Blessed One' (cf. also 'the Power', v. 62) is a substitute for the name 'Yahweh' which the Jews would not pronounce.

d. Add. (Vulg.) 'and a cock crew'.

15 a. Alexander and Rufus were doubtless known to the Roman circle in which Mark wrote his gospel. Cf. Rm 16:13.

b. 9 a.m., or, more vaguely, some time between 9 a.m. and noon.

Is 53:12
Lk 22:37 charge against him read: 'The King of the Jews'. •And they crucified two robbers 27
with him, one on his right and one on his left.[c]

||Mt 27:39-44
||Lk 23:35-37 **The crucified Christ is mocked**

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said, 'Aha! So you 29
14:58 would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! •Then save yourself: 30
come down from the cross!' •The chief priests and the scribes mocked him among 31
themselves in the same way. 'He saved others,' they said 'he cannot save
himself. •Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, for 32
Lk 23:39 us to see it and believe.' Even those who were crucified with him taunted him.

||Mt 27:45-54
||Lk 23:44-47
|Jn 19:28-30 **The death of Jesus**

When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the 33
ninth hour. •And at the ninth hour Jesus Cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi,[d] 34
Ps 22:1 lama sabachthani?' which means, '*My God, my God, why have you deserted me?*'
When some of those who stood by heard this, they said, 'Listen, he is calling on 35
Elijah'. •Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, 36
gave it him to drink saying, 'Wait and see if Elijah will come to take him down'.
But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. •And the veil of the Temple was 37 38
torn in two from top to bottom. •The centurion, who was standing in front of 39
Mt 4:3+:
||27:54 him, had seen how he had died, and he said, 'In truth this man was a son of
God'.[e]

||Mt 27:55-56
||Lk 23:49
|Jn 19:25 **The holy women on Calvary**

There were some women watching from a distance. Among them were Mary 40
6:3
Lk 8:2-3 of Magdala, Mary who was the mother of James the younger and Joset, and
Salome.[f] •These used to follow him and look after him when he was in Galilee. 41
And there were many other women there who had come up to Jerusalem with
him.

||Mt 27:57-61
||Lk 23:50-55
|Jn 19:38-42 **The burial**

It was now evening, and since it was Preparation Day (that is, the vigil of the 42
Mt 27:62+ sabbath), •there came Joseph of Arimathaea, a prominent member of the 43
Council,[g] who himself lived in the hope of seeing the kingdom of God, and he
boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. •Pilate, astonished that 44
he should have died so soon, summoned the centurion and enquired if he was
already dead.[h] •Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the 45
corpse to Joseph •who bought a shroud, took Jesus down from the cross, 46
wrapped him in the shroud and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out
of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. •Mary of 47
Magdala and Mary the mother of Joset were watching and took note of where
he was laid.

||Mt 28:1-8
||Lk 24:1-12
|Jn 20:1-10 **The empty tomb. The angel's message**

16 When the sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, 1
Lk 23:56 and Salome, bought spices with which to go and anoint him. •And very early 2
in the morning on the first day of the week they went to the tomb, just as the
sun was rising.[a]

They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us 3
from the entrance to the tomb?' •But when they looked they could see that the 4
stone—which was very big—had already been rolled back. •On entering the 5
9:3 tomb they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right-hand side, and
they were struck with amazement. •But he said to them, 'There is no need for 6
Mt 2:23+ alarm. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen,
he is not here. See, here is the place where they laid him. •But you must go and 7
tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going before you to Galilee; it is there

8 you will see him, just as he told you".' •And the women came out and ran away
from the tomb because they were frightened out of their wits; and they said
nothing to a soul,[b] for they were afraid...

Appearances of the risen Christ[c] Mt 28:10+ ||Jn 20:11-18

9 Having risen in the morning on the first day of the week, he appeared first to
10 Mary of Magdala from whom he had cast out seven devils. •She then went to those Lk 8:2
who had been his companions, and who were mourning and in tears, and told Lk 24:10-11 Jn 20:18
11 them. •But they did not believe her when they heard her say that he was alive Mt 8:10+
and that she had seen him.

12 After this, he showed himself under another form to two of them as they ||Lk 24:13-35
13 were on their way into the country. •These went back and told the others, who
did not believe them either.

14 Lastly, he showed himself to the Eleven themselves while they were at table. ||Lk 24:36-49 ||Jn 20:19-23
He reproached them for their incredulity and obstinacy, because they had refused 1 Co 15:5
15 to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. •And he said to them, 13:10 Is 52:7
16 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. •He who Mt 28:18-20 Lk 24:47 Jn 20:21 Col 1:23
believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned.
17 These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast *Mt 10:1p* Ac 1:8+; 14:3 *Lk 10:19* Ac 28:3-6
18 out devils; they will have the gift of tongues;[d] •they will pick up snakes in their
hands, and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their
hands on the sick, who will recover.' 1 Tm 4:14+

19 And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: 1 Tm 3:16
20 there at the right hand of God he took his place, •while they, going out, preached
everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs
that accompanied it.

c. Add. v. 28 'And the text of scripture was fulfilled that says: He was taken for a criminal' (Is 53:12). Cf. Lk 22:37.

d. Jesus must have used the Aramaic *Elahi;* the transliteration *Eloi* has probably been influenced by the Hebr. *Elohim.*

e. For the Roman officer, this admission would not have its full Christian content, but Mk clearly sees in it a pagan's acknowledgment that Jesus was more than man.

f. Probably the woman whom Mt (27:56) calls 'the mother of the sons of Zebedee'.

g. I.e. of the Sanhedrin.

h. Var. 'if he had been dead for some time'.

16 a. Var. 'when the sun had risen'.

b. According to Mt 28:8; Lk 24:10,22f; Jn 20:18, they did in fact tell the news. Mark, too, may have said so in a lost ending of his gospel (cf. following note); alternatively, he may have deliberately refrained from speaking of it to avoid having to append an account of the apparitions which he had made up his mind to omit.

c. The 'long ending' of Mark, vv. 9-20, is included in the canonically accepted body of inspired scripture. This does not necessarily imply Marcan authorship which, indeed, is open to question. The manuscript tradition is the main objection. Many MSS (including Vat. and Sin.) omit the present ending. One MS gives, instead, a shorter ending which, proceeding from v. 8, runs 'They reported briefly to Peter's companions what they had been told. Then Jesus himself through their agency broadcast from east to west the sacred and incorruptible message of eternal salvation.' Four MSS give the shorter ending and add the longer. One MS has the longer ending with the following insertion between vv. 14 and 15: 'And they defended themselves thus, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under the sway of Satan, who does not allow those under the yoke of unclean spirits to understand God's truth and power. Now, therefore, reveal your righteousness." This is what they said to Christ, and Christ answered, "The number of years allowed for Satan's authority has been reached, but other terrible things draw near. I was handed over to be killed for those who have sinned, so that they might turn to the truth and sin no more, and so inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness which is in heaven..." ' The patristic tradition, also, is somewhat uncertain. We may add that the transition from v. 8 to v. 9 is brusque. Moreover, it is difficult to see how the original gospel could have ended so abruptly at v. 8. Hence the hypothesis that, for some unknown reason, the original ending has been lost and the present ending composed to fill the gap. This ending is, in fact, a brief summary of the appearances of the risen Christ, and its style differs notably from the usually concrete and pictorial style of Mark. The present ending, however, was known to Tatian and to Irenaeus in the 2nd century, and is to be found in the vast majority of Greek MSS and of the versions. That Mark was its author cannot be proved; it is, nonetheless, 'an authentic relic of the first Christian generation' (Swete).

d. Var. 'new tongues'.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE

Prologue[a]

15:27 1 Co 15:3 *Ac 1:8+* Ep 3:7 Ac 1:1

1 Seeing that many others[b] have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events 1
that have taken place among us, •exactly as these were handed down to us by 2
those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, •I in my 3
turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided
to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, •so that your Excellency may 4
learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.[c]

I. THE BIRTH AND HIDDEN LIFE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AND OF JESUS[d]

The birth of John the Baptist foretold

1 Ch 24:10

In the days of King Herod of Judaea there lived a priest called Zechariah 5
who belonged to the Abijah section of the priesthood, and he had a wife,
Elizabeth by name, who was a descendant of Aaron. •Both were worthy in the 6
sight of God, and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances
Gn 18:11 Jg 13:2-5 1 S 1:5-6 of the Lord. •But they were childless: Elizabeth was barren and they were 7
both getting on in years.

Now it was the turn of Zechariah's section[e] to serve, and he was exercising 8
his priestly office before God •when it fell to him by lot, as the ritual custom 9
was, to enter the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense there.[f] •And at the hour of 10
incense the whole congregation was outside, praying.

Mt 1:20+

Then there appeared to him the angel of the Lord, standing on the right 11
1:65; 4:36; 5:9,26 *2:10* of the altar of incense. •The sight disturbed Zechariah and he was overcome with 12
fear.[g] •But the angel said to him, 'Zechariah, do not be afraid, your prayer 13
1:63 has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth is to bear you a son and you must name
1:10,58; 10:17,21 *Nb 6:2-3* Jr 1:5 him John.[h] •He will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice[i] at his birth, 14
for he will be great in the sight of the Lord; he must drink no wine, no strong 15
Mt 11:18 Ga 1:15 *1:76* drink.[j] Even from his mother's womb he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, •and 16
he will bring back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. •With the 17
Mt 17:10-13+ *Ml 3:23-24* Si 48:10-11 spirit and power of Elijah,[k] he will go before him *to turn the hearts of fathers towards their children* and the disobedient back to the wisdom that the virtuous
have, preparing for the Lord a people fit for him.' •Zechariah said to the angel, 18
Gn 15:8 '*How can I be sure of this?*[l] I am an old man and my wife is getting on in years.'
Dn 8:16; 9:21 *Tb 12:15* Mk 1:1+ *Mt 8:10+* The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel who stand in God's presence, and I have been 19
sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. •Listen! Since you have not 20
believed my words, which will come true at their appointed time, you will be
silenced and have no power of speech until this has happened.' •Meanwhile 21

the people were waiting for Zechariah and were surprised that he stayed in the
22 sanctuary so long. •When he came out he could not speak to them, and they
realised that he had received a vision in the sanctuary. But he could only make
signs to them, and remained dumb.
23 When his time of service came to an end he returned home. •Some time later
24 25 his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept to herself. •'The Lord
has done this for me' she said 'now that it has pleased him to take away the
humiliation I suffered among men.'[m]

The annunciation[n]

26 In the sixth month[o] the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee Dn 8:16 Heb 1:14+
27 called Nazareth, •to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House *Mt 1:18*
28 of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. •He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice,
29 so highly favoured![p] The Lord is with you.' •She was deeply disturbed by these Jg 6:12 Rt 2:4
30 words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, •but the angel said Jdt 13:18
31 to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. •Listen! You are Is 7:14+
32 to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. •He will be great and 2:21 Mt 1:21+
will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne *2 S 7:1+* Is 9:6
33 of his ancestor David; •he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign *Mt 9:27+*
34 will have no end.'[q] •Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since Dn 2:44; 7:14
35 I am a virgin?'[r] •'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and Mt 1:20
the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow.[s] And so the child
36 will be holy and will be called Son of God. •Know this too: your kinswoman Mk 1:24+ *Mt 4:3+*
Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called Ac 3:14+
37 38 barren is now in her sixth month, •*for nothing is impossible to God.*' •'I am the Gn 18:14 Jr 32:27
handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' Mt 19:26 Rm 4:21
And the angel left her.

The visitation

39 Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the
40 hill country of Judah.[t] •She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.
41 Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb 1:15
42 and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. •She gave a loud cry and said,
'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Jg 5:24 Jdt 13:18

1 a. This prologue uses a classical vocabulary and construction; it is similar to the formal prefaces of historians during the hellenistic age.

b. Hyperbole: understand 'several'. For the narratives known and used by Lk, see Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels.

c. Or possibly 'that has come to your knowledge', in which case Theophilus would not be a Christian to be confirmed in the faith but some distinguished official asking for information.

d. From here to ch. 3 Lk, who possibly has Aramaic sources at his disposal, uses LXX Greek with its semitic tendencies. Biblical allusions and colourings are frequent, and the whole flavour of these chapters is archaic and redolent of traditional Israelite messianism.

e. Each section was responsible for a week's service, cf. 1 Ch 24:19; 2 Ch 23:8.

f. It was the priest's duty to keep the brazier burning that stood on the altar of incense in front of the Holy of Holies; he would also supply it with fresh incense, once before the morning sacrifice, again after the evening sacrifice; cf. Ex 30:6-8.

g. Lk is fond of mentioning religious dread and terror: 1:29–30,65; 2:9-10; 4:36; 5:8–10,26; 7:16; 8:25 33–37,56; 9:34,43; 24:37; Ac 2:43; 3:10; 5:5.11; 10:4; 19:17.

h. The name means 'Yahweh-is-gracious'.

i. Joy is the keynote of ch. 1-2;1: 28,46,58; 2:10. Cf. 10:17,20f; 13:17; 15:7,32; 19:6,37; 24:41,52; Ac 2:46+.

j. Several O.T. texts lie behind this remark, especially the law of the nazirite, cf. Nb 6:1+.

k. Ml 3:23 gave rise to the expectation that Elijah would return before the messianic era and pave the way for it. In Mt 17:10-13 John the Baptist is identified with 'the Elijah who has to come'.

l. Zechariah asks for a 'sign', cf. Gn 15:8; Jg 6:17; Is 7:11; 38:7; nevertheless his doubt continues.

m. Lit. 'to take away my shame'. Barrenness was considered a humiliation, Gn 30:23; 1 S 1:5-8, and even a punishment, 2 S 6:23; Ho 9:11.

n. Lk makes the birth and infancy narratives of John parallel to those of Jesus, and gives these latter from Mary's point of view; Matthew tells them from Joseph's.

o. I.e. of John's conception.

p. The translation 'Rejoice' may be preferred to 'Hail' and regarded as containing a messianic reference, cf. Zc 9.9. 'so highly favoured', i.e. as to become the mother of the Messiah. Add. 'Of all women you are the most blessed', cf. 1:42.

q. The angel's words recall several O.T. passages referring to the Messiah.

r. Lit. 'since I do not know man'; this phrase means that Mary is in fact a virgin and perhaps expresses also her intention to remain so.

s. In O.T. this expression is used of the bright cloud which is the sign of God's presence, cf. Ex 13:22+; 19:16+; 24:16+. Cf. Lk 9:34p. The conception of Jesus is effected only by God and his Spirit.

t. Commonly identified with Ain Karim, about 5 m. W. of Jerusalem.

Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?[u] •For the 43
moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. 44
Jn 20:29 Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would 45
be fulfilled.'[v]

1 S 2:1-10 Is 29:19 **The Magnificat**

And Mary[w] said: 46

Is 61:10 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
1 S 2:1 and my spirit *exults in God my saviour;* 47
Hab 3:18 because *he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.* 48
1 S 1:11
11:27 Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed,
Gn 30:13 for the Almighty has done great things for me. 49
Ps 126:3
Ps 111:9 *Holy is his name,*
Ps 103:17 and *his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him.* 50
Ps 89:10; 138:6 He has shown the power of his arm, 51
Si 33:12 he has routed the proud of heart.
Ezk 17:24
Jb 5:11; 12:19 *He has pulled down princes* from their thrones *and exalted the lowly.* 52
Ps 107:9 *The hungry he has filled with good things,* the rich sent empty away. 53
Ps 98:3 Is 41:8-9 *He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy* 54
Gn 12:3; 13: 15; 22:18 —according to the promise he made to our ancestors— 55
of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.[x] 56

The birth of John the Baptist and visit of the neighbours

Meanwhile the time came for Elizabeth to have her child, and she gave birth 57
to a son; •and when her neighbours and relations heard that the Lord had shown 58
1:14+ her so great a kindness, they shared her joy.

The circumcision of John the Baptist

Gn 17:10+ Lv 12:3 Now on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; they were going 59
to call[y] him Zechariah after his father, •but his mother spoke up. 'No,' she 60
said 'he is to be called John.' •They said to her, 'But no one in your family has 61
that name', •and made signs to his father to find out what he wanted him called. 62
1:13 The father asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John'. And they 63
were all astonished. •At that instant his power of speech returned and he spoke 64
1:12+ 2:20+ and praised God. •All their neighbours were filled with awe and the whole affair 65
was talked about throughout the hill country of Judaea. •All those who heard 66
of it treasured it in their hearts. 'What will this child turn out to be?'
1:80+ Ac 11:21 they wondered. And indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.[z]

The Benedictus

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:[aa] 67

Ps 41:13; 72: 18; 106:48 '*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,* 68
Ps 111:9 for he has visited[bb] his people, he has come to their rescue
Ps 132:17 and he has raised up for us a power for[cc] salvation 69
in the House of his servant David,
even as he proclaimed, 70
by the mouth of his holy prophets from ancient times,
Ps 136:24 that he would save us from our enemies 71
and from the hands of all who hate us.
Thus he shows mercy to our ancestors, 72
Lv 26:42 Ps 106:45 thus *he remembers* his holy *covenant,*
the oath he swore 73
Ps 105:8-9 Mi 7:20 to our father Abraham

74 that he would grant us, free from fear,
to be delivered from the hands of our enemies, Gn 22:16-18
75 to serve him in holiness and virtue
in his presence, all our days.
76 And you, little child, Mt 11:10
you shall be called Prophet of the Most High, Mt 16:14+
for you will go before the Lord[dd] 1:16-17
to prepare the way for him. Is 40:3 Ml 3:1
77 To give his people knowledge of salvation Ac 13:25
through the forgiveness of their sins;
78 this by the tender mercy[ee] of our God
who from on high will bring the rising Sun[ff] to visit us, Ml 3:20+ 2 P 1:19
79 to give light to *those who live* *Is 9:1; 42:7* Jn 8:12+
in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet Is 11:6+
into the way of peace.' Jr 6:14+

The hidden life of John the Baptist

80 Meanwhile the child grew up and his spirit matured.[gg] And he lived out in the wilderness until the day he appeared openly to Israel. 1:66; 2:40 3:1-18

The birth of Jesus and visit of the shepherds

1 2 Now at this time Caesar Augustus[a] issued a decree for a census of the whole Mt 2:1
2 world to be taken. •This census—the first[b]—took place while Quirinius was
3 4 governor of Syria, •and everyone went to his own town to be registered. •So Joseph
set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the
5 town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, •in 1 S 16:1-13 Jn 7:42
order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. *Mt 1:18*
6 7 While they were there the time came for her to have her child, •and she gave birth Mt 1:25
to a son, her first-born.[c] She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a
8 manger because there was no room for them at the inn. •In the countryside
close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch
9 their flocks during the night. •The angel of the Lord appeared to them and Ex 24:16+ Tb 5:4+
10 the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, •but the angel Mt 1:20+
said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared 1:12+

u. 'my Lord', i.e. the Messiah.

v. 'the Lord', i.e. God. Or 'And blessed are you who have believed, because what has been promised to you by the Lord will be fulfilled'.

w. Not 'Elizabeth', a var. with only slight MS support. Mary's canticle is reminiscent of Hannah's, 1 S 2:1-10, and of many other O.T. passages. Apart from the main textual similarities noted in the margin there are two characteristic O.T. ideas: 1. God comes to the help not of the rich and powerful but of the poor and the simple, Zp 2:3+, cf. Mt 5:3+. 2. Ever since Abraham received the promises, Gn 15:1+; 17:1+, Israel has been God's favoured one, cf. Dt 7:6+, etc.

x. It is probable that Mary stayed with Elizabeth until John's birth and circumcision, but Luke's habit is to round off one episode before passing to the next, cf. 1:64 and 67; 3:19-20; 8:37-38.

y. The name was normally given when the child was circumcised, cf. 2:21.

z. I.e. protected him: a biblical expression, Jr 26:24; Ac 11:21.

aa. In the full sense of the term, because Zechariah not only utters a hymn of thanksgiving (vv. 68-75) but also foresees the future (vv. 76-79).

bb. God is said to 'visit' when he intervenes notably in history, Ex 3:16+.

cc. Lit. 'a horn of', cf. Ps 75:4+.

dd. I.e. God, as in 1:16-17, not the Messiah.

ee. 'tender mercy', lit. 'bowels of mercy'. 'will bring'; var. 'has brought'.

ff. I.e. either the messianic era or the Messiah himself.

gg. A kind of refrain: 2:40,52; cf. 1:66 and cf. Ac 2:41+; 6:7+.

2 **a.** Roman emperor from 30 B.C. to 14 A.D.

b. The first of a series. The translation sometimes given, 'This census preceded that which was held when Quirinius was governor of Syria', is difficult to justify grammatically. The historical circumstances are little known. Most scholars put the census of Quirinius in 6 A.D., but the only authority for this is Josephus who is doubtfully reliable in this matter, cf. Ac 5:37+. The most probable explanation is that the census, which was made with a view to taxation, took place about 8-6 B.C. as part of a general census of the empire, and that it was organised in Palestine by Quirinius who was specially appointed for the purpose. Quirinius might have been governor of Syria, between 4 and 1 B.C., and if so Luke's expression would then be a rough approximation. Jesus was born certainly before Herod's death (4 B.C.), possibly in 8-6 B.C. The 'Christian era', established by Dionysius Exiguus (6th century), is the result of a false calculation, cf. note to Lk 3:1.

c. In biblical Greek, the term does not necessarily imply younger brothers but emphasises the dignity and rights of the child.

1:14+ Mt 1:21 1:18+ Is 9:5+ by the whole people. •Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to 11
you; he is Christ the Lord.[d] •And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby 12
wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' •And suddenly with the 13
angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

19:38 Ezk 3:12 Is 9:6
'Glory to God in the highest heaven, 14
and peace to men who enjoy his favour'.[e]

Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said 15
to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened
which the Lord has made known to us'. •So they hurried away and found 16
Is 1:3 Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. •When they saw the child 17
they repeated what they had been told about him, •and everyone who heard 18
2:51 Gn 37:11 it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. •As for Mary, she treasured 19
all these things and pondered them in her heart. •And the shepherds went 20
1:64; 2:28, 38; 5:26; 7:16; 13:13 back glorifying and praising God[f] for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly
as they had been told.

1:59+ **The circumcision of Jesus**

Lv 12:3 When the eighth day came and the child was to be circumcised, they gave 21
1:31 Mt 1:21+ him the name Jesus, the name the angel had given him before his conception.

Jesus is presented in the Temple

Lv 12:2-6 And when the day came for them to be purified[g] as laid down by the Law 22
of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord —•observing 23
Ex 13:2; 13:11+ what stands written in the Law of the Lord: *Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord*—•and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what 24
Lv 5:7; 12:8 is said in the Law of the Lord, *a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*[h] •Now 25
in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout
Is 40:1+; 42:1 man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on
him. •It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death 26
9:29; 23:35 until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord.[i] •Prompted by the Spirit he 27
Ex 30:22+ came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for
2:20+ him what the Law required, •he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he 28
said:

The Nunc Dimittis

'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, 29
just as you promised;
Is 52:10 because my eyes have seen the salvation 30
Is 42:6; 46:13; 49:6 which you have prepared for all the nations to see, 31
a light to enlighten the pagans 32
Jn 8:12+ and the glory of your people Israel'.

The prophecy of Simeon

As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that 33
7:23; 12:51-53 were being said about him, •Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 34
Is 15:10 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel,
Jn 19:25-27 Heb 12:3 destined to be a sign that is rejected—•and a sword will pierce your own soul 35
Jn 3:19; 9:39 too—so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare'.

The prophecy of Anna

There was a prophetess[j] also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe 36
of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been
Jdt 8:4-5 1 Tm 5:5 married for seven years •before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four 37
years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting
2:20+ and prayer. •She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and 38
9:32,51; 13:22,33; she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.[k]

The hidden life of Jesus at Nazareth

18:31;19:▲ 11,29;24:▲ 21,47▲

39 When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back
40 to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. •Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, 4:16 Mt 2:23
and he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

Jesus among the doctors of the Law

41 Every year his parents used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. Ex 12:1+ Dt 16:16
42 When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. •When they
43 were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem
44 without his parents knowing it. •They assumed he was with the caravan, and
it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their
45 relations and acquaintances. •When they failed to find him they went back to
Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.
46 Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors,
47 listening to them, and asking them questions; •and all those who heard him
48 were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. •They were overcome 4:22 Jn 7:15,46 Ac 3:9
when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have
you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for
49 you.' •'Why were you looking for me?' he replied 'Did you not know that I must Mt 12:48
50 be busy with my Father's affairs?'[l] •But they did not understand what he meant.

The hidden life at Nazareth resumed

51 He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their 4:16
52 authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. •And Jesus increased 2:19 Gn 37:11 *1:80+* Pr 3:4
in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

II. PRELUDE TO THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS

The preaching of John the Baptist

‖Mt 3:1-12 ‖Mk 1:1-8

1 3 In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign,[a] when Pontius Pilate[b] was 1:80 Mt 27:2
governor of Judaea, Herod[c] tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip[d] tetrarch
2 of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias[e] tetrach of Abilene, •during
the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas,[f] the word of God came to John son of Jr 1:2 Ho 1:1

d. He is, therefore, the expected Messiah; but he is also called 'Lord', a title the O.T. reserves for God. A new era is beginning.

e. Lit. 'to men (who are the object) of (God's) benevolence'. The current translation, 'peace to men of good will', based on the Vulg., does not render the usual sense of the Greek term. Another, less certain, reading is 'peace on earth, and among men divine benevolence'.

f. A favourite theme of Lk: 1:64; 2:28,38; 5:25-26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15,18; 18:43; 19:37; 23:47; 24:53. Cf. Ac 2:47+.

g. Only the mother needed to be purified; the child, however, had to be 'redeemed'. Lk is careful to note that the parents of Jesus, like the Baptist's, observed all that the Law required.

h. Offering of the poor.

i. 'the Christ of the Lord' is the one whom the Lord anoints, cf. Ex 30:22+, i.e. consecrates for a saving mission; the king of Israel, God's chosen prince, is thus consecrated and thus, pre-eminently, the Messiah who is to establish the kingdom of God.

j. A woman dedicated to God and the qualified interpreter of his intentions. Cf. Ex 15:20; Jg 4:4; 2 K 22:14.

k. The messianic deliverance of the Chosen People, 1:68; 24:21, primarily affected their capital city; cf. Is 40:2; 52:9 (and see 2 S 5:9+). For Lk, Jerusalem is God's chosen centre from which will spread his salvation: 9:31,51,53; 13:22,33; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11; 24:47-49,52; Ac 1:8+.

l. Alternative translation 'in my Father's house'. In either case, Jesus is asserting his own personal duyt to his Father (Mt 4:3+) and, in the interests of that duty, an absolute independence of creatures. Cf. Jn 2:4; Mt 12: 46-50.

3 a. Here, as in 1:5 and 2:1-3, Lk dates his narrative by secular events. Tiberius succeeded Augustus, 2:1, on 19 August 14 A.D. The 15th year, therefore, is from 19 August 28 A.D. to 18 August 29 A.D. Alternatively, if the Syrian method of calculating the year of a reign is being followed, the 15th year is from Sept.-Oct. 27 A.D. to Sept.-Oct. 28 A.D. At that time, Jesus was at least 33 years old, possibly 35 or 36. The indication of v. 23 is approximate, and perhaps it only means that Jesus was old enough to exercise a public ministry. The mistake in calculating the 'Christian era' results from taking 3;23 as an exact figure: the 15th year of Tiberius was 782 'after the foundation of Rome'; Dionysius Exiguus subtracted 29 full years from this, thus arriving at 753 for the beginning of our era. Actually, it should have been 750 or even 746.

b. Procurator of Judaea (including Idumaea and Samaria) 26-36 A.D.

c. The Herod referred to is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and Malthake; he was tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea from 4 B.C. to 39 A.D.

d. Son of Herod the Great and Cleopatra, tetrarch from 4 B.C. to 34 A.D.

e. Known from two inscriptions. Abilene was in Anti-Lebanon.

f. The high priest in office was Joseph, called Caiaphas; he exercised this function from 18-36 A.D. and played a leading part in the plot against Jesus,

Lk 1:80 Zechariah, in the wilderness. •He went through the whole Jordan district pro- 3
Jn 1:23 claiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,[g] •as it is written 4
in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

Is 40:3-5
A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley will be filled in, 5
every mountain and hill be laid low,
winding ways will be straightened
and rough roads made smooth.
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God. 6

He said, therefore, to the crowds who came to be baptised by him, 'Brood of 7
Ac 26:20 vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? •But if you are 8
repentant, produce the appropriate fruits, and do not think of telling yourselves,
"We have Abraham for our father" because, I tell you, God can raise children for
Abraham from these stones. •Yes, even now the axe is laid to the roots of the 9
trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and
thrown on the fire.'

Ac 2:37 ^When all the people asked him, 'What must we do, then?' •He answered, 10 11
12:33+ 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the
Mt 5:46+ one with something to eat must do the same'. •There were tax collectors too 12
who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' •He 13
said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate'. •Some soldiers asked him in their 14
turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation!
No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

Jn 1:19-20; 3:28 Ac 13:25 A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning 15
to think that John might be the Christ, •so John declared before them all, 'I 16
Jn 1:26, 27, 33 Ac 1:5+ baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful
than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise
you with the Holy Spirit and fire. •His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear 17
his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will
burn in a fire that will never go out.' •As well as this, there were many other 18
things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

Mt 14:3-12 Mk 6:17-29 **John the Baptist imprisoned**

But Herod the tetrarch, whom he criticised for his relations with his brother's 19
wife Herodias and for all the other crimes Herod had committed, •added a further 20
Jn 3:24 crime to all the rest by shutting John up in prison.[h]

||Mt 3:13-17 ||Mk 1:9-11 **Jesus is baptised**

Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own 21
5:16; 6:12 Jn 1:32-34 baptism was at prayer,[i] heaven opened •and the Holy Spirit descended on him 22
in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son,
the Beloved; my favour rests on you'.[k]

||Mt 1:1-17 **The ancestry of Jesus**

Mt 13:55 When he started to teach, Jesus was about thirty years old, being the son, 23
as it was thought, of Joseph son of Heli, •son of Matthat, son of Levi, son 24
of Melchi, son of Jannai, son of Joseph, •son of Mattathias, son of Amos, son 25
of Nahum, son of Esli, son of Naggai, •son of Maath, son of Mattathias, son 26
of Semein, son of Josech, son of Joda, •son of Joanan, son of Rhesa, son of 27
Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, son of Neri, •son of Melchi, son of Addi, son of 28
Cosam, son of Elmadam, son of Er, son of Joshua, •son of Joshua, son of Eliezer, 29
son of Jorim, son of Matthat, son of Levi, •son of Symeon, son of Judah, son 30
of Joseph, son of Jonam, son of Eliakim, •son of Melea, son of Menna, son of 31

32 Mattatha, son of Nathan, son of David, •son of Jesse, son of Obed, son of Boaz,
33 son of Sala, son of Nahshon, •son of Amminadab, son of Admin, son of Arni, Rt 4:18
34 son of Hezron, son of Perez, son of Judah, •son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son Gn 38:29
35 of Abraham, son of Terah, son of Nahor, •son of Serug, son of Reu, son of
36 Peleg, son of Eber, son of Shelah, •son of Cainan, son of Arphaxad, son of
37 Shem, son of Noah, son of Lamech, •son of Methuselah, son of Enoch, son of
38 Jared, son of Mahalaleel, son of Cainan, •son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God.

Temptation in the wilderness[a] ||Mt 4:1-11 ||Mk 1:12-13

1 4 Filled with the Holy Spirit,[b] Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit 10:21
2 through the wilderness, •being tempted there by the devil for forty days.
3 During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. •Then the devil
4 said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf'. •But
Jesus replied, 'Scripture says: *Man does not live on bread alone*'. Dt 8:3

5 Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all
6 the kingdoms of the world •and said to him, 'I will give you all this power and
the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to Jr 27:5 Rv 13:2,4
7 8 anyone I choose.[c] •Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.' •But Jesus
answered him, 'Scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone'. Dt 6:13

9 Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the
Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said to him 'throw yourself down from
10 here, •for scripture says:

He will put his angels in charge of you
to guard you, Ps 91:11-12

and again:

11 *They will hold you up on their hands*
in case you hurt your foot against a stone'.

12 But Jesus answered him, 'It has been said:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test'. Dt 6:16

13 Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him,[d] the devil left him, to return 22:3,53 Jn 13:2,27
at the appointed time.

III. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

Jesus begins to preach ||Mt 4:12-17,23 ||Mk 1:14-15,39 4:37; 5:15 Mt 3:16+

14 Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his

cf. Mt 26:3; Jn 11:49; 18:14. His father-in-law, Annas, who had been high priest from 6 (?) to 15 A.D., is associated with him and even named first, cf. Ac 4:6 and Jn 18:13,24, as if his prestige was such that he was high priest in all but name.

g. Probably in the neighbourhood of Jericho.

h. Vv. 10-14 (Lk only) emphasise the practical and positive side of John's teaching. Salvation is for all classes of men but justice and charity are necessary in every walk of life.

i. Lk finishes with John's ministry before passing to that of Jesus, cf. 1:56+. He makes no more than a brief allusion to the Precursor's death, 9:7-9.

j. Jesus at prayer is a favourite theme of Lk, cf. 5:16; 6:12; 9:18,28-29; 11:1; 22:41.

k. Var. 'You are my Son, today I have become your father' (Ps 2:7). In Lk and Mk, unlike Mt, the voice addresses Jesus.

4 a. Lk combines Mk's data (40 days of temptation) with Matthew's (three temptations at the end of 40 days' fast). He changes Matthew's order so as to end with Jerusalem; cf. Lk 2:38+.

b. Luke's interest in the Holy Spirit is evident not only from his first two chapters, 1:15,35,41,67,80; 2:25,26,27, but also from the remainder of the gospel in which, on several occasions, he adds a mention of the Spirit to the other synoptic passages, 4:1,14,18; 10:21; 11:13. In Ac also Lk very frequently speaks of the Spirit, Ac 1:8+.

c. The devil's dominion over the world is one of the key ideas of Jn (12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 Jn 3:8+; Rv 13:2,4). See also Mt 8:29+.

d. Rather than 'finished all the temptations'.

=4:44 reputation spread throughout the countryside.[e] •He taught in their synagogues 15
and everyone praised him.[f]

||Mt 13:53-58 ||Mk 6:-16 **Jesus at Nazareth**[g]

2:39,51 He came to Nazara,[h] where he had been brought up, and went into the 16
synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read,[i] •and they 17
handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the
place where it is written:

Is 61:1-2 Mt 3:16+ *The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,* 18
for he has anointed me.
Zp 2:3+ *He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,*[j]
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour. 19

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all 20
eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. •Then he began to speak to them, 'This 21
2:47; 4:15 text is being fulfilled today even as you listen'. •And he won the approval of all, 22
Jn 7:46 and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips.

They said, 'This is Joseph's son, surely ?' •But he replied, 'No doubt you will 23
quote me the saying, "Physician, heal yourself" and tell me, "We have heard all
that happened in Capernaum,[k] do the same here in your own countryside" '.
And he went on, 'I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own 24
country.

1 K 17:1; 18:1 Jm 5:17 'There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah's day, when 25
heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine raged
throughout the land, •but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent 26
1 K 17:9 *to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town.* •And in the prophet Elisha's time 27
2 K 5:14 there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian,
Naaman.'

Jn 7:30 When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. •They sprang 28 29
to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow
of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, •but 30
Jn 8:59 he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

Mk 1:21-28 **Jesus teaches in Capernaum and cures a demoniac**

He went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught them on the 31
||Mt 7:28-29 Ac 13:12 sabbath. •And his teaching made a deep impression on them because he spoke 32
with authority.

In the synagogue there was a man who was possessed by the spirit of an 33
Mt 8:29+ unclean devil, and it shouted at the top of its voice, •'Ha! What do you want 34
8:28 with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are:
Mt 2:23+ *Mk 1:24+* Jn 6:69 Ac 3:14+ the Holy One of God.' •But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' 35
And the devil, throwing the man down in front of everyone, went out of him
1:12+ without hurting him at all. •Astonishment seized them and they were all saying 36
Mt 8:29+ 4:14+ to one another, 'What teaching! He gives orders to unclean spirits with authority
and power and they come out.' •And reports of him went all through the 37
surrounding countryside.

||Mt 8:14-15 ||Mk 1:29-31 **Cure of Simon's mother-in-law**

Leaving the synagogue he went to Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law 38
was suffering from a high fever and they asked him to do something for her.
Leaning over her he rebuked the fever and it left her. And she immediately got 39
up and began to wait on them.

A number of cures

||Mt 8:16-17
||Mk 1:32-34

40 At sunset all those who had friends suffering from diseases of one kind or Mt 8:16
41 another brought them to him, and laying his hand son each he cured them. •Devils 13:13
too came out of many people, howling, 'You are the Son of God'. But he rebuked 1 Tm 4:14+
them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that he was the Mk 1:34+
Christ.

Jesus quietly leaves Capernaum and travels through Judaea

||Mk 1:35-39

42 When daylight came he left the house and made his way to a lonely place.
The crowds went to look for him, and when they had caught up with him they
43 wanted to prevent him leaving them, •but he answered, 'I must proclaim the
Good News of the kingdom of God to the other towns too, because that is what 8:1
44 I was sent to do'. •And he continued his preaching in the synagogues of Judaea.[i] Ac 10:36
4:15; 23:5
Mk 1:38+
Ac 28:21

The first four disciples are called[a]

1 5 Now he was standing one day by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd Mt 4:18
2 pressing round him listening to the word of God, •when he caught sight of two Mk 4:1
Mk 1:16,19
boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing
3 their nets. •He got into one of the boats—it was Simon's[b]—and asked him to put Mk 4:1-2
out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.
4 When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water Jn 21:1-6
5 and pay out your nets for a catch'. •'Master,' Simon replied 'we worked hard all
6 night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' •And Mt 8:10+
when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets Mt 8:3+
7 began to tear, •so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come
and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point.
8 When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me, 1:12+
9 Lord; I am a sinful man'. •For he and all his companions were completely Ex 33:20+
Mt 8:8
10 overcome by the catch they had made; •so also were James and John, sons of Mk 1:17,19
Zebedee, who were Simon's partners.[c] But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; Jn 21:15-17,
11 from now on it is men you will catch'. •Then, bringing their boats back to land, 19
they left everything and followed him.

Cure of a leper

||Mt 8:1-4
||Mk 1:40-45

12 Now Jesus was in one of the towns when a man appeared, covered with
leprosy. Seeing Jesus he fell on his face and implored him. 'Sir,' he said 'if you
13 want to, you can cure me.' •Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said,
14 'Of course I want to! Be cured!' And the leprosy left him at once. •He ordered
him to tell no one, 'But go and show yourself to the priest and make the offering 17:14
for your healing as Moses prescribed it, as evidence for them'. Mk 1:34+

e. One of Luke's recurrent motifs: 4:37; 5:15; 7:17; cf., for similar examples, Ac 2:41+; 6:7; Lk 1:80+.

f. Another favourite theme of Lk: the people admiring and praising Jesus: 4:22; 8:25; 9:43; 11:27; 13:17; 19:48; for similar themes, cf. 4:14+ (Christ's growing reputation), 2:20+ (the praise of God), 1:12+ (religious awe).

g. Apparently this passage combines three visits: the first, vv. 16-22 (Jesus is honoured), occurring at the time indicated by Mt 4:13; the second, vv. 23-24 (Jesus astonishing his audience), the visit of which Mt and Mk speak; the third, vv. 25-30 (the life of Jesus threatened), not mentioned by Mt or Mk and to be placed towards the end of the Galilean ministry. In this way Lk presents an introductory tableau which is a summary and symbol of Christ's great offer and of its contemptuous rejection by his own people.

h. Rare form of the name 'Nazareth'.

i. The director of a synagogue could authorise any adult Jew to read the scripture lesson in public.

j. Add. 'to heal the broken-hearted', cf. LXX.

k. I.e. the miracles of which Lk does not speak until after the visit to Nazareth 4:33, etc.

l. Mk reads 'Galilee'. Lk uses 'Judaea' in the wide sense: the land of Israel. So also in 7:17; 23:5 (?); Ac 10:37; 28:21.

5 a. In this narrative, Lk has combined: 1. A topographical note and an incident about Christ's preaching, vv. 1-3; this section resembles Mk 4:1-2 and 1:16,19; 2. The episode of the miraculous catch, vv. 4-10a, which is like that of Jn 21:1-6; 3. The call of Simon, vv. 10b-11, which is related to Mk 1:17,20. Luke's purpose in placing a period of teaching and miracle before the call of the first disciples was to make their unhesitating response less surprising.

b. In Lk, Simon does not receive the name Peter until 6:14.

c. The 'companions' of v. 7. Andrew is not mentioned because he is in Simon's boat (note the plural pronouns in vv. 5,6,7) which is the central piece in Luke's picture.

4:14+ His reputation continued to grow, and large crowds would gather to hear him 15
and to have their sickness cured, •but he would always go off to some place where 16
3:21+ he could be alone and pray.

||Mt 9:1-8
||Mk 2:1-12
Cure of a paralytic

6:19 Now he was teaching one day, and among the audience there were Pharisees 17
and doctors of the Law who had come from every village in Galilee, from Judaea
and from Jerusalem. And the Power of the Lord[d] was behind his works of
healing. •Then some men appeared, carrying on a bed a paralysed man whom 18
they were trying to bring in and lay down in front of him. •But as the crowd 19
made it impossible to find a way of getting him in, they went up on to the flat
roof and lowered him and his stretcher down through the tiles into the middle of
Mt 8:10+ the gathering, in front of Jesus. •Seeing their faith he said, 'My friend, your sins 20
are forgiven you'. •The scribes and the Pharisees began to think this over. 'Who is 21
this man talking blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?' •But Jesus, 22
aware of their thoughts, made them this reply, 'What are these thoughts you have
in your hearts? •Which of these is easier: to say, "Your sins are forgiven you" 23
or to say, "Get up and walk"? •But to prove to you that the Son of Man has 24
authority on earth to forgive sins,'—he said to the paralysed man—'I order you:
get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.' •And immediately before 25
their very eyes he got up, picked up what he had been lying on and went home
praising God.

2:20+ They were all astounded and praised God, and were filled with awe, 26
Ac 19:17
1:12+ saying, 'We have seen strange things today'.

||Mt 9:9
||Mk 2:13-14
The call of Levi

When he went out after this, he noticed a tax collector, Levi by name, sitting 27
by the customs house, and said to him, 'Follow me'. •And leaving everything he 28
got up and followed him.

||Mt 9:10-12
||Mk 2:15-17
Eating with sinners in Levi's house

In his honour Levi held a great reception in his house, and with them at table 29
was a large gathering of tax collectors and others. •The Pharisees and their scribes 30
19:7 complained to his disciples and said, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors
and sinners?' •Jesus said to them in reply, 'It is not those who are well who need 31
the doctor, but the sick. •I have not come to call the virtuous, but sinners to 32
repentance.'

||Mt 9:14-17
||Mk 2:18-22
Discussion on fasting

They then said to him, 'John's disciples are always fasting and saying prayers, 33
and the disciples of the Pharisees too, but yours go on eating and drinking'.
Jesus replied, 'Surely you cannot make the bridegroom's attendants fast while 34
the bridegroom is still with them? •But the time will come, the time for the bride- 35
groom to be taken away from them; that will be the time when they will fast.'

He also told them this parable, 'No one tears a piece from a new cloak to put 36
it on an old cloak; if he does, not only will he have torn the new one, but the
piece taken from the new will not match the old.

'And nobody puts new wine into old skins; if he does, the new wine will burst 37
the skins and then run out, and the skins will be lost. •No; new wine must be put 38
Jn 3:19 into fresh skins. •And nobody who has been drinking old wine wants new. "The 39
Jn 2:10 old is good" he says.'[e]

||Mt 12:1-8
||Mk 2:23-28
Picking corn on the sabbath

6 Now one sabbath he happened to be taking a walk through the cornfields, 1
and his disciples were picking ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands
and eating them. •Some of the Pharisees said, 'Why are you doing something 2

3 that is forbidden on the sabbath day?' 4 Jesus answered them, 'So you have not
read what David did when he and his followers were hungry— how he went into
the house of God, took the loaves of offering and ate them and gave them to his
5 followers, loaves which only the priests are allowed to eat?' 5 And he said to them,
'The Son of Man is master of the sabbath'.[a]

Cure of the man with a withered hand 13:10-17; 14:1-6 ||Mt 12:9-14 ||Mk 3:1-6

6 Now on another sabbath he went into the synagogue and began to teach, and
7 a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7 The scribes and the Pharisees
were watching him to see if he would cure a man on the sabbath, hoping to
8 find something to use against him. 8 But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the Jn 1:48+
man with the withered hand, 'Stand up! Come out into the middle.' And he came
9 out and stood there. 9 Then Jesus said to them, 'I put it to you: is it against the
10 law on the sabbath to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy it?' 10 Then
he looked round at them all and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand'. He did
11 so, and his hand was better. 11 But they were furious, and began to discuss the 11:53+
best way of dealing with Jesus.

The choice of the Twelve ||Mt 10:1-4 ||Mk 3:13-19

12 Now it was about this time that he went out into the hills to pray; and he spent
13 the whole night in prayer to God. 13 When day came he summoned his disciples 3:21+
14 and picked out twelve of them; he called them 'apostles': 14 Simon whom he ||Mt 10:2-4 ||Ac 1:13
called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,
15 16 Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, 16 Judas son
of James,[b] and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor. Ho 10:8

The crowds follow Jesus ||Mt 4:24-25 ||Mk 3:7-12

17 He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where
there was a large gathering of his disciples with a great crowd of people from all
parts of Judaea and from Jerusalem and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon
18 who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. People tormented
19 by unclean spirits were also cured, and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch 5:17; 8:46 Mk 5:30+ *8:45*
him because power came out of him that cured them all.

The inaugural discourse.[c] The Beatitudes[d] Dt 27:12

20 Then fixing his eyes on his disciples he said: ||Mt 5:1

'How happy are you who are poor: yours is the kingdom of God. ||Mt 5:3
21 Happy you who are hungry now: you shall be satisfied. ||Mt 5:6
Happy you who weep now: you shall laugh. ||Mt 5:5

22 'Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce ||Mt 5:11-12
23 your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice when that day
comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven. This was the
way their ancestors treated the prophets.

The curses

24 'But alas for you who are rich: you are having your consolation now. 16:25
25 Alas for you who have your fill now: you shall go hungry. Is 5:8-25 Am 6:1
Alas for you who laugh now: you shall mourn and weep. Jm 5:1 *Pr 14:13*

d. I.e. God.

e. The 'new wine' Jesus provides is not appreciated by those who have drunk the old wine of the Law.

6 a. One MS here adds an interesting, but probably spurious, dictum: 'On the same day, seeing a man working on the sabbath day, he said to him: Friend, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed; but if you do not know, you are accursed as a breaker of the Law'.

b. Lit. 'Judas of James', which could mean 'brother of James'. Cf. Mt 10:4+.

c. Luke's form is shorter than Matthew's because he has not filled out the discourse as Mt has done and has even left out material of a Jewish character which he thought would not interest his readers, cf. Mt 5:1+.

d. Mt has eight beatitudes, Lk four, and four maledictions. Matthew's beatitudes are a formula for the good life, and they promise heavenly rewards; Lk speaks of material conditions in this life to be reversed in the next, cf. 16:25. In Mt, Jesus uses the third person, in Lk he directly addresses his audience.

'Alas for you when the world speaks well of you! This was the way their 26
ancestors treated the false prophets.

Love of enemies

||Mt 5:44 'But I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those 27
1 P 3:9 who hate you, •bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. 28
||Mt 5:39-40 To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man 29
Pr 21:26 ||Mt 5:42 12:33+ who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. •Give to everyone who 30
asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you.
||Mt 7:12 Treat others as you would like them to treat you. •If you love those who love 31 32
||Mt 5:46 you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. •And if 33
14:12-14 you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even
Pr 21:26 sinners do that much. •And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, 34
what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same
amount. •Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope 35
Si 4:10; 12:6 ||Mt 5:45 of return.[e] You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High,
for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Compassion and generosity

15:1f Ex 34:6-7 ||Mt 7:1 Jm 2:13 'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. •Do not judge, and you 36 37
will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned
yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. •Give, and there will be 38
Pr 12:14 gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over,
||Mt 7:2 ||Mk 4:24 will be poured into your lap;[f] because the amount you measure out is the amount
you will be given back.'

Integrity

||Mt 15:14 He also told a parable to them, 'Can one blind man guide another? Surely 39
||Mt 10:24-25 ||Jn 13:16; 15:20 both will fall into a pit?[g] •The disciple is not superior to his teacher; the fully 40
trained disciple will always be like his teacher. •Why do you observe the splinter 41
in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own? •How can you say 42
to your brother, "Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye", when
you cannot see the plank in your own? Hypocrite! Take the plank out of your
own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take[h] out the splinter
that is in your brother's eye.
||Mt 12:33-35 'There is no sound tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that 43
||Mt 7:16-18 produces sound fruit. •For every tree can be told by its own fruit: people do not 44
pick figs from thorns, nor gather grapes from brambles. •A good man draws what 45
is good from the store of goodness in his heart; a bad man draws what is bad
from the store of badness. For a man's words flow out of what fills his heart.

The true disciple

||Mt 7:21 'Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord" and not do what I say? 46
||Mt 7:24-27 'Everyone who comes to me[i] and listens to my words and acts on them—I will 47
show you what he is like. •He is like the man who when he built his house dug, 48
and dug deep, and laid the foundations on rock; when the river was in flood it
bore down on that house but could not shake it, it was so well built. •But the one 49
who listens and does nothing is like the man who built his house on soil, with no
foundations: as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin
that house became!'

Cure of the centurion's servant

||Mt 8:5-10, 13 ||Jn 4:46-54 Mt 7:28 Ac 10:1 When he had come to the end of all he wanted the people to hear, he went into 1
Capernaum. •A centurion there had a servant, a favourite of his, who was 2
sick and near death. •Having heard about Jesus he sent some Jewish elders[a] 3
to him to ask him to come and heal his servant. •When they came to Jesus they 4

pleaded earnestly with him. 'He deserves this of you' they said •'because he is friendly towards our people;[b] in fact, he is the one who built the synagogue.' Ac 10:1,22 12:33+
So Jesus went with them, and was not very far from the house when the centurion sent word to him by some friends: 'Sir,' he said 'do not put yourself to trouble; because I am not worthy to have you under my roof; •and for this same reason I did not presume to come to you myself; but give the word and let my servant be cured.[c] •For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man: Go, and he goes; to another: Come here, and he comes; to my servant: Do this, and he does it.' •When Jesus heard these words he was astonished at him and, turning round, said to the crowd following him, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found faith like this'. •And when the messengers got back to the house they found the servant in perfect health. Mt 8:10+

The son of the widow of Nain restored to life[d]

Now soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. •When he was near the gate of the town it happened that a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable number of the townspeople were with her. •When the Lord[e] saw her he felt sorry for her. 'Do not cry' he said. •Then he went up and put his hand on the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, 'Young man, I tell you to get up'. •And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus *gave him to his mother*. •Everyone was filled with awe and praised God saying, 'A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people'. •And this opinion of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside. Mt 8:3+ Ac 9:41 *1 K 17:23* 1:12+ *2:20*+ Mt 16:14+ *1:68*+ 4:14+, 44+

The Baptist's question. Jesus commends him ||Mt 11:2-15

The disciples of John gave him all this news, and John, summoning two of his disciples, •sent them to the Lord to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?' •When the men reached Jesus they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to you, to ask, "Are you the one who is to come or have we to wait for someone else?" ' •It was just then that he cured many people of diseases and afflictions and of evil spirits, and gave the gift of sight to many who were blind. •Then he gave the messengers their answer, 'Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the Good News is proclaimed to the poor •and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me'. Is 26:19; 35:5-6; 61:1 Ac 3:8 2:34

When John's messengers had gone he began to talk to the people about John, 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? Oh no, those who go in for fine clothes and live luxuriously are to be found at court! •Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: •he is the one of whom scripture says:

> *See, I am going to send my messenger before you;*
> *he will prepare the way before you.* Ml 3:1

'I tell you, of all the children born of women, there is no one greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he is. •All the people who ||Mt 21:31-32

e. The text is difficult and the translation conj. Var. 'driving no one to despair' or 'despairing of no one' or 'not at all despairing'.
f. Folds in the tunic or cloak were used as a pocket or as a bag for provisions.
g. Addressed, in Lk, to the disciples; in Mt 15:14, to the Pharisees. The same applies to vv. 43-45.
h. Or 'and then you will see how to take'.
i. A Johannine expression, cf. Jn 6:35+.

7 a. Local worthies, not to be confused with the Jerusalem 'elders' who were members of the Sanhedrin.
b. Evidently a pagan in sympathy with Judaism, like Cornelius, Ac 10:1-2+.
c. Var. 'and my servant will be cured'.
d. Lk only. The episode leads up to the reply of Jesus to John's disciples, 7:22.
e. For the first time in the gospel narrative, Jesus is given the title hitherto strictly reserved for Yahweh himself. Cf. Ph 2:11+: Ac 2:36+.

heard him, and the tax collectors too, acknowledged God's plan by accepting baptism from John; 30 but by refusing baptism from him the Pharisees and the lawyers had thwarted what God had in mind for them.

||Mt 11:16-19 **Jesus condemns his contemporaries**

31 'What description, then, can I find for the men of this generation? What are they like? 32 They are like children shouting to one another while they sit in the market place:

Ezk 33:31

"We played the pipes for you,
and you wouldn't dance;
we sang dirges,
and you wouldn't cry".

33 'For John the Baptist comes, not eating bread, not drinking wine, and you say, "He is possessed". 34 The Son of Man comes, eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners".
Jn 6:35+ 35 Yet Wisdom has been proved right by all her children.'[f]

The woman who was a sinner[g]

11:37; 14:1 36 One of the Pharisees invited him to a meal. When he arrived at the Pharisee's
Mt 21:32 Jn 8:4 house and took his place at table, 37 a woman[h] came in, who had a bad name in the town. She had heard he was dining with the Pharisee and had brought with her an alabaster jar of ointment. 38 She waited behind him at his feet, weeping, and her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them away with her hair; then she covered his feet with kisses and anointed them with the ointment.

39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this
Mt 16:14+ Jn 4:18-19 man were a prophet, he would know who this woman is that is touching him and what a bad name she has'. 40 Then Jesus took him up and said, 'Simon, I have something to say to you'. 'Speak, Master' was the reply. 41 'There was once a creditor who had two men in his debt; one owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty. 42 They were unable to pay, so he pardoned them both. Which of them will love him more?' 43 'The one who was pardoned more, I suppose' answered Simon. Jesus said, 'You are right'.

44 Then he turned to the woman. 'Simon,' he said 'you see this woman? I came into your house, and you poured no water over my feet, but she has poured out her tears over my feet and wiped them away with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but she has been covering my feet with kisses ever since I came in.[i] 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 For this reason I tell you that her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven her, or she
Mt 21:31 would not have shown such great love.[j] It is the man who is forgiven little who
Mt 9:2 shows little love.' 48 Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven'. 49 Those who were with him at table began to say to themselves, 'Who is this man, that he even
Mt 8:10+ forgives sins?' 50 But he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace'.

The women accompanying Jesus

||Mt 4:23; 9:35 ||Mk 1:39 *4:43-44* *Mt 8:29+; 12:45* *Mt 27:55-56* Mk 15:40-41 *23:49; 24:10* Jn 19:25

8 1 Now after this he made his way through towns and villages preaching, and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God. With him went the Twelve, 2 as well as certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and several others who provided for them out of their own resources.

||Mt 13:1-9 ||Mk 4:1-9 **Parable of the sower**

4 With a large crowd gathering and people from every town finding their way to him, he used this parable:

5 'A sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, some fell on the edge of the

6 path and was trampled on; and the birds of the air ate it up. •Some seed fell on
7 rock, and when it came up it withered away, having no moisture. •Some seed fell
8 amongst thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. •And some seed fell into rich soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!'

Why Jesus speaks in parables ‖Mt 13:10-11,13 ‖Mk 4:10-12

9 10 His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, •and he said, 'The mysteries of the kingdom of God are revealed to you; for the rest there are only 10:21
parables, so that

they may see but not perceive, Is 6:9
listen but not understand.

The parable of the sower explained ‖Mt 13:18-23 ‖Mk 4:14-20

11 12 'This, then, is what the parable means: the seed is the word of God. •Those on the edge of the path are people who have heard it, and then the devil comes and carries away the word from their hearts in case they should believe and be Mt 8:10+
13 saved. •Those on the rock are people who, when they first hear it, welcome the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of
14 trial they give up. •As for the part that fell into thorns, this is people who have heard, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and
15 pleasures of life and do not reach maturity. •As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance.

Parable of the lamp ‖Mk 4:21-22

16 'No one lights a lamp to cover it with a bowl or to put it under a bed. No, he =11:33 ‖Mt 5:15 Jn 8:12+
puts it on a lamp-stand so that people may see the light when they come in.
17 For nothing is hidden but it will be made clear, nothing secret but it will be =12:2 ‖Mt 10:26
18 known and brought to light. •So take care how you hear; for anyone who has ‖*Mt 13:12: 25:29*
will be given more; from anyone who has not, even what he thinks he has will ‖Mk 4:24-25 =*19:26*
be taken away.'

The true kinsmen of Jesus[a] Mt 12:46-50 ‖Mk 3:31-35

19 His mother and his brothers came looking for him, but they could not get to
20 him because of the crowd. •He was told, 'Your mother and brothers are standing
21 outside and want to see you'. •But he said in answer, 'My mother and my 11:27-28
brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice'. Ezk 33:31

The calming of the storm ‖Mt 8:23-27 ‖Mk 4:35-41

22 One day, he got into a boat with his disciples and said to them, 'Let us cross
23 over to the other side of the lake'. So they put to sea, •and as they sailed he fell asleep. When a squall came down on the lake the boat started taking in water and
24 they found themselves in danger. •So they went to rouse him saying, 'Master! Master! We are going down!' Then he woke up and rebuked the wind and the
25 rough water; and they subsided and it was calm again. •He said to them, 'Where Mt 8:10+
is your faith?' They were awestruck and astonished and said to one another, 1:12+
'Who can this be, that gives orders even to winds and waves and they obey him?'

f. Var. 'by her actions', cf. Mt 11:19. The children of Wisdom, i.e., of the all-wise God, cf. Pr 8:22+, appreciate and welcome God's works.

g. Lk only. This episode is not the same as the anointing at Bethany, Mt 26:6-13p.

h. Most probably not Mary of Magdala, 8:2, and still less Mary, sister of Martha, 10:39; Jn 11:1,2,5; 12:2-3.

i. Var. 'ever since she came in'.

j. Not, as is usually translated, 'her many sins are forgiven her *because* she has shown such great love'. The context demands the reverse: she shows so much affection because she has had so many sins forgiven.

8 a. Lk has taken this passage out of its context in Mk 3:31-35 to serve as a conclusion to this small section on the parables, hence he modifies v. 21 (cf. Mk 3:35) to match v. 15.

||Mt 8:28-34 ||Mk 5:1-20 **The Gerasene demoniac**

They came to land in the country of the Gerasenes,[b] which is opposite Galilee. 26
He was stepping ashore when a man from the town who was possessed by devils 27
came towards him; for a long time the man had worn no clothes, nor did he
live in a house, but in the tombs.

4:34 Catching sight of Jesus he gave a shout, fell at his feet and cried out at the 28
Mt 4:3+ top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, son of the Most High God?
I implore you, do not torture me.'•—For Jesus had been telling the unclean 29
spirit to come out of the man. It was a devil that had seized on him a great many
times, and then they used to secure him with chains and fetters to restrain him,
but he would always break the fastenings, and the devil would drive him out into
the wilds. •'What is your name?' Jesus asked. 'Legion' he said—because 30
many devils had gone into him. •And these pleaded with him not to order them 31
to depart into the Abyss.[c]

Now there was a large herd of pigs feeding there on the mountain, and the 32
devils pleaded with him to let them go into these. So he gave them leave. •The 33
devils came out of the man and went into the pigs, and the herd charged down
the cliff into the lake and were drowned.

When the swineherds saw what had happened they ran off and told their story 34
in the town and in the country round about; •and the people went out to see what 35
had happened. When they came to Jesus they found the man from whom the
10:39 devils had gone out sitting at the feet of Jesus,[d] clothed and in his full
senses; and they were afraid. •Those who had witnessed it told them how the 36
man who had been possessed came to be healed. •The entire population of the 37
1:12+ Gerasene territory was in a state of panic and asked Jesus to leave them. So he
got into the boat and went back.

The man from whom the devils had gone out asked to be allowed to stay with 38
him, but he sent him away. •'Go back home,' he said 'and report all that God has 39
done for you.' So the man went off and spread throughout the town all that
Jesus had done for him.

||Mt 9:18-26 ||Mk 5:21-43 **Cure of the woman with a haemorrhage. Jairus' daughter raised to life**

On his return Jesus was welcomed by the crowd, for they were all there waiting 40
for him. •And now there came a man named Jairus, who was an official of the 41
synagogue. He fell at Jesus' feet and pleaded with him to come to his house,
because he had an only daughter about twelve years old, who was dying. And the 42
crowds were almost stifling Jesus as he went.

Now there was a woman suffering from a haemorrhage for twelve years, 43
Ac 19:12 whom no one had been able to cure.[e] •She came up behind him and touched 44
the fringe of his cloak; and the haemorrhage stopped at that instant. •Jesus said, 45
'Who touched me?' When they all denied that they had, Peter and his companions
5:17; 6:19 said, 'Master, it is the crowds round you, pushing'. •But Jesus said, 'Somebody 46
touched me. I felt that power had gone out from me.' •Seeing herself discovered, the 47
woman came forward trembling, and falling at his feet explained in front of all the
people why she had touched him and how she had been cured at that very moment. 48
'My daughter,' he said 'your faith has restored you to health; go in peace.'

While he was still speaking, someone arrived from the house of the synagogue 49
official to say, 'Your daughter has died. Do not trouble the Master any further.'
Mt 8:10+ But Jesus had heard this, and he spoke to the man, 'Do not be afraid, only have 50
faith and she will be safe'. •When he came to the house he allowed no one to go 51
9:28; 22:8 Jn 13:24-25 in with him except Peter and John and James,[f] and the child's father and mother.
Ac 3:1 They were all weeping and mourning for her, but Jesus said, 'Stop crying; she is 52
not dead, but asleep'. •But they laughed at him, knowing she was dead. •But 53 54
taking her by the hand he called to her, 'Child, get up'. •And her spirit returned and 55
she got up at once. Then he told them to give her something to eat. •Her parents 56
1:12+ Mk 1:34+ were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

The mission of the Twelve

||Mt 10:5,8, 9-14 ||Mk 6:7-13

9 He called the Twelve[a] together and gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases, ·and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. ·He said to them, 'Take nothing for the journey: neither staff, nor haversack, nor bread, nor money; and let none of you take a spare tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there; and when you leave, let it be from there. As for those who do not welcome you, when you leave their town shake the dust from your feet as a sign to them.' ·So they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the Good News and healing everywhere.

Mt 8:3+; 8:29+ 10:7 Ac 9:43; 16-15; 17:7; 18:3 Ac 13:51

Herod and Jesus[b]

||Mt 14:1-2 ||Mk 6:14-16

Meanwhile Herod the tetrarch had heard about all that was going on; and he was puzzled, because some people were saying that John had risen from the dead, ·others that Elijah had reappeared, still others that one of the ancient prophets had come back to life. ·But Herod said, 'John? I beheaded him. So who is this I hear such reports about?' And he was anxious to see him.

9:19 23:8-12

The return of the apostles. Miracle of the loaves

||Mt 14:13-21 ||Mk 6:30-44 ||Jn 6:1-13

On their return the apostles gave him an account of all they had done. Then he took them with him and withdrew to a town called Bethsaida where they could be by themselves. ·But the crowds got to know and they went after him. He made them welcome and talked to them about the kingdom of God; and he cured those who were in need of healing.

Mk 6:45

It was late afternoon when the Twelve came to him and said, 'Send the people away, and they can go to the villages and farms round about to find lodging and food; for we are in a lonely place here'. ·He replied, 'Give them something to eat yourselves'. But they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we are to go ourselves and buy food for all these people'. ·For there were about five thousand men. But he said to his disciples, 'Get them to sit down in parties of about fifty'. ·They did so and made them all sit down. ·Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven, and said the blessing over them; then he broke them and handed them to his disciples to distribute among the crowd. ·They all ate as much as they wanted, and when the scraps remaining were collected they filled twelve baskets.

Peter's profession of faith[c]

||Mt 16:13-16,20 ||Mk 8:27-30

Now one day when he was praying alone in the presence of his disciples he put this question to them, 'Who do the crowds say I am?' ·And they answered, 'John the Baptist; others Elijah; and others say one of the ancient prophets come back to life'. ·'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' It was Peter who spoke up. 'The Christ of God' he said. ·But he gave them strict orders not to tell anyone anything about this.

3:21+ 9:8 2:26+; 23:35 *Mk 1:34+*

First prophecy of the Passion[d]

||Mt 16:21 ||Mk 8:31

'The Son of Man' he said 'is destined to suffer grievously, to be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death, and to be raised up on the third day.'

9:44; 12:50; 17:25; 18:31; 24:7. 26,44

b. Var. 'Gergesenes', 'Gadarenes'.

c. In place of Mark's 'send them out of the district', Mk 5:10. The demons beseech Jesus not to send them back to the depths of the earth, their usual dwelling place and ultimate home, Rv 9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3.

d. As a disciple sits, 8:38; cf. 10:39; Ac 22:3. Lk alone adds this detail.

e. Var. 'a woman who, having spent all she had on doctors, could be cured by no one', cf. Mk 5:26.

f. Cf. Mk 5:37+. Here, however, as in 9:28; Ac 1:13, John is named immediately after Peter. This coupling of John with Peter is common to Lk, 22:8; Ac 3:1,3,11; 4:13,19; 8:14, and the fourth gospel, Jn 13:23-26; 18:15-16; 20:3-9; 21:7,20-23.

9 a. Add. 'apostles'.

b. Lk does not record the Baptist's death; instead, he prepares the reader ('he was anxious to see him') for the subsequent meeting of Herod with Jesus, 23:8-12.

c. Lk has left out a whole section of Mk (6:45–8:26).

d. This prophecy is to be followed by several others, 9:44; 12:50; 17:25; 18:31-33. Cf. 24:7,25-27. Lk omits Peter's protest and his rebuke by Jesus, Mk 8:32f.

The condition of following Christ

Then to all he said, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce 23
himself and take up his cross every day and follow me. •For anyone who wants 24
to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, that man
will save it. •What gain, then, is it for a man to have won the whole world and to 25
have lost or ruined his very self? •For if anyone is ashamed of me and of my 26
words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his own glory
and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.

The kingdom will come soon

'I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before 27
they see the kingdom of God.'

The transfiguration[e]

Now about eight days after this had been said, he took with him Peter and 28
John and James and went up the mountain to pray. •As he prayed, the aspect of 29
his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. •Suddenly 30
there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah •appearing 31
in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in
Jerusalem. •Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake[f] 32
and saw his glory[g] *and the two men standing with him.* •As these were leaving 33
him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make
three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah'.—He did not know
what he was saying. •As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; 34
and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. •And a voice came 35
from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One.[h] Listen to him.' •And 36
after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and,
at that time, told no one what they had seen.

The epileptic demoniac

Now on the following day when they were coming down from the mountain 37
a large crowd came to meet him. •Suddenly a man in the crowd cried out. 'Master,' 38
he said 'I implore you to look at my son: he is my only child. •All at once a spirit 39
will take hold of him, and give a sudden cry and throw the boy into convulsions
with foaming at the mouth; it is slow to leave him, but when it does it leaves the
boy worn out. •I begged your disciples to cast it out, and they could not.' 40
'Faithless and perverse generation!' Jesus said in reply 'How much longer must I be 41
among you and put up with you? Bring your son here.' •The boy was still moving 42
towards Jesus when the devil threw him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus
rebuked the unclean spirit and cured the boy and gave him back to his father,
and everyone was awestruck by the greatness of God. 43

Second prophecy of the Passion

At a time when everyone was full of admiration for all he did, he said to
his disciples, •'For your part, you must have these words constantly in your 44
mind: The Son of Man is going to be handed over into the power of men'.
But they did not understand him when he said this; it was hidden from them 45
so that they should not see the meaning of it, and they were afraid to ask him
about what he had just said.

Who is the greatest?

An argument started between them about which of them was the greatest. 46
Jesus knew what thoughts were going through their minds, and he took a 47
little child and set him by his side •and then said to them, 'Anyone who 48
welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes

me welcomes the one who sent me. For the least among you all, that is the one who is great.' Mt 18:5▲ 14:11

On using the name of Jesus

49 John spoke up. 'Master,' he said 'we saw a man casting out devils in your
50 name, and because he is not with us we tried to stop him.'[i] •But Jesus said to him, 'You must not stop him: anyone who is not against you is for you'. Ac 3:16+; 19:13 11:23

IV. THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM[j]

A Samaritan village is inhospitable

51 Now as the time drew near for him to be taken up to heaven,[k] he resolutely
52 took the road for Jerusalem •and sent messengers ahead of him. These set out,
53 and they went into a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, •but the
54 people would not receive him because he was making for Jerusalem.[l] •Seeing this, the disciples James and John said, 'Lord, do you want us to call down fire
55 56 from heaven to burn them up?'[m] •But he turned and rebuked them,[n] •and they went off to another village. 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19: 28; 24:51 Mt 19:1 Mk 10:1 2 K 1:10

Hardships of the apostolic calling

||Mt 8:18-22

57 As they travelled along they met a man on the road who said to him, 'I will
58 follow you wherever you go'. •Jesus answered, 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'.
59 Another to whom he said, 'Follow me', replied,[o] 'Let me go and bury my
60 father first'. •But he answered, 'Leave the dead to bury their dead;[p] your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God'. 14:26,33
61 Another said, 'I will follow you, sir, but first let me go and say good-bye
62 to my people at home'. •Jesus said to him, 'Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God'. 1 K 19:19-21 Ph 3:13

The mission of the seventy-two disciples

1 10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two[a] others and sent them out ahead
2 of him,[b] in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself was to visit. He said to them,[c] 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord
3 of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest. •Start off now, but remember,
4 I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. •Carry no purse, no haversack,
5 no sandals. Salute no one on the road. •Whatever you house go into, let your 9:1-2 Qo 4:9 ||Mt 9:37-38 Jn 4:36 ||Mt 10:16 =9:3-5; 22:35 2 K 4:29 Mt 10:9-15 ||Mk 6:8-11

e. One of the narratives in which Lk most widely differs from Mk. It is clear that Lk had his own source of information (John?).

f. Preferable to 'they woke up'.

g. The glory of his future coming, 9:26.

h. Var. 'the Beloved', cf. Mt and Mk. The titles 'Chosen One', cf. 23:35; Is 42:1, and 'Son of Man' alternate in the *Parables of Enoch*.

i. Var. 'we stopped him'.

j. From 9:51–18:14, Lk deserts Mk. Assembling material he has found in the Collection (cf. Introduction to the Synoptic Gospels) that served Mt also, together with information from his own special source, Lk arranges all within the literary framework of a journey to Jerusalem (9:53,57; 10:1; 13:22,33; 17:11; cf. 2:38+) suggested to him by Mk 10:1.

k. Lit. 'for his taking up'. This 'assumption' of Jesus, cf. 2 K 2:9-11; Mk 16:19; Ac 1:2,10-11; 1 Tm 3:16, refers to the last days of his suffering life (Passion, death) and the beginning of his glory (resurrection, ascension). Jn, thinking more theologically, uses the word 'glorify' in connection with the whole of this period, Jn 7:39; 12:16,23; 13:31f; for him the crucifixion is a 'lifting up', Jn 12:32+.

l. The hatred of the Samaritans for the Jews, Jn 4:9+, would show itself particularly towards those on pilgrimage to Jerusalem; hence it was usual to bypass this territory, cf. Mt 10:5. Only Lk and Jn (4:1-42) mention Christ's presence in this schismatic province, cf. Lk 17:11,16. The early Church was not slow to follow his example, Ac 8:5-25.

m. Add. 'as Elijah did'. Allusion to 2 K 1:10-12. James and John are seen here as 'sons of thunder' indeed, Mk 3:17.

n. Add. 'You do not know what spirit you are made of. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls but to save them.'

o. Add. 'Lord', cf. Mt 8:21.

p. A play on the two meanings of 'death': physical and spiritual.

10 a. Var. 'seventy'.

b. Not, as in 9:52, to arrange for lodgings etc. but to prepare souls for his coming.

c. The collection used by Mt and Lk included a missionary discourse parallel with that of Mk 6:8-11. Lk has made use of both these sources, but separately (9:3-5; 10:2-12), whereas Mt has joined them together 10:7-16. Cf. Lk 11:39+; 17:22+.

first words be, "Peace to this house!" •And if a man of peace[d] lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. •Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. •Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you, •Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you". •But whenever you enter a town and they do not make you welcome, go out into its streets and say, •"We wipe off the very dust of your town that clings to our feet, and leave it with you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God is very near." •I tell you, on that day it will not go as hard with Sodom as with that town.

1 Tm 5:18 | Mt 3:2+ ||Mt 10:7 Ac 28:8 | Ac 13:51

||Mt 11:21-24 'Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. •And still, it will not go as hard with Tyre and Sidon at the Judgement as with you. •And as for you, Capernaum, did you want to be exalted high as heaven? *You shall be thrown down to hell.*

Is 14:13,15

=9:48 Ex 16:8 ||Mt 10:40 |Mk 9:37 |Jn 13:20 'Anyone who listens to you listens to me; anyone who rejects you rejects me, and who those reject me reject the one who sent me.'

True cause for the apostles to rejoice

1:14+ The seventy-two came back rejoicing. 'Lord,' they said 'even the devils submit to us when we use your name.' •He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven. •Yes, I have given you power to tread underfoot serpents and scorpions and the whole strength of the enemy; nothing shall ever hurt you. •Yet do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you; rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven.'

Ac 3:16+ *Is 14:12* Jn 12:31-32 *Mt 8:29+* *Ps 91:13* Rv 12:9 *Mk 16:18* Rv 20:12+

||Mt 11:25-27 The Good News revealed to the simple. The Father and the Son

1:14+;4:1+ It was then that, filled with joy by the Holy Spirit, he said, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. •[e]Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

8:10 Rv 19:12

||Mt 13:16-17 The privilege of the disciples

Then turning to his disciples he spoke to them in private, 'Happy the eyes that see what you see, •for I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it'.[f]

||Mt 22:34-40 ||Mk 12:28-31 The great commandment

2 Ch 28:15 Pr 3:27 Mt 19:16 Dt 6:5 Lv 19:18 Lv 18:5 Pr 19:16

There was a lawyer who, to disconcert him, stood up and said to him, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' •He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What do you read there?' •He replied, '*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength*, and with all your mind, *and your neighbour as yourself*'. •'You have answered right,' said Jesus 'do this and life is yours.'

Parable of the good Samaritan

Jn 4:9 But the man was anxious to justify himself[g] and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' •Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. •Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. •But a Samaritan[h] traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. •He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring

17:16 Is 1:6

oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the
35 inn and looked after him. •Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them
to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said "and on my way back I will make
36 good any extra expense you have." •Which of these three, do you think, proved
37 himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?' •'The one
who took pity on him' he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same
yourself'.

Martha and Mary[i]

38 In the course of their journey he came to a village, and a woman named Jn 11:1-2
39 Martha welcomed him into her house. •She had a sister called Mary, who sat 8:35+
40 down at the Lord's feet and listened to him speaking. •Now Martha who was
distracted with all the serving said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister is leaving 1 Co 7:35
41 me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me.' •But the Lord 8:3+
answered: 'Martha, Martha,' he said 'you worry and fret about so many things, Mt 6:33
42 and yet few are needed, indeed only one.[j] It is Mary who has chosen the better Jn 6:27
part; it is not to be taken from her.'

The Lord's prayer

1 11 Now once he was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished 3:21+
one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his
2 disciples'. •He said to them, 'Say this when you pray:[a]

"Father, may your name be held holy, ‖Mt 6:9-13
your kingdom come;
3 give us each day our daily bread,[b]
and forgive us our sins,[c]
4 for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us.
And do not put us to the test." '

The importunate friend 18:1-8

5 He also said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in
6 the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves, •because a friend
of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer
7 him"; •and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The
door is bolted now, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up to give
8 it you". •I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's Jg 14:17 Mt 15:23
sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he
wants.

Effective prayer ‖Mt 7:7-11 Jn 14:13-14+

9 'So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find;
10 knock, and the door will be opened to you. •For the one who asks always receives;
the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door
11 opened to him. •What father among you would hand his son a stone when he

d. Lit. 'son of peace', a Hebraism for those who deserve 'peace', i.e. all the spiritual and temporal blessings the word implies. Cf. Jn 14:27+.

e. Add. 'and turning to his disciples he said'.

f. Paul emphasises the fact that the 'mystery' was long kept hidden; Rm 16:25+. See also 1 P 1:11-12.

g. For having put the question.

h. An alien and a heretic, Jn 8:48; cf. Lk 9:53+, from whom one might expect hostility, as opposed to those of Israel who should have been most sensitive to the demands of charity.

i. These two sisters reappear, with the same individual characteristics, in the story of the raising of Lazarus, Jn 11:1-44.

j. Var. 'but only one thing is needed', 'but only a few things are needed', readings which make free with the text and deform the sense. In his remark Jesus rises from the material plane ('few things are needed', i.e. for the meal) to the 'one thing necessary' which is to listen to the word of God.

11 a. Matthew's text has seven petitions, Luke's five. There were therefore two traditions of the Lord's prayer. Matthew's form seems the more ancient.

b. Var. (borrowed, perhaps, from a baptismal liturgy) 'may your Holy Spirit come down on us and cleanse us'.

c. 'Debts' in Mt, here correctly interpreted by Lk who, however, does not suppress this juridical aspect (cf. his following line 'each one who is in debt to us').

asked for bread? Or hand him a snake instead of a fish? •Or hand him a 12
scorpion if he asked for an egg? •If you then, who are evil, know how to give 13
your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give
Jn 14:13-16 the Holy Spirit[d] to those who ask him!'

||Mt 12:22-29 ||Mk 3:22-27 **Jesus and Beelzebul**

Mt 9:32 He was casting out a devil and it was dumb; but when the devil had gone 14
out the dumb man spoke, and the people were amazed. •But some of them 15
=11:29 ||Mt 16:1 ||Mk 8:11 said, 'It is through Beelzebul, the prince of devils, that he casts out devils'. •Others 16
asked him, as a test, for a sign from heaven; •but, knowing what they were 17
thinking, he said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is heading for
ruin, and a household divided against itself collapses. •So too with Satan: if he is 18
divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand?—Since you assert that
it is through Beelzebul[e] that I cast out devils. •Now if it is through Beelzebul 19
that I cast out devils, through whom do your own experts cast them out? Let
Ex 8:15 Mt 12:28 *Lk 17:21* Mt 4:17+; 8:29+ *Is 49:25* Jr 31:11 them be your judges, then. •But if it is through the finger of God[f] that I cast 20
out devils, then know that the kingdom of God has overtaken you. •So long as 21
a strong man fully armed guards his own palace, his goods are undisturbed;
but when someone stronger than he is attacks and defeats him, the stronger 22
man takes away all the weapons he relied on and shares out his spoil.

||Mt 12:30 **No compromise**

9:50 'He who is not with me is against me; and he who does not gather with me 23
scatters.

||Mt 12:43-45 **Return of the unclean spirit**

Lv 16:22 'When an unclean spirit goes out of a man it wanders through waterless coun- 24
try looking for a place to rest, and not finding one it says, "I will go back to
the home I came from". •But on arrival, finding it swept and tidied, •it then goes 25 26
off and brings seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and
set up house there, so that the man ends up by being worse than he was before.'

The truly happy

1:48; 4:15+; 23:29 Now as he was speaking, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said, 27
'Happy the womb that bore you and the breasts you sucked!' •But he replied, 28
8:21 Dt 6:3 Pr 19:16 Rv 1:3 'Still happier those who hear the word of God and keep it!'

||*Mt 12:38-42* **The sign of Jonah**

Mt 16:1 The crowds got even bigger and he addressed them, 'This is a wicked genera- 29
Jn 6:30-31 tion; it is asking for a sign.[g] The only sign it will be given is the sign of Jonah.
For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this 30
1 K 10:1-10 generation.[h] •On Judgement day the Queen of the South will rise up with the men 31
of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the
Jn 6:35+ earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there is something greater than
Jon 3 Solomon here. •On Judgement day the men of Nineveh will stand up with this 32
generation and condemn it, because when Jonah preached they repented; and
there is something greater than Jonah here.

=8:16 ||Mt 5:15 ||Mk 4:21 **The parable of the lamp repeated**

'No one lights a lamp and puts it in some hidden place or under a tub, but 33
on the lamp-stand so that people may see the light when they come in. •The lamp 34
Mt 6:22-23 of your body is your eye. When your eye is sound, your whole body too is filled with
light; but when it is diseased your body too will be all darkness. •See to it then that 35
the light inside you is not darkness. •If, therefore, your whole body is filled with 36
light, and no trace of darkness, it will be light entirely, as when the lamp shines
on you with its rays.'[i]

The Pharisees and the lawyers attacked

37 He had just finished speaking when a Pharisee invited him to dine at his 7:36; 14:1
38 house. He went in and sat down at the table. •The Pharisee saw this and was Mt 15:2 Mk 7:2,5
39 surprised that he had not first washed before the meal. •But the Lord said to him,[j]
'Oh, you Pharisees! You clean the outside of cup and plate, while inside yourselves ||Mt 23:25-26
40 you are filled with extortion and wickedness. •Fools! Did not he who made the
41 outside make the inside too? •Instead, give alms from what you have[k] and then 12:33+
42 indeed everything will be clean for you. •But alas for you Pharisees! You who pay ||Mt 23:23
your tithe of mint and rue and all sorts of garden herbs and overlook justice and
the love of God! These you should have practised, without leaving the others
43 undone. •Alas for you Pharisees who like taking the seats of honour in the =20:46 ||Mt 23:6-7
44 synagogues and being greeted obsequiously in the market squares! •Alas for ||Mk 12:38-39
you, because you are like the unmarked tombs that men walk on without ||Mt 23:27
knowing it!'[l]
45 A lawyer then spoke up. 'Master,' he said 'when you speak like this you
46 insult us too.' •'Alas for you lawyers also,' he replied 'because you load on men ||Mt 23:4
burdens that are unendurable, burdens that you yourselves do not move a finger
to lift.
47 'Alas for you who build the tombs of the prophets, the men your ancestors ||Mt 23:29-31
48 killed! •In this way you both witness what your ancestors did and approve it; they
did the killing, you do the building.[m]
49 'And that is why the Wisdom of God[n] said, "I will send them prophets and ||Mt 23:34-36
50 apostles; some they will slaughter and persecute, •so that this generation will have
to answer for every prophet's blood that has been shed since the foundation
51 of the world, •from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was
murdered between the altar and the sanctuary". Yes, I tell you, this generation
will have to answer for it all.
52 'Alas for you lawyers who have taken away the key of knowledge! You have ||Mt 23:13
not gone in yourselves, and have prevented others going in who wanted to.'
53 When he left the house, the scribes and the Pharisees began a furious attack 6:11; 19:47; 20:19, 22:2
54 on him[o] and tried to force answers from him on innumerable questions, •setting Mt 19:3; 22:15f
traps to catch him out in something he might say.

Open and fearless speech

1 12 Meanwhile the people had gathered in their thousands so that they were
treading on one another. And he began to speak, first of all to his disciples.[a] ||Mt 16:6, 12 ||Mk 8:15
'Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees—that is, their hypocrisy.
2 Everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden =8:17 Qo 10:20
3 will be made clear. •For this reason, whatever you have said in the dark will ||Mt 10:26-27 ||Mk 4:22
be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in hidden places will be
proclaimed on the housetops.

d. Instead of the 'good things' of Mt 7:11. The Holy Spirit is the best of all 'good things'.

e. Var. 'Beelzebul' and 'Beelzebub'.

f. On this phrase, cf. Ex 8:15 and Ps 8:3. This passage and its parallel, Mt 12:28, have combined to provide the title 'finger of God's right hand' for the Holy Spirit.

g. I.e. a miracle in evidence and vindication of Christ's authority, cf. Jn 2:11+; Lk 1:18+. See Mt 8:3+.

h. Jonah showed the Ninevites the way to God; now Jesus points the way, but his hearers, less generous than the Ninevites, have refused to take it. Mt 12:40 offers a different interpretation.

i. The textual tradition of vv. 35-36 is confused, and the text is probably corrupt. But the general meaning is clear: Jesus addresses his message to all, and if the mind is 'healthy', i.e. unclouded by selfish prejudice, cf. Jn 3:19-21, it can be understood by all.

j. Lk depends here on the source he shares with Mt; in 20:45-47 he returns to the same theme, this time depending on Mk. Mt has combined both sources in one discourse (ch. 23). Cf. Lk 10:2+; 17:22+.

k. Interpretation difficult. Others translate 'what is within'.

l. Thus contracting legal impurity, Nb 19:16.

m. Irony. By building the tombs of the prophets they hoped to make amends for their ancestors' sins—yet they have exactly the same mentality as these ancestors.

n. I.e. the divine intention as interpreted by Jesus.

o. The attitude of Christ's enemies continued to harden; Lk traces the process in more detail than Mk; Lk 6:11; 11:53-54; 19:48; 20:19-20; 22:2.

12 a. Or else 'began to say to his disciples: First of all, be on your guard...'

Jn 15:15
||*Mt 10:28-31*
Jm 4:12
Mt 3:12+;
18:9+
1 Co 9:9
21:18

'To you my friends I say: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and 4
after that can do no more. •I will tell you whom to fear: fear him who, after he 5
has killed, has the power to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. •Can you 6
not buy five sparrows for two pennies? And yet not one is forgotten in God's
sight. •Why, every hair on your head has been counted. There is no need to be 7
afraid: you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

||Mt 10:32-33
||Mk 8:38
=9:26

'I tell you, if anyone openly declares himself for me in the presence of men, the 8
Son of Man will declare himself for him in the presence of God's angels. •But 9
the man who disowns me in the presence of men will be disowned in the
presence of God's angels.

||Mt 12:32
||Mk 3:29

'Everyone who says a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but he 10
who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

=21:12-15
||Mt 10:17-20
||Mk 13:11
Jn 14:26+

'When they take you before synagogues and magistrates and authorities, 11
do not worry about how to defend yourselves or what to say, •because when the 12
time comes, the Holy Spirit will teach you what you must say.'

On hoarding possessions

Si 5:1f

A man in the crowd said to him, 'Master, tell my brother to give me a share 13
of our inheritance'. •'My friend,' he replied 'who appointed me your judge, or 14
the arbitrator of your claims?' •Then he said to them, 'Watch, and be on your 15
guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life is not made secure by what he
owns, even when he has more than he needs'.

Si 11:24;
14:4
Ho 12:9
1 Tm 6:17

Then he told them a parable: 'There was once a rich man who, having had 16
a good harvest from his land, •thought to himself, "What am I to do? I have 17
not enough room to store my crops." •Then he said, "This is what I will do: 18
I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my
goods in them, •and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good 19
things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good
time". •But God said to him, "Fool! This very night the demand will be made 20
for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?" •So it is when 21
a man stores up treasure for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight
of God.'

Pr 27:1
Jm 4:13-15
Si 11:19
1 Co 15:33
Qo 6:2; 9:12
Mt 6:19-21
Rv 3:17-18

||Mt 6:25-33 Trust in Providence

Then he said to his disciples, 'That is why I am telling you not to worry 22
about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are
to clothe it. •For life[b] means more than food, and the body more than clothing. 23
Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and 24
no barns; yet God feeds them. And how much more are you worth than the
birds! •Can any of you, for all his worrying, add a single cubit to his span of 25
life? •If the smallest things, therefore, are outside your control, why worry 26
about the rest? •Think of the flowers; they never have to spin or weave;[c] yet, 27
I assure you, not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these.
Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and 28
thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will he look after you, you
men of little faith! •But you, you must not set your hearts on things to eat and 29
things to drink; nor must you worry. •It is the pagans of this world who set their 30
hearts on all these things. Your Father well knows you need them. •No; set your 31
hearts on his kingdom, and these other things will be given you as well.

1 Co 9:9

Jn 10; 21:
15-17

'There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to 32
give you the kingdom.

3:11; 6:30 7:5; 11:41 On almsgiving[d]

Pr 13:7
Ws 7:14
||Mt 6:20-21

'Sell your possessions and give alms. Get yourselves purses that do not wear 33
out, treasure that will not fail you, in heaven where no thief can reach it and
no moth destroy it. •For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 34

On being ready for the Master's return

35 'See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit. 36 •Be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. 37 •Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. I tell you solemnly, he will put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them. 38 •It may be in the second watch he comes, or in the third, but happy those servants if he finds them ready. 39 •You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what hour the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

Si 5:7 1 P 1:13 *Mt 25:1-13* 22:27 Jn 13:4-5 ‖Mk 13:35 ‖Mt 24:43-44

40 Peter said, 'Lord, do you mean this parable for us, or for everyone?' 41 •The Lord replied, 'What sort of steward,[e] then, is faithful and wise enough for the master to place him over his household to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? 42 •Happy that servant if his master's arrival finds him at this employment. 43 •I tell you truly, he will place him over everything he owns. 44 •But as for the servant who says to himself, "My master is taking his time coming", and sets about beating the menservants and the maids, and eating and drinking and getting drunk, 45 •his master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know. The master will cut him off and send him to the same fate as the unfaithful.

‖Mt 24:45-51 1 Co 4:1

46 'The servant who knows what his master wants, but has not even started to carry out those wishes, will receive very many strokes of the lash. 47 •The one who who did not know, but deserves to be beaten for what he has done, will receive fewer strokes. When a man has had a great deal given him, a great deal will be demanded of him; when a man has had a great deal given him on trust, even more will be expected of him.

Mt 10:15

Jesus and his Passion

48 'I have come to bring fire[f] to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! 49 •There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

9:22+; 22:14 Mk 10:38+

Jesus the cause of dissension

‖Mt 10:34-36

50 'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. 51 •For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; 52 •the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

22:37 2:34 Mi 7:6

On reading the signs of the times[g]

53 He said again to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud looming up in the west you say at once that rain is coming, and so it does. 54 •And when the wind is from the south you say it will be hot, and it is. 55 •Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the face of the earth and the sky. How is it you do not know how to interpret these times?

19:44 ‖Mt 16:2-3

56 'Why not judge for yourselves what is right? 57 •For example: when you go to court with your opponent, try to settle with him on the way, or he may drag you before the judge and the judge hand you over to the bailiff and the bailiff

‖Mt 5:25-26

12 b. Lit. 'the soul' in the biblical sense, as in v. 19.

c. Var. 'work or spin', cf. Mt 6:28.

d. That riches are a danger and should be given away in alms is characteristic teaching of Lk: cf. 3:11; 6:30; 7:5; 11:41; 12:33-34; 14:14; 16:9; 18:22; 19:8; Ac 9:36; 10:2,4,31.

e. A steward with authority over other servants; Jesus, therefore, is speaking of the apostles (the 'us' of Peter's question).

f. This fire symbolises neither the spiritual struggle that the coming of Jesus provokes nor, strictly speaking, the Holy Spirit. It is the fire that is to purify and inflame men's hearts, the fire lit on the cross. Jn 12:32 has the same thought in different words.

g. The messianic era has begun: it is high time for this to be realised, because judgement is coming soon, vv. 57-59.

have you thrown into prison. •I tell you, you will not get out till you have paid 59
the very last penny.'

Examples inviting repentance

13 It was just about this time that some people arrived and told him about 1
the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices.[a]
Jn 9:3 At this he said to them, 'Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that 2
were greater sinners than any other Galileans? •They were not, I tell you. No; 3
but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. •Or those eighteen on whom 4
the tower at Siloam fell and killed them? Do you suppose that they were more
Jn 7:23;8:24 guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? •They were not, I tell you. 5
No; but unless you repent you will all perish as they did.'

Parable of the barren fig tree[b]

Jr 8:13
Mt 21:19-20 He told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he 6
came looking for fruit on it but found none. •He said to the man who looked 7
after the vineyard, "Look here, for three years[c] now I have been coming to look
for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down: why should it be taking
up the ground?" •"Sir," the man replied "leave it one more year and give me 8
time to dig round it and manure it: •it may bear fruit next year; if not, then 9
you can cut it down." '

6:6-11; 14:1-6 **Healing of the crippled woman on a sabbath**

Jn 9:14+ One sabbath day he was teaching in one of the synagogues, •and a woman 10 11
Mt 8:29+ was there who for eighteen years had been possessed by a spirit that left her
enfeebled; she was bent double and quite unable to stand upright.[d] •When Jesus 12
saw her he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are rid of your infirmity'
4:40 2:20+ and he laid his hands on her. And at once she straightened up, and she glorified 13
God.
Ex 20:8-10 But the synagogue official was indignant because Jesus had healed on the 14
sabbath,[e] and he addressed the people present. 'There are six days' he said 'when
work is to be done. Come and be healed on one of those days and not on the
14:5 Mt 12:11 sabbath.' •But the Lord answered him. 'Hypocrites!' he said 'Is there one of 15
you who does not untie his ox or his donkey from the manger on the sabbath
Mt 8:29+ and take it out for watering? •And this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom 16
Satan has held bound these eighteen years—was it not right to untie her bonds
1:14+ on the sabbath day?' •When he said this, all his adversaries were covered with 17
4:15+ confusion, and all the people were overjoyed at all the wonders he worked.

||Mt 13:31-32 ||Mk 4:30-32 **Parable of the mustard seed**

He went on to say, 'What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare 18
Ezk 17:23 Dn 4:9,18 it with? •It is like a mustard seed which a man took and threw into his garden: 19
it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air sheltered in its branches.'

||Mt 13:13 **Parable of the yeast**

Another thing he said, 'What shall I compare the kingdom of God with? 20
It is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till 21
it was leavened all through.'

The narrow door; rejection of the Jews, call of the gentiles

2:38+; 9:51+ Through towns and villages he went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. 22
Someone said to him, 'Sir, will there be only a few saved?' He said to them, 23
||Mt 7:13-14 'Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try 24
to enter and will not succeed.
||Mt 25:10-12 'Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find 25
yourself knocking on the door, saying, "Lord, open to us" but he will answer,

26 "I do not know where you come from". •Then you will find yourself saying, ‖Mt 7:22-23
27 "We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets" •but he will reply, "I do not know where you come from. *Away from me, all you wicked men!*" Ps 6:8

28 'Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham ‖Mt 8:11-12
and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves
29 turned outside. •And men from east and west, from north and south, will come
to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

30 'Yes, there are those now last who will be first, and those now first who will ‖Mt 19:30+; 20:16 ‖Mk 10:31
be last.'

Herod the fox

31 Just at this time some Pharisees came up. 'Go away' they said. 'Leave this
32 place, because Herod[f] means to kill you.' •He replied, 'You may go and give
that fox this message: Learn that today and tomorrow I cast out devils and on
33 the third day[g] attain my end.[h] •But for today and tomorrow and the next day
I must go on, since it would not be right for a prophet to die outside Jerusalem.' 2:38+ Mt 16:14+

Jerusalem admonished

‖Mt 23:37-39

34 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are 19:41-44
sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers
35 her brood under her wings, and you refused! •So be it! Your house will be left
to you. Yes, I promise you, you shall not see me till the time comes when you Mt 23:39+
say:

Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!' Ps 118:26

Healing of a dropsical man on the sabbath

6:6-11 13:10-17

1 14 Now on a sabbath day he had gone for a meal to the house of one of the Jn 9:14+
2 leading Pharisees; and they watched him closely. •There in front of him was
3 a man with dropsy, •and Jesus addressed the lawyers and Pharisees. 'Is it
4 against the law' he asked 'to cure a man on the sabbath, or not?' •But they Mk 3:4
5 remained silent, so he took the man and cured him and sent him away. •Then Mt 8:3
he said to them, 'Which of you here, if his son[a] falls into a well, or his ox, will 13:15
6 not pull him out on a sabbath day without hesitation?' •And to this they could ‖Mt 12:11 Jn 7:23
find no answer.

On choosing places at table

7 He then told the guests a parable, because he had noticed how they
8 picked the places of honour. He said this, •'When someone invites you to a Pr 25:6-7 Mt 23:6
wedding feast, do not take your seat in the place of honour. A more distinguished
9 person than you may have been invited, •and the person who invited you both
may come and say, "Give up your place to this man". And then, to your em-
10 barrassment, you would have to go and take the lowest place. •No; when you
are a guest, make your way to the lowest place and sit there, so that, when your

13 a. There is no other evidence for this incident or for that mentioned in v. 4. The meaning of both is clear: sin is not the immediate cause of this or that calamity (cf. Jn 9:3), but such disasters as these are providential invitations to repentance.

b. The episode of the withered fig tree in Mt 21: 18-22p shows Jesus in a hard light; Lk prefers to substitute this parable of his patience.

c. Possibly an allusion to the length of Christ's ministry as described in the fourth gospel.

d. Or 'unable to hold her head erect'.

e. He takes this act of healing for a 'work' forbidden by the Law.

f. Herod Antipas, cf. Lk 3:1+. If, as is possible, he made this threat to rid himself of Jesus, the term 'fox' refers to that sly trick.

g. The expression signifies a short period of time.

h. A word full of meaning, including both his death and the achievement of his perfection: Jesus was made 'perfect' by his suffering and death, Heb 2:10; 5:9. Cf. Jn 19:30.

i. Meaning apparently 'My work will soon be over, but not yet. I have not finished my work of exorcising and healing; this I shall contrive to do on my way to Jerusalem where my destiny lies', cf. 2:38+. Similarly, in Jn 7:30; 8:20 (cf. 8:59; 10:39; 11:54) the enemies of Jesus have no power over him so long as 'his hour has not yet come'.

14 a. 'his son'; var. 'his donkey'.

host comes, he may say, "My friend, move up higher". In that way, everyone
=18:14 ||Mt 23:12 with you at the table will see you honoured. •For everyone who exalts himself 11
9:48 will be humbled, and the man who humbles himself will be exalted.'

On choosing guests to be invited

6:32-35 Si 12:1-5 *12:33+* Then he said to his host, 'When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not ask 12
Pr 22:9 your friends, brothers, relations or rich neighbours, for fear they repay your courtesy by inviting you in return.[b] •No; when you have a party, invite the poor, 13
the crippled, the lame, the blind; •that they cannot pay you back means that 14
6:35 you are fortunate, because repayment will be made to you when the virtuous rise again.'

The invited guests who made excuses

On hearing this, one of those gathered round the table said to him, 'Happy 15
Mt 8:11+ the man who will be at the feast in the kingdom of God!' •But he said to him, 16
||Mt 22:2-10 'There was a man who gave a great banquet, and he invited a large number of people. •When the time for the banquet came, he sent his servant to say to those 17
who had been invited, "Come along: everything is ready now". •But all alike 18
started to make excuses. The first said, "I have bought a piece of land and must go and see it. Please accept my apologies." •Another said, "I have bought five 19
yoke of oxen and am on my way to try them out. Please accept my apologies." Yet another said,"I have just got married and so am unable to come". 20

'The servant returned and reported this to his master. Then the householder, 21
in a rage, said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame". •"Sir," 22
said the servant "your orders have been carried out and there is still room." Then the master said to his servant, "Go to the open roads and the hedgerows 23
and force people to come in to make sure my house is full; •because, I tell you, 24
not one of those who were invited shall have a taste of my banquet". '

Renouncing all that one holds dear

Great crowds accompanied him on his way and he turned and spoke to 25
Mt 10:37; 19:29 ||*Mt 10:38;* 16:24 ||Mk 8:34 =*9:23* Jn 12:26 them. •'If any man comes to me without hating[c] his father, mother, wife,[d] children, 26
brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. •Anyone 27
who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Renouncing possessions

'And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first 28
sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? •Otherwise, 29
if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, •"Here is a man who 30
Pr 24:6 started to build and was unable to finish". •Or again, what king marching to 31
war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? •If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he 32
9:59; 12:33+ would send envoys to sue for peace. •So in the same way, none of you can be 33
my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions.[e]

||Mt 5:13 ||Mk 9:50 **On loss of enthusiasm in a disciple**

'Salt is a useful thing. But if the salt itself loses its taste, how can it he 34
seasoned again? •It is good for neither soil nor manure heap. People throw it 35
out. Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!'

6:36 Ex 34:6+ Ho 2:21+; 11:8-9 *Ps 119:176* 19:7 **The three parables of God's mercy**

15 The tax collectors and the sinners, meanwhile, were all seeking his company 1
to hear what he had to say, •and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 2

3 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' •So he spoke this parable to them: Mt 9:10-13

The lost sheep Ezk 34:1 ||Mt 18:12-14

4 'What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? Ezk 34:4,16
5 And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders
6 •and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours? "Rejoice with me," Is 40:11
7 he would say "I have found my sheep that was lost." •In the same way, I tell you, 19:10
there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance. 1:14+ Ws 12:2 Ezk 18:23; 33:11

The lost drachma

8 'Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light
9 a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? •And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours? "Rejoice
10 with me," she would say "I have found the drachma I lost." •In the same way, 19:10
I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.' Ezk 18:23; 33:11

The lost son (the 'prodigal') and the dutiful son

11 12 He also said, 'A man had two sons. •The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me". So the father divided
13 the property between them. •A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money Pr 29:3 Si 9:6 on a life of debauchery.
14 'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now
15 he began to feel the pinch, •so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants
16 who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. •And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Pr 27:7
17 Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants Zc 10:9
18 have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! •I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and Ho 2:9
19 against you; •I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your
20 paid servants." •So he left the place and went back to his father. Tb 7:6 Jr 3:12f

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. *Is 49:14-16* Jr 31:20
21 He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly.[a] •Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer
22 deserve to be called your son."[b] •But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals
23 on his feet. •Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to
24 have a feast, a celebration, •because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate. 19:10
25 'Now the elder son was out in the fields and on his way back, as he drew
26 near the house, he could hear music and dancing. •Calling one of the servants
27 he asked what it was all about. •"Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back
28 safe and sound." •He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came Jon 4:1
29 out to plead with him; •but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never
30 offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. •But, for this

b. Or 'for fear they invite you in return and that be your repayment'.
c. Hebraism. Jesus asks, not for hate, but for total detachment now, cf. 9:57-62.
d. 'wife', peculiar to Lk, illustrating his leaning to asceticism, cf. 1 Co 7. So Lk also, 18:29.
e. Applicable to all disciples—Lk seems to make no distinction.

15 a. The father's pity symbolises divine mercy; it contrasts with the son's resentment which is like that of the Pharisees and scribes.
b. Add. 'treat me as one of your paid servants', cf. v. 19.

son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property—he and his women—you kill the calf we had been fattening."

'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. 31
1:14+ Ezk 18:23; 33:11 19:10 But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother 32
here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found." '

The crafty steward

16 [a]He also said to his disciples, 'There was a rich man and he had a steward 1
who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. •He called 2
for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of
your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer." •Then the 3
steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me,
what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too
ashamed. •Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed 4
from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes."

'Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How 5
much do you owe my master?" •"One hundred measures of oil" was the reply. 6
The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down straight away and write fifty".
To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred 7
measures of wheat" was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and
write eighty".

'The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness.[b] For the children 8
Jn 8:12+ of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children
of light.'

The right use of money

12:33+ Si 29:12 'And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is,[c] to win you friends, and 9
thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into the tents of
||19:17 ||Mt 25:21 eternity. •The man who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; 10
the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. •If then you 11
cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine
riches? •And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours,[d] who will give 12
you what is your very own?[e]

||Mt 6:24 'No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and 13
love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You
cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'

Against the Pharisees and their love of money

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and laughed at him. •He 14 15
18:9 Mt 6:1; 23:28 Pr 21:2 Ac 1:24 said to them, 'You are the very ones who pass yourselves off as virtuous in
people's sight, but God knows your hearts. For what is thought highly of by men
is loathsome in the sight of God.

||Mt 11:12-13 **The kingdom stormed**

'Up to the time of John it was the Law and the Prophets; since then, the 16
kingdom of God has been preached, and by violence everyone is getting in.

||Mt 5:18 **The Law remains**

'It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for one little stroke to drop 17
out of the Law.

||Mt 5:32; 19:9 **Marriage indissoluble**

'Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery, and 18
the man who marries a woman divorced by her husband commits adultery.

The rich man and Lazarus[f]

'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast 19

magnificently every day. •And at his gate there lay a poor man called Lazarus,
covered with sores, •who longed to fill himself with the scraps that fell from
the rich man's table.[g] Dogs even came and licked his sores. •Now the poor man
died and was carried away by the angels to the bosom of Abraham.[h] The rich
man also died and was buried.
'In his torment in Hades[i] he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off
with Lazarus in his bosom. •So he cried out, "Father Abraham, pity me and
send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am
in agony in these flames". •"My son," Abraham replied "remember that during
your life good things came your way, just as bad things came the way of Lazarus. 6:24-25
Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony. •But that is not all:
between us and you a great gulf[j] has been fixed, to stop anyone, if he wanted
to, crossing from our side to yours, and to stop any crossing from your side to
ours."
'The rich man replied, "Father, I beg you then to send Lazarus to my father's
house, •since I have five brothers, to give them warning so that they do not
come to this place of torment too". •"They have Moses and the prophets," 24:27,44
said Abraham "let them listen to them." •"Ah no, father Abraham," said the
rich man "but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent." •Then
Abraham said to him, "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, 24:27
Jn 5:46-47
they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead". '

On leading others astray

||Mt 18:6-7
||Mk 9:42

17 He said to his disciples, 'Obstacles are sure to come, but alas for the one
who provides them! •It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea
with a millstone put round his neck than that he should lead astray a single
one of these little ones. •Watch yourselves!

Brotherly correction[a]

||Mt 18:15,
21-22

'If your brother does something wrong, reprove him and, if he is sorry,
forgive him. •And if he wrongs you seven times a day and seven times comes
back to you and says, "I am sorry", you must forgive him.'

The power of faith

Mt 8:10+

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith'. •The Lord replied, 'Were ||Mt 17:20;
21:21
your faith the size of a mustard seed you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be
uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you. ||Mk 11:23

Humble service

'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him Jn 13:4-5
when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal immediately"?[b]
Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper laid; make yourself tidy
and wait on me while I eat and drink. You can eat and drink yourself afterwards"?

16 a. This chapter is a compilation of two parables and several *logia* of Jesus on the right and wrong use of money. Vv. 16,17,18, each with a different theme, interrupt the literary scheme of the chapter.

b. The steward is commended not for his roguery but for his adroitness in an awkward situation.

c. Money is here called 'tainted' not only because its owner is here presumed to have gained it dishonestly but because great wealth is rarely acquired without some sharp practice.

d. Lit. 'what is outside' i.e. wealth, which is something external to man.

e. 'your very own'; var. 'our very own'. Jesus is speaking of the most intimate possessions a man can have; these are spiritual.

f. Parable in story form without reference to any historical personage.

g. Add. 'but no one offered him a thing', cf. 15:16.

h. Jewish figure of speech, the equivalent of the old biblical phrase 'gathered to his fathers' i.e. to the patriarchs, Jg 2:10; cf. Gn 15:15; 47:30; Dt 31:16. 'In the bosom of...' implies close intimacy, Jn 1:18, and evokes a picture of the messianic banquet where Lazarus reclines next to Abraham, cf. Jn 13:23; Mt 8:11+.

i. Vulg. has 'in Hades' at the end of v. 22.

j. The 'gulf' is a symbol: the destiny of saved and lost is unalterable.

17 a. Lk, apparently, is thinking of a matter that concerns only two of the community; in Mt the offence is more public. Lk does not mention appealing to the community.

b. With this picture of human relations contrast the gospel paradox, 12:37; 22:27; Jn 13:1-16p.

Jb 22:3; 35:7 Si 10:26 Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? 9 •So with you: 10
when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are merely servants:
we have done no more than our duty".'

The ten lepers

9:51+ Jn 4:9 Now on the way to Jerusalem he travelled along the border between Samaria 11
and Galilee.[c] 12 •As he entered one of the villages, ten lepers came to meet him.
Lv 13:45-46 They stood some way off 13 •and called to him, 'Jesus! Master! Take pity on us.'
5:14 Lv 14:1-32 When he saw them he said, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests'. Now as they 14
Mt 8:4 Mk 1:44 were going away they were cleansed. 15 •Finding himself cured, one of them
2:20+ turned back praising God at the top of his voice 16 •and threw himself at the feet
9:53+; 10:33+ of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. 17 •This made Jesus say,
'Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? 18 •It seems that no
one has come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner.' 19 •And he said to
Mt 8:10+ the man, 'Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.'

The coming of the kingdom of God

Mt 4:17+ Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was to come, he gave them 20
this answer, 'The coming of the kingdom of God does not admit of observation
and there will be no one to say, "Look here! Look there!" For, you must know, 21
11:20 Mt 3:2 the kingdom of God is among you.'[d]

The day of the Son of Man[e]

He said to the disciples, 'A time will come when you will long to see one of 22
Mt 8:20+ Jn 8:56+ the days of the Son of Man[f] and will not see it. 23 •They will say to you, "Look
||*Mt 24:23, 26-27* there!" or, "Look here!" Make no move; do not set off in pursuit; 24 •for as the
||Mk 13:21 lightning flashing from one part of heaven lights up the other, so will be the Son
9:22+ of Man when his day comes. 25 •But first he must suffer grievously and be rejected
by this generation.
||Mt 24:37-39 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it also be in the days of the Son of Man.[g] 26
Gn 6-8 People were eating and drinking, marrying wives and husbands, right up to the 27
day Noah went into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all. 28 •It
Gn 19:1-29 will be the same as it was in Lot's day: people were eating and drinking, buying
and selling, planting and building, 29 •but the day Lot left Sodom, God rained fire
and brimstone from heaven and it destroyed them all. 30 •It will be the same when
the day comes for the Son of Man to be revealed.
21:21 ||Mt 24:17-18 ||Mk 13:15-16 'When that day comes, anyone on the housetop, with his possessions in the 31
house, must not come down to collect them, nor must anyone in the fields turn
Gn 19:26 back either. 32 •Remember Lot's wife. 33 •Anyone who tries to preserve his life will lose
9:24 ||Mt 10:39 ||Jn 12:25 it; and anyone who loses it will keep it safe. 34 •I tell you, on that night two will be
||*Mt 24:40-41* in one bed: one will be taken, the other left; 35 •two women will be grinding corn
together: one will be taken, the other left.'[h] 37 •The disciples interrupted. 'Where,
||Mt 24:28 Lord?' they asked. He said, 'Where the body is, there too will the vultures gather'.

The unscrupulous judge and the importunate widow

11:9+ Pr 25:15 *11:5-8* 18 Then he told them a parable about the need to pray continually and never 1
lose heart.[a] 2 •'There was a judge in a certain town' he said 'who had neither
fear of God nor respect for man. 3 •In the same town there was a widow who kept
on coming to him and saying, "I want justice from you against my enemy!"
For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, "Maybe I have neither 4
fear of God nor respect for man, 5 •but since she keeps pestering me I must give
this widow her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death".'
And the Lord said, 'You notice what the unjust judge has to say? 6 •Now will 7
Rv 6:9-11 not God see justice done to his chosen who cry to him day and night even when
he delays to help them? 8 •I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and
Mt 8:10+; 24:12 done speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?'

The Pharisee and the publican

9 He spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being 16:15
10 virtuous and despised everyone else, •'Two men went up to the Temple to pray, Pr 21:2; 28:13
11 one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. •The Pharisee stood there and said this Mt 6:1; 21: 31; 23:28
prayer to himself, "I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous Rm 2:20
like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here.
12 I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get." •The tax collector stood some
13 distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast
14 and said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner". •This man, I tell you, went home
again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will ||Mt 23:12
be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted.' =14:11

Jesus and the children[b]

9:47
||Mt 19:13-15
||Mk 10: 13-16

15 People even brought little children to him, for him to touch them; but
16 when the disciples saw this they turned them away. •But Jesus called the children
to him and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it
17 is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. •I tell you solemnly, anyone
who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never Mt 18:2
enter it.'

The rich aristocrat

||Mt 19:16-22
||Mk 10: 17-22

18 A member of one of the leading families put this question to him, 'Good
19 Master, what have I to do to inherit eternal life?' •Jesus said to him, 'Why do you 10:25-28
20 call me good? No one is good but God alone. •You know the commandments:
You must not commit adultery; You must not kill; You must not steal; You must Ex 20:12-16 Dt 5:16-20
21 *not bring false witness; Honour your father and mother.*' •He replied, 'I have kept
22 all these from my earliest days till now'. •And when Jesus heard this he said,
'There is still one thing you lack. Sell all that you own and distribute the money 12:33+
23 to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' •But
when he heard this he was filled with sadness, for he was very rich.

The danger of riches

||Mt 19:23-26
||Mk 10: 23-27

24 Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to
25 make their way into the kingdom of God! •Yes, it is easier for a camel to pass
through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'
26 'In that case' said the listeners 'who can be saved?' •'Things that are impossible
27 for men' he replied 'are possible for God.'

The reward of renunciation

||Mt 19:27-29
||Mk 10: 28-30

28 Then Peter said, 'What about us? We left all we had to follow you.' •He said
29 to them, 'I tell you solemnly, there is no one who has left house, wife, brothers, 14:26+
30 parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God •who will not be given
repayment[c] many times over in this present time and, in the world to come,
eternal life'.

c. Making for the Jordan valley and so down to Jericho, 18:35; from there he goes up to Jerusalem.

d. As something already present and active. The alternative translation 'within you' would not furnish as direct an answer to the Pharisees' question.

e. The discourse is proper to Lk, who makes a clear distinction between Jesus prophesying the destruction of Jerusalem, 21:6-24, and his own coming in glory at the end of time, 17:22-37. Some of the passages in this discourse are found in the great eschatological discourse of Mt 24:5-41; there, as elsewhere (cf. Lk 10: 2+; 11:39+), Mt has joined together two sources which Lk leaves separate; cf. Mt 24:1+. 'day' is a more biblical term ('day of Yahweh', cf. Am 5:18+) than Matthew's *parousia* ('coming', 24:3) which is hellenistic in origin. Cf. 1 Co 1:8+.

f. Not to experience again one day of the earthly life of Jesus, nor to see the first day of his glorious coming, but to have the joy of even one of the days that are to follow that coming.

g. I.e. at the time of the coming.

h. Add. v. 36 'There will be two men in the fields: one will be taken, the other left', cf. Mt 24:40.

18 a. Pauline in thought and expression: cf. Rm 1:10; 12:12; Ep 6:18; Col 1:3; 1 Th 5:17; 2 Th 1:11, etc., and 2 Co 4:1,16; Ga 6:9; Ep 3:13; 2 Th 3:13.

b. Lk here rejoins Mark's narrative which he deserted in 9:50. Cf. 9:51+.

c. Add. 'in return'.

Third prophecy of the Passion

||Mt 20:17-19 ||Mk 10: 28-30

Then taking the Twelve aside he said to them, 'Now we are going up to 31
9:22+; 24:25 2:38+; 9:51+ Ac 3:18 Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets[d] about the Son of Man
is to come true. •For he will be handed over to the pagans and will be mocked, 32
maltreated and spat on, •and when they have scourged him they will put him 33
Mk 4:13+ to death; and on the third day he will rise again.' •But they could make nothing 34
of this; what he said was quite obscure to them, they had no idea what it meant.

Entering Jericho: the blind man

||Mt 20:29-34 ||Mk 10: 46-52

Now as he drew near to Jericho there was a blind man sitting at the side of the 35
road begging. •When he heard the crowd going past he asked what it was all about, 36
Mt 2:23+ and they told him that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by. •So he called out, 37 38
Mt 9:27+ 'Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me'. •The people in front scolded him and told 39
him to keep quiet, but he shouted all the louder, 'Son of David, have pity on me'.
Jesus stopped and ordered them to bring the man to him, and when he came up, 40
asked him, •'What do you want me to do for you?' 'Sir,' he replied 'let me see 41
Mt 8:10+ again.' •Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight. Your faith has saved you.' 42
2:20+ And instantly his sight returned and he followed him praising God, and all the 43
people who saw it gave praise to God for what had happened.

Zacchaeus

19 He entered Jericho and was going through the town •when a man whose 1 2
Mt 5:46+ name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax
collectors and a wealthy man. •He was anxious to see what kind of man Jesus 3
was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; •so he ran ahead 4
and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that
way. •When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him: 'Zacchaeus, 5
come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today.' •And he hurried 6
1:14+ down and welcomed him joyfully. •They all complained when they saw what 7
5:30; 15:2 was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house' they said. •But Zacchaeus 8
12:33+ Ex 21:37 2 S 12:6 stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my
property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four
Mt 21:31 times the amount'.[a] •And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this 9
15:6,9,24,32 house, because this man too is a son of Abraham;[b] •for the Son of Man has come 10
to seek out and save what was lost'.

Parable of the pounds[c]

||Mt 25:14-30

While the people were listening to this he went on to tell a parable, because 11
2:38+ he was near Jerusalem and they imagined that the kingdom of God was going
Mk 13:34 to show itself then and there. •Accordingly he said, 'A man of noble birth went 12
to a distant country to be appointed king and afterwards return.[d] •He summoned 13
ten of his servants and gave them ten pounds. "Do business with these" he told
them "until I get back." •But his compatriots detested him and sent a delegation 14
Ps 2:2f Jn 19:15,21 to follow him with this message, "We do not want this man to be our king".

'Now on his return, having received his appointment as king, he sent for those 15
servants to whom he had given the money, to find out what profit each had made.
The first came in and said, "Sir, your one pound has brought in ten". •"Well done, 16 17
||16:10 my good servant!" he replied "Since you have proved yourself faithful in a very
small thing, you shall have the government of ten cities." •Then came the second 18
and said, "Sir, your one pound has made five". •To this one also he said, "And 19
you shall be in charge of five cities". •Next came the other and said, "Sir, here 20
is your pound. I put it away safely in a piece of linen •because I was afraid of you; 21
for you are an exacting man: you pick up what you have not put down and reap
what you have not sown." •"You wicked servant!" he said "Out of your own 22
mouth I condemn you. So you knew I was an exacting man, picking up what
I have not put down and reaping what I have not sown? •Then why did you not 23

put my money in the bank? On my return I could have drawn it out with
24 interest." •And he said to those standing by, "Take the pound from him and
25 give it to the man who has ten pounds". •And they said to him, "But, sir, he has
26 ten pounds"...[e] •"I tell you, to everyone who has will be given more; but =8:18 ||Mt 13:12 ||Mk 4:25
from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away.
27 "But as for my enemies who did not want me for their king, bring them here
and execute them in my presence." ' Ps 2:9

V. THE JERUSALEM MINISTRY

The Messiah enters Jerusalem

||Mt 21:1-11 ||Mk 11:1-11 ||Jn 12:12-16

28 29 When he had said this he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. •Now when 2:38+; 9:51
he was near Bethphage and Bethany, close by the Mount of Olives as it is called,
30 he sent two of the disciples, telling them, •'Go off to the village opposite, and
as you enter it you will find a tethered colt that no one has yet ridden. Untie it
31 and bring it here. •If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" you are to say
32 this, "The Master needs it". ' •The messengers went off and found everything just
33 as he had told them. •As they were untying the colt, its owner said, 'Why are
34 you untying that colt?' •and they answered, 'The Master needs it'.
35 So they took the colt to Jesus, and throwing their garments over its back they
36 helped Jesus on to it. •As he moved off, people spread their cloaks in the road,
37 and now, as he was approaching the downward slope of the Mount of Olives,
the whole group of disciples joyfully began to praise God at the top of their 1:14+ 2:20+
38 voices for all the miracles they had seen. •They cried out: 4:15+

> '*Blessings on the King who comes,* Ps 118:26
> *in the name of the Lord!*
> Peace in heaven 2:14
> and glory in the highest heavens!'

Jesus defends his disciples for acclaiming him

39 Some Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Master, check your disciples', Mt 21:14-16
40 but he answered, 'I tell you, if these keep silence the stones will cry out'.

Lament for Jerusalem

41 42 As he drew near and came in sight of the city he shed tears over it •and said, 13:34-35 Dt 28:36 Jr 26
'If you in your turn had only understood on this day the message of peace![f]
43 But, alas, it is hidden from your eyes! •Yes, a time is coming when your enemies
will raise fortifications all round you, when they will encircle you and hem you Is 29:3
44 in on every side; •they will dash you and the children inside your walls to the
ground; they will leave not one stone standing on another within you—and all
because you did not recognise your opportunity when God offered it![g] 1:68; 12: 54-56

d. Lk often remarks that the Passion was foretold by the prophets: Lk 24:25,27,44; Ac 2:23+; 3:18,24+; 8:32-35; 13:27; 26:22f.

19 a. Fourfold restitution was imposed by the Jewish law (Ex 21:37) for one case only; Roman law demanded it of all convicted thieves. Zacchaeus goes further: he acknowledges the obligation in the case of any injustice he may have been responsible for.

b. Notwithstanding his despised profession. No social rank excludes 'salvation', cf. 3:12-14. All the Jewish privileges follow from 'sonship of Abraham', cf. 3:8; Rm 4:11f; Ga 3:7f.

c. There are notable differences between the parable of the pounds and that of the talents, Mt 25:14-30. Moreover, it seems that in Lk we must distinguish two parables which have been fused into one: that of the pounds, vv. 12-13, 15-26, and that of the royal claimant, vv. 12,14,17,19,27.

d. Probably alluding to the journey of Archelaus to Rome in 4 B.C. to have the will of Herod the Great confirmed in his favour. A deputation of Jews followed him there to thwart the attempt, cf. v. 14.

e. There seems to be a lacuna here.

f. The peace of the messianic age, cf. Is 11:6+; Ho 2:20+.

g. This whole prophecy is made up of O.T. references (especially noticeable in the Greek text for v. 43, cf. Is 29:3; 37:33; Jr 52:4-5; Ezk 4:1-3; 21:27(22); for v. 44, cf. Ho 10:14; 14:1; Na 3:10; Ps 137:9) and suggests the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. as much as, and more than, that of 70 A.D. of whose distinctive features it says nothing. It cannot, therefore, be concluded from this text that the destruction of 70 A.D. had already taken place.

||Mt 21:12-13 ||Mk 11: 15-17 ||Jn 2:14-16 **The expulsion of the dealers from the Temple**

Then he went into the Temple and began driving out those who were selling. 45
Is 56:7 'According to scripture,' he said '*my house will be a house of prayer*. But you 46
Jr 7:11 have turned it into *a robbers' den*.'

Jesus teaches in the Temple

21:37; 22:53 Jn 18:20 *11:53+* ||Mk 11:18 *4:15+* He taught in the Temple every day. The chief priests and the scribes, with 47
the support of the leading citizens, tried to do away with him, •but they did not 48
see how they could carry this out because the people as a whole hung on his words.

||Mt 21:23-27 ||Mk 11: 27-33 **The Jews question the authority of Jesus**

20 [a]Now one day while he was teaching the people in the Temple and 1
proclaiming the Good News, the chief priests and the scribes came up,
Ac 4:7 together with the elders •and spoke to him. 'Tell us' they said 'what authority 2
have you for acting like this? Or who is it that gave you this authority?' •'And 3
I' replied Jesus 'will ask you a question. Tell me: •John's baptism: did it come 4
from heaven, or from man?' •And they argued it out this way among themselves, 5
'If we say from heaven, he will say, "Why did you refuse to believe him?"; •and 6
if we say from man, the people will all stone us, for they are convinced that John
was a prophet'. •So their reply was that they did not know where it came from. 7
And Jesus said to them, 'Nor will I tell you my authority for acting like this'. 8

||Mt 21:33-46 ||Mk 12:1-2 **Parable of the wicked husbandmen**

And he went on to tell the people this parable: 'A man planted a vineyard 9
and leased it to tenants, and went abroad for a long while. •When the time 10
came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get his share of the produce of the
vineyard from them. But the tenants thrashed him, and sent him away
empty-handed. •But he persevered and sent a second servant; they thrashed 11
him too and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. •He still 12
persevered and sent a third; they wounded this one also, and threw him out.
Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What am I to do? I will send them my 13
dear son. Perhaps they will respect him." •But when the tenants saw him 14
they put their heads together. "This is the heir," they said "let us kill him so that
the inheritance will be ours." •So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed 15
him.

'Now what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? •He will come and 16
Jn 12:48 make an end of these tenants and give the vineyard to others.' Hearing this they
said, 'God forbid!' •But he looked hard at them and said, 'Then what does this 17
text in the scriptures mean:

Ps 118:22 *It was the stone rejected by the builders*
that became the keystone?

Anyone who falls on that stone will be dashed to pieces; anyone it falls on will 18
be crushed.'

11:53+ But for their fear of the people, the scribes and the chief priests would have 19
liked to lay hands on him that very moment, because they realised that this
parable was aimed at them.

||Mt 22:15-22 ||Mk 12: 13-17 **On tribute to Caesar**

So they waited their opportunity and sent agents to pose as men devoted to 20
23:2 the Law, and to fasten on something he might say and so enable them to hand
Mt 12:10 him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor. •They put to him 21
this question, 'Master, we know that you say and teach what is right; you favour
no one, but teach the way of God in all honesty. •Is it permissible for us to pay 22
taxes to Caesar or not?' •But he was aware of their cunning and said, •'Show 23 24
me a denarius. Whose head and name are on it?' 'Caesar's' they said. •'Well 25

then,' he said to them 'give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar—and to God what belongs to God.'
26 As a result, they were unable to find fault with anything he had to say in public; his answer took them by surprise and they were silenced.

The resurrection of the dead ||Mt 22:23-33 ||Mk 12:18-27

27 Some Sadducees—those who say that there is no resurrection—approached
28 him and they put this question to him, •'Master, we have it from Moses in writing, that if a man's married brother dies childless, the man must marry the Dt 25:5+
29 widow to raise up children for his brother. •Well then, there were seven brothers.
30 31 The first, having married a wife, died childless. •The second •and then the third married the widow. And the same with all seven, they died leaving no children.
32 33 Finally the woman herself died. •Now, at the resurrection, to which of them will she be wife since she had been married to all seven?'
34 35 Jesus replied, 'The children of this world[b] take wives and husbands, •but those who are judged worthy of a place in the other world and in the resurrection
36 from the dead[c] do not marry •because they can no longer die,[d] for they are the same as the angels, and being children of the resurrection[e] they are sons of
37 God. •And Moses himself implies that the dead rise again, in the passage about the bush where he calls the Lord *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac* Ex 3:6
38 *and the God of Jacob.* •Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for Rm 6:10-11 Ga 2:19 to him all men are in fact alive.'
39 40 Some scribes[f] then spoke up. 'Well put, Master' they said •—because they ||Mt 22:46 ||Mk 12:34 would not dare to ask him any more questions.

Christ, not only son but also Lord of David ||Mt 22:41-45 ||Mk 12:35-37

41 He then said to them, 'How can people maintain that the Christ is son of
42 David? •Why, David himself says in the Book of Psalms:

The Lord said to my Lord: Ps 110:1
Sit at my right hand
43 *and I will make your enemies*
a footstool for you.

44 David here calls him Lord; how then can he be his son?'

The scribes condemned by Jesus ||Mt 23:6-7 ||Mk 12:38-40

45 46 While all the people were listening he said to the disciples, •'Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes and love to be greeted obsequiously =11:43 in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places
47 of honour at banquets, •who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive.'

The widow's mite ||Mk 12:41-44

1 21 As he looked up he saw rich people putting their offerings into the
2 treasury; •then he happened to notice a poverty-stricken widow putting
3 in two small coins, •and he said, 'I tell you truly, this poor widow has put in
4 more than any of them; •for these have all contributed money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in all she had to live on'.

20 a. Lk omits the symbolic episode of the withered fig tree, Mk 11:12-14,20-25, for which he substitutes the parable of the barren fig tree, Lk 13:6-9; he also omits here the discussion on the first commandment of the Law, Mk 12:28-34, which he has already used, taking it from another source, Lk 10:25-28.

b. 'children': a semitism for 'those who belong to...' Cf. 16:8.

c. Only the resurrection of the just is considered here. Cf. Ph 3:11+.

d. Var. 'they have not to die'.

e. Semitism for those who are actually raised up.

f. The scribes, being Pharisees for the most part, believed in the resurrection of the dead, cf. Ac 23:6-9.

||Mt 24:1-3 ||Mk 13:1-4 **Discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem:[a] Introduction**

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned 5
with fine stonework and votive offerings, he said, •'All these things you are staring 6
at now—the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another:
everything will be destroyed'. •And they put to him this question: 'Master,' they 7
said 'when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that this is about
to take place?'

||Mt 24:4-14 ||Mk 13:5-13 **The warning signs**

'Take care not to be deceived,' he said 'because many will come using my name 8
and saying, "I am he" and, "The time is near at hand". Refuse to join them.
Dn 2:28 And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is some- 9
thing that must happen but the end is not so soon.' •Then he said to them, 'Nation 10
Is 19:2 will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. •There will be great 11
earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights
and great signs from heaven.

12:11-12 ||Mt 10:17-22 Jn 15:20; 16:1-2 Ac 4:13 'But before all this happens, men will seize you and persecute you; they will 12
hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before
kings and governors because of my name•—and that will be your opportunity 13
to bear witness. •Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, 14
Ac 6:10 because I myself[b] shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your 15
opponents will be able to resist or contradict. •You will be betrayed even by 16
parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death.
12:7 Mt 10:30 You will be hated by all men on account of my name, •but not a hair of your 17 18
Heb 10:36,39 head will be lost. •Your endurance will win you your lives. 19

||Mt 24:15-20 ||Mk 13:14-18 **The siege**

'When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies,[c] you must realise that she will 20
17:31 soon be laid desolate. •Then those in Judaea must escape to the mountains, those 21
inside the city must leave it, and those in country districts must not take refuge
in it. •For this is the time of vengeance when all that scripture says[d] must be 22
fulfilled. •Alas for those with child, or with babies at the breast, when those days 23
come!

||Mt 24:21 ||Mk 13:19 **The disaster and the age of the pagans**

Ps 81:15 Rm 1:18+ *Dt 28:64* 'For great misery will descend on the land and wrath on this people. •They 24
will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive to every pagan country; and
Rv 11:2 *Dn 12:7* Jerusalem will be trampled down by the pagans until the age of the pagans[e] is
completely over.

||Mt 24:29-30 ||Mk 13:24-26 **Cosmic disasters and the coming of the Son of Man**

'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, 25
bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; •men dying of fear as they 26
await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. •And 27
Dn 7:13-14 then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
Heb 10:37 When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because 28
your liberation[f] is near at hand.'

||Mt 24:32-35 ||Mk 13:28-31 **The time of this coming**

And he told them a parable, 'Think of the fig tree and indeed every tree. •As 29 30
soon as you see them bud, you know that summer is now near. •So with you 31
when you see these things happening: know that the kingdom of God is near.[g]
9:27 Mt 16:28 Mk 9:1 I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all will have 32
taken place. •Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass 33
away.

Be on the alert

34 'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and 17:26-30
drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, 1 Th 5:3
35 like a trap. For it will come down[h] on every living man on the face of the earth.
36 Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to
happen, and to stand with confidence[i] before the Son of Man.' Rv 6:17

The last days of Jesus

37 In the daytime he would be in the Temple teaching, but would spend the night 19:47+; 22:53
38 on the hill called the Mount of Olives. •And from early morning the people *Mt 21:17* Mk 11:11,19
would gather round him in the Temple to listen to him.[j] Jn 8:2

VI. THE PASSION[a]

The conspiracy against Jesus: Judas betrays him ||Mt 26:1-5 ||Mk 14:1-2 Jn 11:47-53

1 22 The feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was now drawing near,
2 and the chief priests and the scribes were looking for some way of doing 11:53+ Ac 5:26
away with him, because they mistrusted the people.[b]
3 Then Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among 4:13 Jn 13:2,27
4 the Twelve. •He went to the chief priests and the officers of the guard[c] to discuss Ac 5:3
5 a scheme for handing Jesus over to them. •They were delighted and agreed to give ||Mt 26:14-16 ||Mk 14: 10-11
6 him money. •He accepted, and looked for an opportunity to betray him to them
without the people knowing.

Preparation for the Passover supper ||Mt 26:17-19 ||Mk 14: 12-16

7 The day of Unleavened Bread came round, the day on which the passover
8 had to be sacrificed, •and he sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and make the 8:51+
9 preparations for us to eat the passover'. •'Where do you want us to prepare it?'
10 they asked. •'Listen,' he said 'as you go into the city you will meet a man
11 carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house he enters •and tell the
owner of the house, "The Master has this to say to you: Where is the dining room
12 in which I can eat the passover with my disciples?" •The man will show you a large
13 upper room furnished with couches. Make the preparations there.' •They set off
and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

The supper

14 When the hour came he took his place at table, and the apostles with him.
15 And he said to them,[d] 'I have longed to eat this passover with you before I suffer; 12:50+

21 a. In 17:22-37, Lk, following one of his sources, speaks of the coming of Jesus in glory at the end of time. Here he follows Mk where two perspectives merge: that of the final coming and that of the destruction of Jerusalem; cf. Mt 24:1+.

b. Lk, in this place, assigns to Jesus the role reserved by Mt 10:20; Mk 13:11; Lk 12:12 to the Spirit of the Father (Mt), the Holy Spirit (Mk and Lk) Ac 6:10. Cf Jn 16:13-15.

c. Lk, explaining the obscure 'disastrous abomination', which his source takes from Dn 9:27, foretells the siege. As in 19:43-44, his terms are biblical and do not necessarily suggest a description after the event.

d. Possibly alluding to Dn 9:27.

e. I.e. the period during which the pagans will take the place of the unfaithful Jewish nation; according to Paul, Rm 11:11-32, this period will end with the conversion of all Israel. An age of indefinite duration is, therefore, to elapse between Jerusalem's destruction and the end of time.

f. Or 'redemption', a Pauline term, cf. Rm 3:24+.

g. The kingdom has already come, 17:21, but this refers to the period of its triumphant progress which begins with the destruction of Jerusalem. Cf. 9:27p.

h. Var. 'for it will come down on you like a snare'.

i. Lit. 'and to stand erect'.

j. The literary relationship with Jn 8:1-2 is unmistakable. The adulterous woman passage of Jn 7:53–8:11, for the Lucan authorship of which there are many good arguments, would fit into this context admirably.

22 a. Throughout the Passion narrative, Lk shows himself considerably less dependent on Mk than hitherto; on the other hand, there are many points of contact with Jn.

b. Lk does not record the anointing at Bethany; he has already described a similar incident in 7:36-50.

c. Officers of the Temple police. All of these were Jews, chosen from among the Levites.

d. In Lk, Christ's discourses at the supper play a more important part than in Mt and Mk, preparing us for those of Jn 13:31–17:26.

Mt 8:11+ because, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled[e] in the kingdom of 16
God'.

Then, taking a cup,[f] he gave thanks and said, 'Take this and share it among 17
||Mt 26:29 ||Mk 14:25 you, •because from now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the king- 18
dom of God comes'.

||Mt 26:26-28 ||Mk 14: 22-24 ||1 Co 11: 23-25 *Jn 6:51*

The institution of the Eucharist[g]

Then he took some bread, and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it 19
to them, saying, 'This is my body which will be given for you; do this as a memorial
Jr 31:31 Mt 26:28 of me'. •He did the same with the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new 20
covenant in my blood which will be poured out for you.[h]

||Mt 26:20-25 ||Mk 14: 17-21 Jn 13:21-30

The treachery of Judas foretold

'And yet, here with me on the table is the hand of the man who betrays me. 21
The Son of Man does indeed go to his fate even as it has been decreed, but alas for 22
that man by whom he is betrayed!' •And they began to ask one another which of 23
them it could be who was to do this thing.

Who is the greatest?

=9:46 A dispute arose also between them about which should be reckoned the 24
||Mt 20:25-27 ||Mk 10: 42-44 greatest, •but he said to them, 'Among pagans it is the kings who lord it over them, 25
and those who have authority over them are given the title Benefactor. •This must 26
9:48 not happen with you. No; the greatest among you must behave as if he were the
youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves. •For who is the greater: 27
12:37 Jn 13:4-15 the one at table or the one who serves? The one at table, surely? Yet here am I
among you as one who serves!

The reward promised to the apostles

Jn 6:66-68; 15:27 *Rv 2:26-28* 'You are the men who have stood by me faithfully in my trials; •and now 28 29
I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father conferred one on me: •you will 30
Rv 3:20-21 ||*Mt 19:28* eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones to judge the
twelve tribes of Israel.

Peter's denial and repentance foretold

Rv 2:10 "Simon, Simon! Satan, you must know, has got his wish to sift you all like 31
Mt 16:19+ Jn 21:15-17 *Mt 8:10+* wheat; •but I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail, and once 32
you have recovered, you in your turn must strengthen your brothers.' •'Lord,' 33
he answered 'I would be ready to go to prison with you, and to death.' •Jesus 34
22:61 ||*Mt 26:31-35* ||Mk 14: 27-31 ||Jn 13:36-38 replied, 'I tell you, Peter, by the time the cock crows today you will have denied
three times that you know me'.

A time of crisis

10:4 He said to them, 'When I sent you out without purse or haversack or sandals, 35
were you short of anything? •'No' they said. He said to them, 'But now if you have 36
12:51 Mt 10:34 *23:32* a purse, take it; if you have a haversack, do the same; if you have no sword, sell
your cloak and buy one,[i] •because I tell you these words of scripture have to 37
Is 53:12 Mt 27:38 be fulfilled in me: *He let himself be taken for a criminal.* Yes, what scripture says
about me is even now reaching its fulfilment.' •'Lord,' they said 'there are two 38
swords here now.' He said to them, 'That is enough!'[k]

||Mt 26:30, 36-46 ||Mk 14:26, 32-42

The Mount of Olives

He then left to make his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, with the 39
21:37 Jn 18:2 disciples following. •When they reached the place he said to them, 'Pray not to be 40
put to the test'.

Then he withdrew from them, about a stone's throw away, and knelt down 41
3:21+ Jn 12:27-29 and prayed. •'Father,' he said 'if you are willing, take this cup away from me. 42

43 Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine.' •Then an angel appeared to Ac 21:14▲
44 him, coming from heaven to give him strength. •In his anguish he prayed even more earnestly, and his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.[l]
45 When he rose from prayer he went to the disciples and found them sleeping
46 for sheer grief. •'Why are you asleep?' he said to them. 'Get up and pray not to be put to the test.'

The arrest

||Mt 26:47-56 ||Mk 14: 43-50 ||Jn 18:3-11

47 He was still speaking when a number of men appeared, and at the head of them the man called Judas, one of the Twelve, who went up to Jesus to kiss him. Ac 1:16
48 Jesus said, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?' •His followers,
49 seeing what was happening, said, 'Lord, shall we use our swords?' •And one of
50 them struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. •But at
51 this Jesus spoke. 'Leave off!' he said 'That will do!' And touching the man's ear he healed him.
52 Then Jesus spoke to the chief priests and captains of the Temple guard and elders who had come for him. 'Am I a brigand' he said 'that you had to set out
53 with swords and clubs? •When I was among you in the Temple day after day you never moved to lay hands on me. But this is your hour; this is the reign of darkness.' 19:47; 21:37 4:13+ Jn 8:12+

Peter's denials

||Mt 26:57, 69-75 ||Mk 14: 66-72 ||Jn 18:15-18, 25-27

54 They seized him then[m] and led him away, and they took him to the high
55 priest's house. Peter followed at a distance. •They had lit a fire in the middle of
56 the courtyard and Peter sat down among them, •and as he was sitting there by the blaze a servant-girl saw him, peered at him, and said, 'This person was with
57 58 him too'. •But he denied it. 'Woman,' he said 'I do not know him.' •Shortly afterwards someone else saw him and said, 'You are another of them'. But Peter
59 replied, 'I am not, my friend'.[n] •About an hour later another man insisted,
60 saying, 'This fellow was certainly with him. Why, he is a Galilean.' •'My friend,' said Peter 'I do not know what you are talking about.' At that instant,
61 while he was still speaking, the cock crew, •and the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter, and Peter remembered what the Lord had said to him, 'Before 22:34
62 the cock crows today, you will have disowned me three times'. •And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Jesus mocked by the guards

||Mt 26:67-68 ||Mk 14:65

63 Meanwhile the men who guarded Jesus were mocking and beating him.
64 They blindfolded him and questioned him. 'Play the prophet' they said. 'Who
65 hit you then?' •And they continued heaping insults on him.

Jesus before the Sanhedrin[o]

||Mt 26:57-66; 27:2 ||Mk 14:53-64; 15:1

66 When day broke there was a meeting of the elders of the people,[p] attended

22 e. The first stage of fulfilment is the Eucharist itself, the centre of spiritual life in the kingdom founded by Jesus; the final stage will be at the end of time when the Passover is to be fulfilled perfectly and in a fashion no longer veiled.

f. Lk distinguishes the Passover and the cup of vv. 15-18 from the bread and the cup of vv. 19-20 in order to draw a parallel between the ancient rite of the Jewish Passover and the new rite of the Christian Eucharist. Some ancient authorities, failing to understand this theological device, and disturbed to find two cups mentioned, quite mistakenly omitted v. 20, or even v. 20 with the second part of v. 19 (i.e. 'which will be given... of me').

g. Note the affinity between Luke's text and Paul's.

h. Or alternatively 'which has to be given' and 'which has to be poured out'.

i. Add. 'And the Lord said'.

j. The purse to buy, the sword to procure by force, the necessities of life. All this is symbolic of a mission in a hostile world.

k. The apostles have taken the words of Jesus too literally and he closes the conversation abruptly.

l. Om. vv. 43-44.

m. In Mt and Mk, Jesus is seized immediately after Judas' greeting; the sword episode follows, and finally the discourse by Jesus. Lk makes the arrest follow the discourse, thus emphasising the control Jesus has over what takes place. Cf., for the same emphasis, Jn 10:18+; 18:4-6.

n. Lit. 'man'.

o. Whereas Mt and Mk have two trials, Lk has only one, and that in the morning, probably held in the 'Tribunal', a building adjacent to the Temple. Cf. Mt 26:57+.

p. 'elders' here means the whole Sanhedrin, not merely one of its three component bodies (the elders);

by the chief priests and scribes. He was brought before their council, •and they 67
Jn 10:24-25 said to him, 'If you are the Christ, tell us'. 'If I tell you,' he replied 'you will not
believe me, •and if I question you, you will not answer. •But from now on, the 68 69
Ps 110:1 Son of Man will be[q] *seated at the right hand* of the Power *of God*.' •Then they 70
Ws 2:14 Mt 4:3+ all said, 'So you are the Son of God then?' He answered, 'It is you who say I am'.
Jn 10:30-33 'What need of witnesses have we now?' they said. 'We have heard it for ourselves 71
Mt 27:1-2 Jn 18:28 from his own lips.' 23The whole assembly then rose, and they brought him 1
before Pilate.

||Mt 27:11-14 ||Mk 15:2-5 ||Jn 18:29-38a **Jesus before Pilate**[a]

They began their accusation by saying, 'We found this man inciting our 2
20:20-26 Ac 17:7; 24:5 people to revolt, opposing payment of the tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be
Christ, a king'. •Pilate put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 3
'It is you who say it' he replied. •Pilate then said to the chief priests and the crowd, 4
'I find no case against this man'. •But they persisted, 'He is inflaming the people 5
4:44+ Ac 3:14 with his teaching all over Judaea; it has come all the way from Galilee, where he
started, down to here'. •When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man were a 6
Galilean; •and finding that he came under Herod's jurisdiction he passed him 7
over to Herod who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

Jesus before Herod[b]

9:9 Mt 14:1-2 Herod was delighted to see Jesus; he had heard about him and had 8
been wanting for a long time to set eyes on him; moreover, he was hoping to see
some miracle worked by him. •So he questioned him at some length; but without 9
Ac 25:7 getting any reply. •Meanwhile the chief priests and the scribes were there, violently 10
pressing their accusations. •Then Herod, together with his guards, treated him 11
with contempt and made fun of him; he put a rich cloak[c] on him and sent him
Ac 4:27+ back to Pilate. •And though Herod and Pilate had been enemies before, they 12
were reconciled that same day.

||Mt 27:15-26 ||Mk 15:6-15 ||Jn 18:38b-19:16 **Jesus before Pilate again**

Pilate then summoned the chief priests and the leading men and the people. 13
'You brought this man before me' he said 'as a political agitator. Now I have 14
gone into the matter myself in your presence and found no case against the man
in respect of all the charges you bring against him. •Nor has Herod either, since 15
he has sent him back to us. As you can see, the man has done nothing that
deserves death, •so I shall have him flogged and then let him go.'[d] •But as one 16 18
Ac 21:36 man they howled, 'Away with him! Give us Barabbas!' •(This man had been 19
Ac 3:14 thrown into prison for causing a riot in the city and for murder.)

Pilate was anxious to set Jesus free and addressed them again, •but they 20 21
shouted back, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' •And for the third time[e] he spoke 22
Jn 18:38 Ac 3:13 to them, 'Why? What harm has this man done? I have found no case against
him that deserves death, so I shall have him punished and then let him go.'[f] •But 23
they kept on shouting at the top of their voices, demanding that he should be
crucified. And their shouts were growing louder.

Ac 3:15 Pilate then gave his verdict: their demand was to be granted. •He released 24 25
the man they asked for, who had been imprisoned for rioting and murder, and
handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they pleased.

||Mt 27:31b-34 ||Mk 15:20b-23 ||Jn 19:17 **The way to Calvary**

As they were leading him away they seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, 26
who was coming in from the country, and made him shoulder the cross and
carry it behind Jesus. •Large numbers of people followed him, and of women 27
too,[g] who mourned and lamented for him. •But Jesus turned to them and said, 28
'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for
your children. •For the days will surely come when people will say, "Happy are 29

those who are barren, the wombs that have never borne, the breasts that have 11:27
30 never suckled!" •Then they will begin to *say to the mountains,"Fall on us!"; to the* Ho 9:14
31 *hills, "Cover us!"* •For if men use the green wood like this, what will happen Ho 10:8
32 when it is dry?'[h] •Now with him they were also leading out two other criminals Ezk 21:3,8
to be executed. 22:37 Is 53:12

The crucifixion[i] ||Mt 27:35-38 ||Mk 15:24-28

33 When they reached the place called The Skull, they crucified him there and the ||Jn 19:17-24
34 two criminals also, one on the right, the other on the left. •[j] Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing'. Then they cast lots to Ps 22:18 Ac 7:60
share out his clothing.

The crucified Christ is mocked ||Mt 27:39-43 ||Mk 15:29-32a

35 The people stayed there watching him. As for the leaders, they jeered at him. 2:26+; 9:35+
'He saved others,' they said 'let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the
36 Chosen One.' •The soldiers mocked him too, and when they approached to offer Jn 1:34
37 him vinegar •they said, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself'. •Above *Mt 27:48*
38 him there was an inscription: 'This is the king of the Jews'. Jn 19:19

The good thief

39 One of the criminals hanging there abused him. 'Are you not the Christ?' Mt 27:44 Mk 15:32b
40 he said. 'Save yourself and us as well.' •But the other spoke up and rebuked him.
'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said. 'You got the same sentence as he did,
41 but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has
42 done nothing wrong. •Jesus,' he said 'remember me when you come into your
43 kingdom.'[k] •'Indeed, I promise you,' he replied 'today you will be with me in paradise.'

The death of Jesus ||Mt 27:45-50 ||Mk 15:33-37

44 It was now about the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came ||Jn 19:25-30
45 over the whole land until the ninth hour. •The veil of the Temple was torn right
46 down the middle; •and when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, he said, 'Father, Ps 31:5
into your hands I commit my spirit'. With these words he breathed his last. Ac 7:60

After the death ||Mt 27:51-56 ||Mk 15:38-41

47 When the centurion saw what had taken place, he gave praise to God and ||Jn 19:31-37
48 said, 'This was a great and good man'. •And when all the people who had gathered *Ac 3:14*
for the spectacle saw what had happened, they went home beating their breasts.
49 All his friends stood at a distance; so also did the women who had accompanied 8:2-3; 24:10
him from Galilee, and they saw all this happen.

of these, Lk names the two most influential (chief priests and scribes).

q. Lk omits the 'you will see' of Mt and Mk and also the allusion to Dn.

23 a. Luke's account lies half-way between the less detailed and less dramatic accounts of Mk and Mt, and the prolonged interview in Jn.

b. Lk only. His information comes perhaps from Manaen, 'who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch', Ac 13:1.

c. The ceremonial dress of princes: Herod's gibe at the royal claim of Jesus, v. 3.

d. Add. v. 17 'He was under obligation to release one man for them every feast day'; this seems to be an explanatory gloss, cf. Mt 27:15p.

e. Lk, like Jn, emphasises Pilate's wish to let Jesus go free, and mentions the procurator's declaration of Christ's innocence three times, cf. Jn 18:38; 19:4,6.

f. Cf. v. 16. Lk does not say what the punishment was; in Mt 27:27-31p it is scourging. Unlike Mt and Mk, but like Jn, Lk regards the punishment as a conciliatory measure designed to avert a sentence not yet pronounced.

g. The Talmud records that noblewomen of Jerusalem were accustomed to give soothing drinks to condemned criminals.

h. If green wood is burnt that is not meant for burning (allusion to Christ's condemnation), what is to happen to the dry wood (the truly guilty)?

i. A comparison with Mk and Mt shows how Lk has softened the harshness of Calvary: Luke's crowd, vv. 27,35,48, is more inquisitive than hostile, and repents in the end, v. 48; Jesus does not utter the seemingly despairing cry, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?'; Christ's ministry of forgiveness goes on to the last, vv. 34,39-43; he dies committing his spirit into the hands of his Father, v. 46.

j. This verse is to be retained despite its omission by some good ancient authorities.

k. Or else 'in your kingly power', i.e. to establish your kingdom. Var. 'when you come with (i.e. in possession of) your kingdom'.

||Mt 27:57-61 ||Mk 15: 42-47 ||Jn 19:38-42

The burial

Then a member of the council arrived, an upright and virtuous man named 50
Joseph. •He had not consented to what the others had planned and carried out. 51
He came from Arimathaea, a Jewish town, and he lived in the hope of seeing the
kingdom of God. •This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 52
He then took it down, wrapped it in a shroud and put him in a tomb which was 53
hewn in stone in which no one had yet been laid. •It was Preparation Day and 54
the sabbath was imminent.[i]

Meanwhile the women who had come from Galilee with Jesus were following 55
behind. They took note of the tomb and of the position of the body.

Mk 16:1 Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. And on the sabbath 56
day they rested, as the Law required.

Mt 28:10+

VII. AFTER THE RESURRECTION

||Mt 28:1-8 ||Mk 16:1-8 ||Jn 20:1-2

The empty tomb. The angel's message

24 *On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, they went to the* 1
tomb with the spices they had prepared. •They found that the stone had 2
been rolled away from the tomb, •but on entering discovered that the body of the 3
Lord Jesus was not there. •As they stood there not knowing what to think, two 4
9:29 Ac 1:10-11 men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. •Terrified, the women 5
lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, 'Why look among the dead
for someone who is alive? •He is not here; he has risen. Remember what he told 6
9:22+ you when he was still in Galilee:[a] •that the Son of Man had to be handed over 7
into the power of sinful men and be crucified, and rise again on the third day?'
And they remembered his words. 8

||Mt 28:10,17 ||*Mk 16:10, 11,14* ||Jn 20:18, 25,29

The apostles refuse to believe the women

When the women returned from the tomb they told all this to the Eleven and 9
8:2-3 to all the others. •The women were Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary the 10
mother of James. The other women with them also told the apostles, •but this 11
Mt 8:10+ story of theirs seemed pure nonsense, and they did not believe them.

||Jn 20:3-10

Peter at the tomb

[b]Peter, however, went running to the tomb. He bent down and saw the binding 12
cloths but nothing else; he then went back home, amazed at what had happened.

||Mk 16: 12-13

The road to Emmaus

That very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, 13
seven miles[c] from Jerusalem, •and they were talking together about all that had 14
happened. •Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by 15
24:31 Jn 20:14,20; 21:4 *24:37* their side; •but something prevented them from recognising him.[d] •He said to 16 17
them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short,
their faces downcast.[e]

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only 18
person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been
happening there these last few days'. •'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus 19
Mt 2:23+ *Mt 16:14+* Ac 2:22; 7:22 of Nazareth'[f] they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things
he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; •and how our chief 20
priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him
1:54,68; 2:38 crucified. •Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. 21
And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; •and some 22
women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early
24:9f morning, •and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they 23
had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. •Some of our friends[g] 24

went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but
of him they saw nothing.'
25 Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message Mt 8:10+ Mk 4:13+
26 of the prophets! •Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter *18:31+* Ac 3:24
27 into his glory?' •Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, *9:22+* 1 P 1:11
he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about 16:29,31
himself.
28 When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if
29 to go on; •but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said
30 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. •Now while he was
with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and
31 handed it to them. •And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he 24:16+ Ac 8:39
32 had vanished from their sight. •Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts
burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'
33 They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the
34 Eleven assembled together with their companions, •who said to them, 'Yes, it is
35 true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' •Then they told their 1 Co 15:5
story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the
breaking of bread.[h]

Jesus appears to the apostles

Jn 20:19-23

36 They were still talking about all this when he himself stood among them
37 and said to them, 'Peace be with you!' •In a state of alarm and fright, they thought 1:12+; 24:16+
38 they were seeing a ghost. •But he said, 'Why are you so agitated, and why are
39 these doubts rising in your hearts? •Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. 1 Jn 1:1
Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see
40 41 I have.' •[i]And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet.[j] •Their joy 1:14+ Mt 8:10+
was so great that they still could not believe it, and they stood there dumbfounded;
42 so he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' •And they offered him a piece Tb 12:19 Jn 21:5
43 of grilled fish, •which he took and ate before their eyes. *Jn 21:9-10,13*

Last instructions to the apostles

44 Then[k] he told them, 'This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with 9:22+
you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and 24:25-27
45 in the Psalms, has to be fulfilled'. •He then opened their minds to understand the Mk 4:13+
46 scriptures, •and he said to them, 'So you see how it is written that the Christ would
47 suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, •and that, in his name, repentance Ac 10:40+ *2:38+*
for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning Mt 3:2+; 28:19-20 Mk 16:15-16
48 from Jerusalem. •You are witnesses to this. ‖*Ac 1:8+*
49 'And now I am sending down to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the ‖Ac 1:4
city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high.'

The ascension

‖Mk 16:19 ‖Ac 1:9,12

50 Then he took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and lifting up his

l. Or possibly 'was shining', alluding to the Jewish custom of lighting lamps when the sabbath began at nightfall.

24 a. Lk does not intend to speak of the Galilean apparitions; he therefore modifies Mk 16:7, just as earlier he omitted Mk 14:28.

b. Om. v. 12.

c. Lit. 'sixty *stadia*' (furlongs); var. (with less support) 'one hundred and sixty'. The identity of the village is disputed.

d. In the apparitions described by Lk and Jn, the disciples do not at first recognise the Lord: they need a word or a sign, Lk 24:30f, 35,37,39-43; Jn 20:14 and 16,20; 21:4 and 6-7; cf. Mt 28:17. This is because the risen body, though the same body that died on the cross, is in a new condition; its outward appearance is therefore changed, Mk 16:12, and it is exempt from the usual physical laws, Jn 20:19. On the condition of glorified bodies, cf. 1 Co 15:44+.

e. Var. 'as you walk along and look sad?'

f. Var. 'the Nazarene'. Cf. Mt 2:23+.

g. Either generalising Peter's experience, v. 12, or alluding to the visit made by Peter with John and described in Jn 20:3-10.

h. In Ac (2:42+) Lk uses this as a technical term for the Eucharist; probably it means the same here.

i. Om. v. 40.

j. Writing for Greeks who scoffed at the idea of bodily resurrection, Lk underlines the physical reality of Christ's risen body, cf. v. 43.

k. The impression given is that all these events took place on the same day, the day of resurrection. See Mt 28:10+.

hands he blessed them. •Now as he blessed them, he withdrew from them and 51
9:51+ was carried up to heaven.[l] •They worshipped him and[m] then went back to 52
1:14+ 2:20+ Jerusalem full of joy; •and they were continually in the Temple praising God.[n] 53

24 l. Om. 'and was carried up to heaven'.
m. Om. 'They worshipped him, and'.
n. Luke's gospel ends where it began, in the Temple; its last word is of joy and praise.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

SAINT JOHN

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL AND LETTERS OF SAINT JOHN

The gospel

The last verse before the Appendix to the fourth gospel (20:31) specifies the book's literary form. It is a 'gospel', just as the preaching of the earlier Church was a 'gospel'; i.e. it proclaims that Jesus is Messiah and Son of God, and its teaching, based on the 'signs' that Jesus gave, aims at bringing men to believe in the Messiah and so to attain life. The fourth gospel, therefore, in spite of all the clues to its late composition, is not unrelated to the most primitive Christian 'kerygma', or message, and in fact it preserves both the structure and the chief points of this message, e.g. the Holy Spirit descends, as the Baptist testifies, to point out Jesus as Messiah, 1:31–34; Christ's 'glory' is manifested in his work and word, 1:35–12:50; his death, resurrection and subsequent apparitions are described, 13:1–20:20; the apostles are sent out with the gift of the Spirit and the power to forgive sins, 20:21–29. The book claims, moreover, to fulfil the condition that (cf. Ac 1:8+) qualifies a witness as 'apostolic': i.e. it offers an (unnamed) eyewitness for its guarantor, 'the disciple Jesus loved', who actually took part in the events of the Passion, 13:23; 19:26,35; cf. 18:15f, saw the empty tomb, 20:2f, and the risen Christ, 21:7,20–24, and was perhaps one of the first two disciples of Jesus, 1:35f.

There are some features peculiar to the fourth gospel that mark it off sharply from the Synoptics. In the first place, its author seems to have been influenced to a considerable extent by ideas current in certain sections of Judaism, ideas that are reflected in the newly discovered Essene documents of Qumran. In this school of thought, the great emphasis laid on 'knowledge' has given its vocabulary the sort of tinge to be found in later Gnostic literature: e.g. the contrasting pairs 'light-darkness', 'truth-lies', 'angel of light—angel of darkness (Beliar)' which all have a dualist flavour. At Qumran—in view of its expectation of an imminent divine Coming—a particular stress was laid both on the need for unity and on the necessity for mutual love. All these ideas which recur in the fourth gospel are characteristic of the Judaeo-Christian milieu in which it must have originated.

In the second place there is this further difference, that the fourth gospel is far more concerned than the Synoptics to bring out the significance of the events of Christ's life and of all that he did and said. The things Christ did were 'signs': their meaning, hidden at first, could be fully understood only after his glorification, 2:22; 12:16; 13:7. The things he said had a deeper meaning not perceived at the time, cf. 2:20+; it was the business of the Spirit who spoke in the name of the risen Christ, to remind the disciples of what Jesus had said, to deepen their understanding of it, and to 'lead' them 'into

the whole truth', cf. 14:26+. The fourth gospel is revelation at this stage of development.

Moreover, this gospel is far more interested than the Synoptics in worship and sacraments. It relates the life of Jesus to the Jewish liturgical year, and associates his miracles with the principal feasts: the Temple is often given as the setting both for them and for Christ's discourses. Jesus asserts that he himself is the focus of a religion, restored 'in spirit and in truth', 4:24, but a religion also which is expressed in the very sacraments through which it works. The dialogue with Nicodemus includes all the essentials of a baptismal instruction, 3:1–21, and the narratives of the man born blind and of the paralytic seem to presuppose the ideas of baptism as light, 9:1–39, and new life, 5:1–14; 7:21–24. Ch. 6 by itself is a complete collection of teachings on the Eucharist, but the entire gospel is pervaded by the concept of the Christian Passover, replacing the Jewish Passover, 1:29,36; 2:13; 6:4; 19:36. Jewish purificatory rites, 2:6; 3:25, give way to a purification of the soul by the Word, 15:3, and the Spirit, 20:22f. In this way the life of Christ is seen as directly related to a living liturgical and sacramental Christianity.

The fourth gospel has a complex literary form: it is akin to the earliest Christian preaching, and yet at the same time it gives us the final results of a quest, completed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for a deeper and more rewarding apprehension of the mystery of Jesus.

Each of the evangelists has his own approach to Christ's person and mission. For St John he is the Word made flesh, come to give life to men, 1:14, and this, the mystery of the Incarnation, dominates the whole of John's thought. He expresses its theology in concrete terms: Jesus is sent; Jesus bears witness. Christ is God's message, he is the Word sent down to earth by God, to whom he must return when his task is complete, cf. 1:1+. This task of the Word is to declare to men the hidden things of God; and to be witness to all that he has seen and heard from the Father himself, cf. 3:11+. As credentials God has given him certain works or 'signs' which he must perform; these demand more than human power and prove that he has been sent by the God who is active in him, cf. 2:11+; through them is glimpsed his glory which will not be revealed fully till the day of his resurrection, cf. 1:14+, when the Son of Man is to be 'lifted up' as Isaiah foretold, Is 53:12 (LXX), to return to the Father by way of the cross, cf. Jn 12:32+, and to resume the glory he had with God 'before the world was made', 17:5+,24. This is the glory about which the prophets learned through revelation, cf. 5:27; 12:41; 19:37 plus references, and the revealing of this glory is a theophany, or divine self-revelation, that is at once both the culmination and final eclipse of all those other theophanies that had taken place already, whether that given in the act of creation, 1:1, or those given to Abraham, 8:56, Jacob, 1:51, Moses, 1:17, or the prophets. The glory of the 'day of Yahweh', cf. Am 5:18+, is identified with the 'day' of Jesus, 8:56, and more particularly with his hour, 2:4+, which is the hour of his 'lifting up' and of his glorification. In that hour the superhuman majesty of him who was 'sent', cf. 8:24+, the majesty of one who came to the world to give life, cf. 3:35+, to give it to all those whose hearts were opened by faith to the saving message he brought, cf. 3:11+. For this 'salvation' and for this alone the Son was 'sent', and in this way his 'sending' was the supreme manifestation of the Father's love for the world, cf. 17:6+.

In the synoptic gospels the revelation of Christ's glory is associated primarily with his eschatological 'coming', his return at the end of time, Mt 16:27f. The basic elements of traditional eschatology: the expectation of the 'last day', 6:39f; 11:24; 12:48, of the 'coming' of Jesus, 14:3; 21:22f, of the resurrection of the dead, 5:28f; 11:24, and of the last judgement, 5:29,45; 3:36, are all found in the fourth gospel, but in it this eschatology receives a new and double emphasis: both on its presence here and now, and also on its invisible activity in the heart of things. In this way, the 'coming' of the Son of Man is interpreted primarily as the 'coming' of Jesus to this world through his Incarnation, his 'lifting up' on the cross, and his return to his own disciples through the Holy Spirit. In the same way the 'judgement' is presented as something working here and now in the soul, and eternal life (John's counterpart of the Synoptic 'kingdom') is made to be something actually present, already in the possession of those who have faith. That these 'last things' should be seen as present is not surprising, since the salvation of mankind throughout history centres on Christ's historical life and death and resurrection. Beyond the Jews who rejected Jesus looms something more fundamental—the 'world', cf. 1:9–10+, the 'darkness', cf. 8:12+, which is controlled by Satan, the 'prince of this world', cf. 1 Jn 2:13f, who challenges God and his Anointed. There is no one who is not involved in this dramatic conflict of the spirit: the world, face to face with the Word, suffers its 'judgement', 12:31–32, receives its verdict, and admits defeat, 16:7–11,33. Christ gives his life, cf. 10:18+, he is 'lifted up' on the cross, but freely, and only in order to enter into his glory, cf. 12:32+, a glory that is made visible even in this world to the confusion of unbelievers and ending in the defeat of Satan for ever. God's victory over evil, his salvation of the world, is already guaranteed by Christ's resurrection in glory; the return of Jesus at the Last Day will be nothing but its confirmation.

It is difficult to determine the precise scheme adopted by John for this great theme. In the first place, the arrangement of the gospel is not always easy to explain: the sequence of ch. 4, 5, 6, 7:1–24 is awkward; ch. 15–17 are placed after the farewell of 14:31; passages like 3:31–36 and 12:44–50 break into the context. The way the gospel was both written and edited may be responsible for this. It would seem that we have only the end-stage of a slow process that has brought together not only component parts of different ages, but also corrections, additions and sometimes even more than one revision of the same discourse. Finally all this was published not by John himself but by his disciples after his death, 21:24. It is even possible that these disciples had a number of Johannine fragments which they were reluctant to abandon; though uncertain of their place, they worked them into the primitive gospel.

Many ways of dividing the gospel have been suggested. These all satisfy some of the data but are frequently far too rigidly systematic. It is best to follow such clear indications as are given by the evangelist himself. In the first place there is no doubt that he attaches special importance to the Jewish liturgical feasts which he uses to punctuate his narrative. These are: three feasts of Passover, 2:13; 6:4; 11:55, one unnamed feast, 5:1, one feast of Tabernacles, 7:2, and one feast of Dedication, 10:22. Secondly, the evangelist on several occasions very deliberately calculates the number of days with a view to dividing the life of Jesus into set periods. Thus we have the first week of Christ's
72 ministry, 1:19–2:11, the week of the feast of Tabernacles, 7:2,14,37, and the

week of the Passion, 12:1,12; 19:31,42, which latter is unified by the symbolic burial that begins it, 12:7, and the actual burial with which it ends, 19:38f; in the same way, 4:45 harks back to the first Passover, cf. 2:13–25, and in this way brackets together a whole section. With the above two points in mind, the following division may be suggested:

Prologue: 'In the beginning...' (1:1–18)

I. *First week* of the messianic ministry: Jesus revealed as Messiah. The week ends with the first miracle at Cana. (1:19–2:11)

II. *First Passover* with its accompanying events, ending with the second miracle at Cana. (2:12–4:54)

III. *Sabbath 'of the paralytic':* Christ cures the man at the Bethzatha pool. (5:1–47)

IV. *The Passover 'of the bread of life':* miracle of the loaves and the subsequent discourse. (6:1–71)

V. *The feast of Tabernacles* with the cure of the man born blind. (7:1–10:21)

VI. *The feast of Dedication* and the resurrection of Lazarus. (10:22–11:54)

VII. *Week of the Passion* and the crucifixion Passover. (11:55–19:42)

VIII. *The resurrection* and week of apparitions. (20:1–29)

IX. *Appendix* concerning the Church and the expectation of Christ's return. (ch. 21)

This division suggests that Christ not only fulfilled the Jewish liturgy but by doing so brought it to an end.

Is the fourth gospel a source of information independent of the three Synoptics? On this problem, and with due caution, the following observations may be made. There are several indications that John was familiar with the traditions behind the Synoptics. At times his omissions would be incomprehensible unless he were presuming that the facts would be known from some other source, but there are also times when he seems anxious to fill out the synoptic tradition and make it more precise. Nevertheless, recent work has been progressively establishing the originality and independence of the Johannine tradition. Even when narrating episodes found in the synoptic gospels, John remains so much himself that literary dependence becomes impossible: the facts must have reached the author by some other route and nowadays he must be considered a source in his own right, an independent witness to the primitive tradition. Between John and Luke the relationship is much closer, close enough to make it possible that when Luke wrote his gospel he made use not perhaps of the fourth gospel as it stands but of the traditions that went to its making, traditions of great antiquity. This applies especially to the Passion and resurrection narratives, but the contrary is also possible, namely, that the final editor of the fourth gospel was influenced by the third.

What then is the historical value of John's gospel? With the growing scholarly appreciation of the independence of the Johannine tradition there has grown also a recognition of its historical significance. On many points, for example, that have to do with Christ's ministry, John improves on the synoptic data; the duration of the ministry and the chronology of the Passion seem to be more precisely defined than in the Synoptics. Indeed, one of the most precise chronological indications in any of the gospels is to be found in John, 2:20,

and it is supported by Lk 3:1. Topography in the fourth gospel is also much more detailed than it is in the Synoptics and this information has been confirmed more than once by recent discoveries (e.g. the pool with five porticos, cf. 5:2). Moreover, throughout the gospel we meet with factual detail that displays the author's close familiarity with Jewish religious practice as also with the rabbinic mind and with the casuistry of the doctors of the Law. The portrait of Christ himself as painted by the evangelist represents him as a figure from some other world but nevertheless as someone real and entirely human: simple and humble even in his risen glory. Finally it may be remarked that if John had not been convinced of the truth of all he wrote, his gospel would have to remain an insoluble enigma.

But it is important to realise that 'history' in this context is a very different thing from the concept of modern historians. The absorbing concern of the evangelist is the *meaning* of those historical events which were at once both divine and human, events which were at one and the same time both historical and theological; events which flowered in time but were rooted in eternity. The aim of the evangelist is to make his account a faithful one, something which he intends should be believed; his theme is a supernatural act, carried out in human history by Jesus Christ, the Word who became incarnate for the salvation of the human race. With this in mind, the evangelist has selected his material, carefully choosing events which, it seemed to him, could be presented symbolically. In this way he has deepened their meaning and given them unsuspected overtones. The miracles he describes are 'signs': they not only manifest Christ's glory, they are also symbolic of the gifts (the new purification, the living bread, light and life) he has brought to the world; even non-miraculous events can be presented in a way that brings out their spiritual meaning, a way that makes them vehicles of the divine mysteries (cf. 2:19–21; 9:7; 11:51f; 13:30; 19:31–37 with notes). John can see spiritual depths even in the most material elements of history: when Jesus comes, it is as the light of the world that he comes: his whole life is a battle against darkness; his death is a judgement on the entire world; and in him are realised the types of the Old Testament—he is the lamb of God, 1:29, the new Temple, 2:21, the healing serpent of Moses, 3:14, the bread of life prefigured by manna, 6:35, the perfect shepherd, 10:11, the true vine, 15:1, etc. In John's portrait of him Christ is presented as divine but it is a portrait filled with the details of Christ's true humanity: it records the Christ of history, but Christ as seen in all his depths as saviour of the world: John's symbolism, therefore, does not compromise history but presupposes it; for him there is no tension between the symbolic and the factual: his symbols are the real events of history, and his symbolism is inherent in these events; his symbolism not only explains the inner meaning of these historic events, but to John, the privileged witness of the incarnate Word, all this symbolism would be useless if these events had not taken place.

As for the *author* of this highly rewarding and complex gospel, tradition almost unanimously makes him John the apostle, the son of Zebedee. Even before 150 A.D. the fourth gospel was known and used by Ignatius of Antioch, by the author of the *Odes of Solomon*, by Papias, by Justin, and probably by Clement of Rome, which makes it clear that the work was already considered to have apostolic authority. The first explicit testimony is that of Irenaeus,

c. 180: 'Last of all John, too, the disciple of the Lord who leant against his breast, himself brought out a gospel while he was in Ephesus'. At about the same time, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and the Muratorian Canon expressly attribute the fourth gospel to John the apostle, though this authorship was denied in about 200 A.D. by some opponents of the Montanists. These last had used the fourth gospel to bolster their doctrine of the Spirit, and their opponents' reaction, prompted by theological considerations, had no supporting evidence from tradition.

This evidence for its Johannine authorship is confirmed by the gospel itself which claims to be the work of an eye-witness, a beloved disciple of the Lord. Its vocabulary and style betray its semitic origin; it is familiar with Jewish customs and with the topography of Palestine at the time of Christ; its author is apparently a close friend of Peter, 13:23f; 18:15; 20:3–10; 21:20–23, as John the apostle was, according to Luke, Lk 22:8; Ac 3:1–4; 4:13,19; 8:14; and its silence with regard to the sons of Zebedee is best explained on the hypothesis that one of the two wrote it. There is no doubt that 'the disciple Jesus loved... who wrote these things', 21:24, is the one who, with Peter and James, enjoyed Christ's closest friendship, Mk 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33. One objection which has been urged is that there is some evidence for this apostle's martyrdom at a date anterior to the writing of the gospel. It cannot be denied that an ancient tradition of John's martyrdom did exist, but there is no proof whatever that it has any greater guarantee than the tradition that John died at Ephesus in his old age: if the former tradition is preferred, it still gives no hint of the date of the martyrdom. In any case, as we saw above, the *corpus* of Johannine traditions was certainly in existence at a very early date even though the gospel as we have it may well have been edited and published later, probably by John's disciples. In such circumstances, John's responsibility for the fourth gospel would not be incompatible with the suggestion that he was martyred.

The letters

The three letters we have, and which by tradition bear John's name, are so like the gospel in style and doctrine that it is difficult not to accept the same John as their author. For a time the Johannine authorship of the second and third letters was in doubt, and traces of this uncertainty are to be found in Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea and Jerome, while the church of Antioch and the Syrian churches in general refused for a long time to accept them; however, these brief, incidental letters are of no doctrinal import, and it is hard to see how they could have forced their way into the canon had they not in fact come from John.

The third letter was probably written first: it is an attempt to settle the dispute on jurisdiction which had arisen in one of the churches acknowledging John's authority; the second letter was written to another church in answer to those who publicly denied the reality of the incarnation. The first letter however is by far the most important: its form is that of an encyclical letter to the Christian communities of Asia, threatened with disintegration under the impact of the early heresies. In this letter John summarises the entire content of his religious experience. He successively develops the parallel themes of light, 1:5f, righteousness, 2:29f, love, 4:7–8f, and truth, 5:6f, and then taking these as a basis he goes on to show how we as children of God must necessarily

live the life of integrity which, for John, is the only thing which fulfils the twin commandments: faith in Jesus Christ, the son of God, and love of the brethren (cf. notes to 1:3,7). Of John's three letters this is the closest to his gospel both in style and doctrine; it must have been written about the same time, but whether before or after is something that cannot now be determined.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT JOHN

PROLOGUE

1:30; 8:24 Gn 1:1-5 1 Jn 1:1-2 3:17; 10:30+

1 In the beginning was the Word:[a] 1
the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning. 2

Ps 33:9 Col 1:15-20 Heb 1:1-3 Rv 3:14 *3:35*+

Through him all things came to be, 3
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be[b] had life in him[c] 4

3:11+

and that life was the light of men,

8:12+ 1 Jn 2:8

a light that shines in the dark, 5

Ws 7:30

a light that darkness could not overpower.[d]

A man came, sent by God. 6
His name was John.[e]

1:19-34

He came as a witness, 7
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.

5:35

He was not the light, 8
only a witness to speak for the light.

3:19; 4:42+; 8:12+; 12:46 Ws 7:26

The Word was the true light 9
that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.[f]

7:7; 8:23; 11:27; 12: 26.31; 13:1 2 P 1:4+ 1 Jn 2:15

He was in the world 10
that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.[g]
He came to his own domain 11
and his own people[h] did not accept him.

10:35

But to all who did accept him 12

3:11+ Ho 2:1 1 Jn 3:2 *1 Jn 5:13*

he gave power to become[i] children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him[j]
who was[k] born not out of human stock 13
or urge of the flesh
or will of man
but of God himself.[l]

1 Jn 5:18

Ex 25:8+ Lv 26:11-12 Dt 4:7+ 1 K 8:27 Ps 85:9 Ba 3:38 *17:5*+ 1 Jn 1:1-3 *Ex 34:6*+ Ho 2:22+

The Word was made flesh,[m] 14
he lived among us,[n]
and we saw his glory,[o]
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.[p]

1:19

John appears as his witness. He proclaims: 15
'This is the one of whom I said:

He who comes after me
ranks before me
because he existed before me'. =1:30

16 Indeed, from his fulness we have, all of us, received— Col 2:9-10
yes, grace in return for grace,[q]
17 since, though the Law was given through Moses, 1:21+
grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. Ex 34:10,32
Dt 33:4;
34:10
18 No one has ever seen God; *6:46*
it is the only Son,[r] who is nearest to the Father's heart, Ex 33:20+
who has made him known. 1 Jn 4:12
3:11+;
17:6+
Col 1:15

I. THE FIRST PASSOVER

A. THE OPENING WEEK

The witness of John 1:7-8,15

19 This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews[s] sent priests and 3:28; 5:33
20 Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' •he not only declared, but Lk 3:15
21 he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ'. •'Well then,' they asked 'are you Ac 13:25
22 Elijah?'[t] 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?'[u] He answered, 'No'. •So they Mt 17:10-13+
said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. *Mt 16:14+*
23 What have you to say about yourself?' •So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

1 a. The O.T. speaks of the Word of God, and of his Wisdom, present with God before the world was made, cf. Pr 8:22+; Ws 7:22+; by it all things were created; it is sent to earth to reveal the hidden designs of God; it returns to him with its work done, Is 55:10-11; Pr 8:22-36; Si 24:3-22; Ws 9:9-12. On its creative role, cf. also Gn 1:3,6 etc.; Is 40:8,26; 44:24-28; 48:13; Ps 33:6; Jdt 16:14; Si 42:15; on its mission, cf. Ws 18: 14-16; Ps 107:20; 147:15-18. For John, too, 13:3; 16:28, the Word existed before the world in God, 1:1,2; 8:24+; 10:30+; it has come on earth, 1:9-14; 3:19; 9:39; 12:46, cf. Mk 1:38+, being sent by the Father, 3:17,34; 5:36,43; 6:29; 7:29; 8:42; 9:7; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3,25, cf. Lk 4:43, to perform a task, 4:34+, namely, to deliver a message of salvation to the world, 3:11+; 1:33+; with its mission accomplished it returns to the Father, 1:18; 7:33; 8:21; 12:35; 13:3; 16:5; 17:11,13; 20:17. The incarnation enabled the N.T., and especially John, to see this separately and eternally existent Word-Wisdom as a person.

b. Alternatively, these words may be joined with the preceding 'not one thing of all that came to be had its being but through him'.

c. Var. 'he is the life'.

d. The Light (Goodness; the Word) cannot be imprisoned by Darkness (Evil; the powers of evil), cf. 7:33f; 8:21; 14:30; 12:31,32; 1 Jn 2:8,14; 4:4; 5:18. Others translate 'could not understand'.

e. John the Baptist, Mt 3:1.

f. Other possible translations 'The true light, that which enlightens every man, was coming into the world', or 'He (the Word) was the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world'.

g. The 'world' variously means: the cosmos or this earth, the human race, those hostile to God who hate Christ and his disciples, 7:7; 15:18,19; 17:14. This last sense coincides with the contemporary Jewish distinction between 'this world', 8:23 and *passim*, dominated by Satan, 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 Jn 5:19, and 'the world to come' which possibly corresponds to John's 'eternal life', 12:25. The disciples are to remain *in* this world for the present, though not *of* it, 17:11,14f.

h. Probably the Jews.

i. Var. 'to be called'.

j. 'to those who believe in his name' omitted by many of the Fathers.

k. Lit. 'who was born not of blood or the will of the flesh or the will of man'. Var. (the commonly accepted reading) 'those who are born', 'not of blood...man': the shorter reading 'not of flesh or blood' is perhaps the original one.

l. Allusion to the eternal generation of the Word but also, as it seems, to Christ's virgin birth, cf. Mt 1: 16,18-23 and Lk 1:26-38.

m. The 'flesh' is man considered as a frail and mortal being, cf. 3:6; 17:2; Gn 6:3; Ps 56:4; Is 40:6. See Rm 7:5+.

n. Lit. 'pitched his tent among us'. The incarnation of the Word makes God personally and visibly present to mankind; it is no longer a presence unseen and awe-inspiring as in the Tent and Temple of the old régime, Ex 25:8+; cf. Nb 35:34, nor merely the presence of divine Wisdom enshrined in Israel's Mosaic Law, Si 24:7-22; Ba 3:36–4:4.

o. The 'glory' is the manifestation of God's presence, Ex 24:16+. No one could see its brilliance and live, Ex 33:20+, but the human nature of the Word now screens this glory as the cloud once did. Yet at times it pierces the veil, at the transfiguration, for instance, cf. Lk 9:32,35 (alluded to in Jn 1:14?), and when Jesus works miracles—'signs' that God is active in him, 2:11+; 11:40; cf. Ex 14:24-27 and 15:7; 16:7f. The resurrection will reveal the glory fully, cf. Jn 17:5+.

p. 'Grace and truth' recalls the 'grace' (or 'love') and 'faithfulness' of God's self-revelation to Moses, Ex 34:6+, cf. Ho 2:16-22.

q. I.e. 'a grace answering to the grace (that is in Christ)' or 'one grace (that of the New Covenant) in place of (another) grace (that of the Old Covenant)'. An alternative translation is 'grace upon grace'.

r. Var. 'God, only-begotten'.

s. In Jn this usually indicates the Jewish religious authorities hostile to Jesus, cf. 2:18; 5:10; 7:13; 9:22; 18:12; 19:38; 20:19, but occasionally the Jews as a whole.

t. On the expected return of Elijah, see Ml 3:23-24 and Mt 17:10-13.

u. From Dt 18:15,18 (see note) the Jews argued that the expected Messiah would be another Moses (the prophet *par excellence*, cf. Nb 12:7+) who would repeat on a grand scale the prodigies of the Exodus. Cf. Jn 3:14; 6:14,30-31,68; 7:40,52; 13:1+; Ac 3:22-23; 7:20-44; Heb 3:1-11. See also Mt 16:14+.

Is 40:3 ||Mt 3:3+ *a voice that cries in the wilderness:*
Make a straight way for the Lord'.

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, •and they put this further 24
question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, 25
Mt 3:6+ and not the prophet?' •John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands 26
7:27+ among you—unknown to you—•the one who is coming after me; and I am 27
Mk 1:7p *10:40* not fit to undo his sandal-strap'. •This happened at Bethany, on the far side of 28
the Jordan,[v] where John was baptising.

4:42+ Ex 12:1+ Is 53:7,12 The next day, seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is 29
the lamb of God[w] that takes away the sin of the world. •This is the one I spoke 30
1:1+; 8:58 of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he
existed before me. •I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to 31
3:34 Is 11:2; 61:1 Mt 3:16p Israel that I came baptising with water.' •John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit 32
coming down on him from heaven like a dove[x] and resting on him. •I did not 33
know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me,
3:5 Mt 3:11+ "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is
going to baptise with the Holy Spirit".[y] •Yes, I have seen and I am the witness 34
Is 42:1 Lk 9:35; 23:35 that he is the Chosen One of God.'[z]

Mt 4:18-20p **The first disciples**

On the following day as John stood there again with two of his disciples, 35
19:5 Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of 36
God'. •Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. •Jesus turned round, saw 37 38
them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi,'—which
means Teacher—'where do you live?' •'Come and see' he replied; so they went 39
and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about
the tenth hour.[aa]

One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had 40
said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. •Early next morning,[bb] Andrew 41
met his brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah'—which means
the Christ—•and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, 42
Mt 16:18-19+ Mk 3:16 1 Co 1:12+ 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas'—meaning Rock.

Mt 9:9 *Jn 12:21* The next day, after Jesus had decided to leave for Galilee, he met Philip and 43
said, 'Follow me'. •Philip came from the same town, Bethsaida, as Andrew and 44
Peter. •Philip found Nathanael[cc] and said to him, 'We have found the one 45
1:21+; 5:39+ Dt 18:18 Ac 26:22+ *7:41,42,52* Mt 13:54f Moses wrote about in the Law, the one about whom the prophets wrote: he is
Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth'. •'From Nazareth?' said Nathanael 'Can 46
anything good come from that place?' 'Come and see' replied Philip. •When 47
Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him,[dd] 'There is an Israelite who deserves
2:25; 6:61,64 Mt 9:4 Lk 6:8 the name, incapable of deceit'. •'How do you know me?' said Nathanael. 48
'Before Philip came to call you,' said Jesus 'I saw you under the fig tree.'[ee] •Na- 49
6:15; 12:13 thanael answered, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God,[ff] you are the King of Israel'.
Jesus replied, 'You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig-tree. 50
You will see greater things than that.' •And then he added, 'I tell you most 51
Gn 28:10-17 solemnly, you will see heaven laid open and, above the Son of Man, the angels
Mt 8:20+ of God ascending and descending'.

The wedding at Cana

21:2; 4:46 2 Three days later[a] there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of 1
Jesus was there,[b] •and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. •When 2 3
they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished,
7:6,30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1 the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine'. •Jesus said, 'Woman,[c] why 4
turn to me?[d] My hour[e] has not come yet.' •His mother said to the servants, 5
Gn 41:55 '*Do whatever he tells you*'. •There were six stone water jars standing there, meant 6
Mk 7:3-4 for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or

7 thirty gallons. •Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water', and they
8 filled them to the brim. •'Draw some out now' he told them 'and take it to the
9 steward.' •They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into
wine. Having no idea where it came from—only the servants who had drawn
10 the water knew—the steward called the bridegroom •and said, 'People generally
serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty
to drink; but you have kept the best wine till now'.

Mt 26:29p
Lk 5:37-39p
1:14+; 4:54
Ex 4:30-31
Nb 16:28

11 This was the first of the signs[f] given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee.
12 He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him. •After this he went
down to Capernaum with his mother and the brothers,[g] but they stayed there
only a few days.

20:17
Mt 4:13
Ac 1:15+

B. THE PASSOVER

The cleansing of the Temple

||Mt 21:12-13
||Mk 11:11, 15-17
Ne 13:8
||Lk 19:45-46
Ml 3:1-4

13 Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, •and in the
14 Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money
15 changers sitting at their counters there. •Making a whip out of some cord, he
drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money-
16 changers' coins, knocked their tables over •and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take
17 all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market'. •Then his
disciples remembered the words of scripture: *Zeal for your house will devour me.*
18 The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you
19 have done?' •Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will
20 raise it up'.[h] •The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this

5:18
Zc 14:21
Ps 69:9
4:48; 6:30
Mt 26:61+
Mt 12:6+, 38-40+

v. Not the Bethany near Jerusalem, 11:18.

w. One of the most significant of John's symbols of Christ, cf. Rv 5:6,12, etc. It blends the idea of the 'servant' (Is 53), who takes on himself the sins of men and offers himself as a 'lamb of expiation' (Lv 14), with that of the Passover lamb (Ex 12:1+; cf. Jn 19:36) whose ritual symbolises Israel's redemption. Cf. Ac 8: 31-35; 1 Co 5:7; 1 P 1:18-20.

x. Om. 'like a dove'.

y. This phrase sums up the whole purpose of the Messiah's coming, cf. 1:1+, namely, that mankind might be born again in the Spirit; the O.T. had already foretold it, cf. Ac 2:33+. The Spirit rests on him, Is 11:2; 42:1; Jn 1:33, and so he can confer it on others (baptism in the Spirit, cf. here and Ac 1:5+), but only after his resurrection, 7:39; 16:7,8; 20:22; Ac 2. For Jesus 'came in the flesh', 1 Jn 4:2; 2 Jn 7, flesh that was corruptible, Jn 1:14+, and it is only when he is 'lifted up' and has gone to the Father that his body, glorified now, is fully endowed with divine, lifegiving power. Thenceforward the Spirit flows freely to the world from this body as from an inexhaustible spring: 7:37-39; 19:34; cf. Rm 5:5+. For the water symbolism, cf. 4:1+.

z. Var. 'the Son of God'.

aa. About 4 p.m. The insertion of this detail suggests that the narrative is a personal reminiscence.

bb. Lit. 'early'; var. 'at first' or 'first'.

cc. Probably the Bartholomew of the Synoptics, Mt 10:3p. Cf. Jn 21:2.

dd. 'of him'; var. 'of Nathanael' or 'to him'.

ee. Christ's supernatural knowledge of men and things is one of the features of Jn's portrait of him, cf. 2:24f; 4:17-19,29; 6:61,64,71; 13:1,11,27,28; 16:19, 30; 18:4; 21:17.

ff. In this passage the phrase implies he is Messiah only (like 'king of Israel'). Cf. Mt 4:3+.

2 a. I.e. three days after the meeting with Philip and Nathanael. The opening events of the gospel, therefore, are contained within one week of which almost every day is noticed; it culminates in the manifestation of Christ's glory.

b. Mary is present when Jesus first manifests his glory; she is there again at the cross, 19:25-27. The two descriptions have several details in common, evidently of set purpose.

c. Unusual address from son to mother; the term is used again in 19:26 where there may be a reference to Gn 3:15,20: Mary is the second Eve, 'the mother of the living'.

d. Lit. 'What to me and to thee', a semitic formula not infrequent in O.T., Jg 11:12; 2 S 16:10; 19:23; 1 K 17:18, etc., and in N.T., Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24; 5:7; Lk 4:34; 8:28. It is used to deprecate interference or, more strongly, to reject overtures of any kind. The shade of meaning can be deduced only from the context. Here, Jesus objects that his hour has not yet come.

e. The 'hour' of his glorification and of his return to the Father's right hand. Its approach is noted by the evangelist, 7:30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1; 17:1. This 'hour' is determined by the Father and cannot be anticipated, though the miracle worked through Mary's intervention is a prophetic symbol of it.

f. For credentials, every true prophet must have 'signs', or wonders worked in God's name, Is 7:11, etc.: cf. Jn 3:2; 6:29,30; 7:3,31; 9:16,33; of the Messiah it was expected that he would repeat the Mosaic miracles, 1:21+. Jesus, therefore, works 'signs' in order to stimulate faith in his divine mission, 2:11,23; 4:48-54; 11:15,42; 12:37; cf. 3:11+. And indeed his 'works' show that God has sent him, 5:36; 10:25,37, that the Father is within him, 10:30+, manifesting the divine glory in power, 1:14+; it is the Father himself who does the works, 14:10; 10:38. But many refuse to believe, 3:12; 5:38-47; 6:36,64; 7:5; 8:45; 10:25; 12:37, and their sin 'remains', 9:41; 15:24. Cf. Mt 8:3+.

g. Var. 'and his brothers'; add. 'and his disciples'. The 'brothers' are not blood-brothers of Jesus but the inner circle of his first disciples, cf. Ac 1:15+.

h. In the fourth gospel, Jesus frequently uses terms which, in addition to their obvious meaning appreciated by the audience, possess a metaphorical and higher sense; cf. 2:20 (Temple); 3:4 (new birth); 4:15 (living water); 6:34 (bread of life); 7:35 (to depart); 11:11 (to awaken); 12:34 (to lift up); 13:9 (to wash); 13:36f (to depart); 14:22 (to show oneself). Consequent

sanctuary:[i] are you going to raise it up in three days?' •But he was speaking of 21
1:14+ the sanctuary that was his body,[j] •and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples 22
5:39+; 14:26+ remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

4:45 During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name 23
when they saw the signs that he gave, •but Jesus knew them all and did not trust 24
1:48+ Pr 15:11 himself to them; •he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what 25
a man had in him.

C. THE MYSTERY OF THE SPIRIT REVEALED TO A MASTER IN ISRAEL

The conversation with Nicodemus

7:48,50-52; 12:42-43; 19:39 3 There was one of the Pharisees called Nicodemus, a leading Jew, •who came 1 2
to Jesus by night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who comes
2:11+; 9:16, 33; 10:21 from God; for no one could perform the signs that you do unless God were with
him'. •Jesus answered: 3

'I tell you most solemnly,
Jn 1:16 1 P 1:23 unless a man is born from above,[a]
he cannot see the kingdom of God'.[b]

2:19+ Nicodemus said, 'How can a grown man be born? Can he go back into his 4
mother's womb and be born again?' •Jesus replied: 5

'I tell you most solemnly,
1:33+ Ezk 36:25 Rm 8:9 Tt 3:5 unless a man is born through water and the Spirit,[c]
he cannot enter the kingdom of God:
Gn 6:3 what is born of the flesh is flesh; 6
6:63 1 Co 15:44-50 what is born of the Spirit is spirit.
Do not be surprised when I say: 7
You must be born from above.
Qo 11:5 Ac 2:2 The wind[d] blows wherever it pleases; 8
you hear its sound,
but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.
That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit.'

'How can that be possible?' asked Nicodemus. •'You, a teacher in Israel, 9 10
and you do not know these things!' replied Jesus.

1:4,12,18; 3:32,34; 5:24,29; 7:16,43 8:14,28,31 Is 50:4,10 Mt 11:27 'I tell you most solemnly, 11
we speak only about what we know
and witness only to what we have seen
and yet you people reject our evidence.[e]
6:60-62 Ws 9:16-17 Ph 3:19f If you do not believe me 12
when I speak about things in this world,
how are you going to believe me
when I speak to you about heavenly things?
20:17+ Pr 30:4 No one has gone up to heaven[f] 13
1:18 Rm 10:6 Ep 4:8,9 except the one who came down from heaven,
the Son of Man who is in heaven;
1:21+; 12:32+ and the Son of Man must be lifted up[g]
Nb 21:4-9 Ws 16:5-7 as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, 14
so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.[h] 15
Gn 22 Zc 12:10 Mt 21:37p Rm 8:32 Yes, God loved the world so much 16
that he gave his only Son,

so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost
but may have eternal life. 1 Jn 4:9▲

17 For God sent his Son into the world 1:1+
not to condemn the world,
but so that through him the world might be saved. 4:42+; 12:47
2 Co 5:19

18 No one who believes in him will be condemned;
but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already,
because he has refused to believe Ac 4:12
in the name[i] of God's only Son.

19 On these grounds is sentence pronounced:
that though the light has come into the world 8:12+
men have shown they prefer
darkness to the light Ps 52:3
because their deeds were evil.

20 And indeed, everybody who does wrong Jb 24:13-17
hates the light and avoids it,
for fear his actions should be exposed; Ep 5:13

21 but the man who lives by the truth[j] Tb 4:6
1 Jn 1:6
comes out into the light,
so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.' Mt 5:14-16

II. JOURNEYS IN SAMARIA AND GALILEE

John bears witness for the last time

22 After this, Jesus went with his disciples into the Judaean countryside and
23 stayed with them there and baptised.[k] •At the same time John was baptising at 4:1-2
Aenon[l] near Salim, where there was plenty of water, and people were going
24 there to be baptised. •This was before John had been put in prison. Mt 3:6+
Lk 3:20

25 Now some of John's disciples had opened a discussion with a Jew about
26 purification,[m] •so they went to John and said, 'Rabbi, the man who was with
you on the far side of the Jordan, the man to whom you bore witness, is baptising
27 now; and everyone is going to him'. •John replied:

misapprehensions provide an opportunity for explanatory developments, cf. 3:11+.

i. Reconstruction work on the Temple began in 19 B.C. This, therefore, is the Passover of 28 A.D.

j. One of the great Johannine symbols. Cf. Rv 21:22. Cf. Paul, 1 Co 12:12+. The body of the risen Christ is to be the focus of worship in spirit and truth, 4:21f, the shrine of the Presence, 1:14, the spiritual temple from which living waters flow, 7:37-39; 19:34.

3 a. To be preferred to 'again'.

b. A phrase common in the Synoptics, Mt 4:17+, but occurring only here (and v. 5) in Jn; its Johannine equivalent is 'life' or 'eternal life'.

c. Allusion to baptism and its necessity, cf. Rm 6:4+.

d. In Greek, as in Hebr., one word serves for both 'wind' and 'spirit'.

e. Jesus does not speak on his own initiative, 7:17-18; he declares what he has seen 'with the Father', 1:18; 3:11; 8:38; cf. 8:24+; it is the Father's words and teaching that he hands on to man, 3:34; 8:28; 12:49,50; 14:24; 17:8,14; he is himself the Word, 1:1,14. This Word is not idle: it calls all things from nothing, 1:1+, it calls the dead from the tomb, 11:43,44; 5:28-29; it gives life to the soul, 5:24; 6:63; 8:51; it confers the Spirit, the source of immortality, 1:33+; 20:22, and so makes men children of God, 10:35; 1:12. It is required only that man should have faith in the Word, 1:12, 'dwell' in it, cf. 8:31, 'keep' it, 8:51,55; 12:47; 14:23; 15:20; 17:6, obey its command which is love, 13:34+. Nevertheless, the Word is enigmatic, 2:20+, and difficult, cf. 6:60; 7:36; it makes its way only into humble hearts. Those who hear it, therefore, respond differently, 7:43; 10:19; some believe, 4:41; 7:40f,46; 8:30, others go away disappointed, 6:66, in spite of the 'signs', 2:11+; this same rejected Word will judge them at the last day, 12:48.

f. Alluding to the ascension, which will both show that Jesus really came from heaven and also establish the Son of Man on his glorious throne.

g. If man would be saved he must turn his eyes to Christ 'lifted up' (12:32+) on the cross, Nb 21:8; Zc 12:10+; Jn 19:37+, as the symbol of his 'lifting up' in the ascension, that is to say he must believe that Christ is the only-begotten Son, 3:18; Zc 12:10. He will then be washed clean by the water from the pierced side, Jn 19:34; Zc 13:1.

h. Var. 'so that everyone who believes in him may receive eternal life'.

i. Semitism: the 'name' is the person.

j. Lit. 'does the truth', cf. 1 Jn 3:19+.

k. A baptism of the same nature as the Baptist's; baptism 'in the Spirit' is reserved for the period after Christ's resurrection in glory, cf. 1:33+.

l. A tradition locates Aenon ('the Springs') in the Jordan valley about 7 miles S. of Scythopolis. Ain Farah is also a possibility.

m. About baptism probably. 'a Jew'; var. 'Jews'. The text is corrupt. The reading may have been 'Jesus' or 'the disciples of Jesus'.

19:11 Heb 5:4 *1 Co 4:7* 2 Co 3:5
'A man can lay claim
only to what is given him from heaven.

1:19-27 Lk 3:15
'You yourselves can bear me out: I said: I myself am not the Christ; I am the one who has been sent in front of him. 28

Ezk 16:1+ Mt 9:15+
'The bride is only for the bridegroom;[n] 29
and yet the bridegroom's friend,
who stands there and listens,
15:11
is glad when he hears the bridegroom's voice.
This same joy I feel, and now it is complete.
He must grow greater, 30
I must grow smaller.
8:23
He who comes from above 31
is above all others;[o]
1 Jn 4:5
he who is born of the earth
is earthly himself and speaks in an earthly way.
He who comes from heaven[p]
3:11
bears witness to the things he has seen and heard, 32
even if his testimony is not accepted;
1 Jn 5:10
though all who do accept his testimony 33
7:28; 8:26
are attesting the truthfulness of God,
1:1+
since he whom God has sent 34
3:11+
speaks God's own words:
1:32
God gives him the Spirit without reserve.[q]
Mt 11:27; 28:18
The Father loves the Son 35
and has entrusted everything to him.[r]
Anyone who believes in the Son has eternal life, 36
9:41
but anyone who refuses to believe in the Son will never see life:
Mt 3:7+
the anger of God stays on him.'

The saviour of the world revealed to the Samaritans[a]

Ps 23:2; 42:1 Jr 31:9 Jl 4:18
4 When Jesus[b] heard that the Pharisees had found out that he was making 1
and baptising more disciples than John—•though in fact it was his disciples 2
Mt 3:6+
who baptised, not Jesus himself—•he left Judaea and went back to Galilee. 3
Lk 9:52-55
This meant that he had to cross Samaria. 4
Gn 33:18-20; 48:21-22 Jos 24:32
On the way he came to the Samaritan town called Sychar,[c] near the land 5
that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. •Joseph's well is there and Jesus, tired by the 6
journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.[d] •When 7
19:28
a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'.
His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. •The Samaritan woman said 8 9
Lk 10:29-37; 17:11-19
to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?'—Jews,
in fact, do not associate with Samaritans.[e] •Jesus replied: 10

3:16 Ac 8:20+
'If you only knew what God is offering
and who it is that is saying to you:
"Give me a drink",
you would have been the one to ask,
6:35
and he would have given you living water'.

'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could 11
6:31-32; 8:53
you get this living water? •Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who 12
gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' •Jesus 13
replied:

Si 24:21
'Whoever drinks this water
will get thirsty again;
6:35; 7:37-39
but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give 14
will never be thirsty again:

the water that I shall give
will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life'. Ps 36:9 Is 58:11

'Sir,' said the woman 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get 2:19+; 6:34
thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water.' •'Go and call your
husband' said Jesus to her 'and come back here.' •The woman answered, 'I have
no husband'. He said to her, 'You are right to say, "I have no husband"'; •for 1:48+
although you have had five, the one you have now is not your husband. You Lk 7:39
spoke the truth there.' •'I see you are a prophet, sir' said the woman. •'Our Mt 16:14+
fathers worshipped on this mountain,[f] while you say that Jerusalem is the place Dt 12:5+
where one ought to worship.'[g] •Jesus said:

'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming
when you will worship the Father
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
You worship what you do not know; 2 K 17:27-33
we worship what we do know; Is 2:3
for salvation comes from the Jews. Rm 9:4-5
But the hour will come—in fact it is here already—
when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth:[h] 2:21+; 17:19
that is the kind of worshipper
the Father wants.
God is spirit,
and those who worship[i]
must worship in spirit and truth.'

The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah—that is, Christ—is coming; Dt 18:18-22
and when he comes he will tell us everything'. •'I who am speaking to you, 9:37
said Jesus 'I am he.'

At this point his disciples returned, and were surprised to find him speaking
to a woman, though none of them asked, 'What do you want from her?' or, 21:12
'Why are you talking to her?' •The woman put down her water jar and hurried
back[j] to the town to tell the people, •'Come and see a man who has told me
everything I ever did; I wonder if he is the Christ?' •This brought people out of
the town and they started walking towards him.

Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, do have something to

n. The O.T. uses the marriage metaphor to express the relationship between God and Israel, Ho 1:2+. Jesus applies it to himself, Mt 9:15p; 22:1f; 25:1f; cf. also Paul in Ep 5:22f; 2 Co 11:2. The Messiah's coming has brought joy to the world, Jn 3:29, cf. 1:29, 36-39; 2:1-11, consequently the marriage feast of the Lamb, Rv 19:7; 21:2, has already begun.

o. Or perhaps 'everything'.

p. Add, 'is above all (others)' (or 'everything').

q. Or 'and gives the Spirit without reserve'.

r. God has communicated his power over life to the Son, 1:4; 5:21; 10:18+, and now the Son gives life to whom he will, 5:26; his gift of the Spirit, 3:5-6; 1:33+; 15:26, establishes 'all flesh' in incorruption 1:14+; 11:25; 17:2,3. Thus, by the Father's decree, all things are 'in the hand' (or 'power') of the Son, 3:35; 10:28,29; 13:3; 17:2; cf. 6:37-39; Mt 11:27; 28:18; on this is based the sovereignty, 12:13-15; 18:36-37, that he will solemnly assume on the day of his 'lifting up', 12:32+; 19:19; Ac 2:33; Ep 4:8; and on that day, the 'Prince of this world' will forfeit his kingdom, 12:31.

4 a. Meetings at a well are a feature of the patriarchal narratives: Gn 24:10f; 29:1f; Ex 2:15f. Wells and springs play a significant part in the life and religion of the patriarchal and Exodus periods: Gn 26:14-22; Ex 15:22-27; 17:1-7 etc. In the O.T., spring water symbolises the life that God gives, especially that of the messianic age: Is 12:3; 55:1; Jr 2:13; Ezk 47:1f (cf. Ps 46:4 and Zc 14:8); Ps 36:8-9 (and in the N.T.: Rv 7:16-17; 22:17); it symbolises also the life imparted by divine Wisdom and by the Law, Pr 13:14; Si 15:3; 24:23-29. This symbolism is carried further in the gospel narrative: living (i.e. spring) water signifies the Spirit, cf. Jn 7:37-39 and 1:33+.

b. Var. 'the Lord'.

c. Either the ancient Shechem (Sichara in Aramaic) or the present village of Askar at the foot of Mt. Ebal, about 3/4 mile from 'Jacob's Well'. The well is not mentioned in Gn.

d. Noon.

e. Some authorities omit this parenthesis. The Jews hated the Samaritans, Si 50:25-26; Jn 8:48; Lk 9:52-55, cf. Mt 10:5; Lk 10:33; 17:16, and attributed their origin to the importation of five pagan groups, 2 K 17:24-41, who retained some of their loyalty to their old gods; these are symbolised by the 'five husbands' of v. 18.

f. I.e. Gerizim; on this mountain the Samaritans had built a rival to the Jerusalem Temple; it was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 129 B.C.

g. Lit. 'one ought to worship in Jerusalem'. Var. 'the place (or: house) in which one ought to worship is in Jerusalem'.

h. The Spirit, 14:26+, who makes a new creature of man, 3:5, is also the inspiring principle of the new worship of God. This worship is 'in truth' because it is the only worship that meets the conditions revealed by God through Jesus.

i. Var. 'those who worship him', cf. 12:20.

j. Var. 'went off'.

eat'; •but he said, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about'. •So the 32 33
disciples asked one another, 'Has someone been bringing him food?' •But Jesus 34
said:

'My food
1:1+; 5:30; 6:38-40; 17:4; 19:30 is to do the will of the one who sent me,
and to complete his work.
Mt 26:39 Have you not got a saying: 35
Four months and then the harvest?
Well, I tell you:
Mt 9:37-38 Lk 10:2 Look around you, look at the fields;
Rv 14:15 already they are white, ready for harvest![k]
Already •the reaper is being paid his wages, 36
already he is bringing in the grain for eternal life,
Ps 126:5-6 and thus sower and reaper rejoice together.
For here the proverb holds good: 37
one sows, another reaps;
17:18; 20:21 Ac 8:14-17 I sent you to reap 38
a harvest you had not worked for.
Others worked for it;
and you have come into the rewards of their trouble.'[l]

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the 39
woman's testimony when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done', •so, when 40
the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed
for two days, and •when he spoke to them many more came to believe; •and 41 42
they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us;
1:9-10+, 29; 3:17; 11:52; 1Jn 2:2; 4:15 we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the
world'.[m]

‖Mt 8:5-13 ‖Lk 7:1-10 **The cure of the nobleman's son**

When the two days were over Jesus left for Galilee. •He himself had declared 43 44
Mt 13:57p; 16:14+ that there is no respect for a prophet in his own country, •but on his arrival the 45
Galileans received him well, having seen all that he had done at Jerusalem
Jn 2:23 during the festival which they too had attended.
2:1-11 He went again to Cana in Galilee, where he had changed the water into wine. 46
Mt 8:5 Lk 7:1-10 Now there was a court official there whose son was ill at Capernaum •and, 47
hearing that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judaea, he went and asked him
2:18; 20:29 Mt 12:38p to come and cure his son as he was at the point of death. •Jesus said, 'So you will 48
not believe unless you see signs and portents!' •'Sir,' answered the official 'come 49
down before my child dies.' •'Go home,' said Jesus 'your son will live.' The man 50
Mt 8:10+ believed what Jesus had said and started on his way; •and while he was still on 51
the journey back his servants met him with the news that his boy was alive. •He 52
asked them when the boy had begun to recover. 'The fever left him yesterday'
they said 'at the seventh hour.' •The father realised that this was exactly the time 53
when Jesus had said, 'Your son will live'; and he and all his household believed.
2:11+ This was the second sign given by Jesus, on his return from Judaea to Galilee. 54

III. THE SECOND FEAST AT JERUSALEM

The cure of a sick man at the Pool of Bethzatha

5 Some time after this there was a Jewish festival,[a] and Jesus went up to Jeru- 1
salem. •Now at the Sheep Pool in Jerusalem there is a building, called Beth- 2
zatha[b] in Hebrew, consisting of five porticos; •and under these were crowds of 3
sick people—blind, lame, paralysed—waiting for the water to move;[c] •for at 4
Mt 1:20+ intervals the angel of the Lord came down into the pool, and the water was

disturbed, and the first person to enter the water after this disturbance was cured
5 of any ailment he suffered from. •One man there had an illness which had lasted
6 thirty-eight years, •and when Jesus saw him lying there and knew he had been in
7 this condition for a long time, he said, 'Do you want to be well again?' •'Sir,'
replied the sick man 'I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is
disturbed; and while I am still on the way, someone else gets there before me.'
8 9 Jesus said, 'Get up, pick up your sleeping-mat and walk'. •The man was cured Mt 9:6
at once, and he picked up his mat and walked away.

10 Now that day happened to be the sabbath, •so the Jews said to the man who 9:14 Ex 20:8+ Jr 17:21-27
had been cured, 'It is the sabbath; you are not allowed to carry your sleeping-
11 mat'. •He replied, 'But the man who cured me told me, "Pick up your mat and
12 walk" '. •They asked, 'Who is the man who said to you, "Pick up your mat and
13 walk"?' •The man had no idea who it was, since Jesus had disappeared into the
14 crowd that filled the place. •After a while Jesus met him in the Temple and said, Mt 9:2+
'Now you are well again, be sure not to sin any more, or something worse may 8:11 Mt 12:45
15 happen to you'.[d] •The man went back and told the Jews that it was Jesus who
16 had cured him. •It was because he did things like this on the sabbath that the Mt 12:8
17 Jews began to persecute Jesus.[e] •His answer to them was, 'My Father goes on 7:23; 9:4
18 working, and so do I'.[f] •But that only made the Jews even more intent on killing 7:1,19,25; 11:53
him, because, not content with breaking the sabbath, he spoke of God as his own *2:16; 10:33* Ws 2:16
Father, and so made himself God's equal. Mt 12:14

19 To this accusation Jesus replied:

'I tell you most solemnly,
the Son can do nothing by himself; 8:28-29
he can do only what he sees the Father doing:
and whatever the Father does the Son does too.
20 For the Father loves the Son 3:35
and shows him everything he does himself,
and he will show him even greater things than these,
works that will astonish you.
21 Thus, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, Dt 32:39 1 S 2:6 2 K 5:7
so the Son gives life to anyone he chooses; *3:35+*
22 for the Father judges[g] no one; *5:27* Dn 7:10
he has entrusted all judgement to the Son, Ac 10:42+
23 so that all may honour the Son
as they honour the Father.
Whoever refuses honour to the Son 17:6+
refuses honour to the Father who sent him.
24 I tell you most solemnly,
whoever listens to my words, 10:27; 18:37
and believes in the one who sent me, 3:11+ 1 Jn 2:25

k. A harvest of souls: the Samaritans who are coming to Jesus, v. 30, are its first-fruits.

l. The reapers are the apostles, the sowers those who have laboured before them, especially Jesus.

m. Not merely 'King of Israel' as in 1:49. This world-perspective is typical of John, cf. 1:29; 3:16; 11:52; 1 Jn 2:2. Nevertheless, 'salvation comes from the Jews', 4:22.

5 a. Var. 'the festival'. Possibly Pentecost, or Tabernacles.

b. Var. 'Bethesda' (house of mercy), 'Bethsaida' or 'Belsetha'.

c. Probably due to the inflow of fresh water from time to time. The best witnesses omit 'waiting for the water to move' and the whole of v. 4.

d. Jesus does not say that the disease was the result of sin, cf. 9:2f. He warns the man that his cure is a divine favour that must be acknowledged by conversion, cf. Mt 9:2-8; to forget this is to risk something worse than the disease. The miracle is therefore a 'sign' of spiritual resurrection, v. 24.

e. The episode is concluded in 7:19-23. The discourse of 5:19-47 falls into two parts: 1. the Father commits lifegiving power to the Son, vv. 19-30; 2. the Father bears witness to the Son: a. through the Baptist, b. through the works the Father does through Jesus c. through the scriptures (Moses), vv. 31-47.

f. Jewish theologians reconciled the fact that God 'rested' after the work of creation (the sabbath was the human counterpart of this 'rest', Gn 2:2f) with his unceasing, active government of the world, by distinguishing between God's activity as creator, which is now at an end, and his activity as judge (or 'governor'), which never ends. Jesus claims that what he does and what the Father does are one and the same. Hence the anger of the Jews and Christ's vindication of his claim.

g. Power over life and death expresses the highest judicial function, cf. v. 21.

3:18 has eternal life;
without being brought to judgement
1 Jn 3:14 he has passed from death to life.
I tell you most solemnly, 25
the hour will come—in fact it is here already—
10:16; 11: 25-26 8:51 when the dead[h] will hear the voice of the Son of God,
and all who hear it will live.
6:57 1 Jn 5:11 3:35+ For the Father, who is the source of life, 26
has made the Son the source of life;
Mt 8:20+ and, because he is the Son of Man, 27
5:22 Dn 7:13,22 Mt 9:6 2 Co 5:10 has appointed him supreme judge.
Do not be surprised at this, 28
for the hour is coming
when the dead will leave their graves
3:11+; 11: 43-44 at the sound of his voice:[i]
Mt 25:46 those who did good 29
will rise again to life;
Dn 12:2 Mt 16:27; 25:46 Ac 24:15 and those who did evil, to condemnation.
I can do nothing by myself; 30
I can only judge as I am told to judge,[j]
and my judging is just,
4:34; 6:38 because my aim is to do not my own will,
but the will of him who sent me.

8:13-14 'Were I to testify on my own behalf, 31
my testimony would not be valid;
1 Jn 5:9 but there is another witness[k] who can speak on my behalf, 32
and I know[l] that his testimony is valid.
1:19-28 You sent messengers to John, 33
Mt 11:7-11p and he gave his testimony to the truth:
8:18 not that I depend on human testimony; 34
no, it is for your salvation that I speak of this.
1:8 Si 48:1 Mt 3:7 John was a lamp alight and shining 35
and for a time you were content to enjoy the light that he gave.
But my testimony is greater than John's: 36
10:25 the works my Father has given me to carry out,
these same works of mine
1:1+ testify that the Father has sent me.
Besides, the Father who sent me 37
2:11+; 6: 44-45; 8:18 bears witness to me himself.
1 Jn 5:9 You have never heard his voice,
you have never seen his shape,
1 Jn 2:14 and his word finds no home in you 38
8:37 because you do not believe
in the one he has sent.

1:45; 2:22; 5:47; 7:52; 8:56; 12: 16,41; 19: 28; 20:9 Ac 17:12 'You study[m] the scriptures, 39
believing that in them you have eternal life;[n]
now these same scriptures testify to me,[o]
and yet you refuse to come to me for life! 40
1:14 1 Th 2:6 As for human approval, this means nothing to me. 41
Besides, I know you too well: 42
1 Jn 2:15; 3:17 you have no love of God in you.
I have come in the name of my Father 43
and you refuse to accept me;
Mt 24:5,24+ if someone else comes in his own name
you will accept him.

44 How can you believe,
since you look to one another for approval 12:43
and are not concerned Mt 6:1
with the approval that comes from the one God?[p] Rm 2:29
1 Co 4:5
1 Th 2:6
45 Do not imagine that I am going to accuse you before the Father:
you place your hopes on Moses,
and Moses will be your accuser. Dt 31:26
46 If you really believed him
you would believe me too, 5:39+
since it was I that he was writing about; Dt 18:15
Mt 8:10+
47 but if you refuse to believe what he wrote, Lk 16:31
how can you believe what I say?'

IV. ANOTHER PASSOVER, THE BREAD OF LIFE

The miracle of the loaves

||Mt 14:13-21
||Mk 6:32-44
||Lk 9:10-17

1 6 Some time after this, Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee—
2 or of Tiberias—•and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he
3 gave by curing the sick. •Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his
4 disciples. •It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.[a] 11:55
5 Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where
6 can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' •He only said this to test Philip;
7 he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. •Philip answered, 'Two hundred
8 denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each'. •One of his Nb 11:22
9 disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, •'There is a small boy here
10 with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' •Jesus
said to them, 'Make the people sit down'. There was plenty of grass there, and
11 as many as five thousand men sat down. •Then Jesus took the loaves, gave 21:13
thanks, and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with
12 the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. •When they had eaten enough he
said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted'.
13 So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the 2 K 4:42-44
14 meal of five barley loaves. •The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said,
15 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world'. •Jesus, who could see 1:21+
they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped[b] 1:49; 12:13; 18:36
back to the hills by himself. Heb 12:2
Mk 1:34+

Jesus walks on the waters

||Mt 14:22-33
||Mk 6:45-52

16 That evening the disciples went down to the shore of the lake and •got into
17 a boat to make for Capernaum on the other side of the lake. It was getting
18 dark by now and Jesus had still not rejoined them. •The wind was strong, and
19 the sea was getting rough. •They had rowed three or four miles when they saw
Jesus walking on the lake and coming towards the boat. This frightened them,
20 21 but he said, 'It is I. Do not be afraid.'[c] •They were for taking him into the boat,
but in no time it reached the shore at the place they were making for.

The discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum[d]

22 Next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side saw that only one boat

h. The spiritually dead.
i. The reference is to the resurrection of the dead at the last day, cf. Mt 22:29-32.
j. Lit. 'as I hear'. It is the Father whom Jesus 'hears'.
k. The Father.
l. Var. 'you know', wrongly making this verse refer to the Baptist's testimony, v. 33.
m. Alternative translation 'study', imperative.
n. On the scriptures as source of life, cf. Dt 4:1; 8:1,3; 30:15-20; 32:46f; Ba 4:1; Ps 119, etc.
o. The scriptures converge on Jesus who is their focus, cf. 1:45; 2:22; 5:39,46; 12:16,41; 19:28; 20:9.
p. Var. 'from the Only One'.
6 a. The bread Jesus gives is to be the new Passover.
b. Var. 'withdrew'.
c. Om. 'Do not be afraid'.
d. Some interpreters hold that a discourse about the Eucharist (6:51-58: Jesus nourishing the soul with

had been there, and that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that the disciples had set off by themselves. •Other boats, however, had put in 23
from Tiberias, near the place where the bread had been eaten.[e] •When the 24
people saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into those boats and crossed to Capernaum to look for Jesus. •When they found him on 25
the other side, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' •Jesus answered: 26

'I tell you most solemnly,
you are not looking for me
2:11+ because you have seen the signs
but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat.
Is 55:2 Lk 10:42 Do not work for food that cannot last, 27
but work for food that endures to eternal life,
Mt 8:20+ the kind of food the Son of Man is offering[f] you,
for on him the Father, God himself, has set his seal.'[g]

Then they said to him, 'What must we do if we are to do the works that God 28
wants?' •Jesus gave them this answer, 'This is working for God:[h] you must 29
Mt 8:10+; 16:1-4 Lk 11:29-32 1:21+; 2:11+ Ex 16:4f Ps 78:24 believe in the one he has sent'. •So they said, 'What sign will you give to show us 30
that we should believe in you? What work will you do? •Our fathers had manna 31
to eat in the desert; as scripture says: *He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*'
Jesus answered: 32

'I tell you most solemnly,
it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven,
Mt 6:11 it is my Father who gives you the bread from heaven,
the true bread;
for the bread of God 33
is that which comes down from heaven
and gives life to the world'.

2:19+; 4:15 'Sir,' they said 'give us that bread always.' •Jesus answered: 34 35

4:10+,14 Pr 9:1-6 Si 24:19-22 Is 55:1-3 Mt 11:19 Lk 7:35; 11:31 1 Co 1:24 2:11+; 15:24 'I am[i] the bread of life.
He who comes to me will never be hungry;
he who believes in me will never thirst.[j]
But, as I have told you, 36
you can see me and still you do not believe.
All that the Father gives me will come to me, 37
4:14 and whoever comes to me[k]
I shall not turn him away;
4:34; 5:30; 12:27+; 14:31; 15:10 Mt 26:39 Heb 10:9 because I have come from heaven, 38
not to do my own will,
but to do the will of the one who sent me.
Now the will of him who sent me 39
3:35+; 10:28,29; 17:12; 18:9 is that I should lose nothing
of all that he has given to me,
and that I should raise it up on the last day.
Yes, it is my Father's will 40
1 Jn 2:25 that whoever sees the Son[l] and believes in him
shall have eternal life,
and that I shall raise him up on the last day.'

Meanwhile the Jews were complaining[m] to each other about him, because he 41
Mt 13:54-57 Mk 6:1-6 had said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven'. •'Surely this is Jesus 42
son of Joseph' they said. 'We know his father and mother. How can he now say,
"I have come down from heaven"?' •Jesus said in reply, 'Stop complaining to 43
each other.

44 'No one can come to me
unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me, 5:37 Mt 16:17
and I will raise him up at the last day.
45 It is written in the prophets:
They will all be taught by God, Is 54:13 Jr 31:33f
and to hear the teaching of the Father, 1 Th 4:9 1 Jn 2:20,27
and learn from it,
is to come to me.
46 Not that anybody has seen the Father, 1:18 Ex 33:20+ 1 Jn 4:12
except the one who comes from God:
he has seen the Father. 7:29
47 I tell you most solemnly,
everybody who believes has eternal life.
48 I am the bread of life.
49 Your fathers ate the manna in the desert
and they are dead;
50 but this is the bread that comes down from heaven,
so that a man may eat it and not die.
51 I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Is 25:6 Mt 26:26f
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and the bread that I shall give Lk 22:19p
is my flesh,[n] for the life of the world.'[o] 1 Co 11:24

52 Then the Jews started arguing with one another: 'How can this man give
53 us his flesh to eat?' they said. •Jesus replied:

'I tell you most solemnly,
if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man 1:14+ Mt 8:20+
and drink his blood,
you will not have life in you.
54 Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood Is 25:6
has eternal life,
and I shall raise him up on the last day.
55 For my flesh is real food
and my blood is real drink.
56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood 15:4-5

his flesh and blood, cf. 6:51+) has been inserted into the narrative-discourse which may be summarised as follows: the Jews ask for a 'sign' like that of the manna, vv. 30-31; cf. 1:21+; Jesus tells them, 'The Father's message, which I pass on to man, (cf. 3:11+) makes of me man's true bread, a nourishment that only those with faith can receive', vv. 32f; the Jews do not understand, vv. 60-66; only Peter and the disciples believe, vv. 67-71. (This doctrine is best understood in the light of Dt 8:3; Pr 8:22-24 and 9:1-6; Si 24:3 and 24:17-21; Lk 11:29-32.)

6 e. Add. 'after the Lord had given thanks'.

f. Var. 'will offer'.

g. The 'seal' that Jesus received at his baptism, namely the Spirit, Mt 3:16+, who is the power of God operative in Christ's 'signs'. Cf. Ac 10:38; Mt 12:28; Ep 1:13; 4:30; 2 Co 1:22.

h. For 'works' in the Jewish sense Jesus substitutes faith in God's envoy.

i. The Greek phrase *ego eimi* recalls the name that God revealed to Moses, Ex 3:14+, cf. Jn 8:24+, but here (and frequently elsewhere) it also forms the prelude to the explanation of a parable. In this case the parable is not in words but in action: the gift of the manna and the multiplication of the loaves are explained as parables of Christ's gift of himself, the true bread.

j. As Wisdom invites man to her table, Pr 9:1f, so does Jesus. Jn sees him as the Wisdom of God which, in the O.T. revelation, was already moving towards personification, cf. 1:1+. This perception springs from Christ's own teaching already recorded in the Synoptics, Mt 11:19; Lk 11:31p, but given here much more clearly by Jn. Thus, Christ's origin is mysterious, Jn 7:27-29; 8:14,19; cf. Jb 28:20-28; he alone knows the secrets of God and reveals them to man, 3:11-12,31-32; cf. Mt 11:25-27p; Ws 9:13-18; Ba 3:29-38; he is the living bread that supremely satisfies, 6:35; cf. Pr 9:1-6; Si 24:19-22, if men will only come to him, 3:20,21; 5:40; 6:35,37,44,65; 7:37; cf. Pr 9:4-5; Si 24:19; Mt 11:28; but they must seek him before it is too late, 7:34; 8:21; cf. Pr 1:28. Cf. also Is 55:1-3. For Paul's teaching, cf. 1 Co 1:24+.

k. To 'come to' Jesus is to believe in him.

l. 'Seeing' the Son is perceiving and acknowledging that he is in truth the Son sent by the Father, cf. 12:45; 14:9; 17:6+.

m. As their forefathers did in the desert, cf. Ex 16:2f; 17:3; Nb 11:1; 14:27; 1 Co 10:10.

n. Add. 'that I shall give'; the phrase is, in any case, to be understood.

o. Jesus is the true bread because he is God's Word, vv. 32f, and also because he is a victim whose body and blood are offered in sacrifice for the life of the world, vv. 51-58, cf. 6:22+. The word 'flesh' suggests a connection between Eucharist and incarnation: the Word made flesh, 1:14, is the food of man.

lives in me
and I live in him.
As I, who am sent by the living Father, 57
myself draw life from the Father,
5:26; 14:19 so whoever eats me will draw life from me.[p]
This is the bread come down from heaven; 58
not like the bread our ancestors ate:[q]
they are dead,
but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

He taught this doctrine at Capernaum, in the synagogue. •After hearing it, 59 60
3:11+ many of his followers said, 'This is intolerable language. How could anyone
1:48+ accept it?' •Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and 61
Mt 11:6
12:32+ said, 'Does this upset you? •What if you should see the Son of Man ascend to 62
Mt 8:20+ where he was before?

1:33+; 3:6 'It is the spirit that gives life, 63
the flesh has nothing to offer.
3:11+ The words I have spoken to you are spirit
and they are life.[r]

1:48+ 'But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the outset 64
those who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. •He went on, 65
'This is why I told you that no one could come to me unless the Father allows
Lk 22:28 him'. •After this, many of his disciples left him and stopped going with him. 66

||Mt 16:16p **Peter's profession of faith**

Then Jesus said to the Twelve, 'What about you, do you want to go away too?' 67
1:21+ Simon Peter answered, 'Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of 68
Dt 8:3
Ac 3:14+; 7:38 eternal life, •and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.'[s] 69
10:36; 17:19 Jesus replied, 'Have I not chosen you, you Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.' 70
13:18 He meant Judas son of Simon Iscariot, since this was the man, one of the Twelve, 71
13:2,27 who was going to betray him.

V. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for the feast and teaches there

5:18; 11:54 7 After this Jesus stayed in Galilee; he could not[a] stay in Judaea, because the 1
Mk 9:30p Jews were out to kill him.

Ex 23:14+ As the Jewish feast of Tabernacles drew near, •his brothers[b] said to him, 2 3
Nb 29:12
Zc 14:16-19 'Why not leave this place and go to Judaea, and let your disciples[c] see the works
Mt 5:15 you are doing; •if a man wants to be known he does not do things in secret; since 4
2:11+ you are doing all this, you should let the whole world see'. •Not even his brothers, 5
2:4+ in fact, had faith in him. •Jesus answered, 'The right time[d] for me has not come yet, 6
1:10+ but any time is the right time for you. •The world cannot hate you, but it does 7
3:19; 8:12+ hate me, because I give evidence that its ways are evil. •Go up to the festival 8
yourselves: I am not going[e] to this festival, because for me the time is not ripe
yet.' • Having said that, he stayed behind in Galilee. 9

However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went up as well, but 10
quite privately, without drawing attention to himself. •At the festival the Jews 11
were on the look-out for him: 'Where is he?' they said. •People stood in groups 12
Mt 27:63 whispering[f] about him. Some said, 'He is a good man'; others, 'No, he is leading
Jn 9:22 the people astray'. •Yet no one spoke about him openly, for fear of the Jews. 13

When the festival was half over, Jesus went to the Temple and began to 14
Mt 7:28; 13:54-57 teach.[g] •The Jews were astonished and said, 'How did he learn to read? He has 15
Lk 2:47
Ac 4:13 not been taught.' •Jesus answered them: 16

'My teaching is not from myself: 3:11+
it comes from the one who sent me;
17 and if anyone is prepared to do his will,
he will know whether my teaching is from God
or whether my doctrine is my own.
18 When a man's doctrine is his own 8:50
he is hoping to get honour for himself;
but when he is working for the honour of one who sent him,
then he is sincere
and by no means an impostor.
19 Did not Moses give you the Law? 8:37-41 Rm 2:17-23
And yet not one of you keeps the Law!

20 'Why do you want to kill me?' •The crowd replied, 'You are mad! Who wants 8:48,52; 10:20
21 to kill you?' •Jesus answered, 'One work I did, and you are all surprised by it. Mt 5:1-9
22 Moses ordered you to practise circumcision—not that it began with him, it goes Gn 17:10+ Ac 7:8
23 back to the patriarchs—and you circumcise on the sabbath. •Now if a man Rm 4:11
can be circumcised on the sabbath so that the Law of Moses is not broken, Mt 12:1-5, 11-12
why are you angry with me for making a man whole and complete on a sabbath?[h] Lk 14:5
24 Do not keep judging according to appearances; let your judgement be according 8:15 Is 11:3 Zc 7:9 Lk 13:5f
to what is right.'

The people discuss the origin of the Messiah

25 Meanwhile some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'Isn't this the man 5:18
26 they want to kill? •And here he is, speaking freely, and they have nothing to
say to him! Can it be true the authorities[i] have made up their minds that he is
27 the Christ? •Yet we all know where he comes from, but when the Christ appears 1:26 Heb 7:3
no one will know where he comes from.'[j]
28 Then, as Jesus taught in the Temple, he cried out:

'Yes, you know me and you know where I came from. 8:19; 19:9+
Yet I have not come of myself:
no, there is one who sent me and I really come from him,[k] 3:34; 8:26
and you do not know him,
29 but I know him 6:46; 8:55
because I have come from him[l] 1:1+
and it was he who sent me.'

30 They would have arrested him then, but because his time had not yet come 7:44 Lk 4:29f
no one laid a hand on him. *2:4+; 8:20*

p. The life that the Father communicates to the Son passes to the faithful through the Eucharist.

q. Add. 'the manna' or 'in the desert'.

r. Christ's words about the bread from heaven reveal something real and divine of which only the Spirit, cf. 1:33+, can supply understanding, cf. 14:26+, and which is the source of life for men.

s. I.e. the Messiah, God's chosen envoy, consecrated and united in him uniquely, cf. 10:36; 17:19. Var. 'you are the Christ, the Son of God' or 'the Son of the living God', cf. Mt 16:16.

7 a. Var. 'he did not wish to'.

b. In the wide sense: cousins, relations, cf. Mt 12:46+.

c. Those in Jerusalem and Judaea, cf. 2:23; 3:26; 4:1.

d. I.e. 'my hour', cf. 2:4+.

e. Var. 'I am not going yet'.

f. Lit. 'There was whispering (var. much whispering) about him in the crowds'.

g. 7:14-52 is made up of separate passages with a common theme—the uncertainty about Christ's origin. 1. His human origin obscures his divine: he has never been a pupil of the rabbis, what is his knowledge worth? (vv. 14-18); the details of his childhood are known, how can he be the Messiah? (vv. 25-30). 2. His reputed birth at Nazareth shows that he is not the Christ (vv. 40-52). The theme of 'departure', too, (vv. 33-36, cf. 8:21-23) is connected with that of divine origin: the man Christ departs for the place where (in his divine nature, cf. vv. 29 and 34) he has always been. Vv. 19-24 are the conclusion of 5:1-16 and are alien to the present context.

h. The argument is rabbinic in type: circumcision was reckoned the 'healing' of one member; if this 'healing' of one member was allowed on the sabbath how much more the healing of the whole man?

i. Var. 'the chief priests' or 'the elders' or 'they'.

j. They knew that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, v. 42; Mt 2:5f, but it was commonly believed that he would lie hidden in some secret place, cf. Mt 24:26, (in heaven, according to some) until the day of his coming. This belief was vindicated, though his audience did not recognise it, by Christ's heavenly origin.

k. Lit. 'he who sent me is true' (var. 'truthful').

l. Var. 'because I am at his side'.

Jesus foretells his approaching departure

There were many people in the crowds, however, who believed in him; they 31
2:11+ were saying, 'When the Christ comes, will he give more signs than this man?'
Hearing that rumours like this about him were spreading among the people, 32
the Pharisees[m] sent the Temple police to arrest him.
Then Jesus said: 33

16:16 'I shall remain with you for only a short time now;
1:1+ then I shall go back to the one who sent me.
8:21; 12:21. 26; 14: 3.19 You will look for me and will not find me:[n] 34
where I am
Dt 4:29 Pr 1:28 Is 55:6 Ho 5:6 you cannot come.'

The Jews then said to one another, 'Where is he going that we shan't be 35
Jm 1:1+ 1 P 1:1+ able to find him? Is he going abroad to the people who are dispersed among
the Greeks and will he teach the Greeks? •What does he mean when he says: 36

2:19+ "You will look for me and will not find me:
where I am,
you cannot come"?'

The promise of living water

Nb 29:35 *Pr 1:20; 8:3* On the last day and greatest day of the festival,[o] Jesus stood there and cried 37
out:

4:1+ Nb 20:11 Pr 18:4 Is 55:1,3 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to me![p]
Let the man come and drink •who believes in me!' 38

2:21+; 19:34 As scripture says: From his breast[q] shall flow fountains of living water.[r]
1 Co 10:4+ He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive; 39
1:33+ Ac 5:32; 19:2 for there was no Spirit as yet[s] because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Fresh discussions on the origin of the Messiah

1:21+ Several people who had been listening said, 'Surely he must be the prophet', 40
2 S 7:1-2+ *Mt 9:27+ Rm 1:3* and some said, 'He is the Christ', but others said, 'Would the Christ be from 41
Galilee? •Does not scripture say that the Christ must be descended from David 42
Mi 5:1 Mt 2:5f and come from the town of Bethlehem?'[t] •So the people could not agree about 43
3:11; 7:30 him. •Some would have liked to arrest him, but no one actually laid hands on 44
him.

The police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees who said to them, 45
Mt 13:54-56 Lk 2:47; 4:22 'Why haven't you brought him?' •The police replied, 'There has never been 46
anybody who has spoken like him'. •'So' the Pharisees answered 'you have been 47
3:1 Mt 11:25 *9:34* led astray as well? •Have any of the authorities believed in him? Any of the 48
Pharisees? •This rabble knows nothing about the Law—they are damned.' 49
3:1+; 19:39 One of them, Nicodemus—the same man who had come to Jesus earlier—said to 50
Dt 1:16f; 17:4 *5:39* them, •'But surely the Law does not allow us to pass judgement on a man without 51
giving him a hearing and discovering what he is about?' •To this they answered, 52
1:46 Mt 16:14+ 'Are you a Galilean too? Go into the matter, and see for yourself: prophets do
not come out of Galilee.'

The adulterous woman[u]

They all went home, 8 and Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 53 1
At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came 2
Lk 21:37-38 to him, he sat down and began to teach them.
The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught 3
Lk 7:37-50 committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody,
Jb 31:11 Dn 13:22 they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing 4
Lv 20:10 Dt 22:22-24 adultery, •and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to 5

6 death by stoning. What have you to say?' •They asked him this as a test, looking
for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on Mt 12:10; 19:3 Lk 20:20
7 the ground with his finger.[a] •As they persisted with their question, he looked
up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to Dt 17:7 Mt 7:1-5
8 throw a stone at her'. •Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again.
9 When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest,
10 until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. •He
looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' Ezk 18:32; 33:11 *Ps 103:8, 13-14 5:14* Ezk 18:23
11 'No one, sir' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and
don't sin any more.'

Jesus, the light of the world[b]

12 When Jesus spoke to the people again, he said:

'I am the light of the world;
anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark;
he will have the light of life'. Gn 1:5 Ex 13:22 Jb 11:17; 18:5 Is 42:6; 58:10 Lm 3:2 Jl 2:2 Am 5:18 Mi 7:8 Mt 5:14

A discussion on the testimony of Jesus to himself

13 At this the Pharisees said to him, 'You are testifying on your own behalf;
14 your testimony is not valid'. •Jesus replied:

'It is true that I am testifying on my own behalf,
but my testimony is still valid, 3:11+; 5:31
because I know
where I came from and where I am going;
but you do not know 14:28
where I come from or where I am going.[c]
15 You judge by human standards;[d] 7:24; 12:47 Rm 7:5
I judge[e] no one,

m. Var. 'Pharisees and chief priests', 'They and the chief priests', 'Chief priests and Pharisees'.

n. Christ, like God himself, must be sought while there is still time to find him. But the Jews will let his 'time' slip by and instead of coming to them, salvation will come to the pagans (the 'Greeks'). Cf. 12:20-21; 12:32+; 19:37+.

o. The day, the 7th or perhaps the 8th, celebrating the end of the festival.

p. Om. 'to me'. Christ's invitation resembles that of divine Wisdom, cf. 6:35+.

q. From Jesus himself, according to the oldest tradition, though another has joined 'the man who believes in me' with what follows, making the 'streams' flow from the believer.

r. The liturgy of the feast of Tabernacles, which formed the background of these words, included prayers for rain, rites which commemorated the Mosaic water-miracle, Ex 17:1-7; cf. 1 Co 10:4, and readings from biblical passages foretelling lifegiving water for Zion, Zc 14:8; Ezk 47:1f. Cf. Jn 4:1+.

s. Var. 'the Spirit had not yet been given'.

t. Add. 'where David was', 'of David', or 'where he was'. Only Christ's intimates knew that he had been born in Bethlehem.

u. The author of this passage, 7:53-8:11, is not John: it is omitted by the oldest witnesses (MSS, versions, Fathers) and found elsewhere in others; moreover, its style is that of the Synoptics and the author was possibly Luke, cf. Lk 21:38+. Nevertheless, the passage was accepted in the canon and there are no grounds for regarding it as unhistorical.

8 a. The significance of the gesture is doubtful.

b. The development in the N.T. of the light-darkness theme can be traced fairly clearly along three main lines: 1. Just as the sun lights man on his way, so anything that shows him his way to God is 'light': of old it was the Law, the Wisdom and Word of God, Qo 2:13; Pr 4:18-19; 6:23; Ps 119:105; cf. Rm 2:19; now it is Christ, Jn 1:9; 9:1-39; 12:35; 1 Jn 2:8-11; cf. 2 Co 4:6, who is compared with the bright cloud that led the Israelites, Jn 8:12; cf. Ex 13:21f; Ws 18:3f; it is also his followers from whom the light of God's own perfections shines on men, Mt 5:14-16; Lk 8:16; Rv 21:24. 2. Light is symbolic of life, contentment, and joy, as darkness is of death, unhappiness, and misery, Jb 30:26; Is 45:7; cf. Ps 17:15+; hence, enslavement is darkness, the deliverance and salvation of the messianic age is light, Is 8:22-9:1; Mt 4:16; Lk 1:79; Rm 13:11-12. This light shines even on the pagan nations, Lk 2:32; Ac 13:47, through Christ who is the Light Jn (cf. texts just quoted); Ep 5:14; it is at its brightest in the kingdom of heaven, Mt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Rv 22:5; cf. 21:3-4. 3. The 'light-darkness' contrast came to be used for the mutually hostile worlds of Good and Evil (cf. the Essene texts of Qumran). Thus in the N.T. there are two 'empires', Christ the lord of one, Satan of the other, 2 Co 6:14-15; Col 1:12-13; Ac 26:18; 1 P 2:9, each striving for the mastery, Lk 22:53; Jn 13:29-30. Men are either 'sons of light' or 'sons of darkness', Lk 16:8; 1 Th 5:5; Ep 5:7-8; Jn 12:36, according as their life is ruled by the light (Christ) or by darkness (Satan), 1 Th 5:4f; 1 Jn 1:6-7; 2:9-10, and what they do shows which they are, Rm 13:12-14; Ep 5:8-11. The coming of the Light makes clear this distinction ('judgement') of man from man, because this coming forces everyone to declare himself either for or against, Jn 3:19-21; 7:7; 9:39; 12:46; cf. Ep 5:12-13. But one day all will be well, and one day the darkness will yield to the light, Jn 1:5; 1 Jn 2:8; Rm 13:12.

c. It is enough for the Son to be his own witness since he alone knows the mystery of his heavenly origin, cf. Mt 11:27p.

d. The Jews judge by what they see: a man like themselves; 'in that flesh they fail to see the glory of God's Son shining' (St Augustine).

e. In the semitic sense of the word, i. e. 'condemn'.

but if I judge, 16
5:30; 8:29 my judgement will be sound,
because I am not alone:
10:30+ the one who sent me is with me;
Dt 17:6; 19:15 Nb 35:30 and in your Law it is written 17
that the testimony of two witnesses is valid.
I may be testifying on my own behalf, 18
5:23.37 but the Father who sent me is my witness too.'

They asked him, 'Where is your Father?' Jesus answered: 19

7:28; 12:45; 15:21 14:7 'You do not know me, nor do you know my Father;
if you did know me, you would know my Father as well'.

Mk 12:41+ 2:4+; 7:30 He spoke these words in the Treasury, while teaching in the Temple. No one arrested him, because his time had not yet come. 20

The unbelieving Jews warned

7:33-36 Again he said to them: 21

7:34+; 14-19 'I am going away; you will look for me
Dt 24:16 Ezk 18:20; 33:12-20 Ho 5:6 and you will die in your sin.[f]
Where I am going, you cannot come.'

The Jews said to one another, 'Will he kill himself? Is that what he means by 22
13:33.36 saying, "Where I am going, you cannot come"?' •Jesus went on: 23

'You are from below;
I am from above.
1:10+ You are of this world;
3:31; 17:14; 18:36 I am not of this world.
I have told you already: You will die in your sins. 24
1:1+; 8:28 Ex 3:14+ Is 43:11 Lk 13:5 3 Jn 7+ Yes, if you do not believe that I am He,[g]
you will die in your sins.'

10:24 So they said to him, 'Who are you?' Jesus answered: 25

'What I have told you from the outset.[h]
About you I have much to say 26
and much to condemn;
3:33; 7:28 but the one who sent me is truthful,
and what I have learnt from him
12:48-50 I declare to the world.'

They failed to understand that he was talking to them about the Father. 27
So Jesus said: 28

12:32+ Mt 8:20+ 8:24+ 'When you have lifted up the Son of Man,
then you will know that I am He[i]
and that I do nothing of myself:
3:11; 5:19 what the Father has taught me
is what I preach;
8:16; 10:17, 30+; 15: 10; 16:3, 32 1 Jn 3:22 he who sent me is with me, 29
and has not left me to myself,
for I always do what pleases him'.

As he was saying this, many came to believe in him. 30

Jesus and Abraham

To the Jews who believed in him Jesus said: 31

3:11+ Rm 9:8 'If you make my word your home
you will indeed be my disciples,

32 you will learn the truth
and the truth will make you free'. Is 42:7 Dn 9:13 Ga 4:25

33 They answered, 'We are descended from Abraham and we have never been
34 the slaves of anyone; what do you mean, "You will be made free"?' Jesus replied: Mt 3:9 Lm 2:17

'I tell you most solemnly, 2:19+
everyone who commits sin is a slave.[j] Rm 6:17-19 2 P 2:19
35 Now the slave's place in the house is not assured, 14:2 Gn 21:10 Jr 2:14f Ga 4:30f
but the son's place is assured.
36 So if the Son makes you free, Ga 5:1
you will be free indeed.
37 I know that you are descended from Abraham; Mt 21:33-46
but in spite of that you want to kill me
because nothing I say has penetrated into you. 5:38; 7:19; 12:48
38 What I, for my part, speak of Rv 2:9+
is what I have seen with my Father; 3:11+
but you, you put into action
the lessons learnt from your father.'

39 They repeated, 'Our father is Abraham'. Jesus said to them:

'If you were Abraham's children,
you would do as Abraham did.[k]
40 As it is, you want to kill me
when I tell you the truth
as I have learnt it from God;
that is not what Abraham did. Gn 15:6; 17:1
41 What you are doing is what your father does.'

'We were not born of prostitution,'[l] they went on 'we have one father: God.' Ex 4:22 Dt 32:6
42 Jesus answered:

'If God were your father, you would love me,
since I have come here from God; yes, I have come from him; Mk 1:38+ 1 Jn 5:1
not that I came because I chose,
no, I was sent, and by him. 1:1+
43 Do you know why you cannot take in what I say?
It is because you are unable to understand my language.[m]
44 The devil is your father, 19:11 Ac 7:51-52; 13:10 1 Jn 3:8-15
and you prefer to do
what your father wants.

8 f. By rejecting Jesus, the Jews are heading for irremediable loss; they are sinning against the truth, vv. 40,45f. It is the sin against the Spirit, Mt 12:31p. Cf. Jn 7:34+.

g. 'I Am' or 'I am He' is the divine name revealed to Moses, Ex 3:14+; it means that the God of Israel is unique, the true God, Dt 32:39. When Jesus appropriates this name, he is claiming to be the one incomparable saviour, the goal of Israel's faith and hope. Cf. Jn 8:28,58; 13:19 and also 6:35; 18:5,8.

h. A very obscure text; it is variously rendered 'Why, in the first place, am I speaking to you?'; 'Why should I speak to you at all?'; 'What I have been telling you from the beginning'; 'Precisely what I am telling you'. Our translation resembles this last but preserves the idea of temporal priority which leads up to the following 'then' of v. 28, thus: as it is, the Jews have the opportunity of knowing Christ from his words; afterwards, when they know him as one 'lifted up' (12:32+), it will be too late. The Vulg. translation '(I am) the Beginning who speak to you' is grammatically impossible.

i. In the O.T. the formula 'you shall know that I am', or 'that I am Yahweh', is a declaration of God's power, cf. 8:24+, or else heralds some notable intervention of God in history, cf. Ex 10:2; Ezk 6:7, 10,13f, etc; Is 43:10 (strikingly like John). This verse foretells the glorification of Jesus through his 'lifting up' on the cross, Jn 12:32+, which is to be the reply to the Jews' question (v. 25) but will be also the condemnation of their unbelief. Cf. 19:37; Rv 1:7; Mt 26:64p; 1 Co 2:8.

j. Add. 'of sin'.

k. Var. 'If you are Abraham's children, do as Abraham did'. Unlike Isaac, the Jews are not 'children' of Abraham because they do not believe; they are merely of his 'race' (like the bondwoman's son, Ishmael, who was cast out, cf. vv. 34-35). On this, cf. Ga 4: 30f+.

l. The prophets call religious infidelity 'prostitution', cf. Ho 1:2+; here, therefore, the Jews are objecting that they have been faithful to God's covenant.

m. Because they have the devil for master, and he is hostile to the truth. Cf. 18:37.

Gn 2:17; 3:1f; Ws 1:13; 2:24; Rm 5:12
He was a murderer from the start;
he was never grounded[n] in the truth;
there is no truth in him at all:
when he lies
he is drawing on his own store,
because he is a liar, and the father of lies.[o]
But as for me, I speak the truth 45
and for that very reason,
you do not believe me.
Heb 4:16; 1 P 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5
Can one of you convict me of sin?[p] 46
If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me?
A child of God 47
10:26+
listens to the words of God;
12:48; 1 Jn 4:6
if you refuse to listen,
it is because you are not God's children.'

4:9+; 7:20+
The Jews replied, 'Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and 48
possessed by a devil?' Jesus answered:

'I am not possessed; 49
no, I honour my Father,
but you want to dishonour me.
7:18
Not that I care for my own glory, 50
there is someone who takes care of that and is the judge of it.
3:11+
I tell you most solemnly, 51
5:25-28; 11:25
whoever keeps my word
will never see death.'

7:20+
The Jews said, 'Now we know for certain that you are possessed. Abraham 52
is dead, and the prophets are dead, and yet you say, "Whoever keeps my word
4:12
will never know the taste of death". •Are you greater than our father Abraham, 53
who is dead? The prophets are dead too. Who are you claiming to be?' •Jesus 54
answered:

'If I were to seek my own glory
that would be no glory at all;
my glory is conferred by the Father,
by the one of whom you say, "He is our God"
although you do not know him. 55
7:29
But I know him,
and if I were to say: I do not know him,
I should be a liar, as you are liars yourselves.
But I do know him, and I faithfully keep his word.
5:39+; Gn 17:17+; Mt 13:17f; Lk 17:22
Your father Abraham rejoiced 56
to think that he would see my Day;[q]
he saw it and was glad.'[r]

The Jews then said, 'You are not fifty yet, and you have seen Abraham!' 57
Jesus replied: 58

'I tell you most solemnly,
1:1+.30
before Abraham ever was,
8:24+
I Am'.

10:31.39; 11:8; Lk 4:29f
At this they picked up stones to throw at him;[s] but Jesus hid himself and left 59
the Temple.

Is 42:7
The cure of the man born blind

9 As he went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. •His disciples ½
asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been

3 born blind?' •'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered 'he was born 5:14+ Lk 13:2
blind so that the works of God[a] might be displayed in him.

4 'As long as the day lasts 11:9-10; 12:35-36
I must[b] carry out the work of the one who sent me; 4:34; 5:16
the night will soon be here when no one can work.[c]
5 As long as I am in the world
I am the light of the world.'[d] 8:12+; 9:37

6 Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put
7 this over the eyes of the blind man, •and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool 2 K 5:10
of Siloam[e] (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed Is 8:6
himself, and came away with his sight restored.
8 His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't
9 this the man who used to sit and beg?' •Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one'.
Others said, 'No, he only looks like him'. The man himself said, 'I am the man'.
10 11 So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' •'The man called
Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go
12 and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' •They asked,
'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered.
13 14 They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. •It had been a
15 sabbath day when Jesus made the paste[f] and opened the man's eyes, •so when 5:9 Mt 12:10fp Lk 13:10f; 14:1f
the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on
16 my eyes, and I washed, and I can see'. •Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This
man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath'. Others said, 'How
could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. 3:2
17 So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself,
now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man. Mt 16:14+
18 However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had
19 gained his sight,[g] without first sending for his parents and •asking them, 'Is this
man really your son who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now
20 able to see?' •His parents answered, 'We know he is our son and we know he
21 was born blind, •but we don't know how it is that he can see now, or who
22 opened his eyes.[h] He is old enough: let him speak for himself.' •His parents
spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the 7:13
23 synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. •This was why 12:42
his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him'.
24 So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, 'Give glory to God![i]
25 For our part, we know that this man is a sinner.' •The man answered, 'I don't
26 know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see'. •They
27 said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' •He replied,
'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all
28 again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' •At this they hurled abuse
29 at him: 'You can be his disciple,' they said 'we are disciples of Moses: •we

n. Var. 'he has no footing in the truth'.
o. Or 'father of the liar'.
p. I.e. of betraying the commission entrusted to him by God.
q. I.e. Christ's coming. Another example of an expression reserved for God in the O.T. (the 'day of Yahweh', cf. Am 5:18+) but adopted for himself by Christ.
r. Abraham saw Christ's 'day' (as Isaiah 'saw his glory', Jn 12:41), but 'from a distance', cf. Heb 11:13; Nb 24:17, because he saw it in the birth of the promised Isaac (at which Abraham 'laughed', Gn 17:17+) which was an event prophetic of Christ. Jesus claims to be the ultimate fulfilment of this promise made to Abraham; he is Isaac according to the spirit.
s. The claim of Jesus to live on the divine plane (v. 58) is, for the Jews, blasphemy, for which the penalty is stoning, Lv 24:16.

9 a. 'Signs', cf. 2:11+.
b. Var. 'we must'.
c. The life of Jesus is compared to a day's work, 5:17, ending with the night of death. Cf. Lk 13:32.
d. Before the miracle takes place its significance is pointed out, cf. 9:37.
e. The water drawn from here during the feast of Tabernacles symbolised the blessings of the messianic age. Henceforth, the source of these blessings is Jesus himself. 'The envoy', or 'the one sent', is one of Jn's favourite names for Christ, cf. 3:17,34; 5:36, etc.
f. Such work was forbidden on the sabbath.
g. Om. 'that the man had been blind and had gained his sight'.
h. Add. 'ask him'.
i. A biblical phrase putting a person under oath to tell the truth and to make reparation for his insult to the divine majesty, cf. Jos 7:19; 1 S 6:5.

know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from'. •The man replied, 'Now here is an astonishing thing! He has 30
10:21 Pr 15:29 Is 1:15 opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! •We know that God 31
doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. •Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes 32
3:2 of a man who was born blind;[j] •if this man were not from God, he couldn't do 33
7:49 a thing.' •'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through 34
and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to 35
Mt 8:20+ him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' •'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who 36
4:26; 9:5+ he is so that I may believe in him.' •Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is 37
Mt 8:10+; 23:16 speaking to you'. •[k] The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him. 38

Jesus said: 39

8:12+ 'It is for judgement
1:1+ that I have come into this world,
Mt 13:13 2 Th 2:12 so that those without sight may see
and those with sight[l] turn blind'.

Is 5:21 Mt 15:14p Rm 2:19 Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, 'We are not blind, 40
surely?' •Jesus replied: 41

'Blind? If you were,[m]
you would not be guilty,
but since you say, "We see",
3:36; 12:48 Mt 23:16f your guilt remains.

Jr 23:1-3 Ezk 34:1-31 **The good shepherd**

10 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold 1
through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand.
The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; •the 2 3
10:26-27 gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one[a] he calls his
own sheep and leads them out. •When he has brought out his flock, he goes 4
Ex 13:22 Mi 2:13 ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. •They never 5
follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them[b] this parable but they failed to understand what he meant 6
by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again: 7

'I tell you most solemnly,
I am the gate of the sheepfold.[c]
All others who have come[d] 8
are thieves and brigands;
but the sheep took no notice of them.
Mt 7:14 I am the gate. 9
3:17 Ps 23:1-3 Is 49:9-10 Anyone who enters through me will be safe:
he will go freely in and out
Ezk 34:14 and be sure of finding pasture.
The thief comes 10
only to steal and kill and destroy.
I have come
10:28 so that they may have life[e]
and have it to the full.
Ezk 34:1+ Heb 13:20 I am the good shepherd:[f] 11
the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep.
The hired man, since he is not the shepherd 12
and the sheep do not belong to him,

abandons the sheep and runs away
as soon as he sees a wolf coming,
and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep;
13 this is because he is only a hired man
and has no concern for the sheep.
14 I am the good shepherd;
I know my own
and my own know me,[g]
15 just as the Father knows me
and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for my sheep.
16 And there are other sheep I have
that are not of this fold,
and these I have to lead as well.[h]
They too will listen to my voice,
and there will be only one flock,[i]
and one shepherd.
17 The Father loves me,
because I lay down my life
in order to take it up again.
18 No one takes it from me;
I lay it down of my own free will,[j]
and as it is in my power to lay it down,
so it is in my power to take it up again;
and this is the command I have been given by my Father.'

Jr 23:1f
Ezk 34:3-8
Zc 11:17
10:26-27
1 Jn 2:4
15:9
Mt 11:25-27p
Gn 11:9
Jr 23:3
Ezk 37:24
Ep 2:14f; 4:4f
5:25; 11:52
18:37
3:35; 8:29
Ezk 34:23; 37:22
Ph 2:8-9
Heb 10:10
13:1; 14:30; 17:19; 19:11,30

19 These words caused disagreement[k] among the Jews. 20 •Many said, 'He is
21 possessed, he is raving; why bother to listen to him?' •Others said, 'These are not the words of a man possessed by a devil: could a devil open the eyes of the blind?'

3:11+
7:20
Ho 9:7
3:2
9:30-32

VI. THE FEAST OF DEDICATION

Jesus claims to be the Son of God

22 It was the time when the feast of Dedication was being celebrated in Jerusalem.
23 It was winter, •and Jesus was in the Temple walking up and down in the Portico
24 of Solomon. •The Jews gathered round him and said, 'How much longer are
25 you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.'[l] •Jesus replied:

1 M 4:36+
Ac 3:11+
Lk 22:67
8:25

j. There are many points of resemblance between ch. 9 and 3:1-21, and it is probable that to the evangelist's mind the cure of the man born blind is a symbol of the new birth through water and the Spirit, 3:3-7.

k. Om. all v. 38 and first two words of v. 39.

l. The complacent who trust to their own 'light', cf. vv. 24,29,34, as opposed to the humble, typified by the blind man. Cf. Dt 29:3; Is 6:9f; Jr 5:21; Ezk 12:2.

m. I.e. if you knew you were blind, as blind men do.

10. a. Or possibly 'each by its name'.

b. I.e. to the Pharisees, wilfully blind, 9:40. They fail to realise that the parable refers to them.

c. The gate that gives access to the sheep. Only those who 'go in' by Jesus have authority to guide the flock, 21:15-17.

d. Add. 'before me'. The reference is probably to the Pharisees, cf. Mt 23:1-36; Lk 11:39-52 and Mt 9:36; Mk 6:34.

e. Life eternal. Jesus gives it, 3:16,36; 5:40; 6:33, 35,48,51; 14:6; 20:31, with abounding generosity, cf. Rv 7:17; Mt 25:29; Lk 6:38.

f. God, himself the shepherd of his people, was to choose a shepherd for them in the messianic age, cf. Ezk 34:1+. Christ's assertion that he is the good shepherd is a claim to messiahship.

g. In biblical language, cf. Ho 2:22+, 'knowledge' is not merely the conclusion of an intellectual process, but the fruit of an 'experience', a personal contact (cf. Jn 10:14-15 and 14:20; 17:21-22; cf. 14:17; 17:3; 2 Jn 1-2); when it matures, it is love, cf. Ho 6:6+ and 1 Jn 1:3+.

h. Not to take them into the Jewish fold but to gather them into the flock that Jesus 'leads' to eternal life.

i. Var. 'one fold'.

j. Jesus has life in himself, 3:35+, and no one can rob him of it, 7:30,44; 8:20; 10:39; he surrenders it of his own will, 10:18; 14:30; 19:11; hence his perfect control and majestic calm in the face of death, 12:27; 13:1-3; 17:19; 18:4-6; 19:28.

k. Add. 'again'.

l. Not, as hitherto, in the enigmatic language of parable, cf. v. 6; 16:25,29. More urgently than before, 2:18, 5:16; 6:30; 8:25, the Jews press Jesus to say if he is the Messiah. In the Synoptics, the question is put by the high priest before the Passion, Mt 26:63p.

'I have told you,[m] but you do not believe.
2:11+; 5:36 The works I do in my Father's name are my witness;
Pr 28:5 1 Co 2:14 but you do not believe, 26
because you are no sheep of mine.[n]
10:3-4,14 The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; 27
I know them and they follow me.
10:10 Rm 8:33-39 I give them eternal life; 28
they will never be lost
Dt 33:3 Ws 3:1 and no one will ever steal them from me.
3:35+ The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone,[o] 29
Dt 32:39 Is 43:13; 51:16 and no one can steal[p] from the Father.
1:1+ The Father and I are one.'[q] 30

8:59 The Jews fetched stones to stone him, •so Jesus said to them, 'I have done 31 32
many good works for you to see, works from my Father; for which of these
Lk 22:70-71 are you stoning me?' •The Jews answered him, 'We are not stoning you for doing 33
5:18; 19:7 Mt 9:3 a good work but for blasphemy: you are only a man and you claim to be God'.
Jesus answered: 34

Rm 3:19 'Is it not written in your Law:
Ps 82:6 Jn 11:4,27; 12:34; 15:25 Heb 1:2 1:12 *I said, you are gods?*[r]
So the Law uses the word gods 35
of those to whom the word of God was addressed,
and scripture cannot be rejected.
1:1+; 17:18 Jr 1:5 Yet you say to someone the Father has consecrated and sent 36
into the world,
"You are blaspheming",
6:67-69 because he says, "I am the Son of God".
If I am not doing my Father's work, 37
there is no need to believe me;
but if I am doing it, 38
then even if you refuse to believe in me,
2:11+ at least believe in the work I do;
then you will know for sure
14:11; 17:21 that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.'

8:59 They wanted[s] to arrest him then, but he eluded them. 39

Jesus withdraws to the other side of the Jordan

1:28 Mt 19:1 Mk 10:1 He went back again to the far side of the Jordan to stay in the district where 40
John had once been baptising. •Many people who came to him there said, 'John 41
gave no signs, but all he said about this man was true'; •and many of them 42
believed in him.

The resurrection of Lazarus

12:1-8 Lk 10:38f 11 There was a man named Lazarus who lived in the village of Bethany with 1
the two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he was ill.—•It was the same 2
Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with
ointment and wiped his feet with her hair.[a] •The sisters sent this message to 3
2:11 Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill'. •On receiving the message, Jesus said, 4
1:14+ 'This sickness will end, not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son
10:34+ of God will be glorified'.[b]
Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, •yet when he heard that 5 6
Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days •before saying to the 7
disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea'.[c] •The disciples said, 'Rabbi, it is not long since 8
8:59; 10:31 the Jews wanted to stone you; are you going back again?' •Jesus replied: 9

9:4 'Are there not twelve hours in the day?
A man can walk in the daytime without stumbling

because he has the light of this world to see by; 8:12+
10 but if he walks at night he stumbles,
because there is no light to guide him.'

11 He said that and then added, 'Our friend Lazarus is resting, I am going to
12 wake him'. •The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he is able to rest he is sure to get 2:19+
13 better'. •The phrase Jesus used referred to the death of Lazarus, but they thought Mt 9:24p
14 15 that by 'rest' he meant 'sleep', so •Jesus put it plainly, 'Lazarus is dead; •and
for your sake I am glad I was not there because now you will believe.[d] But let 2:11+
16 us go to him.' •Then Thomas—known as the Twin—said to the other disciples, 14:5; 20:24-29
'Let us go too, and die with him'. Mk 10:32
17 On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days
18 19 already. •Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, •and many Jews had 11:45; 12:9-11,17-19
20 come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. •When
Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting Lk 10:39f
21 in the house. •Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here,[e] my brother would 11:32
22 not have died, •but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will Mk 11:24p
23 24 grant you'.[f] •'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' •Martha said, 2:19+
25 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day'. •Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection.[g] 8:51
If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live,[h] Mt 22:23+ 5:24
26 and whoever lives and believes in me 1 Jn 3:14
will never die.
Do you believe this?'

27 'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one 10:34+
who was to come into this world.' 1:9,10+
28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in a low
29 voice, 'The Master is here and wants to see you'. •Hearing this, Mary got up
30 quickly and went to him. •Jesus had not yet come into the village; he was still
31 at the place where Martha had met him. •When the Jews who were in the house
sympathising with Mary saw her get up so quickly and go out, they followed
her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there.
32 Mary went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw him she threw herself at his
33 feet, saying, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died'. •At 11:21
the sight of her tears, and those of the Jews who followed her, Jesus said in great 11:38; 13:21
34 distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, •'Where have you put 12:27
35 36 him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see'. •Jesus wept; •and the Jews said, 'See
37 how much he loved him!' •But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the
38 eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' •Still

m. Christ's previous statements had made it sufficiently clear that he spoke as God's envoy, cf. 2:19; 5:17f,39; 6:32f; 8:24,28f,56f; 9:37.

n. Faith in Jesus implies an inner sympathy with him: man must be 'from above', 8:23, 'of God', 8:47, 'of the truth', 18:37, of his flock, 10:14. Faith presupposes a mind open to truth, 3:17-21. Cf. Ac 13:48+; Rm 8:29f.

o. Var. 'As for my Father, that which he has given me is greater than all'.

p. Var. 'Steal them'.

q. The Son's power is not other than the Father's. The context shows that this is the primary meaning, but the statement is deliberately undefined and hints at a more comprehensive and a profounder unity. The Jews do not miss the implication; they sense a claim to godhead, v. 33. Cf. 1:1; 8:24,29; 10:38; 14:9-10; 17:11,21 and 2:11+.

r. The words were addressed to magistrates whose function made them, in a sense, 'gods' because 'judgement is God's', Dt 1:17; 19:17; Ex 21:6; Ps 58. Christ's argument is a rabbinic *a fortiori*, the conclusion being that blasphemy is a surprising charge to bring when it is God's consecrated envoy who calls himself Son of God. On this title, 'Son of God', v 36, cf. 5:25; 11:4,27; 20:17,31, Christ's fate is henceforth to turn, cf. 19:7. See Mt 4:3+.

s. Add. 'again'.

11 a. It is unlikely that this is 'the woman who was a sinner' of Lk 7:37.

b. A double meaning here: Jesus will be glorified by the miracle itself, cf. 1:14+, but the miracle will bring about his death, 11:46-54, by which also he will be glorified, 12:32+.

c. Add. 'again'.

d. Had Lazarus not died, there would have been no miracle to confirm their faith.

e. Add. 'Lord'.

f. Martha has faith in Jesus but she stops short as if about to ask an impossibility.

g. Add. 'and the life'.

h. The man of faith has conquered death once and for all; the resurrection of Lazarus is the sign of this victory, cf. 3:11+.

11:33 sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening.
Jesus said, 'Take the stone away'. Martha[t] said to him, 'Lord, by now he will 39
smell; this is the fourth day'. •Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you 40
1:14+; 2:11+ believe you will see the glory of God?' •So they took away the stone. Then 41
17:1 Mt 14:19p Jesus lifted up his eyes[u] and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.
I knew indeed that you always hear me, 42
1:1+ but I speak
12:30 for the sake of all these who stand round me,
so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

5:27-29 When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' 43
19:40; 20:5-7 The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a 44
cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free'.

The Jewish leaders decide on the death of Jesus

11:19; 12:10 Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did 45
Mt 26:3-5p believed in him, •but some of them went to tell the Pharisees what Jesus had 46
12:19 Lk 22:2 Ac 4:16 done. •Then the chief priests and Pharisees called a meeting. 'Here is this man 47
working all these signs' they said 'and what action are we taking? •If we let 48
him go on in this way everybody will believe in him, and the Romans will come
18:13 Lk 3:2+ and destroy the Holy Place[k] and our nation.' •One of them, Caiaphas, the 49
high priest that year, said, 'You don't seem to have grasped the situation at all;
you fail to see that it is better[l] for one man to die for the people, than for the 50
whole nation to be destroyed'. •He did not speak in his own person, it was as 51
high priest[m] that he made this prophecy that Jesus was to die for the nation[n]—
4:42+; 10:16 Gn 11:9 5:18+ Mt 12:14p 7:1 and not for the nation only, but to gather together in unity the scattered children 52
of God. •From that day they were determined[o] to kill him. •So Jesus no longer 53 54
went about openly among the Jews, but left the district for a town called
Ephraim, in the country bordering on the desert, and stayed there with his
disciples.

VII. THE LAST PASSOVER

A. BEFORE THE PASSION

The Passover draws near

2:13; 6:4 The Jewish Passover drew near,[p] and many of the country people who had 55
Nb 9:6-13 gone up to Jerusalem[q] to purify themselves •looked out for Jesus, saying to one 56
another as they stood about in the Temple, 'What do you think? Will he come
to the festival or not?' •The chief priests and Pharisees had by now given their 57
orders: anyone who knew where he was must inform them so that they could
arrest him.

‖Mt 26:6-13 ‖Mk 14:3-9 **The anointing at Bethany**

12 Six days before the Passover,[a] Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus 1
was, whom he had raised from the dead. •They gave a dinner for him 2
11:2+ there; Martha waited on them and Lazarus was among those at table. •Mary 3
brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the
feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair; the house was full of the scent of the
ointment. •Then Judas Iscariot—one of his disciples, the man who was to betray 4
him—said, •'Why wasn't this ointment sold for three hundred denarii, and the 5
money given to the poor?' •He said this, not because he cared about the poor, 6
13:29 but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to
help himself to the contributions. •So Jesus said, 'Leave her alone; she had to 7

8 keep this scent for the day of my burial.[b] •You have the poor with you always,
you will not always have me.'
9 Meanwhile a large number of Jews heard that he was there and came not 11:19
only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the
10 dead. •Then the chief priests decided to kill Lazarus as well, •since it was on his
11 account that many of the Jews were leaving them and believing in Jesus. 11:45

The Messiah enters Jerusalem

||Mt 21:1-9
||Mk 11:1-10
||Lk 19:28-38

12 The next day the crowds who had come up for the festival heard that Jesus
13 was on his way to Jerusalem. •They took branches of palm and went out to 1 M 13:51
Rv 7:9
meet him, shouting, '*Hosanna*! *Blessings on* the King of Israel,[c] *who comes in the* *1:49; 6:15*
14 *name of the Lord.*' •Jesus found a young donkey and mounted it—as scripture Ps 118:26
15 says: •*Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, mounted on* Zc 9:9f
16 *the colt of a donkey.* •At the time his disciples did not understand this, but later, 14:26+
Mk 4:13+
after Jesus had been glorified, they remembered that this had been written
17 about him and that this was in fact how they had received him. •All who had 5:39+
been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the
18 dead were telling how they had witnessed it; •it was because of this, too, that
the crowd came out to meet him: they had heard that he had given this sign.
19 Then the Pharisees said to one another, 'You see, there is nothing you can do; 11:47-48
Mt 21:15-16
look, the whole world is running after him!'

Jesus foretells his death and subsequent glorification

20 Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks.[d]
21 These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this 1:44
22 request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus'. •Philip went to tell Andrew, 7:34+; 12:32+
and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus.
23 Jesus replied to them:

'Now the hour has come 2:4+
for the Son of Man to be glorified. 3:14+
Mt 8:20+
24 I tell you, most solemnly,
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, 1 Co 15:36
it remains only a single grain; Is 53:10-12
but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest. Ps 126:6
25 Anyone who loves his life loses it; ||Mt 16:25
||Mk 8:35
anyone who hates his life in this world ||Lk 9:24
will keep it for the eternal life.
26 If a man serves me, he must follow me, 1:10+
Mt 16:24
wherever I am,[e] my servant will be there too. *7:34; 14:3;* 17:24
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.
27 Now my soul is troubled.[f] 6:38; 11:33; 13:21; 18:4
Mt 26:37
Heb 5:7-8

l. Add. 'the dead man's sister'.
j. Add. 'upwards', 'to heaven', 'upwards to heaven'.
k. Lit. 'our Place'; Jerusalem, the Holy Land, or more probably the holiest of all places, the Temple.
l. Add. 'for you', or 'for us'.
m. Add. 'for that year'.
n. Caiaphas means that Jesus must be executed to save the nation from political extinction; the higher, prophetic sense is that the death of Jesus is necessary for the salvation of the world. Cf. 1:29+.
o. Var. 'they plotted'.
p. Jn repeatedly emphasises the connection between the Passover and Christ's death, 13:1; 18:28; 19:14,42.
q. Add. 'before the Passover'.

12 a. This last week of Christ's life is as carefully punctuated as the first, 12:12; 13:1; 18:28; 19:31; cf. 2:1+. Each of the two weeks culminates in the manifestation of Christ's glory, but the time for 'signs' (cf. Cana, 2:4,11) is now over: 'the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified', 12:23; 13:31f; 17:1,5.

b. Christ sees Mary's act as a gesture of respect offered to his dead body before the time; it is a symbol of his actual burial, 19:38f.
c. The Messiah-King.
d. Not Jews by birth but converts to the monotheism of Israel and adopting certain specific Mosaic observances; they are the 'God-fearing men' of Ac 10:2+.
e. In the glory of the Father, cf. 14:3; 17:24.
f. This episode and Gethsemane have many details in common: the anguish as the 'hour' draws near, the appeal to the Father's pity, the acceptance of death, the comfort from heaven (cf. Lk). But we should note the dissimilarities: in Jn, Christ's prayer for pity remains unuttered; nor does he 'fall to the

What shall I say:
Lk 22:40-46p Father, save me from this hour?
18:11 But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour.
Father, glorify your name!'[g] 28

1:14+; 2:11+; 17:5+ A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again'.
People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others 29
11:42 said, 'It was an angel speaking to him'. •Jesus answered, 'It was not for my sake 30
that this voice came, but for yours.[h]

1:10+; 3:19 1 Jn 3:9 Is 14:12 Lk 10:18 Rv 12:9; 20:1-6 3:35+ 'Now sentence is being passed on this world; 31
now the prince of this world is to be overthrown.[i]
And when I am lifted up from the earth,[j] 32
I shall draw all men[k] to myself.'[l]

21:19 By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die. •The crowd 33 34
Rm 3:19+ 1 Col 1:23 2:19+ Mt 8:20+ answered, 'The Law has taught us that the Christ will remain for ever. How can
you say, "The Son of Man must be lifted up"? Who is this Son of Man?' •Jesus 35
then said:

8:12+ 'The light will be with you only a little longer now.
9:4 Walk[m] while you have the light,
Jb 5:14 1 Jn 2:10 or the dark will overtake you;
he who walks in the dark does not know where he is going.
Jr 13:16 While you still have the light, 36
believe in the light
and you will become sons of light.'

Having said this, Jesus left them and kept himself hidden.

Conclusion: the unbelief of the Jews

2:11+; 20:30 Dt 29:1-3 Mt 11:20 Though they had been present when he gave so many signs, they did not 37
believe in him; •this was to fulfil the words of the prophet Isaiah: *Lord, who* 38
Is 53:1 Rm 10:16 *could believe what we have heard said, and to whom has the power of the Lord*
Mt 13:13+ *been revealed*? •Indeed, they were unable to believe because, as Isaiah says 39
Is 6:9f again: •*He has blinded their eyes, he has hardened their heart, for fear they should* 40
see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and turn to me for healing.
5:39+ Is 6:4 Isaiah said this when he saw his glory,[n] and his words referred to Jesus. 41
And yet there were many who did believe in him, even among the leading 42
3:1; 9:22 5:44 men, but they did not admit it, through fear of the Pharisees and fear of being
expelled from the synagogue: •they put honour from men before the honour 43
that comes from God.
Jesus declared publicly: 44

Mt 10:41 'Whoever believes in me
believes not in me
13:20 but in the one who sent me,
8:19; 14:7-9 and whoever sees me, 45
sees the one who sent me.
1:1+,9; 8:12+ I, the light, have come into the world, 46
so that whoever believes in me
need not stay in the dark any more.
3:11+ Mt 13:18-23p Lk 8:21p; 11:28 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them faithfully, 47
it is not I who shall condemn him,
since I have come not to condemn the world,
3:17 but to save the world:
8:26-27 Lk 20:16 he who rejects me and refuses my words 48
has his judge already:
Dt 31:26-29 the word itself that I have spoken

will be his judge on the last day. 8:37,47
49 For what I have spoken does not come from myself; 14:10
no, what I was to say, what I had to speak, Dt 18:18-19
was commanded by the Father who sent me, 1:1+
50 and I know that his commands mean eternal life. 3:11+
And therefore what the Father has told me
is what I speak.'

B. THE LAST SUPPER

Jesus washes his disciples' feet

1 13 It was before the festival of the Passover, and Jesus knew that the hour Mt 26:17+
had come for him to pass from this world to the Father.[a] He had always 1:48+
loved[b] those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his 10:18+
love was.[c] 1:10+; 2:4+

2 They were at supper,[d] and the devil had already put it into the mind[e] of 6:71; 13:27; 14:30
3 Judas Iscariot son of Simon, to betray him. •Jesus knew that the Father had Mt 26:20p
put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning Lk 22:3
4 to God, •and he got up from table, removed his outer garment and, taking a 1:1+; 3:35+
5 towel, wrapped it round his waist; •he then poured water into a basin and Lk 12:37; 17:7-10
began to wash the disciples' feet[f] and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my Mt 3:13-14
7 feet?' •Jesus answered, 'At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but 12:46+
8 later you will understand'. •'Never!' said Peter 'You shall never wash my feet.'
Jesus replied, 'If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me'.[g]
9 'Then, Lord,' said Simon Peter 'not only my feet, but my hands and my head 2:19+
10 as well!' •Jesus said, 'No one who has taken a bath needs washing,[h] he is clean 15:3
11 all over.[i] You too are clean,[j] though not all of you are.' •He knew who was 1:48+
going to betray him, that was why he said, 'though not all of you are'.

12 When he had washed their feet and put on his clothes again he went back
13 to the table. 'Do you understand' he said 'what I have done to you? •You call

ground' (Mt, Mk) or 'kneel' (Lk). Cf. Jn 18:4-6; 10:18+.

g. Var. 'your Son'. The Father's 'name' is his person. Jesus worked for the Father's glory; his death, now freely offered, is the completion of that work because it shows how great is the Father's love for men, 17:6+.

h. Christ's coming death is thus divinely and publicly sanctioned.

i. Var. 'cast out'. Satan (cf. 14:30; 16:11; 2 Co 4:4; Ep 2:2; 6:12) was lord of the world, 1 Jn 5:19; Christ's death breaks his dominion over men. Cf. Jn 3:35+ and Mt 8:29+; Lk 8:31+; Col 1:12-13.

j. Om. 'from the earth'. Allusion both to the 'lifting up' of Christ on the cross (v. 33) and to his 'lifting up' to heaven, 3:13,14; 8:28, cf. 6:62, on the day of his resurrection, 20:17+; the two events are two aspects of the same mystery, 13:1+. When Christ is raised to the Father's right hand in glory, 12:23; 17:5+, he will send the Spirit, 7:39, through whom his reign will spread over the world, 16:14; cf. 3:35+.

k. Var. 'every man' or 'all things'.

l. The crucified Jesus will be set before the eyes of the world as its saviour, cf. 19:37. This is the answer to the Greeks' request to 'see' Jesus, cf. 6:40+.

m. Jesus urges the Jews to believe in him before it is too late, cf. 7:34+.

n. 'when he saw'; var. 'because he saw'. Alluding to Isaiah's vision in the Temple, Is 6:1-4+. Jn interprets it as a prophetic vision of Christ's glory, cf. 8:56+.

13 a. According to a Jewish tradition the word 'Passover' (*pesah:* cf. Ex 12:11+) meant 'a passing, or crossing over', referring it to the crossing of the Red Sea, Ex 14. Christ (and we with him) will pass from this world, which is enslaved by sin, to the Father's company, the true Land of Promise. Cf. Jn 1:21+.

b. Here, for the first time, Jn clearly states that Christ's life and death are an expression of his love for his disciples. The impression given is one of a secret kept for these last moments, 13:34; 15:9,13; 17:23; 1 Jn 3:16; Ga 2:20; Rm 8:35; Ep 3:19; 5:2,25.

c. Lit. 'he loved them to the end', i.e. utterly.

d. Var. 'Supper was over'.

e. Var. 'the devil having already put in the (his?) heart that Judas Iscariot should betray him', or '...having already put in his heart (i.e. made up his mind)...', or 'Satan having already entered into the heart of Judas in order that he might betray him'. Unseen forces are at work in Christ's Passion: the human agents are tools of the devil. Cf. 6:70f; 8:44; 12:31; 13:27; 16:11; Rv 12:4,17; 13:2; Lk 22:3; 1 Co 2:8.

f. The dress and duty are those of a slave, cf. 1 S 25: 41.

g. Lit. 'you have no share with me', a semitic phrase: Peter is cutting himself off from his Lord and from all share in his ministry and in his glory, because he does not appreciate his Master's outlook.

h. Add. 'except for his feet'.

i. Peter has understood Christ's answer, v. 8, superficially, as if a new rite of purification were being instituted. Jesus replies that his sacrifice has already achieved this purification, cf. 15:2-3; 1 Jn 1:7; Heb 10:22. He explains the meaning of his action in vv. 12-15.

j. The same Greek word is used for 'clean' and 'pure'.

me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. •If I, then, the Lord and Master, 14
13:34; 15:1-2 Lk 22:24-30 Ep 5:2 Ph 2:5,8 1 Tm 5:10 have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet.[k] •I have given you 15
an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.

'I tell you most solemnly, 16
no servant is greater than his master,
15:20 Mt 10:24 Lk 6:40 no messenger is greater than the man who sent him.

'Now that you know this, happiness will be yours if you behave accordingly. 17
Jm 1:25 6:70 I am not speaking about all of you: I know the ones I have chosen; but what 18
Ps 41:9 Lm 1:2 scripture says must be fulfilled: *Someone who shares my table rebels*[l] *against me.*

14:29; 16:4 'I tell you this now, before it happens, 19
so that when it does happen
8:24+ you may believe that I am He.[m]
‖Mt 10:40 ‖Mk 9:37 ‖Lk 9:48 I tell you most solemnly, 20
whoever welcomes the one I send welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.'

‖Mt 26:21-25 ‖Mk 14:18-21 ‖Lk 22:21-23 **The treachery of Judas foretold**

11:33; 12:27 Having said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and declared, 'I tell you most 21
solemnly, one of you will betray me'. •The disciples looked at one another, 22
19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20 Lk 8:51+ wondering which he meant. •The disciple Jesus loved was reclining next 23
to Jesus; •Simon Peter signed to him and said, 'Ask who it is he means', •so 24 25
leaning back on Jesus' breast he said, 'Who is it, Lord?' •'It is the one' replied 26
Jesus 'to whom I give the piece of bread[n] that I shall dip in the dish.' He dipped
the piece of bread and gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. •At that instant, 27
13:2+ Lk 22:3 1:48+ after Judas had taken the bread, Satan entered him. Jesus then said, 'What you
are going to do, do quickly'. •None of the others at table understood the reason 28
12:6 he said this. •Since Judas had charge of the common fund, some of them thought 29
Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the festival', or telling him to give
something to the poor. •As soon as Judas had taken the piece of bread he went 30
8:12+ out. Night had fallen.
When he had gone Jesus said: 31

21:19 Mt 8:20+ 'Now[o] has the Son of Man been glorified,
and in him God has been glorified.
If God has been glorified in him,[p] 32
1:14+ God will in turn glorify him in himself,[q]
and will glorify him very soon.

Farewell discourses

'My little children, 33
16:10 I shall not be with you much longer.
8:21 You will look for me,
and, as I told the Jews,[r]
1:1+ where I am going,
you cannot come.[s]
13:15 1 Jn 2:8 15:12,17 Lv 19:18 Mt 19:19; 22:39 Lk 10:26f I give you a new commandment:[t] 34
love one another;
just as I have loved you,
you also must love one another.
Ac 4:32 By this love you have for one another, 35
everyone will know that you are my disciples.'

2:19+ Mt 26:31f 8:21; 21:18-19 21:16 ‖Lk 22:31-34 Simon Peter said, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus replied, 'Where I am 36
going you cannot follow me now; you will follow me later'.[u] •Peter said to him,[v] 37
'Why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.' •'Lay down your 38

life for me?' answered Jesus. 'I tell you most solemnly, before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times. ‖Mt 26:33-35 ‖Mk 14: 29-31

1 **14** 'Do not let your hearts be troubled.[a] 14:27
Trust in God still, and trust in me. 10:28-30; 16:6,33
2 There are many rooms in my Father's house; 1 Th 4:7
if there were not, I should have told you.[b]
I am going now to prepare a place for you, 8:35
3 and after I have gone and prepared you a place, Heb 6:19-20
I shall return to take you with me;[c]
so that where I am 7:34; 12:26; 17:24
you may be too.
4 You know the way to the place where I am going.'

5 Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we 11:16; 13:36; 16:5; 20;
6 know the way?' Jesus said: 24-29

'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.[d] 1:4 Heb 10:19-20
No one can come to the Father except through me.
7 If you know me,[e] you know my Father too. 8:19; 12:45 2 Co 4:4
From this moment you know him and have seen him.'

8 Philip said, 'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied'. Ex 33:18+
9 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me?

'To have seen me is to have seen the Father, 1:18; 12:45
so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"? 10:30+; 17:6+
10 Do you not believe[f]
that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?
The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself: 1:1+; 12:49
it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work. 2:11+
11 You must believe me when I say
that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; 10:38
believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason.
12 I tell you most solemnly,
whoever believes in me Mt 8:10+
will perform the same works as I do myself,
he will perform even greater works, Mt 21:21

k. I.e. serve one another lovingly and humbly.
l. Lit. 'has lifted up his heel against me'.
m. Because it demonstrates Christ's superhuman knowledge and fulfils the scripture, Judas' betrayal and Christ's death will confirm the disciples' faith.
n. Lit. 'morsel'. This particular 'morsel' is not the Holy Eucharist; nevertheless, a comparison of 13:2,18 with 6:64,70 seems to show that there was some connection between the institution and Judas' act of treachery. Cf. Lk 22:21.
o. The Passion has already begun, since Judas has just gone out to do Satan's work; Jesus speaks of his victory as already won, cf. 16:33.
p. Om. 'If God has been glorified in him'.
q. 'himself' refers to God the Father who will glorify the Son of Man by taking him to himself in glory. Cf. 17:5,22,24.
r. Christ's 'departure' and his glorification are intimately connected. The separation will be, for the Jews, final, 8:21; for the disciples, only for a time, 14:2-3.
s. Except by dying, cf. v. 36; 21:19,22f.
t. The reference to Christ's 'departure', v. 33, (which leads up to the prophecy of Peter's denial, vv. 36-38) makes this command, vv. 34-35, a solemn legacy from Christ. Though enunciated in the Mosaic Law, this precept of love is 'new' because Jesus sets the standard so high by telling his followers to love one another as he himself loved them, and because love is to be the distinguishing mark of the 'new' era which the death of Jesus inaugurates and proclaims to the world.
u. A cryptic prophecy of Peter's martyrdom.
v. Add. 'Lord'.

14 a. The apostles are perturbed by the predictions of betrayal, of Christ's departure, and of Peter's denial. Jesus wants to strengthen their faith; this purpose pervades ch. 14.
b. Others translate 'otherwise I would have told you (where I am going)'.
c. This promise keeps the Church's hope alive. Cf. 1 Th 4:16f; 1 Co 4:5; 11:26; 16:22; Rv 22:17,2; 1 Jn 2:28.
d. Jesus is the Way: in him we have our access to the Father; he makes the Father known to the world, 1:18; 12:45; 14:9; he is the Truth: he is the teacher and the personification of worship 'in spirit and truth' which alone pleases the Father, 4:23f; he is the Life: to know the Father, present in the Son, is eternal life, 17:3.
e. Var. 'If you had known me, you would have...'
f. When Philip asks for some marvellous manifestation of the Father, he is falling short of that faith by which alone the Father is seen to be in the Son and the Son in the Father.

because I am going to the Father.[g]

15:7,16; 16:24,26 Mt 7:7-11 Ac 3:16+ 1 Jn 3:22 — Whatever you ask for in my name I will do, 13
so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
If you ask for anything in my name, 14
I will do it.

Dt 6:4-9; 7:11; 11:1 Ws 6:18 — If you love me you will keep my commandments.[h] 15
1 Jn 2:3; 4:21; 5:3 — I shall ask the Father, 16
and he will give you another Advocate[i]
to be with you for ever,

14:26+ — that Spirit of truth[j] 17
1:10+ — whom the world can never receive
since it neither sees nor knows him;
1 Jn 4:6 2 Jn 1-2 — but you know him,
because he is with you, he is in you.[k]

Mt 28:20 — I will not leave you orphans; 18
I will come back to you.

7:34; 8:21 — In a short time the world will no longer see me; 19
16:16,22 — but you will see me,
6:57 — because I live and you will live.[l]
On that day[m] 20
10:30+ — you will understand that I am in my Father
17:11,21,22 — and you in me and I in you.

1 Jn 2:5; 3:24; 4:21 — Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them 21
will be one who loves me;
16:27; 17:26 Dt 7:12-13 Ws 6:12 Si 4:10,14 — and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father,
and I shall love him and show myself to him.'[n]

2:19+ — Judas[o]—this was not Judas Iscariot—said to him, 'Lord, what is all this 22
Ac 10:41 — about? Do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?' •Jesus 23
replied:

3:11+ 1 Jn 2:5+ *Dt 7:12-13* Si 4:10,14 — 'If anyone loves me he will keep my word,[p]
and my Father will love him,
and we shall come to him
Ep 3:17 Rv 3:20 — and make our home with him.

Those who do not love me do not keep my words. 24
1:1+; 3:11+ — And my word[q] is not my own:
it is the word of the one who sent me.

I have said these things to you 25
while still with you;

2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 14:17; 15:26; 16:7,13-15; 20:9 1 Co 2:10 Ep 3:5 1 Jn 2:20,27 — but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, 26
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything
and remind you of all I have said to you.[r]

Nb 6:26 — Peace[s] I bequeath to you, 27
Rm 5:1 Ep 2:14-18 2 Th 3:16 — my own peace I give you,
a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.

14:1-3 — Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

You heard me say: 28
8:14 — I am going away, and shall return.
If you loved me you would have been glad to know that I am going to the Father,
for the Father is greater than I.[t]

13:19; 16:4 — I have told you this now before it happens, 29
so that when it does happen you may believe.

I shall not talk with you any longer,[u] 30
1:10+; 13:2+ — because the prince of this world is on his way.

He has no power over me, 10:18+; 16:33
31 but the world must be brought to know that I love the Father 6:38+
and that I am doing exactly what the Father told me.
Come now, let us go. Mt 26:46p

The true vine

1 15 'I am the true vine,[a] Is 5:1+ Ph 1:11
and my Father is the vinedresser.
2 Every branch in me that bears no fruit[b]
he cuts away, Mt 15:13
and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes 15:16
to make it bear even more.
3 You are pruned[c] already, 13:10
by means of the word that I have spoken to you. 3:11+
4 Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. 6:56-57
As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself,
but must remain part of the vine,
neither can you unless you remain in me.
5 I am the vine,
you are the branches.
Whoever remains in me, with me in him,
bears fruit in plenty; 15:16
for cut off from me you can do nothing. Dt 8:17 *1:3* Ps 127:1
6 Anyone who does not remain in me Si 6:3
is like a branch that has been thrown away
—he withers; Ezk 19:12
these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, Ezk 15:1-8 Mt 3:10p; 13:30,40
and they are burnt.
7 If you remain in me
and my words remain in you,
you may ask what you will 14:13+
and you shall get it. 1 Jn 5:14

g. Christ brought revelation and salvation; his miracles were 'signs' of these things, 2:11+. The 'works' of the disciples will continue this ministry. The Spirit, from whom mighty works will proceed, is to be sent by Jesus seated in glory at the Father's right hand, 7:39; 16:7.

h. Var. 'keep my commandments'. Jesus, like God himself, asserts his right to love and obedience.

i. The Greek word *parakletos* is here translated 'Advocate', but it is difficult to choose between the possible meanings: 'advocate', 'intercessor', 'counsellor', 'protector', 'support'. The parallel between the Spirit's work for the disciples and Christ's brings out powerfully the personal character of the Spirit, cf. 14:26+; 1 Jn 2:1.

j. He who reveals and inspires the true worship of God, 4:23f, as opposed to the prince of this world who is 'the father of lies', 8:44; 1 Jn 4:3f.

k. Var. 'will be in you'.

l. The world has seen its last of Jesus, cf. 7:34; 8:21. The disciples, however, will see him in his risen life, not merely with their eyes but with the inward vision of faith, 20:29.

m. Phrase used by the prophets for the occasions when God notably intervenes in human history, cf. Is 2:17; 4:1f, etc. The 'day' may indicate a whole epoch; here, it is the post-resurrection era.

n. By coming, with the Father, to dwell in him.

o. The 'Judas, brother of James' of Lk 6:16 and Ac 1:13; the Thaddaeus of Mt 10:3 and Mk 3:18.

p. As the world does not: 8:37,43,47.

q. Var. 'the word that you hear'.

r. In place of the departed Christ, the faithful will have the Spirit, 14:16,17; 16:7; cf. 1:33+. He is the *parakletos*, who intercedes with the Father, cf. 1 Jn 2:1, and whose voice is heard in human courts, 15:26,27; cf. Lk 12:11-12; Mt 10:19-20p; Ac 5:32. He is the Spirit of truth, leading men to the very fulness of truth, 16:13, teaching them to understand the mystery of Christ — his fulfilment of the scriptures, 5:39+, the meaning of his words, 2:19+, of his actions, and of his 'signs', 14:26; 16:13; 1 Jn 2:20f,27, all hitherto obscure to the disciples, 2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 20:9. In this way the Spirit is to bear witness to Christ, 15:26; 1 Jn 5:6,7, and shame the unbelieving world, 16:8-11.

s. The customary Jewish greeting and farewell, cf. Lk 10:5p; it means soundness of body but came to be used of the perfect happiness and the deliverance which the Messiah would bring. All this Jesus gives.

t. Though the Son is the Father's equal, 10:30+; 8:24+, his glory is for the moment veiled, 1:14+; his return to the Father will reveal it again, 17:5+. Cf. Ph 2:6-9; Heb 1:3.

u. Var. 'I will not have much more speech with you'.

15 a. On the vine image, cf. Jr 2:21; Is 5:1+. In the Synoptics, Jesus uses the vine as a symbol of the kingdom of God, Mt 20:1-8; 21:28-31, 33-41 and p, and 'the fruit of the vine' becomes the Eucharistic sacrament of the New Covenant, Mt 26:29p. Here he calls himself the true vine whose fruit, the true Israel, will not disappoint God's expectation.

b. The 'fruit' is that of a life of obedience to the commandments, especially that of love, vv. 12-17. Cf. Is 5:7; Jr 2:21.

c. The Greek word seems to be used here in its agricultural sense, but it may also mean 'clean' or 'pure', cf. 13:10.

M 15:16 Rm 6:22; 7:4
It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, 8
and then you will be my disciples.[d]
3:35+; 10: 14-15+
As the Father has loved me, 9
so I have loved you.
13:1+; 17:23
Remain in my love,
If you keep my commandments 10
you will remain in my love,
6:38+; 8:29
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and remain in his love.
I have told you this 11
3:29; 16:21, 22; 17:13
so that my own joy[e] may be in you
and your joy be complete.
1 Jn 1:4
This is my commandment: 12
13:34
love one another,
as I have loved you.
1 Jn 3:16
A man can have no greater love 13
Rm 5:6-8 Ga 2:21
than to lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends, 14
if you do what I command you.
Rm 8:15 Ga 4:7
I shall not call you servants any more, 15
because a servant does not know
his master's business;
Lk 12:4
I call you friends,
Gn 18:17 Ex 33:11
because I have made known to you
everything I have learnt from my Father.
You did not choose me, 16
Dt 7:6+, 8 1 Jn 4:10
no, I chose you;
and I commissioned you
15:2+, 5 Mt 13:23 Rm 6:20-23
to go out and to bear fruit,
fruit that will last;
14:13+ Mt 18:19
and then the Father will give you
anything you ask him in my name.
What I command you 17
13:34 1 Jn 3:23; 4:21
is to love one another.

The hostile world[f]

Mt 10:22 1 Jn 3:12-13
'If the world hates you, 18
remember that it hated me before you.
If you belonged to the world, 19
the world would love you as its own;
1:10+; 17:14-16
but because you do not belong to the world,
because my choice withdrew you from the world,
therefore the world hates you.
Remember the words I said to you: 20
13:16 Mt 10:24 Lk 6:40 *Mt 10:25*
A servant is not greater than his master.
If they persecuted me,
they will persecute you too;
if they kept my word,
they will keep yours as well.
Ac 5:41
But it will be on my account that they will do all this, 21
8:19; 16:3 1 Jn 3:1
because they do not know the one who sent me.
If I had not come, 22
1 Jn 5:16
if I had not spoken to them,
they would have been blameless;
8:21-24+; 16:9
but as it is they have no excuse for their sin.
10:30+
Anyone who hates me hates my Father. 23

24 If I had not performed such works among them
as no one else has ever done, Mt 10:25; 12:24-28
they would be blameless;
but as it is, they have seen all this, 2:11+; 6:36
and still they hate both me and my Father.
25 But all this was only to fulfil the words written in their Law: 10:34
They hated me for no reason. Rm 3:19+ *Ps 35:19; 69:4*
26 When the Advocate comes,
whom I shall send to you from the Father,
the Spirit of truth who issues from[g] the Father, 14:26+
he will be my witness. Mt 10:19-20 Ac 5:32 *1 Jn 1:2*
27 And you too will be witnesses,
because you have been with me from the outset. Mt 10:18 Lk 1:2; 22:28 Ac 1:8+

1 **16** 'I have told you all this
so that your faith may not be shaken.[a]
2 They will expel you from the synagogues, Mt 10:17 Lk 21:12 Ac 8:1
and indeed the hour is coming
when anyone who kills you will think he is doing a holy duty for God. Ac 26:9-11 1 Tm 1:13
3 They will do these things
because they have never known either the Father or myself. 8:29; 15:21
4 But I have told you all this, 13:19; 14:29
so that when the time for it comes
you may remember that I told you. Mk 13:23

The coming of the Advocate

'I did not tell you this from the outset,
because I was with you; 17:12
5 but now I am going to the one who sent me. 1:1+
Not one of you has asked, "Where are you going?" Tb 12:20 *13:36; 14:5*
6 Yet you are sad at heart because I have told you this. 14:1
7 Still, I must tell you the truth:
it is for your own good that I am going
because unless I go,
the Advocate will not come to you;
but if I do go, 1:33+
I will send him to you. 14:26
8 And when he comes,
he will show the world how wrong it was, 1:10+
about sin,
and about who was in the right,
and about judgement:
9 about sin: 8:21-24; 15:22
proved by their refusal to believe in me;[b]
10 about who was in the right:
proved by my going to the Father 1 Tm 3:16
and your seeing me no more;[c] 13:33

d. Var. 'and so prove to be my disciples'. In this way the Father is 'glorified in the Son', 14:13. Cf. 21:19.

e. The perfect happiness of the messianic era which is communicated by the Son of God.

f. Jesus contrasts the disciples' love for one another with the world's hatred of them. It will be with them as with their Master, and when the world persecutes them, it persecutes Jesus himself. Cf. Ac 9:5; Col 1:24.

g. The sending of the Spirit into the world rather than the eternal 'proceeding' from the Father within the Trinity.

16 a. Lit. 'so that you may not be 'tripped'. To preserve their faith from shock, Jesus forewarns the apostles of coming trials, cf. 13:19.

b. The world's sin is unbelief, 8:21,24,46; 15:22; the Spirit will expose it.

c. The Spirit will demonstrate the right of Jesus to the title 'Son of God', cf. 10:33; 19:7. The 'passing' of Jesus to the Father will prove that he is God's Son, 13:1; 20:17, because it shows that heaven is his true home, 6:62.

about judgement: 11
12:31+ proved by the prince of this world being already condemned.[d]
I still have many things to say to you 12
but they would be too much for you now.
14:26+ But when the Spirit of truth comes 13
he will lead you to the complete truth,
since he will not be speaking as from himself
but will say only what he has learnt;
and he will tell you of the things to come.[e]
He will glorify me, 14
since all he tells you
will be taken from what is mine.
17:10 Everything the Father has is mine; 15
that is why I said:
All he tells you
will be taken from what is mine.[f]

Jesus to return very soon

7:33; 14:19 'In a short time you will no longer see me, 16
and then a short time later you will see me again.'[g]

Then some of his disciples said to one another, 'What does he mean, "In a 17
short time you will no longer see me, and then a short time later you will see me
again" and, "I am going to the Father"? •What is this "short time"?[h] We don't 18
1:48+ know what he means.' •Jesus knew that they wanted to question him, so he 19
16:30 said, 'You are asking one another what I meant by saying: In a short time you
will no longer see me, and then a short time later you will see me again.

'I tell you most solemnly, 20
you will be weeping and wailing
Rv 11:10 while the world will rejoice;
Heb 12:11 you will be sorrowful,
Ps 126:6
1 P 1:6 but your sorrow will turn to joy.[i]
Is 26:17-18; 66:7-14
Mi 4:9-10 A woman in childbirth suffers, 21
because her time has come;
Si 11:25
Jr 31:13 but when she has given birth to the child she forgets the suffering[j]
in her joy that a man has been born into the world.
So it is with you: you are sad now, 22
14:19; 15:11; 20:20 but I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy,
Ac 2:46+ and that joy no one shall take from you.
14:20 When that day comes, 23
you will not ask me any questions.
I tell you most solemnly,
14:13+ anything you ask for from the Father
he will grant in my name.
Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.[k] 24
Ask and you will receive,
and so your joy will be complete.
Mt 13:34-35p I have been telling you all this in metaphors, 25
the hour is coming
when I shall no longer speak to you in metaphors;
but tell you about the Father in plain words.[l]
When that day comes 26
14:13 you will ask in my name;
and I do not say that I shall pray to the Father[m] for you,
14:23 because the Father himself loves you 27
for loving me

and believing that I came from God.
28 I came from the Father and have come into the world 1:1+
and now I leave the world to go to the Father.'

29 His disciples said, 'Now you are speaking plainly and not using metaphors!
30 Now we see that you know everything, and do not have to wait for questions to 1:48+;16:19
31 be put into words; because of this we believe that you came from God.' •Jesus
answered them:

'Do you believe at last?
32 Listen; the time will come—in fact it has come already— Zc 13:7
when you will be scattered, each going his own way Mt 26:31p
and leaving me alone. *Ps 69:20b*
And yet I am not alone, 8:29
because the Father is with me.
33 I have told you all this
so that you may find peace in me. 14:27+
In the world you will have trouble, 1:10+
but be brave: Ps 129:2
I have conquered the world.' 12:31; 14:30
Ws 7:30
1 Jn 2:14+

The priestly prayer of Christ[a]

17 After saying this, Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: 11:41
Mt 14:19

1 'Father, the hour has come: *2:4+; 21:19*
glorify your Son
so that your Son may glorify you;[b]
2 and, through the power over all mankind[c] that you have given him, 3:35+
let him give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him. 1 Jn 2:25
3 And eternal life is this: Ws 15:3
Jr 24:7;
31:31-34
to know you,[d]
the only true God, Ezk 36:25-28
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.[e] 1:1+
4 I have glorified you on earth 14:7-9
1 Jn 5:20-21
and finished the work
that you gave me to do. 4:34+
5 Now, Father, it is time for you to glorify me 12:28
Ph 2:6-11
with that glory I had with you[f] *1:14+;*
17:22,24
before ever the world was.[g] Is 49:4
6 I have made your name[h] known 5:23; 14:9;
17:26
Ex 3:13
Mt 6:10

d. The Spirit will reveal the significance of Christ's death: it is the final sentence pronounced on the prince of this world.

e. The new order of things that is to result from Christ's death and resurrection.

f. By revealing the hidden depths of the mystery of Jesus, the Spirit makes his glory known. Jesus, in his turn, manifests the glory of the Father, 17:4, from whom comes everything he possesses, 3:35; 5:22,26; 13:3; 17:2. The Father is the source of the revelation communicated by the Son and brought to completion by the Spirit who in this way glorifies both Son and Father. There are not three revelations but one.

g. A veiled reference to his approaching death and resurrection. Add, 'because I am going to the Father'.

h. Add, 'he speaks of'.

i. The happiness of seeing the risen Christ after the sad days of his Passion, cf. 20:20.

j. Traditional biblical metaphor for the sufferings which will herald the new, messianic age. Cf. Mt 24:8+.

k. Because Jesus was not yet glorified. Cf. 14:13f.

l. The resurrection and the coming of the Spirit inaugurate the period of more perfect instruction which is to end in the vision of God 'as he is'. 1 Jn 3:2.

m Var. 'and I shall not pray to the Father'. Jesus is still the only mediator, cf. 10:9; 14:6; 15:5; Heb 8:6, but the disciples' faith and love make them one with him and therefore dear to the Father: mediation could not be more perfect.

17 a. The time for the sacrifice draws near: in this prayer Jesus offers himself and intercedes for his disciples.

b. When Jesus asks to be 'glorified', it is not in his own interests, cf. 7:18, 8:50, but the glory of Son and Father are one, cf. 12:28; 13:31.

c. Lit. 'all flesh', cf. 1:14.

d. To 'know' in the biblical sense, cf. 10:14+.

e. Hitherto the Mosaic Law had been the instrument of revelation which now comes to man through Christ.

f. Var. 'the glory which was with you' or 'the glory with which I was' or 'the glory with you'.

g. Either the glory he enjoyed as the pre-incarnate Son, or else the glory predestined for him from eternity by the Father, 1:14+.

h. It was Christ's mission to reveal the 'name', i.e. the person, of the Father, 17:3-6,26; 12:28+; 14:7-11; cf. 3:11+; now love for men is characteristic of the Father, 1 Jn 4:8,16, and he proves this love by

to the men you took from the world to give me.
3:35+ They were yours and you gave them to me,
3:11+ and they have kept your word.
Now at last they know 7
that all you have given me comes indeed from you;
for I have given them 8
3:11+ the teaching you gave to me,
and they have truly accepted this,[i] that I came from you,
and have believed that it was you who sent me.
I pray for them; 9
1:10+ I am not praying for the world
but for those you have given me,
because they belong to you:
16:15 all I have is yours 10
and all you have is mine,
2 Th 1:10,12 and in them I am glorified.
1:10+ I am not in the world any longer, 11
but they are in the world,
1:1+; 14:20 and I am coming to you.
Holy Father,
3:35+ Nb 6:24 Mt 6:13 Ac 4:32 keep those you have given me true to your name,[j]
so that they may be one like us.
While I was with them, 12
16:4; 18:9 I kept those you had given me true to your name.
6:39; 10:28 I have watched over them and not one is lost
13:18,19+ Ps 41:9 Mt 26:24 Ac 1:16,20 except the one who chose to be lost,[k]
and this was to fulfil the scriptures.
But now I am coming to you 13
and while still in the world I say these things
15:11+ to share my joy with them to the full.
3:11+ I passed your word on to them, 14
and the world hated them,
15:19 because they belong to the world
8:23 no more than I belong to the world.
I am not asking you to remove them from the world, 15
Mt 6:13 1 Co 5:10 but to protect them from the evil one.[l]
1 Jn 2:14+; 5:18 *8:23* They do not belong to the world 16
any more than I belong to the world.
Ac 9:13+ 1 P 1:22 *2 S 7:28* Consecrate[m] them in the truth; 17
your word is truth.
10:36 As you sent me into the world, 18
4:38; 20:21 I have sent them into the world,
10:18+ and for their sake I consecrate myself[n] 19
4:23+; 6:70 so that they too may be consecrated in truth.[o]
1 Th 4:7 Heb 2:11; 5:9; 10:14 I pray not only for these, 20
but for those also
who through their words will believe in me.
10:38; 14:20 Ac 4:32 May they all be one. 21
Father, may they be one in us,
10:30+ as you are in me and I am in you,
so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.
1:14+; 17:5+ I have given them the glory you gave to me, 22
that they may be one as we are one.
With me in them and you in me, 23
may they be so completely one
that the world will realise that it was you who sent me

and that I have loved them[p] as much as you loved me. 15:9
24 Father,
I want those you have given me
to be with me where I am, 12:26; 14:3
1 Th 4:17
so that they may always see the glory *17:5+*
you have given me Mt 25:23
because you loved me 2 Th 1:12
before the foundation of the world. Ep 1:4
1 P 1:20
25 Father, Righteous One,
the world has not known you, 1:10+
but I have known you, 1 Jn 3:1
and these have known
that you have sent me. 1:1+
26 I have made your name known to them 17:6+
and will continue to make it known, Ex 3:13
so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, 14:21
and so that I may be in them.'

C. THE PASSION

The arrest of Jesus

1 18 After he had said all this Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the ||Mt 26:30,36
||Mk 14:26,
32
2 Kedron valley. There was a garden there, and he went into it with his ||Lk 23:29
3 disciples. •Judas the traitor knew the place well, since Jesus had often met his
disciples there, •and he brought the cohort[a] to this place together with a detach- ||Mt 26:47-56
||Mk 14:
43-52
4 ment of guards sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees, all with lanterns and ||Lk 22:47-53
torches and weapons. •Knowing everything that was going to happen to him, 1:48+
5 Jesus then came forward and said, 'Who are you looking for?' •They answered, *12:27+*
'Jesus the Nazarene'. He said, 'I am he'. Now Judas the traitor was standing
6 among them. •When Jesus said, 'I am he', they moved back and fell to the ground. 8:24+
7 He asked them a second time, 'Who are you looking for?' They said, 'Jesus the
8 Nazarene'. •'I have told you that I am he' replied Jesus. 'If I am the one you
9 are looking for, let these others go.' •This was to fulfil the words he had spoken,
'Not one of those you gave me have I lost'. 6:39; 10:28;
17:12
10 Simon Peter, who carried a sword, drew it and wounded the high priest's ser- 18:36
11 vant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. •Jesus said to
Peter, 'Put your sword back in its scabbard; am I not to drink the cup that the 12:27
Father has given me?' Mt 20:22;
26:39p

Jesus before Annas and Caiaphas. Peter disowns him

12 The cohort and its captain and the Jewish guards seized Jesus and bound
13 him. •They took him first to Annas, because Annas was the father-in-law of Lk 3:2
14 Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. •It was Caiaphas who had suggested 11:50
to the Jews, 'It is better for one man to die for the people'.
15 Simon Peter, with another disciple,[b] followed Jesus. This disciple, who was ||Mt 26:58,
69-75
16 known to the high priest, went with Jesus into the high priest's palace, •but ||Mk 14:54,
66-72
||Lk 22:54-62

delivering up his only Son, 3:16-18; 1 Jn 4:9,10,14,16; cf. Rm 8:32; it follows that men must believe that Jesus is the Son, 3:18, if they are to appreciate this love, cf. 1 Jn 2:23; Jn 20:31, and thus 'know' the Father.

i. Add. 'and have known'. Also translated 'they have given them true welcome because I came from you'.

j. Lit. 'Keep those in your name whom (var. which) you have given me'. So also in v. 12.

k. Lit. 'the son of perdition'.

l. Or 'from evil', cf. Mt 6:13.

m. The verb means literally: to set aside for, dedicate to, God; to 'sanctify' (in the original sense of the word), cf. Ac 9:13+.

n. Jesus offers himself in sacrifice for his followers.

o. Dedicated to God's worship 'in spirit and truth'.

p. Var. 'that you have loved them'.

18 a. A detachment from the Roman garrison in Jerusalem.

b. Probably the 'disciple' of 20:2f, 'whom Jesus loved', the evangelist himself.

Peter stayed outside the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who was keeping the door and brought
21:17 Mt 26:69-70 Peter in. •The maid on duty at the door said to Peter, 'Aren't you another of 17
that man's disciples?' He answered, 'I am not'. •Now it was cold, and the servants 18
and guards had lit a charcoal fire and were standing there warming themselves;
Mt 26:58 so Peter stood there too, warming himself with the others.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. •Jesus 19 20
Is 45:19; 48:16 Mt 26:55 Lk 19:47; 22:53 answered, 'I have spoken openly for all the world to hear; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple where all the Jews meet together: I have said
nothing in secret. •But why ask me? Ask my hearers what I taught: they know 21
Ac 23:2 what I said.' •At these words, one of the guards standing by gave Jesus a slap 22
in the face, saying, 'Is that the way to answer the high priest?' •Jesus replied, 'If 23
there is something wrong in what I said, point it out; but if there is no offence
Mt 26:57 in it, why do you strike me?' •Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas 24
the high priest.[c]

21:17 ||Mt 26:69-70 ||Lk 22:54-60 As Simon Peter stood there warming himself, someone said to him, 'Aren't 25
you another of his disciples?' He denied it saying, 'I am not'. •One of the high 26
priest's servants, a relation of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, 'Didn't
I see you in the garden with him?' •Again Peter denied it; and at once a cock 27
crew.

Jesus before Pilate

||Mt 27:2, 11:26 ||Mk 15:1-15 ||Lk 23:1-7, 13-25 *11:55* Mt 26:17+ They then led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium.[d] It was 28
now morning. They did not go into the Praetorium themselves or they would be
defiled[e] and unable to eat the passover. •So Pilate came outside to them and 29
said, 'What charge do you bring against this man?' They replied, •'If he were 30
not a criminal, we should not be handing him over to you'. •Pilate said, 'Take 31
Ac 18:15 him yourselves, and try him by your own Law'. The Jews answered, 'We are not
allowed to put a man to death'.[f] •This was to fulfil the words Jesus had spoken 32
3:14+ indicating the way he was going to die.

So Pilate went back into the Praetorium and called Jesus to him, 'Are you 33
19:14f, 19-22 the king of the Jews?' he asked. •Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own 34
accord, or have others spoken to you about me?' •Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? 35
It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me:
1:10+; 6:15+ *8:23; 12:32;* 18:10-11 what have you done?' •Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if 36
my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being
surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind.' •'So you are a 37
3:35+ king then?' said Pilate. 'It is you who say it' answered Jesus. 'Yes, I am a king.
3:11+ Si 4:28 I was born for this, I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth;
10:26+ 1 Jn 3:19+ and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.' •'Truth?' said Pilate 38
'What is that?'; and with that he went out again to the Jews and said, 'I find
Mt 27:15 Lk 23:22+ no case against him. •*But according to a custom of yours I should release one* 39
prisoner at the Passover; would you like me, then, to release the king of the
Jews?' •At this they shouted: 'Not this man,' they said 'but Barabbas'. Barabbas 40
was a brigand.

||Mt 27:27-31 ||Mk 15:16-20 19 Pilate then had Jesus taken away and scourged; •and after this, the soldiers 1 2
twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on his head, and dressed him
in a purple robe. •They kept coming up to him and saying, 'Hail, king of the 3
Jews!'; and they slapped him in the face.

Pilate came outside again and said to them, 'Look, I am going to bring 4
Is 52:14 him out to you to let you see that I find no case'.[a] •Jesus then came out wearing 5
1:29,36 the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said, 'Here is the man'. •When 6
they saw him the chief priests and the guards shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'
Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him: I can find no case against him'.
Lv 24:16 'We have a Law,' the Jews replied 'and according to that Law he ought to die, 7
10:33-36 because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

8 9 When Pilate heard them say this his fears increased. •Re-entering the Praetorium, he said to Jesus, 'Where do you come from?'[b] But Jesus made no answer. 7:28
10 Pilate then said to him, 'Are you refusing to speak to me? Surely you know I
11 have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?' •'You would have 3:27; 10:18+
no power over me' replied Jesus 'if it had not been given you from above; that
is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater guilt.'[c] 8:21,44

Jesus is condemned to death

12 From that moment Pilate was anxious to set him free, but the Jews shouted,
'If you set him free you are no friend of Caesar's; anyone who makes himself Ac 17:7
13 king is defying Caesar'. •Hearing these words, Pilate had Jesus brought out, and
seated himself on the chair of judgement at a place called the Pavement, in
14 Hebrew Gabbatha.[d] •It was Passover Preparation Day,[e] about the sixth hour.[f] 19:31
15 'Here is your king' said Pilate to the Jews. •'Take him away, take him away!' Mt 26:17+
they said.[g] 'Crucify him!' 'Do you want me to crucify your king?' said Pilate. *18:33-37*
16 The chief priests answered, 'We have no king except Caesar'. •So in the end Pilate Lk 19:14
handed him over to them to be crucified.

The crucifixion ||Mt 27:31, 33,37-38 ||Mk 15:20, 22,25-27 ||Lk 23:33,38

17 They then took charge of Jesus,[h] •and carrying his own cross he went out *Gn 22:6*
of the city to the place of the skull or, as it was called in Hebrew, Golgotha, Lk 23:26
18 where they crucified him with two others, one on either side with Jesus in the Is 53:12
19 middle. •Pilate wrote out a notice and had it fixed to the cross; it ran: 'Jesus
20 the Nazarene, King of the Jews'. •This notice was read by many of the Jews, 3:35+; 18:33
because the place where Jesus was crucified was not far from the city, and the Heb 13:12+
21 writing was in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. •So the Jewish chief priests said to
Pilate, 'You should not write "King of the Jews", but "This man said: I am King Lk 19:14
22 of the Jews" '. •Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written'.

Christ's garments divided ||Mt 27:35 ||Mk 15:24 ||Lk 23:34

23 When the soldiers had finished crucifying Jesus they took his clothing and
divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless,[i]
24 woven in one piece from neck to hem; •so they said to one another, 'Instead of
tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it'. In this way the words
of scripture were fulfilled:

> *They shared out my clothing among them.*
> *They cast lots for my clothes.* Ps 22:18

This is exactly what the soldiers did.

Jesus and his mother ||Mt 27:55-56 ||Mk 15: 40-41 ||Lk 23:49

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother[j] and his mother's sister,[k] Mary the *Lk 2:35;* 8:2-3

c. This is all that John has to say about the Jewish trial which, in fact, runs through the whole gospel from the Baptist's cross-examination, 1:19, to the decision to kill Jesus, 11:49-53.

d. The Roman procurator's judicial court.

e. To enter a pagan house was to incur legal impurity, cf. Ac 11:2f.

f. The Romans had withdrawn from the Sanhedrin the power of life and death. Jesus could have been stoned by the Jews, cf. 8:59; 10:31, but not crucified ('lifted up') by them.

19 a. Add. 'in him' or 'against him'.

b. I.e. not 'what district do you come from?' but 'what is the secret of your origin? Who are you?' First, the people of Cana, 2:9, then the Samaritan woman, 4:11, the apostles, the multitude, 6:5, the Jewish leaders, 7:27f; 8:14; 9:29f, and now Pilate, are faced with the mystery of Jesus, 16:28, 17:25, which is the theme of the whole gospel, 1:13.

c. The Jewish leaders, Caiaphas in particular, 11:51f; 18:14, but also Judas who betrayed him to them, 6:71; 13:2,11,21; 18:2,5.

d. Probably meaning 'elevated place', 'mound'.

e. In the course of this day, the Passover supper was made ready (it was to be eaten after sunset, cf. Ex 12:6+) and everything necessary prepared so that the feast could be celebrated without violating the rest prescribed by the Law.

f. About noon, the time by which all leaven had to be removed from the house; during the Passover unleavened bread ('azymes') was to be eaten, cf. Ex 12:15f. It is possible that the evangelist wishes to call attention to this coincidence; cf. 1 Co 5:7.

g. Var. 'shouted' or 'were shouting'.

h. Add. 'and led him away'.

i. Possible allusion to the priesthood of the crucified: the high-priestly robe was without seam.

j. Her presence is mentioned only by John. Cf. 2:1+.

k. Either Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee

wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. •Seeing his mother and the disciple 26
2:4+; 13:22-23 he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son'.
Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother'.[l] And from that moment the 27
disciple made a place for her in his home.

||Mt 27:48-50 ||Mk 15: 36-37 ||Lk 23:46

The death of Jesus

After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to 28
4:7; 5:39+ fulfil the scripture perfectly he said:

Ps 22:15 *'I am thirsty'.*

Ps 69:21 A jar full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in the vinegar on 29
a hyssop stick[m] they held it up to his mouth. •After Jesus had taken the vinegar 30
4:34+; 10:18+; 17:4 Mt 8:20p he said, 'It is accomplished';[n] and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.[o]

The pierced Christ

19:14 Dt 21:23 ||Lk 23:47f Ga 3:13 It was Preparation Day, and to prevent the bodies remaining on the cross 31
during the sabbath—since that sabbath was a day of special solemnity—the Jews
asked Pilate to have the legs broken[p] and the bodies taken away. •Consequently 32
the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with
him and then of the other. •When they came to Jesus, they found[q] he was already 33
1:33+ Nb 20:11 Zc 13:1 7:37-39; 20:27 1 Jn 5:6-8 3 Jn 12 dead, and so instead of breaking his legs •one of the soldiers pierced his side 34
with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water.[r] •This is the 35
evidence of one who saw it[s]—trustworthy evidence, and he[t] knows he speaks the
truth—and he gives it so that you may believe as well. •Because all this happened 36
to fulfil the words of scripture:

Ex 12:46 Ps 34:20 *Not one bone of his will be broken;*[u]

and again, in another place scripture says: 37

Zc 12:10 Nb 21:9 Rv 1:7 *They will look on the one whom they have pierced.*[v]

||Mt 27:57-60 ||Mk 15: 42-46 ||Lk 23:50-54

The burial

After this, Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a disciple of Jesus—though a 38
secret one because he was afraid of the Jews—asked Pilate to let him remove
the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so they[w] came and took it away.
3:1; 7:50 Nicodemus came as well—the same one who had first come to Jesus at night-time 39
—and he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred
11:44; 20:7 pounds. •They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen 40
cloths, following the Jewish burial custom. •At the place where he had been 41
crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new tomb in which no one
had yet been buried. •Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb 42
was near at hand, they laid Jesus there.

VIII. THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

The empty tomb

||Mt 28:1-8 ||Mk 16:1-8 ||Lk 24:1-11 *Mt 28:10+* 20 It was very early on the first day of the week[a] and still dark, when Mary 1
of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved
13:22-23; 18:15 away from the tomb •and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, 2
the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and
we don't know where they have put him.'

So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. •They ran together, 3 4
but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; •he bent 5
down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in.[b] •Simon 6
Lk 24:12 Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen

cloths on the ground, •and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. •Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. •Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture,[e] that he must rise from the dead. •The disciples then went home again.

11:44; 19:40
21:7
5:39+; 14:26+

The appearance to Mary of Magdala

Meanwhile Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, she stooped to look inside, •and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet. •They said, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' 'They have taken my Lord away' she replied 'and I don't know where they have put him.' •As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise him. •Jesus said, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him'. •Jesus said, 'Mary!' She knew him[d] then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!'[e]—which means Master. •Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me,[f] because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and find the brothers,[g] and tell them: I am ascending to my Father[h] and your Father, to my God and your God.' •So Mary of Magdala went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her.

||Mt 28:9-10
||Mk 16:9-11
Sg 3:1-3
Lk 24:16
Mk 10:51
Sg 3:4
1:1+
Ac 1:9
2:12+; 12:32+
Lk 24:10

Appearances to the disciples

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were,[i] for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', •and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, •and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.

||Mk 16: 14-18
||Lk 24:36-39
21:14
16:16
14:27
Lk 24:16+
1 Jn 1:1
15:11; 16:22

'As the Father sent me,
so am I sending you.'

4:38; 17:18
Mt 28:19
Mk 16:15
Lk 24:47f

(cf. Mt 27:56p) or else, if the phrase refers to what follows, 'Mary, the wife of Clopas'.

l. The reference to the O.T. (vv. 24,28,36,37) and the unusual term 'woman' suggest that the evangelist sees more in this than the gesture of a dutiful son: namely, a declaration that Mary, the new Eve, is the spiritual mother of all the faithful, here represented by the beloved disciple.

m. Conj. 'on a spear'.

n. I.e. the Father's work as foretold by the scriptures: the salvation of the world through the sacrifice of Christ. Jn does not record the desolate cry of Mt 27:46 and Mk 15:34: it is the calm majesty of Christ's death that he wishes to emphasise. Cf. Lk 23:46; Jn 12:27+.

o. The last breath of Jesus is a token of the outpouring of the Spirit, 1:33+; 20:22.

p. To hasten death.

q. Var. 'when they saw'.

r. Var. 'water and blood'. The significance of the incident is brought out by two texts of scripture (vv. 36f). The blood shows that the lamb has truly been sacrificed for the salvation of the world, 6:51; the water, symbol of the Spirit, shows that the sacrifice is a rich source of grace. Many of the Fathers, not without good reason, interpret the water and blood as symbols of baptism and the Eucharist, and these two sacraments as signifying the Church which is born like a second Eve from the side of another Adam. Cf. Ep 5: 23-32.

s. The disciple of v. 26, probably the evangelist himself.

t. Referring either to 'the one who saw' or else to God (or Christ) whom 'the one who saw' calls to witness.

u. Two texts are here combined: one from a Psalm describing how God protects the virtuous man persecuted (cf. Ws. 2:18-20), of whom the 'servant of Yahweh' (Is 53) is the ideal example; the other, a ritual instruction for the preparation of the Passover lamb. Cf. Jn 1:29+ and 1 Co 5:7.

v. 'They will look', in the Johannine sense of 'see and understand', cf. 3:14+. For Jn, the Roman soldier symbolises the pagans who will be converted, cf. 12:20-21,32 and notes. Similarly, Mt 27:54+ and Mk 15:39+. Cf. also Lk 23:47,48; Mt 24:30; Rv 1:7.

w. Var. 'he'.

20 a. This was to become 'the Lord's Day', the Christian Sunday; cf. Rv 1:10.

b. The disciple acknowledges that Peter has some title to precedence. Cf. 21:15-17.

c. Cf. Ps 16:8-11; 2:7; Ac 2:24-31; 13:32-37; 1 Co 15:4.

d. Var. 'She turned'.

e. A more solemn address than 'Rabbi', and often used when speaking to God; it therefore approximates to Thomas' profession of faith, v. 28.

f. Mary has fallen at the feet of Jesus to embrace them. Cf. Mt 28:9.

g. Var. 'my brothers'.

h. This assertion does not contradict the account of Ac 1:3f. Christ 'went up' to the Father, that is to say, his body entered into glory, Jn 3:13; 6:62; Ep 4:10; 1 Tm 3:16; Heb 4:14; 6:19f; 9:24; 1 P 3:22; cf. Ac 2: 33+, 36+, on the day he rose fom the tomb, Jn 20:17; Lk 24:51. The significance of the 'ascension', 40 days later, Ac 1:2f,9-11, is that the time of earthly companionship with Christ is over, that he is now 'seated at the right hand of God' and will not return before his final coming (the '*parousia*').

i. Add. 'assembled'.

After saying this he breathed[j] on them and said: 22

1:33+ Ac 1:8+; 2:2
'Receive the Holy Spirit.
For those whose sins you forgive, 23
they are forgiven;
Mt 16:19; 18:18+
for those whose sins you retain,
they are retained.'

11:16; 14:5 Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them 24
Lk 24:9-10 1 Jn 1:1 when Jesus came. •When the[k] disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, 25
21:14 I refuse to believe'. •Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and 26
Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood
14:27 among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. •Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put 27
1 Jn 1:1 your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my
19:34+ side.[l] Doubt no longer but believe.' •Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' 28
Jesus said to him: 29

'You believe because you can see me.
4:48 Lk 1:45; 24:9-10 Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'[m]

CONCLUSION

12:37 There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but 30
they are not recorded in this book. •These are recorded so that you may believe 31
1 Jn 5:13 that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life
Ac 3:16+ through his name.

APPENDIX[a]

Mt 26:32p; 28:7 **The appearance on the shore of Tiberias**

21 Later on, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. It was by the Sea 1
11:16; 14:5 of Tiberias, and it happened like this: •Simon Peter, Thomas called the 2
2:1 Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two more of
Mt 4:18 Lk 5:4-10 his disciples were together. •Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing'. They replied, 3
'We'll come with you'. They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night.

It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples 4
Lk 24:16+, 41 did not realise that it was Jesus. •Jesus called out, 'Have you caught anything, 5
friends?' And when they answered, 'No', •he said, 'Throw the net out to starboard 6
and you'll find something'. So they dropped the net, and there were so many
13:23; 20:8 fish[b] that they could not haul it in. •The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is 7
the Lord'. At these words 'It is the Lord', Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped his cloak round him and jumped into the water. •The 8
other disciples came on in the boat, towing the net and the fish; they were only about a hundred yards from land.

Lk 24:41-43 As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and 9
a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it. •Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you 10
have just caught'. •Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore,[c] 11
full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. •Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast'. 12
4:27 None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'Who are you?'; they knew quite
6:11 Lk 24:42 well it was the Lord. •Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it 13
20:19-23; 26-29 to them, and the same with the fish. •This was the third time that Jesus showed 14
himself to the disciples after rising from the dead.

15 After the meal Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?' He answered, 'Yes Lord, you know I love you'. Lk 5:10; 22:32 Ac 20:28
16 Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs'. •A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He replied, 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you'. Jesus
17 said to him, 'Look after my sheep'. •Then he said to him a third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was upset that he asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' and said, 'Lord, you know everything; you know I love you'. Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. 13:37,38; 18: 17, 25-27 1:48+ 6:68f Mt 16:17-19 Lk 22:31-32

18 'I tell you most solemnly,
when you were young
you put on your own belt
and walked where you liked;
but when you grow old
you will stretch out your hands, 2 P 1:14
and somebody else will put a belt round you
and take you where you would rather not go.'

19 In these words he indicated the kind of death[d] by which Peter would give glory to God. After this he said, 'Follow me'. 12:33; 13: 31,36; 17:1 Lk 5:11
20 Peter turned and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them—the one who had leaned on his breast at the supper and had said to him, 'Lord, who is it that 13:25
21 will betray you?' •Seeing him, Peter said to Jesus, 'What about him, Lord?'
22 Jesus answered, 'If I want him to stay behind till I come,[e] what does it matter
23 to you? You are to follow me.' •The rumour then went out among the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus had not said to Peter, 'He will not die', but, 'If I want him to stay behind till I come'.[f]

Conclusion

24 This disciple is the one who vouches for these things and has written them down, and we know[g] that his testimony is true. 3 Jn 12
25 There were many other things that Jesus did; if all were written down, the world itself, I suppose, would not hold all the books that would have to be written.

j. The breath of Jesus is a symbol of the Spirit ('breath', in Hebrew); he sends forth the Spirit who will make all things anew, Gn 1:2; 2:7; Ezk 37:9; Ws 15:11. See Jn 19:30+and Mt 3:16+.

k. Add. 'other.'

l. In the closing words of his gospel, John again calls the Christian reader's attention to the wound in Christ's side, cf. 19:34+.

m. On the apostles' witness, cf. Ac 1:8+.

21 a. Added either by the evangelist or by one of his disciples

b. This generosity recalls Cana, 2:6, the loaves miracle, 6:11f, the living water, 4:14; 7:37f, the life which the good shepherd gives, 10:10, and the richness of the Spirit bestowed on Jesus, 3:34.

c. In the Synoptics, this operation is an image of the kingdom's coming, Mt 13:47f, or of the apostles' task, Mt 4:19p. Here, too, it evidently symbolises the apostolic mission under Peter's direction. Cf. Jn 21: 15-17.

d. Martyrdom.

e. I.e. until the *parousia*, cf. 1 Co 11:26; 16:22; Rv 1:7; 22:7,12,17,20.

f. Add. 'what is that to you?'

g. Possibly the words of a group of John's disciples.

THE ACTS
OF THE APOSTLES

INTRODUCTION TO
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts and the third gospel must originally have been two parts of a book that today we should call 'a history of the rise of Christianity'. About 150 A.D., when Christians wanted the four gospels bound in one codex, these two parts were separated. The title 'Acts of the Apostles', or 'Acts of Apostles', which may have been given to the second part at this time, follows normal contemporary hellenistic usage as in, e.g., the 'Acts' of Hannibal and the 'Acts' of Alexander, etc. That these two books of the New Testament were once closely associated is suggested 1. by their Prologues: both are addressed (cf. Lk 1:1-4) to someone called Theophilus and Ac 1:1, having referred to the gospel as an 'earlier work', goes on by way of introduction to say why the gospel was written and to summarise its closing incidents (appearances of the risen Christ, ascension); 2. by their literary affinity: vocabulary, grammar and style are not only consistent all through Acts showing that it is a literary unity, but they are also characteristic of the third gospel, which makes it almost certain that both books are by the same author.

The only identification of the *author* ever suggested by church writers is St Luke, and no critics ancient or modern have ever seriously suggested anyone else. This identification was already known to the churches about the year 175 A.D. as shown by the Roman canon known as the Muratorian Fragment, by the Anti-Marcionite Prologue, by St Irenaeus, Clement and Origen in Alexandria and by Tertullian, and it is supported by internal evidence: the author must have been a Christian of the apostolic age, either a thoroughly hellenised Jew or, more probably, a well educated Greek with some knowledge of medicine and extremely well acquainted with the LXX and Jewish things in general. Lastly, and more significantly, he had accompanied Paul on his journeys judging from his use of the first person plural in Part 2 of Acts, and of all Paul's companions none is more strongly indicated than Luke. According to an ancient tradition Luke was a Syrian from Antioch, a doctor and of pagan origin, Col 4:10-14; Paul describes him as a close friend who stayed by him during his two periods of captivity in Rome, Col 4:14; Phm 24; 2 Tm 4:11. Luke probably accompanied Paul on the second (Ac 16:10f) and third (Ac 20:6f; cf. perhaps 2 Co 8:18) missionary journeys, and the only reason he does not figure in lists like that of Ac 20:4 is because he probably compiled the lists himself.

There is no clear early tradition about either *date* or *place* of writing (Greece, after Paul's death? Rome, before the end of Paul's trial?), and we have to rely on internal evidence. Acts ends with Paul's Roman captivity in 61-63, with reference to which it mentions a period of two years, 28:30+, and this happens

to be the legal interval after which a case was dismissed if no evidence had arrived to support the charge. It is possible, therefore, that these lines were written after Paul's release. This ties in with the date of 64 A.D. suggested for Mark, since Acts must be later than Mark. A date as late as 80-100 which has been suggested by some critics is possible, but (as in Luke) there are no positive indications in Acts of a date later than 70 A.D.

The precise date, however, becomes a secondary consideration once the book can establish its primary importance either as an author's eyewitness account for the events that fill a major section or as based on adequate sources at the author's disposal. Analysis of Acts confirms Lk 1:1-4 (meant as prologue to the complete work) by suggesting that Luke must have collected a great deal of detailed evidence from a variety of sources, because in spite of the way Luke has superimposed his own personality in reworking this material he has not succeeded in disguising the various sources he has used. Not only does the flavour of the doctrinal content change according to the context so that in appropriate sections it seems convincingly primitive, but as well as that there is considerable variation in the literary style. In passages where Luke can control the style, when, for example, he is writing up his own travel notes, the Greek is excellent; but in his description of the early history of the Palestinian community we find that the language becomes full of semitisms, clumsy and even inaccurate. In some places this is only because he is trying to copy Old Testament LXX Greek, but mostly it is because he is reproducing his various Aramaic sources as closely as possible. In Luke this can be checked by comparing it with two of its sources (i.e. Mark and the document common to Matthew and Luke), but unfortunately there are no texts with which to compare Acts; it is possible, however, to try to determine what kinds of sources were used. One suggestion was that the whole of 1-15:35 is based on a single Aramaic document, but this is far too sweeping as it does not account for all the editing that Luke has unmistakably done in these chapters. Luke has obviously used not one long source but several short ones, many of which may not even have been written documents, though some probably were. Without being dogmatic about details, it is possible to classify the main kinds of traditions collected by Luke. 1. Those that relate to the *primitive Jerusalem community*, ch. 1-5. 2. Biographical notes about *individuals:* e.g. Peter, 9:32-11:18; ch. 12, or Philip, 8:4-40; these details could have been supplied at first hand by people like Philip, the deacon Luke met at Caesarea, 21:8. 3. Details about the early days of the *community in Antioch* and its foundation by hellenistic Jews: these were obviously provided by that community, 6:1-8:3; 11:19-30; 13:1-3. 4. *Paul's conversion and missionary journeys:* these were things Paul himself could have told Luke, 9:1-30; 13:4-14:28; 15:36f. 5. For *Paul's later journeys* Luke would probably have had his own notes and these he seems to use in the 'we' passages which are precisely the sections where the peculiarities of Luke's own style are most concentrated, 11:28; 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16. Luke managed to organise all this material into a single book by sorting it out chronologically as best he could and linking the episodes together with frequent editorial formulae, e.g. 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; etc.

The unsophisticated nature of this material and the respect with which Luke

treats it guarantee the *historical worth* of Acts. It was not easy to put all these sources together, and obviously a certain amount of anticipation, repetition and fusion was unavoidable; thus the events of ch. 12 should come before the visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem mentioned in 11:30; 12:25, unless this visit is to be identified with that of ch. 15; though the account of the 'council of Jerusalem' (ch. 15) may itself be a conflation of two quite distinct debates (cf. notes). Slight adjustments like this do not affect the basic reliability of the work, as may be seen for example by checking how closely Luke's account of Paul's missionary activities agrees with Paul's epistles, which were quite certainly not among the sources Luke used for Acts. This is even true of Galatians if we make allowances for the conflations in Acts. The earlier events, of course, cannot be checked in this way, but may seem reasonable enough in themselves, and Luke seems to have treated the sources for his account with considerable respect, if we may judge by all the realistic and lifelike details he has left in. Considerable suspicion, however, is aroused by the speeches in Acts since it is maintained that Luke has done what all classical historians did and put his own free compositions into the mouth of his characters. On the other hand it is hard to believe that anyone, however gifted, but least of all a person of Greek culture like Luke, could reproduce so convincingly, after forty years, the archaisms and semitisms of, for example, the speeches by Peter and Stephen. Luke must have had access to records in the sense that the earliest preaching made use of only a very few main themes and supported these with stereotyped arguments set out in standard ways and learnt by heart. Christian Jews had anthologies of scriptural texts; non-Jewish Christians had collections of tags from the accepted philosophers, while both had the essential kerygma (proclamation) of the Messiah who was killed and rose again, together with his invitation to conversion and baptism. Luke must first have come across these outlines of Christian preaching as sermons and from his own researches have been able later on, through his acute sense of psychology, to fill them out authentically with the most important Christian teaching.

Whether Acts is objective is the first question that must be faced when discussing the book's *purpose.* F.C. Baur and his followers thought Acts was a 2nd century attempt to smooth over the quarrel between Petrine and Pauline factions. Such a radical attack on the objectivity of Acts would not be put forward by any exegete today, not only because the date it suggests is far too late, but because its formulation is so obviously influenced by Hegel's philosophy of history. To what extent, however, is Acts a piece of special pleading? To what extent does it twist the facts that it records? Was Luke's purpose in writing Acts to present a portrait of Paul that would convince the Roman authorities that Paul was not a political criminal? This is certainly one aspect of Acts but not the only one, and in any case such a portrait of Paul need not necessarily be tendentious—Luke may have been convinced it was a true portrait, and Luke may have been right. The two things he stresses are the exclusively religious nature of Paul's battle with the Jews, and Paul's loyalty to the Roman authority. These were plain facts and Luke had every right to base his portrait on them. However, as has been said, Luke was not merely interested in giving a portrait of Paul to serve as evidence for the Roman courts: what he aimed at was to write the history of the beginnings of Christianity.

This assertion is based on the *structure* of the book that is summarised in the words of Christ with which it begins: 'You will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth', Ac 1:8. Acts begins with Jerusalem where the faith takes firm root and the first community grows in grace and numbers, ch. 1-5. This community begins to expand, under the stimulus of the world-wide outlook of converts from hellenistic Judaism especially after the martyrdom of Stephen when these converts were expelled, 6:1-8:3. The faith spreads north of Jerusalem to Samaria, 8:4-25, south-west to the coast and north again to Caesarea, 8:26-40; 9:32-11:18. The insertion here of Paul's conversion shows that the faith had already reached Damascus and indicates that it was soon to reach Cilicia, 9:1-30. Refrains like the one that closes this section (9:31, which adds Galilee to the list) draw attention repeatedly to the spread of the faith. Acts turns next to the reception of the Good News in Antioch, 11:19-26, and shows how Antioch became a missionary headquarters, while keeping in touch with Jerusalem, and how Jerusalem and Antioch reached an agreed solution to the main problems connected with the missions, 11:27-30; 15:1-35. This leads on to the spread of the faith to the pagans. After his imprisonment following the conversion of Cornelius, Peter goes off to a place that is not named, ch. 12, and from that point Paul takes over the leading part in Luke's story. His first journey (before the council of Jerusalem) takes the faith to Cyprus and Asia Minor, ch. 13-14; his next two journeys take it as far as Macedonia and Greece, 15:36-18:22; 18:23-21:17. After each one he returns to Jerusalem where eventually he is arrested and later imprisoned at Caesarea, 21:18-26:32. This leads him to Rome, where, still a missionary in spite of being a prisoner in chains, Paul preaches the Good News, ch. 27-28, and since Rome could be taken as 'the ends of the earth' by any one who thought of Jerusalem as the centre, Luke has reached a point where he can stop.

It is a pity that Luke does not write about what the other apostles did, or describe how the Church was founded, for example, in Rome where it had been established before Paul's arrival (cf. Romans, written during Paul's third journey) or in Alexandria. Luke does not even suggest that Peter had an apostolate outside Palestine: there is never any doubt as to who the focus of attention is all through Acts, though only the second half is devoted to Paul exclusively. The sort of things, however, that Luke does not mention and the kind of gaps he leaves are valuable guarantees of the things he does say, since he limits himself to facts that he has acquired either at first hand or from sources he has checked. Luke is not interested in giving *all* the details about the spread of Christianity. What he is interested in is: 1. the spiritual energy inside Christianity that motivates its expansion, and 2. the spiritual doctrine he can deduce from the facts at his disposal. This is what the book is about, and what makes it universal and irreplaceable.

Here it is only possible to list the main points of this elaborate *theology* of Acts. 1. The kerygma (proclamation) of the apostles is centred on faith in Christ, and in Acts this is presented with many slight variations that make it possible for us to recover the history of how this teaching grew more and more precise; e.g. the earliest Christians are shown as feeling no need to go beyond the stage of contemplating the triumph of the human Jesus who has

become the *Kyrios* by his resurrection, 2:22-36; but later Paul is made to give him the title 'Son of God', 9:20. 2. From the speeches we know the main scriptural texts that (under the Spirit's guidance) formed the basis both for a systematic Christology and for arguments with the Jews: e.g. the themes of the Servant, 3:13,26; 4:27,30; 8:32-33, and the second Moses, 3:22f; 7:20f; the proof of the resurrection from Ps 16:8-11 (Ac 2:24-32; 13:34-37); and the use of their own history to warn Jews against resisting grace, 7:2-53; 13:16-41. Pagans, of course, needed a more generalised theological argument, 14:15-17; 17:22-31, and though the apostles are primarily 'witnesses', 1:8+ (as such Luke sums up their kerygma, 2:22+, and records their miraculous 'signs') the most urgent problem facing the new Church was the admission of pagans, and Acts provides important details about this. The Jerusalem brotherhood led by James remains faithful to the Jewish Law, 15:1,5; 21:20f; but the Hellenists, for whom Stephen acts as spokesman, want to break away from Temple worship. Peter, but even more so Paul, get the principle of salvation through faith in Christ recognised at the council of Jerusalem. This dispenses the pagans from the need to be circumcised and from obeying the Law of Moses. As it is still true, however, that this salvation comes from Israel, Luke records how Paul always preached to the Jews first, and only turned to the pagans after his fellow Jews had rejected him, 13:5+. 3. Acts also provides important details about life in the earliest Christian communities: e.g. the way of prayer and community of goods known to the church in Jerusalem; the administration of baptism in water and baptism in Spirit, 1:5+; celebration of the Eucharist, 2:42+; early attemps at organisation in e.g. 'prophets' and 'teachers', 13:1+, and the 'elders' who preside in the Jerusalem church, 11:30+, and who are also appointed by Paul in the churches he founds, 14:23. 4. All these developments in community life are attributed to the irresistible guidance of the Spirit. As Lk 4:1+ insists on the importance of the Holy Spirit so Acts (1:8+) attributes the spread of the developing Church to the continuous activity of the Holy Spirit—this is why the book has been called 'the gospel of the Spirit', and why it seems so full os spiritual joy and of wonder at God's works, a fact that can hardly surprise those who understand what the coming of Christianity meant to a world that had never seen anything like it. 5. To this wealth of theology we must add the detailed factual information which we should otherwise lack, the psychological tact with which Luke typically presents his characters, the shrewdness and the craftsmanship of passages like the speech in the presence of Agrippa, ch. 26, and the pathos of scenes like the farewell to the Ephesian elders, 20:17-38. This book, the only one of its kind in the New Testament, is full of treasures. Without it, there would be great gaps in what we know about the beginnings of Christianity.

The texts of the New Testament have come down to us with a great number of minor variants, and for Acts those in the so-called 'Western' Text (Codex Bezae, the old Latin and old Syriac versions, and early ecclesiastical writers) are the most interesting. Because this Western Text has not been critically edited like the Alexandrian recension, it contains many corrupt readings, but many of its concrete and vivid details, absent from the other texts, could be authentic. The most important of these readings have been either mentioned in the footnotes or incorporated in the text.

THE ACTS
OF THE APOSTLES

Prologue

Lk 1:1-4
1:22
Mt 28:19-20
Lk 24:49
Lk 24:51
1 Tm 3:16
10:40-41;
13:31
Mt 28:10
19:8
Lk 24:42-43
||*Lk 24:49*
2:33 +
Ga 3:14
Ep 1:13
11:16
Lk 3:16p

1 In my earlier work,[a] Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and 1
taught from the beginning •until the day he gave his instructions to the 2
apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit,[b] and was taken up to heaven.[c]
He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: 3
for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the
kingdom of God.[d] •When he had been at table with them, he had told them not 4
to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is'
he had said 'what you have heard me speak about: •John baptised with water but 5
you, not many days from now, will be baptised[e] with the Holy Spirit.'

The ascension

Dn 2:21
Mt 24:36p
1 Th 5:1-2
Is 43:10
Mt 28:19
||Lk 24:47-48
2 K 2:11
Mk 16:19
||Lk 24:50-51
Jn 20:17
Rm 10:6
Ep 4:8-10
1 P 3:22
Lk 24:4
3:20
Zc 14:4

Now having met together,[f] they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are 6
you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?'[g] •He replied, 'It is not for you to 7
know times or dates[h] that the Father has decided by his own authority, •but 8
you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you,[i] and then you will be
my witnesses[j] not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and
indeed to the ends of the earth'.[k]
As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud[l] took him 9
from their sight. •They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men 10
in white were standing near them •and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee 11
standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into
heaven, this same Jesus[m] will come back in the same way[n] as you have seen him
go there.'

I. THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

The group of apostles

||Lk 6:14-16p
2:42,46; 6:4
Rm 12:12
Lk 23:49

So from the Mount of Olives, as it is called, they went back to Jerusalem, 12
a short distance away, no more than a sabbath walk; •and when they reached 13
the city they went to the upper room where they were staying; there were Peter
and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew,
James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Jude son of James.[o] •All 14
these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including
Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.[p]

The election of Matthias

1:20
Ps 41:9
Jn 13:18

One day Peter stood up to speak to the brothers[q]—there were about a 15
hundred and twenty persons in the congregation: •'Brothers, the passage of 16
scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit, speaking through David,

foretells the fate of Judas, who offered himself as a guide to the men who Lk 22:47
17 arrested Jesus—•after having been one of our number and actually sharing this
18 ministry of ours. •As you know, he bought a field with the money he was paid ||Mt 27:3-10
for his crime. He fell headlong and burst open, and all his entrails poured out. Ws 4:19
19 Everybody in Jerusalem heard about it and the field came to be called the Bloody
20 Acre, in their language Hakeldama. •Now in the Book of Psalms it says:

Let his camp be reduced to ruin, Ps 69:25
Let there be no one to live in it. Jn 17:12

And again:

Let someone else take his office. Ps 109:8

21 'We must therefore choose someone who has been with us the whole time that
22 the Lord Jesus was travelling round with us, •someone who was with us right
from the time when John was baptising until the day when he was taken up from
us—and he can act with us as a witness to his resurrection.' 1:8+; 10:39
23 Having nominated two candidates, Joseph known as Barsabbas, whose
24 surname was Justus, and Matthias, •they prayed, 'Lord, you can read everyone's 13:9+
25 heart; show us therefore which of these two you have chosen •to take over this 15:8
ministry and apostolate, which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place'. Jr 11:20+ Lk 16:15 Rv 2:23
26 They then drew lots for them, and as the lot fell to Matthias, he was listed as *Ex 33:7+* 1 S 14:41+
one of the twelve apostles.[r]

1 a. The gospel of Luke.

b. This emphasises the part played by the Spirit in the first missionary activities of the apostles, vv. 5,8 and ch. 2, as in the opening of Christ's ministry, Lk 4:1,14,18.

c. The Western Text does not mention the ascension here.

d. The kingdom of God, Mt 4:17+, must be the main subject preached by the apostles, cf. Ac 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31, as it was the main thing preached by Christ, cf. Mt 3:2+.

e. The baptism of the Spirit foretold by John the Baptist, Mt 3:11p, and here promised by Jesus, will be initiated by the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, Ac 2:1-4. Subsequently, the apostles, obedient to Christ's command, Mt 28:19, will continue to make use of baptism in water, Ac 2:41; 8:12,38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5, as the ritual initiation into the messianic kingdom, cf. Mt 3:6+, but it will be 'in the name of Jesus', Ac 2:38+, and through belief in Christ as saviour, cf. Rm 6:4+, will be able to absolve from sins and to give the Spirit, Ac 2:38. Connected with this Christian baptism by water there is the companion rite of the imposition of hands, 1 Tm 4:14+, the purpose of which is to give the gifts of the Spirit in as manifest a way as they had been given at Pentecost, Ac 8:16-19; 9:17-18; 19:5-6 (but cf. 10:44-48); this is the origin of the sacrament of confirmation. Side by side with these Christian sacraments the baptism of John was for a time still being administered by certain of the less instructed early Christians, 19:3.

f. Ac 1:6 takes up the narrative broken off in Lk 24:49.

g. The apostles still identified the messianic kingdom with the political restoration of David's dynasty, Cf. Mt 4:17+.

h. Human history is the unfolding of salvation, and it develops through the 'times and dates', cf. Dn 2:21; 1 Th 5:1, that God has always foreseen (Rm 16:25+; 1 Co 2:7; Ep 1:4; 3:9,11; Col 1:26; 2 Tm 1:9; cf. Mt 25: 34): first there are the 'times' of preparation, Heb 1:2; 9:9; 1 P 1:11, and of God's patience, Rm 3:26; Ac 17:30; then follows the appointed time Ga 4:4+, the moment long foretold for the Messiah to come and begin the era of salvation, Rm 3:26+; after this, the time that is to elapse before the *parousia* or final coming, 2 Co 6:2+; lastly, the great and final 'Day' 1 Co 1:8+ (preceded by the 'last days', 1 Tm 4:1+) and the Last Judgement itself, Rm 2:6+.

i. The Holy Spirit is a favourite theme of Luke (Lk 4:1+); he talks mostly about the Holy Spirit as a Power, Lk 1:35; 24:49; Ac 1:8; 10:38; Rm 15:13 19; 1 Co 2:4,5; 1 Th 1:5; Heb 2:4, sent from God by Christ, Ac 2:33, to broadcast the Good News. 1. The Spirit gives the charismata, 1 Co 12:4f, that guarantee the message: the gift of tongues, Ac 2:4+, of miracles, 10:38, of prophecy, 11:27+; 20:23; 21:11, of wisdom, 6:3,5,10; 2. the Spirit gives strength to proclaim Jesus as Messiah in spite of persecution, 4:8,31; 5:32; 6:10; cf. Ph 1:19, and to bear witness to him, Mt 10:20p; Jn 15:26; Ac 1:8; 2 Tm 1:7f, cf. following note; 3. the Spirit guides the Church in her major decisions: the admission of pagans, Ac 8:29,40; 10:19,44-47; 11:12-16; 15:8, without obligation to observe the Law, 15:28; Paul's mission to the pagan world, 13:2f; 16:6-7; 19:1 (Western Text), cf Mt 3:16+. Ac also mentions the Spirit as received in baptism and forgiving sins 2:38; cf. Rm 5:5+.

j. The primary function of the apostles is to bear witness: not only to Christ's resurrection, Lk 24:48; Ac 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 13:31; 22:15, but also to the whole of his public life, Lk 1:21; Jn 15:27; Ac 1:22; 10:39f.

k. Nothing can limit the apostolic mission. Is 45: 14+. The progress outlined here follows the geographical plan of Ac: Jerusalem was destined to receive the Good News, to be the centre from which it is now spreading, cf. Lk 2:38+.

l. The cloud is part of theophanies in O.T., Ex 13:22+, and in N.T. Lk 9:34-35p. In particular, Dn 7:13, it marks the coming, or *parousia*, of the Son of Man, Mt 24:30+; v. 11 of this passage; cf. 1 Th 4:17; Rv 1:7; 14:14-16.

m. Thus the Western Text. Text. Rec. 'this Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven'.

n. The glorious coming the *parousia*, see notes on Mt 24 and Lk 17:22-37; 21:5-33.

o. 'Son' (of Alphaeus, of James) is not in the Greek. The apostle Jude is not the Jude 'brother' of Jesus, cf. Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3, and brother of James (Jude 1). Nor is it likely that the apostle James son of Alphaeus was James brother of the Lord, Ac 12:17; 15:13, etc.

p. Cousins of Jesus cf. Mt 12:46+.

q. The term means Christians, usually the laity as distinct from apostles and elders, cf. 11:1; 12:17; 17-18; Rm 1:13 etc.

r. 'he was listed as one of the twelve apostles' Western Text.

Pentecost

Ex 23:14+ 4:31 Ps 33:6; 104:30 Jn 3:8+; 20:22 1:5+; 19:6 1:8+ Ws 1:7 Lk 24:47 Mt 28:19 Col 1:23 Gn 11:1-9 10:2+ 10:46 1 Co 14:23

2 When Pentecost day came round, they[a] had all met in one room, ·when 1
suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven,[b] the 2
noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; ·and something 3
appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire;[c] these separated and came 4
to rest on the head of each of them. ·They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,
and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit[d] gave them the gift of speech.
Now there were devout men[e] living in Jerusalem from every nation under 5
heaven, ·and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these 6
men speaking his own language.[f] ·They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely' 7
they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? ·How does it happen that each 8
of us hears them in his own native language? ·Parthians, Medes and Elamites; 9
people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ·Phrygia 10
and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors
from Rome—·Jews and proselytes[g] alike—Cretans and Arabs; we hear them 11
preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.' ·Everyone was 12
amazed and unable to explain it; they asked one another what it all meant.
Some, however, laughed it off. 'They have been drinking too much new wine' 13
they said.

Peter's address to the crowd

3:4; 4:8; 5:8,29; 10:5 2:33+ Jl 3:1-5 Is 2:2 Rm 7:5+ Si 1:10 11:27+; 21:9 5:12 Mt 24:29p Rm 10:9-13 1 Co 1:2 Mt 2:23+ 10:38 Lk 24:19 4:10 1 Th 2:15 Ps 18:6 13:34-37 Ps 16:8-11

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven[h] and addressed them in a loud voice: 14
'Men of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, make no mistake about
this, but listen carefully to what I say. ·These men are not drunk, as you 15
imagine; why, it is only the third hour of the day.[i] ·On the contrary, this is 16
what the prophet[j] spoke of:

In the days to come[k]—it is the Lord who speaks— 17
I will pour out my spirit on all mankind.
Their sons and daughters shall prophesy,
your young men shall see visions,
your old men shall dream dreams.
Even on my slaves, men and women, 18
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.
I will display portents in heaven *above* 19
and *signs* on earth *below*.
The sun will be turned into darkness 20
and the moon into blood
before the great Day of the Lord dawns.[l]
All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.[m] 21

'Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say:[n] Jesus the Nazarene was a 22
man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that
God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. ·This 23
man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention[o] and foreknowledge
of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law.[p] You killed him,
but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades;[q] for it was 24
impossible for him to be held in its power since, ·as David says of him:[r] 25

I saw the Lord before me always,
for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me.
So my heart was glad 26
and my tongue cried out with joy;
my body, too, will rest in the hope
that you will not abandon my soul to Hades 27
nor allow your holy one to experience corruption.
You have made known the way of life to me, 28
you will fill me with gladness through your presence.

29 'Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and
30 buried: his tomb is still with us. •But since he was a prophet, and knew that
God *had sworn him* an oath *to make one of his descendants succeed him on the* 2 S 7:12 Ps 132:11
31 *throne*, •what he foresaw and spoke about was the resurrection of the Christ: Mt 9:27+
he is the one who was *not abandoned to Hades*, and whose body did not *experience*
32 *corruption*. •God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that. 1:8+
33 Now raised to the heights by God's right hand,[s] he has received from the Father 1:4-5+ Ezk 36:27+
the Holy Spirit, who was promised,[t] and what you see and hear is the outpouring Mt 21:9,42 Ep 4:8-11
34 of that Spirit. •For David himself never went up to heaven;[u] and yet these
words are his:

The Lord said to my Lord: Ps 110:1
Sit at my right hand
35 *until I make your enemies*
a footstool for you.

36 'For this reason the whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made 2:23+; 9:22; 10:42; 13:33 Rm 10:9 Ph 2:11+
this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'[v]

2 a. Not the hundred and twenty 1:15-26, but the group mentioned in 1:13-14.

b. The Spirit is like the wind, and the same word is used for both 'spirit' and 'breath'.

c. The shape of the flames (Is 5:24; cf. Is 6:6-7) is here associated with the gift of tongues.

d. One element, vv. 4,11,13, of the Pentecost miracle is the gift of *glossolalia* common in the early Church: see 10:46; 11:15; 19:6; 1 Co 12-14; cf. Mk 16:17, cf. early prophecy in Israel. Nb 11: 25-29; 1 S 10:5-6,10-13; 19:20-24; 1 K 22:10. Cf. the promise of Joel, 3:1-5, quoted by Peter, vv. 17f.

e. 'devout men' Sin. Western Text 'Now the Jews who were living in Jerusalem were men from every nation under heaven'. The other texts have both 'devout men' and 'Jews'.

f. A second characteristic of the Pentecost miracle: the apostles speak a universal language: the unity lost at Babel is restored. This symbolises and anticipates the apostles' worldwide mission.

g. Pagan converts to Judaism who joined the chosen race by being circumcised. These proselytes are not the same as the God-fearers, 10:2+, who admire the Jewish religion and attend the synagogue but do not accept circumcision or the ritual prescribed by the Law. Jews and proselytes are not here additional classes of people: the terms qualify the nations just enumerated.

h. Peter speaks as head of the apostolic body and occupies a leading position, cf. 1:15; 2:37; 3:4,6,12; 4:8,13; 5:3,8,9,15,29; cf. 10-11. See Mt 16:19+.

i. About 9 a.m.

j. Add. 'Joel'. Vv. 17-21 quoted as in Western Text; Alexandrian Text favours the LXX.

k. The messianic age.

l. The day of the Lord's coming in glory, the 'day of Yahweh'. Am 5:18+. In Christian preaching, this 'day' is that of Christ's return, Mt 24:1+.

m. The Christians style themselves 'those who invoke the name of the Lord', 9:14,21; 22:16; 1 Co 1:2; 2 Tm 2:22; the title 'Lord' no longer indicates Yahweh but Jesus, cf. Ph 2:11; Ac 3:16+. On Judgement day people will be received or rejected according as they have or have not invoked this name, i.e. acknowledged Jesus as Lord: see Ac 4:12 and Rm 10:9.

n. The content of the earliest apostolic preaching (the 'kerygma') is here summarised for the first time; cf. the five discourses of Peter, Ac 2:14-39; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43, and the discourse of Paul, 13:16-41. The kerygma is 1. a witness, 1:8+, to Christ's death and resurrection, 2:24+, and to his exaltation, 2:33+; 2:36+. 2. It also provides certain details of Christ's ministry; how it was heralded by John the Baptist, 10:37; 13:24, inaugurated by teaching and miracle, 2:22; 10:38, completed by the appearances of the risen Christ. 10:40,41; 13:31, and by the gift of the Spirit, 2:33; 5:32. 3. It places this story in its wider setting: it appeals to the past adducing the O.T. prophecies, 2:23+; 2:25+, and it surveys the future, the advent of the messianic era, inviting Jews and pagans to repentance, 2:38+, so that Christ's glorious return may come the sooner, 3:20-21. The gospels, which are developments of the primitive preaching, adopt the same scheme.

o. The O.T. prophecies demonstrate this divine plan: Ac 3:18; 4:28; 13:29, cf. 8:32-35; 9:22; 10:43; 17:2-3; 18:5,28; 26:22-23,27; 28:23; Lk 18:31+; 22:22; 24:25-27,44.

p. In this case the Romans. The primitive kerygma accused the Jews in the same way and confronted them with that act of God which raised up Jesus, 2:32,36; 3:13-17; 4:10; 5:30-31; 7:52; 10:39-40; 13:27-30; 17:31; cf. Rm 1:4+; 1 Th 2:14+.

q. 'of Hades' Western Text; 'of death' Text. Rec. Cf. vv. 27 and 31. 'Hades' in LXX is *sheol*, Nb 16:33+; Mt 16:18+.

r. Quoted according to LXX. In the Hebr. text the psalmist prays only for deliverance from imminent death 'You will not allow your faithful one to see the pit'. Hence the argument presupposes the Greek version which, by translating 'pit' (=grave) as 'corruption', introduces a new idea.

s. Words borrowed from Ps 118 (v. 16 LXX 'The right hand of the Lord has raised me up') used in their preaching by the apostles who took it to be messianic: Ac 4:11; 1 P 2:7; Mt 21:9p,42p; 23:39; Lk 13:35; Jn 12:13; Heb 13:6. But it is possible to translate 'Having been raised up to the right hand of God' and to see in this an introduction to the quotation (v. 34) of Ps 110:1, which is another theme of apostolic preaching: Mt 22:44p; 26:64p; Mk 16:19; Ac 7:55,56; Rm 8:34; 1 Co 15:25; Ep 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 P 3:22.

t. According to the prophets, the gift of the Spirit would characterise the messianic era. Ezk 36:27+ Peter explains the miracle his hearers have witnessed as the 'pouring out' of this spirit, foretold in Jl 3:1-2 by the risen Christ.

u. The argument is, apparently, that David lies in his tomb and therefore did not ascend into heaven; hence God's summons was addressed not to him but to the one who came out from the tomb. A variant reading 'for he himself says', in place of 'and yet these is words are his' (i.e. it was said by, not to him), reduces the argument to that of Mt 22:43-45.

v. Conclusion of the argument from scripture: it is by his resurrection that Jesus has been constituted the 'Lord' of whom Ps 110 speaks and the 'Messiah' (Christ) to whom Ps 16 refers. From Ps 2:7 (Son of God), Ac 13:33+; Heb 1:5; 5:5; Rm 1:4+ develop a similar argument. Cf. also Ac 5:31 (leader and saviour); 10:42 and Rm 14:9 (Judge and Lord of living and dead); Ph 2:9-11 (glorified Lord).

The first conversions

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 37
16:30 Lk 3:10 'What must we do, brothers?' •'You must repent,'[w] Peter answered 'and every 38
1:5+ Mt 3:2+ one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ[z] for the forgiveness of
2:33+ your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. •The promise[v] that was 39
Is 57:19 made is for you and your children, and for all *those who are far away,*[z] *for all*
Jl 3:5 *those whom the Lord* our God *will call to himself.*' •He spoke to them[aa] for a long 40
Dt 32:5 Mt 17:17 time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this
Lk 9:41 perverse generation'. •They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted 41
1:5+; 2:47 what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.[bb]

4:32-35; 5:12-16 **The early Christian community**[cc]

1:14; 6:4 These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles,[dd] to the brotherhood,[ee] 42
to the breaking of bread[ff] and to the prayers.[gg]

=5:11-12 The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep 43
impression on everyone.[hh]

=4:32,34-35 The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common; •they sold 44 45
6:1 their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed.

5:12; 13:48 Lk 24:53 They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the 46
breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly[ii] and generously; •they praised 47
4:21,33; 5:13 God[jj] and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their
2:41+ community those destined to be saved.[kk]

14:8-10 **The cure of a lame man**

Lk 8:51 3 Once, when Peter and John were going up to the Temple for the prayers at 1
the ninth hour,[a] •it happened that there was a man being carried past. He 2
was a cripple from birth; and they used to put him down every day near the Temple entrance called the Beautiful Gate so that he could beg from the people going in. •When this man saw Peter and John on their way into the Temple he 3
2:14+ begged from them. •Both Peter and John looked straight at him and said, 'Look 4
at us'. •He turned to them expectantly, hoping to get something from them, 5
but Peter said, 'I have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have: 6
3:16+; 4:10 Mt 2:23+ in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!'[b] •Peter then took him by 7
the hand and helped him to stand up. Instantly his feet and ankles became firm,
Is 35:6 Lk 7:22p he jumped up, stood, and began to walk, and he went with them into the Temple, 8
walking and jumping and praising God. •Everyone could see him walking and 9
2:47+ praising God, •and they recognised him as the man who used to sit begging at 10
Lk 1:12+ 5:5; 19:17 the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. They were all astonished and unable to explain what had happened to him.

Peter's address to the people

Everyone came running towards them in great excitement, to the Portico of 11
5:12 Jn 10:23 Solomon, as it is called, where the man was still clinging to Peter and John.
When Peter saw the people he addressed them, 'Why are you so surprised at 12
10:26; 14:15 this? Why are you staring at us as though we had made this man walk by our
Ex 3:6,15 own power or holiness? •You are Israelites, and it is *the God of Abraham, Isaac* 13
4:27 Is 52:13 2:23+ *and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, who has glorified his servant*[c] Jesus, the same Jesus you handed over[d] and then disowned[e] in the presence of Pilate after Pilate
Lk 23:22+ Lk 23:2,5, 19,25,47 2:23+ had decided to release him. •It was you who accused[f] the Holy One,[g] the Just 14
One,[h] you who demanded the reprieve of a murderer •while you killed the prince 15
of life.[i] God, however, raised him from the dead, and to that fact we are the
1:8+ Heb 2:11 witnesses; •and it is the name of Jesus which, through our faith in it, has 16
brought back the strength of this man whom you see here and who is well known

to you. It is faith in that name that has restored this man to health, as you can all see.[j] 3:6; 4:10

17 'Now I know, brothers, that neither you nor your leaders had any idea what
18 you were really doing;[k] •this was the way God carried out what he had foretold,
19 when he said through all his prophets that his Christ would suffer. •Now you
20 must repent and turn to God,[l] so that your sins may be wiped out, •and so
that the Lord may send the time of comfort.[m] Then he will send you the Christ
21 he has predestined, that is Jesus,[n] •whom heaven must keep till the universal
restoration[o] comes which God proclaimed, speaking through his holy prophets.[p]
22 Moses, for example, said: *The Lord God will raise up a prophet like myself for you,*
23 *from among your own brothers; you must listen to whatever he tells you.* •*The*

13:27; 1 Co 2:8; 1 Tm 1:13
Lk 18:31
2:38+; Mt 3:2+; *2 P 3:11-13*
Mt 3:23-24; Mt 17:11; *7:37*; Dt 18:18,19; Mt 16:14+; Jn 1:21+

w. Each of the great apostolic discourses closes with a call to repentance (cf. Mt 3:2+) to obtain forgiveness of sins: Ac 3:19,26; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; cf.17:30; 26:20; Lk 1:77; 3:8; 5:32; 13:3.

x. Baptism is administered 'in the name of Jesus Christ' (cf. 1:5+) and the recipient 'invokes the name of the Lord Jesus' (cf. 2:21+; 3:16+): 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; 1 Co 1:13,15; 6:11; 10:2; Ga 3:27; Rm 6:3; cf. Jm 2:7. Such expressions are not necessarily the actual liturgical formulae of baptism, cf. Mt 28:19, they may simply indicate its significance, namely, that the baptised profess their faith in Christ, and Christ adopts those who thenceforth are dedicated to him.

y. The promise is addressed primarily to the Jews, 3:25-26; 13:46; Rm 9:4.

z. I.e. the pagans, alluding to Is 57:19 quoted and explained in Ep 2:13-17; cf. also Ac 22:21.

aa. Or 'he bore witness', cf. 8:25; 28:23.

bb. Luke repeatedly and deliberately notes the Church's numerical growth: v. 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1,7; 9:31+; 11:21,24; 16:5; cf. 12:24; 13:48-49; 19:20.

cc. Cf. this passage with 4:32-35 and 5:12-16. These three composite editorial 'summaries' paint similar pictures of life in the first Christian community.

dd. Not the proclamation of the Good News to non-Christians, cf. 15:35, but instructions for the newly converted in which the scriptures were explained in the light of the Christian Event.

ee. What constitutes this 'brotherhood' or 'fellowship' is a united purpose, cf. Ga 2:9; Phm 6; 1 Jn 1:3,6,7, and a care for the poorer members to the extent of holding all goods in common, cf. Rm 15:26; 2 Co 8:4; 9:13; Ph 1:5+. In a word: charity.

ff. See v. 46; 20:7,11; 27:35; Lk 24:30,35. In itself the phrase suggests a Jewish meal at which the one who presides pronounces a blessing before dividing the bread. For Christians, however, it implies the eucharistic ceremony, 1 Co 10:16; 11:24; Lk 22:19p; 24:35+. This, v. 46, was celebrated not in the Temple but in private houses; an ordinary meal would accompany it, cf. 1 Co 11:20-34.

gg. Prayers in common, with the apostles presiding, 6:4; 4:24-30, is one example. Cf. 1:14,24; 12:5. There are many examples in Ac of the constant prayer Jesus recommended (Mt 6:5) and practised (Mt 14:23+). There is the prayer in common presided over by the apostles (1:14; 4:24-30; 6:4) with the breaking of bread as the central ceremony (2:42,46; 20:7,11); the prayer for special occasions like the election and ordination to office in the Church (1:24; 6:6; 13:3; 14:23—accompanied in the last two cases by fasting); the confirmation of the Samaritans (8:15); the prayer in time of persecution (4:24-30; 12:5,12). There are also individual prayers: that of Stephen for himself and his persecutors (7:59-60), the prayer of Paul after his vision (9:5), of Peter and Paul before they work miracles (9:40; 28:8), of Peter when God sends him to Cornelius (10:9; 11:5) who is himself a man of prayer (10:2,4,30-31), of Paul and Silas in prison (16:25), of Paul when he bids farewell at Miletus (20:36) and at Tyre. In most of these cases the prayer is a petition (see also the petition for forgiveness in 8:22-24), but there is also the prayer of praise (16:25) and thanksgiving (28:15). Prayer is evidence of faith: 'to invoke the name of Jesus Christ' is the mark of a Christian (2:21,38; 9:14,21; 22:16).

hh. Add. 'in Jerusalem, and upon all there was great fear'.

ii. Joy is the sequel of faith: 8:8,39; 13:48,52; 16:34; cf. 5:41; Lk 1:14+; Rm 15:13.

jj. Cf. 3:8,9; 4:21; 13:48; 21:20; Lk 2:20+.

kk. When judgement comes the members of the Christian community are assured of salvation, 2:21+, cf. 13:48 and St Paul's letters. The Church is thus identified with 'the remnant of Israel', Is 4:3+. Cf. Rm 9:27.

3 a. The time of evening sacrifice, cf. Ex 29:39,42; Lk 1:8-10+; Ac 10:3,30.

b. Var. 'get up and walk', cf. Lk 5:23-24, etc.

c. The Christians see in Jesus the mysterious 'servant' of Is 52:13–53:12 (quoted in part in Ac 8:32-33), cf. Is 42:1+. See below, v. 26; 4:27,30. His 'glorification' by God is his resurrection, v. 15. Cf. Jn 17:5+.

d. Cf. Is 53:12. Same allusion to the Servant Song in Rm 4:25; 8:32; Ga 2:20; Ep 5:2,25; Ac 7:52.

e. As they disowned Moses, 7:35, himself a figure of Christ.

f. Var. 'disowned'.

g. Cf. with Ac 4:27,30: Jesus is 'the holy servant of God'. He is also 'the holy one of God' and 'the holy one' *par excellence:* Ac 2:27; Lk 1:35; 4:34; Mk 1:24+; Jn 6:69; Rv 3:7.

h. Cf. Is 53:11; Ac 7:52; 22:14. See also Mt 27:19; Lk 23:47; 1 P 3:18; 1 Jn 2:1.

i. The one who leads his subjects to full life, imparting his own life to them. In the Roman liturgy the Easter Sequence borrows the expression *Dux vitae mortuus regnat vivus.* This same title of 'leader' is given, 7:27,35, to Moses who prefigures Christ. Cf. 5:31+; Heb 2:10.

j. The 'name', according to the ancients, is inseparable from the person and shares his prerogatives, see Ex 3:14+. By invoking the name of Jesus, 2:21+,38+, his power is stirred to action, 3:6; 4:7,10,30; 10:43; 16:18; 19:13; Lk 9:49; 10:17; see also Jn 14:13,14; 15:16; 16:24,26; 20:31. Faith is of course required if this invocation is to be effective, cf. Ac 19:13-17; Mt 8:10+.

k. Apparently an allusion to Lk 23:34; cf. Ac 7:60.

l. By 'repentance' man 'comes back' to God, cf. Mt 3:2+. The pagans must return to God by forsaking idols; see 1 Th 1:9; Ga 4:9; 1 Co 10:7,14; Ac 14:15; 15:19; 26:18,20; the Jews must turn to the Lord by acknowledging Jesus as Lord: cf. 2 Co 3:16; Ac 9:35. The expression of Lk 1:16; Ac 11:21; cf. 1 P 2:25 is somewhat different. Cf. also Is 6:10, quoted in Ac 28:27; Mt 13:15; Mk 4:12; cf. Jn 12:40.

m. This epoch coincides with that of Christ's coming and of 'the restoration of all things', cf. 1:7+; Rm 2:6+, a period which, as the apostles thought, would see the re-establishment of the kingdom in Israel, Ac 1:6-7. Repentance and conversion hasten its coming, cf. 2 P 3:12.

n. Or 'Jesus who has been appointed Christ for you' cf. 2:36+. When the time comes, Christ who became King Messiah through his resurrection will return to establish his kingdom for ever and to make all creation new, v. 21, cf. Rm 8:19+.

o. Term used by the prophets for the return from Exile (foretaste of the messianic age), Jr 15:19, etc.

p. Add. 'from ancient times'.

Mt 17:5p *man who does not listen to that prophet is to be cut off from the people.* •In fact, 24
Lk 24:25 all the prophets that have ever spoken, from Samuel onwards, have predicted these days.[q]

Si 44:19-21 'You are the heirs of the prophets, the heirs of the covenant God made with 25
Rm 9:4; 15:8 Gn 12:3+; 22:18 our ancestors when he told Abraham, *in your offspring all the families of the earth*
2:39+ Ga 3:8-29 *will be blessed.* •It was for you in the first place that God raised up[r] his servant 26
and sent him to bless you[s] by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.'[t]

Peter and John before the Sanhedrin

Lk 22:4+ 4 While they were still talking to the people the priests came up to them, accom- 1
5:17-18,24 panied by the captain of the Temple and the Sadducees.[a] •They were extremely 2
23:6-8; 24: 15,21 1 Co 15: 20-23 annoyed at their teaching the people the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead by proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. •They arrested them, but as it 3
was already late, they held them till the next day. •But many of those who had 4
2:41+ listened to their message became believers, the total number of whom had now risen to something like five thousand.

The next day the rulers, elders and scribes[b] had a meeting in Jerusalem •with 5
6
5:17 Lk 3:2+ Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, Jonathan,[c] Alexander and all the members of the high-priestly families. •They made the prisoners stand in the middle and 7
Lk 20:2 began to interrogate them, 'By what power, and by whose name have you men
1:8+; 2:14+, 22+ Mt 10:20 done this?' •Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed them, 'Rulers of 8
the people, and elders! •If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness 9
to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, •[d]then I am glad to tell you all, 10
and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the
3:6,16+ name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised
2:23-24+ from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up
Ps 118:22 2:33+ Mt 21:42p 1 P 2:4,7 perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. •This is *the stone rejected* by you 11
the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. •For of all the names in the 12
2:21+ Jl 3:5 world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'[e]

Lk 12:11-12p; 21:12-15p Jn 7:15 They were astonished at the asssurance shown by Peter and John, considering 13
they were uneducated laymen; and they recognised them as associates of Jesus;
but when they saw the man who had been cured standing by their side, they could 14
find no answer. •So they ordered them to stand outside while the Sanhedrin had 15
Jn 11:47-48 a private discussion. •'What are we going to do with these men?' they asked. 16
'It is obvious to everybody in Jerusalem that a miracle has been worked through
them in public, and we cannot deny it. •But to stop the whole thing spreading 17
any further among the people, let us caution them never to speak to anyone in
this name again.'

So they called them in and gave them a warning[f] on no account to make 18
5:28.40 statements or to teach in the name of Jesus. •But Peter and John retorted, 'You 19
5:29 must judge whether in God's eyes it is right to listen to you and not to God. •We 20
1:8+ Jr 20:9 1 Co 9:16 2 Co 13:8 2 Tm 1:7-8 2:47+ cannot promise to stop proclaiming what we have seen and heard.' •The court 21
repeated the warnings and then released them; they could not think of any way
to punish them, since all the people were giving glory to God for what
had happened. •The man who had been miraculously cured was over forty years 22
old.

The apostles' prayer under persecution

As soon as they were released they went to the community and told them 23
everything the chief priests and elders had said to them. •When they heard it 24
they lifted up their voice to God all together. 'Master,' they prayed 'it is you
14:15+ who made heaven and earth and sea, and everything in them; •*you it is who said* 25
through the Holy Spirit and speaking through our ancestor David, your servant:[g]

Ps 2:1-2 Mt 26:3 *Why this arrogance among the nations,*
these futile plots among the peoples?

26 *Kings on earth setting out to war,*
princes making an alliance,
against the Lord and against his Anointed.[h]

27 'This is what has come true: in this very city Herod and Pontius Pilate[i] *made* Lk 23:12
an alliance with the pagan *nations* and the *peoples* of Israel, against your holy
28 servant Jesus whom you *anointed*,[j] •but only to bring about the very thing that you 3:13+; 10:38
29 in your strength and your wisdom[k] had predetermined should happen. •And 2:23+
now, Lord, take note of their threats and help your servants to proclaim your 18:9-10; 28:31
30 message with all boldness, •by stretching out your hand to heal and to work Ep 6:19 *4:33*
31 miracles and marvels through the name of your holy servant Jesus.' •As they *3:16+*
prayed, the house where they were assembled rocked; they were all filled with 1:8+
the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim the word of God boldly.[l]

The early Christian community[m]

2:42-47; 5:12-16

32 The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for Jn 17:11,21 Ph 1:27
his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common. *=2:44-45*
33 The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with 1:8+
great power,[n] and they were all given great respect.[o] 4:30
34 None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or Dt 15:4
35 houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, •to present it to the Lk 12:33
apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need. 2:44-45

The generosity of Barnabas

36 There was a Levite of Cypriot origin called Joseph whom the apostles surnamed
37 Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement').[p] •He owned a piece of land 11:22; 13:1 1 Co 9:6
and he sold it and brought the money, and presented it to the apostles. Ga 2:1

The fraud of Ananias and Sapphira

Jos 7

1 5 There was another man, however, called Ananias. He and his wife, Sapphira,
2 agreed to sell a property; •but with his wife's connivance he kept back part of
3 the proceeds, and brought the rest and presented it to the apostles. •'Ananias,' Peter
said 'how can Satan have so possessed you that you should lie to the Holy Spirit Lk 22:3 Jn 13:2,27
4 and keep back part of the money from the land? •While you still owned the land,
wasn't it yours to keep, and after you had sold it wasn't the money yours to do Dt 23:22-24
with as you liked? What put this scheme into your mind? It is not to men that

q. The earliest Christian preaching made a point of showing how Jesus fulfilled O.T. prophecy: he was a descendant of David, 2:30; 13:34, he appeared as a prophet, Moses' successor, 3:22f, cf. Mt 16:14+; Jn 1:21+, he suffered, Ac 2:23+, he was the stone rejected by the builders (the Jews) but now set in a place of honour, 4:11, he rose again, 2:25-31; 13:33-37, and is at God's right hand, 2:34f.

r. Thus implementing the promise recalled in v. 22, because the Greek verb means both 'to raise up' and 'to raise up again'. God by raising Christ from the dead fulfils the promises made to the fathers, 13:32-34; 24:14-15; 26:6-8.

s. Cf. 26:23; 2 Tm 1:10; Ga 3:14. Christ by his resurrection brought to the world the blessing promised to Abraham, v. 25.

t. Others translate 'so long as each of you turns from your wicked ways'.

4 a. The priestly aristocratic faction opposed the Pharisees who were the pious and popular party, see Mt 3:7+. The Sadducees are always represented as denying the doctrine of resurrection, Ac 23:6-8; Lk 20:27-38p. More than once the mutual hostility of these two parties produces an alliance of Pharisees with Christians, cf. Ac 5:34; 23:8-9; 26:5-8; Lk 20:39.

b. The Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, Israel's supreme court.

c. Cf. Lk 22:66+. Var. 'John'.

d. For vv. 10-12 we follow the Western Text.

e. 'Jesus' means 'God saves', Mt 1:21.

f. Apparently a solemn legal warning. In matters of this kind the accused (unless they were rabbis) could not be imprisoned except for a second offence (the case in 5:28).

g. Text corrupt, translation uncertain.

h. 'Anointed': the Greek word is 'Christ'; it is explained here, v. 27, according to its etymological sense.

i. Representing respectively the 'kings' and 'princes' the Psalm mentions. For 'Herod', cf. Lk 23:6-16.

j. The 'anointing' that has constituted him King Messiah, 'the Christ', cf. Mt 3:16+.

k. Lit. 'your hand and counsel'.

l. A miniature Pentecost, cf. the earlier one, 2:1f.

m. A summary like that of 2:42-47. The prevailing idea is here the pooling of resources; this preludes two examples: Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira. The emphasis on sacrificing possessions is characteristic of Luke's religious outlook.

n. A power that showed itself by miracles. Cf. 2:22; 3:12; 4:7; 6:8; 8:13; 10:38; 1 Th 1:5; 1 Co 2:4-5.

o. By the populace: cf. 2:47; 4:21; 5:13.

p. The Greek word means both 'consolation' and 'encouragement'. Cf. 11:23. 'son of', a semitic expression here meaning 'with an aptitude for'. On Barnabas, see 9:27; 11:22-30; 12:25; ch. 13-15; 1 Co 9:6; Ga 2; Col 4:10.

you have lied, but to God.' •When he heard this Ananias fell down dead. This 5
3:10+ made a profound impression on everyone present. •The younger men got up, 6
wrapped the body in a sheet, carried it out and buried it.

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had taken place. 7
2:14+ Peter challenged her, 'Tell me, was this the price you sold the land for?' 'Yes,' 8
she said 'that was the price.' •Peter then said, 'So you and your husband have 9
Nb 21:5-6 1 Co 10:9; 11:30-32 agreed to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test! What made you do it? You hear those footsteps? They have just been to bury your husband; they will carry you out, too.' •Instantly she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men came in they 10
found she was dead, and they carried her out and buried her by the side of her
20:28 Lk 1:12+ 1 Co 1:2 husband.[a] •This made a profound impression on the whole Church[b] and on all 11
who heard it.

2:42-47; 4:32-35 **The general situation**[c]

=2:46; 3:11 They all[d] used to meet by common consent in the Portico of Solomon. •No one 12b 13
=2:47 else ever dared to join them, but the people were loud in their praise •and the 14
2:41 numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily.[e]
2:19 So many signs and wonders were worked among the people at the hands of the 12a
Mk 6:56 apostles •that the sick were even taken out into the streets and laid on beds and 15
19:12 sleeping-mats in the hope that at least the shadow of Peter might fall across some
8:6-8; 28:8-9 of them as he went past. •People even came crowding in from the towns round 16
Lk 4:40-41 about Jerusalem, bringing with them their sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were cured.

The apostles' arrest and miraculous deliverance

4:6 Then the high priest[f] intervened with all his supporters from the party of the 17
4:1-3 13:45 Sadducees. Prompted by jealousy, •they arrested the apostles and had them put 18
in the common gaol.

12:7-10; 16:25-26 But at night the angel of the Lord opened the prison gates and said as he led 19
Mt 1:20+ 13:26,46+ them out, •'Go and stand in the Temple, and tell the people all about this new 20
Life'.[g] •They did as they were told; they went into the Temple at dawn and 21
began to preach.

A summons to appear before the Sanhedrin

When the high priest arrived, he and his supporters convened the Sanhedrin —this was the full Senate[h] of Israel—and sent to the gaol for them to be brought. But when the officials arrived at the prison they found they were not inside, so 22
they went back and reported, •'We found the gaol securely locked and the warders 23
on duty at the gates, but when we unlocked the door we found no one inside'.
4:1+ When the captain of the Temple and the chief priests heard this news they 24
wondered what this could mean. •Then a man arrived with fresh news. 25
'At this very moment' he said 'the men you imprisoned are in the Temple. They are standing there preaching to the people.' •The captain went with his 26
Lk 20:19p; 22:2p men and fetched them. They were afraid to use force in case the people stoned them.

When they had brought them in to face the Sanhedrin, the high priest 27
demanded an explanation. •'We gave you a formal warning' he said 'not to 28
4:18+ preach in this name,[i] and what have you done? You have filled Jerusalem with
Mt 27:25 your teaching, and seem determined to fix the guilt of this man's death on us.'
2:14+; 4:19 2:23+ In reply Peter and the apostles said, 'Obedience to God comes before obedience 29
to men; •it was the God of our ancestors who raised up Jesus, but it was you 30
Ps 118:16 who had him executed by hanging on a tree.[j] •By his own right hand God has 31
2:33+; 38+; 4: 12+ 1:8+ now raised him up to be leader and saviour,[k] to give repentance and forgiveness
Jn 15:27 15:28 Jn 7:39 of sins through him to Israel. •We are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy 32
Spirit[l] whom God has given to those who obey him.' •This so infuriated them 33
that they wanted to put them to death.

Gamaliel's intervention

34 One member of the Sanhedrin, however, a Pharisee called Gamaliel, who was 22:3
a doctor of the Law and respected by the whole people,[m] stood up and asked
35 to have the men taken outside for a time. •Then he addressed the Sanhedrin,
36 'Men of Israel, be careful how you deal with these people. •There was Theudas 23:9
who became notorious not so long ago. He claimed to be someone important, Jn 7:50f
and he even collected about four hundred followers; but when he was killed,
37 all his followers scattered and that was the end of them. •And then there was
Judas the Galilean, at the time of the census, who attracted crowds of supporters; Lk 2:2+
38 but he got killed too, and all his followers dispersed.[n] •What I suggest, therefore,
is that you leave these men alone and let them go. If this enterprise, this movement Mt 15:13
39 of theirs, is of human origin it will break up of its own accord; •but if it does in Lk 20:4
fact come from God you will not only be unable to destroy them, but you might
find yourselves fighting against God.'[o] 2 M 7:19
40 His advice was accepted; •and they had the apostles called in, gave orders
for them to be flogged, warned them not to speak in the name of Jesus and 22:19
41 released them. •And so they left the presence of the Sanhedrin glad to have had Mt 10:17
the honour of suffering humiliation for the sake of the name.[p] 4:18
42 They preached every day both in the Temple and in private houses, and their Mt 5:10-11
proclamation of the Good News of Christ Jesus was never interrupted. 1 Co 4:9f
Ph 2:9-10
18:5+

II. THE EARLIEST MISSIONS

The institution of the Seven

1 6 About this time, when the number of disciples[a] was increasing, the Hellenists 2:41+
made a complaint against the Hebrews:[b] in the daily distribution their own 2:45

5 a. Prompted by love of money, Ananias and Sapphira tried to deceive the apostles and the Holy Spirit which was leading and directing them; this was their sin.

b. The meaning of this term, adopted from the O.T., cf. Ac 7:38, to signify the messianic community, Mt 16:18+, expanded as Christianity developed. It originally indicated the mother church in Jerusalem, Ac 8:1; 11:22, etc.; later the individual churches throughout Judaea, Ga 1:22; 1 Th 2:14; cf. Ac 9:31, and among the pagans, Ac 13:1; 14:23; 15:41; 16:5; Rm 16:1,4; 1 Co 1:2+, etc.; Jm 5:14; 3 Jn 9; Rv 1:4; 2:1, etc., referring to their 'gatherings', 1 Co 11:18; 14:23,34, etc., cf. Ac 19:32; Phm 2, or to their regions, Rm 16:5; 1 Co 16:19; Col 4:15. Lastly, it stands for the Church united under God, Ac 20:28; 1 Co 10:32; 12:28, etc., for the Church as Body and Bride of Christ, Col 1:18+; Ep 5:23-32, and for the Church as including the whole cosmos, Ep 1:23+.

c. This third 'summary' stresses the miraculous power of the apostles, cf. 2:43; 4:33. Vv. 12b-14 interrupt the development of this theme.

d. Here, it seems, not the apostles but all the faithful.

e. Rather than 'More and more joined (the community) as believers in the Lord'. Cf. 11:24.

f. Var. 'Annas the high priest', cf. 4:6.

g. Lit. 'all the words (cf. v. 32; 10:37) of this Life'. This means the same thing as 'the message of salvation', 13:26. The purpose of Christian preaching is the 'salvation', cf. 4:12; 11:14; 15:11; 16:17,30-31, and 'life', cf. 3:15; 11:18; 13:46,48, promised to those 'who invoke the name of the Lord', 2:21,40,47; 4:12.

h. The terms 'Sanhedrin' and 'Senate' both indicate the same council, the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, cf. Lk 22:66+.

i. Western Text " 'Did we not expressly forbid you to preach in that name? And now...' Then Peter answered, 'Which must we obey? God or man?' 'God' he said. And Peter then replied, 'The God of our ancestors..' "

j. The phrase is repeated in 10:39 (cf. 13:29). It recalls Dt 21:23, quoted in Ga 3:13, cf. 1 P 2:24.

k. The title matches 'Prince of life', 3:15+; it also corresponds to 'Prince and Redeemer' applied to Moses as a prefiguring of Christ, 7:35 (cf. 7:25). See also Heb 2:10; 12:2. There is an implicit comparison of Jesus with Moses.

l. Cf. Mt 10:20p; Jn 15:26-27; Ac 1:8.

m. Gamaliel I, Paul's teacher, 22:3, belonged to the school of Hillel and was the leading exponent of the more liberal and humane interpretation of the Law. The policy he urges here is in line with that of the Pharisaic party, cf. 4:1+.

n. Josephus mentions the revolts of Theudas and of Judas the Galilean but the dates he gives seem improbable. Both must have taken place about the time Jesus was born.

o. A variant introduces the idea of ritual purity '...leave them alone and do not dirty your hands. For if ... God, not only you but kings and tyrants will be powerless to destroy them. Do not therefore touch these men lest you find yourselves at war with God.'

p. The name for whose sake the apostles suffer, cf. 21:13; 1 P 4:14; 3 Jn 7, the name they preach, 4:10,12,17,18; 5:28,40; cf. 3:6,16; 8:12,16; 9:15,16,27,28, and which the Christians invoke, 2:21; 4:12; 9:14,21; 22:16, is the name, i.e. the person, of Jesus, 3:16+, the name he received at his resurrection, 2:36+, 'the name above all other names'. This name was 'Lord', hitherto reserved to God, Ph 2:9-11+.

6 a. 'Disciples': a new use of the term, peculiar to Ac, to indicate the Christians who are thus associated with the small circle of those first adherents of Jesus who are called by this name in the gospels.

b. 'Hellenists': Jews from outside Palestine; in Jerusalem they had their own synagogues where the Bible was read in Greek. The 'Hebrews' were native Palestinian Jews; their language was Aramaic but in their synagogues the Bible was read in Hebr. This distinction made its way into the early Church. Missionary initiative was to come from the hellenistic group.

widows were being overlooked. •So the Twelve called a full meeting of the 2
disciples and addressed them, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word
Ex 18:17-23 Nb 27:16-18 of God so as to give out food; •you, brothers, must select[c] from among yourselves 3
1:8+ Is 11:2+ seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will
1 Tm 3:8-10 hand over this duty to them, •and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and 4
1:14; 2:42 to the service of the word'.[d] •The whole assembly approved of this proposal and 5
8:5; 21:8 elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip,
Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to
13:3 1 Tm 4:14+ Judaism.[e] •They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands 6
on them.[f]
2:41+; 12: 24; 13:49; 19:20 Rm 1:5+ The word of the Lord continued to spread:[g] the number of disciples in Jeru- 7
salem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission
to the faith.

Stephen's arrest

Stephen was filled with grace and power and began to work miracles and 8
great signs among the people. •But then certain people came forward to debate 9
with Stephen, some from Cyrene and Alexandria who were members of the
synagogue called the Synagogue of Freedmen,[h] and others from Cilicia and Asia.
They found they could not get the better of him because of his wisdom, and 10
1:8+ Lk 21:15 because it was the Spirit that prompted what he said. •So they procured some 11
21:21 men to say, 'We heard him using blasphemous language against Moses and against
God'. •Having in this way turned the people against him as well as the elders 12
and scribes, they took Stephen by surprise, and arrested him and brought him
before the Sanhedrin. •There they put up false witnesses to say, 'This man 13
is always making speeches against this Holy Place and the Law. •We have heard 14
Mt 2:23+ Mt 26:59-61p him say that Jesus the Nazarene is going to destroy this Place and alter the
traditions that Moses handed down to us.'[i] •The members of the Sanhedrin all 15
Lk 4:20 looked intently at Stephen, and his face appeared to them like the face of an
angel.[j]

Stephen's speech

7 The high priest asked, 'Is this true?' •He replied,[a] 'My brothers, my fathers, ½
Ps 29:3b listen to what I have to say. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham,
Gn 12:1 while he was in Mesopotamia before settling in Haran,[b] •*and said to him, "Leave* 3
your country and your family and go to the land I will show you". •So he left 4
Chaldaea and settled in Haran; and after his father died God made him leave
Haran and come to this land where you are living today. •God did not give him 5
Gn 12:7+ a single square foot of this land to call his own, yet he promised to *give it to him*
Gn 15:2 *and after him to his descendants, childless* though he was. •The actual words God 6
Gn 15:13 used when he spoke to him are that *his descendants would be exiles in a foreign land,*
Gn 15:14 *where they would be slaves and oppressed for four hundred years.* •*"But I will pass* 7
Ex 3:12 *judgement on the nation that enslaves them*" God said "*and after this they will leave,*
Gn 17:10+ *and worship me in this* place."[c] •Then he made the covenant of circumcision: so 8
Gn 21:4 Jn 7:22 when his son Isaac was born he circumcised him on the eighth day. Isaac did the
same for Jacob, and Jacob for the twelve patriarchs.
Gn 37:11,28 'The patriarchs were *jealous of Joseph and sold him into slavery in Egypt.* But 9
Gn 39:2,3, 21,23 *God was with him,* •and rescued him from all his miseries by making him wise 10
Gn 41:40-41 Ps 105:21 enough to attract the attention of Pharaoh king of Egypt, who *made him governor*
Gn 41:54-55; 42:5 *of Egypt* and put him in charge of the royal household. •*Then a famine came* that 11
caused much suffering *throughout Egypt and Canaan,* and our ancestors could
Gn 42:2 find nothing to eat. •When Jacob *heard that there was grain for sale in Egypt,* 12
he sent our ancestors there on a first visit, •but it was on the second that *Joseph* 13
Gn 45:1 *made himself known to his brothers,* and told Pharaoh about his family. •Joseph 14
Gn 46:27+ then sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, a total of *seventy-five people.*
Jacob went down into Egypt and after he and our ancestors had died there, 15

16 their bodies were brought back to Shechem and buried in the tomb that Abraham Gn 50:13
had bought and paid for from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem.[d]
17 'As the time drew near for God to fulfil the promise he had solemnly made
18 to Abraham, our nation in Egypt *grew larger and larger,* •*until a new king came* Ex 1:7,8
19 *to power in Egypt who knew nothing of* Joseph. •*He exploited* our race, and ill- Ex 1:10,11
treated our ancestors, forcing them to expose their babies to prevent their Ex 1:22
20 surviving. •It was at this period that Moses was born, *a fine child* and favoured Ex 2:2
21 by God. He was looked after for three months in his father's house, •and after Heb 11:23f
he had been exposed, *Pharaoh's daughter* adopted him and *brought him up* Ex 2:5,10
22 *as her own son.* •So Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians and
became a man with power both in his speech and his actions. Lk 24:19
23 'At the age of forty[e] he decided to visit *his countrymen, the sons of Israel.* •When Ex 2:11
24 he saw one of them being ill-treated he went to his defence and rescued the man by
25 *killing the Egyptian.* •He thought his brothers realised that through him God Ex 2:12
26 would liberate them, but they did not. •The next day, when he came across
some of them fighting, he tried to reconcile them. 'Friends,' he said 'you are
27 brothers; why are you hurting each other?' •But *the man who was attacking his* Ex 2:13
fellow countryman pushed him aside. '*And who appointed you*' he said '*to be our* Ex 2:14
28 *leader and judge?*[f] • *Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?*'
29 Moses fled when he heard this[g] and *he went to stay in the land of Midian,* where Ex 2:15
he became the father of two sons.
30 'Forty years later, *in the wilderness* near Mount Sinai, *an angel appeared to him* Ex 3:1-2
31 *in the flames of a bush* that was on fire. •Moses was amazed by what he saw.
32 *As he went nearer to look at it the voice of the Lord was heard,* •"*I am the God of* Ex 3:4,6
your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". Moses trembled and *did not*
33 *dare to look any more.* •The Lord said to him, "*Take off your shoes; the place where* Ex 3:5
34 *you are standing is holy ground.* •*I have seen the way my people are ill-treated in* Ex 3:7-8
Egypt, I have heard their groans, and I have come down to liberate them. So come
here and let me send you into Egypt." Ex 3:10
35 'It was the same Moses that they had disowned[h] when they said, "*Who* Ex 2:14
appointed you to be our leader and judge?" who was now sent to be both leader

c. Var. 'We shall select'.

d. When the community met for public worship the apostles had two functions: they recited the prayers and were responsible also for the *catechesis* (the doctrinal elaboration of the Good News).

e. Luke does not call the chosen seven 'deacons', but twice uses the word *diakonia* ('service' v. 4; translated 'distribution' in v. 1). All seven have Greek names; the last is a proselyte, cf. 2:11+. The hellenistic Christians now have their own organisation independent of the Hebrew group.

f. Lit. 'and they prayed and laid their hands on them': possibly a gesture of the community, cf. 13:1-3, more probably (v. 3) of the apostles.

g. A fresh formula, see also 12:24; 19:20; cf. Lk 1:80+, here juxtaposed with the earlier one, see Ac 2:41+.

h. Probably the descendants of Jews carried off to Rome by Pompey in 63 B.C. who were sold into slavery and later released.

i. The 'false witnesses' at the trial of Jesus similarly objected that he 'would destroy the Temple'. There is also a similarity in the climax of the two trials, Ac 7:56-57; Mt 26:62-66. The allegations concerning Mosaic practice will be made in Paul's case also, Ac 15:1,5; 21:21,28; 25:8; 28:17.

j. The sight of an angel induces religious awe, cf. Jg 13:6. The face of Moses, reflecting the glory of God as he came down from Sinai, produced the same effect, Ex 34:29-35; 2 Co 3:7-18; so also the appearance of Jesus was changed, Mt 17:2; Lk 9:29. The members of the Sanhedrin in their turn witness a transfiguration, that of Stephen as he contemplates the glory of God, Ac 7:55-56. The narrative, interrupted by the insertion of Stephen's discourse, 7:1-54, is resumed in 7:55.

7 a. The discourse opens with a summary of the stories of Abraham and Joseph, vv. 2-16; it goes on to expound the history of Moses, vv. 17-43 (cf. the charge made against Stephen, 6:11). With Moses' divine mission of salvation Stephen contrasts the attitude of Israel: rejection, disobedience, faithlessness—traditional themes (cf. Dt) but here elaborated with the Christian Event in mind. When Stephen speaks of Moses he is thinking of Christ whom Moses prefigured: the Jews react now as the Israelites did then. From the subsequent history of Israel Stephen selects only the building of the Temple; his purpose is to point out that God does not dwell in man-made temples, vv. 44-50 (cf. the allegation in 6:13). The speech ends with a fierce diatribe, vv. 51-53, which uses one of the themes of the earliest Christian preaching, cf. 2:23+.

b. According to Gn 11:31 the apparition took place at Haran. Stephen follows a non-biblical tradition.

c. Mt. Horeb, but Stephen says 'this place' (i.e. the Jerusalem Temple) instead.

d. 'father of Shechem': this detail is taken from Gn 33:19. Var. 'from the sons of Hemor, son of Shechem', 'from the sons of Emmor at Shechem', 'from the sons of Emmor (inhabitants) of Shechem'. V. 16 follows a non-biblical tradition.

e. According to Jewish traditions.

f. By raising up Jesus from the dead God has appointed him 'leader', cf. 5:31, and 'judge', cf. 10:42; 17:31.

g. In Ex 2:15 Moses runs away because he is afraid of Pharaoh; here it is because his compatriots reject him.

h. The Bible does not apply this verb to Moses, but in Ac 3:13-14 it is applied to Jesus. Nor does the Bible give the name 'redeemer' to Moses. The image of Christ shades into that of Moses who prefigured him.

and redeemer through the angel who had appeared to him in the bush. •It was 36
Ex 7:3 Moses who, after performing *miracles and signs in Egypt*, led them out across the
Nb 14:33 Am 5:25 Red Sea and *through the wilderness for forty years.* •It was Moses who told the 37
Dt 18:15,18 sons of Israel, "*God will raise up a prophet like myself for you from among*
Dt 4:10; 9:10; 18:16 *your own brothers*".[i] •When they held the assembly[j] in the wilderness it was only 38
Jn 1:17 Ga 3:19+ through Moses that our ancestors could communicate with the angel who had spoken to him on Mount Sinai;[k] it was he who was entrusted with words of life[l] to hand on to us. •This is the man that our ancestors refused to listen to: they 39
Nb 14:3 pushed him aside, *turned back to Egypt* in their thoughts,[m] •*and said to Aaron,* 40
Ex 32:1,23 "*Make some gods to be our leaders; we do not understand what has come over this*
Ex 32:4,6 *Moses who led us out of Egypt*". •It was then that *they made a bull calf and offered* 41
sacrifice to the idol. They were perfectly happy with something they had made for themselves. •God turned away from them and abandoned them to the 42
worship of the army of heaven,[n] as scripture says in the book of the prophets:

Am 5:25-27 (LXX)

Did you bring me victims and sacrifices in the wilderness
for all those forty years, you House of Israel?
No, you carried the tent of Moloch on your shoulders 43
and the star of the god Rephan,
those idols that you had made to adore.
So now I will exile you even further than Babylon.

'While they were in the desert our ancestors possessed the Tent of Testimony 44
that had been constructed according to the instructions God gave Moses, telling
Ex 25:40 Heb 8:5 him to *make an exact copy of the pattern* he had been shown. •It was handed 45
down from one ancestor of ours to another until Joshua brought it into the country we had conquered from the nations which were driven out by God as we advanced. Here it stayed until the time of David. •He won God's favour and 46
Ps 132:5 asked permission *to have a temple built for* the House[o] of *Jacob,* •though it was 47
1 K 6:2 *Solomon* who actually *built God's house* for him. •Even so the Most High does 48
17:24 Heb 9:11,24 not live in a house that human hands have built: for as the prophet says:

Is 66:1-2

With heaven my throne 49
and earth my footstool,
what house could you build me,
what place could you make for my rest?
Was not all this made by my hand? 50

Ex 33:3+ 2 Ch 30:7-8; 36:14-16 Is 63:10 Jr 4:4+ 'You stubborn people, with your pagan hearts and pagan ears. You are always 51
resisting the Holy Spirit,[p] just as your ancestors used to do. •Can you name 52
a single prophet your ancestors never persecuted? In the past they killed those
Mt 23:34-35 Jn 8:44 who foretold the coming of the Just One, and now you have become his
2:23+; 3:14+; 7:38+ betrayers, his murderers. •You who had the Law brought to you by angels are 53
the very ones who have not kept it.'

They were infuriated when they heard this, and ground their teeth at him. 54

The stoning of Stephen. Saul as persecutor

Ex 24:16+ But Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory 55
2:33+ Mt 26:64p+ Dn 7:13 Mt 8:20+ of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand.[q] •'I can see heaven thrown open' 56
he said 'and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.' •At this all the 57
members of the council shouted out and stopped their ears with their hands; then
Heb 13:12+ they all rushed at him, •sent him out of the city and stoned him. The wit- 58
22:20; 26:10 Ga 1:13+ Ps 31:5 Lk 23:46 nesses[r] put down their clothes at the feet of a young man called Saul.[s] •As they 59
were stoning him, Stephen said in invocation,[t] 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'.
Lk 23:34 7:58; 22:20 Then he knelt down and said aloud, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them'; 60
and with these words he fell asleep. **8** [a]Saul entirely approved of the killing. 1

Jn 16:2 That day a bitter persecution started against the church in Jerusalem, and everyone[b] except the apostles fled to the country districts of Judaea and Samaria.[c]

2 There were some devout people, however, who buried Stephen and made great mourning for him.

3 Saul then worked for the total destruction of the Church; he went from house to house arresting both men and women and sending them to prison. 9:1-2; 22:4; 26:10-11; 1 Co 15:9; Ga 1:13; Ph 3:6; 1 Tm 1:13

Philip in Samaria

4 Those who had escaped went from place to place preaching the Good News. =11:19

5 One of them was Philip who went to a Samaritan town[d] and proclaimed the 6 Christ to them.[e] •The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, 6:5; 21:8; 18:5+; 5:16 either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw 7 them for themselves. •There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking Mt 8:29+ out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. 28:8-9 8 As a result there was great rejoicing in that town. 2:46+

Simon the magician

9 Now a man called Simon had already practised magic arts in the town and astounded the Samaritan people. He had given it out that he was someone 10 momentous, •and everyone believed what he said; eminent citizens and ordinary 11 people alike had declared, 'He is the divine power that is called Great'.[f] •They had only been won over to him because of the long time he had spent working 12 on them with his magic. •But when they believed Philip's preaching of the Good News about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were 13 baptised, both men and women, •and even Simon himself became a believer. 1:5+ After his baptism Simon, who went round constantly with Philip, was astonished when he saw the wonders and great miracles that took place.

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word 11:1,22; Jn 4:38; Lk 8:51+ 15 of God, they sent Peter and John to them, •and they went down there, and 16 prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, •for as yet he had not come 1:5+; 19:2,6 down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. 10:44 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 1:5+; 1 Tm 4:14+

i. A messianic text already cited, 3:22. One other than Moses—the Messiah—is to play a similar part, Mt 16:14+; Jn 1:21+.

j. Lit. 'at the time of the assembly'. The word also means 'church', cf. 5:11+. Dt uses 'day of assembly' to mean the final occasion when the Law was promulgated, Ex 19:10-25. From the earliest days Christians have seen the Church as the successor to this solemn 'assembly' of the chosen people in the desert.

k. Moses acted as mediator between 'the angel' and the people. 'The angel of Yahweh' in the earliest texts is identical with Yahweh as manifesting himself, Gn 16:7+, cf. Mt 1:20+. Later, a distinction was made between Yahweh and his angel in order to emphasise the divine transcendence. Thus Moses is represented as in immediate touch not with God but with one or several angels. There are traces of this idea in Ga 3:19; Heb 2:2.

l. To obey the Law is to live, Dt 4:1; 8:1,3; 30:15-16, 19-20; 32:46-47; Lv 18:5, quoted in Ga 3:12; Rm 10:5; the Law therefore is referred to as 'the statutes of life' Ezk 33:15; Ba 3:9. For the Christian, the gospel preaching is 'the word of life', Ph 2:16; cf. Ac 5:20, i.e. 'the word of salvation', Ac 13:26. Since life springs from God's word, this word is itself 'living': cf. Heb 4:12; 1 P 1:23. And Jesus is himself 'the Word of life': 1 Jn 1:1.

m. Cf. Nb 14:3 and Ex 16:3. Cf. Ezk 20:8-14.

n. Biblical phrase for the stars, often worshipped as gods.

o. Var. 'for the God'.

p. Who spoke through Moses and the prophets.

q. Stephen's vision is to be related to his transfiguration, 6:15+.

r. The false witnesses mentioned in 6:13-14. It was for the hostile witnesses to initiate the execution of the sentence, Dt 17:7.

s. St Paul.

t. A good example of 'invoking the name of the Lord', 2:21+.

8 a. Vv. 1-4 are made up of a number of brief remarks: Stephen's burial (v. 2), the natural conclusion of the foregoing narrative; Saul's campaign against the Christians (vv. 1a and 3) which links the account of the stoning of Stephen, cf. 7:58b, with what appears to be its sequel, namely Paul's conversion, 9:1-30; finally a note on the Church persecuted and scattered (vv. 1b-4) which introduces the narrative of Philip's mission, 8:5-40, and that of Peter, 9:32–11:18; v. 4 is found again in 11:19. We have here, therefore, a preliminary sketch of the various themes developed in the following chapters up to ch. 12.

b. 'everyone': a very general statement. The persecution in fact seems to have been directed principally against the Hellenists, cf. 6:1.5, and it was this group, scattered by persecution, that gave the church its first missionaries, cf. v. 4; 11:19-20.

c. Second stage of the Church's expansion, cf. 1:8. The third begins with the foundation of the church of Antioch, 11:20.

d. Var. 'the town of Samaria', 'the town of Caesarea'. The reference is probably not to the town called Samaria, by this time a hellenistic city and known as Sebaste, but to the province: those who are evangelised are the 'Samaritans' in the Jewish sense of the word, i.e. akin in blood and religion but cut off from Israel's community and living in heresy, cf. Jn 4:9+; Mt 10:5-6+.

e. The Samaritans, too, expected the Messiah, cf. Jn 4:25.

f. Or, less probably, 'that is called Megalleh' (Aramaic for 'Revealing'). Evidently it was thought that Simon's supernatural power issued from some indwelling force of the high God.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the imposition of hands 18
by the apostles, he offered them some money. •'Give me the same power' he said 19
'so that anyone I lay my hands on will receive the Holy Spirit.' •Peter answered, 20
13:10 Jn 4:10 Is 55:1 Mt 10:8 'May your silver be lost forever, and you with it, for thinking that money could buy what God has given for nothing![g] •You have no share, no rights, in this: 21
God can see how your heart is warped. •Repent of this wickedness of yours, and 22
pray to the Lord; you may still be forgiven for thinking as you did; •it is plain 23
Dt 29:17 Pr 5:22 Jr 4:18 Heb 12:16 to me that you are trapped in the bitterness of gall and the chains of sin.'[h]
'Pray to the Lord for me yourselves' Simon replied ' so that none of the things 24
you have spoken about may happen to me.'[i]
1:8+ Having given their testimony and proclaimed the word of the Lord, they went 25
back to Jerusalem, preaching the Good News to a number of Samaritan villages.

Philip baptises a eunuch

Mt 1:20+ The angel of the Lord[j] spoke to Philip saying, 'Be ready to set out at noon[k] 26
along the road that goes from Jerusalem down to Gaza, the desert road'. •So he 27
1 K 8:41f Ps 68:31 Is 56:3-7 set off on his journey. Now it happened that an Ethiopian[l] had been on pilgrimage
to Jerusalem; he was a eunuch and an officer at the court of the kandake, or
queen, of Ethiopia, and was in fact her chief treasurer. •He was now on his way 28
home; and as he sat in his chariot he was reading the prophet Isaiah. •The 29
1:8+ Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and meet that chariot'. •When Philip ran up, he 30
heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, 'Do you understand what you
Rm 10:14 are reading?' •'How can I' he replied 'unless I have someone to guide me?' So 31
he invited Philip to get in and sit by his side. •Now the passage of scripture he 32
was reading was this:[m]

Is 53:7-8 Lk 18:31+

Like a sheep that is led to the slaughter-house,
like a lamb that is dumb in front of its shearers,
like these he never opens his mouth.
He has been humiliated and has no one to defend him. 33
Who will ever talk about his descendants,
since his life on earth has been cut short!

The eunuch turned to Philip and said, 'Tell me, is the prophet referring to 34
Lk 24:27 himself or someone else?' •Starting, therefore, with this text of scripture Philip 35
proceeded to explain the Good News of Jesus to him.
Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'Look, 36
10:47; 16:33 there is some water here; is there anything to stop me being baptised?'[n] •He 38
ordered the chariot to stop, then Philip and the eunuch both went down into
1:5+ the water and Philip baptised him. •But after they had come up out of the water 39
1 K 18:12+ Lk 24:31-32 2:46+ again Philip was taken away by the Spirit of the Lord,[o] and the eunuch never
saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. •Philip found that he had reached 40
Azotus and continued his journey proclaiming the Good News in every town as far
21:8 as Caesarea.

=22:5-16 =26:10-18 **The conversion of Saul[a]**

8:3 Ga 1:12-17 9 Meanwhile Saul was still breathing threats to slaughter the Lord's disciples. 1
He had gone to the high priest •and asked for letters addressed to the 2
9:21; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14,22 2 P 2:2 synagogues in Damascus, that would authorise him to arrest and take to Jerusalem
any followers of the Way,[b] men or women, that he could find.[c]
Suddenly, while he was travelling to Damascus and just before he reached 3
the city, there came a light from heaven all round him. •He fell to the ground, 4
and then he heard a voice saying, 'Saul, Saul,[d] why are you persecuting me?'
Mt 25:40 1 Co 8:12 'Who are you, Lord?' he asked, and the voice answered, 'I am Jesus, and you 5
are persecuting me.[e] •Get up now and go into the city, and you will be told what 6
you have to do.' •The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless, for 7
Dn 10:7 though they heard the voice they could see no one. •Saul got up from the ground, 8

but even with his eyes wide open he could see nothing at all, and they had to lead
9 him into Damascus by the hand. •For three days he was without his sight, and
took neither food nor drink.

10 A disciple called Ananias who lived in Damascus had a vision in which he 10:3
11 heard the Lord say to him, 'Ananias!' When he replied, 'Here I am, Lord', •the Gn 22:1+
Lord said, 'You must go to Straight Street and ask at the house of Judas for
someone called Saul, who comes from Tarsus. At this moment he is praying,
12 having had a vision[f] of a man called Ananias coming in and laying hands on him 9:17; 28:8 1 Tm 4:14+
to give him back his sight.'

13 When he heard that, Ananias said, 'Lord, several people have told me about 9:41-42; 26:10 Rm 1:7; 12:13 1 Co 1:2; 6:2 2 Co 1:1 2:21+ 22:21 Rm 1:8 1 Co 9:16-17
14 this man and all the harm he has been doing to your saints[g] in Jerusalem. •He has
only come here because he holds a warrant from the chief priests to arrest
15 everybody who invokes your name.' •The Lord replied, 'You must go all the
same, because this man is my chosen instrument to bring my name before pagans
16 and pagan kings and before the people of Israel;[h] •I myself will show him how
17 much he himself must suffer for my name'. •Then Ananias went. He entered 15:26; 21:13 Mt 10:22+ 1 Co 4:9-13+ 22:14; 26:16 1 Co 9:1; 15:8
the house, and at once laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, I have been
sent by the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on your way here so that you may
18 recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit'.[i] •Immediately it was as Tb 11:10-15
though scales fell away from Saul's eyes and he could see again. So he was
19 baptised there and then, •and after taking some food he regained his strength. 1:5+

Saul's preaching at Damascus

Ga 1:16-17

20 After he had spent only a few days with the disciples in Damascus, •he began
21 preaching in the synagogues, 'Jesus is the Son of God'.[j] •All his hearers were 13:33
amazed. 'Surely' they said 'this is the man who organised the attack in Jerusalem

g. The Holy Spirit is supremely the Gift of God, cf. 2:38; 10:45; 11:17; Lk 11:9,13; the idea recurs in the *Veni Creator*.

h. 'Simony' (trafficking in sacred things) gets its name from this incident.

i. Western Text adds 'and he wept bitterly without ceasing'.

j. Referred to as 'the Spirit' in vv. 29 and 39.

k. Or 'towards the south'.

l. 'Ethiopia' began beyond the first cataract of the Nile: Nubia or the Sudan. It was ruled by queens bearing the generic name 'kandake'.

m. Quoted from the LXX, here somewhat obscure and deriving from a Hebr. text itself obscure and probably corrupt. On the use of Is 53 in early Christian preaching, see 3:13+.

n. V. 37 is a very ancient gloss preserved in the Western Text and suggested by the baptismal liturgy "And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may'. And he replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'."

o. Var. West. 'the Holy Spirit came down on the eunuch and the angel of the Lord carried Philip away'.

9 a. Crucial event in the Church's history. Luke gives three accounts whose discrepancies of detail are explained by their differing literary forms: the second and third accounts are found in Paul's discourses. See also Ga 1:12-17. The incident took place probably in 36 A.D., about 12 years (14 if we reckon as the ancients did) before the council of Jerusalem', Ga 2:1f; cf. Ac 15, held in 49.

b. The 'Way' is the way of life characteristic of the Christian community; the term is used, by extension, for the community itself. When men follow this 'Way' God is served as he wishes to be served, Mt 22:16p, cf. 7:13-14; 21:32; 1 Co 12:31; 2 P 2:2; Ps 119:1f; Pr 4:10f; Jr 12:16, etc. This unqualified use of the word is peculiar to Ac, 18:25,26; 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22.

c. The Roman authority recognised the high priest's jurisdiction over the members of Jewish communities even outside Palestine; according to 1 M 15:21 this even included right of extradition.

d. Aramaic ('Hebrew', 26:14) form of Saul's name.

e. Whatever is done to the disciples for the sake of the name of Jesus is done to Jesus himself, Mt 10:40+.

f. Lit. 'having seen'; var. 'having seen in a vision'.

g. Since God is the Holy One *par excellence*, Is 6:3, those consecrated to his service are called 'holy', Lv 17:1+. The term, applied originally to the people of Israel, Ex 19:6+, and in particular to the community of the messianic era, Dn 7:18+, is especially apt for the Christians who are the new 'holy race', 1 P 2:5,9, called, Rm 1:7; 1 Co 1:2; Ep 1:4; 2 Tm 1:9, by their baptismal consecration, Ep 5:26f, to a blameless life, 1 Co 7:34; Ep 1:4; 5:3; Col 1:22, which makes them holy as God is holy, 1 P 1:15f, cf. 1 Jn 3:3, and like Jesus himself, 'the Holy One of God', Mk 1:24+. In the early community it becomes the usual term for the Christians, in Palestine first, Ac 9:13,32,41; Rm 15:26,31; 1 Co 16:1,15; 2 Co 8:4; 9:1,12, and then in all the churches, Rm 8:27; 12:13; 16:2,15; 1 Co 6:1f; 14:33; 2 Co 13:12; Ep 1:15; 3:18; 4:12; 6:18; Ph 4:21f; Col 1:4; 1 Tm 5:10; Phm 5,7; Heb 6:10; 13:24; Jude 3 (and in the introductory formulae of the letters 2 Co 1:1, etc.). In Rv 5:8; 8:3 etc. the word is used more specifically of the Christians who witness by their death. At times its application may be restricted to the leaders, the 'apostles and prophets', Ep 3:5 and Col 1:26; Ep 3:8; 4:12; Rv 18:20. Lastly, as in the O.T., Jb 5:1+, it may indicate the angels, Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; Ac 10:22; Jude 14; Rv 14:10, and in some cases it is doubtful whether the reference is to angels or to the saints in glory, Ep 1:18; Col 1:12; 1 Th 3:13; 2 Th 1:10.

h. Cf. Jr 1:10. Paul's mission is 'to all men', Ac 22:15, to the pagan nations, 26:17; this agrees with what Paul himself writes in Ga 1:16, cf. Rm 1:5; 11:13; 15:16-18; Ga 2:2,8,9; Ep 3:8; Col 1:27; 1 Tm 2:7. On the 'kings', cf. Ac 26:2+.

i. Characteristic Lucan phrase. Lk 1:15,41,67; Ac 2:4; 4:8,31; 9:17; 13:9. Cf. Lk 4:1+.

j. 'Son of God' corresponds to 'Christ' in v. 22. Cf. Mt 4:3+. We meet the title 'Son of God' only once more in Ac, 13:33. It is characteristic of Pauline Christology, Ga 1:16; 2:20; 4:4,6; Rm 1:3-4,9; 1 Th 1:10; cf. Rm 9:5+.

against the people who invoke this name, and who came here for the sole
9:2 purpose of arresting them to have them tried by the chief priests?' •Saul's power 22
increased steadily, and he was able to throw the Jewish colony at Damascus into
2:36+; 18:5,28 complete confusion by the way be demonstrated that Jesus was the Christ.

Some time passed,[k] and the Jews worked out a plot to kill him, •but news of 23 24
2 Co 11:32-33 it reached Saul. To make sure of killing him they kept watch on the gates day
Jos 2:15 and night, •but when it was dark the disciples[l] took him and let him down from 25
the top of the wall, lowering him in a basket.

Ga 1:18-19 **Saul's visit to Jerusalem**[m]

22:17 When he got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all 26
4:36-37 afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple. •Barnabas, 27
however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how
the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he
had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. •Saul now started to go 28
13:46+ round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord.
5:41+ But after he had spoken to the Hellenists,[n] and argued with them, they became 29
=22:17-21 determined to kill him. •When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea, 30
11:25 and sent him off from there to Tarsus.[o]

A lull

The churches[p] throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, 31
2:41+; 20:32 building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consola-
1 Co 8:1 tion of the Holy Spirit.[q]

Peter cures a paralytic at Lydda

Peter visited one place after another and eventually came to the saints living 32
down in Lydda. •There he found a man called Aeneas, a paralytic who had been 33
bedridden for eight years. •Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ cures you: 34
19:17 get up and fold up your sleeping mat'. Aeneas got up immediately;[r] •everybody 35
who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they were all converted to the Lord.

Peter raises a woman to life at Jaffa

13:9+ At Jaffa there was a woman disciple called Tabitha, or Dorcas in Greek,[s] 36
Lk 12:33+ who never tired of doing good or giving in charity. •But the time came when she 37
1 K 17:19 got ill and died, and they washed her and laid her out in a room upstairs. •Lydda 38
is not far from Jaffa, so when the disciples heard that Peter was there, they sent
two men with an urgent message for him, 'Come and visit us as soon as possible'.

Peter went back with them straightaway, and on his arrival they took him 39
to the upstairs room, where all the widows stood round him in tears, showing
him tunics and other clothes Dorcas had made when she was with them. •Peter 40
Mk 5:40-41 sent them all out of the room and knelt down and prayed. Then he turned to
the dead woman and said, 'Tabitha, stand up'. She opened her eyes, looked at
Lk 7:15 Peter and sat up. •Peter helped her to her feet, then he called in the saints and 41
3:7; 9:13+; 20:10 widows and showed them she was alive. •The whole of Jaffa heard about it and 42
19:17 many believed in the Lord.

Lk 9:4 Peter stayed on some time in Jaffa, lodging with a leather-tanner called Simon. 43

15:7 **Peter visits a Roman centurion**[a]

Lk 7:2,4-5 Ga 2:12 10 One of the centurions of the Italica cohort stationed in Caesarea was 1
2:11+ called Cornelius. •He and the whole of his household were devout and 2
Lk 12:33+ *Lk 18:1* God-fearing,[b] and he gave generously to Jewish causes and prayed constantly
to God.

27:23 One day at about the ninth hour he had a vision in which he distinctly saw 3
Mt 1:20+ the angel of God come into his house and call out to him, 'Cornelius!' •He stared 4
9:10+ Lk 1:12+ at the vision in terror and exclaimed, 'What is it, Lord?' 'Your offering of prayers

and alms' the angel answered 'has been accepted by God.[c] •Now you must send someone to Jaffa and fetch a man called Simon, known as Peter, •who is lodging with Simon the tanner whose house is by the sea.' •When the angel who said this had gone, Cornelius called two of the slaves and a devout soldier of his staff, told them what had happened, and sent them off to Jaffa. 2:14+

Next day, while they were still on their journey and had only a short distance to go before reaching Jaffa, Peter went to the housetop at about the sixth hour to pray. •He felt hungry and was looking forward to his meal, but before it was ready he fell into a trance •and saw heaven thrown open and something like a big sheet being let down to earth by its four corners;[d] •it contained every possible sort of animal and bird, walking, crawling or flying ones. •A voice then said to him, 'Now, Peter; kill and eat!' •But Peter answered, 'Certainly not, Lord; I have never yet eaten anything profane or unclean'. •Again, a second time, the voice spoke to him, 'What God has made clean, you have no right to call profane'.[e] •This was repeated three times, and then suddenly the container was drawn up to heaven again. 16:9 11:5-17 Lv 11 Ezk 4:14 Gn 1:31+

Peter was still worrying over the meaning of the vision he had seen, when the men sent by Cornelius arrived. They had asked where Simon's house was and they were now standing at the door, •calling out to know if the Simon known as Peter was lodging there. •Peter's mind was still on the vision and the Spirit[f] had to tell him, 'Some men[g] have come to see you. •Hurry down, and do not hesitate about going back with them; it was I who told them to come.' •Peter went down and said to them, 'I am the man you are looking for; why have you come?' •They said, 'The centurion Cornelius, who is an upright and God-fearing man, highly regarded by the entire Jewish people, was directed by a holy angel to send for you and bring you to his house and to listen to what you have to say'. •So Peter asked them in and gave them lodging. 1:8+ Lk 7:4-5

Next day, he was ready to go off with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Jaffa. •They reached Caesarea the following day, and Cornelius was waiting for them. He had asked his relations and close friends to be there, and as Peter reached the house Cornelius went out to meet him, knelt at his feet and prostrated himself. •But Peter helped him up. 'Stand up,' he said 'I am only a man after all!' •Talking together they went in to meet all the people assembled there, •and Peter said to them, 'You know it is forbidden for Jews to mix with people of another race and visit them, but God has made it clear to me that I must not call anyone profane or unclean. •That is why I made no objection 3:12; 14:15 Rv 19:10 11:3; 15:9 Ga 2:12, 15-16

k. Three years, according to Ga 1:17-18; Paul's stay in Arabia belongs to this period. Luke's statement is not detailed.

l. Var. 'his disciples'.

m. Paul mentionst his visit, Ga 1:18-19. He observes that at that time the churches in Judaea did not yet know him by sight, but says nothing of the part Barnabas played. He states that, of the apostles, he saw none but Peter, and James the brother of the Lord; Ac, generalising, speaks vaguely of 'the apostles'.

n. Var. 'the Greeks' (i.e. the pagans); same variant in 11:20. The hellenistic Christians (cf. 6:1+) are the most active proselytisers, just as the hellenistic Jews were the most active opponents of Christian propaganda, 6:9f; 7:58; 9:1; 21:27; 24:19.

o. Where Barnabas later finds him, 11:25. Compare this with Ga 1:18-21 and with Ac 22:17-21.

p. 'the churches' Western and Antiochene Texts; 'the Church' Alexandrian Text.

q. Joy in the faith, 2:46+. Others render 'they thrived through the comfort (or: by the help; or: thanks to the encouragement) of the Holy Spirit'.

r. For similar miracles: Lk 5:18-26p; 13:11-13; Jn 5:1-14; Ac 3:1-10 (and 4:22); 14:8-10.

s. I.e. 'gazelle'.

10 a. For Luke, Cornelius' conversion has a wide application. Its significance for the Church at large appears from the narrative itself and from its emphasis on the visions of Peter and of Cornelius, but especially from the way the author deliberately links this incident to the decision of the 'Council of Jerusalem', cf. 15:7-11, 14. There seem to be two separate lessons here. First, God himself has made it clear that the pagans are to be received into the Church without being forced to obey the Law, cf. 10:34-35,44-48a; 11:1,15-18; 15:7-11,14; and Ga 2:1-10. Secondly, God himself has shown Peter that he must accept the hospitality of the uncircumcised. The problem of social relations between Christians converted from Judaism and Christians converted from paganism underlies the narrative, cf. 10:10-16,28-29; 11:2-14; and Ga 2:11-21.

b. The expressions 'fearing God', 10:2,22,35; 13:16,26, and 'worshipping God', 13:43,50; 16:14; 17:4,17; 18:7, are technical terms for admirers and followers of the Jewish religion who stop short of circumcision, cf. 2:11+.

c. Lit. 'has ascended as a memorial before God'. The expression recalls the 'memorial' sacrifice, cf. Lv 2:2,9,16, to which Tb 12:12 compares prayer.

d. Following Western Text.

e. Peter is to throw off his scruples of legal purity, 11:9. Cf. Mt 15:1-20p; Rm 14:14,17. The immediate practical conclusion is that Peter must not fear contact with the uncircumcised, Ac 10:27-28.

f. The intervention of the Spirit is like that of the angel of the Lord, cf. 8:26,29.

g. Var. 'Three men', cf. 11:11.

to coming when I was sent for; but I should like to know exactly why you sent for me.' •Cornelius replied, 'Three days ago I was praying[h] in my house 30
at the ninth hour, when I suddenly saw a man in front of me in shining robes.
He said, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been 31
accepted as a sacrifice in the sight of God; •so now you must send to Jaffa and 32
fetch Simon known as Peter who is lodging in the house of Simon the tanner, by
the sea". •So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. 33
Here we all are, assembled in front of you to hear what message God has given
you for us.'

Peter's address in the house of Cornelius

Then Peter addressed them: 'The truth I have now come to realise' he said 34
Dt 10:17+ Rm 2:11 Ga 2:6 1 P 1:17 'is that God does not have favourites, •but that anybody of any nationality who 35
fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.[i]
'It is true, God sent his word[j] to the people of Israel, and it was to them that 36
Is 52:7 Na 2:1 *the good news of peace was brought* by Jesus Christ—but Jesus Christ is Lord of
Rm 10:12 Lk 4:44+ all men. •You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea;[k] about 37
Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching
1:8+;4:27+ Is 61:1 Mt 3:16+ baptism.[l] •*God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit* and with power, and because 38
God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen
2:22 Mt 8:29+ *1:8+; 22* into the power of the devil. •Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything 39
he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also
2:23+ to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, •yet three days afterwards 40
God raised him to life[m] and allowed him to be seen, •not by the whole people 41
1:3-4 but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those
Jn 14:22 Lk 24:41-43 *13:31* witnesses—we have eaten and drunk with him[n] after his resurrection from the
dead—•and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people[o] and to tell them 42
2:36+ that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead.[p] •It is to him that 43
2:23+ all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins
2:38+; 3:16+ forgiven through his name.'

15:8 **Baptism of the first pagans**

1:8+ *8:16* While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down[q] on all the listeners. 44
Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift 45
2:33 of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the pagans too, •since they could 46
2:4+,11 hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God.
8:36; 11:17 Peter himself then said, •'Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these 47
people, now they have received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?' •He 48
1:5+; 2:38+; 16:15 *18:20* then gave orders[r] for them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterwards they begged him to stay on for some days.[s]

Jerusalem: Peter justifies his conduct

1:15+ *8:14; 15:7* **11** The apostles and the brothers in Judaea heard that the pagans too had 1
accepted the word of God, •and when Peter came up to Jerusalem the 2
10:28,48+ Jews criticised him[a] •and said, 'So you have been visiting the uncircumcised 3
and eating with them, have you?' •Peter in reply gave them the details point by 4
10:10-48 point: •'One day, when I was in the town of Jaffa,' he began 'I fell into a trance as 5
I was praying and had a vision of something like a big sheet being let down from
heaven by its four corners. This sheet reached the ground quite close to me.
I watched it intently and saw all sorts of animals and wild beasts—everything 6
possible that could walk, crawl or fly. •Then I heard a voice that said to me, "Now, 7
Peter; kill and eat!" •But I answered: Certainly not, Lord; nothing profane or 8
unclean has ever crossed my lips. •And a second time the voice spoke from 9
heaven, "What God has made clean, you have no right to call profane". •This 10
was repeated three times, before the whole of it was drawn up to heaven again.
'Just at that moment, three men stopped outside the house where we were 11

12 staying; they had been sent from Caesarea to fetch me, •and the Spirit told me 1:8+
to have no hesitation about going back with them. The six brothers here came
13 with me as well, and we entered the man's house. •He told us he had seen an angel
standing in his house who said, "Send to Jaffa and fetch Simon known as Peter;
14 he has a message for you that will save you and your entire household". 2:47+; 16:15+
15 'I had scarcely begun to speak when the Holy Spirit came down on them 10:44+
16 in the same way as it came on us at the beginning, •and I remembered that the
Lord had said, "John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy 1:5
17 Spirit". •I realised then that God[b] was giving them the identical thing he gave to us 15:8-9
when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; and who was I to stand in God's way?'[c] 10:47; 15:9 Mt 16:23+ 2:47; 21:20
18 This account satisfied them, and they gave glory to God. 'God' they said 'can
evidently grant even the pagans the repentance that leads to life.' *13:46f; 14-27; 17:30; 26:20*

Foundation of the church of Antioch

Those who had escaped[d] during the persecution that happened because of 8:1.4
19 Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch,[e] but they usually 21:3
proclaimed the message only to Jews. •Some of them, however, who came from
20 Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch where they started preaching to the Greeks,[f]
proclaiming the Good News of the Lord Jesus[g] to them as well. •The Lord helped Lk 1:66
21 them, and a great number believed and were converted to the Lord. 2:41+; 3:19+ *4:36+; 8:14*
The church in Jerusalem[h] heard about this and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.
22 There he could see for himself that God had given grace, and this pleased him,
23 and he urged[i] them all to remain faithful to the Lord[j] with heartfelt devotion; 13:43; 14:22
for he was a good man, filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. And a large 6:5
24 number of people were won over to the Lord. 2:41+
25 Barnabas then left for Tarsus to look for Saul, •and when he found him he 9:30
26

h. Var. 'I was fasting and praying'.

i. The language of sacrifice (cf. v. 4). The unblemished victim and its offerer are both 'acceptable' to God, Lv 1:3; 19:5; 22:19-27. Isaiah (56:7) had prophesied that when the fulness of time came, the pagans' sacrifices would be 'acceptable' to God; see Ml 1:10-11. Cf. Rm 15:16; Ph 4:18; 1 P 2:5.

j. Var. 'The word that God has sent'.

k. Vv. 37-42 sum up the gospel story, cf. 1:21-22; 2:22+, emphasising the same points as Luke brought out in his own gospel.

l. Lit. 'Jesus from Nazareth, how he began (var. 'how it [all] began') in Galilee after the baptism proclaimed by John'.

m. Lit. 'raised him on the third day': stereotyped formula of the Christian preaching and faith. It appears as early as 1 Co 15:4 (a first stage of the creed) with the addition 'according to the scriptures'. The formula echoes Jon 2:1 (cf. Mt 12:40); see also Ho 6:2. It recurs in Mt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Lk 9:22; 18:33; 24:7,46.

n. Add. (West.) 'and were his companions for forty days after his resurrection from the dead'.

o. I.e. the Chosen People, Israel, 10:2; 21:28.

p. Those still alive at the glorious coming and those who have died before the coming but then rise for judgement. See 1 Th 4:13–5:10. By raising up Jesus, God has solemnly invested him as supreme Judge, Ac 17:31; Jn 5:22,27; 2 Tm 4:1; 1 P 4:5; to proclaim the resurrection is therefore to invite men to repentance, cf. Ac 17:30-31.

q. 'The Pentecost of the pagans'. As Peter notes, v. 47; 11:15; 15:8, it resembles the first Pentecost.

r. It was not usual for the apostles to administer baptism themselves, cf. 19:5; 1 Co 1:14,17. See also 1 Jn 4:2.

s. That Peter should lodge with the uncircumcised seems to the Jerusalem 'Hebrews' even more shocking and contrary to the Law than that he should authorise their baptism (11:2-3; cf. 10:28). This same question gave rise to the Antioch incident, Ga 2:11f.

11 a. Western Text 'So after some time Peter determined to set out for Jerusalem. After speaking to the brothers and encouraging them, he set out, delivering many sermons throughout the countryside and instructing the people. When he reached them and told them of the favour God had granted, the circumcised brothers remonstrated with him.'

b. 'God' omitted by Western Text (because it is Christ who gives the Spirit).

c. Peter explains why he allowed a pagan to be baptised; he does not answer the objection that he had lodged with the uncircumcised, cf. v. 3, see 10:1+. According to Luke, Peter was considered to have been the first to receive pagans into the Church, in spite of the episode of the Ethiopian eunuch, 8:26-39, and the date of the evangelisation of Antioch to which Luke does not refer till later, vv. 19f. Against this background the council of Jerusalem, 15:5-29, appears as a kind of sequel to, or repetition of, the discussion in 11:1-18.

d. V. 19 takes up from 8:1 and 8:4 and then presents the episode of the Antiochene church's foundation as an immediate sequel to Stephen's martyrdom from which it has been separated by the insertion of the Acts of Philip, 8:5-40, and of Peter, 9:31–11:18. Nevertheless, the narrative presupposes the story of Saul's vocation, 9:1-30, itself concerned with Stephen's martyrdom.

e. Antioch on the Orontes, capital of the Roman province of Syria third city of the empire after Rome and Alexandria.

f. Var. 'Hellenists', cf. 9:29. 'Greeks', as opposed to 'Jews', v. 19, includes all the uncircumcised.

g. Not 'Christ', a title more suited to a Jewish audience with its messianic expectation; in preaching to pagans Jesus was called 'Lord', cf. 25:26+. He is 'Lord' because, in virtue of his elevation to the Father's right hand, he rules over the kingdom in this fulness of time, cf. 2:21,36; 7:59-60; 10:36; 1 Th 4:15-17; 2 Th 1:7-12; Rm 10:9-13.

h. Which enjoyed right of supervision over the other churches, cf. 8:14; 11:1, and see Ga 2:2+.

i. Apparently a play on the name 'Barnabas', 'son of exhortation', 4:36.

j. Var. 'in the Lord'

brought him to Antioch. As things turned out they were to live together in that church[k] a whole year, instructing a large number of people. It was at Antioch
1 P 4:16 that the disciples were first called 'Christians'.[l]

Barnabas and Saul sent as deputies to Jerusalem

2:17; 13:1; 15:32; 19:6 / *1:8+; 21:10* While they were there some prophets[m] came down to Antioch from Jerusalem,[n] 27
and one of them whose name was Agabus, seized by the Spirit, stood up and 28
predicted that a famine would spread over the whole empire. This in fact happened
11:25 before the reign of Claudius came to an end.[o] •The disciples decided to send 29
relief, each to contribute what he could afford, to the brothers living in Judaea.
20:17 / Ga 2:1 / Tt 1:5+ / 1 P 5:1 They did this and delivered their contributions to the elders[p] in the care of 30
Barnabas and Saul.

Peter's arrest and miraculous deliverance[q]

Mt 20:22-23 12 It was about this time that King Herod started persecuting certain members 1
of the Church. •He beheaded James the brother of John, •and when he 2 3
saw that this pleased the Jews he decided to arrest Peter as well. •This was during 4
Ex 12:1+ the days of Unleavened Bread, and he put Peter in prison, assigning four squads
of four soldiers each to guard him in turns. Herod meant to try Peter in public
after the end of Passover week. •All the time Peter was under guard the Church 5
prayed to God for him unremittingly.

5:18-24; 16:25-40 On the night before Herod was to try him, Peter was sleeping between two 6
soldiers, fastened with double chains,[b] while guards kept watch at the main
5:19 / Mt 1:20+ / *1 K 19:5-7* entrance to the prison. •Then suddenly the angel of the Lord stood there, and 7
the cell was filled with light. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him. 'Get up!'
he said 'Hurry!'—and the chains fell from his hands. •The angel then said, 'Put 8
on your belt and sandals'. After he had done this, the angel next said, 'Wrap
your cloak round you and follow me'. •Peter followed him, but had no idea that 9
what the angel did was all happening in reality; he thought he was seeing a vision.
They passed through two guard posts one after the other, and reached the iron 10
gate leading to the city. This opened of its own accord; they went through it[c]
and had walked the whole length of one street when suddenly the angel left him.
It was only then that Peter came to himself. 'Now I know it is all true' he said. 11
'The Lord really did send his angel and has saved me from Herod and from all
that the Jewish people were so certain would happen to me.'

As soon as he realised this he went straight to the house of Mary the mother 12
13:9+; 15:37 / Col 4:10 / 1 P 5:13 of John Mark,[d] where a number of people had assembled and were praying. •He 13
knocked at the outside door and a servant called Rhoda came to answer it. •She 14
recognised Peter's voice and was so overcome with joy that, instead of opening
the door, she ran inside with the news that Peter was standing at the main entrance.
They said to her, 'You are out of your mind', but she insisted that it was true. 15
Then they said, 'It must be his angel!'[e] •Peter, meanwhile, was still knocking, 16
so they opened the door and were amazed to see that it really was Peter himself.
With a gesture of his hand he stopped them talking, and described to them how 17
1:15+; 15:13; 21:17 / 1 Co 15:7 / *16:27; 27:42* the Lord had led him out of prison. He added, 'Tell James[f] and the brothers'.
Then he left and went to another place.

When daylight came there was a great commotion among the soldiers, who 18
could not imagine what had become of Peter. •Herod put out an unsuccessful 19
search for him; he had the guards questioned, and before leaving Judaea to take
up residence in Caesarea he gave orders for their execution.[g]

2 M 9:5-28 **The death of the persecutor**

Now Herod was on bad terms with the Tyrians and Sidonians. However, they 20
sent a joint deputation which managed to enlist the support of Blastus, the king's
chamberlain, and through him negotiated a treaty, since their country depended
for its food supply on King Herod's territory. •A day was fixed, and Herod, 21

wearing his robes of state and enthroned on a dais, made a speech to them.
22 23 The people acclaimed him with, 'It is a god speaking, not a man!', •and at that moment the angel of the Lord struck him down, because he had not given the glory to God. He was eaten away with worms and died.[h] Mt 1:20+ 2 M 9:9

Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch

24 25 The word of God continued to spread and to gain followers. •Barnabas and Saul completed their task and came back from Jerusalem,[i] bringing John Mark with them. 6:7+; 11:29-30; 12:12+

III. THE MISSION OF BARNABAS AND PAUL
THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

The mission sent out

1 13 In the church at Antioch the following were prophets and teachers:[a] Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, who had 11:27+ 4:36+

k. Meaning doubtful. Possibly 'they worked together', 'they were received (by the church)', i.e. were guests of the church.

l. I.e. supporters or followers of Christus (or Chrestus). The nickname shows that the pagans of Antioch took the title 'Christ' (anointed) for a proper name.

m. Like the O.T. prophets, Dt 18:18+; 2 P 1:21; Mt 5:12, those of the N.T. are charismatics, 1 Co 12:1+, who speak in God's name, being inspired by his Spirit. Under the New Covenant this charisma is bestowed even more generously, Ac 2:17-18, and at times it is enjoyed by the faithful at large, Ac 19:6; 1 Co 11:4-5; 14:26,29-33,37. But particular individuals are so specially endowed with the charisma that they are always referred to as 'prophets', Ac 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9,10. These normally occupy the second place after the apostles in the order of charisma, 1 Co 12:28-29; Ep 4:11; but cf. 1 Co 12:10; Rm 12:6; Lk 11:49; this is because they are the appointed witnesses of the Spirit, Rv 2:7, etc., 1 Th 5:19-20, whose 'revelations' they communicate, 1 Co 14:6,26,30; Ep 3:5; Rv 1:1, just as the apostles are witnesses to the risen Christ, Rm 1:1+; Ac 1:8+, and proclaim the kerygma, Ac 2:22+. They do not simply foretell the future, Ac 11:28; 21:11, or read hearts, 1 Co 14:24-25; cf. 1 Tm 1:18. When they 'edify, exhort, console', 1 Co 14:3; cf. Ac 4:36; 11:23-24, they do so by a supernatural revelation; in this they resemble those who 'speak strange languages', Ac 2:4+; 19:6, but their gift is greater because their speech is intelligible, 1 Co 14. Their chief work was evidently to explain the oracles of scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, especially those of the O.T. prophets, 1 P 1:10-12, and thus expound the 'mystery' of the divine plan, 1 Co 13:2; Ep 3:5; Rm 16:25+. For this reason they are named with the apostles as the foundation of the Church, Ep 2:20+. The Revelation of St John is a typical example of this N.T. 'prophecy', Rv 1:3; 10:11; 19:10; 22:7-10,18-19. For all its dignity, the prophetic charisma communicates knowledge that is imperfect and provisional, being bound up with faith, Rm 12:6, which is itself destined to vanish in face of the beatific vision, 1 Co 13:8-12.

n. Western Text adds 'and there was great rejoicing. While we were together, one of them ...' If this reading is correct, this is the first of the 'We-sections', cf. 16:10.

o. In the reign of Claudius (41-54) famine swept through the empire (49-50), through Greece first, and later Rome. Josephus puts it in the time of Tiberius Alexander the procurator (46-48).

p. The apostles are not mentioned, unlike 15:2, etc.; they had perhaps left Jerusalem. According to Ac 9:26; 11:29f; 15:2, it would seem that Paul made three journeys to Jerusalem before his two visits to Galatia, 16:6; 18:23. Paul himself, however, in Ga 1:18; 2:1f; cf. 4:13, mentions only two. The impression produced by Ac arises perhaps from Luke's method of combining his sources. It may be that the journey of 11:29 is the same as that of 15:2. The 'help' which is the purpose of the journey is probably to be distinguished from that which Paul supplied later, Ac 24:17, when the great collection, made at the appeal of the Jerusalem church, was completed, Ga 2:10; cf. 1 Co 16:1+; 2 Co 8:4; 9:1,12,13; Rm 15:31.

12 a. This episode, which 11:30 and 12:25 seem to place at the same time as the visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem, must in fact have preceded it, for Herod Agrippa I (called 'king' to distinguish him from his uncle Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of the Passion story, and awarded the royal title by Caligula in 37) was not actually king of Judaea and Samaria until 41; he died in 44. The events here described took place, therefore, between 41 and 44. The narrative has been rather clumsily fitted into its present literary context.

b. Each one to a soldier on either side.

c. Add. 'went down the seven steps'.

d. John Mark is mentioned again in 12:25; 13:5,13; 15:37,39; he was cousin to Barnabas, Col 4:10. During Paul's first Rome captivity Mark was with him, Col 4:10; Phm 24, and shortly before he died Paul asked for Mark's assistance, 2 Tm 4:11. Mark was also a disciple of Peter, 1 P 5:13, and tradition names him as author of the second gospel.

e. It was popularly believed that guardian angels were a kind of spiritual 'double' of their charges.

f. 'James' without qualification means the 'brother of the Lord'. At the time of Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, Ga 1:19 (i.e. in 38-39, cf. Ac 9:1+) and afterwards, James was leader of the 'Hebrew' section of the Jerusalem Christians. After Peter's departure he was in charge of the mother church. See Ac 15:13; 21:18; 1 Co 15:7. The Letter of James appears under his name.

g. Soldiers were liable to the punishment intended for their escaped prisoners, cf. 16:27; 27:42.

h. Var. 'When he had come down from the tribune he became food for worms even while he still lived; and so he died'.

i. Var. 'to Jerusalem', but cf. 11:29.

13 a. On the 'prophets', see 11:27+. The charisma of the teacher, or *didaskalos*, was his ability to instruct others on matters of morality and doctrine, instruction usually based on the scriptures. Cf. 1 Co 12-14+. The five prophets and teachers here named represent the governing body of the church of Antioch; cf. the list of the Twelve, Ac 1:13, and of the Seven, 6:5. Like the latter, the Antiochene Five are, it seems, hellenistic Jews.

13:9+ been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. •One day while they were 2
1:8+ offering worship[b] to the Lord and keeping a fast, the Holy Spirit said, 'I want
14:25-26 Barnabas and Saul set apart for the work to which I have called them'. •So it was 3
6:6; 14:23; 15:40 that after fasting and prayer they laid their hands on them[c] and sent them off.

Cyprus: the magician Elymas

So these two, sent on their mission by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia 4
and from there sailed to Cyprus.[d] •They landed at Salamis and proclaimed the 5
12:12+; 13:15,46; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1-2,10,17; 18:4,6 word of God in the synagogues of the Jews;[e] John acted as their assistant.

They travelled the whole length of the island, and at Paphos they came in 6
contact with a Jewish magician called Bar-jesus. •This false prophet was one 7
of the attendants of the proconsul Sergius Paulus who was an extremely intelligent man. The proconsul summoned Barnabas and Saul and asked to hear the word of God, •but Elymas Magos—as he was called in Greek—tried to stop them 8
so as to prevent the proconsul's conversion to the faith. •Then Saul, whose other 9
8:20-23 name is Paul,[f] looked him full in the face •and said, 'You utter fraud, you 10
Jn 8:44 impostor, you son of the devil, you enemy of all true religion, why don't you stop twisting the straightforward ways of the Lord? •Now watch how the hand 11
of the Lord will strike you: you will be blind, and for a time you will not see the sun.' That instant, everything went misty and dark for him, and he groped about to find someone to lead him by the hand. •The proconsul, who had watched 12
Mt 22:33 Lk 4:32 everything, became a believer, being astonished by what he had learnt about the Lord.

They arrive at Antioch in Pisidia

Paul and his friends went by sea from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia where 13
15:38 John left them to go back to Jerusalem. •The others carried on from Perga till they 14
reached Antioch in Pisidia. Here they went to synagogue on the sabbath and took
13:5+ their seats. •After the lessons from the Law and the Prophets had been read, 15
28:23 the presidents of the synagogue sent them a message: 'Brothers, if you would like to address some words of encouragement[g] to the congregation, please do so'. Paul stood up, held up a hand for silence and began to speak: 16

Paul's preaching before the Jews[h]

2:22+; 10:2+ 'Men of Israel, and fearers of God,[i] listen! •The God of our nation Israel[j] 17
Is 1:2 Ex 1:7 chose our ancestors, and made our people great when they were living as foreigners
Ex 3-15 in Egypt; then by divine power he led them out, •and for about forty years *took* 18
Dt 1:31 *care of*[k] *them in the wilderness.* •*When he had destroyed seven nations in Canaan,* 19
Dt 7:1+ *Gn 15:13* *he put them in possession* of their land •for about four hundred and fifty years.[l] 20
Ex 12:40-41 *1 S 8-10* After this he gave them judges, down to the prophet Samuel. •Then they 21
demanded a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin.[m] After forty years, •he deposed him and made David their king, of 22
1 S 13:14 Ps 89:20 Is 44:28 *13:32* whom he approved in these words, "*I have selected David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will carry out my whole purpose*". •To keep his promise, God 23
has raised up[n] for Israel one of David's descendants, Jesus, as Saviour, •whose 24
19:3-4 coming was heralded by John when he proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the
Ml 3:1-2 Lk 1:76 whole people of Israel. •Before John ended his career he said, "I am not the one[o] 25
Mt 3:11p+ Jn 1:20 you imagine me to be; that one is coming after me and I am not fit to undo his sandal".

'My brothers, sons of Abraham's race, and all you who fear God, this message 26
5:20+ of salvation is meant for you.[p] •What the people of Jerusalem and their rulers 27
2:23+; 3:17+ did, though they did not realise it, was in fact to fulfil the prophecies read on every
Lk 18:31+ *13:14f; 15:21* sabbath.[q] •Though they found nothing to justify his death,[r] they condemned him 28
and asked Pilate to have him executed.[s] •When they had carried out everything 29
5:30+ that scripture foretells about him they took him down from the tree and buried
him in a tomb.[t] •But God raised him from the dead, •and for many days he 30 31

appeared to those who had accompanied him from Galilee to Jerusalem: and it is these same companions of his who are now his witnesses before our people. 1:3 1:8+

32 'We have come here to tell you the Good News. It was to our ancestors that 2:24-31; 13:23
33 God made the promise but •it is to us, their children,[u] that he has fulfilled it, by raising Jesus from the dead. As scripture says in the first psalm:[v] *You are my* Ps 2:7
34 *son: today I have become your father.*[w] •The fact that God raised him from the 2:36+; 9: 20+
dead, never to return to corruption, is no more than what he had declared: *To*
35 *you I shall give the sure and holy things promised to David.*[x] •This is explained by Is 55:3
36 another text: *You will not allow your holy one to experience corruption.* •Now when Ps 16:9
David in his own time had served God's purposes he died; he was buried with
37 his ancestors and has certainly *experienced corruption.* •The one whom God has raised up, however, has not *experienced corruption.*

38 'My brothers, I want you to realise that it is through him that forgiveness of 2:38+ Rm 8:3 *15:11* Rm 1:16+; 3:20+
your sins is proclaimed. Through him justification from all sins which the Law
39 of Moses was unable to justify •is offered to every believer.

40 'So be careful—or what the prophets say will happen to you. 28:26-27

41 *Cast your eyes around you, mockers;* Hab 1:5
be amazed, and perish!
For I am doing something in your own days
that you would not believe if you were to be told of it.'[y]

42 As they left they were asked to[z] preach on the same theme the following

13 b. The use of the term for Christian prayer in common puts this on a level with the sacrificial worship of the Old Law, cf. Rm 1:9+.

c. It seems, to judge by 14:26 (cf. 15:40), that by this act the community commends to God's grace the new missionaries chosen, v. 2, and sent, v. 4, by the Holy Spirit. The significance of the rite is not, therefore, exactly the same as that of 6:6 by which the Seven receive their commission from the apostles. Cf. 1 Tm 4: 14+.

d. Barnabas' native country, 4:36.

e. Paul's regular policy, 17:2, is to approach the Jews first, cf. 13:14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:10,17; 18:4,19; 19:8; 28:17,23, on the principle that the Jews have first claim, see 3:26; 13:46; Rm 1:16; 2:9-10; Mk 7:27; only after their refusal does Paul turn to the pagans, cf. Ac 13:46; 18:6; 28:28.

f. The Jews, and the eastern peoples in general, adopted names familiar in the Graeco-Roman world: John took 'Mark', 12:12, Joseph-Barsabbas took 'Justus', 1:23, Simeon 'Niger', 13:1, Tabitha 'Dorcas', 9:36, etc. Luke has given Paul his Roman name for the first time and does not use 'Saul' again. He also gives prominence now to Paul who is no longer a subordinate of Barnabas but the real missionary leader, v. 13.

g. I.e. a sermon based upon the scriptures, cf. Rm 15:4. The synagogue custom mentioned here was followed also when Christians met for worship; the sermons were preached by the 'prophets' or teachers, cf. 1 Co 14:3,31; 1 Tm 4:13; Heb 13:22; Ac 11:23; 14:22; 15:32; 16:40; 20:1,2.

h. The great inaugural discourse of Paul which Luke offers as typical of the apostle's preaching to the Jews. It falls into two parts: vv. 16-25 are a summary of the history of salvation (cf. Stephen's sermon, ch. 7) with an appendix recalling John the Baptist's testimony; vv. 26-39 claim that Jesus who died and has risen is the expected Messiah (thus closely resembling Peter's discourses, though this discourse ends with a suggestion of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith). The conclusion, vv. 40-41, is a grave warning taken from the scriptures, cf. 28:26-27.

i. The two classes of listeners: Jews by birth and 'God-fearers', 10:2+.

j. Lit. 'the God of this people Israel'.

k. Var. 'upheld' (or: 'bore with').

l. Western (and Antiochene) Text 'For about four hundred and fifty years he gave them judges'. The text is obscure.

m. Paul's own name, and he too was of the tribe of Benjamin, Rm 11:1; Ph 3:5.

n. Or 'raised from the dead'. The Greek verb can mean either, and this ambivalence is exploited in the argument, as in 3:20-26; the 'promise' finds fulfilment in Christ's resurrection, vv. 32-33; see also 26:6-8; moreover, it is by his resurrection that Jesus is established as saviour, cf. 5:31; see also 2:21; 4:12; Rm 5:9-10; Ph 3:20, etc. Thus the verb which means 'raise up' in v. 22 unequivocally means 'raise from the dead' from v. 30 onwards. In v. 23 it is transitional and ambiguous.

o. Var. 'what'.

p. Var. 'for us'.

q. Following Western Text. Current text 'For those who live in Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognise him or (understand) the prophecies read on every sabbath: but they fulfilled the prophecies by condemning him'.

r. A recurring element of the Christian plea: the innocence and unjust condemnation of Jesus, cf. 3:13-14; Lk 23:16,22,47; Mt 27:3-10,19,23-24.

s. 'asked Pilate to have him executed', alternatively (the textual witnesses vary) 'that (he) should be executed'; or 'that (they might) execute him'. Var. 'handed him over to Pilate that he might be executed'.

t. Western Text '... foretells about him, after he had been crucified they asked Pilate for permission to take him down from the tree, and when they received it they took him down and buried him in a tomb'.

u. Var. 'for our children'.

v. 'first psalm' Western reading (following the ancient custom of reading Ps 1 and 2 as one); var. 'second psalm'.

w. By his resurrection Christ was enthroned as Messiah, and from then on his human nature enjoyed all the privileges of the Son of God. Cf. Rm 1:4+.

x. The quotation from Is introduces the reference to Ps 16 (the 'holy things promised to—lit. 'of'—David' are explained as the assurance to David in Ps 16 that 'the holy one of God' would not experience corruption).

y. The disbelief and rejection of the Jews (cf. Mt 21: 33+; 22:1+) are a favourite theme of Luke, cf. Ac 13: 5+; he uses it again as a conclusion to Ac, 28:26-27.

z. Var. 'When they left they felt it appropriate to'.

10:2+; 17:4 sabbath. •When the meeting broke up many Jews and devout converts[aa] joined 43
Paul and Barnabas,[bb] and in their talks with them Paul and Barnabas urged
11:23; 14:22 them to remain faithful to the grace God had given them.[cc]

Paul and Barnabas preach to the pagans

The next sabbath almost the whole town assembled to hear the word of God.[dd] 44
5:17; 17:5 When they saw the crowds, the Jews, prompted by jealousy, used blasphemies 45
1 Th 2:14+ and contradicted everything Paul said. •Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out 46
13:5+; 18: boldly.[ee] 'We had to proclaim the word of God to you first, but since you have
6; 28:24 rejected it, since you do not think yourselves worthy of eternal life, we must turn
1:8 to the pagans. •For this is what the Lord commanded us to do when he said: 47

Is 49:6 *I have made you a light for the nations,*
Jn 8:12+ *so that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth.'*[ff]
15:14; 26:23

2:46-47+ It made the pagans very happy to hear this and they thanked the Lord for his 48
Rm 8:28 message;[gg] all who were destined for eternal life became believers.[hh] •Thus the 49
3:15+
6:7+ word of the Lord spread through the whole countryside.
10:2+ But the Jews worked upon some of the devout women of the upper 50
classes and the leading men of the city and persuaded them to turn against Paul
18:6 and Barnabas and expel them from their territory. •So they shook the dust 51
Lk 9:5;
10-11p from their feet in defiance and went off to Iconium; •but the disciples were filled 52
2:46+
Mt 10:14 with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Iconium evangelised

13:5+ 14 At Iconium they went to the Jewish synagogue, as they had at Antioch,[a] 1
and they spoke so effectively that a great many Jews and Greeks became
believers.[b]
17:13 Some of the Jews, however, refused to believe, and they poisoned the minds 2
1 Th 2:14+ of the pagans against the brothers.[c]
4:29-30; Accordingly Paul and Barnabas stayed on for some time, preaching fearlessly 3
13:46+ for the Lord; and the Lord supported all they said about his gift of grace, allowing
20:24,32
Mk 16:17-20 signs and wonders to be performed by them.
The people in the city were divided,[d] some supported the Jews, others the 4
apostles, •but eventually with the connivance of the authorities a move was 5
2 Tm 3:11 made by pagans as well as Jews to make attacks on them and to stone them.
When the apostles came to hear of this, they went off for safety to Lycaonia where, 6
in the towns of Lystra and Derbe and in the surrounding country,[e] •they preached 7
the Good News.

3:1-10 **Healing of a cripple**

A man sat there[f] who had never walked in his life, because his feet were 8
crippled from birth; •and as he listened to Paul preaching, he managed to catch 9
his eye. Seeing that the man had the faith to be cured,[g] •Paul said in a loud voice, 10
'Get to your feet—stand up', and the cripple jumped up and began to walk.
When the crowd saw what Paul had done they shouted in the language of 11
28:6 Lycaonia, 'These people are gods who have come down to us disguised as men'.
They addressed Barnabas as Zeus, and since Paul was the principal speaker they 12
called him Hermes.[h] •The priests of Zeus-outside-the-Gate,[i] proposing that all 13
the people should offer sacrifice with them, brought garlanded oxen to the gates.
When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard what was happening they tore their 14
clothes,[j] and rushed into the crowd, shouting, •'Friends, what do you think you 15
3:12; 10:26 are doing? We are only human beings like you. We have come with good news
2:38+; 3: to make you turn from these empty idols to the living God[k] who made heaven
19+
17:22-30+ and earth and the sea and all that these hold.[l] •In the past he allowed each nation 16
Ps 147:20
Ws 13:1 to go its own way; •but even then he did not leave you without evidence of himself 17
Jr 5:24 in the good things he does for you: he sends you rain from heaven, he makes your

18 crops grow when they should, he gives you food and makes you happy.' •Even this speech, however, was scarcely enough to stop the crowd offering them sacrifice.

The mission is disrupted

19 Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium, and turned the people against the apostles. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the town, 20 thinking he was dead. •The disciples came crowding round him but, as they did so, he stood up and went back to the town. The next day he and Barnabas went off to Derbe.

21 Having preached the Good News in that town and made a considerable number 22 of disciples, they went back through Lystra and Iconium to Antioch. •They put fresh heart into the disciples,[m] encouraging them to persevere in the faith. 'We all have to experience many hardships' they said 'before we enter the kingdom 23 of God.' •In each of these churches they appointed elders,[n] and with prayer and fasting they commended them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

24 25 They passed through Pisidia and reached Pamphylia. •Then after proclaiming 26 the word[o] at Perga they went down to Attalia •and from there sailed for Antioch, where they had originally been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

27 On their arrival they assembled the church and gave an account of all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith[p] to the pagans. 28 They stayed there with the disciples for some time.

1 Th 2:14+
2 Co 11:25
2 Tm 3:11

15:32,41; 18:23
11:23; 13:43
Mt 10:22; 24:13
Rm 5:3-4
2 Th 1:4f
2 Tm 2:12; 3:12
Heb 10:36
13:3

13:2-3

14:3; 15:4, 12; 21:19

15:35

Controversy at Antioch

Ga 2:1-9

1 **15** [a]Then some men came down from Judaea[b] and taught the brothers, 'Unless you have yourselves circumcised in the tradition of Moses you cannot be

21:21,25

aa. 'converts' or 'proselytes', here in the wide sense, is equivalent to 'those who feared God' or 'those who worshipped God', cf. 10:2+.

bb. Add. 'considering it fitting to accept baptism'.

cc. Add. West. 'And in this way the word of God spread through the whole town'.

dd. Var. 'the word of the Lord', or '(to hear) Paul who spoke for a long time about the Lord'.

ee. The 'courage' and 'confidence' of the apostles has been already stressed, 4:13,29,31; Luke repeatedly attributes these qualities to Paul, 9:27-28; 14:3; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31, and Paul himself lays emphasis on them, 1 Th 2:2; 2 Co 3:12; 7:4; Ph 1:20; Ep 3:12; 6:19-20.

ff. LXX text quoted freely. The words may be taken either as referring to Paul himself (cf. 26:17-18), apostle and teacher of the pagans (cf. Rm 11:13; 1 Tm 2:7; Ep 3:8, etc.), or to the risen Christ (see Ac 26:23 which also, it seems, is based on Is 49:6; and see Lk 2:32, dependent on Is 49:6,9): Christ is the light of the pagans, but since only the apostles' witness can spread this light, cf. Ac 1:8+, Paul considers this prophecy as a command that he must carry out.

gg. Var. 'the word of God'.

hh. 'eternal life', cf. v. 46, i.e. the life of the world to come, cf. 3:15+; only those achieve it whose names are 'written in heaven', Lk 10:20, in 'the book of life', Ph 4:3; Rv 20:12+. 'Destined for the life of the world to come' was a common rabbinic expression. In Christian teaching the first prerequisite of this predestination to glory is faith in Christ. See Jn 10:26+; Rm 8:28-30, and earlier in Ac 2:39.

14 a. Lit. 'At Iconium they went to the Jewish synagogue in the same way (or: together)'.

b. V. 1 is continued in v. 3.

c. Refusal to believe becomes in a short time active opposition, cf. 19:9; 28:24 and 9:23; 13:45,50; 17:5-8,13; 18:6,13.

d. Continuation of v. 2.

e. Lystra, a Roman colony, Timothy's home town, cf. 16:1-2. The events of vv. 8-19 take place in Lystra; Paul is not in Derbe until v. 20.

f. All the MSS have 'in Lystra' but this is evidently an addition, cf. v. 20b.

g. Others translate 'to be saved'. The condition for the miracle is faith, cf. Mt 8:10+.

h. Hermes (the Latin 'Mercury') was the gods' mouthpiece.

i. His temple was outside the walls.

j. Sign of displeasure, cf. Mt 26:65.

k. In preaching against polytheism it was customary to contrast the true God with the false, the living God with helpless idols, and to make an appeal for conversion. For a summary of Paul's preaching to the pagans see 1 Th 1:9-10 and Ga 4:9; cf. Ac 15:19; 26:18,20.

l. That God creates the universe shows that he is a living God: this proposition is found in Jewish creeds. Cf. Ex 20:11; Ne 9:6; Ps 146:6; Ac 4:24; 17:24; Rv 10:6; 14:7.

m. Cf. Rm 1:11; 1 Th 3:2,13; Lk 22:32.

n. The elders, cf. 11:30+, are here chosen by the apostles, not by the community; so also Tt 1:5.

o. Add. 'of the Lord' or 'of God'.

p. Paul uses a similar metaphor, 1 Co 16:9; 2 Co 2:12; Col 4:3.

15 a. The events of this chapter raise several difficulties: 1. vv. 5-7a repeat vv. 1-2a as if the author, having two different accounts of how the controversy started, decided to give both as they stood. 2. V. 6 gives the impression that the community leaders held a private meeting, but vv. 12,22 suggest the debate took place before the whole Christian assembly. 3. The meeting issues a decree about how Christian converts from paganism must observe purity rites, and it entrusts this decree to Paul, vv. 22f; later, however (in 21:25), James seems to assume that Paul was then being informed of this decree for the first time. Paul himself does not speak of the decree either in Ga 2:6 (speaking of the Jerusalem meeting) or in 1 Co 8-10; Rm 14 (discussing similar problems). 4. Though the decree of Ac 15:29 was primarily intended for the churches of Syria and Cilicia, 15:23, Luke has nothing to say about Paul publishing it when he travelled through those

saved'.•This led to disagreement, and after Paul and Barnabas had had a long argument with these men it was arranged that Paul and Barnabas and others of the church[c] should go up to Jerusalem and discuss the problem with the apostles[d] and elders. 2

All the members of the church saw them off,[e] and as they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria they told how the pagans had been converted, and this news was received with the greatest satisfaction by the brothers. •When they arrived in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church and by the apostles and elders, and gave an account of all that God had done with them. 3 4

21:19

Controversy at Jerusalem

15:1 But certain members of the Pharisees' party who had become believers objected,[f] insisting that the pagans should be circumcised and instructed to keep the Law of Moses.[g] •The apostles and elders[h] met to look into the matter, •and after the discussion had gone on a long time, Peter stood up[i] and addressed them. 5 6 7

2:14+

Peter's speech

10:1–11: 18+ 'My brothers,' he said 'you know perfectly well that in the early days God made his choice among you: the pagans were to learn the Good News from me and so become believers. •In fact God, who can read everyone's heart, showed his approval of them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he had to us. •God made no distinction between them and us, since he purified their hearts by faith.[j] It would only provoke God's anger[k] now, surely, if you imposed on the disciples the very burden that neither we nor our ancestors were strong enough to support? Remember, we believe that we are saved in the same way as they are: through the grace of the Lord Jesus.'[l] 8 9 10 11

10:44–47; 11:15–17 11:17+ Mt 23:4 Ga 5:1 Rm 7 Ga 3:10–12

This silenced the entire assembly,[m] and they listened to Barnabas and Paul describing all the signs and wonders God had worked through them among the pagans. 12

14:3,27; 21:19 Ga 2:7

James' speech

12:17+ When they had finished it was James[n] who spoke. 'My brothers,' he said 'listen to me. •Simeon[o] has described how God first arranged to enlist a people for his name out of the pagans. •This is entirely in harmony with the words of the prophets, since the scriptures say:[p] 13 14 15

13:47; 18:10 Rm 9:26; 15:9–12; 16:26 2 P 1

Am 9:11-12

> *After that I shall return* 16
> *and rebuild the fallen House of David;*
> *I shall rebuild it from its ruins*
> *and restore it.*
> *Then the rest of mankind,* 17
> *all the pagans who are consecrated to my name,[q]*
> *will look for the Lord,*
> *says the Lord who made this •known so long ago.[r]* 18

3:19+; 21:25 'I rule, then,[s] that instead of making things more difficult for pagans who turn to God, •we send them a letter telling them merely to abstain from anything polluted by idols,[t] from fornication,[u] from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.[v] •For Moses has always had his preachers in every town, and is read aloud in the synagogues every sabbath.' 19 20 21

13:27

The apostolic letter

Then the apostles and elders decided to choose delegates to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; the whole church concurred with this. They chose Judas known as Barsabbas[w] and Silas,[x] both leading men in the brotherhood, and gave them this letter to take with them: 22 23

15:40 1 Th 1 2 Th 1:1 1 P 5:12 16:4

'The apostles and elders, your brothers, send greetings to the brothers of pagan

birth in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. •We hear that some of our members have disturbed you with their demands and have unsettled your minds. They acted without any authority from us, •and so we have decided unanimously to elect delegates and to send them to you with Barnabas and Paul, men we highly respect who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. •Accordingly we are sending you Judas and Silas, who will confirm by word of mouth what we have written in this letter. •It has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves not to saddle you with any burden beyond these essentials: •you are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from fornication. Avoid these, and you will do what is right.[u] Farewell.'

Ac 15:1 Ga 2:12 9:15-16 1:8+; 5:32; 21:25

The delegates at Antioch

The party left and went down to Antioch, where they summoned the whole community and delivered the letter. •The community read it and were delighted with the encouragement it gave them. •Judas and Silas, being themselves prophets, spoke for a long time, encouraging and strengthening the brothers. •These two spent some time there, and then the brothers wished them peace and they went back to those who had sent them.[z] •Paul and Barnabas, however, stayed on in Antioch, and there with many others they taught and proclaimed the Good News, the word of the Lord.

11:27+ 14:22 14:28 2:42+

provinces, 15:41. Luke does mention it when speaking about Lycaonia, 16:4, but the terms of 15:19-21; 21:25 suggest that the decree was for all regions. All these difficulties may be explained by supposing that Luke has combined two distinct controversies and their varying solutions (Paul distinguishes them more clearly in Ga 2). One controversy was about the obligations of convert pagans to observe the Law, and Peter and Paul both took part, cf. Ga 2:1-10; the other controversy which took place later was about the social relations between the groups of Christian converts, those from Judaism and those from paganism, cf. Ga 2:11-14. In this James, in Perter's absence, took the leading part. Any contact with pagans involved legal impurity for Jews: cf. Ac 15:20+.

15 b. In Ga 2:12 there are several of them and they come from James

c. Ga 2:1-3 mentions Titus who had pagan blood.

d. The apostles, who are not mentioned either in 11:30 or in 21:18, are grouped here with the elders. cf. Ga 2:2-9 where Peter and John are grouped with James, 'brother of the Lord', as authorities in the Jerusalem church.

e. Others translate 'provided them with all they needed for the journey', cf. 1 Co 16:11; Tt 3:13.

f. In the current text there seems to be no connection between the Pharisees' intervention at Jerusalem and the events that happened at Antioch. The Western Text links them together 'But those who had told them to go up to the elders then stood up...'

g. According to Ga 2:3-5 they are thinking particularly of Titus who had accompanied Paul to Jerusalem.

h. Add. West. 'and the assembly', cf. v. 12.

i. Add. West. '(inspired) by the Spirit'.

j. An interpretation of God's message to Peter, 10:15; 11:9; cf. 10:28; Si 38:10.

k. Lit. 'put God to the test': i.e. to ask God for a miracle to prove his will when this has been made known already—a blasphemous frame of mind. In the present case God had made his attitude clear by sending the Spirit to Cornelius and his family.

l. A straight answer to the assertion in v. 1. The doctrine is that of Ga 2:15-21; 3:22-26; Rm 11:32; Ep 2:1-10; etc. On this score the Jews' position is not privileged, cf. Ac 13:38; Ga 5:6; 6:15.

m. Western Text 'When the elders had expressed their agreement with what Peter had said, this silenced...'

n. Ga 2:9 witnesses to the importance of the part played by James.

o. Simon Peter's semitic name, cf. 2 P 1:1.

p. The text is quoted according to the LXX; the argument depends on variants peculiar to that version and probably comes from hellenistic circles, though here it is ascribed to the leader of the 'Hebrew' party.

q. Lit. 'on whom my name has been invoked' (or 'over whom ... pronounced'). To invoke the name of Yahweh over a people, cf. 2 Ch 7:14, or over a place, cf. 2 Ch 6:34, is to consecrate it to him.

r. Lit. 'says the Lord who makes these things known from of old'. Var. 'says the Lord who does these things. From of old the Lord knows his work.'

s. James settles the discussion, and the terms of the apostolic letter are those of his own pronouncement. Ga 2:9 also suggests that James at this period occupied the first place in the Jerusalem church, cf. Ac 12:17+. A variant reduces this impression 'And so, for my part...'

t. The flesh of animals slain for pagan sacrifice, cf. v. 29 and 21:25. See 1 Co 8 10.

u. This word probably refers to all the irregular marriages listed in Lv 18.

v. Western Text omits 'the meat of strangled animals' and adds, after 'blood': 'and not to do to others what one would not have done to oneself' (so also in v. 29). Another omits 'fornication'. The ritual exceptions mentioned by James show clearly the sort of thing that was at issue and answer the question asked in Ac 11:3 and Ga 2:12-14: what must hellenistic Christians do for Judaeo-Christians to mix with them without incurring legal impurity? James decides to keep only those prescriptions for purity that have a fundamentally religious meaning: 1. to eat idol-meats implies sharing in sacrilegious worship, cf. 1 Co 8,10. 2. Blood symbolises life, and that belongs to God alone. The severity with which the Law forbids it, Lv 1:5+, explains the Jews' reluctance to dispense pagans from this prohibition. 3. As blood remains in strangled animals, this is part of the previous prohibition. 4. The table of irregular marriages is only included here because they involved legal impurity, not by way of moral judgement.

w. Not mentioned elsewhere, cf. 1:23.

x. Silas, missionary companion of Paul, 15:40–18:5, is the same as the Silvanus mentioned in 1 Th 1:1; 2 Th 1:1; 2 Co 1:19; 1 P 5:12.

y. Western Text adds 'under the guidance of the Holy Spirit'.

z. Western Text adds v. 34 'But Silas decided to stay there'. Several MSS further add 'Jude set out by himself'.

IV. PAUL'S MISSIONS

Paul separates from Barnabas and recruits Silas

On a later occasion Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us go back and visit all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord, so that we can see how
12:12+ the brothers are doing'. •Barnabas suggested taking John Mark, •but Paul was not
13:13 in favour of taking along the very man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had refused to share in their work.

After a violent quarrel they parted company, and Barnabas sailed off with
15:22+ Mark to Cyprus. •Before Paul left, he chose Silas to accompany him and was
13:3 commended by the brothers to the grace of God.[aa]

Lycaonia: Paul recruits Timothy

14:22+ He travelled through Syria and Cilicia, consolidating the churches.[bb]

16 From there he went to Derbe, and then on to Lystra. Here there was a
1 Tm 1:2; 2 Tm 1:5; 3:15; Phm 1; Heb 13:23 disciple called Timothy,[a] whose mother was a Jewess who had become a believer; but his father was a Greek. •The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy, •and Paul, who wanted to have him as a travelling companion, had him circumcised. This was on account of the Jews in the locality[b] where everyone knew his father was a Greek.

15:23-29 As they visited one town after another, they passed on the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, with instructions to respect them.

2:41+; 14:22+ So the churches grew strong in the faith, as well as growing daily in numbers.

The crossing into Asia Minor

Ga 4:13-15 They travelled through Phrygia and the Galatian country,[c] having been told by the Holy Spirit not to preach the word in Asia. •When they reached the frontier
Rm 8:9; Ph 1:19; 1 P 1:11 of Mysia they thought to cross it into Bithynia, but as the Spirit of Jesus[d] would not allow them, •they went through[e] Mysia and came down to Troas.

10:9-23 One night Paul had a vision: a Macedonian appeared and appealed to him in these words, 'Come across to Macedonia and help us'. •Once he had seen this vision we[f] lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to bring them the Good News.

Arrival at Philippi

Sailing from Troas we made a straight run for Samothrace; the next day for Neapolis, •and from there for Philippi, a Roman colony and the principal city of that particular district of Macedonia.[g] After a few days in this city •we went
13:5+ along the river outside the gates as it was the sabbath and this was a customary place for prayer.[h] We sat down and preached to the women who had come to the
10:2+ meeting. •One of these women was called Lydia, a devout woman from the town of Thyatira who was in the purple-dye trade. She listened to us, and the Lord opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying. •After she and her household
1:5+ had been baptised[i] she sent us an invitation: 'If you really think me a true believer
10:48 in the Lord,' she said 'come and stay with us'; and she would take no refusal.[j]

Imprisonment of Paul and Silas

One day as we were going to prayer, we met a slave-girl who was a soothsayer[k] and made a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes. •This girl started
19:15; Mt 8:29+ following Paul and the rest of us and shouting, 'Here are the servants of the Most High God; they have come to tell you how to be saved!' •She did this every day
Mk 16:17 afterwards until Paul lost his temper one day and turned round and said to the
Mk 1:25-26+; 3:16+ spirit, 'I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to leave that woman'. The spirit went out of her there and then.

19:24-27 When her masters saw that there was no hope of making any more money

out of her, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the law courts in the
20 market place •where they charged them before the magistrates and said, 'These
21 people are causing a disturbance in our city. They are Jews •and are advocating
22 practices which it is unlawful for us as Romans to accept or follow.'[l] •The crowd
joined in and showed its hostility to them, so the magistrates had them stripped Ph 1:30 1 Th 2:2
23 and ordered them to be flogged. •They were given many lashes and then thrown 2 Co 11:25
24 into prison, and the gaoler was told to keep a close watch on them. •So, following
his instructions, he threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the
stocks.

The miraculous deliverance of Paul and Silas

25 Late that night Paul and Silas were praying and singing God's praises, while Col 3:16
26 the other prisoners listened. •Suddenly there was an earthquake that shook the 4:31
prison to its foundations. All the doors flew open and the chains fell from all the 12:6-11
27 prisoners. •When the gaoler woke and saw the doors wide open he drew his sword 12:18-19; 27:42
28 and was about to commit suicide, presuming that the prisoners had escaped. •But
Paul shouted at the top of his voice, 'Don't do yourself any harm; we are all here'.
29 The gaoler called for lights, then rushed in, threw himself trembling[m] at the
30 feet of Paul and Silas, •and escorted them out, saying, 'Sirs, what must I do to be
31 saved?' •They told him, 'Become a believer in the Lord Jesus, and you will be 2:21+; 16:15+
32 saved, and your household too'. •Then they preached the word of the Lord[n] to
33 him and to all his family. •Late as it was, he took them to wash their wounds,
34 and was baptised then and there with all his household. •Afterwards he took 1:5+; 8:36, 38
them home and gave them a meal, and the whole family celebrated their con- 2:46+
version to belief in God.
35 When it was daylight the magistrates sent the officers with the order: 'Release
36 those men'.[o] •The gaoler reported the message to Paul, 'The magistrates have
37 sent an order for your release; you can go now and be on your way'.[p] •'What!'
Paul replied 'They flog Roman citizens[q] in public and without trial and throw 22:25
us into prison, and then think they can push us out on the quiet! Oh no! They
must come and escort us out themselves.'
38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, who were horrified to hear the
39 men were Roman citizens. •They came and begged them to leave the town.[r] 22:29

aa. Var. 'the grace of the Lord'.

bb. Western Text adds 'passing on to them the injunctions of the elders', cf. 16:4.

16 a. Timothy became Paul's constant companion, cf. 17:14f; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; 1 Th 3:2,6; 1 Co 4:17; 16:10; 2 Co 1:19; Rm 16:21, and one of his most faithful disciples to the very end (see 1 Tm and 2 Tm which are addressed to him).

b. Paul opposed circumcision for converts from paganism, Ga 2:3; 5:1-12, but Timothy had a Jewish mother and so, by Jewish law, was an Israelite.

c. Galatia strictly so called, cf. Introduction to the Letters of St Paul. When he left Iconium therefore, Paul intended to travel westwards to Ephesus. But the Spirit intervened and he turned N. into Phrygia, then in a north-westerly direction to 'Galatian country', where illness kept him for a time, Ga 4:13-15, preached the gospel in these places and returned later to visit the disciples there, Ac 18:23.

d. Om. 'of Jesus'.

e. Preferable to 'they skirted'.

f. Sudden transition to first person plural: the first 'We-section' of Ac, but see 11:27+. Cf. Introduction.

g. Philippi, a town in the principal district of the province of Macedonia; it had become a Roman colony and was a completely Latin city, its administration modelled on that of Rome.

h. The Jews had no synagogue in Philippi; they met by the side of the river (for ritual ablutions).

i. Lydia's conversion brought her household to the faith; cf. 10:33; 16:31,34; 18:8; 1 Co 1:16.

j. Unusual for Paul: cf. 20:33-35; 1 Th 2:9; 2 Th 3:8; 1 Co 9, though on a later occasion the Philippians persuaded him to accept help again, cf. Ph 4:10-18. He would have accepted it from no one else; it is the greatest compliment to the charity of Lydia and of the other Philippian Christians.

k. Lit. 'who had a Python-spirit', so called from the serpent Python of the ancient Delphic oracle.

l. The practices referred to are Jewish, cf. 6:14; 15:1; 21:21; 26:3; 28:17; Jn 19:40; the accusers make no distinction between Christian and Jew. The precise charge is proselytism: though the Jews were allowed to practise their religion, they had no right to proselytise Romans. Christian propaganda was therefore against the law.

m. This new fear comes from his realising that he has treated as criminals men who are envoys of God.

n. Var. 'the word of God'

o. Var. 'When it was daylight the magistrates met in the market place; remembering the earthquake that had taken place they were afraid and sent the officers to say: Release the men you arrested yesterday.'

p. Add. 'in peace'.

q. The *lex Porcia* forbade (under heavy penalties) the scourging of a Roman citizen.

r. Alex. (and Antiochene) Text 'They came to apologise, and when they had taken them out they asked them to leave the town'. Western Text 'And going with a number of friends to the prison, they urged them to go out, saying: We had not realised what you wanted and that you were holy men. When they had taken them out, they begged them: Get out of this town in case those who shouted against you get another mob together.'

From the prison they went to Lydia's house where they saw all the brothers and 40
gave them some encouragement; then they left.

Thessalonika: difficulties with the Jews

Ph 4:16 17 Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they eventually reached 1
13:5+ Thessalonika, where there was a Jewish synagogue. •Paul as usual intro- 2
duced himself and for three consecutive sabbaths developed the arguments from
Lk 24:25-27, 46-47 scripture for them, •explaining and proving how it was ordained that the Christ 3
2:23+; 18: 5+ should suffer and rise from the dead. 'And the Christ' he said 'is this Jesus whom
13:43 I am proclaiming to you.' •Some of them[a] were convinced and joined Paul and 4
10:2+ Silas, and so did a great many God-fearing people and Greeks,[b] as well as a number
of rich women.

13:45+ 1 Th 2:14+ The Jews, full of resentment, enlisted the help of a gang from the market place, 5
stirred up a crowd, and soon had the whole city in an uproar. They made for
Rm 16:21 Jason's house,[c] hoping to find them there and drag them off to the People's
Assembly; •however, they only found Jason and some of the brothers, and these 6
they dragged before the city council, shouting, 'The people who have been
24:5 turning the whole world upside down have come here now; •they have been 7
Lk 23:2 Jn 19:12-15 staying at Jason's. They have broken every one of Caesar's edicts by claiming
that there is another emperor,[d] Jesus.' •This accusation alarmed the citizens 8
and the city councillors •and they made Jason and the rest give security before 9
setting them free.

Fresh difficulties at Beroea

When it was dark the brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away to Beroea,[e] 10
13:5+ where they visited the Jewish synagogue as soon as they arrived. •Here the Jews 11
were more open-minded than those in Thessalonika, and they welcomed the word
Jn 5:39 very readily; every day they studied the scriptures to check whether it was true.
Many Jews became believers, and so did many Greek women from the upper 12
classes and a number of the men.

When the Jews of Thessalonika heard that the word of God was being preached 13
14:2+ by Paul in Beroea as well, they went there to make trouble and stir up the people.
1 Th 3:2 So the brothers arranged for Paul to go immediately as far as the coast, leaving 14
Silas and Timothy behind. •Paul's escort took him as far as Athens, and went 15
18:5 back with instructions for Silas and Timothy to rejoin Paul as soon as they could.[f]

Paul in Athens

Paul waited for them in Athens and there his whole soul was revolted at the 16
13:5+ sight of a city given over to idolatry.[g] •In the synagogue he held debates with the 17
10:2+ Jews and the God-fearing, but in the market place he had debates every day with
anyone who would face him.[h] •Even a few Epicurean and Stoic philosophers[i] 18
argued with him. Some said, 'Does this parrot know what he's talking about?'[j]
And, because he was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection,[k] others said,
'He sounds like a propagandist for some outlandish gods'.[l]

1 Co 1:22 They invited him to accompany them to the Council of the Areopagus,[m] where 19
they said to him, 'How much of this new teaching you were speaking about are
we allowed to know? •Some of the things you said seemed startling to us and we 20
2 Tm 3:7 would like to find out what they mean.' •The one amusement the Athenians and 21
the foreigners living there seem to have, apart from discussing the latest ideas,
is listening to lectures about them.

So Paul stood before the whole Council of the Areopagus and made this 22
speech:

Paul's speech before the Council of the Areopagus[n]

'Men of Athens, I have seen for myself how extremely scrupulous you are
in all religious matters, •because I noticed, as I strolled round admiring your 23

sacred monuments, that you had an altar inscribed: To An Unknown God.[o] Well,
the God whom I proclaim is in fact the one whom you already worship without
knowing it.

24 'Since the God who made the world and everything in it[p] is himself Lord of heaven and earth, he does not make his home in shrines made by human hands. 1 K 8:27 Is 42:5 *14:15+*
25 Nor is he dependent on anything that human hands can do for him, since he can never be in need of anything; on the contrary, it is he who gives everything— 7:48-50
26 including life and breath—to everyone. •From one single stock[q] he not only created the whole human race so that they could occupy the entire earth, but he decreed how long each nation should flourish and what the boundaries of its
27 territory should be.[r] •And he did this so that all nations might seek the deity[s] and, by feeling their way towards him, succeed in finding him. Yet in fact he is not
28 far from any of us, •since it is in him that we live, and move, and exist,[t] as indeed some of your own writers[u] have said: 2 M 7:23; 14:35 Ps 50:12 Gn 10 Dt 32:8 Jb 12:33 Dt 4:29 Ps 145:18 Ws 13:6 Is 55:6 Rm 1:19 *Ps 104*

"We are all his children".[v] 2 P 1:4

29 'Since we are the children of God, we have no excuse for thinking that the deity looks like anything in gold, silver or stone that has been carved and designed by a man.[w] 19:26 Is 40:18 Rm 1:22-23
30 'God overlooked that sort of thing when men were ignorant, but now he is
31 telling everyone everywhere that they must repent, •because he has fixed a day when the whole world will be judged, and judged in righteousness,[x] and he has appointed a man to be the judge. And God has publicly proved this by raising this man from the dead.'[y] Rm 3:25-26 2:38+ Lk 24:47 10:42+
32 At this mention of rising from the dead, some of them burst out laughing;
33 others said, 'We would like to hear you talk about this again'.[z] •After that Paul 24:25

17 a. Aristarchus, one of Paul's most faithful companions, cf. 20:4; Col 4:10, was probably one of them.

b. Var. 'Greek worshippers of God'. The reading here preferred distinguishes 'those who worship God', 10:2+, from 'Greeks' not previously influenced by Jewish proselytism. Most of the conversions in Thessalonika were made from paganism, cf. 1 Th 1:9-10, etc.

c. Possibly the Jason of Rm 16:21.

d. Actually, the Christians deliberately avoided calling Jesus by the emperor's title *basileus* ('king'); they preferred 'Christ' (Messiah) and 'Lord'.

e. Despite their departure the persecution at Thessalonika went on, cf. 1 Th 2:14.

f. Luke is summarising and simplifying. Timothy must have gone with Paul because Paul later sends him from Athens to Thessalonika, 1 Th 3:1f.

g. Athens was the intellectual metropolis of pagan hellenism, and to Luke was a symbol. This is evident from the fact that Paul's sermon there, the only sample of his preaching to the pagans, is the only one in which he argues philosophically.

h. The one explicit mention in Ac of this kind of preaching (though cf. 14:7f).

i. The two prevailing philosophical systems.

j. Lit. 'What does this seed-picker want to say?' The local Athenian word *spermologos* was used of birds that peck, crows etc. It came to mean 'beggar', one who picks up food wherever he can find it, and also a garrulous man who speaks in clichés, parrot-wise.

k. Cf. v. 32. They assume *Anastasis* ('Resurrection') is the name of a goddess, consort of Jesus.

l. Socrates was accused of the same thing.

m. A hill to the S. of the Agora. The word means also the Athenian supreme council which held its sessions there. The text may be understood in two ways: either the philosophers lead Paul 'on to (the hill of) the Areopagus', away from the city centre for easier listening, or (preferably) they lead him 'before (the Council of) the Areopagus'.

n. Paul preaches on the knowledge of God, a theme very popular in the propaganda of contemporary hellenistic Judaism. The pagans are accused of not knowing God, v. 23, the proof being that they worship idols v. 29. This ignorance is culpable, v. 30, since all men are capable of knowing God as creator and controller of the cosmos, vv. 24-29. Cf. the same line of argument in 14:15-17; Ws 13-14; Rm 1:19-25; Ep 4:17-19.

o. The pagans used to dedicate altars 'to the unknown gods' lest they provoke the vengeance of gods whose names they did not know. Paul turns the practice to his own purpose and thus parries the charge of preaching 'outlandish gods'.

p. This idea was common in Greek thought and hellenistic Judaism; it is a form of the old biblical theme in Am 5:21f; 1 Ch 29:10f; Ps 50:9-13, etc.

q. Var. 'of one blood', 'of one nation', 'of one race'.

r. Alternative translations 'determining the division of times' or 'determining the order of the seasons (cf. 14:17) and the bounds of human habitation' (man was not to occupy the whole earth but only part of it). The general meaning is the same: the order of the cosmos is enough to lead to a knowledge of God.

s. Var. 'God' or 'the Lord'.

t. Expression suggested by the poet Epimenides of Cnossos (6th c. B.C.).

u. Lit. 'of your people'. Var. 'of your poets' or 'of your sages'.

v. Quotation from the *Phainomena* of Aratus, a poet of Cilician origin (3rd c. B.C.). Cleanthes the Stoic (3rd c.) used almost identical language.

w. This form of attack on idolatry has ancient precedent, cf. Is 40:20+.

x. Cf. Ps 9:8; 96:13; 98:9. The apostles set their appeal for repentance against the background of judgement, cf. especially 10:42-43; 1 Th 1:10.

y. Christ's resurrection justifies belief in his coming as judge and saviour at the end of time, cf. Rm 14:9; 2 Tm 4:1; 1 P 4:5.

z. In the Greek world, even among Christians, the doctrine of the resurrection met stubborn resistance from preconceived ideas, cf. 1 Co 15:12f. The Jerusalem Sanhedrists condemned and attacked this Christian dogma; the Athenians of the Areopagus were content to mock. Paul's failure in Athens was all but complete; from now on he refuses to use the devices of Greek philosophy, 1 Co 2:1-5.

left them, •but there were some who attached themselves to him and became believers, among them Dionysius the Areopagite[aa] and a woman called Damaris, and others besides. 34

Foundation of the church of Corinth

Rm 16:3 1 Co 16:19 2 Tm 4:19

18 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth,[a] •where he met a Jew called Aquila whose family came from Pontus. He and his wife Priscilla[b] had recently left Italy because an edict of Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome.[c] Paul went to visit them, •and when he found they were tentmakers, of the same trade as himself, he lodged with them, and they worked together.[d] •Every sabbath he used to hold debates in the synagogues, trying to convert Jews as well as Greeks. 1 2 3 4

20:33-35 1 Co 4:12 13:5+

17:15 1 Th 3:5-7 5:42; 8:5; 9:22

After Silas and Timothy had arrived from Macedonia,[e] Paul devoted all his time to preaching, declaring to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.[f] •When they turned against him and started to insult him, he took his cloak and shook it out in front of them,[g] saying, 'Your blood be on your own heads; from now on I can go to the pagans with a clear conscience'. •Then he left the synagogue and moved to the house next door that belonged to a worshipper of God called Justus.[h] Crispus, president of the synagogue, and his whole household, all became believers in the Lord. A great many Corinthians who had heard him became believers and were baptised.[i] •One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, 'Do not be afraid to speak out, nor allow yourself to be silenced: •I am with you. I have so many people on my side in this city that no one will even attempt to hurt you.' •So Paul stayed there preaching the word of God among them for eighteen months. 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

13:51+ Mt 27:24-25 *Ac 13:5+;* 13:46-47, 51+; 20: 26; 28:28 1 Co 1:14 1:5+ 23:11 Jr 1:8 1 Co 2:3 *Jn 10:16*

The Jews take Paul to court

1 Th 2:14+ 21:27-28

But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia,[j] the Jews made a concerted attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal. •'We accuse this man' they said 'of persuading people to worship God in a way that breaks the Law.'[k] •Before Paul could open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'Listen, you Jews. If this were a misdemeanour or a crime, I would not hesitate to attend to you; •but if it is only quibbles about words and names, and about your own Law, then you must deal with it yourselves—I have no intention of making legal decisions about things like that.' •Then he sent them out of the court, •and at once they all turned on Sosthenes,[l] the synagogue president, and beat him in front of the court house. Gallio refused to take any notice at all. 12 13 14 15 16 17

23:29; 25: 18-19 Jn 18:31

Return to Antioch and departure for the third journey

After staying on for some time, Paul took leave of the brothers and sailed for Syria,[m] accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut off, because of a vow he had made.[n] 18

Rm 16:1 21:23

When they reached Ephesus, he left them, but first he went alone to the synagogue to debate with the Jews. •They asked him to stay longer but he declined, though when he left he said, 'I will come back another time, God willing'. Then he sailed from Ephesus. 19 20 21

13:5+ 10:48 *Jm 4:15*

He landed at Caesarea, and went up to greet the church.[o] Then he came down to Antioch •where he spent a short time before continuing his journey through the Galatian country and then through Phrygia, encouraging all the followers. 22 23

16:6+; 14:22+

Apollos

19:1

An Alexandrian Jew named Apollos[p] now arrived in Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, with a sound knowledge of the scriptures, and yet, •though he had been given instruction in the Way of the Lord and preached with great spiritual earnestness and was accurate in all the details he taught about Jesus, he had only experienced the baptism of John. •When Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak 24 25 26

1 Co 1:12; 16:12 Tt 3:13 9:2+ 19:3-5

boldly in the synagogue, they took an interest in him and gave him further instruction about the Way.[q] 13:46+ Rm 16:3

27 When Apollos thought of crossing over to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote asking the disciples to welcome him.[r] When he arrived there he was 2 Co 3:1
28 able by God's grace to help the believers considerably •by the energetic way he refuted the Jews in public and demonstrated from the scriptures that Jesus was 9:22; 18:5+ the Christ.

The disciples of John at Ephesus

1 **19** While Apollos was in Corinth,[a] Paul made his way overland as far as 18:24
2 Ephesus,[b] where he found a number of disciples. •When he asked, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' they answered, 'No, 8:15-17 Jn 7:39
3 we were never even told there was such a thing as a Holy Spirit'.[c] •'Then how
4 were you baptised?' he asked. 'With John's baptism' they replied. •'John's Mt 3:6+
baptism' said Paul 'was a baptism of repentance; but he insisted that the people 1:5+; 2: 38+; 13: 24-25+
should believe in the one who was to come after him—in other words Jesus.'
5 6 When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, •and 1:5+
the moment Paul had laid hands on them the Holy Spirit came down on them, 8:15-17+ 1 Tm 4:14+
7 and they began to speak with tongues and to prophesy. •There were about twelve Ac 2:4+; 11:27+
of these men.

Foundation of the church of Ephesus[d]

8 He began by going to the synagogue, where he spoke out boldly and argued 13:5+,46+
9 persuasively about the kingdom of God. He did this for three months, •till the 1:3+; 20:25

aa. Luke's readers must have known him. He became the subject of legend, especially since the 5th c. when an author (the 'pseudo-Dionysius') published various mystical writings under his name. Later legend identifies him with St Denys, first Bishop of Paris (3rd c.).

18 a. Corinth, rebuilt by Julius Caesar, became capital of the Roman province of Achaia. Its population was largely Roman and Latin-speaking, but brisk trade had attracted people of all nations. It had a considerable Jewish colony. The immorality of Corinth was proverbial.

b. Also called Prisca, Rm 16:3; 1 Co 16:19; 2 Tm 4:19.

c. This edict, mentioned by Suetonius, was issued in 49 or 50. It was effective for a very short time, cf. Rm 16:3; Ac 28:17.

d. Though Paul acknowledges the missionary's right to sustenance, 1 Co 9:6-14; Ga 6:6; 2 Th 3:9; cf. Lk 10:7, he himself always practised a trade, 1 Co 4:12, not wishing to be a burden on anyone, 1 Th 2:9; 2 Th 3:8; 2 Co 12:13f, and in order to prove his singleness of purpose, Ac 20:33f; 1 Co 9:15-18; 2 Co 11:7-12. Only from the Philippians did he accept help, Ph 4:10-18; 2 Co 11:8f, cf. Ac 16:15+. He recommended his followers to do the same to supply their own needs, 1 Th 4:11f; 2 Th 3:10-12, and those of the poor, Ac 20:35; Ep 4:28.

e. It was after this that Paul wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians.

f. That Jesus was Messiah was the distinctive theme of the preaching to the Jews, cf. 2:36; 3:18,20; 5:42; 8:5,12; 9:22; 17:3; 18:28; 24:24; 26:23.

g. Symbolically breaking off relations. The following sentence is biblical, cf. Lv 20:9-16; 2 S 1:16, and means that the Jews must accept full responsibility for the consequences. Their 'blood', i.e. their punishment, is not Paul's affair; his conscience is clear (lit. 'I am clean').

h. Var. 'Titus Justus' or 'Titius Justus'.

i. Western Text add. 'believing in God through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ', cf. 8:36+. The converts had therefore been pagans.

j. An inscription from Delphi puts Gallio's proconsulate in 52. Paul's arraignment before Gallio must have been towards the end (v. 18) of his eighteen-month stay (v. 11) in Corinth: probably the spring of 52.

k. Ambiguous term capable of meaning the Roman law, cf. 16:21; 17:7, or the Jewish Law which was itself guaranteed by Roman law. Gallio chooses to see the charge as a question of the interpretation of Jewish Law (v. 15) in which he claims no competence.

l. Possibly the Sosthenes of 1 Co 1:1.

m. Back to Antioch, his headquarters.

n. The Greek is obscure, but apparently it was Paul, not Aquila, who took the vow. To take a vow was to be *nazir*, cf. Nb 6:1+, for the period it covered, usually thirty days, and among other obligations it meant leaving the hair uncut during that time. It is not known whether the vow was taken by Paul at Cenchreae or whether it expired there. Cf. Ac 21:23-27 where Paul and four other Jews perform the rites for the fulfilment of a vow.

o. Perhaps the church in Jerusalem.

p. For further information, cf. 1 Co: when he went to Corinth his enormous popularity soon developed into partisanship, cf. 1 Co 1:12; 3:4-11,22; see also Tt 3:13. These remarks about Apollos have something in common with the description of John the Baptist's admirers at Ephesus in the following passage: combining these two descriptions of an imperfectly informed Christianity, we may possibly get some idea of Christianity in the church of Alexandria at this time.

q. Add. 'of God'.

r. On the use of letters of reference in the early Christian communities, cf. Rm 16:1; 2 Co 3:1f; Col 4:10; 3 Jn 9-10,12.

19 a. An editorial link joining two items of information which are inserted in the account of the journey. The Western Text has 'When Paul, pursuing his own plan, wanted to set out for Jerusalem, the Spirit told him to go back to Asia. Consequently, he made his way...'

b. Ephesus at this time was regarded, with Alexandria, as one of the finest cities in the empire; it was a religious, political and commercial centre of mixed population.

c. They were unaware, not that the Spirit existed (evident from the O.T. to the most casual reader) but that the messianic promises had been fulfilled and the Spirit given in abundance, cf. 2:17-18,33.

d. Resumption of the narrative interrupted by the remarks about Apollos and the followers of John the Baptist: 19:8 follows on 18:23 and 19:1.

attitude of some of the congregation hardened into unbelief. As soon as they
9:2+ began attacking the Way in front of the others, he broke with them and took his
disciples apart to hold daily discussions in the lecture room of Tyrannus.[e] •This 10
went on for two years,[f] with the result that people from all over Asia,[g] both Jews
and Greeks, were able to hear the word of the Lord.

The Jewish exorcists

So remarkable were the miracles worked by God at Paul's hands •that 11 12
5:15 Lk 8:44-47p handkerchiefs or aprons which had touched him were taken to the sick, and they
were cured of their illnesses, and the evil spirits came out of them.
3:16+ Lk 9:49p But some itinerant Jewish exorcists[h] tried pronouncing the name of the Lord 13
Jesus over people who were possessed by evil spirits; they used to say, 'I command
you by the Jesus whose spokesman is Paul'. •Among those who did this were 14
16:17 seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest. •The evil spirit replied, 'Jesus 15
I recognise, and I know who Paul is, but who are you?' •and the man with the 16
evil spirit hurled himself at them and overpowered first one and then another,[i]
and handled them so violently that they fled from that house naked and badly
9:35,42 mauled. •Everybody in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, heard about this episode; 17
3:10 Lk 5:26 they were all greatly impressed, and the name of the Lord Jesus came to be held
in great honour.

Some believers, too, came forward to admit in detail how they had used spells[j] 18
and a number of them who had practised magic collected their books and made 19
a bonfire of them in public. The value of these was calculated to be fifty thousand
silver pieces.

6:7+ In this impressive way the word of the Lord spread more and more widely 20
and successfully.[k]

V. A PRISONER FOR CHRIST

Rm 15:22-32 1 Co 16:1-8 **Paul's plans**

11:30+; 23:11 When all this was over Paul made up his mind to go back to Jerusalem through 21
Macedonia and Achaia. 'After I have been there' he said 'I must go on to see
Rm 1:13 1 Co 4:17 Rome as well.' •So he sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, ahead of 22
him to Macedonia, while he remained for a time in Asia.

Ephesus: the silversmiths' riot[l]

It was during this time that a rather serious disturbance broke out in connection 23
9:2+ with the Way. •A silversmith called Demetrius, who employed a large number 24
16:19 Ws 15:12 of craftsmen making silver shrines of Diana, •called a general meeting of his own 25
men with others in the same trade. 'As you men know,' he said 'it is on this
industry that we depend for our prosperity. •Now you must have seen and heard 26
how, not just in Ephesus but nearly everywhere in Asia, this man Paul has per-
suaded and converted a great number of people with his argument that gods made
17:29+ by hand are not gods at all. •This threatens not only to discredit our trade, but 27
also to reduce the sanctuary of the great goddess Diana to unimportance.It could
end up by taking away all the prestige of a goddess venerated all over Asia, yes,
and everywhere in the civilised world.' •This speech roused them to fury, and they 28
started to shout,[m] 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' •The whole town was in an 29
uproar and the mob rushed to the theatre dragging along two of Paul's
20:4; 27:2 Macedonian travelling companions, Gaius and Aristarchus.[n] •Paul wanted to 30
Col 4:10 make an appeal to the people, but the disciples refused to let him; •in fact, some 31
of the Asiarchs,[o] who were friends of his, sent messages imploring him not to
take the risk of going into the theatre.

By now everybody was shouting different things till the assembly itself had 32
no idea what was going on; most of them did not even know why they had been

33 summoned. •The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and when some of the
crowd shouted encouragement[p] he raised his hand for silence in the hope of being
34 able to explain things to the people. •When they realised he was a Jew, they all 16:20
started shouting in unison, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' and they kept this
35 up for two hours. •When the town clerk eventually succeeded in calming the
crowd, he said, 'Citizens of Ephesus! Is there anybody alive who does not know
that the city of the Ephesians is the guardian of the temple of great Diana and
36 of her statue that fell from heaven? •Nobody can contradict this and there is no
37 need for you to get excited or do anything rash. •These men you have brought
38 here are not guilty of any sacrilege or blasphemy against our goddess. •If Deme-
trius and the craftsmen he has with him want to complain about anyone, there are
39 the assizes and the proconsuls; let them take the case to court. •And if you want
40 to ask any more questions you must raise them in the regular assembly. •We could
easily be charged with rioting for today's happenings: there was no ground for it
41 all, and we can give no reason for this gathering.' •When he had finished this
speech he dismissed the assembly.

Paul leaves Ephesus

1 20 When the disturbance was over,[a] Paul sent for the disciples and, after
speaking words of encouragement to them, said good-bye and set out for 14:22; 16:40
2 Macedonia. •On his way through those areas[b] he said many words of encourage- 1 Co 16:5
3 ment to them and then made his way into Greece, •where he spent three months.[c]
He was leaving by ship for Syria when[d] a plot organised against him by the Jews 9:23; 23:12f
4 made him decide to go back by way of Macedonia. •He was accompanied[e] by 1 Th 2:14+
Sopater, son of Pyrrhus, who came from Beroea; Aristarchus and Secundus who 19:29
came from Thessalonika; Gaius from Doberus, and Timothy, as well as Tychicus Rm 16:21
5 and Trophimus who were from Asia.[f] •They all went on to Troas where they 16:1+
6 waited for us.[g] •We ourselves left Philippi by ship[h] after the days of Unleavened 19:22+; 21:29
Bread[i] and met them five days later at Troas, where we stopped for a week.[j] 2 Tm 4:20

Troas: Paul raises a dead man to life

7 On the first day of the week[k] we met to break bread. Paul was due to leave 2:42+

e. Western Text adds 'from the fifth to the tenth hour' (11 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

f. 20:31 says three years. During this stay, Paul wrote the first Letter to the Corinthians, the Letter to the Galatians and, probably, the Letter to the Philippians.

g. Not the whole of proconsular Asia (the W. half of Asia Minor) but the region centred on Ephesus and including the seven towns of Rv 1:11. Epaphras of Colossae had been appointed by Paul to evangelise his own city, and his mission had spread to Laodicea and Hierapolis, Col 1:7; 4:12-13. Paul was also assisted by Timothy and Erastus, Ac 19:22, Gaius and Aristarchus, 19:29, Titus, whom Ac never mentions, and others, cf. 2 Co 12:18. Luke credits Paul with the achievements of his subordinates.

h. On Jewish exorcisms, cf. Mt 12:27. Jesus himself, and his apostles after him, cf. Ac 5:16; 16:18, frequently exorcised, cf. Mt 8:29+.

i. Or 'both' (two of their number).

j. Occult practices for which Ephesus was well-known.

k. Alex. Text 'Thus, through the power of the Lord, the word spread even more widely and impressively'.

l. The literary style of this narrative is unusual in Luke; he has taken it from a special source and linked it with his story of the evangelisation of Ephesus.

m. Western Text adds 'rushing into the street'.

n. Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonika, 20:4, was a companion of Paul during his imprisonment, 27:2; Col 4:10; Phm 24. Gaius is probably the one mentioned in Ac 20:4.

o. Members of the 'Asiatic assembly' which supervised the cult of Rome and the emperor on behalf of the cities of Asia.

p. Others translate 'they made him stand away from the crowd'.

20 a. The narrative is resumed from 19:22.

b. From here he sent his second letter to the Christians in Corinth.

c. Paul was therefore able to carry out the proposal of 1 Co 16:5-6. During this period in Corinth he wrote the Letter to the Romans. Western Text 'When he had been there for three months and the Jews had plotted against him, he intended to set out for Syria, but the Spirit told him to go back through Macedonia'.

d. To take the proceeds of the collection to Jerusalem, cf. 19:21 and Rm 15:25+.

e. Add. 'as far as Asia'. Sopater is perhaps the Jew, Sosipater, of Rm 16:21. 'Doberus'; var. 'Derbe'.

f. Trophimus was an Ephesian, 21:29, cf. 2 Tm 4:20. Tychicus is mentioned several times in the letters, Ep 6:21; Col 4:7; 2 Tm 4:12; Tt 3:12.

g. Narrative in the first person: Paul met Luke again at Philippi; from then on they stayed together, cf. 16:10+.

h. From the port of Neapolis, cf. 16:11.

i. Passover week, cf. Ex 12:1+.

j. On Paul's previous ministry in this town (when on the way from Ephesus to Corinth: vv. 1-2) cf. 2 Co 2:12.

k. The first day of the Jewish week, which had become the Christians' day of assembly, cf. Mt 28:1+; 1 Co 16:2, the 'Lord's day' *(dies dominica)* Rv 1:10. This Sunday meeting was held when the *dies dominica* began, i.e. on the Saturday evening, because the day was reckoned in the Jewish fashion.

the next day, and he preached a sermon that went on till the middle of the night.
A number of lamps were lit in the upstairs room where we were assembled, •and 8
as Paul went on and on, a young man called Eutychus who was sitting on the 9
window-sill grew drowsy and was overcome by sleep and fell to the ground three
9:36-42 floors below. He was picked up dead. •Paul went down and stooped to clasp the 10
1 K 17:17-24 2 K 4:30-37 Mk 5:39p boy to him. 'There is no need to worry,' he said 'there is still life in him.' •Then 11
he went back upstairs where he broke bread and ate and carried on talking till
he left at daybreak. •They took the boy away alive, and were greatly 12
encouraged.

From Troas to Miletus

We were now to go on ahead by sea, so we set sail for Assos, where we were 13
to take Paul on board; this was what he had arranged, for he wanted to go by road.
When he rejoined us at Assos we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. •The 14 15
next day we sailed from there and arrived opposite Chios. The second day we
touched at Samos and, after stopping at Trogyllium, made Miletus the next day.
Paul had decided to pass wide of Ephesus so as to avoid spending time in Asia, 16
24:11 since he was anxious to be in Jerusalem, if possible, for the day of Pentecost.

Farewell to the elders of Ephesus

11:30+ From Miletus he sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus. •When they 17 18
arrived he addressed these words to them:[l]
1Th 1:5; 2: 10-12 Ph 2:3 'You know what my way of life has been ever since the first day I set foot
among you in Asia, •how I have served the Lord in all humility, with all the 19
2 Co 1:8-9; 11:23-31 sorrows and trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. •I have not 20
hesitated to do anything that would be helpful to you; I have preached to you,
13:5+ 2 Tm 4:2 and instructed you both in public and in your homes, •urging both Jews and 21
Greeks to turn to God and to believe in our Lord Jesus.[m]
'And now you see me a prisoner already in spirit;[n] I am on my way to Jeru- 22
1:8+ salem, but have no idea what will happen to me there, •except that the Holy Spirit, 23
21:4,11 in town after town, has made it clear enough that imprisonment and persecution
Ph 2:16 2 Tm 4:7 await me. •But life to me is not a thing to waste words on,[o] provided that when 24
I finish my race I have carried out the mission the Lord Jesus gave me—and that
26:16-18 was to bear witness to the Good News of God's grace.
'I now feel sure that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming 25
19:8; 20:38 the kingdom will ever see my face again.[p] •And so here and now I swear that my 26
18:6+ conscience is clear as far as all of you are concerned, •for I have without faltering 27
20:20 put before you the whole of God's purpose.
5:11+ Jn 21:15-17 1 Co 1:2+ Ep 1:14+ 1 Tm 4:16 1 P 2:9+; 5:1-3 'Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit 28
has made you the overseers, to feed the Church of God[q] which he bought with
his own blood.[r] •I know quite well that when I have gone fierce wolves will invade 29
you and will have no mercy on the flock. •Even from your own ranks there will 30
Mt 7:15 2 P 2:1-2 1 P 5:8-9 be men coming forward with a travesty of the truth on their lips to induce the
disciples to follow them. •So be on your guard, remembering how night and day 31
19:10+ for three years I never failed to keep you right, shedding tears over each one of
14:23 you. •And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace that has 32
9:31 Dt 33:3-4 Ep 2:20-22 power[s] to build you up and to give you your inheritance among all the sanctified.
'I have never asked anyone for money or clothes; •you know for yourselves 33 34
18:3+ that the work I did earned enough to meet my needs and those of my compan-
1 Co 11:1 Ep 4:28 Si 4:31 ions. •I did this to show you that this is how we must exert ourselves to support 35
the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, who himself said, "There is
more happiness in giving than in receiving".'[t]
21:5 When he had finished speaking he knelt down with them all and prayed. •By 36 37
Rm 16:16+ now they were all in tears; they put their arms round Paul's neck and kissed him;
20:25 what saddened them most was his saying they would never see his face again. 38
Then they escorted him to the ship.

The journey to Jerusalem

21 When we had at last torn ourselves away from them and put to sea, we set
a straight course and arrived at Cos; the next day we reached Rhodes, and
from there went on to Patara.[a] •Here we found a ship bound for Phoenicia, so we
went on board and sailed in her. •After sighting Cyprus and leaving it to port, 11:19; 15:3
we sailed to Syria and put in at Tyre, since the ship was to unload her cargo there.
We sought out the disciples and stayed there a week. Speaking in the Spirit,[b] 20:23; 21:11
they kept telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem, •but when our time was up we set 20:36-38; 21:12
off. Together with the women and children they all escorted us on our way till we *15:3*
were out of the town. When we reached the beach, we knelt down and prayed;
then, after saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard and they returned
home.

The end of our voyage from Tyre came when we landed at Ptolemais, where
we greeted the brothers and stayed one day with them. •The next day we left and
came to Caesarea. Here we called on Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven, and 6:5; 8:4f,40
stayed with him. •He had four virgin daughters who were prophets. •When we 2:4+,17
had been there several days a prophet called Agabus arrived from Judaea •to see 11:27-28
us. He took Paul's girdle, and tied up his own feet and hands,[c] and said, 'This
is what the Holy Spirit says, "The man this girdle belongs to will be bound like 1:8+; 20:23; 21:33
this by the Jews in Jerusalem, and handed over to the pagans" '.[d] •When we heard
this, we and everybody there implored Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. •To 21:4
this he replied, 'What are you trying to do—weaken my resolution by your tears?
For my part, I am ready not only to be tied up but even to die in Jerusalem for 9:15-16; 20:24+
the name of the Lord Jesus.' •And so, as he would not be persuaded, we gave up
the attempt, saying, 'The Lord's will be done'. Mt 6:10 Lk 22:42p

Paul's arrival in Jerusalem

After this we packed and went on up to Jerusalem. •Some of the disciples
from Caesarea accompanied us and took us to the house of a Cypriot with whom
we were to lodge;[e] he was called Mnason and had been one of the earliest disciples.
On our arrival in Jerusalem the brothers gave us a very warm welcome. •The 1:15+ Rm 15:31
next day Paul went with us[f] to visit James, and all the elders were present. •After *12:17+*
greeting them he gave a detailed account of all that God had done among the 14:27; 15:4, 12
pagans through his ministry. •They gave glory to God when they heard this. *11:18+*
'But you see, brother,' they said 'how thousands of Jews have now become

l. The third great discourse of Paul in Ac. The first, ch. 13, exemplified his preaching to the Jews; the second, ch. 17, his preaching to the pagans; the third 20:18-35, is as it were the last testament of the departing pastor. Many of the details of this third discourse are found in his letters; its tone is that of the Pastoral Letters. After referring to his mission in Asia, vv. 18-21, he speaks of this as a final parting and seems to hint at his death, vv. 22-27. Paul's last advice to the elders of Ephesus (and through them to all the pastors in every church) is vigilance, vv. 28-32, selflessness, charity, vv. 33-35. In all of this Paul appeals to his own example: the discourse therefore draws a faithful portrait of the apostle himself.

m. Summary of Pauline preaching, to be compared with 17:30-31; 1 Th 1:9-10; 1 Co 8:4-6. Faith and conversion must go together, cf. Mk 1:15.

n. On his way to captivity Paul speaks of himself as a prisoner; in his heart he is one already. Others translate 'a prisoner of the Spirit', i.e. impelled by the Holy Spirit.

o. Cf. 15:26; 21:13; 1 Th 2:8; Ph 1:21-23. Others translate 'But I do not count my life of any value, as if it were precious to me'.

p. Cf. v. 38. From Jerusalem Paul intended to visit Spain, Rm 15:24-28. His long imprisonment affected his plans and he did in fact revisit Ephesus despite the presentiment expressed here, cf. Ac 28:31+.

q. Var. 'the Church of the Lord'. 1 P 2:9-10 speaks of the people which God made his own (following Is 43:21; cf. Ac 18:10+); this people was the 'Congregation (=Church) of God', 5:11, one of Paul's favourite expressions, cf. 1 Co 1:2; 10:32; 11:22, etc.

r. A difficult phrase sometimes rendered 'acquired by him at the price of the blood of his own Son', cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16. But we may see underlying the expression a certain flexibility of thought, since the work of the Father (='God') and of the Son is so inseparably one (cf., for example, Rm 8:31-39). For the doctrine, cf. Ep 5:25-27; Heb 9:12-14; 13:12.

s. 'to God', var. 'to the Lord'. 'that has power', or 'who has power', referring to God, cf. Rm 16:25.

t. The gospels have not recorded this saying.

21 a. Add. 'and Myra'.

b. The command does not come from the Spirit, but the Spirit has revealed to them Paul's fate which their love for him seeks to avert.

c. Prophecy in mime like that used by the prophets in the past, cf. Jr 18:1+.

d. The forecast (cf. 28:17) only approximately corresponds to the narrative of Paul's arrest (cf. 21:31-33) but it resembles the prophecy of Christ's Passion in Lk 18:31-34; cf. Col 1:24; Ph 3:10, etc.

e. The Western Text indicates, perhaps correctly, that this was half-way to Jerusalem.

f. The last 'we' until 27:1 (the departure for Rome): Luke followed Paul as far as Jerusalem and was to accompany him again from Caesarea to Rome.

believers, all of them staunch upholders of the Law,[g] and •they have heard that 21
6:11,14; 15:1; 28:17 you instruct all Jews living among the pagans to break away from Moses,[h]
Mk 7:1-13 authorising them not to circumcise their children[i] or to follow the customary
practices. •What is to be done? Inevitably there will be a meeting of the whole 22
body, since they are bound to hear that you have come.[j] •So do as we suggest. 23
18:18+; 24:17 We have four men here who are under a vow; •take these men along and be 24
purified with them and pay all the expenses connected with the shaving of their
heads.[k] This will let everyone know there is no truth in the reports they have heard
15:19f,28f about you and that you still regularly observe the Law. •The pagans who have 25
become believers, as we wrote when we told them our decisions, must abstain from
15:1+ things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and
from fornication.'[l]

So the next day Paul took the men along and was purified with them, and he 26
visited the Temple to give notice of the time when the period of purification would
be over and the offering would have to be presented on behalf of each of them.[m]

Paul's arrest

The seven days were nearly over when some Jews from Asia caught sight of 27
24:18 him in the Temple and stirred up the crowd and seized him, •shouting, 'Men of 28
Rm 15:31 Israel, help! This is the man who preaches to everyone everywhere against our
18:13-15; 21:21; 24: 5f,14; 25:8 people, against the Law and against this place.[n] Now he has profaned this Holy
Lm 1:10 Ezk 44:9 Place by bringing Greeks into the Temple.' •They had, in fact, previously seen 29
20:4 Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and thought that Paul had brought
him into the Temple.

This roused the whole city; people came running from all sides; they seized 30
26:21 Paul and dragged him out of the Temple, and the gates were closed behind them.
23:27 They would have killed him if a report had not reached the tribune of the cohort[o] 31
that there was rioting all over Jerusalem. •He immediately called out soldiers 32
and centurions, and charged down on the crowd, who stopped beating Paul when
they saw the tribune and the soldiers. •When the tribune came up he arrested 33
20:23; 21:11; 22:29 Paul, had him bound with two chains and enquired who he was and what he had
done. •People in the crowd called out different things, and since the noise made 34
it impossible for him to get any positive information, the tribune ordered Paul
to be taken into the fortress. •When Paul reached the steps, the crowd became 35
so violent that he had to be carried by the soldiers; •and indeed the whole mob 36
22:22 Lk 23:18 was after them, shouting, 'Kill him!'

Just as Paul was being taken into the fortress, he asked the tribune if he could 37
have a word with him. The tribune said, 'You speak Greek, then? •So you are 38
not the Egyptian who started the recent revolt and led those four thousand cut-
throats[p] out into the desert?' •'I?' said Paul 'I am a Jew and a citizen of the well- 39
known city of Tarsus in Cilicia. Please give me permission to speak to the people.'
The man gave his consent and Paul, standing at the top of the steps, gestured to 40
the people with his hand. When all was quiet again he spoke to them in Hebrew.[q]

Paul's address to the Jews of Jerusalem[a]

7:2 22 'My brothers, my fathers, listen to what I have to say to you in my defence.' 1
When they realised he was speaking in Hebrew, the silence was even greater 2
2 Co 11:22 than before. •'I am a Jew,' Paul said 'and was born at Tarsus in Cilicia. I was 3
26:4-5 *5:34* brought up here in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was taught the exact
26:5 Rm 10:2 observance of the Law of our ancestors. In fact, I was as full of duty towards God
Ga 1:13-14 Ph 3:5-6 as you are today. •I even persecuted this Way[b] to the death, and sent women as 4
8:3; 9:2 well as men to prison in chains •as the high priest and the whole council of elders 5
‖9:1-18+; =26:9-18 can testify, since they even sent me with letters to their brothers in Damascus.
When I set off it was with the intention of bringing prisoners back from there
to Jerusalem for punishment.

'I was on that journey and nearly at Damascus when about midday a bright 6

7 light from heaven suddenly shone round me. •I fell to the ground and heard a voice
8 saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" •I answered: Who are you,
Lord? and he said to me, "I am Jesus the Nazarene, and you are persecuting Mt 2:23+
9 me". •The people with me saw the light but did not hear his voice as he spoke
10 to me. •I said: What am I to do, Lord? The Lord answered, "Stand up and go
into Damascus, and there you will be told what you have been appointed to do".
11 The light had been so dazzling that I was blind and my companions had to take
me by the hand; and so I came to Damascus.

12 'Someone called Ananias, a devout follower of the Law and highly thought
13 of by all the Jews living there,[c] •came to see me; he stood beside me and said,
"Brother Saul, receive your sight". Instantly my sight came back and I was able
14 to see him. •Then he said, "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know 1 Co 9:16-17
15 his will, to see the Just One[d] and hear his own voice speaking, •because you are 9:17; 26:16
1 Co 9:1
to be his witness before all mankind, testifying to what you have seen and heard.[e] *1:8+*
16 And now why delay? It is time you were baptised and had your sins washed away Mt 13:16-17p
1 Jn 1:1-3
while invoking his name." *2:38+*

17 'Once, after I had got back to Jerusalem,[f] when I was praying in the Temple, 9:26
18 I fell into a trance •and then I saw him. "Hurry," he said "leave Jerusalem at Ga 1:18
19 once; they will not accept the testimony you are giving about me."[g] •Lord, *9:29-30*
I answered, it is because they know that I used to go from synagogue to syna-
20 gogue, imprisoning and flogging those who believed in you; •and that when the 5:40
blood of your witness[h] Stephen was being shed, I was standing by in full agreement 7:58; 8:1; 26:10
21 with his murderers, and minding their clothes. •Then he said to me, "Go! I am
sending you out to the pagans far away."[i] 2:39+; 9:15

Paul the Roman citizen

22 So far they had listened to him, but at these words they began to shout, 'Rid
23 the earth of the man! He is not fit to live!' •They were yelling, waving their 21:36;25:24
24 cloaks and throwing dust into the air, •and so the tribune had him brought into
the fortress and ordered him to be examined under the lash, to find out the reason
25 for the outcry against him. •But when they had strapped him down Paul said
to the centurion on duty, 'Is it legal for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen 16:37+; 23:27

g. For its observance by others as well as by themselves, cf. 11:2; 15:1,5; Ga 2:12; 5:1f.

h. Paul's doctrine of faith as the one source of justification, cf. Rm 1:16+; 3:22+, did indeed lead to this, since it meant that the Mosaic Law no longer gave the Jew superiority over the gentile. But Paul's purpose in expounding this principle was to leave converts from paganism free of Jewish observance, cf. Ga 2:11f, not to dissuade devout Jews from it.

i. Cf. Rm 2:25-29; 4:9-12; 1 Co 7:17-20.

j. Var. 'What is to be done? They will in any case hear that you have come.'

k. The determination of the nazirite vow had to be celebrated with expensive sacrifices, Nb 6:14-15.

l. Western Text 'Of the pagans who have become believers they have nothing to say to you. For our part, we have sent our decisions, namely that they have no observance to practise but that of abstaining from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from fornication.'

m. Text obscure: it seems to presuppose before the nazirite sacrifice a period of seven days devoted to certain rites of purification; there is no other evidence for this practice.

n. Cf. the charges against Stephen, 6:11-14, and against Jesus, Mt 26:61; 27:40.

o. A Roman garrison consisting of an auxiliary cohort was stationed in the Antonia overlooking the Temple area from the N.W. corner.

p. Or 'four thousand Assassins'; the term, *sikarioi*, strictly means extreme nationalists. This revolt is mentioned by Josephus.

q. I.e. Aramaic: Hebrew was not spoken after the Exile.

22 a. After the three discourses which sum up the preaching of Paul, ch. 13, 17, 20, Ac records three apologias: before the Jewish people in Jerusalem, ch. 22, before the procurator Felix, ch. 24, before King Agrippa, ch. 26; each is cleverly adapted to the audience, cf. 9:1+. Before the people Paul defends his conduct as being that of a devout Jew.

b. The Church, cf. 9:2+. On Paul's career as persecutor, cf. 7:58; 8:1,3; 9:1,21; 22:19-20; 26:11; 1 Co 15:9; Ga 1:13,23; Ph 3:6; 1 Tm 1:13.

c. Paul describes Ananias simply as a pious Jew without adding that he was a Christian, 9:10 or mentioning his vision, 9:10-16.

d. Christ, cf. 3:14; 7:52.

e. Cf. 9:15. Ananias here speaks in the name of 'the God of our ancestors', like an O.T. prophet. Paul is to be a witness 'before all mankind', but the pagans are not explicitly mentioned until v. 21.

f. Paul passes over the three years which elapsed before their return, cf. 9:23+. The trance he speaks of is not mentioned elsewhere; it is not to be confused with that of 2 Co 12:1-4.

g. The narrative of Paul's apostolic work emphasises this, cf. 13:46-48; 18:6; 28:25-28.

h. The Greek word, *martyr*, had not yet acquired its restricted meaning but was beginning to; the supreme testimony being that of blood. Cf. Rv 2:13; 6:9; 17:6.

i. Since 'apostle' means 'envoy', Christ's words imply that Paul is now an apostle, cf. Ga 1:1; 1 Co 9:1; 2 Co 12:11-12, and, in particular, an apostle of the pagans, Ga 1:16; 2:7-8, though Ac (with the exception of 14:4,14) reserves the term 'apostle' to the Twelve.

and has not been brought to trial?' •When he heard this the centurion went and 26
told the tribune; 'Do you realise what you are doing?' he said 'This man
is a Roman citizen'. •So the tribune came and asked him, 'Tell me, are you a 27
Roman citizen?' 'I am' Paul said. •The tribune replied, 'It cost me a large sum to 28
acquire this citizenship'. 'But I was born to it' said Paul. •Then those who were 29
16:39; 21:33 about to examine him hurriedly withdrew, and the tribune himself was alarmed
when he realised that he had put a Roman citizen in chains.[j]

His appearance before the Sanhedrin[k]

The next day, since he wanted to know what precise charge the Jews were 30
bringing, he freed Paul and gave orders for a meeting of the chief priests and
the entire Sanhedrin; then he brought Paul down and stood him in front of them.
23 Paul looked steadily at the Sanhedrin and began to speak, 'My brothers, 1
24:16 to this day I have conducted myself before God with a perfectly clear con-
Jn 18:22 science'.[a] •At this the high priest Ananias[b] ordered his attendants to strike him 2
Ezk 13:10-15 Mt 23:27 on the mouth. •Then Paul said to him, 'God will surely strike you, you 3
whitewashed wall! How can you sit there to judge me according to the Law, and
then break the Law by ordering a man to strike me?' •The attendants said, 'It is 4
God's high priest you are insulting!' •Paul answered, 'Brothers, I did not realise 5
Ex 22:27 it was the high priest, for scripture says: *You must not curse a ruler of your people*'.

4:1-4 Now Paul was well aware that one section was made up of Sadducees and the 6
26:5 Ph 3:5 other of Pharisees, so he called out in the Sanhedrin, 'Brothers, I am a Pharisee
24:15; 26:6f; 28:20 and the son of Pharisees. It is for our hope in the resurrection of the dead that
4:2+ I am on trial.' •As soon as he said this a dispute broke out between the Pharisees 7
and Sadducees, and the assembly was split between the two parties. •For the 8
5:17 Mt 22:23 Sadducees say there is neither resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit,[c] while the
Pharisees accept all three. •The shouting grew louder, and some of the scribes 9
5:34f from the Pharisees' party stood up and protested strongly, 'We find nothing wrong
with this man. Suppose a spirit has spoken to him, or an angel?'[d] •Feeling was 10
running high, and the tribune, afraid that they would tear Paul to pieces, ordered
his troops to go down and haul him out and bring him into the fortress.

18:9-10; 27:24 Next night, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'Courage! You have borne 11
19:21 witness for me in Jerusalem, now you must do the same in Rome.'

The conspiracy of the Jews against Paul

9:23; 20:3; 25:3 When it was day, the Jews held a secret meeting at which they made a vow[e] 12
1 Th 2:14+ not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. •There were more than forty who 13
took part in this conspiracy, •and they went to the chief priests and elders, and 14
told them, 'We have made a solemn vow to let nothing pass our lips until we have
killed Paul. •Now it is up to you and the Sanhedrin together to apply to the 15
tribune to bring him down to you, as though you meant to examine his case more
closely; we, on our side, are prepared to dispose of him before he reaches you.'

But the son of Paul's sister heard of the ambush they were laying and made 16
his way into the fortress and told Paul, •who called one of the centurions and 17
said, 'Take this young man to the tribune; he has something to tell him'. •So the 18
man took him to the tribune, and reported, 'The prisoner Paul summoned me and
requested me to bring this young man to you; he has something to tell you'. •Then 19
the tribune took him by the hand and drew him aside and asked, 'What is it you
have to tell me?' •He replied, 'The Jews have made a plan to ask you to take Paul 20
down to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, as though they meant to inquire more closely
into his case. •Do not let them persuade you. There are more than forty of them 21
lying in wait for him, and they have vowed not to eat or drink until they have
got rid of him. They are ready now and only waiting for your order to be given.'
The tribune let the young man go with this caution, 'Tell no one that you have 22
given me this information'.

Paul transferred to Caesarea

23 Then he summoned two of the centurions and said, 'Get two hundred soldiers
ready to leave for Caesarea by the third hour of the night with seventy cavalry and
24 two hundred auxiliaries; •provide horses for Paul, and deliver him unharmed
25 26 to Felix the governor'.[j] •He also wrote a letter in these terms: •'Claudius Lysias
27 to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. •This man had been seized by the 21:31-33
Jews and would have been murdered by them but I came on the scene with my
troops and got him away, having discovered that he was a Roman citizen. 22:25-29
28 Wanting to find out what charge they were making against him, I brought him
29 before their Sanhedrin. •I found that the accusation concerned disputed points 18:15; 25: 18-19; 26: 31; 28:18
of their Law,[g] but that there was no charge deserving death or imprisonment.[h]
30 My information is that there is a conspiracy against the man, so I hasten to send
him to you, and have notified his accusers that they must state their case against
him in your presence.'[i]
31 The soldiers carried out their orders; they took Paul and escorted him by night
32 to Antipatris. •Next day they left the mounted escort to go on with him and
33 returned to the fortress. •On arriving at Caesarea the escort delivered the letter
34 to the governor and handed Paul over to him. •The governor read the letter
and asked him what province he came from. Learning that he was from Cilicia
35 he said, •'I will hear your case as soon as your accusers are here too'. Then he
ordered him to be held in Herod's praetorium.

The case before Felix

1 24 Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some of the
elders and an advocate named Tertullus, and they laid information against
2 Paul before the governor. •Paul was called, and Tertullus opened for the
prosecution, 'Your Excellency, Felix, the unbroken peace we enjoy and
3 the reforms this nation owes to your foresight •are matters we accept, always
4 and everywhere, with all gratitude. •I do not want to take up too much of your
5 time, but I beg you to give us a brief hearing. •The plain truth is that we find
this man a perfect pest; he stirs up trouble among Jews the world over, and is a 16:20; 17:6 Lk 23:2 *Mt 2:23+ 21:28*
6 ringleader of the Nazarene sect.[a] •He has even attempted to profane the Temple.
7 We placed him under arrest, intending to judge him according to our Law,[b] •but
8 the tribune Lysias intervened and took him out of our hands by force, •ordering
his accusers to appear before you; if you ask him[c] you can find out for yourself
9 the truth of all our accusations against this man.' •The Jews supported him,
asserting that these were the facts.
10 When the governor motioned him to speak, Paul answered:[d]

j. Nevertheless, Paul is left in chains, v. 30; 23:18; 24:27; 26:29. Possibly a distinction is to be made between the heavy chains, a torture in themselves (of which Paul may have been relieved), and the lighter chains to prevent the prisoner from escaping.

k. As Jesus foretold to his disciples, Mt 10:17-18= Mk 13:9-10; Lk 21:12. Paul is to appear before 'councils' Ac 22:30–23:10, 'governors' (Felix, ch. 24), 'kings' (Agrippa, ch. 25-26).

23 a. The 'clear conscience' is a feature of Paul's moral teaching: 1 Co 4:4; 2 Co 1:12; 1 Tm 1:5,19; 3:9; 2 Tm 1:3; cf. Heb 13:18.

b. Ananias son of Nedebaios became high priest in about 47 A.D. He was arrested, sent to Rome and probably deprived of office in 51 or 52, then reinstated; he was assassinated in 66 at the beginning of the Jewish War.

c. The resurrection of the body, cf. 2 M 7:9+, and the doctrine of angels, cf. Tb 5:4+, were not part of Jewish teaching until a comparatively late date. From the text it appears that the Sadducees rejected the latter as well as the former (they certainly denied the doctrine of retribution in the world to come). On both questions Paul and the Pharisees were in agreement, cf. Ac 4:1f+.

d. The conjecture is apparently intended to explain the apparition on the Damascus road.

e. By calling down God's vengeance on themselves should they weaken.

f. Antoninus Felix, a freedman, brother of Pallas, Agrippina's favourite; he was procurator of Judaea from 52 to 59 or 60.

g. Western Text '...points of the Law of Moses, and a man called Jesus'.

h. Luke emphasises such statements which attest Paul's innocence, cf. v. 9; 25:18,25; 26:31; 28:18, as he did in the case of Jesus, cf. 3:13; 13:28; Lk 23:14-15,22.

i. Add. 'Farewell'.

24 a. Christianity was, for its opponents, merely a 'sect', cf. 5:17, within Judaism, cf. v. 14; 28:22.

b. The Jews claim that this is their affair. Cf. 25:9; Jn 18:31+. Alex. Text omits 'intending... before you'.

c. 'him' is Lysias in the text adopted here (cf. v. 22), Paul according to the shorter text.

d. Paul denies the charge of inciting to riot (cf. v. 5), vv. 11-13. He then explains how being a 'Nazarene' (cf. v. 5) in no way prevents him being a faithful Jew, vv. 14-16. He goes on to refute the charge of profaning the Temple, vv. 17-19. Finally he reminds them that it had been found impossible to convict him when he appeared before the Sanhedrin, vv. 20-21.

Paul's speech before the Roman governor

'I know that you have administered justice over this nation for many years,
and I can therefore speak with confidence in my defence. •As you can verify for 11
11:30+; 20:16 yourself, it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem on
pilgrimage,[e] •and it is not true that they ever found me arguing with anyone or 12
stirring up the mob, either in the Temple, in the synagogues, or about the town;
neither can they prove any of the accusations they are making against me now. 13
9:2+ 'What I do admit to you is this: it is according to the Way which they describe 14
25:8+ Mt 5:17+ Rm 3:31; 10:4 as a sect that I worship the God of my ancestors, retaining my belief in all points
of the Law and in what is written in the prophets;[f] •and I hold the same hope 15
4:2 Jn 5:29+ 23:1+,6 in God as they[g] do that there will be a resurrection of good men and bad men
alike. •In these things, I, as much as they, do my best to keep a clear conscience 16
at all times before God and man.
21:24 'After several years[h] I came to bring alms to my nation[i] and to make offerings;[j] 17
it was in connection with these that they found me in the Temple; I had been 18
21:27 purified, and there was no crowd involved, and no disturbance. •But some Jews 19
from Asia...—these are the ones who should have appeared before you and
accused me of whatever they had against me. •At least let those who are present 20
say what crime they found me guilty of when I stood before the Sanhedrin, •unless 21
it were to do with this single outburst, when I stood up among them and called
4:2; 23:6 out: It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'[k]

Paul's captivity at Caesarea

9:2+ At this, Felix, who knew more about the Way than most people, adjourned 22
the case, saying, 'When Lysias the tribune has come down I will go into your
case'. •He then gave orders to the centurion that Paul should be kept under arrest 23
but free from restriction, and that none of his own people should be prevented
from seeing to his needs.[l]
Some days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla who was a Jewess.[m] He sent 24
for Paul and gave him a hearing on the subject of faith in Christ Jesus. •But when 25
Mk 6:17-20 he began to treat of righteousness, self-control and the coming Judgement, Felix
17:32 took fright[n] and said, 'You may go for the present; I will send for you when I find
it convenient'. •At the same time he had hopes of receiving money from Paul, 26
and for this reason he sent for him frequently and had talks with him.
When the two years[o] came to an end, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus[p] 27
25:9 and, being anxious to gain favour with the Jews, Felix left Paul in custody.[q]

Paul appeals to Caesar

25 Three days after his arrival in the province,[a] Festus went up to Jerusalem 1
from Caesarea. •The chief priests and leaders of the Jews informed him of 2
23:12-15 the case against Paul,[b] urgently •asking him to support them rather than Paul, 3
and to have him transferred to Jerusalem. They were, in fact, preparing an ambush
to murder him on the way. •But Festus replied that Paul would remain in custody 4
in Caesarea, and that he would be going back there shortly himself. •'Let your 5
authorities come down with me' he said 'and if there is anything wrong about
the man, they can bring a charge against him.'
After staying with them for eight or ten days at the most, he went down to 6
Caesarea and the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and had Paul brought
Mt 26:59-61p; 27:12-14p Lk 23:10 17:6-7 in. •As soon as Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem 7
surrounded him, making many serious accusations which they were unable to
substantiate. •Paul's defence was this, 'I have committed no offence whatever 8
21:28+; 24:14+ against either Jewish law, or the Temple, or Caesar'. •Festus was anxious to gain 9
favour with the Jews, so he said to Paul, 'Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem
and be tried on these charges before me there?'[c] •But Paul replied, 'I am standing 10
before the tribunal of Caesar and this is where I should be tried. I have done the
Jews no wrong, as you very well know. •If I am guilty of committing any capital 11

crime, I do not ask to be spared the death penalty. But if there is no substance
in the accusations these persons bring against me, no one has a right to surrender
12 me to them. I appeal to Caesar.'[d] •Then Festus conferred with his advisers and 28:19
replied, 'You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go'.

Paul appears before King Agrippa

13 Some days later King Agrippa and Bernice[e] arrived in Caesarea and paid
14 their respects to Festus. •Their visit lasted several days, and Festus put Paul's
case before the king. 'There is a man here' he said 'whom Felix left behind in
15 custody, •and while I was in Jerusalem the chief priests and elders of the Jews
16 laid information against him, demanding his condemnation. •But I told them
that Romans are not in the habit of surrendering any man, until the accused
confronts his accusers and is given an opportunity to defend himself against the
17 charge. •So they came here with me, and I wasted no time but took my seat on
18 the tribunal the very next day and had the man brought in. •When confronted
with him, his accusers did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected;
19 but they had some argument or other with him about their own religion and about 18:15; 23:29
20 a dead man called Jesus whom Paul alleged to be alive. •Not feeling qualified 23:6; 26:6f
1 Co 15:4
to deal with questions of this sort, I asked him if he would be willing to go to
21 Jerusalem to be tried there on this issue. •But Paul put in an appeal for his case
to be reserved for the judgement of the august emperor,[f] so I ordered him to be
22 remanded until I could send him to Caesar.' •Agrippa said to Festus, 'I should
like to hear the man myself'.[g] 'Tomorrow' he answered 'you shall hear him.'
23 So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived in great state and entered the
audience chamber attended by the tribunes and the city notables; and Festus
24 ordered Paul to be brought in. •Then Festus said, 'King Agrippa, and all here
present with us, you see before you the man about whom the whole Jewish
community has petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, loudly protesting
25 that he ought not to be allowed to remain alive. •For my own part I am satisfied 22:22
that he has committed no capital crime, but when he himself appealed to the
26 august emperor I decided to send him. •But I have nothing definite that I can
write to his Imperial Majesty[h] about him; that is why I have produced him before

e. Lit. 'to worship', cf. 8:27.

f. Christianity is not a different religion, it is Judaism with its ancient hope fulfilled. If the Jews reject Christ, they reject their own religious tradition. Cf. the discourse before Agrippa, ch. 26, the early Christian argument from prophecy, 2:23+; 3:24+, and Paul's own assertions, Rm 1:2; 3:31; 10:4; 16:26; 1 Co 15:3-4; Ga 3, etc.

g. The Pharisees, cf. 23:6+.

h. The visit of 18:22 must have been at least four years earlier, and the 'council of Jerusalem' visit eight or nine years earlier.

i. The only allusion in Ac to the real purpose of the journey, namely to deliver in Jerusalem the collection made among the churches in pagan territory, cf. Rm 15:25+.

j. Sacrifices offered to God, cf. 21:24,26.

k. A doctrine of the Pharisees: Paul shrewdly implies that Christians and Pharisees have something in common.

l. The same conditions as for Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

m. Youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa (12:1+). She had left her first husband, the king of Emesa, to marry Felix.

n. Felix was avaricious, cruel and dissolute. Compare the attitude of John the Baptist before Herod Antipas.

o. Greek: *dietia* (=a period of two years). This term, which recurs in 28:30, here seems to be used in its technical juridical sense: the maximum duration of preventive custody. This would mean that, since sentence had not meanwhile been pronounced, Paul must have been set free when the period expired. This is probably what happened in Rome, cf. 28:30. By detaining Paul, Felix was breaking the law.

p. Appointed probably in 60, died in 62.

q. 'anxious to . . .'; Western Text; 'And he left Paul in prison on account of Drusilla'.

25 a. Or 'after taking office'.

b. Same procedure as in 24:1, cf. 25:15.

c. Festus realises that the dispute is about religious matters, a case not for him but for the Sanhedrin (cf. vv. 19-20). But as a Roman citizen Paul could not be committed to the Sanhedrin without his own consent. To secure this, Festus promises to attend and to preside over the discussion.

d. Since Festus has disclaimed jurisdiction, Paul cannot escape trial before the Sanhedrin except by claiming the Roman citizen's privilege of trial before the imperial tribunal.

e. Agrippa, Bernice and Drusilla (cf. 24:24) were children of Herod Agrippa I, cf. 12:1+. The eldest, later Agrippa II, was born in 27. At this time Bernice was living with her brother and their relationship became matter for gossip; some years later Bernice became the mistress of Titus, the Roman general, later emperor.

f. Lit. 'Augustus'; so also in v. 25. The title 'Augustus', like 'Caesar', was borne by the ruling emperor, in this case Nero (54-68).

g. Just as his great-uncle Herod Antipas had wanted to see Jesus, Lk 9:9; 23:8.

h. Lit. 'to the Lord', term for the emperor considered as a king whose power was absolute and universal, and therefore practically divine.

you all, and before you in particular, King Agrippa, so that after the examination
I may have something to write. •It seems to me pointless to send a prisoner 27
without indicating the charges against him.'

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You have leave to speak on your own behalf'. 1
And Paul held up his hand and began his defence:

Paul's speech before King Agrippa[a]

'I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, in that it is before you I am to 2
answer today all the charges made against me by the Jews, •the more so because[b] 3
you are an expert in matters of custom and controversy among the Jews. So I beg
you to listen to me patiently.

22:3+ Ga 1:14 'My manner of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among 4
my own people and in Jerusalem, is common knowledge among the Jews. •They 5
have known me for a long time and could testify, if they would, that I followed
the strictest party in our religion and lived as a Pharisee. •And now it is for my 6
23:6+ hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors that I am on trial, •the promise 7
2 M 7 Dn 12:1-3 that our twelve tribes, constant in worship night and day, hope to attain.[c] For
that hope, Sire, I am actually put on trial by Jews! •Why does it seem incredible 8
to you that God should raise the dead?[d]

=9:1-18; =22:3-16 Mt 2:23+ 'As for me, I once thought it was my duty to use every means to oppose the 9
name of Jesus the Nazarene. •This I did in Jerusalem; I myself threw many of the 10
9:13+ saints into prison, acting on authority from the chief priests, and when they were
8:1; 22:20 sentenced to death I cast my vote against them. •I often went round the 11
synagogues inflicting penalties, trying in this way to force them to renounce their
faith; my fury against them was so extreme that I even pursued them into foreign
cities.

'On one such expedition I was going to Damascus, armed with full powers 12
and a commission from the chief priests, •and at midday as I was on my way, 13
your Majesty, I saw a light brighter than the sun come down from heaven. It
shone brilliantly round me and my fellow travellers. •We all fell to the ground, 14
and I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting
me? It is hard for you, kicking like this against the goad."[e] •Then I said: Who 15
are you, Lord? And the Lord answered, "I am Jesus, and you are persecuting
Ezk 2:1 me. •But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this 16
1:8+ reason: to appoint you as my servant and as witness of this vision in which you
Jr 1:5-8 have seen me, and of others in which I shall appear to you. •*I shall deliver you* 17
Is 42:7,16 from the people and *from the pagans, to whom I am sending you* •*to open their* 18
9:17-18 Jn 8:12+ Col 1:12-14 Dt 33:3-4 *eyes*, so that they may turn *from darkness to light*,[f] from the dominion of Satan
to God, and receive, through faith in me, forgiveness of their sins[g] and a share
in the inheritance of the sanctified."

Ga 1:16 'After that, King Agrippa, I could not disobey the heavenly vision. •On the 19 20
contrary I started preaching, first to the people of Damascus, then to those of
11:18 Jerusalem and all the countryside of Judaea, and also to the pagans, urging them
2:38+ Lk 3:8p to repent and turn to God, proving their change of heart by their deeds. •This 21
21:30-31 was why the Jews laid hands on me in the Temple and tried to do away with me.
But I was blessed with God's help, and so I have stood firm to this day, testifying 22
2:23+ Jn 1:45 to great and small alike, saying nothing more than what the prophets and Moses
himself said would happen: •that the Christ was to suffer and that, as the first 23
1 Co 15:20-23 to rise from the dead, he was to proclaim that light now shone for our people and
13:47 for the pagans too.'

His hearers' reactions

He had reached this point in his defence when Festus shouted out, 'Paul, you 24
are out of your mind; all that learning of yours is driving you mad'.[h] •'Festus, 25
Jn 18:37-38 your Excellency,' answered Paul 'I am not mad: I am speaking nothing but the
sober truth. •The king understands these matters, and to him I now speak with 26

assurance, confident that nothing of all this is lost on him; after all, these things 13:46+
27 were not done in a corner.[f] •King Agrippa, do you believe in the prophets? I know Is 45:19
28 you do.' •At this Agrippa said to Paul, 'A little more, and your arguments would
29 make a Christian[j] of me'. •'Little or more,'[k] Paul replied 'I wish before God that not only you but all who have heard me today would come to be as I am —except for these chains.' 28:20

30 At this the king rose to his feet, with the governor and Bernice and those who
31 sat there with them. •When they had retired they talked together and agreed,
32 'This man is doing nothing that deserves death or imprisonment'. •And Agrippa 23:29+
remarked to Festus, 'The man could have been set free if he had not appealed to 28:19
Caesar'.

The departure for Rome

1 27 When it had been decided that we[a] should sail for Italy, Paul and some
other prisoners were handed over to a centurion called Julius, of the
2 Augustan cohort. •We boarded a vessel from Adramyttium bound for ports on the
Asiatic coast, and put to sea; we had Aristarchus with us, a Macedonian of 19:29+
3 Thessalonika. •Next day we put in at Sidon, and Julius was considerate enough
to allow Paul to go to his friends to be looked after.

4 From there we put to sea again, but as the winds were against us we sailed
5 under the lee of Cyprus, •then across the open sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia,
6 taking a fortnight[b] to reach Myra in Lycia. •There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship leaving for Italy and put us aboard.

7 For some days we made little headway, and we had difficulty in making
Cnidus. The wind would not allow us to touch there, so we sailed under the lee
8 of Crete off Cape Salmone •and struggled along the coast until we came to a place
called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

Storm and shipwreck

Jon 1:4-16
Mt 8:23-27p

9 A great deal of time had been lost, and navigation was already hazardous
since it was now well after the time of the Fast,[c] so Paul gave them this warning,
10 'Friends, I can see this voyage will be dangerous and that we run the risk of losing
11 not only the cargo and the ship but also our lives as well'. •But the centurion
took more notice of the captain and the ship's owner than of what Paul was
12 saying; •and since the harbour was unsuitable for wintering, the majority were
for putting out from there in the hope of wintering at Phoenix—a harbour in
Crete, facing south-west and north-west.

13 A southerly breeze sprang up and, thinking their objective as good as reached,
14 they weighed anchor and began to sail past Crete, close inshore. •But it was not

26 a. A flattering address, vv. 2-3; cf. 24:2-3,10, is followed by Paul's assertion that his Christian faith in bodily resurrection is shared by the Pharisees, vv. 4-8; cf. 23:6+. Paul then describes the circumstances of his conversion, vv. 9-18; cf. 9:1-18; 22:3-16, and ends with a summary of his preaching which presents the Christian faith simply as the fulfilment of the scriptures, vv. 19-23; cf. 13:15-41. Behind the immediate quarrel lay the whole question of the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, cf. 24:14+.

b. Others translate 'more than anyone'.

c. The messianic hope takes definite shape in the belief in the resurrection of the virtuous who are to have their place in the kingdom at the end of time, cf. Dn 12:1-3; 2 M 7:9+. This hope has its initial fulfilment in the resurrection of Christ which is the ground of Christian hope, 1 Co 15:15-22; Col 1:18.

d. Var. vv. 7-8 'the promise for which our twelve tribes assiduously worship God day and night in the hope of attaining it; it is for that I am now arraigned by the Jews: namely, that God raises the dead'.

e. Greek proverb for useless resistance: the ox kicking against the goad succeeds only in wounding itself.

f. Paul's missionary vocation is described here in O.T. terms used about two great prophetic figures, Jeremiah and the Servant of Yahweh.

g. In 9:17-18, Paul, his sight restored, passes from darkness to light; in 22:16 (cf. 9:18) Paul is ordered to wash away his sins by baptism. Thus his own experience is a symbol of his mission to others.

h. Festus is taken aback by Paul's biblical erudition and probably by the Jewish method of argument. Agrippa is silent; he is clearly shaken, cf. his evasive reply in v. 28.

i. The scriptures are being fulfilled by events (v. 23; the Passion and death of Christ; the widespread apostolic preaching) which all the world can see.

j. The word is still a nickname, cf. 11:26+. Var. 'In a little while you will persuade me to become a Christian!' or, 'In a little while you will persuade yourself you have made me a Christian!'

k. A play on Agrippa's phrase.

27 a. Luke reappears on the scene. The precision of the narrative suggests a carefully kept diary.

b. Lit. 'for fifteen days'. Western Text.

c. Another name for the feast of Atonement, the only fast-day prescribed by the Law, Lv 16:29-31. It was celebrated about the time of the autumn equinox.

long before a hurricane, the 'north-easter' as they call it, burst on them from across
the island. •The ship was caught and could not be turned head-on to the wind, 15
so we had to give way to it and let ourselves be driven. •We ran under the lee of 16
a small island called Cauda and managed with some difficulty to bring the ship's
boat under control. •They hoisted it aboard and with the help of tackle bound 17
cables round the ship; then, afraid of running aground on the Syrtis banks, they
Jon 1:5 floated out the sea-anchor and so let themselves drift. •As we were making very 18
heavy weather of it, the next day they began to jettison the cargo, •and the third 19
day they threw the ship's gear overboard with their own hands. •For a number 20
of days both the sun and the stars were invisible and the storm raged unabated
until at last we gave up all hope of surviving.

27:33 Then, when they had been without food for a long time,[d] Paul stood up among 21
the men. 'Friends,' he said 'if you had listened to me and not put out from Crete,
you would have spared yourselves all this damage and loss. •But now I ask you 22
27:34 not to give way to despair. There will be no loss of life at all, only of the ship.
10:3+ Jon 1:9 Last night there was standing beside me an angel of the God to whom I belong 23
18:9; 23:11 and whom I serve, •and he said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. You are destined to 24
appear before Caesar,[e] and for this reason God grants you the safety of all who
are sailing with you." •So take courage, friends; I trust in God that things will 25
turn out just as I was told; •but we are to be stranded on some island.' 26

On the fourteenth night we were being driven one way and another in the 27
Adriatic,[f] when about midnight the crew sensed that land of some sort was near.
They took soundings and found twenty fathoms; after a short interval they 28
sounded again and found fifteen fathoms. •Then, afraid that we might run 29
aground somewhere on a reef, they dropped four anchors from the stern and
prayed for daylight. •When some of the crew tried to escape from the ship and 30
lowered the ship's boat into the sea as though to lay out anchors from the bows,
Paul said to the centurion and his men, 'Unless those men stay on board you 31
cannot hope to be saved'. •So the soldiers cut the boat's ropes and let it drop 32
away.

27:21 Just before daybreak Paul urged them all to have something to eat. 'For 33
fourteen days' he said 'you have been in suspense, going hungry and eating
27:24 Mt 10:30 nothing. •Let me persuade you to have something to eat; your safety is not in 34
doubt. Not a hair of your heads will be lost.' •With these words he took some 35
bread, gave thanks to God in front of them all, broke it and began to eat.[g] •Then 36
they all plucked up courage and took something to eat themselves. •We were 37
in all two hundred and seventy-six souls on board that ship. •When they had 38
eaten what they wanted they lightened the ship by throwing the corn overboard
into the sea.

When day came they did not recognise the land, but they could make out 39
a kind of bay with a beach; they planned to run the ship aground on this if they
could. •They slipped the anchors and left them to the sea, and at the same time 40
loosened the lashings of the rudders; then, hoisting the foresail to the wind, they
headed for the beach. •But the cross-currents carried them into a shoal and the 41
vessel ran aground. The bows were wedged in and stuck fast, while the stern began
to break up with the pounding of the waves.

12:19+; 16:27 The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners for fear that any should swim off 42
and escape. •But the centurion was determined to bring Paul safely through, and 43
would not let them do what they intended. He gave orders that those who could
swim should jump overboard first and so get ashore, •and the rest follow either 44
on planks or on pieces of wreckage. In this way all came safe and sound to land.

Waiting in Malta

28 Once we had come safely through, we discovered that the island was 12
called Malta. •The inhabitants treated us with unusual kindness. They
made us all welcome, and they lit a huge fire because it had started to rain and

3 the weather was cold. •Paul had collected a bundle of sticks and was putting
them on the fire when a viper brought out by the heat attached itself to his hand.
4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand they said to one
another, 'That man must be a murderer; he may have escaped the sea, but divine
5 vengeance[a] would not let him live'. •However, he shook the creature off into the Mk 16:18 Lk 10:19
6 fire and came to no harm, •although they were expecting him at any moment
to swell up or drop dead on the spot. After they had waited a long time without
seeing anything out of the ordinary happen to him, they changed their minds 14:11
and began to say he was a god.
7 In that neighbourhood there were estates belonging to the prefect of the
island, whose name was Publius. He received us and entertained us hospitably
8 for three days. •It so happened that Publius' father was in bed, suffering from
feverish attacks and dysentery. Paul went in to see him, and after a prayer he laid Lk 10:9p
9 his hands on the man and healed him. •When this happened, the other sick 9:12
10 people on the island came as well and were cured; •they honoured us with many 5:15-16; 8:7-8
marks of respect, and when we sailed they put on board the provisions we Lk 4:40 1 Tm 4:14+
needed.

From Malta to Rome

11 At the end of three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the
12 island; she came from Alexandria and her figurehead was the Twins. •We put in
13 at Syracuse and spent three days there; •from there we followed the coast up to
Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up and on the second day we
14 made Puteoli,[b] •where we found some brothers and were much rewarded by
staying a week with them. And so we came to Rome.
15 When the brothers there heard of our arrival they came to meet us, as far as
the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them he thanked
16 God and took courage. •On our arrival in Rome Paul was allowed to stay in
lodgings of his own with the soldier who guarded him.[c]

Paul makes contact with the Roman Jews[d]

17 After three days he called together the leading Jews. When they had assembled,
he said to them, 'Brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or 21:21+; 24:14+
the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to
18 the Romans. •They examined me and would have set me free, since they found
19 me guilty of nothing involving the death penalty; •but the Jews lodged an objec- 23:29+
tion, and I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation to make 25:11; 26:32
20 against my own nation.[e] •That is why I have asked to see you and talk to you,
for it is on account of the hope of Israel that I wear this chain.' 23:6+; 26:6-8,29
21 They answered,[f] 'We have received no letters from Judaea about you, nor has Lk 4:44+
any countryman of yours arrived here with any report or story of anything to
22 your discredit. •We think it would be as well to hear your own account of 17:19-20
your position; all we know about this sect is that opinion everywhere con- 24:5,14
demns it.'

d. Paul's second speech (vv. 33f) would follow naturally on this observation. This first speech (vv. 21-26) seems to have been rather clumsily introduced into this context and to be partly a repetition of the second.

e. Not before Nero in person but before his tribunal.

f. The name was used for all that part of the Mediterranean between Greece, Italy and Africa.

g. Western Text add. 'giving it to us also'. All Jews pronounced a blessing when about to eat; nevertheless, the terms Luke uses seem to suggest the Eucharist, cf. 2:42+.

28 a. Lit. 'justice', *diké*, the divine justice personified.

b. Pozzuoli on the Gulf of Naples. There was already a Christian colony in this busy port.

c. Western Text (adopted by the Antiochene recension) '... Rome, the centurion handed the prisoners over to the commander. But Paul was allowed to live outside the (Praetorian) camp.' This additional information agrees with what in fact must have happened. By the concession of *custodia militaris* the prisoner had his own lodgings, but his right arm was chained to the left of the soldier in charge.

d. Paul wants to establish good relations with the Jews of Rome as soon as possible. He gives a brief account of his trial, and for the last time protests his loyalty to Judaism.

e. Western Text add. 'but merely wished to escape death'.

f. The reply is cautious.

Paul's declaration to the Roman Jews[g]

So they arranged a day with him and a large number of them visited him at his 23
13:15-41 lodgings. He put his case to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying
1:3+
2:23+ to persuade them about Jesus, arguing from the Law of Moses and the prophets.
13:46-47 This went on from early morning until evening, •and some were convinced by 24
what he said, while the rest were sceptical. •So they disagreed among themselves 25
and, as they went away, Paul had one last thing to say to them,[h] 'How aptly the
Holy Spirit spoke when he told your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah:

13:40
Is 6:9-10
Mt 13:14

Go to this nation and say: 26
You will hear and hear again but not understand,
see and see again, but not perceive.
For the heart of this nation has grown coarse, 27
their ears are dull of hearing and they have shut their eyes,
for fear they should see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their heart,
and be converted
and be healed by me.

18:6 'Understand, then, that this salvation of God has been sent to the pagans; 28
they will listen to it.'[i]

Epilogue

Paul spent the whole of the two years[k] in his own rented lodging. He welcomed 30
all who came to visit him, •proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the 31
4:29
13:46+ truth about the Lord Jesus Christ with complete freedom and without hindrance
from anyone.[l]

28 g. In Rome also Paul preaches the gospel first to the Jews, cf. 13:5+. The summary of this preaching should be compared with the opening discourse in Pisidian Antioch, 13:15-41.

h. Paul's words are reminiscent of those following his discourse at Antioch, 13:46-47. They constitute the finale of Ac. and sound its dominant note, cf. 13:41+. They recall the vision of the future offered by Jesus at the end of his discourse in Nazareth, Lk 4:23-27, and in his last words to the apostles, Lk 24:47. The text from Is. 6:9-10 (LXX), is also used in Mt 13:14-15 (cf. Mk 4:12p) and, in part, in Jn 12:40. Both theme and text are commonplaces of early Christianity.

i. The Western Text (followed by the Antiochene recension) adds v. 29 'And when he had said this, the Jews left, arguing hotly between themselves'.

j. Thus Paul arrived in Rome, which brings one period of evangelisation to a close, cf. Lk 24:47; Ac 1:8+, and is presented as the starting-point for a further advance of Christianity. Before Luke had finished his gospel he had opened up wide horizons to the apostolic mission; his Book of Acts ends with the same prospect for the future.

k. The same technical term as in 24:27. Paul, therefore, has been under the *custodia militaris* for the legal period during which his case should have been tried. This suggests that the trial did not in fact take place, probably because there was no one to accuse him. The legal period over, Paul must have been released; Phm 22 looks forward to his approaching liberation. During these two years Paul wrote his letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians as well as his note to Philemon.

l. Western Text add, 'saying that this is he, Jesus, the son of God, by whom the whole world is destined to be judged', cf. 17:31. On Paul's ministry after his discharge, his second imprisonment, and his death, see the Introduction to the Letters of St Paul.

THE LETTERS OF SAINT PAUL

INTRODUCTION TO
THE LETTERS OF SAINT PAUL

CHRONOLOGY

Through the Acts of the Apostles and through his own letters Saint Paul is more familiar to us than any other figure of the New Testament. These two mutually independent sources confirm and complement each other in spite of certain discrepancies of detail. We are also able to construct a fairly exact chronology of Paul's life from references to dated events such as Gallio's proconsulate in Corinth, Ac 18:12, and the year Festus succeeded Felix, Ac 24:27-25:1.

Paul, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, Ac 9:11; 21:39; 22:3, about 10 A.D. of a Jewish family of the tribe of Benjamin, Rm 11-1; Ph 3:5, was a Roman citizen, Ac 16:37f; 22:25-28; 23:27. As a young man he was educated in Jerusalem by Gamaliel who gave him a thorough grounding in religious doctrine of the school of the Pharisees. He became a bitter persecutor of the infant Church, Ac 22:4f; 26:9-12; Ga 1:13; Ph 3:6, and played some part in Stephen's martyrdom, Ac 7:58; 22:20; 26:10; but on the road to Damascus, c. 34 A.D., a vision of the risen Jesus changed his whole life. The risen Lord opened his mind to the truth of the Christian faith and revealed that he had chosen him to be the apostle of the pagans, Ac 9:3-16p; Ga 1:12,15f; Ep 3:2f. From then on, Paul dedicated his life to serving Christ who had personally chosen him as his follower, Ph 3:12. After spending some time in Arabia he returned to Damascus, Ga 1:17, and began his preaching there, Ac 9:20. In about 39 A.D. after a brief visit to Jerusalem, Ga 1:18; Ac 9:26-29, Paul went to Syria and Cilicia, Ga 1:21; Ac 9:30, till Barnabas fetched him back to Antioch where they preached together, Ac 11:25f and cf. 9:27. During Paul's first missionary journey (45-49) to Cyprus, Pamphilia, Pisidia and Lycaonia, Ac 13-14, he started using his Greek name Paul instead of his Jewish name Saul, Ac 13:9, and, because he preached better, started to become more famous than Barnabas, Ac 14:12. In 49 A.D., fourteen years after his conversion, Ga 2:1, he went to Jerusalem to take part in the apostles' council, and it was partly through his influence that the council agreed that the Jewish Law was not binding on Christian converts from paganism, Ac 15; Ga 2:3-6. His mission as apostle to the pagans was formally sanctioned, Ga 2:7-9, and he set out once more. The dates of his second (50-52; Ac 15:36-18:22) and third missionary journeys (53-58; Ac 18:23-21:17) are discussed later under the letters he wrote at intervals during those journeys. In 58, Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, Ac 21:27-23:22, and imprisoned at Caesarea Palestinae until 60 A.D., Ac 23:23-26:32. In the autumn of 60, Festus the procurator sent him to Rome under escort, Ac 27:1-28:16, where, after the statutory two years (61-63), Ac 28:30, Paul's case was dismissed for want of evidence and he was set free. It is possible that he went to Spain, as he had

hoped to do, Rm 15:24,28; but the pastoral letters suggest that he travelled again in the east. A subsequent imprisonment in Rome ended, according to a very ancient tradition, in martyrdom, probably in the year 67.

THE CHARACTER OF PAUL

As well as this chronology, it is possible to recover quite a detailed portrait of Paul from his letters and from Acts.

He was a person of great dedication, capable of pursuing an ideal with a complete disregard for the cost. For him, the only thing that mattered was God, and as God's servant, Paul refused any sort of compromise. It was with equally single-minded determination that he had persecuted those he considered God's enemies, 1 Tm 1:13, cf. Ac 24:5, 14, and later preached Christ as the one, universal saviour. This saviour he served passionately and selflessly for the rest of his life. He knew what work he had been given to do, 1 Co 9:16, and he let nothing stop him doing it: hard work, exhaustion, suffering, poverty, danger of death, 1 Co 4:9-13; 2 Co 4:8f; 6:4-10; 11:23-27. Far from letting these things weaken his love for God or Christ, Rm 8:35-39, he welcomed them, since they helped him to grow into the image of his suffering and crucified Master, 2 Co 4:10f; Ph 3:10f. The knowledge that his vocation was unique gave him an enormous ambition, but it did not make him arrogant. It was with holy humility that Paul felt a personal pride in being responsible for so many churches, 2 Co 11:28, cf. Col 1:24, and claimed to have done more missionary work than others, 1 Co 15:10, cf. 2 Co 11:5, and offered himself as a model to his converts, 2 Th 3:7 +. He never forgot that having persecuted the Church of Christ, he was the unworthiest of all the apostles. All the great things he succeeded in doing he attributed to God's grace working through him, 1 Co 15:10; 2 Co 4:7; Ph 4:13; Col 1:29; Ep 3:7.

Paul had a sensitive temperament that showed itself in his attitude to those he had converted. He had a childlike trust in the converts at Philippi, Ph 1:7f; 4:10-20, a deep affection for those at Ephesus, Ac 20:17-38; he was furious with those in Galatia who were on the verge of apostasy, Ga 1:6; 3:1-3, and deeply upset when he thought that the Christians in Corinth had become vain and unstable, 2 Co 12:11-13:10. When he was being ironical with people he considered superficial, 1 Co 4:8; 2 Co 11:7; 12:13, or when he was outspoken, Ga 3:1-3; 4:11; 1 Co 3:1-3; 5:1-2; 6:5; 11:17-22; 2 Co 11:3f, it was only for their own good, 2 Co 7:8-13, and after these outbursts he soon became tender, 2 Co 11:1-2; 12:14f, and fatherly, 1 Co 4:14f; 2 Co 6:13, cf. 1 Th 2:11; Phm 10, even motherly, 1 Th 2:7; Ga 4:19, and anxious to restore the earlier affection, Ga 4:12-20; 2 Co 7:11-13.

Paul's fiercest outbursts of indignation were directed against everybody who tried to seduce his converts, whether they were Jews, who opposed him wherever he went, Ac 13:45,50; 14:2,19; 17:5,13; 18:6; 19:9; 21:27, or Judaising Christians who wanted all followers of Christ to follow the Law, Ga 1:7; 2:4; 6:12f. He never minced his words with either of these groups, 1 Th 2:15f; Ga 5:12; Ph 3:2, and, however unprepossessing, he felt himself to be an irresistible weapon wielded by divine power against ambitious, arrogant and unspiritual opponents, 2 Co 10:1-12:12. God's weapon was Paul's selfless sincerity, Ac 18:3+. It has been suggested that the people against whom he

inveighs were in fact the senior apostles in Jerusalem, but this is impossible. Some of the Judaeo-Christians, who remained faithful to the Law, invoked Peter, 1 Co 1:12, and James, Ga 2:12, in an attempt to discredit Paul, but Paul always respected the authority of these apostles, Ga 1:18; 2:2, though he claimed to be just as much a witness to Christ as they were, Ga 1:11f; 1 Co 9:1; 15:8-11. Even when Paul had his disagreement with Peter, Ga 2:11-14, his attitude was conciliatory, Ac 21:18-26, and he organised a collection for the poor Christians of Jerusalem, Ga 2:10, since he considered this would be the best possible proof that his pagan converts were truly one with the Christians of the mother church, 2 Co 8:14; 9:12-13; Rm 15:26f.

PAUL AS PREACHER

What Paul proclaimed was in all essentials the apostolic 'kerygma', Ac 2:22+, i.e. that Christ had been crucified and had risen from the dead and that this had been foretold in the scriptures, 1 Co 2:2; 15:3-4; Ga 3:1. What he calls 'his' Good News, Rm 2:16; 16:25, was identical with the faith commonly held, Ga 1:6-9; 2:2; Col 1:5-7, but emphasised the conversion of pagans, Ga 1:16; 2:7-9, in line with the missionary policy initiated at Antioch. Paul accepts and sometimes appeals to the apostolic tradition, 1 Co 12:23; 15:3-7, to which he was deeply indebted. Though he probably never met Jesus during his earthly life, cf. 2 Co 5:16+, Paul was familiar with his teaching, 1 Th 4:15; 1 Co 7:10f; Ac 20:35, and confidently claimed to have seen the risen Christ, not only on the Damascus road, Ac 9:17; 22:14f; 26:16; 1 Co 9:1; 15:8, but on several occasions subsequently, Ac 22:17-21; 26:16. He also had revelations and ecstasies, 2 Co 12:1-4, but everything he had received from apostolic tradition he could also attribute, and justly, to direct communication from the Lord, Ga 1:12; 1 Co 11:23.

These mystical experiences have sometimes been attributed to Paul's excitable and morbid temperament, yet this is hardly likely. The disease that detained him in Galatia, Ga 4:13-15, was probably an attack of malaria, and the 'thorn in my side', 2 Co 12:7, may well be the persistent hostility of Jews, his brothers 'according to the flesh', Rm 9:3. Paul does not seem to have had a very vivid imagination judging by his sparing and pedestrian use of imagery: the sports-ground, 1 Co 9:24-27; Ph 3:12-14; 2 Tm 4:7f, and the sea, Ep 4:14. Two images, farming, 1 Co 3:6-8, and building, 1 Co 3:10-17; Rm 15:20; Ep 2:20-22, are so basic that he often mixes them, 1 Co 3:9; Col 2:7; Ep 3:17, cf. Col 2:19; Ep 4:16. His genius was much more intellectual than imaginative, his enthusiasm was never divorced from the rigid logic with which he explains his teaching and adapts it to the needs of his audience. It is to this intellectual need he felt to adapt his teaching to the occasion that we owe the remarkable theological analysis to which he repeatedly submits the kerygma. His logic, which is based on the rabbinical method in which he had been trained, may seem strange to some people today (e.g. Ga 3:16; 4:21-31). His genius, however, was never restricted by these scholastic conventions, so that however unattractive some people may find the method, it does not obscure the profundity of his teaching.

Paul was a Jew with a Greek cultural background which he had possibly begun to acquire when a boy in Tarsus and which was certainly reinforced by repeated contact with the Graeco-Roman world; this influence is obvious

not only in his logical method but also in his language and style. He sometimes quotes Greek writers, 1 Co 15:33; Tt 1:12; Ac 17:28, and was familiar with popular Stoic-based philosophy from which he borrows concepts (e.g. of the soul separated from the body and bound for another world, 2 Co 5:6-8; the cosmic *pleroma* in Col and Ep) and clichés (1 Co 8:6; Rm 11:36; Ep 4:6). From the Cynics and Stoics he borrowed the rapid question and answer method (the diatribe), Rm 3:1-9, 27-31, and the rhetorical device of heaping word on word, 2 Co 6:4-10. Even his use of long, packed phrases in wave after wave, Ep 1:3-14; Col 1:9-20, has a precedent in hellenistic religious literature. The Greek that was a second mother tongue to Paul (cf. Ac 21:40), that he was able to use so familiarly with only occasional semitisms, was a cultured form of the *koine*, i.e. the Greek of his own day. Paul never attempted Attic elegance, and he deliberately avoided rhetoric so that his audience would be convinced not by the form but by the content of his message of faith and by the signs the Spirit had promised to provide to confirm it, 1 Th 1:5; 1 Co 2:4f; 2 Co 11:6; Rm 15:18. This is one reason why his grammar is sometimes wrong and his sentences unfinished, 1 Co 9:15; another is that he sometimes thought too fast or too emotionally; a third is that with rare exceptions, Phm 19, he normally dictated his letters, Rm 16:22, (a common practice at the time) and only wrote the final greeting by way of signature, 2 Th 3:17; Ga 6:11; 1 Co 16:21; Col 4:18. Some passages in his letters were obviously written only after long and careful thought, e.g. Col 1:15-20, but mostly his letters suggest spontaneity and lack of revision, and this is why Paul's sentences sound dynamic, and why he seems to pack so much into them. He is not easy to read, 2 P 3:16; profound thoughts expressed by an urgent writer never are; however, some passages have an extraordinary religious and literary power.

It is important to remember that Paul's letters were not meant as theological treatises: they are simply his response to a particular situation in a particular church. They begin according to the usual epistolary convention, Rm 1:1+, but cannot be classed either as private letters, or as literary 'epistles'; they are Pauline dissertations intended for a specific circle of readers and, in a general way, for all the faithful. Paul's letters do not give any systematic and exhaustive exposition of his teaching, they are all commentaries on certain points of sermons that he preached, and the existence of these sermons must always be remembered by the reader. This does not detract from their value: the depth and range of his letters give us all the essentials of Paul's message. No matter what the reason was for writing or who the people were to whom he was writing, his basic teaching remained the same: that Christ died and rose from the dead. The apostle who was all things to all men, 1 Co 9:19-22, adapts this, his one basic doctrine, to the listener; he develops and enriches it. Paul has sometimes been accused of being an eclectic, in the sense of adopting not only different but contradictory opinions according to the circumstances in which he found himself, of being interested less in truth than in persuading people to believe in Christ. He has also been accused of not having an open mind, of being obsessed by the vision that converted him, and of never having allowed his ideas to develop. The truth between these two extremes seems to be that Paul's theology does remain homogeneous but that it did develop under the guidance of the Spirit, who inspired everything he did as an apostle, and that Pauline thought reached its highest development in the letter to the Christians at

Ephesus. To show this development of Paul's thought, his letters have to be read in the same order in which they were written; the order, however, in which they are printed here is the traditional one that arranges them in order of diminishing length.

PAUL'S JOURNEYS AND LETTERS

1 and 2 Thessalonians. 50-51 A.D.

The first letters to be written were to the converts Paul had made in Thessalonika in the summer of 50 A.D. during his second missionary journey, Ac 17:1-10. As a result of the hostility of some Jews he went on to Beroea, and from there to Athens and Corinth where, it seems, he wrote 1 Th during the winter of 50-51. When he wrote this letter, his companions were Silas and Timothy. Timothy had paid a second visit to Thessalonika, and brought back the good news of their faith under persecution, hence the affectionate tone of the opening chapters, 1-3; these are followed by a series of practical recommendations, 4:1-12; 5:12-28, interrupted by an opportune instruction on the destiny of the dead and on Christ's *parousia*, 4:13-5:11. 2 Th was probably written at Corinth a few months later, making further practical recommendations, 1; 2:13-3:15, and offering fresh instruction on the time of the *parousia* and the signs that were to come before it, 2:1-12.

The literary resemblance between 1 and 2 Th is so close that some critics consider 2 Th a forgery made by one who had absorbed Paul's ideas and style, but it is hard to explain why this should have been done; a more obvious explanation is that when, about a year later, Paul had deepened his eschatological thought, he wrote this second letter but repeated various expressions from the first. The two are not contradictory but complementary and the earliest authorities believed that they were both written by Paul.

These two letters are particularly important because of their eschatological teaching, but they also introduce many points elaborated in subsequent letters. At this earlier stage, Paul's ideas were structured around the question of how the resurrection and *parousia* of Christ can bring salvation to his followers whether alive or dead, 1 Th 4:13-18. Paul described this *parousia* in the traditional terms of Jewish and the earliest Christian apocalyptic literature (i.e. the 'eschatological discourse' of the Synoptics, and particularly of Mt). Like Jesus himself he sometimes so emphasised, 1 Th 5:1-11, the unpredictable imminence of the Coming and the necessity for vigilance, as to give the impression that he and his readers would live to see it, 1 Th 4:17; but in 2 Th 2:1-12 he tried to allay the anxiety naturally aroused and reminded his readers that the day could not come till certain signs had preceded it. What these signs were to be is not as clear to us as it must have been to the first readers. Paul seems to consider the 'Adversary' to be an individual person who had to wait till the end of the age before he could appear; some writers consider that by the phrase 'that which at present holds him back', 2 Th 2:6, Paul meant the Roman empire, others that he meant the preaching of the gospel; no conclusion has been reached.

1 and 2 Corinthians. 57 A.D.

Paul wrote the letters to Thessalonika during the eighteen months he spent

evangelising Corinth, Ac 18:1-15, from the end of 50 to the middle of 52 A.D. His policy was always to establish the Christian faith in a centre of population, and here he chose the great and populous port of Corinth, so that it could spread from there into the whole of Achaia, 2 Co 1:1; 9:2. The Christian community he established grew strong, and was composed mostly of poor people, 1 Co 1:26-28, but Corinth was not only a great centre of hellenism and a magnet to every sort of philosophy and religion, it was also a notorious centre of immorality; it was a *milieu* that could only create awkward problems for those newly converted to a faith that had only recently been introduced. It was to the solution of these problems that Paul addressed himself when he wrote his two letters to the Christians of Corinth.

How these two letters came to be written now seems clear enough, though some details are still disputed. There had been an earlier letter than these two canonical ones, 1 Co 5:9-13, but the date at which this first letter was written is unknown and it has not survived. Before the end of the two-and-a-half years he spent at Ephesus (54-57) on his third missionary journey, Ac 19:1-20:1, a Corinthian delegation arrived to ask Paul certain questions, 1 Co 16:17; and as he had also received news of Corinth from Apollos, Ac 18:27f; 1 Co 16:12, and from Chloe's household, 1 Co 1:11, he felt obliged to write a second letter. This is 1 Co, and it was written sometime near Easter, 57 (1 Co 5:7f; 16:5-9; compare Ac 19:21). Shortly afterwards, some sort of crisis developed in Corinth and Paul was forced to pay a brief and painful visit, 2 Co 1:23-2:1; 12:14; 13:1-2; while there he promised another and a longer visit, 2 Co 1:15-16, which never in fact took place. Instead, Paul sent a representative to whom he delegated his authority : all that happened was that a second crisis developed; Paul's authority, committed to this delegate, had been flouted, 2 Co 2:5-10; 7:12. Paul still did not pay the promised visit, but sent a severe letter written 'with many tears', 2 Co 2:3f, 9; this third letter had the desired effect, 2 Co 7:8-13. This good news that he heard from Titus only reached Paul after he had gone to Macedonia, 2 Co 2:12f; 7:5-16, after leaving Ephesus as a result of serious disturbances of which we know little, 1 Co 15:32; 2 Co 1:8-10; Ac 19:23-40. At this stage, towards the end of 57, he wrote 2 Co. He must subsequently have travelled via Corinth, Ac 20:1f, cf. 2 Co 9:5; 12:14; 13:1,10, to Jerusalem where he was arrested at Whitsun.

It has been suggested that 2 Co 6:14-7:1 is a fragment of the lost first letter, and 2 Co 10-13 part of the letter written 'in tears'. It would be hard to prove that they were parts of these two particular letters, but it is quite certain that these two sections are not in their original contexts. The first section reads like an insertion, 2 Co 7:2 follows naturally on 6:13, and the whole insertion, 6:14-7:1, has remarkable affinity with some of the Essene literature discovered at Qumran. The vehemence of the second section, 2 Co 10-13, is certainly not in place after the friendly tone of the first nine chapters. To these two dislocations should be added the fact that 9:1 does not make sense after what has been said in ch. 8 about the collection, and is probably part of a completely different note on the subject. These are probably fragments of things Paul wrote on different occasions, that were later put in their present place as part of the process of preserving a collection of the apostle's writings.

In these letters to Corinth, even the details about Paul and the way he treated his converts are important doctrinally. 1 Co in particular contains a great deal

of information about urgent problems that faced the church and about the decisions made to meet them : internally there were questions of moral conduct, 1 Co 5:1-13, 6:12-20, of marriage and virginity, 7:1-40, of liturgical and eucharistic meetings, of the charismata, 12:1-14:40; externally, questions of appeals to civil courts, 6:1-11, and eating foods sacrificed to idols, ch. 8-10. It was Paul's religious genius to turn what might have remained cases of conscience or liturgical instruction into a vehicle for the profound doctrine of Christian liberty, the sanctification of the body, the supremacy of love, union with Christ. When forced to defend his apostolate, 2 Co 10-13, he does so in a style of immense power, 2 Co 1:12-6:10; and when he brings up the business of collecting money, 2 Co 8-9, he discusses the collection in the light of the ideal of union between the churches. The eschatological basis of his doctrine is always present in Paul's mind, and provides the perspective in which he explains the resurrection of the body, 1 Co 15; here, however, the apocalyptic imagery of 1 and 2 Th gives place to a philosophical method of justifying a doctrine that the Greek mind found so unsympathetic. As Paul penetrates this new Greek environment, he tries to adapt the Good News he proclaims, and this he does with particular skill when presenting the folly of the cross to Greek wisdom. The apostle's converts at Corinth had split into factions, each proud of its own leader and boasting about his talents; Paul reminded them that there is only one master, Christ, and only one message, the cross, and that there is no wisdom outside that message, 1 Co 1:10-4:13. The importance of this is that quite naturally through the way events had developed, without surrendering anything of the primacy of his eschatological thought, the inner development of Paul's ideas led him to the point where he had to stress how the life we lead here and now is already a life of union between Christ and his followers and that this union is achieved by faith which is the only way to know him. Later, when the Galatian crisis developed, Paul had to relate this teaching to Judaism, and in doing so he explored further depths of this new life into which people are born by faith.

Galatians. Romans. 57-58 A.D.

The letters Paul wrote to the Christians of Galatia and Rome need to be treated together, since both letters analyse the same problem. The first was Paul's immediate reaction to a particular situation, but the second, which is his more considered opinion, is more like a theological treatise than a letter, and in it Paul systematically arranges all his new ideas that had emerged from the argument. This close relationship between the two letters is really the strongest reason against the early dating of Ga (pre-49 A.D., the council of Jerusalem) which some scholars have suggested. They argue that Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, Ga 2:1-10, was the second visit mentioned in Ac 11:30; 12:25, not the third, Ac 15:2-30, since several details here differ from Paul's account, and that, as Paul seems unaware of the decree of the council, Ac 15:20,29 (cf. Ga 2:6), this letter must have been written before it. All difficulties disappear if it is supposed that the 'Galatians' are the Christians of Lycaonia and Pisidia, evangelised by Paul on his first missionary journey when he returned by the way he had come; this would explain the double visit that Ga 4:13 seems to imply. This hypothesis does not have very much to support it apart from the fact that Lycaonia and Pisidia had been part of the province of Galatia in

36-25 B.C.; in the 1st century A.D., however, 'Galatia' normally referred to Galatia properly so called which lay to the north of Lycaonia and Pisidia, and it is unlikely that the inhabitants of each district were *both* called 'Galatians', Ga 3:1. This 'South-Galatia' hypothesis would not even be necessary if the second visit of Ga 2:1-10 could be identified with the third visit of Ac 15; and in fact this third visit of Ac seems to resemble the visit in Ga much more closely than it does the second, Ac 11:30; 12:25, which could have been sufficiently unimportant for Paul to have been justified in leaving it out of the discussion in Ga, in spite of his assurance, Ga 1:20. It is even possible that this second visit of Ac never took place but is simply one of Luke's literary doublets; cf. Introduction to Acts and Ac 11:30+. In this view, then, (that the letter to the Christians of Galatia was probably written eight years after the council of Jerusalem) the reason Paul does not mention the decree could be that the date of the decree was later than that of Ga (cf. Ac 15:1+). This would explain Peter's conduct that Paul says he criticised, Ga 2:11-14. The converts to whom the letter was addressed would then be the inhabitants of the 'Galatian territory' (i.e. North Galatia) through which Paul passed on his second and third journeys, Ac 16:6; 18:23. The letter may have been written at Ephesus, or even in Macedonia, about the year 57.

The letter to the Christians of Rome must, in this case, have been written soon after. In the winter of 57-58 Paul was at Corinth preparing to go to Jerusalem and from there to visit Rome on the way to Spain, Rm 15:22-32; cf. 1 Co 16:3-6; Ac 19:21; 20:3. He had not founded the Roman church, and any information he had about it (from people like Aquila, Ac 18:2) was not considerable: all we learn from occasional allusions in the letter is that it was a mixed community and that there was a danger of Jewish and non-Jewish converts looking down on each other. In view of this danger, Paul thought it would be prudent to pave the way for his visit by sending a letter (through Phoebe the deaconess, Rm 16:1) in which he stated systematically his ideas about the problem of how Judaism and Christianity were related to each other; these ideas were the ones he had been forced to develop by the Galatian crisis. In Rm he reassembled all the ideas he had expressed in Ga and by doing so made them even more precise. Ga has a mixed personal and emotional appeal, 1:12-2:21, with doctrinal argument, 3:1-4:31, and earnest admonition, 5:1-6:18. Rm on the other hand is a carefully planned whole: it has only a few main sections and these are shown to be all parts of one whole by a preliminary section in which Paul outlines all the subjects that are subsequently developed.

Like Co and Ga, the authenticity of the letter to Roman Christians is not seriously disputed though it is suggested that ch. 15 and 16 are later insertions. Chapter 16 has many greetings, and it may quite easily have been a separate note for the church at Ephesus, but in spite of certain MSS ch. 15 cannot be amputated so easily. Critics who keep ch. 16 as part of the original letter suggest that it was quite possible for Paul to have met a great many Christians who, as Jews, had eight years previously been expelled under Claudius and then later on gone back to Rome, and that it was diplomatic for him to mention their names in a letter to a church he had not yet visited. The unusual style of the doxology, 16:25-27, certainly suggests that it could be a later insertion, but this in itself is not sufficient argument against its authenticity.

The letter to Corinth contrasted Christ as the Wisdom of God with the

human wisdom of philosophers, but in the letters to Galatia and Rome, Paul contrasted the perfection people can achieve by purely human effort with Christ who is the Perfection of God. What Paul was trying to do was to correct the unbalance of the Greek outlook that relied too exclusively on reason, just as in the earlier letters he had tried to correct the unbalance of the Jewish outlook that relied too heavily on the Law. Judaising Christians who had visited Galatia advised the pagan converts to have themselves circumcised to ensure their salvation. This would have meant adopting all the prescriptions of the Law, Ga 5:2f, the implications of which, to Paul, made nonsense of Christ's redemptive work, Ga 5:4, and it was for this reason that he opposed the circumcision of his converts so violently. He maintained that the true value of the Law could be appreciated only by seeing its place in the development of God's plan, Ga 3:23-25. The Mosaic Law was good and holy, Rm 7:12, because it really did convey God's will to the Jews, but as law it was unable to provide anyone with the spiritual power necessary to obey it: all the Law could do was make people aware of sin and of the need they have for God to help them, Ga 3:19-22; Rm 3:20; 7:7-13. All human beings need this help, and it is necessarily a gift from God: it was promised to Abraham long before the Law was formulated, Ga 3:16-18; Rm 4, and has now been given in Jesus Christ: his death and resurrection have created the human race anew: once polluted by Adam's sin, it now has Christ himself as its prototype, Rm 5:12-21. All human beings united to Christ by faith, and living the new life by sharing the Spirit of Christ, are made perfect gratuitously and so enabled to live in the way God wants human beings to live, Rm 8:1-4. This faith must result in the human person doing 'good works', but these will not be at all the same as those 'good works', commanded by the Law, on which Jews were so proud to rely; they will be works prompted by the presence of the Spirit, Ga 5:22-25; Rm 8:5-13, and they will be open to all who have faith, whether Jew or pagan, Ga 3:6-9, 14. The preparatory or Mosaic stage of religion is over, and Jews who claim they are continuing to fulfil the Law are in fact putting themselves outside the pale of salvation. Had God not permitted their blindness, however, the pagans would not have found themselves invited inside. This cannot be taken as meaning that God has failed to keep his promise to the Jews, it means that their failure to live up to God's original choice will not be permanent: some of them, the 'remnant' foretold by the prophets, have already become believers, and one day all of them will, Rm 9-11. Meanwhile, all converts without exception, whether they are Jews or not, must love and help each other as one family, Rm 12:1-15:13. The general outlines of this thesis were sketched in Ga; the details added in Rm are much deeper insights into mysteries such as the position of the human race as waiting for salvation, Rm 1:18-3:20; the spiritual struggle of each individual to be saved, Rm 7:14-25; God's gift of salvation, Rm 3:24 and *passim*; what the death and resurrection of Jesus actually achieved, Rm 4:24f; 5:6-11, and how Christians share in this by dying and rising in faith and baptism, Ga 3:26f; Rm 6:3-11; the vocation of the whole human race to be children of God, Ga 4:1-7; Rm 8:14-17; the love and wisdom of God who, being perfect and faithful to his promises, only reveals his salvific will stage by stage, Rm 3:21-26; 8:31-39. Paul's thought is still basically eschatological — we are saved 'in hope', Rm 5:1-11; 8:24 — but, as in his letters to Corinth, the stress is on the already present reality of salvation: the Spirit that was

promised is already possessed, as 'first-fruits', Rm 8:23, by the Christian who from now on lives in Christ, Rm 6:11, and Christ in him, Ga 2:20.

The letter to the Romans is a magnificent though incomplete synthesis of Paul's theology: it does not exhaust his doctrine. The Lutheran controversy showed it was the most important of Paul's letters, but it would be a pity if this led people to neglect the other letters which are necessary to complete a really adequate review of all Paul's theological ideas.

Philippians. 56-57 A.D.

The Roman colony of Philippi was one of the principal cities of Macedonia; it had been evangelised by Paul in 50 A.D. during his second missionary journey, Ac 16:12-40, and he revisited it twice during his third: in the autumn of 57, Ac 20:1-2, and at Passover 58, Ac 20:3-6. His converts there had proved their affection by contributing to his support first at Thessalonika, Ph 4:16, then at Corinth, 2 Co 11:9, and later still had commissioned Epaphroditus to take further contributions to him, Ph 4:10-20. Paul wrote a letter (Ph) to thank them, and to say that he accepted their gifts. Normally, Paul was afraid of doing anything that might give the impression that he was trying to make money out of his preaching, Ac 18:3+, so it seems he was on terms of special intimacy with his converts at Philippi.

At the time of writing, Paul was under arrest, Ph 1:7, 12-17, and for a long time this was assumed to be the first Roman captivity. Rome, however, was so far away that it seems unlikely that communications between Paul (with whom Epaphroditus was staying) and Philippi could have been as frequent or as easy as they appear to have been, 2:25-30. Nor is it clear why, if Paul were under arrest in Rome or in Caesarea, Ac 23:23, the Philippians should say that the contribution brought by Epaphroditus was the first chance they had had since the second missionary journey (cf. the gifts mentioned in 4:10,16) of helping the apostle, since Paul had visited them twice on his third journey. It may be easier to suppose that Paul actually wrote this letter during the third journey, before reaching Philippi, i.e. while he was at Ephesus, the capital of Roman Asia, in 56-57 hoping to visit Macedonia after his liberation (compare Ph 1:26; 2:19-24 and Ac 19:21f; 20:1; 1 Co 16:5). The 'Praetorium', Ph 1:13, and 'Caesar's household', 4:22, do not necessarily refer to Rome, since there were praetoria in all the major cities and there were most certainly detachments of the praetorian guard in Ephesus. It is true that there is no reference anywhere to an Ephesian captivity; but Luke says very little about Paul's three years there, Ac 19:1-20:1, and Paul himself mentions having fought with beasts at Ephesus, 1 Co 15:32, and troubles and imminent death in Roman Asia, 2 Co 1:8-10.

If we accept this hypothesis we shall have to dissociate Ph from Col, Ep and Phm and group it with the 'great letters', notably with 1 Co. The style and content of the letter are quite consistent with this. It is not particularly doctrinal, it is just a friendly letter, giving some news to his converts at Philippi, warning them against the 'bad workmen' who are ruining his work in other places and might turn on them next, and, above all, appealing for the unity of corporate humility. As part of this appeal Paul gives us, 2:6-11, the poem on the humility of the Messiah; and whether he wrote it or is quoting it, this poem is our chief proof that the early Church believed in the divine pre-existence of Jesus.

The authenticity of the letter is generally accepted, and it is quite possible, as some writers suggest, that it may be made up of several originally separate notes.

Ephesians. Colossians. Philemon. 61-63 A.D.

The letters to the Christians of Ephesus and Colossae (both in Roman Asia) and the letter to Philemon are closely related: the mission on which Onesimus is sent in Col 4:9 is the same as that in Phm 12; the same is true of Tychicus in Col 4:7f and Ep 6:21f; Paul's companions in Col 4:10-14 are the same as in Phm 23-24; Col and Ep are very similar in style and doctrine. All three were written while Paul was under arrest, Phm 1, 9f, 13, 23; Col 4:3,10,18; Ep 3:1; 4:1; 6:20, and this is almost certainly his arrest (61-63) in Rome rather than (58-60) in Caesarea where it would be difficult to account for the presence of Mark and of Onesimus, or (56-57) in Ephesus since there is nothing to suggest that Luke was ever there with Paul. The degree to which Paul's style has changed, and his doctrine developed, suggests some interval between Col, Ep and the 'great letters' Co, Ga, Rm. This interval (57-61) came to an end when Epaphras, Col 1:7, Paul's delegate, arrived from Colossae (a church Paul had not founded) 1:4; 2:1, with disturbing news. Paul promptly wrote a letter to the Christians there, and gave it to Tychicus to deliver. The inherent dangers of this new situation stimulated Paul to rethink things at a deeper level, and just as Rm had systematised the ideas outlined in Ga, so now, at about the same time as Col, Paul wrote another letter in which he restructured his teaching from the new angle that he had been forced to adopt by the recent developments at Colossae. This new synthesis of Paul's thought is referred to as the letter he wrote to the Christians at Ephesus. The title, however, is misleading, and has very scanty MS support, cf. Ep 1:1. This is a general letter in which Paul is speaking to the whole Church and not just to the church at Ephesus where he had spent three years, Ep 1:15; 3:2-4, though it was meant in a special way for Colossae and the other Christian communities of the Lycus valley among whom he asks for it to be circulated, Col 4:16.

Critics have often disputed who the authors are of these two letters: for Col the balance now is in favour of Paul, since not only does it retain his basic ideas but the new ideas in it are such as seem to be satisfactorily explained by the circumstances mentioned above. There is, however, no such agreement that Ep, in the form in which we have it, is a letter of Paul's. Among arguments in favour of Paul are: 1. that Ep is not the work of any derivative thinker like a disciple, but of someone with a genius for creative thinking; 2. that the leisurely, rich and extravagant style of Col and Ep which contrasts so much with the quick, jerky discussions of earlier letters, can probably be explained by these wide new horizons that Paul was opening for himself; 3. that the style of the earlier letters is not at all consistent, and two early examples of this later contemplative, semi-liturgical manner can be found in 2 Co 9:8-14, Rm 3:23-26; 4. that the slavish and awkward borrowing by Ep of phrases from Col might be due to the fact that Paul was not in the habit of composing every word of his letters, and on this occasion he may have allowed a disciple to play a greater part than usual.

The danger at Colossae was due to the basically Jewish (Col 2:16) speculations they had taken up about the celestial or cosmic powers. These were the powers

thought to be responsible for the regular movement of the cosmos, and the speculations about them, much influenced by hellenistic philosophy, attached an importance to these powers that threatened the supremacy of Christ. Paul accepts these cosmological premisses and, far from expressing any doubts about these powers, he associates them with the angels of Jewish tradition, 2:15; all he is concerned about is to show their subordinate place in the scheme of salvation. Their task had been to 'mediate' the Law and to administer it and that task is now accomplished: *Christos Kyrios*, Christ the Lord, has established a new order of things and he now governs the cosmos. Raised up to heaven, he is above all the cosmic powers and has stripped them of their ancient dignities, 2:15. Because he is the Son, the Father's image, he was their lord already when the world was made; now in the new creation he is their confirmed and absolute master, for gathered into him is the *pleroma*, the fulness of Being, that is to say the fulness both of God and of all that exists through God's creative power, 1:13-20. Christians have been set free from these 'elements of the world', 2:8,20, through being united with their Master and thus sharing in his fulness, 2:10, Christians must never again accept their tyranny by submitting to an old and now impotent law, 2:16-23. United to the dead and risen Christ by baptism, 2:11-13, they are parts of his Body and live a new life, his life, because as Head of his body he communicates his life to it, 2:19. Paul had always taught that salvation consisted of sharing the life of Christ in this way; the new perspective in which the arguments at Colossae forced him to see things was one in which he saw the effects of Christ's work on the entire cosmos. Since the human race forms part of the cosmos, the cosmos itself must be influenced by the salvific act of the one and only Lord of all creation. In this perspective, Paul is able to widen his whole concept of the 'Body of Christ', which was an idea that, five years or so before in 1 Co 12:12f, he had only touched on. Three aspects of this broader view, which focusses on the function of Christ as Head, are: that the scope of salvation is seen to be cosmic; that Christ, into whom the Church has to structure itself, is this same victor who has triumphed over the whole cosmos; and finally that the concept of the future, eschatological, promise, as already realised, becomes very much more central, cf. Ep 2:6+.

When Paul wrote the letter we know as Ephesians, it was along the same lines, but this time he can assume the conclusions of the previous letter about the subordinate place of the Powers, Ep 1:20-22, and give further thought to how the Church as the Body of Christ embraces the whole of the new Universe, 'the fulness of him who is filled, all in all', 1:23. This concept of the *pleroma* is the innermost depth of Paul's vision, the central statement of everything he wrote. It forms the new focus round which he can synthesise many of his previous insights. In particular he reconsiders some of the problems he had already dealt with in Rm, which is the most important statement of Paul's previous period of thought. In a few phrases he recalls his survey of humanity under the shadow of sin and of how salvation is a gift given by God through Christ, 2:1-10. Next, he re-examines the problem of Jew and pagan that had so troubled him before, Rm 9-11; but this time, in the calm eschatological light of the cosmic Christ, he is aware of the unity of Jews and pagans, who are now reconciled since each is equally part of the New Humanity, and who, together, advance toward the Father, Ep 2:11-22. That it should be the non-Jew who

should be benefited by the Messiah who came to save Israel is the 'mystery', 1:9; 3:3-6,9; 6:19; Col 1:27; 2:2; 4:3, which occupies his thoughts for the last five years or so of his life and which he writes about in the inimitable Pauline way. He writes about the infinite wisdom of this 'mystery', 3:9f; Col 2:3, about how it proves Christ's love to be inexhaustible, Ep 3:18f, and about how, out of all possible people, God had made the unexpected choice of Paul, who was 'the least of all', to proclaim this mystery, Ep 3:2-8. That the full truth, about salvation being for the whole human race, was not revealed before, was itself part of the very scheme God had for realising this salvation, Ep 1:3-14, the culmination of which was the salvific act of marriage between Christ and the human race which is his bride, the Church, 5:22-32.

The short letter Paul wrote at about the same time as Col and Ep is to tell Philemon of Colossae, v.19, one of Paul's converts, that Onesimus, a runaway slave belonging to Philemon, and also one of Paul's converts, had returned. It is a very short note, and Paul wrote it in his own handwriting, v. 19. The letter reveals a gentle, affectionate side of the apostle, and also shows how he applies his views on slavery to a particular case, Rm 6:15+: as far as society is concerned, the master still owns his slave, but the two of them should remember that they are brothers serving the same Master, v. 16; cf. Col 3:22; 4:1.

1 Timothy. Titus. 2 Timothy. 65 A.D.

Paul's two letters to Timothy and his letter to Titus are all three of them closely related in substance, form and historical background. 1 Tm and Tt both seem to have been written from Macedonia, Timothy being at that time in Ephesus, 1 Tm 1:3, where Paul hoped to join him in the near future, 3:14; 4:13, while Titus was in Crete where he had been left by Paul, Tt 1:5, who planned to winter at Nicopolis in Epirus where Titus was to join him, Tt 3:12. By the time he wrote 2 Tm, Paul was a prisoner in Rome, 1:8; 16f; 2:9, but had visited Troas, 4:13, and Miletus, 4:20. The position is not hopeful, 4:16, and Paul feels sure he will die soon, 4:6-8,18; he is lonely and would like Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, 4:9-16,21. In spite of certain similarities, this is not the situation either of the Roman captivity, 61-63, or of the journey that preceded it. Some critics have concluded that the letters were written not by Paul, but by a forger who put in these details to make the letter seem more authentic and as Pauline as possible. There is, however, no proof that Paul died at the end of his first captivity, in fact Ac 28:30 suggests he was set free. It is not impossible, therefore, for Paul to have made another journey, not necessarily to Spain as he had once planned seven or eight years before, Rm 15:24,28, but in the east as he had planned a year or so ago, Phm 22. It is possible then that 1 Tm and Tt were written about 65 A.D. on that journey through Crete, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. The background of 2 Tm seems to be a fresh captivity, ending in Paul's death; in that case, this letter would be Paul's last will and testament, and must have been written shortly before his martyrdom in 67.

Paul wrote these letters in order to instruct two of his most loyal followers, Ac 16:1+; 2 Co 2:13+, how to organise and govern the communities he had confided to their care; since the 18th century they have generally been grouped as the 'pastoral letters'. Some critics suggest that they presuppose a stage in the evolution of the Church's hierarchy that only occurred after Paul's death;

others think that the situation they do suppose would not have been at all unlikely towards the end of Paul's lifetime. The titles '*episcopos*' and 'presbyter', Tt 1:5-7, are still, cf. Ac 20:17,28, practically synonymous, as they had been in the earliest communities governed by a college of elders, Tt 1:5+. There is no trace in these letters of the monarchic bishops of whom Ignatius of Antioch writes forty years later. There are signs, however, that this development is taking place: Timothy and Titus are empowered to act as delegates of Paul; they are responsible for several communities though they are not attached to any of them, Tt 1:5; they are living in an interim period when apostolic authority was in the process of being transmitted, since the apostles themselves were dying. Not long after the death of Paul this authority became vested in the head of the college of presbyters, the 'bishop'. To invent the interim period represented in the pastoral letters would seem to be so pointless that its presence is a valuable indication of their authenticity. It should also be noticed that these *episcopoi-presbyteroi* are not just administrative officials; they are that, but they are also primarily responsible for teaching and governing, 1 Tm 3:2,5; 5:17; Tt 1:7,9, and as such they are the ancestors of our 'bishops' and 'priests'.

Many critics have thought the insistence on 'sound teaching', 1 Tm 1:10, etc., and on keeping the deposit of faith, 1 Tm 6:20; 2 Tm 1:14, uncharacteristic of a bold original thinker like Paul. On the other hand it must be remembered that Paul felt his end was near and that he probably felt it his duty to warn his young helpers against the sort of speculation he had seen developing. There were new ideas going round which, if believed in, would make shipwreck of the faith, 1 Tm 1:19. There is no need to assume that these ideas were 2nd century Gnostic teachings being attacked by someone writing under Paul's name. These idle questions, 1 Tm 6:4, empty problems, 'myths and endless genealogies', 1 Tm 1:4, 'Jewish myths', Tt 1:14, 'disputes about the Law', Tt 3:9, and the various ascetical practices they seemed to involve, 1 Tm 4:3, would all appear to belong to those groups of hellenised and syncretistic ideas affecting Judaism, which had formed part of the crisis in Colossae.

These letters are certainly not written in Paul's distinctive style: they flow smoothly without any of the fire and exuberance of the early letters, and the vocabulary used is very different. Some critics have tried to explain this by saying that Paul was getting old, and that being in prison affected him; but Col, Ep, Ph were written less than five years before, and Paul was not under arrest when he wrote 1 Tm and Tt. Attempts have been made to separate the authentic sections from later additions, but these have not proved very satisfactory. The alternative would appear to be that Paul, as in the case of Ep but to a greater degree, must have given someone who was both disciple and secretary an unprecedented amount of freedom. Luke was with Paul at the time, 2 Tm 4:11, and critics have occasionally maintained that they could detect similarities between his style and that of the pastoral letters.

Hebrews. 67 A.D.

The question of who wrote this letter to the Jewish Christians has, unlike the disputed authorship of the pastoral letters, been a subject of debate from the earliest times. Not that its canonical status was often questioned, but up to the end of the 4th century the Western Church denied that Paul had written it, and the Eastern Church only affirmed it with many reservations about its

literary composition (Clement of Alexandria; Origen). Its vocabulary and style have a simplicity and a distinction quite uncharacteristic of Paul; the way in which it quotes and uses the Old Testament is different from Paul's; the usual Pauline greetings and introduction are lacking, and though its doctrine has Pauline overtones, it is so original that its immediate attribution to Paul is difficult. Most critics agree that Paul could not have been its author in the same sense as he was author of the other letters, but he is felt to have had sufficient influence, direct or (more likely) indirect, to warrant its inclusion from early times in the *corpus Paulinum.*

No sort of agreement exists as to who actually wrote the letter; Barnabas, Silas, Aristion, etc. have been suggested; perhaps the most likely is Apollos, the Alexandrian Jew who is praised by Luke for his eloquence, apostolic zeal and knowledge of the scriptures, Ac 18:24-28. Not only are these qualities reflected in the letter itself, but its language and thought, by having sufficient affinity with Philo, also suggest Alexandrian culture. The argument of the letter, pleaded with rhetorical skill, is founded entirely on the Old Testament.

The place and date of writing are equally uncertain, and who it was intended for is unknown. But the author seems to be writing from Italy, 13:24, and he speaks as if the Temple were still open for worship, 8:4f, warning his readers against the temptation of going back to it, and, when he emphasises the transitory nature of the Mosaic cult, he makes no reference to the destruction of the Temple. This suggests he was writing before 70 A.D. On the other hand, he certainly makes use of Paul's letters from prison and therefore wrote after 63. If the crisis behind the author's urgent appeal for unshakeable faith, 10:25 etc., is the first threat of the Jewish War, the letter could be dated 67 A.D.

The title 'to the Hebrews' dates from the 2nd century and is well chosen. The letter clearly assumes not only that its readers are thoroughly familiar with the Old Covenant but that they are Jewish Christians, perhaps even Jewish priests, cf. Ac 6:7, to judge by the emphasis on public worship and ceremonial. Having become Christians, they seem to have left Jerusalem and gone for shelter to some coastal town like Caesarea or Antioch. They are tired of exile and think longingly of the splendour of Temple worship and of the part they played in it; their new faith is not very strong, and they have not yet properly understood it; persecution discourages them and they are tempted to go back.

The letter was written to them to try to prevent this happening, 10:19-39. To these exiles the author presents Christian life in the perspective of the Exodus, marching to the Place of Rest, the Promised Land of heaven, an exodus led not by Moses but by Christ, 3:1-6, and led by the same light of faith and hope that had accompanied their ancestors on the Exodus and had illumined all the saints of old, 3:7-4:11; 11 *passim.* Christ himself replaces the old priesthood and, being a priest like Melchisedek, he is higher than Aaron, 4:14-5:10; 7. The ineffectual sacrifices of levitical worship are replaced by the one uniquely efficacious sacrifice of Christ himself, 8:1-10:18. To prove this, the author shows how Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is, as Leader and Priest, higher than all the angels and ruler of all things, ch. 1-2.

In this letter, strictly theological and exegetical passages alternate with passages of exhortation, but the main themes themselves are interwoven in a very intricate and oriental way, as disconcerting to some modern western

readers as its method of using scripture. These are the reasons why this letter can tell us so much about typology, about the way the earliest Christians conceived the harmony of the Old and New Testaments, and about the way they understood the redemptive work of Jesus in terms of God's whole plan of salvation. Add to all that it tells us its deep intuitions into the centre of Christian belief, and it will be clear why this semi-Pauline unsigned document is one of the most important books of the New Testament.

ROMANS

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

Address[a]

1 From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle,[b] Ac 26:16-18
2 and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God •promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures. Ga 1:10,15 Ph 1:1 Col 1:1

3 This news is about the Son of God who, according to the human nature he 2 S 7:1+ Mt 9:27+ 1 Tm 3:16 Rv 22:16
4 took, was a descendant of David: •it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed[c] Son *9:5+; 10:9* 1 Co 6:14
5 of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead.[d] •Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith[e] Heb 11:8
6 to all pagan nations in honour of his name. •You are one of these nations, and Ac 9:15
7 by his call belong to Jesus Christ. •To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send Ac 9:13+ *1 Co 8:6* grace and peace.

Thanksgiving and prayer

8 First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you and for the way in 16:19
9 which your faith is spoken of all over the world. •The God I worship[f] spiritually[g] 1 Th 1:8; 2:5
by preaching the Good News of his Son knows that I never fail to mention you 2 Co 1:23 Ph 1:8
10 in my prayers, •and to ask to be allowed at long last the opportunity to visit 2 Tm 1:3 *1 Th 2:17*
11 you, if he so wills. •For I am longing to see you either to strengthen you by Jm 4:15

1 a. Adopting the convention of his time Paul begins letters with an introductory paragraph (names of sender and receiver, good wishes) followed by thanks and a wish. He colours this, however, with his own Christian spirit, and often manages to fit theological ideas into it so as to anticipate the principal themes of each letter. In Rm these themes are: God's freedom to choose his people; the connection between faith and being made holy; salvation through Christ's death and resurrection; the harmony of the two Testaments.

b. A Jewish title that means 'envoy', cf. Jn 13:16; 2 Co 8:23; Ph 2:25, sometimes used in the N.T. for the Twelve chosen by Christ, Mt 10:2; Ac 1:26; 2:37, etc.; 1 Co 15:7; Rv 21:14, to be his witnesses, Ac 1:8+, sometimes in a wider sense for those sent to preach the gospel, Rm 16:7; 1 Co 12:28; Ep 2:20; 3:5; 4:11. Though Paul was not a member of the Twelve, the fact that he had been appointed missionary to the gentiles by God, Ac 26:17; Rm 11:13; 1 Co 9:2; Ga 2:8; 1 Tm 2:7, constitutes him an apostle of Christ, Rm 1:1; 1 Co 1:1; etc., equal to the Twelve, Ac 10:41, because like them he had seen the risen Christ, 1 Co 9:1, and been sent by him, Rm 1:5; Ga 1:16, to be his witness, Ac 26:16. In spite of being 'the least of the apostles', 1 Co 15:9, he is their equal, 1 Co 9:5; Ga 2:6-9, because he did not learn the Good News he preaches from them, Ga 1:1,17,19.

c. Vulg. 'predestined'.

d. For Paul Christ rose only because God raised him, 1 Th 1:10; 1 Co 6:14; 15:15; 2 Co 4:14; Ga 1:1; Rm 4:24; 10:9; Ac 2:24+; cf. 1 P 1:21, thus displaying his 'power', 2 Co 13:4; Rm 6:4; Ph 3:10; Col 2:12; Ep 1:19f; Heb 7:16; and because God raised him to life through the Holy Spirit, Rm 8:11, Christ is established in glory as *Kyrios*, Ph 2:9-11+; Ac 2:36; Rm 14:9, deserving anew, this time in virtue of his messianic work, the name he had from eternity, 'Son of God', Ac 13:33, Heb 1:5; 5:5. Cf. Rm 8:11+; 9:5+.

e. Subjective genitive: the obedience implicit in the virtue of faith. Cf. Ac 6:7; Rm 6:16-17; 10:16; 15:18; 16:19,26; 2 Co 10:5-6; 2 Th 1:8; 1 P 1:22; Heb 5:9; 11:8.

f. Lit. 'I offer worship in my spirit'. The apostolic ministry is an act of worship offered to God, cf. 15:16, like the Christian life itself, since both depend on charity, 12:1; Ph 2:17+; 3:3; 4:18; Ac 13:2; 2 Tm 1:3; 4:6; Heb 9:14; 12:28; 13:15; 1 P 2:5.

g. By spirit *(pneuma)* Paul sometimes means the highest element in a human being, Rm 1:9; 8:16; 1 Co 2:11; 16:18; 2 Co 2:13; 7:13; Ga 6:18; Ph 4:23; Phm 25; 2 Tm 4:22; cf. Mt 5:3; 27:50; Mk 2:8; 8:12; Lk 1:47,80; 8:55; 23:46; Jn 4:23f; 11:33; 13:21; 19:30; Ac 7:59; 17:16; 18:25; 19:21. This he distinguishes from the flesh, the lower element (1 Co 5:5; 2 Co 7:1; Col 2:5; cf. Mt 26:41p; 1 P 4:6; Rm 7:5), from the body (1 Co 5:3f; 7:34; cf. Jm 2:26; Rm 7:24), and from

sharing a spiritual gift with you, •or what is better, to find encouragement among you from our common faith. •I want you to know, brothers, that I have often planned to visit you—though until now I have always been prevented—in the hope that I might work as fruitfully among you as I have done among the other pagans. •I owe a duty to Greeks[h] just as much as to barbarians, to the educated just as much as to the uneducated, •and it is this that makes me want[i] to bring the Good News to you too in Rome.

12 13 15:23 Ac 19:21 14 15

SALVATION BY FAITH

I. JUSTIFICATION

The theme stated

Ac 13:38 1 Co 1:18-25; 2:1-5 2 Co 12:9f 1:16+ Hab 2:4 Ga 3:11 Heb 10:38

For I am not ashamed of the Good News: it is the power of God saving all who have faith[j]—Jews first,[k] but Greeks as well—•since this is what reveals the justice[l] of God to us: it shows how faith leads to faith,[m] or as scripture says: *The upright man finds life through faith.*

16 17

A. GOD'S ANGER AGAINST PAGAN AND JEW[n]

God's anger against the pagans

Ps 69:24; 85:3-5 Mi 7:9 Zp 1:15 Ws 13:1-9 Si 17:8 Ac 17:24-29 1 Co 1:21 *Ws 11:15* Is 5:21; 40: 26:28 *Ep 4:17-18* *1 Col 1:19-20* Ps 106:20 Ex 32 Dt 4:16-18 Ws 11:15; 12:24; 13: 10f Jr 2:11 *Ep 4:19*

The anger of God is being revealed from heaven against all the impiety and depravity of men who keep truth imprisoned in their wickedness. •For what can be known about God is perfectly plain to them since God himself has made it plain. •Ever since God created the world his everlasting power and deity—however invisible—have been there for the mind to see in the things he has made. That is why such people are without excuse: •they knew God[o] and yet refused to honour him as God or to thank him; instead, they made nonsense out of logic and their empty minds were darkened. •The more they called themselves philosophers, the more stupid they grew, •until *they exchanged the glory* of the immortal God for a worthless imitation, *for the image* of mortal man, of birds, of quadrupeds and reptiles. •That is why God left them[p] to their filthy enjoyments and the practices with which they dishonour their own bodies, since they have given up divine truth for a lie and have worshipped and served creatures instead of the creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen!

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

That is why God has abandoned them to degrading passions: why their women have turned from natural intercourse to unnatural practices •and why their *menfolk have given up natural intercourse to be consumed with passion for each* other, men doing shameless things with men and getting an appropriate reward for their perversion.

26 27

In other words, since they refused to see it was rational to acknowledge God, God has left them to their own irrational ideas and to their monstrous behaviour.[q] 13:13 And so they are steeped[r] in all sorts of depravity, rottenness, greed and malice,[s] and addicted to envy, murder, wrangling, treachery and spite. •Libellers, slanderers, enemies of God,[t] rude, arrogant and boastful, enterprising in sin, rebellious to parents, •without brains, honour, love[u] or pity. •They know what Ws 14:22 God's verdict is: that those who behave like this deserve to die—and yet they do it; and what is worse, encourage others to do the same.[v]

28 29 30 31 32

The Jews are not exempt from God's anger[a]

Mt 7:1 Ep 2:3

2 So no matter who you are, if you pass judgement you have no excuse. In judging others you condemn yourself, since you behave no differently from those you judge. •We know that God condemns that sort of behaviour impartially: •and when you judge those who behave like this while you are

1 2 3

4 doing exactly the same, do you think you will escape God's judgement? •Or are
you abusing his abundant goodness, patience and toleration, not realising that
5 this goodness of God is meant to lead you to repentance? •Your stubborn refusal
to repent is only adding to the anger God will have towards you on that day of
6 anger when his just judgements will be made known. •*He will repay each one as*
7 *his works deserve.*[b] •For those who sought renown and honour and immortality
8 by always doing good there will be eternal life; •for the unsubmissive who
refused to take truth for their guide and took depravity instead, there will be

Ws 11:23
Si 5:4
2 P 3:9
Ac 7:51
Zp 1:14-18
2 Th 1:5-10
Ps 62:12
Heb 11:6p
1 P 1:7

the *psyche* also (1 Th 5:23+; cf. Heb 4:12; Jude 19); it bears some relationship to *nous* (Rm 7:25; Ep 4:23). Cf. also 'dispositions of the spirit' in 1 Co 4:21; 2 Co 12:18; Ga 6:1; Ph 1:27. By choosing this traditional term (cf. Is 11:2+) instead of the *nous* of the Greek philosophers, the N.T. can suggest a deep affinity between the human spirit and the Spirit of God that stimulates and guides it, Rm 5:5+; Ac 1:8+. There are many texts where it is hard to tell whether it is the natural or supernatural spirit that is referred to, the personal or the indwelling spirit—cf. e.g. Rm 12:11; 2 Co 6:6; Ep 4:3,23; 6:18; Ph 3:3 var.; Col 1:8; Jude 19, etc.

h. In contrast to 'barbarians', 'Greeks' means the inhabitants of the hellenic world (including the Romans, who had adopted the Greek culture); in contrast to 'Jews' it means the pagans in general, 1:16; 2:9-10; 3:10; 10:12; 1 Co 1:22-24, etc.

i. Alternative translation 'And therefore, in so far as it is in my power, I am prepared to...'

j. Faith, which is the response of a human being to God as truth and goodness and so the one source of salvation, relies on the truth of God's promises and on God's faithfulness to them (Rm 3:3f; 1 Th 5:24; 2 Tm 2:13; Heb 10:23; 11:11) and on his power to implement them (Rm 4:17-21; Heb 11:19). After the long O.T. period of preparation (Heb 11) God has spoken through his Son (Heb 1:1). We must believe the Son (cf. Mt 8:10+; Jn 3:11+) and the *kerygma* or proclamation (Rm 10:8-17; 1 Co 1:21; 15:11,14; cf. Ac 2:22+) of the Good News (Rm 1:16; 1 Co 15:1-2; Ph1: 27; Ep 1:13) made by the apostles (Rm 1:5; 1 Co 3:5; cf. Jn 17:20). The *kerygma* proclaims that God raised Jesus from the dead, made him *Kyrios* (Rm 4:24f; 10:9; Ac 17:31; 1 P 1:21; cf. 1 Co 15:14,17), and through him offers life to all who believe in him (Rm 6:8-11; 2 Co 4:13f; Ep 1:19f; Col 2:12; 1 Th 4:14). Faith in the name, or person, of Jesus (Rm 3:26; 10:13; cf. Jn 1:12; Ac 3:16; 1 Jn 3:23) who is the Messiah (Ga 2:16; cf. Ac 24:24; 1 Jn 5:1), the Lord (Rm 10:9; 1 Co 12:3; Ph 2:11; cf. Ac 16:31) and Son of God (Ga 2:20; cf. Jn 20:31; 1 Jn 5:5; Ac 8:37; 9:20) is thus the necessary condition of salvation (Rm 10:9-13; 1 Co 1:21; Ga 3:22; cf. Is 7:9+; Ac 4:12; 16:31; Heb 11:6; Jn 3:15-18). Faith is not only intellectual assent, it is to trust and obey (Rm 1:5; 6:17; 10:16; 16:26; cf. Ac 6:7) the lifegiving truth (2 Th 2:12f). Faith which thus unites a person with Christ (2 Co 13:5; Ga 2:16,20; Ep 3:17) also confers the Spirit on him (Ga 3:2,5,14; cf. Jn 7:38f; Ac 11:17), the Spirit of the sons of God (Ga 3:26; cf. Jn 1:12). Faith is reliance on God and not on self (Rm 3:27; Ep 2:9) and thus contrasts with the old order of the Law (Rm 7:7+) with its vain search (Rm 10:3; Ph 3:9) for holiness by works (Rm 3:20,28; 9:31f; Ga 2:16; 3:11f); only faith can effect true holiness, the saving holiness of God himself (Rm 1:17+; 3:21-26), received as a free gift from him (Rm 3:24; 4:16; 5:17; Ep 2:8; cf. Ac 15:11). Faith relates to the promise made to Abraham (Rm 4; Ga 3:6-18) and so makes salvation accessible to everyone, pagans included (Rm 1:5,16; 3:29f; 9:30; 10:11f; 16:26; Ga 3:8). It is coupled with baptism (Rm 6:4+), calls for public profession (Rm 10:10; 1 Tm 6:12), and expresses itself in charity (Ga 5:6; cf. Jm 2:14+). Faith is obscure (2 Co 5:7; Heb 11:1; cf. Jn 20:29), and involves hope as its concomitant (Rm 5:2+). It must be allowed to grow (2 Co 10:15; 1 Th 3:10; 2 Th 1:3) amid struggles and sufferings (Ph 1:29; Ep 6:16; 1 Th 3:2-8; 2 Th 1:4; Heb 12:2; 1 P 5:9), demanding fortitude (1 Co 16:13; Col 1:23; 2:5,7) and tenacity (2 Tm 4:7; cf. 1:14; 1 Tm 6:20) right up to the vision and possession of God (1 Co 13:12; cf. 1 Jn 3:2).

k. In the actual development of salvation history the Jews come first: 'salvation comes from the Jews' (Jn 4:22). Cf. Rm 2:9-10; Mt 10:5f; 15:24; Mk 7:27; Ac 13:5+. But abuse of this privilege could condemn them.

l. Not 'distributive' justice (reward for deeds) but the saving justice (cf. Is 56:1) of God, 3:26, who fulfils his promise to save by giving salvation as a free gift.

m. The expression probably means that faith is the one necessary condition to ensure this revelation.

n. By way of antithesis, the subject of the Good News being the revelation of God's saving justice, 1:16-17 (resumed in 3:21f), is interrupted by considering what the human race is like before it hears the Good News. In it both pagan, 1:18-32, and Jew, 2:1–3:20, are subject to God's 'anger' which accounts for the increase of sin, and which will reach its climax in the Last Judgement, 2:6+; Mt 3:7+.

o. To know there is one, personal God means to know that one must pray to him and adore him.

p. The traditional biblical phrase 'God abandoned', or 'left them', used three times for emphasis, means that religious error, if blameworthy, results in moral and social ills. Sin produces its own consequences and its own punishment; cf. Ezk 23:28-29; Is 64:6; Ws 11:15-16; 12:23-27. Though Paul judges and condemns pagan society he does not condemn individuals (whose intentions God alone must judge, 2:16; 1 Co 4:5; 5:12-13) since he presupposes, Rm 2, that there are pagans who obey the natural law written in their hearts, 2:14-15. To do that, a human being must admit that he is a sinner.

q. A clever twist here: as a punishment for refusing to use it properly, moral judgement, which goes with knowing about God, v. 21, disappears.

r. Here, as he frequently does elsewhere, Paul uses lists of vices taken from current pagan and (even more so) Jewish literature: 13:13; 1 Co 5:10-11; 6:9-10; 2 Co 12:20; Ga 5:19-21; Ep 4:31; 5:3-5; Col 3:5-8; 1 Tm 1:9-10; 6:4; 2 Tm 3:2-5; Tt 3:3 Cf. also Mt 15:19p; 1 P 4:3; Rv 21:8; 22:15.

s. Add. 'fornication'.

t. Others translate 'hateful to God', but cf. 5:10; 8:7.

u. Add. (Vulg.) 'loyalty', cf. 2 Tm 3:3.

v. The Latin text tradition reads 'They know that God is just, and yet they did not understand that those who behave like this deserve to die, and not only those who do this but those who encourage them'.

2 a. Here Paul turns to the Jews not actually naming them, vv. 1-16, until 2:17–3:20. He is aware, as he condemns others, that he is condemning himself if he behaves in the way they do, vv. 1-5; 17-24. Nothing can take the place of personal virtue: not the Law, vv. 12-16, not circumcision, vv. 25-29, not even the scriptures, 3:1-8. The Jew as well as the pagan will be individually judged by God, 2:6-11, since each is equally liable to sin, 3:9-20.

b. The prophecy of a 'day of Yahweh' which will be a day of anger and salvation, Am 5:18+, will be fulfilled eschatologically in the 'day of the Lord', when Christ returns in glory, 1 Co 1:8+. On this 'day of judgement' (cf. Mt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36, 2 P 2:9; 3:7; 1 Jn 4:17) the dead will rise again, 1 Th 4:13-18; 1 Co 15:12-23,51f, and the whole human race will be judged in God's court, Rm 14:10, and in Christ's,

anger and fury. •Pain and suffering will come to every human being who employs 9
himself in evil—Jews first, but Greeks as well; •renown, honour and peace will 10
Dt 10:17+ Ac 10:34+ come to everyone who does good—Jews first, but Greeks as well. •God has 11
no favourites.

The Law will not save them

Sinners who were not subject to the Law will perish all the same, without 12
that Law; sinners who were under the Law will have that Law to judge them.
Mt 7:26-27 Lk 8:21 Jm 1:22-25 It is not listening to the Law but keeping it that will make people holy in the 13
sight of God. •For instance, pagans who never heard of the Law but are led 14
by reason[e] to do what the Law commands, may not actually 'possess' the Law,
but they can be said to 'be' the Law. •They can point to the substance of the 15
Law engraved on their hearts—they can call a witness, that is, their own
conscience—they have accusation and defence, that is, their own inner mental
2:6+ 1 Co 4:5 dialogue.[d] •...on the day when,[e] according to the Good News I preach, God, 16
through Jesus Christ, judges the secrets of mankind.

Is 48:1-4 Am 5:21+ Mt 3:8-9 Jn 8:33f Jn 9:40-41 If you call yourself a Jew, if you really trust in the Law and are proud of 17
your God, •if you know God's will through the Law and can tell what is right, 18
if you are convinced you can guide the blind and be a beacon to those in the 19
Mt 23 Lk 18:9-12 dark, •if you can teach the ignorant and instruct the unlearned because your Law 20
Ps 50:16-21 embodies all knowledge and truth, •then why not teach yourself as well as the 21
others? You preach against stealing, yet you steal; •you forbid adultery, yet you 22
commit adultery; you despise idols, yet you rob their temples. •By boasting about 23
the Law and then disobeying it, you bring God into contempt. •As scripture 24
Is 52:5 LXX Ezk 36:20 Jm 2:7 2 P 2:2 says: *It is your fault that the name of God is blasphemed among the pagans.*

Circumcision will not save them

1 Co 7:19 Ga 5:3 It is a good thing to be circumcised if you keep the Law; but if you break the 25
Jr 9:24-25 Law, you might as well have stayed uncircumcised. •If a man who is not 26
circumcised obeys the commandments of the Law, surely that makes up for not
Mt 12:41f being circumcised? •More than that, the man who keeps the Law, even though 27
he has not been physically circumcised, is a living condemnation of the way you
disobey the Law in spite of being circumcised and having it all written down.
Ep 2:11 Ph 3:2f Jr 4:4+ To be a Jew is not just to look like a Jew, and circumcision is more than a physical 28
operation. •The real Jew is the one who is inwardly a Jew, and the real circum- 29
7:6; 8: 2+ 2 Co 3:6 cision is in the heart—something not of the letter but of the spirit. A Jew like that
may not be praised by man, but he will be praised by God.

God's promises will not save them

3 Well then, is a Jew any better off?[a] Is there any advantage in being circum- 1
9:4-5 cised? •A great advantage in every way. First, the Jews are the people to 2
Ps 89:30-37 2 Tm 2:13 whom God's message was entrusted. •What if some of them were unfaithful? 3
Will their lack of fidelity cancel God's fidelity? •That would be absurd. God will 4
Ps 116:11 always be true even though *everyone* proves to be *false*; so scripture says: *In all*
Ps 51:4 LXX *you say your justice shows, and when you are judged you win your case.* •But if our 5
1:18+ Jb 34:12,17 lack of holiness makes God demonstrate his integrity,[b] how can we say God is
unjust when—to use a human analogy—he gets angry with us in return? •That 6
would be absurd, it would mean God could never judge the world. •You might 7
9:19+ as well say that since my untruthfulness makes God demonstrate his truthfulness
and thus gives him glory,[c] I should not be judged to be a sinner at all. •That 8
6:1,15 would be the same as saying: Do evil as a means to good. Some slanderers have
accused us of teaching this,[d] but they are justly condemned.

All are guilty

Well: are we any better off?[e] Not at all: as we said before, Jews and Greeks 9
11:32 Si 8:5 are all under sin's dominion. •As scripture says: 10

There is not a good man left, no, not one; Ps 14:1-3
11 *there is not one who understands,*
not one who looks for God.
12 *All have turned aside, tainted all alike;*
there is not one good man left, not a single one.
13 *Their throats are yawning graves;* Ps 5:9
their tongues are full of deceit.
Vipers' venom is on their lips, Ps 140:3
14 *bitter curses fill their mouths.* Ps 10:7
15 *Their feet are swift when blood is to be shed,* Is 59:7-8
16 *wherever they go there is havoc and ruin.*
17 *They know nothing of the way of peace,*
18 *there is no fear of God before their eyes.* Ps 36:1

19 Now all this that the Law[f] says is said, as we know, for the benefit of those Jn 10:34; 12:34; 15:25
who are subject to the Law, but it is meant to silence everyone and to lay the Ga 3:22
20 whole world open to God's judgement; •and this is because *no one can be justified* *Ps 143:2* Ga 2:16
in the sight of God by keeping the Law:[g] all that law does is to tell us what is Rm 7:7
sinful.

B. FAITH AND THE JUSTICE OF GOD

The revelation of God's justice

21 God's justice that was made known through the Law and the Prophets has 10:5
22 now been revealed outside the Law, •since it is the same justice of God that 1 K 8:46 *1:16+* Ga 2:16;3
comes through faith to everyone, Jew and pagan alike, who believes in Jesus
23 24 Christ. •Both Jew and pagan sinned and forfeited God's glory,[h] •and both are 5:2,13
justified through the free gift of his grace[i] by being redeemed[j] in Christ Jesus Dn 9:24

2 Co 5:10; cf. Mt 25:31f. This trial is inescapable, Rm 2:3; Ga 5:10; 1 Th 5:3, and impartial, v. 11; Col 3:25; cf. 1 P 1:17; it is conducted by God, Rm 12:19; 14:10; 1 Co 4:5; cf. Mt 7:1p. Through Christ, v. 16; 2 Tm 4:1; cf. Jn 5:22; Ac 17:31. God will judge 'the living and the dead', 2 Tm 4:1; cf. Ac 10:42; 1 P 4:5. He examines the heart, v. 16; 1 Co 4:5; cf. Rv 2:23, and his trial is by fire, 1 Co 3:13-15; he will treat everyone according to his works, 1 Co 3:8; 2 Co 5:10; 11:15; Ep 6:8; cf. Mt 16:27; 1 P 1:17; Rv 2:23; 20:12; 22:12. What has been sown will be reaped, Ga 6:7-9; cf. Mt 13:39; Rv 14:15. Angrily he will destroy, Rm 9:22, evil powers, 1 Co 15:24-26; 2 Th 2:8, and evil people, 2 Th 1:7-10; cf. Mt 13:41; Ep 5:6; 2 P 3:7; Rv 6:17; 11:18. But for the chosen, i.e. those who have done good, there will be freedom, Ep 4:30; cf. Rm 8:23, rest, Ac 3:20; cf. 1 Th 1:7; Heb 4:5-11, reward, cf. Mt 5:12; Rv 11:18, salvation, 1 P 1:5, honour, 1 P 5:6, praise, 1 Co 4:5, and glory, Rm 8:18f; 1 Co 15:43; Col 3:4; cf. Mt 13:43.

c. I.e. guided by conscience, not by revealed law. As Jews are not meant to be saved by the Law but guided by it to salvation, so the natural law in his conscience can guide any human being.

d. 'they have...dialogue'; lit. 'and the accusing or defending thoughts they have about themselves (or: about each other)'.

e. Anacoluthon: v. 16 follows grammatically on v. 13. Alternative translation 'in the court where God judges...', cf. 1 Co 4:3.

3 a. There is one further argument in favour of the Jews: if Israel is the people chosen by God to receive the promise, then how can there be any other way to salvation? Later, ch. 9-11, Paul develops at great length the brief answer he gives here: however much humans are unfaithful to the pact, this cannot abrogate God's promises; indeed the way humans behave only makes the promises more remarkable, a fact however which does not stop God being angry with the sinner (v. 6), or absolve his sin (v. 8). The dialogue used here seems it may echo some of Paul's debates in the synagogues.

b. The argument compares the group: faithfulness truth (truthfulness), integrity, with its anti-group: faithlessness, falsehood, sinfulness.

c. Lit. 'But (var. 'For') if through my untruthfulness God's truthfulness abounds to his glory'.

d. By twisting Paul's words as in Ga 3:22; Rm 5:20; cf. 6:1,15.

e. Disputed translation; some prefer 'what excuse then can we offer?' or 'Are we worse off, then?'

f. 'Law' here means all the O.T., cf. 1 Co 14:34; Jn 10:34, etc.

g. Since Ps 143 says that no human being would ever be forgiven if God judged him by his actions, there must be something else that will account for justification, and Paul finds this in God's promises to save his people: this is God's 'justice' that was promised for the messianic era and that, as Paul says, v. 21, is manifest in Jesus Christ. The Law, which merely regulates behaviour, was not meant by God to eliminate sin but to make sinners aware of the fact, cf. 1:16+; 7:7+.

h. 'Glory' in O.T. sense, Ex 24:16+, that is to say God as present to human beings and communicating himself to them more and more, a process that can only reach its climax in the messianic era, cf. Ps 84:9; Is 40:5, etc.

i. This word *(charis)* when used with reference to human relationships can mean either the quality that makes a person attractive (Ac 2:47), or it can mean thanks for a gift (Lk 6:32-34; 17:9), or it can mean something given free and unearned (Ac 25:3; 1 Co 16:3; 2 Co 8:6-7,19). This last sense predominates in the N.T., and especially in Paul (John uses *agape*) who uses the word to describe the way God saves through Jesus: it is a work of spontaneous love to which no one had any claim. It was an act of 'grace' for Jesus to come on earth (2 Co 8:9; Tt 2:11; Jn 1:14,17), to die (Heb 2:9), for his Father

1 Jn 2:2; 4:10 Heb 2:17 who was appointed by God to sacrifice his life so as to win reconciliation through 25
faith.[k] In this way God makes his justice known; first, for the past, when sins
Ac 17:30 went unpunished because he held his hand,[l] •then, for the present age,[m] 26
5:6; 11:30 Is 53:11 1 Tm 2:7 Tt 1:3 by showing positively that he is just,[n] and that he justifies everyone who believes
in Jesus.

What faith does

1 Co 1:29 So what becomes of our boasts? There is no room for them. What sort of 27
2:17; 4:2-3; 5:2+; 11: 18 law excludes them? The sort of law that tells us what to do? On the contrary,
Ga 6:13-14 Ep 2:9 it is the law of faith,[o] •since,[p] as we see it, a man is justified by faith and not 28
by doing something the Law tells him to do. •Is God the God of Jews alone and 29
not of the pagans too? Of the pagans too, most certainly, •since there is only one 30
God, and he is the one who will justify the circumcised because of their faith
8:4 Mt 5:17 Ac 24:14 and justify the uncircumcised through their faith. •Do we mean that faith makes 31
the Law pointless? Not at all: we are giving the Law its true value.[q]

C. THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM

Gn 12:1+; 15:6+ Ga 3:6-9 Jm 2:14+, 20-24 Si 44:19-21

Abraham justified by faith

4 Apply this to Abraham,[a] the ancestor from whom we are all descended.[b] 1
3:27 If Abraham was justified as a reward for doing something, he would really 2
have had something to boast about, though not in God's sight •because scripture 3
Gn 15:6 Ga 3:6 says: *Abraham put his faith in God, and this faith was considered as justifying*[c] *him.*
Jm 2:23 If a man has work to show, his wages are not considered as a favour but as his 4
due; •but when a man has nothing to show except faith in the one who justifies 5
sinners, then his faith is considered as justifying him.[d] •And David says the same: 6
a man is happy if God considers him righteous, irrespective of good deeds:

Ps 32:1-2
Happy those whose crimes are forgiven, 7
whose sins are blotted out;
happy the man whom the Lord considers sinless. 8

Justified before circumcision

Is this happiness meant only for the circumcised, or is it meant for others as 9
well? Think of Abraham again: *his faith*, we say, *was considered as justifying him*,
but when was this done? When he was already circumcised or before he had been 10
circumcised? It was before he had been circumcised, not after; •and when he was 11
Gn 17:11 Jn 7:22 *circumcised* later it was only *as a sign* and guarantee[e] that the faith he had before
Ga 3:7 his circumcision justified him. In this way Abraham became the ancestor of all
1 Co 9:12 uncircumcised believers, so that they too might be considered righteous; •and 12
ancestor, also, of those who though circumcised do not rely on that fact alone,
but follow our ancestor Abraham along the path of faith he trod before he had
been circumcised.

Not justified by obedience to the Law

Gn 12:7+ The promise of inheriting the world was not made to Abraham and his 13
Ga 3:16-18 descendants on account of any law but on account of the righteousness which
consists in faith.[f] •If the world is only to be inherited by those who submit to 14
the Law, then faith is pointless and the promise worth nothing. •Law 15
Ga 3:10 Rm 5:13; 7: 7+ involves the possibility of punishment for breaking the law—only where there
is no law can that be avoided.[g] •That is why what fulfils the promise depends on 16
faith, so that it may be a free gift and be available to all of Abraham's
descendants, not only those who belong to the Law but also those who belong
Gn 17:5 to the faith of Abraham who is the father of all of us. •As scripture says: *I have* 17
made you the ancestor of many nations—Abraham is our father in the eyes of God,

in whom he put his faith, and who brings the dead to life and calls into being what does not exist.[h] Dt 32:39+ Is 48:13 2 Co 1:9 Heb 11:19 Rv 4:11

Abraham's faith, a model of Christian faith

18 Though it seemed Abraham's hope could not be fulfilled, he hoped and he

to give him up as a gift to us, a gift that includes all divine favours (Rm 8:32; cf. 1 Co 2:12; Ep 1:6f): justification, salvation, and the right to inherit by having faith in him without having to perform the works of the Law (Rm 3:24; 4:4f; Ep 2:5,8; Tt 3:7; cf. Ac 15:11); it will also be an act of 'grace' for Christ to come again at the end of the world and for us to receive everlasting glory (1 P 1:13; 2 Th 1:12). It was by grace that Abraham received the promise (Rm 4:16; Ga 3:18) and that a few Israelites were chosen to survive (Rm 11:5f). Since grace is God's love for us, it is inexhaustible (Ep 1:7; 2:7; cf. 2 Co 4:15; 9:8,14; 1 Tm 1:14) and it conquers sin (Rm 5:15,17,20). The one word 'grace' is so useful and full of meaning that it can be used to indicate the entire messianic era (Rm 5:21) that succeeds the era of the Law (Rm 6:14; Ga 2:21; 5:4), the same messianic era that was once proclaimed by the prophets (1 P 1:10) and is now proclaimed as the Good News (Col 1:6; cf. Ac 14:3; 20:24,32). The word sums up the gifts of God so well that Paul begins and ends his letters by wishing 'grace' to all his readers (1 Th 1:1 and 5:28, etc.; cf. 1 P 1:2; 5:10,12; 2 P 1:2; 3:18; 2 Jn 3; Rv 1:4; 22:21). It is by an act of grace that 'the God of all grace' (1 P 5:10) calls men to salvation (Ga 1:6; 2 Tm 1:9; 1 P 3:7), loads them with all spiritual gifts (1 Co 1:4-7; cf. 2 Th 2:16; Ac 6:8), makes Paul an apostle of the pagans (Rm 1:5; 12:3; 15:15f; 1 Co 3:10; Ga 1:15f; 2:9; Ep 3:2,7,8; Ph 1:7) and assigns to each Christian the part he has to play in the life of the Church (Rm 12:6; 1 Co 12:1+; 2 Co 8:1; Ep 4:7; 1 P 4:10); similarly, it is a 'grace' to suffer for Christ (Ph 1:29; 1 P 2:19-20). Mary 'found grace' with God (Lk 1:30; cf. Ac 7:46 and LXX passim); Jesus himself received the 'grace' of the highest name of all (Ph 2:9; cf. Lk 2:40). For human beings to be agreeable to God depends primarily on God's initiative and secondarily on human response. It is possible to receive grace in vain (2 Co 6:1; cf. 1 Co 15:10), to fall from grace (Ga 5:4), to forfeit grace (Heb 12:15), and thus to insult the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29). Grace obtained must be carefully guarded (Rm 5:2; Heb 12:28; 1 P 5:12) and used wisely (1 P 4:10); it is not enough to remain in grace (Ac 13:43; cf. 14:26; 15:40), it must increase (2 P 3:18), to strengthen us (2 Tm 2:1), and help us to persist in our good intentions (Heb 13:9). This divine help is given to the humble (Jm 4:6; 1 P 5:5) and is obtained by prayer, since this is to approach 'the throne of grace' confidently (Heb 4:26). Grace will be granted and will be found sufficient; it is the power of Christ operating in weak man (2 Co 12:9; cf. 1 Co 15:10), and this grace of Christ triumphs over unspiritual wisdom (2 Co 1:12). The same word *charis* is also used for thanksgiving (Rm 6:17; 7:25; 1 Co 10:30; 15:57; 2 Co 2:14; 8:16; 9:15; Col 3:16; 1 Tm 1:12; 2 Tm 1:3; and cf. the verb *eucharisteîn*), since gratitude to God is the fundamental and necessary disposition for grace. From all these shades of meaning it is clear that the word *charis* is always used to emphasise that the gift is absolutely free; to bring out its power and its inwardness Paul also uses the word *pneuma* (cf. Rm 5:5+).

j. Yahweh had 'redeemed' Israel by delivering her from the slavery of Egypt, to provide himself with a nation for his 'inheritance'. Dt 7:6+. When the prophets spoke of the 'redemption' from Babylon, Is 41:14+, they hinted at a deliverance more profound and less restricted, the forgiveness that is deliverance from sin, Is 44:22; cf. Ps 130:8; 49:7-8. This messianic redemption is fulfilled in Christ, 1 Co 1:30; cf. Lk 1:68; 2:38. God the Father through Christ—and indeed Christ himself—has 'delivered' the new Israel from the slavery of the Law, Ga 3:13; 4:5; and of sin, Col 1:14; Ep 1:7; Heb 9:15, by 'acquiring' her, Ac 20:28, making her his own, Tt 2:14; purchasing her, Ga 3:13; 4:5; 1 Co 6:20; 7:23; cf. 2 P 2:1. The price was the blood of Christ, Ac 20:28; Ep 1:7; Heb 9:12; 1 P 1:18f; Rv 1:5; 5:9. This redemption, begun on Calvary and guaranteed by the present gift of the Spirit, Ep 1:14; 4:30, will be complete only at the *parousía*, Lk 21:28, when deliverance from death is secured by the resurrection of the body, Rm 8:23.

k. Lit. 'whom God put forward as (or: destined to be) a propitiatory through faith by his blood'. For the 'propitiatory', or 'throne of mercy', cf. Ex 25:17+; and cf. Heb 9:5. On the Day of Atonement, Lv 16:1+, this was sprinkled with blood, Lv 16:15. The blood of Christ has performed what the ancient ritual could only symbolise: purification from sin. Cf. also the blood of the covenant, Ex 24:8+; Mt 26:28+.

l. A quasi-forgiveness; God declined to attach guilt (a *paresis* or 'passing over'); such 'non-imputation' would be an idle procedure if positive forgiveness were not to follow, i.e. the utter destruction of sin by man's justification. Others translate 'with a view to the remission of sins'.

m. This 'present age' is in God's plan of salvation the 'time appointed', Ac 1:7+, for Christ's redemptive work, Rm 5:6; 11:30; 1 Tm 2:6; Tt 1:3, which comes in the appointed time, Ga 4:4+, once for all, Heb 7:27+, and inaugurates the eschatological era. Cf. Mt 4:17p; 16:3p; Lk 4:13; 19:44; 21:8; Jn 7:6,8.

n. I.e. exercising his (saving, cf. 1:17+) justice, as he had promised, by justifying man.

o. I.e. the 'law' which is faith. Paul contrasts two regimes: of law, 7:7+, and of faith, 1:16+; cf. 4:13.

p. Var. 'Therefore'.

q. Lit. 'we establish (the) Law'; it is only by means of the regime of faith that the Law achieves what it was intended to do, viz. to make people holy, cf. 7:7+.

4 a. Lit. 'What then shall we say about Abraham?' Var. (Vulg.) 'What then shall we say that Abraham has gained?'

b. The recurrence of the fatherhood of Abraham theme marks the stages in the argument, vv. 1,12,16-18.

c. Jewish tradition, preoccupied with Abraham's loyalty and his fortitude under trial, had made him the outstanding example of justification by works, Ws 10:5; Si 44:20f; 1 M 2:52 (and cf. especially the Book of Jubilees, ch. 11-12; 16:19f, etc.) cf. also Jm 2:22+, see 2:14+. Paul however finds that this justification and these works have their source in Abraham's faith, Gn 12:1+ and 15:6+. Cf. Heb 11:8f.

d. The words themselves are capable of various interpretations: by reason of his faith Abraham was reckoned a righteous man by God, though in fact he was not so; or, by reason of his faith Abraham had conferred upon him gratuitously by God a righteousness (or 'justice') that was not his when he came to believe; or thirdly, in God's eyes (and hence in fact) faith that is operative is one and the same with righteousness. The first of these interpretations is, however, incompatible with Pauline teaching as a whole, so also, it would seem, is the second; the third is completely consistent with it.

e. This word, *sphragis*, (lit. 'seal' or 'impression of a seal') came very soon to be analogically used of baptism, the sacrament of Christian faith.

f. Lit. 'the righteousness of faith', i.e. that righteousness which is precisely the act of believing with a living faith. The inheritance is conferred not to reward people who respect the clauses of a contract (a law), but to implement promises accepted in a disposition of faith. Cf. 3:27.

g. Lit. 'For law brings anger whereas (var. 'for') where there is no law there is no law-breaking either'.

h. As at the creation. These two most striking manifestations of God's omnipotence prepare the reader for the allusion to Christ's resurrection in v. 24.

believed, and through doing so he did become *the father of many nations* exactly
Gn 15:5 as he had been promised: *Your descendants will be as many as the stars.* •Even 19
Gn 17:1,17 the thought that his body was past fatherhood—he was about a hundred years
Heb 11:11 old—and Sarah too old to become a mother, did not shake his belief.[i] •Since God 20
Mk 9:23 Heb 11:1f *Jr 32:17* Lk 1:37 had promised it, Abraham refused either to deny it or even to doubt it, but drew
strength from faith[j] and gave glory to God, •convinced that God had power 21
to do what he had promised. •This is the faith that was *'considered as justi-* 22
fying him'. •Scripture however does not refer only to him but to us as well 23
1 Co 10:6+ when it says that his faith was thus 'considered'; •our faith too will be 'considered' 24
1:4+ if we believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, •Jesus who was 25
Is 53:5,6 1 Co 15:17 *put to death for our sins* and raised to life to justify us.[k]

II. SALVATION

Faith guarantees salvation[a]

Jn 14:27 Ep 3:12 5 So far then we have seen that, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith we are 1
judged righteous and at peace[b] with God, •since it is by faith and through 2
3:27+ Jesus that we have entered this state of grace[c] in which we can boast about
3:23+ looking forward to God's glory.[d] •But that is not all we can boast about; we can 3
2 Co 12:9-10 Jm 1:2-4 boast about our sufferings. These sufferings bring patience, as we know, •and 4
1 P 4:13-14 Rv 1:9 patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, •and this hope is 5
1 Co 13:13+ not deceptive, because the love of God[e] has been poured into our hearts by the
8:14-16 Ga 4:4-6 Holy Spirit which has been given us.[f] •We were still helpless when at his appointed 6
3:26+ 1 P 3:18 moment Christ died for sinful men. •It is not easy to die even for a good man— 7
though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die—
8:32 Jn 15:13 but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still 8
1 Jn 4:10,19 sinners. •Having died to make us righteous,[g] is it likely that he would now fail 9
1 Th 1:10 *2 Co 5:18* to save us from God's anger? •When we were reconciled to God by the death of 10
his Son, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled, surely we may
count on being saved by the life of his Son? •Not merely because we have been 11
reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord
Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

A. DELIVERANCE FROM SIN AND DEATH AND LAW

Adam and Jesus Christ[h]

Gn 3:1+ Ws 2:24 Si 25:24 1 Co 15:21-22 *3:23; 6:23* Gn 3:17,19 Well then, sin *entered the world* through one man, and through sin death,[i] and 12
thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has
sinned.[j] •Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no 13
law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', •yet death reigned 14
4:15; 7:7+ over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was
not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured[k] the One to come, •but the gift itself considerably outweighed 15
the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many[l] died, it is even more
certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so
many as an abundant free gift. •The results of the gift also outweigh the results of 16
one man's sin: for after one single fall came judgement with a verdict of condem-
nation, now after many falls comes grace with its verdict of acquittal. •If it is 17
certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall,
it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign
in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous.
Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of 18
one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. •As by one man's disobed- 19
Is 53:11 ience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made

righteous.[m] •When law[n] came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling, 7:7+ Ga 3:19
but however great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater; •and 11:32
so, just as sin reigned wherever there was death, so grace will reign to bring 6:23; 7:25
eternal life thanks to the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

i. Lit. 'Though he considered his own body dead (and that Sarah's womb was dead) it was with unshaken faith'. Text. Rec. and Vulg. 'His faith was not shaken, nor did he give a thought to his own body that was dead already'.

j. Faith is all-powerful, Mk 9:23. It shares in the divine omnipotence itself, cf. 2 Co 12:9-10.

k. 'Justice', or 'righteousness', is in effect the initial sharing in the life of the risen Christ, 6:4; 8:10, etc.; Paul never isolates the death of Jesus from his resurrection.

5 a. The theme of the second section, ch. 5-11: for the Christian who has received justification, cf. ch. 1-4, the love God has for him and the Spirit bestowed on him is a pledge of salvation. After the antithesis of 5:12–7:25 this theme is resumed in ch. 8.

b. Var. 'let us be at peace'.

c. Lit. 'we have access to this grace (i.e. the enjoyment of God's friendship) in which we stand'.

d. Lit. 'about the hope of the glory of God'. For a Christian to hope is to be confident that he will get the eschatological gifts: the resurrection of the body, Rm 8:18-23; 1 Th 4:13f; cf. Ac 2:26; 23:6; 24:15; 26:6-8; 28:20, the rich inheritance of the saints, Ep 1:18; cf. Heb 6:11f; 1 P 1:3f, eternal life, Tt 1:2; cf. 1 Co 15:19, glory, Rm 5:2; 1 Jn 3:2f, in short, salvation, 1 Th 5:8; cf. 1 P 1:3-5, of self and neighbour, 2 Co 1:6f; 1 Th 2:19. Though it means primarily this virtue of expectation, 'hope' is used sometimes for the expected gifts themselves, Ga 5:5; Col 1:5; Tt 2:13; Heb 6:18. Of old, this hope was given to Israel, Ep 1:11-12; cf. Jn 5:45; Rm 4:18, and not to the pagans, Ep 2:12; cf. 1 Th 4:13; but it was a step towards a higher hope, Heb 7:19, offered now to the pagan world also, Ep 1:18; Col 1:27; cf. Mt 12:21; Rm 15:12, through the 'mystery' of Christ, Rm 16:25+. The basis of this hope is God himself, 1 Tm 5:5; 6:17; 1 P 1:21; 3:5, his love, 2 Th 2:16, his invitation, 1 P 1:13-15; cf. Ep 1:18; 4:4, with the power, Rm 4:17-21, truthfulness, Tt 1:2; Heb 6:18, fidelity, Heb 10:23, in implementing the promises declared in the written word, Rm 15:4, and in the gospel message, Col 1:23, promises fulfilled in Christ's person, 1 Tm 1:1; 1 P 1:3,21. The hope is therefore not illusory, Rm 5:5. Since the gifts it expects are in the future, Rm 8:24; Heb 11:1, faith is its prop, Rm 4:18; 5:1f; 15:13; Ga 5:5; Heb 6:11f; 1 P 1:21; charity is its food, Rm 5:5; 1 Co 13:7; hope and faith and charity, the three theological virtues, are closely allied, 1 Co 3:13+. Hope's excelling source is the Holy Spirit, Ga 5:5, greatest of all the eschatological gifts and in part already conferred, Rm 5:5+; Ac 1:8+; this enlightens, Ep 1:17f, and strengthens hope, Rm 15:13, and inspires its prayer, Rm 8:25-27, effecting the unity of the Body, for this hope is common, Ep 4:4. And because hope is built on justification through faith in Christ, Rm 5:1f; cf. Ga 5:5, it is rich in confidence, 2 Co 3:12; Heb 3:6, consolation, 2 Th 2:16; Heb 6:18, joy, Rm 12:12; 15:13; 1 Th 2:19, and is a thing to be proud of, Rm 5:2; 1 Th 2:19; Heb 3:6; the sufferings of this present time cannot dismay it, these cannot compare with the glory to come, Rm 8:18; on the contrary they sustain it, giving it a constancy, Rm 8:25; 12:12; 15:4; 1 Th 1:3; cf. 1 Co 13:7, that tests, Rm 5:4, and fortifies it, 2 Co 1:7.

e. God's love for us; of this the Holy Spirit is a pledge and to this, by his active presence within us, he bears witness: cf. 8:15 and Ga 4:6. Through him we stand before God as sons before their father; the love is mutual. This text therefore, in the light of its parallel passages, asserts that the Christian shares in the life of the Trinity through 'sanctifying grace'.

f. The promised Spirit, Ep 1:13, cf. Ga 3:14; Ac 2:33+, distinctive of the new covenant as contrasted with the old, Rm 2:29; 7:6; 2 Co 3:6; cf. Ga 3:3; 4:29; Ezk 36:27+, is not merely an exhibition of healing or charismatic power, Ac 1:8+; it is also, and especially, an inward principle of new life, a principle that God 'gives', 1 Th 4:8, etc., cf. Lk 11:13; Jn 3:34; 14:16f; Ac 1:5; 2:38 etc.; 1 Jn 3:24, 'sends', Ga 4:6; cf. Lk 24:49; Jn 14:26; 1 P 1:12, 'supplies' Ga 3:5; Ph 1:19, 'pours out', Rm 5:5; Tt 3:5f; cf. Ac 2:33. Received into the Christian by faith, Ga 3:2,14; cf. Jn 7:38f; Ac 11:17, and baptism, 1 Co 6:11; Tt 3:5; cf. Jn 3:5; Ac 2:38; 19:2-6, it dwells within him, Rm 8:9; 1 Co 3:16; 2 Tm 1:14; cf. Jm 4:5, in his spirit, Rm 8:16; cf. Rm 1:9+, and even in his body, 1 Co 6:19. This Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, Rm 8:9; Ph 1:19; Ga 4:6; cf. 2 Co 3:17; Ac 16:7; Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:7,14; makes the Christian a son of God, Rm 8:14-16; Ga 4:6f, and establishes Christ in his heart, Ep 3:16. For the Christian (as for Christ himself, Rm 1:4+) this Spirit is a principle of resurrection, Rm 8:11+, in virtue of an eschatological gift which even in life signs him as with a seal, 2 Co 1:22; Ep 1:13; 4:30, and which is present within him by way of pledge, 2 Co 1:22; 5:5; Ep 1:14; and of first-fruits, Rm 8:23. It takes the place of the evil principle in man that is 'the flesh', Rm 7:5+, and becomes a principle of faith, 1 Co 12:3; 2 Co 4:13; cf. 1 Jn 4:2f, of supernatural knowledge, 1 Co 2:10-16; 7:40; 12:8f; 14:2f; Ep 1:17; 3:16,18; Col 1:9; cf. Jn 14:26+, of love, Rm 5:5; 15:30; Col 1:8, of sanctification, Rm 15:16; 1 Co 6:11; 2 Th 2:13; cf. 1 P 1:2, of moral conduct, Rm 8:4-9,13; Ga 5:16-25, of apostolic courage, Ph 1:19; 2 Tm 1:7f; cf. Ac 1:8+, of hope, Rm 15:13; Ga 5:5; Ep 4:4, of prayer, Rm 8:26f; cf. Jm 4:3,5; Jude 20. The Spirit must not be quenched, 1 Th 5:19, or grieved, Ep 4:30. It unites men with Christ, 1 Co 6:17, and thus secures the unity of his Body, 1 Co 12:13; Ep 2:16,18; 4:4.

g. Lit. 'Being justified in his blood'.

h. Sin dwells within man, Rm 7:14-24; now death, sin's chastisement, came into the world as a result of Adam's fall, Ws 2:24: from this Paul concludes that sin itself entered into all men through that first fall. We have here the doctrine of original sin. Its interest for Paul lies in the parallel it enables him to draw between the deadly work of the first Adam and the more than sufficient compensation of the 'second Adam', vv. 15-19; 1 Co 15:21f,25. It is as the new head of the human race, the great image in which God remakes his creation, Rm 8:29+; 2 Co 5:17+, that Christ is mankind's saviour.

i. Sin divides man from God. This separation is 'death', death spiritual and eternal; physical death is the symbol of it, cf. Ws 2:24; Heb 6:1+.

j. Meaning disputed. Either by sharing in Adam's sin, ('all have sinned in Adam') or else by their own personal sins, cf. 3:23. In this second interpretation the Greek could be translated 'for this reason that everyone...' a phrase introducing a situation actually occurring which allowed (eternal) death to threaten all mankind. Sin's power which through Adam made its entrance into the world did in fact bring about eternal death by means of personal sin, itself an acquiescence in Adam's rebellion. (Paul is of course speaking of adults.) A further translation is possible 'by reason of which (i.e. of the death-situation brought about by Adam's sin) everyone has sinned'.

k. 'prefigured', cf. 1 Co 10:6+: the likeness, therefore, is not complete—hence the comparison, begun in v. 12 and interrupted by the long parenthesis of vv. 13 and 14, becomes a contrast in v. 15.

l. The word 'many' means all mankind, cf. v. 18; see Mt 20:28+.

m. Not only at the Last Judgement (for Paul regards justification as a present condition, cf. 5:1, etc.) but progressively as each individual becomes reborn in Christ.

n. 'law' without the definite article, i.e. a state of things in which law is the governing factor.

Col 2:12-13 Tt 3:5-7 1 P 3:21-22 3:8; 6:15

Baptism

6 Does it follow that we should remain in sin so as to let grace have greater 1
scope? •Of course not. We are dead to sin, so how can we continue to live 2
Ga 3:27 Col 2:12 in it? •You have been taught that when we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were 3
baptised in his death; •in other words,[a] when we were baptised we went into 4
1:4+ the tomb with him and joined him in death,[b] so that as Christ was raised from
Ex 24:16+ the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life.
Ph 3:10-11 If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him 5
8:11+ Ep 2:6+ Col 3:9-10+ Ga 5:24; 6:14 Col 3:4-5+ 6:14 in his resurrection. •We must realise that our former selves have been crucified 6
with him to destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin. •When 7
a man dies, of course, he has finished with sin.[c]
But[d] we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: 8
Ac 13:34 1 Co 15:26 2 Tm 1:10 Heb 2:14f Rv 1:18 Heb 7:27+ Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death 9
has no power over him any more. •When he died, he died, once for all, to sin,[e] 10
so his life now is life with God; •and in that way, you too must consider yourselves 11
to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.[f]

Holiness, not sin, to be the master

7:14-24 1 Co 6:15 That is why you must not let sin reign in your mortal bodies[g] or command 12
your obedience to bodily passions, •why you must not let any part of your body 13
turn into an unholy weapon fighting on the side of sin; you should, instead,
offer yourselves to God, and consider yourselves dead men brought back to life;
you should make every part of your body into a weapon fighting on the side of
6:6 God; •and then sin will no longer dominate your life, since you are living by 14
grace and not by law.

The Christian is freed from the slavery of sin[h]

6:1; 14:1 1 Co 6:12; 7:21 Does the fact that we are living by grace and not by law mean that we are 15
free to sin? Of course not. •You know that if you agree to serve and obey a 16
Jn 8:34 2 P 2:19 master you become his slaves. You cannot be slaves of sin that leads to death
and at the same time slaves of obedience that leads to righteousness. •You were 17
1:5+ 16:17 Jn 8:36 Ga 5:13 1 P 2:24 once slaves of sin, but thank God you submitted without reservation to the
creed you were taught. •You may have been freed from the slavery of sin, but only 18
to become 'slaves' of righteousness. •If I may use human terms to help your 19
1 P 1:14-15 natural weakness: as once you put your bodies at the service of vice and immor-
ality, so now you must put them at the service of righteousness for your sanct-
ification.

The reward of sin and the reward of holiness

When you were slaves of sin, you felt no obligation to righteousness, •and 20 21
8:6 Dt 30:15-20 Pr 10:16; 12:28 Jn 15:8,16 what did you get from this? Nothing but experiences that now make you blush,[i]
since that sort of behaviour ends in death. •Now, however, you have been set 22
free from sin, you have been made slaves of God, and you get a reward leading
5:12,21 Gn 2:17 Ga 6:7-9 Jm 1:15 to your sanctification and ending in eternal life. •For the wage paid by sin is 23
death; the present given by God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ac 15:10-11 ### The Christian is not bound by the Law[a]

Ga 2:19+ 1 Co 7:39 7 Brothers, those of you who have studied law will know that laws affect 1
a person only during his lifetime.[b] •A married woman, for instance, has legal 2
obligations to her husband while he is alive, but all these obligations come to
an end if the husband dies. •So if she gives herself to another man while her 3
husband is still alive, she is legally an adulteress; but after her husband is dead
her legal obligations come to an end, and she can marry someone else without
6:5-6 becoming an adulteress. •That is why you, my brothers, who through the body 4
of Christ[c] are now dead to the Law, can now give yourselves to another husband,
6:8-11,22 Jn 15:8 to him who rose from the dead to make us productive for God. •Before our 5

conversion[d] our sinful passions, quite unsubdued by the Law, fertilised our 7:7f
6 bodies to make them give birth to death. •But now we are rid of the Law, freed 6:7

6 a. Lit. 'therefore'; var. 'for'.

b. Baptism is not separated from faith but goes with it, Ga 3:26f; Ep 4:5; Heb 10:22; cf. Ac 8:12f,37; 16:31-33; 18:8; 19:2-5, and gives it outward expression by the operative symbolism of the baptismal ceremonial. For this reason Paul ascribes to faith and to baptism the same effects (cf. Ga 2:16-20 and Rm 6:3-9). The sinner is immersed in water (the etymological meaning of 'baptise' is 'dip') and thus 'buried' with Christ, Col 2:12, with whom also he emerges to resurrection, Rm 8:11+, as a 'new creature', 2 Co 5:17+, a 'new man', Ep 2:15+, a member of the one Body animated by the one Spirit, 1 Co 12:13; Ep 4:4f. This resurrection will not be complete or final until the end of time, 1 Co 15:12+ (but cf. Ep 2:6+), but is already taking place in the form of a new life lived 'in the Spirit', vv. 8-11,13; 8:2f; Ga 5:16-24. The death-resurrection symbolism of baptism is particularly Pauline, but this initial rite of the Christian life, Heb 6:2, is also spoken of in the N.T. as a cleansing bath, Ep 5:26; Heb 10:22; cf. 1 Co 6:11; Tt 3:5, a new birth, Jn 3:5; Tt 3:5; cf. 1 P 1:3; 2:2, an enlightenment, Heb 6:4; 10:32; cf. Ep 5:14. On the baptism of water and the baptism of the Spirit, cf. Ac 1:5+; these two aspects of the consecration of the Christian are apparently the 'anointing' and the 'seal' of 2 Co 1:21f. According to 1 P 3:21 the ark of Noah is an antetype of baptism.

c. Possibly in the sense that he no longer has the means to sin, having lost his 'sinful body', v. 6; being no more 'in the flesh', 8:9, he is freed from sin once and for all, cf. 1 P 4:1. Possibly in the sense that in law the death of the accused cancels legal proceedings, Cf. 7:1.

d. Var. 'For'.

e. Christ was sinless, 2 Co 5:21, but having a physical body like our own, Rm 8:3, he belonged to the order of sin; when he became 'spiritual', 1 Co 15:45-46, he belonged only to the divine order. Similarly, though the Christian remains 'in the flesh' for a time, he already lives by the spirit.

f. Text. Rec. and Vulg. 'Christ Jesus our Lord'. Cf. 14:7f; 1 Co 3:23+; 2 Co 5:15; Ga 2:20; 1 P 2:24.

g. Though baptism has destroyed sin in man, as long as his body has not been 'clothed with immortality', 1 Co 15:54, sin can still find a way to reassert itself in a 'mortal' body, i.e. one where concupiscence still has a hold, cf. 7:14f.

h. Christ has freed human beings from evil so as to restore them to God. Paul develops the biblical ideas of 'redemption', 3:24+, and of liberation from death, 7:1+, and in order to bring out their implications makes frequent use of a metaphor that his contemporaries would find impressive: the slave redeemed and set free who can be a slave no longer but must serve his new master freely and faithfully. Christ has paid for our redemption with his life, 1 Co 6:20; 7:23; Ga 3:13; 4:5; and he has made us permanently free, Ga 5:1,13. The Christian must be careful not to let himself be caught again by those who once owned him, Ga 2:4f; 4:9; 5:1, i.e. by sin, Rm 6:18-22; the Law, Rm 6:14; 8:2; Ga 3:13; 4:5; cf. Rm 7:1+, with its ritual observance, Ga 2:4; the principles of the world, Ga 4:3,8, cf. Col 2:20-22; and corruption, Rm 8:21-23. He is a free man, 1 Co 9:1, son of a free mother, i.e. the spiritual Jerusalem, Ga 4:26,31. This liberty is not licence to sin, Ga 5:13; cf. 1 P 2:16; 2 P 2:19. It means serving a new master, God, Rm 6:22; cf. 1 Th 1:9; 1 P 2:16, the Lord Christ, Rm 1:1, etc.; Jm 1:1; 2 P 1:1; Jude 1; Rm 14:18; 16:18, etc., to whom the Christian now belongs, 1 Co 6:19; 3:23, for whom he lives and dies, Rm 7:1+; this obedient service is prompted by faith and leads to righteousness and holiness, Rm 6:16-19. This is the sort of freedom a son has, Ga 4:7, one who has been one made free by 'the law of the Spirit', Rm 8:2; cf. 7:6; 8:14f; 2Co 3:17 (and cf. Jm 1:25; 2:12), and he must be prepared to surrender it to serve his neighbour in charity, Ga 5:13; cf. 2 Co 4:5, and respect for someone else's scruples require it, 1 Co 10:23-33; Rm 14; cf. 1 Co 6:12-13; 1 Co 9:19. Slavery as a social institution may be tolerated in a society that is, after all, transient, 1 Co 7:20–24,31, it has no real significance in the new order established by Christ, 1 Co 12:13; Ga 3:28; Col 3:11: the Christian slave has been enfranchised by the Lord Christ, and the slave and his master are equally servants of Christ, 1 Co 7:22; cf. Ep 6:5-9; Col 3:22–4:1; Phm 16.

i. Or 'what did you get from actions that now make you blush?'

7 a. Paul now approaches a subject which has been in his mind for some time, 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 6:14: the emancipation of the Christian from the Law, and this causes him to explain the rôle of the Law as God intended it, cf. 7:7+.

b. Elsewhere Paul refers to the liberation of the Christian either biblically as 'redemption', 3:24+, or, hellenistically, as 'enfranchisement', 6:15+. He also describes it frequently as a deliverance from death, since death frees a man from his past with all its tyrannical demands, 6:7; 7:1-3. The Christian, in union with the dead and risen Christ, 8:11+, and by virtue of faith, 1:16+, and baptism, 6:4+, is now dead to sin, 6:2,11, cf. 1 P 4:1, to the Law, Rm 7:6; Ga 2:19+, to the principles of the world, Col 2:20, and so lives under the new order of grace and the Spirit, Rm 8:5-13. Like an emancipated slave enslaved to a new master, 6:15+, the Christian, risen in Christ, lives no longer for himself but for Christ and for God, 6:11-13; 14:7f; cf. 2 Co 5:15; Ga 2:20.

c. As the Christian is dead to sin, so he is dead to the Law, by virtue of the dead and risen 'body of Christ', cf. 7:1+.

d. Lit. 'While we were in the flesh'. 1. The primary meaning of 'flesh' is the matter of which the body is made, 1 Co 15:39; cf. Lk 24:39; Rv 17:16; 19:18; it is the opposite of spirit, Rm 1:9+; it is the body with its senses, Col 2:1,5, and especially the medium of sexual union, 1 Co 6:16; 7:28; Ep 5:29,31; cf. Mt 19:5p; Jn 1:13; Jude 7, by which people become parents and heirs, Rm 4:1; 9:3,5; 11:14; cf. Heb 12:9. Thus 'flesh', like *basar* in biblical usage, emphasises the weak and perishable side of human beings, Rm 6:19; 2 Co 7:5; 12:7; Ga 4:13f; cf. Mt 26:41p, and their insignificance in comparison with God, Rm 3:20 and Ga 2:16; 1 Co 1:29; cf. Mt 24:22p; Lk 3:6; Jn 17:2; Ac 2:17; 1 P 1:24. This explains the words Paul uses when comparing nature with grace 'according to the flesh', 1 Co 1:26; 2 Co 1:17; Ep 6:5; Col 3:22; cf. Phm 16; Jn 8:15, 'flesh and blood', 1 Co 15:50; Ga 1:16; Ep 6:12; Heb 2:14; cf. Mt 16:17, and 'fleshly', Rm 15:27; 1 Co 3:1,3; 9:11; 2 Co 1:12; 10:4. 2. Since the sending of the Spirit is what gives this eschatological age its character, Paul can use the word 'flesh' to signify the old dispensation as opposed to the new, Rm 9:8; Ga 3:3; 6:12f; Ph 3:3f; Ep 2:11; cf. Heb 9:10,13; Jn 3:6; 6:63; so also the phrase 'according to the flesh', 1 Co 10:18; 2 Co 11:18; Ga 4:23,29; cf. Rm 1:3f; 2 Co 5:16, and 'fleshly', Heb 7:16; but cf. 1 Co 10:3f. 3. For Paul the 'flesh' is especially the sphere in which the passions and sin operate, Rm 7:5,14,18,25; 13:14; 2 Co 7:1; Ga 5:13,19; Ep 2:3; Col 2:13,18,23; cf. 1 P 2:11; 2 P 2:10,18; 1 Jn 2:16; Jude 8,23, condemned to corruption, 1 Co 15:50; Ga 6:8; cf. Jm 5:3; Ac 2:26,31, and to death, Rm 8:6,13; 1 Co 5:5; 2 Co 4:11; cf. 1 P 4:6, so much so that 'flesh' becomes personified as a Power of evil hostile to God, Rm 8:7f, and to the Spirit, Rm 8:4-9,12f; Ga 5:16f. Christ has defeated this Power by assuming 'sinful flesh', Rm 8:3; cf. 1 Tm 3:16; Jn 1:14; 1 Jn 4:2; 2 Jn 7, and putting it to death on the cross, Rm 8:3; Ep 2:14-16; Col 1:22; cf. Heb 5:7f; 10:20; 1 P 3:18; 4:1. Being united with him, Jn 6:51f, Christians are no longer 'in the flesh', Rm 7:5; 8:9, since they have crucified the flesh, Ga 5:24; cf. 1 P 4:1, and cast it off by baptism, Col 2:11; more precisely, they are still 'in the flesh' as long as they remain in this world, Ph 1:22-24; cf. 1 P 4:2, but are not slaves to the flesh any more, 2 Co 10:3; they are its masters through their union with Christ by faith, Ga 2:20, and suffering, Col 1:24.

2:29 Mt 9:16-17 2 Co 3:6 by death from our imprisonment, free to serve in the new spiritual way and not the old way of a written law.

The function of the Law[e]

3:20; 5:20; 7:5; 8:3 Ga 3:10,19 Ex 20:17 4:15; 5:13 Jm 1:14-15 1 Co 15:56 Gn 2:17; 3: 1f Lv 18:5 Ezk 20:11 Gn 3:13

Does it follow that the Law itself is sin? Of course not. What I mean is that 7
I should not have known what sin was except for the Law. I should not for
instance have known what it means to covet if the Law had not said *You shall*
not covet. •But it was this commandment that sin took advantage of to produce 8
all kinds of covetousness in me, for when there is no Law, sin is dead.
Once, when there was no Law, I[f] was alive; but when the commandment 9
came, sin came to life •and I died: the commandment was meant to lead me to 10
life but it turned out to mean death for me, •because sin took advantage of the 11
commandment to mislead me, and so sin, through that commandment, killed me.

Dt 4:8 1 Tm 1:8 Jm 1:25 5:20

The Law is sacred, and what it commands is sacred, just and good. •Does 12 13
that mean that something good killed me? Of course not. But sin,[g] to show itself
in its true colours, used that good thing to kill me; and thus sin, thanks to the
commandment, was able to exercise all its sinful power.

The inward struggle[h]

6:12-14 Jb 14:4+ Ps 51:5 Ws 9:15 Ga 5:17 1 P 4:2 7:5 Ga 2:20

The Law, of course, as we all know, is spiritual; but I am unspiritual; I have 14
been sold as a slave to sin. •I cannot understand my own behaviour. I fail to carry 15
out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate. •When 16
I act against my own will, that means I have a self that acknowledges that the
Law is good, •and so the thing behaving in that way is not my self but sin living 17
in me. •The fact is, I know of nothing good living in me—living, that is, in my 18
unspiritual self—for though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance
is not, •with the result that instead of doing the good things I want to do, I carry 19
out the sinful things I do not want. •When I act against my will, then, it is not 20
my true self doing it, but sin which lives in me.[i]

2 Co 4:16 Ep 3:16 Jm 1:14-15; 4:1 8:23 Ws 1:4+ 5:21; 6:23

In fact, this seems to be the rule,[j] that every single time I want to do good 21
it is something evil that comes to hand. •In my inmost self[k] I dearly love God's 22
Law,[l] but •I can see that my body follows a different law that battles against 23
the law which my reason dictates. This is what makes me a prisoner of that law
of sin which lives inside my body.
What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to 24
death?[m] •Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! 25
In short, it is I who with my reason[n] serve the Law of God, and no less I who
serve in my unspiritual self the law of sin.[o]

B. THE CHRISTIAN'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

The life of the spirit

Ws 1:4+ 7:7+ Ac 13:38-39; 15:10-11 6:10+ Ga 3:13 2 Co 5:21 Heb 2:14-18 3:31+; 9:30-31+; 10:4

8 The reason, therefore, why those who are in Christ Jesus are not condemned, 1
is that the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you[a] free from the 2
law of sin and death.[b] •God has done what the Law, because of our unspiritual 3
nature, was unable to do.[c] God dealt with sin by sending his own Son in a body
as physical as any sinful body, and in that body[d] God condemned sin. •He did 4
this in order that the Law's just demands[e] might be satisfied in us, who behave
not as our unspiritual nature but as the spirit dictates.

Ga 5:16-23 6:21 Ga 6:8 1 Jn 2:15-16 7:5-6

The unspiritual are interested only in what is unspiritual, but the spiritual 5
are interested in spiritual things. •It is death to limit oneself to what is unspiritual; 6
life and peace can only come with concern for the spiritual. •That is because to 7
limit oneself to what is unspiritual is to be at enmity with God: such a limitation
never could and never does submit to God's law. •People who are interested 8
only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. •Your interests, however, 9

are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not
10 belong to him. •Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ
11 is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified;[f] •and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.[g]

Ps 51:11
Jn 3:5-6

6:4+
Ezk 37:10
1:4+;
6:8-11

e. In itself the Law is holy and good since it expresses God's will, 7:12-25; 1 Tm 1:8; it is the glorious prerogative of Israel, Rm 9:4; but cf. 2:14f. And yet it seems to have been a failure: in spite of the Law the Jews are sinners like everyone else, Rm 2:21-27; Ga 6:13; Ep 2:3, and obedience to it even makes them so confident, Rm 2:17-20; 3:27; 4:2,4; 9:31f; Ph 3:9; Ep 2:8, that they are shut off by it from the grace of Christ, Ga 6:12; Ph 3:18; cf. Ac 15:1; 18:13; 21:21. In short, the Law is powerless to make any man just, Ga 3:11,21f; Rm 3:20; cf. Heb 7:19. Paul's argument, to which polemic lends a tone of paradox, is that this apparent failure of the Law is due to the nature of the Law itself and to the part it was meant to play in the history of salvation. The Law gives information—it does not give spiritual strength. No law, whether Mosaic or otherwise, not even the primordial command given to Adam, cf. vv. 9-11, can prevent sin, in fact law makes it worse: 1, because though law is not the source of sin it becomes the instrument of sin by arousing concupiscence, Rm 7:7f; 2, because by informing the mind it increases the fault, which becomes a conscious 'transgression', 4:15; 5:13; 3, because the only remedy law can offer is punishment, 4:15, curse, Ga 3:10, condemnation, 2 Co 3:9, death, 2 Co 3:6; hence it can be called 'the law of sin and death', Rm 8:2; cf. 1 Co 15:56; Rm 7:13. Nevertheless God willed this defective system, though as a temporary period of schooling, Ga 3:24, to make people conscious of their sin, Rm 3:19f; 5:20; Ga 3:19, and to teach them to look for justification solely to the grace of God, Ga 3:22; Rm 11:32. Since this state of things is only for a time it has to give way before the fulfilment of the promise made, before the Law, to Abraham and his descendants, Ga 3:6-22; Rm 4. Christ has put an end to the Law Ep 2:15; cf. Rm 10:4, satisfying its demands by dying a sinner's death, Ga 3:13; Rm 8:3; Col 2:14; but at the same time he 'fulfils', cf. Mt 5:17; 3:15, all that is of positive value in the Law, Rm 3:31; 9:31; 10:4. He emancipates the sons from the guardianship of the tutor, Ga 3:25f. With him they are dead to the Law, Ga 2:19; Rm 7:4-6; cf. Col 2:20, from which he has 'redeemed' them, Ga 3:13, in order to make them sons by adoption, Ga 4:5. Through the promised Spirit he gives to mankind thus renewed, Ep 2:15+, the inward strength to do all the good things prescribed by the Law, Rm 8:4f. This order of grace, superseding that of the old Law, may still be called a law, but it is 'the law of faith', Rm 3:27, 'the law of Christ', Ga 6:2, 'the law of the Spirit', Rm 8:1, and love is its essential precept, Ga 5:14; Rm 13:8f; cf. Jm 2:8.

f. Paul speaks in the person of mankind before the Law was given, cf. 5:13.

g. Sin personified, cf. 5:12, here takes the place of the serpent of Gn 3:1 and the devil of Ws 2:24.

h. Paul now speaks in the person of mankind still under the empire of sin and not yet justified, whereas in ch. 8, he speaks in the name of the justified Christian with the gift of the Spirit who, nevertheless, is conscious of an inward struggle while on earth, Ga 5:17f.

i. Paul is not denying man's personal responsibility for the evil he does, any more than for the good in Ga 2:20.

j. Lit. 'law', in the sense of regular experience.

k. This 'inmost self' is man's rational nature as opposed to the 'outer self', 2 Co 4:16a, which is man's perishable body. This distinction which has its origin in Greek thought is not the same as that between the 'old' and the 'new' self, Col 3:9-10+, which derives from Jewish eschatology. There are texts, however, where Paul speaks of the 'inmost self' in the Christian sense of the 'new self', 2 Co 4:16b; Ep 3:16.

l. Var. 'reason's law' as in v. 23.

m. Lit. 'from the body of this death'. Paul is concerned with the body and its component members, Rm 12:4; 1 Co 12:12,14f, that is to say with the human being as he actually is, a sentient creature, 1 Co 5:3; 2 Co 10:10, with a sexual life, Rm 4:19; 1 Co 6:16; 7:4; Ep 5:28, because it is in the body that man lives morally and religiously. The body, though tyrannised by the 'flesh', Rm 7:5+, by sin, 1:24; 6:12f; 7:23; 8:13; 1 Co 6:18, by death, Rm 6:12; 8:10, and therefore a 'body of flesh', Col 2:11; cf. 1:22, a 'body of sin', Rm 6:6, and a 'body of death', 7:24, is not however doomed to perish, as Greek philosophy would have it, but, in accordance with the biblical tradition, Ezk 37:10+; 2 M 7:9+, destined to live, Rm 8:13; 2 Co 4:10, through resurrection, Rm 8:11+. The principle of this renewal is the Spirit, 5:5+, which takes the place of the *psyche*, 1 Co 15:44+, and transforms the body of the Christian into the likeness of the risen body of Christ, Ph 3:21. Until this ultimate deliverance takes place, Rm 8:23, the body of the Christian, provisionally delivered from the 'flesh' by its union with Christ's death, 6:6; 8:3f, is even now the home of the Holy Spirit, 1 Co 6:19, who produces in it a new life of righteousness and holiness, Rm 6:13,19; 12:1; 1 Co 7:34, which is meritorious, 2 Co 5:10, and gives glory to God, 1 Co 6:20; Ph 1:20.

n. The *nous*, human reason or mind, is a Greek idea very different from the *pneuma* or supernatural Spirit, 5:5+, and even from the spirit in the biblical sense of man's higher self, 1:9+. It is the principle of understanding, 1 Co 14:14,15,19; Ph 4:7; 2 Th 2:2; cf. Lk 24:45; Rv 13:18; 17:9, and of moral judgement, Rm 14:5; 1 Co 1:10. Usually it is reliable, Rm 7:23,25, but is at times perverted, 1:28; Ep 4:17; 1 Tm 6:5; 2 Tm 3:8; Tt 1:15, by the 'flesh', Col 2:18; cf. Rm 7:5+, and has to be renewed, Rm 12:2, within man's own spirit by the Spirit of God, Ep 4:23f; cf. Col 3:10.

o. This sentence, which would come more naturally before v. 24, seems to have been added—perhaps by Paul himself.

8 a. Var. 'me', 'us'.

b. Paul contrasts the order of sin and death with the new order of the Spirit. The word 'spirit' here means either the Holy Spirit in person (as it does more clearly in v. 9) or the spirit of man made new by his presence, cf. 5:5+; 1:9+.

c. The Mosaic Law, imposed from without, could not be an inward principle of salvation, 7:7+. Christ alone, who by his death destroyed our unspiritual nature (lit. 'flesh') in his own person, could destroy sin whose domain the 'flesh' was. Man formerly carnal is now, through union with Christ, spiritual.

d. Lit. 'in the likeness of sinful flesh, and in that flesh...'

e. Summed up in the command of love, cf. 13:10; Ga 5:14; Mt 22:40. (See Rm 7:7+.)

f. Because of sin, 5:12+, the body is doomed to physical death and is the instrument of spiritual death also; but the Spirit is life, a power of resurrection; see following note.

g. The resurrection of the Christian is intimately dependent on that of Christ, 1 Th 4:14; 1 Co 6:14; 15:20f; 2 Co 4:14; 13:4; Rm 6:5; Ep 2:6; Col 1:18; 2:12f; 2 Tm 2:11. It is by the same power and the same gift of the Spirit, cf. Rm 1:4+, that the Father will raise them to life in their turn. This operation is already being prepared: a new life is making the Christians into sons (v. 14) in the likeness of the Son himself, 8:29+, and they are being incorporated into the risen Christ by faith, 1:16+, and baptism, 6:4+.

So then, my brothers, there is no necessity for us to obey our unspiritual 12
Gn 6:3 Ga 6:8 Ep 4:22-24 selves or to live unspiritual lives. •If you do live in that way, you are doomed to 13
die; but if by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body you will live.

Ga 4:4-7 **Children of God**

Ga 5:18 Everyone moved[h] by the Spirit is a son of God. •The spirit you received 14 15
Jn 1:12; 15:15 5:5+ 1 Jn 4:18 is not the spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of
sons, and it makes us cry out, 'Abba, Father!'[i] •The Spirit himself and our spirit 16
Ga 3:16, 26-29 Lk 22:28-30; 24:26 Ph 3:10-11 1 P 4:13 Rv 21:7 bear united witness[j] that we are children of God. •And if we are children we 17
are heirs as well: heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings
so as to share his glory.

Glory as our destiny

5:2-5 2 Co 4:17 Col 3:3-4 1 Jn 3:2 Gn 3:17; 6:20+ Ho 4:3+ I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, 18
as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. •The whole creation is eagerly 19
waiting for God to reveal his sons.[k] •It was not for any fault on the part of 20
creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God;[l]
2 P 3:12-13 but creation still retains the hope •of being freed, like us, from its slavery to 21
Rv 21:1 decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. •From 22
the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in
2 Co 5:2-5 one great act of giving birth; •and not only creation, but all of us who possess 23
Ph 3:20 the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for[m] our bodies
3:24+; 5:2+; 7:24+ 2 Co 5:7 Heb 11:1 to be set free. •For we must be content to hope that we shall be saved[n]—our 24
salvation is not in sight, we should not have to be hoping for it if it were—•but, 25
as I say, we must hope to be saved since we are not saved yet—it is something
we must wait for with patience.

5:5+; 8:15 Ga 4:6 Jm 4:3.5 The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose 26
Jr 11:20+ words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way
that could never be put into words, •and God who knows everything in our 27
hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints
expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.[o]

Ep 1:4-14 **God has called us to share his glory**

Gn 50:20 Jm 1:12 Ac 13:48+ We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all 28
those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose.[p]
Jr 1:5 1 Co 15:49 Ph 3:21 Col 1:18 They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true 29
images of his Son,[q] so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. •He 30
called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he
justified he shared his glory.[r]

1 Co 13:1+ **A hymn to God's love**

After saying this, what can we add? With God on our side who can be against 31
5:6-11 Gn 22:12,16 Jn 3:16 2 Co 5:14-21 1 Jn 4:10 Is 50:8 Ac 2:23 us? •Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, 32
we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give.
Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, •could 33 34
Heb 7:25 anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us—he rose
from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are 35
troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being
Ps 44:11 1 Th 3:4 2 Tm 3:12 threatened or even attacked. •As scripture promised: *For your sake we are being* 36
massacred daily, and reckoned as sheep for the slaughter. •These are the trials 37
Jn 16:33 through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing 38
that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, •or height or depth,[s] nor any 39
created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in
Christ Jesus our Lord.

C. THE PLACE OF ISRAEL[a]

The privileges of Israel

1 9 What I want to say now is no pretence; I say it in union with Christ—it is 2 Co 11:29
the truth—my conscience in union with the Holy Spirit assures me of it too.
2 What I want to say is this: my sorrow is so great, my mental anguish so endless, 2 Co 12:7+
3 I would willingly be condemned[b] and be cut off from Christ if it could help my Ex 32:32
4 brothers of Israel,[c] my own flesh and blood. •They were adopted as sons, they Ga 1:9
were given the glory and the covenants; the Law and the ritual were drawn up *Ep 2:12*
5 for them, and the promises were made to them. •They are descended from the 1 Th 2:8
patriarchs and from their flesh and blood came Christ who is above all, God for 1:3
ever blessed![d] Amen. 1 Co 15:28
2 Co 5:16
1 P 4:11

h. 'led' seems inadequate: the Holy Spirit is much more than one who inwardly admonishes, he is the principle of a life truly divine, cf. Ga 2:20.

i. The prayer of Christ in Gethsemane, Mk 14:36.

j. Or (Vulg.)' The Spirit bears witness to our spirit'.

k. Lit. 'waiting for the revelation of the sons of God'. The material world, created for man, shares his destiny. It was cursed for man's sin, Gn 3:17, and is therefore now deformed: impotent and decadent, vv. 19-22. But like man's body, destined to be glorified, it too is to be redeemed, vv. 21,23; it will share the glorious liberty of the children of God, v. 21. For the Greek philosopher matter was evil and the spirit must be delivered from it; Christianity regards matter as itself enslaved and to be set free. In other texts also salvation is extended to creatures (especially angels) other than man, cf. Col 1:20; Ep 1:10; 2 P 3:13; Rv 21:1-5.

l. Lit. 'Creation was subjected to futility; this was not its own fault but the work of him who so subjected it'—i.e. of God who punished man's sin in this way, or of man whose sin was responsible.

m. Add. 'adoptive sonship (and)' which would here have an eschatological sense, but see v. 15.

n. Lit. 'It is through hope that we are saved'. The salvation is eschatological, cf. 5:1-11.

o. Paul insists on the necessity of constant prayer (Rm 12:12; Ep 6:18; Ph 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Th 5:17; 1 Tm 2:8; 5:5; cf. 1 Co 7:5) taught by Jesus himself (Mt 6:5+; 14:23+) and practised by the early Christians (Ac 2:42+). Paul is always praying for the faithful (Ep 1:16; Ph 1:4; Col 1:3,9; 1 Th 1:2; 3:10; 2 Th 1:11; Phm 4) and asks them to do the same for him (Rm 15:30; 2 Co 1:11; Ep 6:19; Ph 1:19; Col 4:3; 1 Th 5:25; 2 Th 3:1; Phm 22; Heb 13:18), and for each other (2 Co 9:14; Ep 6:18; on prayer for sinners and the sick, cf. 1 Jn 5:16; Jm 5:13-16). These prayers must ask for growth in holiness but also for the removal of all external (1 Th 2:18 and 3:10; Rm 1:10) and internal (2 Co 12:8-9) obstacles to it; we have to pray, too, for the orderly conduct of the country's business (1 Tm 2:1-2). Paul lays special stress on prayers of thanksgiving (Ep 5:4; Ph 4:6; Col 2:7; 4:2; 1 Th 5:18; 1 Tm 2:1) for every gift of God (Ep 5:20; Col 3:17) and particularly for the food God gives us (Rm 14:6; 1 Co 10:31; 1 Tm 4:3-5); he begins all his own letters with a prayer of thanks (Rm 1:8, etc.) and he wants the spirit of gratitude to pervade all the Christians' dealings with each other (1 Co 14:17; 2 Co 1:11; 4:15; 9:11-12). In liturgical gatherings prayers of thanksgiving and praise must predominate (1 Co 11-14) and these sentiments must inspire the hymns that the Christians compose for these occasions (Ep 5:19; Col 3:16). It is the Holy Spirit who inspires the prayer of the Christian, and Paul prefers to emphasise this rather than repeat the traditional Wisdom themes, namely the necessary conditions for prayer and its efficaciousness (cf. Jm 1:5-8; 4:2-3; 5:16-18; 1 Jn 3:22; 5:14-16) which Paul guarantees by the presence of the Spirit of Christ within the Christian, enabling him to pray as a son to his father (Rm 8:15,26-27; Ga 4:6; cf. 6:18; Jude 20), while Christ himself intercedes at the right hand of God (Rm 8:34; cf. Heb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1). The Father's response is therefore most generous (Ep 3:10). Hence Christians are called 'those who invoke the name of Jesus Christ' (1 Co 1:2; cf. Rm 10:9-13; 2 Tm 2:22; Jm 2:7; Ac 9:14,21; 22:16). On the attitude to be adopted when praying cf. 1 Co 11:14-16; 1 Tm 2:8.

p. Var. (Vulg.) 'We know that for those who love God everything conspires for good, for all those that he has called...'

q. Christ, the image of God in the primordial creation, Col 1:15+, cf. Heb 1:3, has now come, by a new creation, 2 Co 5:17+, to restore to fallen man the splendour of that image which has been darkened by sin, Gn 1:26+; 3:22-24+; Rm 5:12+. He does this by forming man in the still more splendid image of a son of God (Rm 8:29); thus, sound moral judgement is restored to the 'new man', Col 3:10+, and also his claim to glory which he had sacrificed by sin, Rm 3:23+. This glory which Christ as the image of God possesses by right, 2 Co 4:4, is progressively communicated to the Christian, 2 Co 3:18, until his body is itself clothed in the image of the 'heavenly' man, 1 Co 15:49.

r. Everything has been directed by God to the glory of his elect: it was for this they were called to the faith and justified by baptism; with this, it can be said by anticipation, they are already clothed.

s. The 'powers' 'heights' and 'depths' are probably the mysterious cosmic forces which to the mind of antiquity were in general hostile to mankind. Cf. Ep 1:21; 3:18.

9 a. Paul's theme of justification by faith led him to speak of the righteousness of Abraham, ch. 4. Similarly here the theme of salvation lovingly bestowed by God through the Spirit makes it necessary for him to speak about Israel's case, ch. 9-11, a people which remains unbelieving though it has received the promise of salvation. The subject of these chapters, therefore, is not the problem of individual predestination to glory, or even to faith, but of Israel's part in the development of salvation history, the only problem raised by the statements in the O.T.

b. Lit. *anathema*, a thing accursed, under a ban, cf. Jos 6:17+ and Lv 27:28+.

c. Actual descendants of Jacob (called 'Israel', Gn 32:29). All the other privileges derive from this: adoptive sonship, Ex 4:22; cf. Dt 7:6+; the glory of God, Ex 24:16+, who dwells with his people, Ex 25:8+; Dt 4:7+; cf. Jn 1:14+; the covenant with Abraham, Gn 15:1+; 15:17+; 17:1+, with Jacob-Israel, Gn 32:29, with Moses, Ex 24:7-8; the worship of the one true God; the Law which embodies his will; the messianic promises, 2 S 7:1+, and physical relationship with Christ.

d. Both the context and the internal development of the sentence imply that this doxology is addressed to Christ. Paul rarely gives Jesus the title 'God', though cf. Tt 2:13, or addresses a doxology to him, cf. Heb 13:21, but this is because he usually keeps this title for the Father, cf. Rm 15:6, etc., and considers the divine persons not so much with an abstract

3:3+ **God has kept his promise**

Nb 23:19 Is 55:10-11 2:28-29 Mt 3:9p Gn 21:12 Does this mean that God has failed to keep his promise? Of course not. 6 Not all those who descend from Israel are Israel; 7 not all the descendants of Abraham are his true children. Remember: *It is through Isaac that your name will be carried on*, 8 which means that it is not physical descent that decides who are the children of God; it is only the children of the promise who will count as the true descendants. 9 The actual words in which the promise was made were: *I shall visit you* at such and such a time, *and Sarah will have a son.* 10 Even more to the point is what was said to Rebecca when she was pregnant by our ancestor Isaac, but before her twin children were born and before either had done good or evil. 11 In order to stress that God's choice is free, 12 since it depends on the one who calls, not on human merit, Rebecca was told: *the elder shall serve the younger*, 13 or as scripture says elsewhere: *I showed my love for Jacob and my hatred for Esau.*

Jn 8:31-44 Gn 18:10 11:5-6 Gn 25:23 Ml 1:2-3

3:5 **God is not unjust**

Dt 32:4 Ex 33:19 Ps 147:10f Ex 9:16 Does it follow that God is unjust? Of course not. 14 Take what God said to Moses: *I have mercy on whom I will, and I show pity to whom I please.* 15 In other words, the only thing that counts is not what human beings want or try to do, but the mercy of God. 16 For in scripture he says to Pharaoh: *It was for this I raised you up,*[e] *to use you as a means of showing my power and to make my name known throughout the world.* 17 In other words, when God wants to show mercy he does, and when he wants to harden someone's heart he does so. 18

3:7 Ws 12:12 Mt 20:15 Is 29:16 Is 29:16+ Jr 18:6 Ws 15:7 Is 45:9; 64:7 You will ask me, 'In that case, how can God ever blame anyone, since no one can oppose his will?'[f] 19 But what right have you, a human being, to cross-examine God? *The pot has no right to say to the potter: Why did you make me this shape?* 20 Surely a potter can do what he likes with the clay? It is surely for him to decide whether he will use a particular lump of clay to make a special pot or an ordinary one? 21

2:4; 3:25-26 Pr 16:4 Ws 12:20-21 8:29 Ep 2:1-7 Or else imagine[g] that although God is ready to show his anger and display his power, yet he patiently puts up with the people who make him angry, however much they deserve to be destroyed. 22 He puts up with them for the sake of those other people, to whom he wants to be merciful, to whom he wants to reveal[h] the richness of his glory, people he had prepared for this glory long ago. 23 'Well, we are those people; whether we were Jews or pagans we are the ones he has called.[i] 24

All has been foretold in the Old Testament

Ho 2:25 1 P 2:10 Ho 2:1 Is 10:22-23 Ho 2:1 11:5 Is 1:9 That is exactly what God says in Hosea: *I shall say to a people that was not mine,* '*You are my people*', *and to a nation I never loved,* '*I love you*'. 25 *Instead of being told,* '*You are no people of mine*', *they will now be called the sons of the living God.*[k] 26 Referring to Israel Isaiah had this to say:[l] *Though Israel should have as many descendants as there are grains of sand on the seashore, only a remnant will be saved,* 27 *for without hesitation or delay the Lord will execute his sentence on the earth.*[m] 28 As Isaiah foretold: *Had the Lord of hosts not left us some descendants we should now be like Sodom, we should be like Gomorrah.* 29

8:4; 10:4. 20; 11:7 From this it follows[n] that the pagans who were not looking for righteousness found it all the same, a righteousness that comes of faith, 30 while Israel, looking for a righteousness derived from law failed to do what that law required.[o] 31 Why did they fail? Because they relied on good deeds instead of trusting in faith. In other words, they *stumbled over the stumbling-stone* 32 mentioned in scripture: 33 *See how I lay in Zion a stone to stumble over, a rock to trip men up—only those who believe in him will have no cause for shame.*

Is 8:14 Is 28:16 1 P 2:6-8 10:11

Israel fails to see that it is God who makes us holy

10 Brothers, I have the very warmest love for the Jews, and I pray to God for them to be saved. 1 I can swear to their fervour for God, but their zeal is 2

3 misguided.[a] •Failing to recognise the righteousness that comes from God, they Mt 5:20 Ph 3:9
4 try to promote their own idea of it, instead of submitting to the righteousness of God.[b] •But now the Law has come to an end with Christ, and everyone who has 8:4; 9:30, 31+ Mt 5:17 Ac 24:14 2 Co 3:14 Ga 3:24 3:21; 4
faith may be justified.

The testimony of Moses

5 When Moses refers to being justified by the Law, he writes: *those who keep* Ly 18:5 Ga 3:12+
6 *the Law will draw life from it.* •But the righteousness that comes from faith says
this:[c] Do not tell yourself you have to bring Christ down—as in the text: *Who* Dt 9:4; 30:
7 *will go up to heaven?* •or that you have to bring Christ back from the dead—as 12f
8 in the text: *Who will go down to the underworld?*[d] •On the positive side it says: Ps 107:26 1 P 3:19+ Dt 30:14 Si 51:26 Ac 2:36+ 1 Co 12:3
The word, that is the faith we proclaim, *is very near to you, it is on your lips and*
9 *in your heart.* •If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your
10 heart that God raised him from the dead,[e] then you will be saved. •By believing 1:4
from the heart you are made righteous; by confessing with your lips you are
11 saved. •When scripture says: *those who believe in him will have no cause for shame,* Is 28:16
12 it makes no distinction between Jew and Greek: all belong to the same Lord who 1:16; 32-33; 9:33
13 is rich enough, however many ask his help, •*for everyone who calls on the name* Jl 3:5 Ac 2:21+
of the Lord will be saved.

appreciation of their nature as with a concrete appreciation of their functions in the process of salvation. Moreover, he has always in mind the historical Christ in his concrete reality as God made man, cf. Ph 2:5+; Col 1:15+. For this reason he presents Christ as subordinated to the Father, 1 Co 3:23; 11:3, not only in the work of creation, 1 Co 8:6, but also in that of eschatological renewal, 1 Co 15:27f; cf. Rm 16:27, etc. Nevertheless, the title 'Lord', *Kyrios*, received by Christ at his resurrection, Ph 2:9-11; cf. Ep 1:20-22; Heb 1:3f, is the title given by the LXX to Yahweh in the O.T., Rm 10:9,13; 1 Co 2:16. For Paul Jesus is essentially 'the Son of God', Rm 1:3-4,9; 5:10; 8:29; 1 Co 1:9; 15:28; 2 Co 1:19; Ga 1:16; 2:20; 4:4,6; Ep 4:13; 1 Th 1:10; cf. Heb 4:14, etc., his 'own Son', Rm 8:3,32, 'the Son of his love', Col 1:13, who belongs to the sphere of the divine by right, the sphere from which he came, 1 Co 15:47, being sent by God, Rm 8:3; Ga 4:4. The title 'Son of God' became his in a new way with the resurrection, Rm 1:4+; cf. Heb 1:5; 5:5, but it was not then that he received it since he pre-existed not only as prefigured in the O.T., 1 Co 10:4, but ontologically, Ph 2:6; cf. 2 Co 8:9. He is the Wisdom, 1 Co 1:24,30, and the Image, 2 Co 4:4, by which and in which all things were created, Col 1:15-17; cf. Heb 1:3; 1 Co 8:6, and have been re-created, Rm 8:29; cf. Col 3:10; 1:18-20, because into his own person is gathered the fulness of the godhead and of the universe, Col 2:9+. In him God has devised the whole plan of salvation, Ep 1:3f, and he, no less than the Father, is its accomplishment (cf. Rm 11:36; 1 Co 8:6 and Col 1:16,20). The Father raises to life and judges, so does the Son raise to life (cf. Rm 1:4+; 8:11+ and Ph 3:21) and judge (cf. Rm 2:16 and 1 Co 4:5; Rm 14:10 and 2 Co 5:10). In short, he is one of the three persons enumerated in the trinitarian formulae, 2 Co 13:13+.

e. Like the O.T. writers Paul attributes to God as their ultimate cause (stressing the phrase of Ex: I raised you up) the good and bad actions of men, cf. 1:24f.

f. If man's perversity thus becomes part of God's design, how can man be accused of not doing the will of God? Paul replies, as before in a similar case (3:7; 6:1,15), by disallowing the objection. God being the absolute master of what he has made, the question of injustice cannot arise. Cf. Mt 20:15.

g. Lit. 'But if', an obscure phrase here, to be interpreted by the context. Paul is explaining how the hardening of Pharaoh's heart then, and the unbelief of Israel now, are not acts of injustice if regarded as elements in the plan of God. God could destroy the Jewish people, as he could have destroyed Pharaoh, but he patiently tolerates them: thus (while allowing time to repent, 2:4) he 'shows his anger' (by permitting sins to multiply, cf. ch. 1-3, though even this paves the way to conversion); he 'displays his power' by brushing such obstacles aside, v. 17, as the present antagonism of the Jews towards the gospel; but above all he carries out his merciful plan for the pagans, cf. 11:11-12, to whom the gospel is preached once the Jews have rejected it, cf. Ac 13:5+.

h. Lit. 'in order to (reveal)'; var. 'and (revealed)'.

i. In the Greek, vv. 22-24 are a long conditional clause without an apodosis. Supply 'how, if this supposition is correct, could we speak of injustice in God?' In the long run, everything is directed to the salvation of both pagans and Jews, cf. 11:32.

j. Lit. '(namely) to us whom he has called not only from the Jews but from the pagans'.

k. The story of an Israel welcomed back by God despite its unfaithfulness thus becomes the antetype of the invitation to the pagans, who had no claim, to the messianic feast.

l. The texts cited here proclaim both the infidelity of Israel and the return of a 'remnant', cf. Is 4:3+, in which the promises are safeguarded. They are thus a preparation for ch. 11.

m. One var. (Vulg.) makes the quotation follow the LXX text, which Paul abbreviates.

n. Lit. 'Then what shall we say?' This conclusion introduces the argument of the following chapter where the cause of Israel's infidelity is examined not now as in God but as in Israel itself.

o. Only the Christian can do this, 3:31; 8:4; 10:4; cf. 7:7+; Ac 13:39 'that law': var. (Vulg.) 'that law of righteousness'.

10 a. Like that of Paul before his conversion, Ac 22:3; Ga 1:14; Ph 3:6; cf. 1 Tm 1:13.

b. Righteousness is not something to be won: it is a favour man receives through faith in Christ, cf. 1:16+; 7:7+.

c. The argument is odd at first reading, because the passage of Dt is certainly a eulogy of the righteousness of the Law. But Paul sees in this text, which sums up the whole Law in the precept of love and the 'circumcision of the heart', Dt 30:6,16,20, a presentiment of the new law. The 'word of faith', uttered and made effective by the Spirit of Christ, 8:2,14, is deeper in the heart and sweeter in the mouth than the 'word of the Law' could be.

d. Lit. 'the depths'—of the sea in Dt 30:13, of Sheol in Paul's applied sense. In connection with this text, the Targum had already spoken of the descent of Moses from Sinai and the ascent of Jonah from the depths of the sea.

e. Profession of faith, such as is made at baptism, is the outward expression of the inward commitment of the 'heart'.

Israel has no excuse

Heb 11:6 But they will not ask his help unless they believe in him,[f] and they will not 14
Ac 8:31 believe in him unless they have heard of him, and they will not hear of him unless
they get a preacher, •and they will never have a preacher unless one is sent, but 15
Is 52:7 as scripture says: *The footsteps of those who bring good news is a welcome sound.*[g]
1:5+ Is 53:1 Not everyone, of course, listens to the Good News. As Isaiah says: *Lord, how many* 16
believed what we proclaimed? •So faith comes from what is preached, and what is 17
preached comes from the word of Christ.[h]

Mt 24:14+ Let me put the question: is it possible that they did not hear? Indeed they 18
Ps 19:4 did; in the words of the psalm, *their voice*[i] *has gone out through all the earth, and*
their message to the ends of the world. •A second question: is it possible that Israel 19
11:1,12 Dt 32:21 did not understand? Moses answered this long ago: *I will make you jealous of*
people who are not even a nation; I will make you angry with an irreligious people.[j]
Is 65:1 Isaiah said more clearly: *I have been found by those who did not seek me, and have* 20
9:30 *revealed myself to those who did not consult me;* •and referring to Israel he goes 21
Is 65:2 on: *Each day I stretched out my hand to a disobedient and rebellious people.*[k]

The remnant of Israel

10:19 Ps 94:14 2 Co 11:21+ **11** Let me put a further question then:[a] is it possible that *God has rejected his* 1
people? Of course not. I, an Israelite, descended from Abraham through
the tribe of Benjamin, •could never agree that God had rejected his people, the 2
people he chose specially long ago. Do you remember what scripture says of
1 K 19:10,14 Elijah—how he complained to God about Israel's behaviour? •*Lord, they have* 3
killed your prophets and broken down your altars. I, and I only, remain, and they
1 K 19:18 *want to kill me.* •What did God say to that? *I have kept for myself seven* 4
thousand men who have not bent the knee to Baal. •Today the same thing 5
Is 4:3+ 9:12-17 has happened: there is a remnant, chosen by grace. •By grace, you notice, nothing 6
therefore to do with good deeds, or grace would not be grace at all!

9:30-31 2 Co 3:15 What follows? It was not Israel as a whole that found what it was seeking, 7
but only the chosen few. The rest were not allowed to see the truth; •as scripture 8
Dt 29:3 Is 29:10 says: *God has given them a sluggish spirit, unseeing eyes and inattentive ears, and*
Mt 13:13+ Ps 69:22f *they are still like that today.* •And David says: *May their own table*[b] *prove a trap* 9
for them, a snare and a pitfall—let that be their punishment; •*may their eyes be* 10
struck incurably blind, their backs bend for ever.

The Jews to be restored in the future

11:25,30 Mt 21:43 Ac 13:5+ Let me put another question then: have the Jews fallen for ever, or have they 11
just stumbled?[c] Obviously they have not fallen for ever: their fall, though, has
10:19 Mt 8:11f; 21:43 saved the pagans[d] in a way the Jews may now well emulate. •Think of the extent 12
to which the world, the pagan world, has benefited from their fall and defection—
then think how much more it will benefit from the conversion of them all. •Let 13
me tell you pagans[e] this: I have been sent to the pagans as their apostle, and I am
proud of being sent, •but the purpose of it is to make my own people envious 14
of you, and in this way save some of them. •Since their rejection meant the 15
reconciliation of the world, do you know what their admission will mean? Nothing
less than a resurrection from the dead![f]

The Jews are still the chosen people

A whole batch of bread is made holy if the first handful of dough is made 16
15:27 holy;[g] all the branches are holy if the root is holy. •No doubt some of the branches 17
Ep 2:11-22 have been cut off, and, like shoots of wild olive, you[h] have been grafted among[i]
the rest to share with them[j] the rich sap provided by the olive tree itself, •but still, 18
5:2+;3:27+ 1 Co 1:31 even if you think yourself superior to the other branches, remember that you do
not support the root; it is the root that supports you. •You will say, 'Those 19
branches were cut off on purpose to let me be grafted in!' True, •they were cut off, 20
but through their unbelief; if you still hold firm, it is only thanks to your faith.

21 Rather than making you proud, that should make you afraid. •God did not Jr 49:12 Lk 23:31
22 spare the natural branches, and he is not likely to spare you.[k] •Do not forget that God can be severe as well as kind: he is severe to those who fell, and he is kind to you, but only for as long as he chooses to be, otherwise you will find
23 yourself cut off too, •and the Jews, if they give up their unbelief, grafted back in
24 your place. God is perfectly able to graft them back again; •after all, if you were cut from your natural wild olive to be grafted unnaturally on to a cultivated olive, it will be much easier for them, the natural branches, to be grafted back on the tree they came from.

The conversion of the Jews

25 There is a hidden reason for all this, brothers, of which I do not want you 16:25+
to be ignorant, in case you think you know more than you do. One section of Israel has become blind, but this will last only until the whole pagan world has 11:11+
26 entered,[l] •and then after this the rest of Israel will be saved as well. As scripture says:[m] *The liberator will come from Zion, he will banish godlessness from Jacob.* Is 59:20-21
27 *And this is the covenant I will make with them when I take their sins away.* Is 27:9
28 The Jews are enemies of God only with regard to the Good News, and enemies only for your sake; but as the chosen people, they are still loved by God, 9:6
29 loved for the sake of their ancestors. •God never takes back his gifts or revokes Nb 23:19 1 S 15:29 Is 54:10
his choice.
30 Just as you changed from being disobedient to God, and now enjoy mercy
31 because of their disobedience, •so those who are disobedient now—and only 11:11
32 because of the mercy shown to you—will also enjoy mercy eventually. •God has Ezk 18:23 Ga 3:22 *3:9; 5:20*
imprisoned all men in their own disobedience only to show mercy to all mankind.

A hymn to God's mercy and wisdom

33 How rich are the depths of God—how deep his wisdom and knowledge— Jdt 8:14 Jb 11:6 Ps 139:6, 17-18
and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods!
34 *Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor?* •*Who* *Is 40:13* 1 Co 2:11
35

f. The argument, supported by scripture, is clear: if Israel as a people refuses to invoke the name of the Lord, it is because she has been blind to the light that was offered.

g. Lit. 'How beautiful the feet of those who bring good news!'

h. Var. 'word of God'.

i. Of those who preach the gospel.

j. This allusion to Israel's jealousy prepares the way for 11:11,14.

k. In the Hebr. both texts (vv. 20 and 21) refer to the Jewish people, but in the first of these the prophet speaks of Israel 'not invoking the name of Yahweh' and therefore no better than the pagans. Paul's application of v. 20 to the pagans *(ethne)* is the more easily made in that the Greek version uses *ethnos* ('nation') in Is 65:1, and not *laos* (i.e. Israel, the 'people' of God) as in Is 65:2.

11 a. This phrase, used in 10:18,19 to introduce a denunciation of Israel, now prefaces an announcement of its salvation (so also in v. 11). Israel, though unbelieving, 10:21, is still a chosen people, 11:2. The 'remnant', Is 4:3+ its temporary representative, is the pledge of future restoration.

b. This psalm quotation describes the punishment of those who, because they themselves were sated, would not understand the just man's sufferings or his thirst. There may be a reference (as in the Targum) to sacrificial meals; if so, the prophecy is fulfilled to the letter: the Jews are incapable of acknowledging a suffering Messiah precisely because they are so attached to their formal worship.

c. Lit. 'have they stumbled so as to fall (without hope of rising)?'

d. The present unbelief of the Jews is only a false step which God has permitted with a view to the conversion of the pagans, 9:22; 11:12,19,25,30, and ultimately of the Jews themselves: for their own good God will make them 'jealous', 10:19, of the pagans.

e. I.e. the converts to Christianity from paganism. Thus even as apostle of the gentiles Paul is working for the salvation of his own people (lit. his 'flesh').

f. This sentence has been variously interpreted. The meaning seems to be that if a comparison may be drawn between the conversion of the pagans and 'the reconciliation of the world' (the first stage in the redemptive plan), the conversion of Israel will be such a favour from God that it could be compared only with the final resurrection (the second stage). If this is true, Paul is thinking of the general resurrection at the end of time; but he does not say that this is to take place immediately after Israel's conversion. On the other hand some translate 'life from those who were dead'.

g. Even the unbelieving Israelites still belong to the Chosen People and to some degree share its sacred character, just as the first handful of dough (lit. 'the dough offered as first-fruits') makes the whole offering sacred. Nb 15:19-21.

h. The pagan who is now a Christian.

i. Or 'in place of'.

j. Add. 'the root and'.

k. Lit. 'perhaps he will not spare you'; var. 'he will not spare you'.

l. Paul is still speaking of peoples, not of individuals: the Jews *en masse*, and the pagan world as a whole.

m. The O.T. prophesied that as a result of the Messiah's coming Israel would be cleansed of all her sins. Paul teaches (calling it, lit., a 'mystery', v. 25) that this prophecy, partially fulfilled already in the conversion of the pagans, implies the conversion of the Jewish people also.

Jb 41:3 / *1 Co 8:6* / Col 1:16-17 / Heb 2:10 *could ever give him anything or lend him anything?* •All that exists comes from him; 36
all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.

EXHORTATION

Spiritual worship

1 Th 4:1 / 1:9+ / 8:14-16, 26-27 / Ep 4:23
12 Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way 1
that is worthy of thinking beings,[a] by offering your living bodies as a holy
sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. •Do not model yourselves on the behaviour 2
of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new
mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good,
what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

Humility and charity

In the light of the grace I have received I want to urge each one among you 3
Ph 2:3 not to exaggerate his real importance. Each of you must judge himself soberly by
1 Co 12:9; 13:2 the standard of the faith[b] God has given him. •Just as each of our bodies has 4
several parts and each part has a separate function, •so all of us, in union with 5
1 Co 12:12+ Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other.[c] •Our gifts 6
Ac 11:27+ / 1 Co 12:8-10, 28-30 / Ep 4:7-11 / 1 P 4:10 differ according to the grace given us. If your gift is prophecy, then use it as your
faith suggests; •if administration, then use it for administration; if teaching, 7
then use it for teaching. •Let the preachers deliver sermons, the almsgivers give 8
Tt 1:5+ freely, the officials be diligent, and those who do works of mercy do them
cheerfully.

1 Co 12:4 / 1 P 1:22 / *Jn 13:34* / Ph 2:3 / *1 Co 13:13+*
Do not let your love be a pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil. •Love 9 10
each other as much as brothers should, and have a profound respect for each
other.[d] •Work for the Lord[e] with untiring effort and with great earnestness of 11
Mk 1:14; 6:4 / Col 4:2 / *Ac 9:13+* spirit. •If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials 12
come; and keep on praying. •If any of the saints are in need you must share with 13
them; and you should make hospitality your special care.

Mt 5:38-48+ **Charity to everyone, including enemies**[f]

1 Co 12:26 / Si 7:34 / Pr 3:7
Bless those who persecute you: never curse them, bless them. •Rejoice with 14 15
those who rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow. •Treat everyone with equal 16
kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor. Do not
1 Th 5:15 / *Pr 20:22* / *Pr 3:4* LXX / 2 Co 8:21 / *1 Co 6:6-7* / *Lv 19:18* allow yourself to become self-satisfied. •Never repay evil with evil but let everyone 17
see that you are interested only in the highest ideals. •Do all you can to live at 18
peace with everyone. •Never try to get revenge; leave that, my friends, to God's 19
Dt 32:35 / Pr 25:21-22+ anger.[g] As scripture says: *Vengeance is mine—I will pay them back*, the Lord
promises. •But there is more: *If your enemy is hungry, you should give him food,* 20
and if he is thirsty, let him drink. Thus you heap red-hot coals on his head. •Resist 21
evil and conquer it with good.

Submission to civil authority[a]

1 Tm 2:1-2 / Tt 3:1 / 1 P 2:13-15 / *Pr 8:15* / Jr 27:6; 13:2
13 You must all obey the governing authorities. Since all government comes 1
from God, the civil authorities were appointed by God, •and so anyone who 2
resists authority is rebelling against God's decision, and such an act is bound
to be punished. •Good behaviour is not afraid of magistrates; only criminals 3
have anything to fear. If you want to live without being afraid of authority, you
must live honestly and authority may even honour you. •The state is there to 4
serve God for your benefit. If you break the law, however, you may well have
fear: the bearing of the sword has its significance. The authorities are there to
serve God: they carry out God's revenge by punishing wrongdoers. •You must 5
obey, therefore, not only because you are afraid of being punished,[b] but also
for conscience' sake. •This is also the reason why you must pay taxes, since all 6

government officials are God's officers. They serve God by collecting taxes.
7 Pay every government official what he has a right to ask—whether it be direct tax or indirect, fear or honour. Mt 22:21p

Love and law

Mt 22:34-40
Jn 13:34

8 Avoid getting into debt, except the debt of mutual love. If you love your fellow Col 3:14
9 men you have carried out your obligations.[c] •All the commandments: *You shall* Ex 20:13-17
Dt 5:17-21
not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal,[d] *you shall not covet,*
and so on, are summed up in this single command: *You must love your neighbour*[e] Lv 19:18
Ga 5:14
10 *as yourself.* •Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why *1 Co 13:4-7*
it is the answer to every one of the commandments.[f]

Children of the light

1 Th 5:4-8

11 Besides, you know 'the time' has come:[g] you must wake up now: our salvation 1 Co 7:26, 29-31
12 is even nearer than it was when we were converted. •The night is almost over, it Ep 5:8-16
Col 4:5
will be daylight soon—let us give up[h] all the things we prefer to do under cover 1 Jn 2:8
Jn 8:12+
13 of the dark; let us arm ourselves and appear in the light. •Let us live decently Ep 6:11+
as people do in the daytime: no drunken orgies, no promiscuity or licentiousness, 1:29+
14 and no wrangling or jealousy. •Let your armour be the Lord Jesus Christ; forget Ga 3:27
Ep 4:24
about satisfying your bodies with all their cravings.

Charity towards the scrupulous

1 Co 8; 10: 14-33

1 **14** If a person's faith is not strong enough,[a] welcome him all the same without 6:15+
2 starting an argument. •People range from those who believe they may eat 1 Th 5:14
any sort of meat to those whose faith is so weak they dare not eat anything
3 except vegetables. •Meat-eaters must not despise the scrupulous. On the other Col 2:16-21
hand, the scrupulous must not condemn those who feel free to eat anything they
4 choose, since God has welcomed them. •It is not for you to condemn someone Mt 7:1
Jm 4:12
else's servant: whether he stands or falls it is his own master's business; he will
5 stand, you may be sure, because the Lord has power to make him stand. •If
one man keeps certain days as holier than others, and another considers all days Col 2:16
6 to be equally holy, each must be left free to hold his own opinion. •The one who
observes special days does so in honour of the Lord. The one who eats meat also
does so in honour of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; but then the man
who abstains does that too in honour of the Lord, and so he also gives God thanks.

12 a. Or 'in a spiritual way', as opposed to the ritual sacrifices of Jews or pagans, cf. Ho 6:6. Cf. Rm 1:9+.
b. 'Faith' is used here to mean the spiritual gifts bestowed by God on the members of the Christian community to ensure its life and growth.
c. The sentence emphasises not so much the identification of Christians with Christ, 1 Co 12:27 as their dependence on one another.
d. Or 'outdo each other in mutual esteem'.
e. Lit. 'Serve the Lord'; var. 'Be ready when opportunity arises' (lit. 'Serve the time').
f. The perspective now, particularly from v. 17 onwards, embraces all mankind.
g. Lit. 'give place... to anger', presumably the anger of God waiting to punish sin.

13 a. Paul here enunciates the principle that all authority, supposing it lawful and for the common good, derives from God. Hence the Christian religion, like its morality, 12:1, enters into civil life also, 13:1-7. Paul does not contradict this even after the first persecutions.
b. Lit. 'not only on account of anger'.
c. Lit. 'fulfilled the law'—apparently law in general, not only the Mosaic Law.
d. Add. (Vulg.) 'you shall not bear false witness'.
e. In Lv the 'neighbour' was a fellow countryman, here it is any member of the human family which is made one in Christ, Ga 3:28; Mt 25:40.
f. Lit. 'that is why love is the law in all its fulness'.
g. The thought is a fundamental one in Paul's moral teaching. The 'time' *(kairos)* is apparently the eschatological era, called in the Bible the 'latter days', introduced by Christ's death and resurrection and coextensive with the age of the Church on earth, the age of salvation, 2 Co 6:2+. It is opposed to the era that preceded it by a difference not so much of time as of nature. The Christian, henceforward a 'child of the day', emancipated from the wicked world, Ga 1:4, and from the empire of darkness, belongs to the kingdom of God and of his Son, Col 1:13; he is already a citizen of heaven, Ph 3:20. This entirely new status dominates the whole moral outlook, cf. 6:3f.
h. Lit. 'let us divest ourselves of'; var. 'let us cast away'.

14 a. Christians not sufficiently instructed in the faith and therefore without the firm convictions that would give them a sure conscience, vv. 2,5,22. These considered themselves bound to observe certain days, v. 5, and to abstain from meat or from wine, vv. 2,21, perhaps as a permanent obligation, v. 21. Such ascetical practices were familiar to the pagan world (the Pythagoreans) and the Jewish (the Essenes, John the Baptist). Paul lays down the same general rule as in the similar case of 1 Co 8; 10:14-33: each must act 'for the Lord' as his conscience tells him, vv. 5-6, provided it is not a doubtful conscience, v. 23; but above all, charity must govern the conduct of those 'strong' in the faith, vv. 1,15,19-21 and 15:1-13.

6:10-11 The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; •if we live, we live 7 8
for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong
Ac 10:42 2 Co 5:15 to the Lord. •This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that 9
he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. •This is also why you should 10
never pass judgement on a brother or treat him with contempt, as some of you
2:6+ 2 Co 5:10 have done. We shall all have to stand before the judgement seat of God;[b] •as 11
Is 45:23 Ph 2:10-11 Ga 6:5 scripture says: *By my life—it is the Lord who speaks—every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall praise God.* •It is to God, therefore, that each of us 12
must give an account of himself.

Far from passing judgement on each other, therefore, you should make up 13
your mind never to be the cause of your brother tripping or falling. •Now I am 14
Mt 15:1-20p Ac 10:15 1 Tm 4:4 perfectly well aware, of course, and I speak for the Lord Jesus, that no food is
unclean in itself; however, if someone thinks that a particular food is unclean,
1 Co 8:10 then it is unclean for him. •And indeed[c] if your attitude to food is upsetting your 15
1 Co 13:1+ brother,[d] then you are hardly being guided by charity. You are certainly not free
to eat what you like if that means the downfall of someone for whom Christ died.

1 Co 8:8 In short, you must not compromise your privilege,[e] •because the kingdom 16 17
of God does not mean eating or drinking this or that, it means righteousness and
Ga 5:22 1 Th 1:6 peace and joy brought by the Holy Spirit. •If you serve Christ in this way you 18
12:17-18 will please God and be respected by men. •So let us adopt any custom that leads 19
to peace and our mutual improvement; •do not wreck God's work[f] over a 20
Tt 1:15 question of food. Of course all food is clean, but it becomes evil if by eating it
1 Co 8:13; 10:24 1 Tm 4:4 you make somebody else fall away.[g] •In such cases the best course is to abstain 21
from meat and wine and anything else that would make your brother trip or
fall or weaken in any way.

Hold on to your own belief,[h] as between yourself and God[i]—and consider 22
the man fortunate who can make his decision without going against his conscience.
1 Co 8:7 But anybody who eats in a state of doubt is condemned, because he is not in good 23
faith;[j] and every act done in bad faith is a sin.

1 Co 9:22 Ga 6:2 1 Co 10-33; 13:5 14:19 1 Co 8:1 Ps 69:9 15 We who are strong have a duty to put up with the qualms of the weak 1
without thinking of ourselves. •Each of us should think of his neighbours and 2
help them to become stronger Christians. •Christ did not think of himself: the words 3
of scripture—*the insults of those who insult you fall on me*—apply to him. •And 4
1 Co 10:6+ 2 Tm 3:16 1 M 12:9 2 M 15:9 indeed everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach
us something about hope from the examples scripture gives of how people who
did not give up were helped by God. •And may he who helps us when we refuse 5
to give up, help you all to be tolerant with each other,[a] following the example
Ph 2:2f of Christ Jesus, •so that united in mind and voice you may give glory to the God 6
and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

An appeal for unity

It can only be to God's glory, then, for you to treat each other in the same 7
Mt 15:24 Ac 3:25-26 1 Co 8:7 friendly way as Christ treated you. •The reason Christ became the servant of 8
circumcised Jews was not only so that God could faithfully carry out the promises
Ex 34:6 Ac 15:14-15 Ps 18:50 made to the patriarchs, •it was also to get the pagans to give glory to God for 9
his mercy,[b] as scripture says in one place: *For this I shall praise you among the*
Dt 32:43 LXX Ps 117:1 *pagans and sing to your name.* •And in another place: *Rejoice, pagans, with his* 10
people, •and in a third place: *Let all the pagans praise the Lord, let all the peoples* 11
Is 11:10; 11:1 Rv 5:5 *sing his praises.* •Isaiah too has this to say: *The root of Jesse will appear, rising* 12
up to rule the pagans, and in him the pagans will put their hope.

May the God of hope bring you such joy and peace in your faith that the 13
power of the Holy Spirit will remove all bounds to hope.[c]

EPILOGUE

Paul's ministry

14 It is not because I have any doubts about you, my brothers; on the contrary
I am quite certain that you are full of good intentions, perfectly well instructed
15 and able to advise each other. •The reason why I have written to you,[a] and put
some things rather strongly, is to refresh your memories, since God has given me
16 this special position. •He has appointed me as a priest of Jesus Christ, and I am
to carry out my priestly duty[c] by bringing the Good News from God to the pagans, 1:9-10
and so make them acceptable as an offering, made holy by the Holy Spirit.
17 I think I have some reason to be proud of what I, in union with Christ Jesus, 5:2+ Ga 2:7
18 have been able to do for God. •What I am presuming to speak of, of course, is
only what Christ himself has done to win the allegiance of the pagans, using 1:5+
19 what I have said and done •by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of Ac 1:8+ 2 Co 12:12+
the Holy Spirit. Thus, all the way along, from Jerusalem to Illyricum,[f] I have
20 preached Christ's Good News to the utmost of my capacity. •I have always, Col 1:25
however, made it an unbroken rule never to preach where Christ's name has 2 Co 10:15-16
already been heard. The reason for that was that I had no wish to build on other *1 Co 3:10f*
21 men's foundations; •on the contrary, my chief concern has been to fulfil the
text: *Those who have never been told about him will see him, and those who have* Is 52:15
never heard about him will understand.

Paul's plans

22 That is the reason why I have been kept from visiting you so long,[g] •though 1:10f Ac 19:21-22
23 for many years I have been longing to pay you a visit. Now, however, having
24 no more work to do here,[h] •I hope to see you on my way to Spain and, after
enjoying a little of your company, to complete the rest of the journey with your
25 good wishes. •First, however, I must take a present of money to the saints in Ac 19:21
26 Jerusalem, •since Macedonia and Achaia have decided to send a generous 12:13 1 Co 16:1+
27 contribution to the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. •A generous contribution
as it should be, since it is really repaying a debt: the pagans who share the spiritual 11:17f 1 Co 9:11
possessions of these poor people have a duty to help them with temporal posses- Ga 6:6
28 sions. •So when I have done this and officially handed over[i] what has been raised,
29 I shall set out for Spain and visit you on the way. •I know that when I reach you
I shall arrive with rich blessings from Christ.
30 But I beg you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit, 2 Co 1:11 Ep 6:19 Col 4:3,12
31 to help me through my dangers by praying to God for me.[j] •Pray that I may 1 Th 5:25

b. Who alone knows the secrets of the heart, cf. 2:16; 1 Co 4:3f.

c. 'And indeed'; var. 'But' or 'Now'.

d. By his taking bad example, or by being scandalised at an action his conscience does not approve.

e. Probably the privilege of Christian liberty of which the 'strong' make use but which may be brought into disrepute, cf. 3:8+.

f. Either the 'weak' man himself or the Christian community, cf. 1 Co 3:9.

g. Lit. 'by eating it with a cause of stumbling' cf. v. 13; that is, according to the context (v. 21 deals with the duties of the 'strong'), while giving 'scandal'. Others interpret while following bad example, cf. v. 14.

h. Var. 'Have you a belief? Hold on to it.'

i. Because it is true and seen as such by God; but charity has a higher claim.

j. 'good faith', lit. 'faith', but here in the sense of right conscience, cf. 14:1+. Other translations 'since he does not act from conviction', or, 'since his action is not prompted by a conviction of faith'.

15 a. I.e. to be thoughtful for each other. Others interpret 'to live in good understanding of each other', 'to live in agreement with each other'.

b. Christ welcomed the pagans, and thus gave glory to God. But by confining his work while on earth to the evangelisation of Israel, cf. Mt 15:24, Christ gave evidence of God's loyalty to his promise, the converted pagans being living evidence rather of God's mercy. Let these in their turn be merciful to their brothers in the faith, cf. 12:1.

c. This blessing resumes the central themes of the doctrinal section of the epistle.

d. Paul once again justifies himself for writing to a church he did not found, cf. 1:5-6,13.

e. The apostolate, even more than the ordinary Christian life, 12:1; cf. Ph 2:12, is a liturgical function, cf. 1:9, the apostle—or rather, through him, Christ, v. 18—makes an offering of men to God.

f. The two extremes of Paul's missionary journeys at the time of writing; whether he had actually entered Illyricum is disputed.

g. Var. 'so many times'.

h. Not that all the pagans there have been converted, but that Paul's task is to lay foundations; he leaves his disciples to build on them, cf. 1 Co 3:6,10; Col 1:7, etc.

i. Lit. 'sealed'.

j. Cf. 2 Co 1:11; Ep 6:19; Col 4:3; 1 Th 5:25; 2 Th 3:1; Heb 13:18.

Ac 20:3,23; 21:10f, 17f,27f escape the unbelievers in Judaea, and that the aid I carry to Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints. 32 •Then, if God wills, I shall be feeling very happy when I come to enjoy a period of rest among you. 33 •May the God of peace be with you all! Amen.

Greetings and good wishes

Ac 18:18 16 [a]I commend to you our sister Phoebe,[b] a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae. 1 •Give her, in union with the Lord, a welcome worthy of saints, 2 and help her with anything she needs: she has looked after a great many people, myself included.

Ac 18:2f,26 1 Co 16:19 2 Tm 4:19 My greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 3 •who 4 risked death to save my life:[c] I am not the only one to owe them a debt 1 Co 16:19 of gratitude, all the churches among the pagans do as well. 5 •My greetings also Col 4:15 Phm 2 to the church that meets at their house.

1 Co 16:15 Greetings to my friend Epaenetus, the first of Asia's gifts to Christ;[d] greetings 6 to Mary who worked so hard for you; 7 •to those outstanding apostles Andronicus and Junias, my compatriots and fellow prisoners[e] who became Christians before me; 8 •to Ampliatus, my friend in the Lord; 9 •to Urban, my fellow worker in Christ; to my friend Stachys; 10 •to Apelles who has gone through so much for Christ; to everyone who belongs to the household of Aristobulus; 11 •to my compatriot Herodion; to those in the household of Narcissus who belong to the Lord; 12 •to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who work hard for the Lord; to my friend Persis who has done so much for the Lord; 13 •to Rufus,[f] a chosen servant of the Lord, and to his mother who has been a mother to me too. 14 •Greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and all the brothers who are with them; 15 •to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all Ac 20:37 2 Co 13:12+ the saints who are with them. 16 •Greet each other with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings.[g]

Ga 6:11 ### A warning and first postscript

I implore you, brothers, be on your guard against anybody who encourages 17 6:17 Mt 18:17 trouble or puts difficulties in the way of the doctrine you have been taught. Avoid them.[h] 18 •People like that are not slaves of Jesus Christ, they are slaves of their Ph 3:19 own appetites, confusing the simple-minded with their pious and persuasive 1:5+ arguments. 19 •Your fidelity to Christ, anyway, is famous everywhere, and that 1:8 makes me very happy about you. I only hope that you are also wise in what is *Mt 10:16* 1 Co 14:20 good, and innocent of what is bad. 20 •The God of peace will soon crush Satan *Gn 3:15* beneath your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.[i]

Last greetings and second postscript

Ac 16:1+ Timothy, who is working with me, sends his greetings; so do my compatriots, 21 Ac 13:1; 17: 5; 20:4 Jason and Sosipater. 22 •I, Tertius, who wrote out this letter, greet you in the Lord. 1 Co 1:14 Greetings from Gaius, who is entertaining me and from the whole church that 23 meets in his house. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends his greetings; so does our brother Quartus.

Jude 25 ### Doxology[j]

11:25 1 Co 2:7 Ep 1:9; 3:3 Col 1:26 1 Tm 3:9 Glory to him who is able to give you the strength[k] to live according to the 25 Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery[l] kept secret for endless ages, 26 •but now so clear that it must be broadcast 1:5 Ac 15:14 to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things Ga 1:5 Ep 3:21 Ph 4:20 1 Tm 1:17 to be. 27 •He alone is wisdom;[m] give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.[n]

16 a. This chapter may not have formed part of the original epistle, cf. Introduction to the Letters of St Paul.

b. Probably the bearer of the letter.

c. Presumably in Ephesus, either at the time of the riot described in Ac 19:23f, or during Paul's imprisonment there (cf. v. 7); see Introduction to the Letters of St Paul.

d. Lit. 'the first-fruits of Asia for Christ'. This probably means the first convert in the province of Asia.

e. Paul had been imprisoned several times already, cf. 2 Co 11:23. Andronicus and Junias (var. Julias) are apostles in the wide sense, Rm 1:1+.

f. Possibly the son of Simon of Cyrene, Mk 15:21.

g. This greeting, not found elsewhere in Paul's letters, shows his veneration for the church in Rome.

h. The curt warning is reminiscent of Ga 6:12-17. It probably refers to judaising preachers, cf. Ga 5:7-12 and particularly Ph 3:18-19.

i. Omit 'The grace...' This formula (add. 'all') is placed by some authorities (Vulg.) after v 23 or v. 27.

j. Most authorities place this doxology here, but in some it appears at the end of ch. 15 or 14; others omit. A solemn presentation, cf. Ep 3:20; Jude 24-25, of the main points of the letter.

k. Firmly grounded in doctrine and strong in Christian practice. Cf. 1:11; 1 Th 3:2,13; 2 Th 2:17; 3:3; 1 Co 1:8; 2 Co 1:21; Col 2:7.

l. The idea of a 'mystery' of wisdom, v. 27; 1 Co 2:7; Ep 3:10; Col 2:2-3, long hidden in God and now revealed, v. 25; 1 Co 2:7,10; Ep 3:5,9f; Col 1:26, is borrowed by Paul from Jewish apocalypse, Dn 2:18-19+, but he enriches the content of the term by applying it to the climax of the history of salvation: the saving cross of Christ, 1 Co 2:8; the call of the pagans, v. 26; Rm 11:25; Col 1:26-27; Ep 3:6, to this salvation preached by Paul, v. 25; Col 1:23; 4:3; Ep 3:3-12; 6:19, and finally the restoration of all things in Christ as their one head, Ep 1:9-10. See also 1 Co 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Ep 5:32; 2 Th 2:7; 1 Tm 3:9,16; 2 Tm 1:9-10; Mt 13:11p+; Rv 1:20; 10:7; 17:5,7.

m. Cf. 11:33-36; 1 Co 1:24; 2:7; Ep 3:10; Col 2:3; Rv 7:12.

n. Cf. Ga 1:5; Ep 3:21; Ph 4:20; 1 Tm 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tm 4:18; Heb 13:21; 1 P 4:11; 2 P 3:18; Jude 25; Rv 1:6.

1 CORINTHIANS

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

INTRODUCTION

Rm 1:1+ **Address and greetings. Thanksgiving**

1 I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle, together with brother Sosthenes, 1
10:32 Ac 5:11+ Ac 9:13+; 20:28 Ac 2:21+ send greetings •to the church of God[a] in Corinth, to the holy people of Jesus 2
Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who
pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours. •May God 3
our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through 4
2 Co 8:7,9 Jesus Christ. •I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especial- 5
12:8+ ly in your teachers and preachers; •the witness to Christ[b] has indeed been strong 6
2 Th 1:7+ among you •so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while 7
3:13; 5:5 2 Co 1:14 Ph 1:6; 2:16 Col 1:22 10:13 2 Co 1:18 Ph 3:10f 1 Jn 1:3 you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed;[c] •and he will keep you 8
steady and without blame[d] until the last day, the day[e] of our Lord Jesus Christ,
because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God 9
is faithful.[f]

I. DIVISIONS AND SCANDALS

A. FACTIONS IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

Dissensions among the faithful

All the same, I do appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus 10
Rm 15:5 Ph 2:2f Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing
among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. •From what 11
Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers, it is clear that there are
3:4 2 Co 10:7 3:22-23 Jn 1:42 serious differences among you. •What I mean are all these slogans that you have, 12
like: 'I am for Paul', 'I am for Apollos', 'I am for Cephas',[g] 'I am for Christ'.[h]
Ac 18:24+ Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you 13
Ep 4:5 baptised in the name of Paul? •I am thankful that I never baptised any of you 14
Ac 18:8 Rm 16:23 after Crispus and Gaius •so none of you can say he was baptised in my name. 15
16:15-17 Ac 16:15+ Then there was the family of Stephanas, of course, that I baptised too, but no one 16
else as far as I can remember.

The true wisdom and the false

3:18 2 Co 1:12 For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and 17
not to preach that in the terms of philosophy[i] in which the crucifixion of Christ
2 Co 2:16 cannot be expressed. •The language of the cross may be illogical to those who 18
Rm 1:16 are not on the way to salvation, but those of us who are on the way see it as God's
Is 29:14 Ps 33:10 power to save. •As scripture says: *I shall destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring* 19
Is 33:18 LXX *to nothing all the learning of the learned.* •*Where are the philosophers now? Where* 20

are the scribes? Where are any of our thinkers today? Do you see now how God Is 19:12
21 has shown up the foolishness of human wisdom? •If it was God's wisdom that Rm 1:19-20
human wisdom should not know God, it was because God wanted to save
those who have faith through the foolishness of the message that we preach.
22 23 And so, while the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, •here Mt 12:38p Jn 2:18+
are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot Ac 17:19-23 *Jn 12:34*
24 get over, to the pagans madness, •but to those who have been called, whether
25 they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God. •For Jn 6:35+
God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger 2 Co 12:10; 13:14
than human strength.

26 Take yourselves for instance, brothers, at the time when you were called:
how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word,[j] how many were Dt 7:7 Si 10:19f
27 influential people, or came from noble families? •No, it was to shame the wise Rm 7:5 *Jg 7:2*
that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong 1 S 16:7 2 Co 4:7
28 that he chose what is weak by human reckoning; •those whom the world thinks Jm 2:5
common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen—those who are
29 nothing at all to show up those who are everything. •The human race has nothing Dt 8:17-18+ Rm 3:27
30 to boast about to God, •but you, God has made members of Christ Jesus and by Ep 2:9
God's doing he has become our wisdom, and our virtue, and our holiness, and
31 our freedom. •As scripture says: *if anyone wants to boast, let him boast about* Jr 9:22-23 Si 10:28 2 Co 10:17
the Lord.

1 2 As for me, brothers, when I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory Rm 1:16 2 Co 1:12; 11:6
2 or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed.[a] •During
my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and
3 only about him as the crucified Christ. •Far from relying on any power of my Ga 3:1; 6:14
4 own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling'[b] •and in my speeches and Ph 2:12
the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philo-
5 sophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. •And I did this so that Ac 1:8+ 2 Co 12:12 1 Th 1:5
your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.

6 But still we have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity:[c] not Col 1:28 Heb 5:14
a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age,[d] which

1 a. One of Paul's favourite expressions: 10:32; 11:16.22; 15:9; 2 Co 1:1; Ga 1:13; 1 Th 2:14; 2 Th 1:4; 1 Tm 3:5,15; cf. also Ac 20:28. Cf. 'the churches of Christ', Rm 16:16. Cf. Mt 16:18+; Ac 5:11+.

b. I.e. what is said by a witness testifying to Christ. 'among you' or 'in you'.

c. When the hidden plans of God are to be made known, Rm 16:25+, Christ will reveal himself at the end of time, the time of his *parousia*, 1 Co 15:23+, and his Appearing, 1 Tm 6:14+; cf. Lk 17:30; 2 Th 1:7; Heb 9:28; 1 P 1:5,7,13; 4:13. Before this, the Man of Sin will have 'revealed' himself, only to be destroyed by Christ, 2 Th 2:3-8.

d. Cf. Ph 1:10; 2:15f; Ep 1:4; Col 1:22; 1 Th 3:13; 5:23; Jude 24.

e. This 'day of the Lord', 5:5; 2 Co 1:14; 1 Th 5:2; 2 Th 2:2; cf. 2 P 3:10, called also the 'day of Christ', Ph 1:6,10; 2:16, or simply the 'day', 1 Co 3:13; 1 Th 5:4; cf. Heb 10:25, or 'that day', 2 Th 1:10; 2 Tm 1:12,18; 4:8; cf. Mt 7:22; 24:36; Lk 10:12; 21:34, or 'the day of the Son of Man', Lk 17:24, cf. v. 26, or 'the day of God', 2 P 3:12, or 'the day of visitation', 1 P 2:12, or 'the great day', Jude 6; Rv 6:17; 16:14, or 'the last day', Jn 6:39,40,44,54; 11:24; 12:48, is the fulfilment in the eschatological era, ushered in by Christ, of the 'day of Yahweh' foretold by the prophets, Am 5:18+. The fulfilment begins with the first coming of Christ, Lk 17:20-24, and the punishment of Jerusalem, Mt 24:1+; and this final stage in the history of salvation, cf. Ac 1:7+, will be completed by the glorious second coming, 1 Co 1:7+, 15:23+; 1 Tm 6:14+, of the Sovereign Judge, Rm 2:6+; Jm 5:8-9. A cosmic upheaval and renewal will accompany it (cf. Am 8:9+), Mt 24:29p+; Heb 12:26f; 2 P 3:10-13; Rv 20:11; 21:1; cf. Mt 19:28; Rm 8:20-22. This day of light is coming, Rm 13:12; Heb 10:25; Jm 5:8; 1 P 4:7; cf. 1 Th 5:5,8, but exactly when is uncertain, 1 Th 5:1+, meanwhile we must prepare for it, 2 Co 6:2+.

f. Cf. 10:13; 2 Co 1:18; 1 Th 5:24; 2 Th 3:3; 2 Tm 2:13; Heb 10:23; 11:11.

g. Either because Cephas (Peter) had visited the church of Corinth, or because some members of that church paid special allegiance to Peter's authority, acknowledged in other churches.

h. Perhaps these attached themselves to the immediate witnesses of the risen Christ, cf. Ac 1:21f; 10:41, in preference to others, cf. 1 Co 9:1; 2 Co 5:16+; 11:5,23; 12:11; or else they acknowledged no human intermediary between themselves and Christ.

i. Lit. 'wisdom'. This human wisdom (here philosophical speculation and tricks of rhetoric) will be contrasted with the wisdom of God, v. 24 and 2:6f.

j. Lit. 'according to the flesh'. Paul is explaining God's purpose, but at the same time he sardonically reminds the Corinthians that they have no reason to be proud.

2 a. Lit. 'the testimony of God', i.e. to the message of Jesus. Var. 'the mystery of God'.

b. 'fear and trembling': a biblical cliché, cf. Jg 7:3; Ps 2:11; 55:5; Ezk 12:18; Mk 5:33; 1 Co 2:3; 2 Co 7:15; Ep 6:5; Ph 2:12.

c. The 'mature' or 'perfect' *(teleioi)* are not an exclusive group of initiates but those who have reached maturity in Christian life and thought. Cf. 14:20; Ph 3:15; Col 4:12; Heb 5:14.

d. Perhaps human rulers or governments; more probably, the evil powers or demons that control the world, cf. 1 Co 15:24-25; Ep 6:12. See also Lk 4:6 and Jn 12:31+; but the reference is perhaps to both, the latter using the former as their tools.

Rm 16:25+ are coming to their end. •The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our 7
mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages
Ep 3:10 began. •It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or 8
1 P 1:12
Ps 24:8 they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory;[e] •we teach what scripture calls:[f] 9
Is 64:3 *the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man,*
Jr 3:16 *all that God has prepared for those who love him.*

Dn 2:28 These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for 10
Jn 14:26+
2 Co 13:13+ the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God. •After all, 11
Jdt 8:14 the depths of a man can only be known by his own spirit, not by any other man,
Pr 20:27
Rm 11:33f and in the same way the depths of God can only be known by the Spirit of God.
Now instead of the spirit of the world, we have received the Spirit that comes 12
from God, to teach us to understand the gifts that he has given us. •Therefore 13
we teach, not in the way in which philosophy is taught, but in the way that the
15:44+ Spirit teaches us: we teach spiritual things spiritually.[g] •An unspiritual person[h] 14
Pr 28:5 is one who does not accept anything of the Spirit of God: he sees it all as nonsense;
Mt 16:23
Jn 10:26+ it is beyond his understanding because it can only be understood by means of the
15:44+ Spirit. •A spiritual man, on the other hand, is able to judge the value of everything, 15
Is 40:13 and his own value is not to be judged by other men.[i] •As scripture says: *Who* 16
Rm 11:34
Ws 9:13 *can know the mind of the Lord, so who can teach him?* But we are those who have
7:40 the mind of Christ.[j]

3 Brothers, I myself was unable to speak to you as people of the Spirit: I treated 1
1 Th 2:7 you as sensual men, still infants in Christ. •What I fed you with was milk, 2
Heb 5:12-14
1 P 2:2 not solid food, for you were not ready for it; and indeed, you are still[a] not ready
Sl 37:28
Ga 5:19-20 for it •since you are still unspiritual. Isn't that obvious from all the jealousy 3
Jm 3:16 and wrangling[b] that there is among you, from the way that you go on behaving
1:12 like ordinary people? •What could be more unspiritual than your slogans, 'I am 4
for Paul' and 'I am for Apollos'?

The place of the Christian preacher

After all, what is Apollos and what is Paul? They are servants who brought 5
the faith to you. Even the different ways in which they brought it were assigned
2 Tm 2:6 to them by the Lord. •I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but God 6
made things grow. •Neither the planter nor the waterer matters: only God, who 7
makes things grow. •It is all one who does the planting and who does the watering, 8
and each will duly be paid according to his share in the work. •We are fellow 9
Ep 2:20-22 workers with God;[c] you are God's farm, God's building.
1 P 2:5
Rm 15:20 By the grace God gave me, I succeeded as an architect and laid the foundations, 10
on which someone else is doing the building. Everyone doing the building must
Ps 118:22 work carefully. •For the foundation, nobody can lay any other than the one 11
Is 28:16
Ac 4:11-12 which has already been laid, that is Jesus Christ. •On this foundation you can 12
1 P 2:4 build in gold, silver and jewels, or in wood, grass and straw, •but whatever the 13
1:8+ material, the work of each builder is going to be clearly revealed when the day
Mt 3:11-12p comes. That day will begin with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's
1 P 1:7 work. •If his structure stands up to it, he will get his wages; •if it is burnt down, 14 15
Is 43:2 he will be the loser, and though he is saved himself, it will be as one who has gone
through fire.[d]

6:19 Didn't you realise that you were God's temple[e] and that the Spirit of God was 16
2 Co 6:16
Ep 2:20-22 living among you? •If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God 17
will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred;[f] and you are that temple.

Conclusions

1:17-25 Make no mistake about it: if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the 18
Pr 28:26 ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be
wise. •Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As scripture 19
Jb 5:13 says: *The Lord knows wise men's thoughts: he knows how useless they are;*
Ps 94:11 or again: *God is not convinced by the arguments of the wise.* •So there is 20 21

22 nothing to boast about in anything human: •Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, 1:12
23 life and death, the present and the future, are all your servants; •but you belong 6:19; 11:3
to Christ[o] and Christ belongs to God. Rm 8:10

1 4 People must think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the Lk 12:42-44
2 mysteries of God. •What is expected of stewards is that each one should be
3 found worthy of his trust. •Not that it makes the slightest difference to me
whether you, or indeed any human tribunal, find me worthy or not. I will not
4 even pass judgement on myself. •True, my conscience does not reproach me at
all, but that does not prove that I am acquitted: the Lord alone is my judge. 2 Co 5:10-11
5 There must be no passing of premature judgement. Leave that until the Lord Mk 7:1
comes: he will light up all that is hidden in the dark and reveal the secret intentions Lk 12:2-3
of men's hearts. Then will be the time for each one to have whatever praise he Rm 2:16
deserves, from God. Jn 5:44

6 Now in everything I have said here, brothers, I have taken Apollos and
myself as an example (remember the maxim: 'Keep to what is written');[a] it is not
for you, so full of your own importance, to go taking sides for one man against
7 another. •In any case, brother, has anybody given you some special right? What
do you have that was not given to you? And if it was given, how can you boast Jn 3:27
8 as though it were not? •Is it that you have everything you want—that you are Ga 6:3
rich already, in possession of your kingdom, with us left outside? Indeed I wish *Rv 3:17*
9 you were really kings, and we could be kings with you! •But instead, it seems to
me, God has put us apostles at the end of his parade, with the men sentenced 2 Co 4:8-12; 6:4-10; 11:
to death; it is true—we have been put on show in front of the whole universe, 23-33
10 angels as well as men. •Here we are, fools for the sake of Christ, while you are 1 Tm 3:10-11
the learned men in Christ; we have no power, but you are influential; you are
11 celebrities, we are nobodies. •To this day, we go without food and drink and 2 Co 11:27
12 clothes; we are beaten and have no homes; •we work for our living with our own Ac 18:3+
hands. When we are cursed, we answer with a blessing; when we are hounded,
13 we put up with it; •we are insulted and we answer politely. We are treated as Ps 116:10
the offal of the world, still to this day, the scum of the earth.

An appeal

14 I am saying all this not just to make you ashamed but to bring you, as my
15 dearest children, to your senses. •You might have thousands of guardians in
Christ, but not more than one father and it was I who begot you in Christ Jesus Ga 4:19
16 17 by preaching the Good News. •That is why I beg you to copy me •and why I have 1 Th 2:11 Phm 10 *2 Th 3:7+* *Ac 16:1+; 19:22*
sent you Timothy, my dear and faithful son in the Lord: he will remind you of the
way that I live in Christ, as I teach it everywhere in all the churches.

18 When it seemed that I was not coming to visit you, some of you became self-
19 important, •but I will be visiting you soon, the Lord willing, and then I shall
want to know not what these self-important people have to say, but what they
20 21 can do, •since the kingdom of God is not just words, it is power. •It is for you 2:4+
to decide: do I come with a stick in my hand or in a spirit of love and goodwill? 2 Co 10:2

e. The 'Glory' is the manifestation of Yahweh's power, Ex 24:16+, the incommunicable attribute of God. The title 'Lord of Glory' implies the same dignity for Jesus as that of Yahweh himself.

f. A free combination of Is 64:3 and Jr 3:16, or possibly a quotation from the *Apocalypse of Elijah*.

g. Lit. 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual'. Exact meaning obscure. Other possible renderings 'demonstrating for spiritual men how spiritual truths hold together'; 'spiritual truths being thus suited to spiritual men'; 'submitting spiritual truths to the judgement of men of the Spirit'.

h. *Psychikos:* man left to his own natural resources. Cf. the note on *soma psychikon* of 15:44.

i. A defensive remark: Paul, a 'spiritual' man, is not to be judged by the Corinthians who are 'sensual', 3:1-3.

j. Var. 'of the Lord'.

3 a. Om. 'still'.

b. Add. 'and dissension'.

c. Or 'fellow-workers in God's employment'.

d. This is not a direct reference to purgatory but several Doctors of the Church have taken it as a basis for that doctrine.

e. *Naos:* more precisely the innermost part of the Temple, the 'sanctuary' where God dwells.

f. I.e. consecrated and reserved to God: to lay hands on it is sacrilege.

g. Cf. 1:12; 6:19; 11:3; 2 Co 10:7; Rm 6:11+,15+; 8:9; Mk 9:41.

4 a. Obscure. Perhaps a citation of a proverb familiar to the Corinthian Jews; perhaps a gloss deprecating some insertion by a copyist.

B. INCEST IN CORINTH

Lv 18:8; 20-11 Dt 27:20
5 I have been told as an undoubted fact that one of you is living with his father's wife.[a] This is a case of sexual immorality among you that must be unparalleled even among pagans. •How can you be so proud of yourselves? You should
Lv 18:29 Dt 13:6 Col 2:5
be in mourning. A man who does a thing like that ought to have been expelled from the community. •Though I am far away in body, I am with you in spirit, and have already condemned the man who did this thing as if I were actually
Mt 18:20
present. •When you are assembled together in the name of the Lord Jesus,[b] and I am spiritually present with you, then with the power of our Lord Jesus
2 Th 3:14 1 Tm 1:20 1:8+
he is to be handed over to Satan so that his sensual body may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.[c]

The pride that you take in yourselves is hardly to your credit. You must know
Ga 5:9
how even a small amount of yeast is enough to leaven all the dough, •so get rid
Nb 5:3
of all the old yeast, and make yourselves into a completely new batch of bread,
Jn 1:29 1 P 1:19 Rv 5:5
unleavened as you are meant to be. Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed; let us celebrate the feast, then, by getting rid of all the old yeast of evil and wickedness, having only the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.[d]

2 Th 3:14
When I wrote in my letter to you[e] not to associate with people living immoral
2 Co 6:17 1 Jn 5:19
lives, •I was not meaning to include all the people in the world who are sexually immoral, any more than I meant to include all usurers and swindlers or idol-
Jn 17:15
worshippers. To do that, you would have to withdraw from the world altogether.
Mt 18:17 Rm 1:29+
What I wrote was that you should not associate with a brother Christian[f] who is leading an immoral life, or is a usurer, or idolatrous, or a slanderer, or a drunkard, or is dishonest; you should not even eat a meal with people like that. •It is
Col 4:5 1 Th 4:12 1 Tm 3:7
not my business to pass judgement on those outside.[g] Of those who are inside, you can surely be the judges. •But of those who are outside, God is the judge.
Dt 13:6
You must drive out this evil-doer from among you.

C. RECOURSE TO THE PAGAN COURTS

Ac 9:13+ *Ws 3:8* Dn 7:22.26 Mt 19:28 Rv 20:4 *Jude 5-6*
6 How dare one of your members take up a complaint against another in the lawcourts of the unjust[a] instead of before the saints? •As you know, it is the saints who are to 'judge the world';[b] and if the world is to be judged by you, how can you be unfit to judge trifling cases? •Since we are also to judge angels, it follows that we can judge matters of everyday life; •but when you have had cases of that kind, the people you appointed to try them were not even respected in the Church.[c] •You should be ashamed: is there really not one reliable man among you to settle differences between brothers •and so one brother brings a court case against another in front of unbelievers? •It is bad enough for you to have
Mt 5:38-42p Rm 12:17-19 1 Th 5:15
lawsuits at all against one another: oughtn't you to let yourselves be wronged, and let yourselves be cheated? •But you are doing the wronging and the cheating, and to your own brothers.

Ep 5:5 Rm 1:29+ 15:50 Jn 3:5 Ga 5:21 Ep 2:1-6 Tt 3:3-7 1 Jn 2:12
You know perfectly well that people who do wrong will not inherit the kingdom of God: people of immoral lives, idolaters, adulterers, catamites, sodomites, •thieves, usurers, drunkards, slanderers and swindlers will never inherit the kingdom of God.[d] •These are the sort of people some of you were once, but now you have been washed clean, and sanctified, and justified through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Spirit of our God.[e]

D. FORNICATION

10:23 Si 37:28 Rm 6:15+ *Gn 4:7*
'For me there are no forbidden things';[f] maybe, but not everything does good. I agree there are no forbidden things for me, but I am not going to let anything dominate me. •Food is only meant for the stomach, and the stomach for food;
Col 2:22
yes, and God is going to do away with both of them. But the body—this is not

14 meant for fornication;[g] it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. •God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise[h] us up too. 10:31 15:12f Rm 1:4+; 8:11+
15 You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ; do you think I can take parts of Christ's body and join them to the body 2:12+ *Rm 6:12-13*
16 of a prostitute? Never! •As you know, a man who goes with a prostitute is one
17 body with her, since *the two*, as it is said, *become one flesh*. •But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. Gn 2:24 Rm 8:9-10
18 Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the
19 body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. •Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. 3:16-17 Rm 5:5+ 1 Th 4:4-8
20 You are not your own property; •you have been bought and paid for.[i] That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.[j] *3:23; 7:23* Rm 3:24+; 6:15+ Ph 1:20

II. ANSWERS TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS

A. MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY[a] Ep 5:22-33+

1 7 Now for the questions about which you wrote. Yes, it is a good thing for Mt 19:12
2 a man not to touch a woman; •but since sex is always a danger, let each
3 man have his own wife and each woman her own husband. •The husband must give his wife what she has the right to expect, and so too the wife to the husband.
4 The wife has no rights over her own body; it is the husband who has them. In the
5 same way, the husband has no rights over his body; the wife has them. •Do not refuse each other except by mutual consent, and then only for an agreed time, to leave yourselves free for prayer; then come together again in case Satan should
6 take advantage of your weakness to tempt you. •This is a suggestion, not a rule:
7 I should like everyone to be like me, but everybody has his own particular gifts from God, one with a gift for one thing and another with a gift for the opposite.
8 There is something I want to add for the sake of widows and those who are
9 not married: it is a good thing for them to stay as they are, like me, •but if they cannot control the sexual urges, they should get married, since it is better to be 1 Tm 5:11-14+ married than to be tortured.
10 For the married I have something to say, and this is not from me but from Mt 5:32p; 19:9
11 the Lord: a wife must not leave her husband —•or if she does leave him, she must either remain unmarried or else make it up with her husband—nor must a husband send his wife away.

5 a. His mother-in-law; cf. Lv 18:8.
b. Var. 'of our Lord Jesus Christ'.
c. Not just excommunicated, or expelled from the community, v. 13, but consigned to Satan to be punished. The punishment, however, is intended to convert the man: his 'spirit', that is his soul, is to be saved. Cf. 11:30-32.
d. The Jews removed all yeast from their houses at Passover time, Ex 12:1+, and ate only unleavened bread ('azymes'). Christ crucified (our 'passover', i.e. our paschal lamb) is the one sacrifice for all, cf. Jn 19:36+. The Christian is united with the sacrificed and risen Christ in an unending Passover: he must therefore remove 'the old yeast', i.e. 'evil and wickedness', and use unleavened bread, i.e. 'sincerity and truth', instead.
e. The 'pre-canonical' letter, see Introduction to The Letters of St Paul.
f. Lit. 'a brother'.
g. Those who do not belong to the community, cf. Mk 4:11; Col 4:5; 1 Th 4:12; 1 Tm 3:7. The expression is of Jewish origin, cf. Si, prologue v. 5.
6 a. The pagan magistrates. Not that the Corinthian judges were more corrupt than others but they had not been 'justified' by God through faith in Christ. Hence Paul's play on words: how could they administer 'justice' for those who were 'justified', i.e. the 'saints', or members of the Christian community?
b. Side by side with Christ, the sovereign judge.
c. I.e. the pagan judges, cf. Mt 15:26+; 18:17. An alternative translation 'If therefore you have such everyday cases, set those to try them who are of no account whatever in the Church', that is to say, the least respected of the Christians. The invitation would be then sarcastic: the disputes are so trifling that the most ignorant could deal with them.
d. Cf. 15:50; Ga 5:21; Ep 5:5; Rv 21:8; 22:15.
e. Note the trinitarian formula, cf. 2 Co 13:13+.
f. Probably one of Paul's own sayings the meaning of which has been distorted by the libertines.
g. Against the libertines who maintained that fornication was as necessary for the body as food and drink.
h. Var. 'has raised'.
i. Lit. 'You have been bought for a price'.
j. Lit. 'Glorify (Vulg. adds 'and carry') God in your body'.
7 a. Not a formal treatise on marriage and virginity but a series of replies, probably in the same order as questions were put to Paul. Hence the repetitions and apparent contradictions. The main points are: 1. As a general rule, each should keep the state of life in which his call to the faith found him. 2. Virginity is a higher calling than marriage, and spiritually more profitable. 3. Marriage is a safeguard for those incapable of absolute continence.

1 P 3:1 The rest is from me and not from the Lord. If a brother has a wife who is an 12
unbeliever, and she is content to live with him, he must not send her away;
and if a woman has an unbeliever for her husband, and he is content to live with 13
her, she must not leave him. •This is because the unbelieving husband is made 14
one with the saints through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made one with
the saints through her husband. If this were not so, your children would be
unclean, whereas in fact they are holy.[b] •However, if the unbelieving partner 15
does not consent, they may separate; in these circumstances, the brother or
sister[c] is not tied:[d] God has called you[e] to a life of peace. •If you are a wife, it 16
may be your part to save your husband, for all you know; if a husband, for all
you know, it may be your part to save your wife.

7:20,24; 11:16 For the rest, what each one has is what the Lord has given him and he should 17
continue as he was when God's call reached him. This is the ruling that I give
in all the churches. •If anyone had already been circumcised at the time of 18
1 M 1:15 his call, he need not disguise it, and anyone who was uncircumcised at
Rm 2:25-29 Ga 5:6; 6:15 the time of his call need not be circumcised; •because to be circumcised or 19
uncircumcised means nothing: what does matter is to keep the commandments
of God. •Let everyone stay as he was at the time of his call. •If, when you were 20 21
Rm 6:15+ Ep 6:5-9 called, you were a slave, do not let this bother you; but if you should have the
Col 3:22-24 chance of being free, accept it. •A slave, when he is called in the Lord, becomes 22
Rm 6:18,22 the Lord's freedman, and a freeman called in the Lord becomes Christ's slave.
6:20 You have all been bought and paid for; do not be slaves of other men.[f] •Each 23 24
Rm 3:24+ 1 P 1:18 7:17 one of you, my brothers, should stay as he was before God at the time of his call.

About remaining celibate, I have no directions from the Lord but give my 25
own opinion as one who, by the Lord's mercy, has stayed faithful. •Well then, 26
Rm 13:11 I believe that in these present times of stress[g] this is right: that it is good for a man
to stay as he is. •If you are tied to a wife, do not look for freedom; if you are 27
free of a wife, then do not look for one. •But if you marry, it is no sin, and it is 28
not a sin for a young girl to get married. They will have their troubles, though,
in their married life,[h] and I should like to spare you that.

2 Co 6:2+ Heb 13:14 Brothers, this is what I mean: our time is growing short. Those who have 29
2 Co 6:8-10 wives should live as though they had none, •and those who mourn should live as 30
though they had nothing to mourn for; those who are enjoying life should live
as though there were nothing to laugh about; those whose life is buying things
should live as though they had nothing of their own; •and those who have to 31
1 Jn 2:16-17 deal with the world should not become engrossed in it.[i] I say this because the
world as we know it is passing away.

Mt 19:12 I would like to see you free from all worry. An unmarried man can devote 32
himself to the Lord's affairs, all he need worry about is pleasing the Lord; •but 33
a married man has to bother about the world's affairs and devote himself to
pleasing his wife: •he is torn two ways. In the same way an unmarried woman, 34
like a young girl, can devote herself to the Lord's affairs; all she need worry
about is being holy in body and spirit. The married woman, on the other hand,
has to worry about the world's affairs and devote herself to pleasing her husband.
I say this only to help you, not to put a halter round your necks, but simply to 35
Lk 10:40 make sure that everything is as it should be, and that you give your undivided
attention to the Lord.

Si 7:25 Still, if there is anyone who feels that it would not be fair to his daughter to 36
let her grow too old for marriage, and that he should do something about it, he
is free to do as he likes: he is not sinning if there is a marriage. •On the other 37
hand, if someone has firmly made his mind up, without any compulsion and
in complete freedom of choice, to keep his daughter as she is, he will be doing
a good thing. •In other words, the man who sees that his daughter is married 38
has done a good thing but the man who keeps his daughter unmarried has done
something even better.[j]

Rm 7:2 A wife is tied as long as her husband is alive. But if the husband dies, she is 39

40 free to marry anybody she likes, only it must be in the Lord.[k] •She would be happier, in my opinion, if she stayed as she is—and I too have the Spirit of God,[l] I think. 2:16 Ep 3:4

B. FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS[a]

General principles

Rm 14

8 1 Now about food sacrificed to idols. 'We all have knowledge'; yes, that is so, but knowledge gives self-importance—it is love that makes the building grow. Ac 9:31 Rm 15:2
2 A man may imagine he understands something, but still not understand anything
3 in the way that he ought to. •But any man who loves God is known[b] by him.
4 Well then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: we know that idols do not really Ga 4:8
5 exist in the world and that there is no god but the One. •And even if there were Dt 6:4+
things called gods, either in the sky or on earth—where there certainly seem to
6 be 'gods' and 'lords' in plenty[c]—•still for us there is one God, the Father, from Ex 20:2-3+
whom all things come and for whom we exist; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, Rm 11:36 Ep 4:5-6 *Jn 1:3* Col 1:16-17 Heb 1:2
through whom all things come and through whom we exist.

The claims of love

Rm 14; 15: 1-2,7 1 Th 5:14

7 Some people, however, do not have this knowledge. There are some who have been so long used to idols that they eat this food as though it really had been sacrificed to the idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled
8 by it. •Food, of course, cannot bring us in touch with God: we lose nothing Rm 14:17 Col 2:21f Heb 13:9 *Rm 6:15+ Rm 14:15*
9 if we refuse to eat, we gain nothing if we eat. •Only be careful that you
do not make use of this freedom in a way that proves a pitfall for the weak.
10 Suppose someone sees you, a man who understands, eating in some temple Rv 2:18
of an idol; his own conscience, even if it is weak, may encourage him[d]
11 to eat food which has been offered to idols. •In this way your knowledge
could become the ruin of someone weak, of a brother for whom Christ
12 died. •By sinning in this way against your brothers, and injuring their weak Mt 10:40+ Ac 9:5
13 consciences, it would be Christ against whom you sinned. •That is why,
since food can be the occasion of my brother's downfall, I shall never eat meat Rm 14:13, 20-21
again in case I am the cause of a brother's downfall.

Paul invokes his own example[a]

9 1 I, personally, am free: I am an apostle and I have seen Jesus our Lord. You Ac 9:17+ Rm 1:1+ *Ac 15:8*
2 are all my work in the Lord. •Even if I were not an apostle to others, I should

b. 'Sanctification' and 'holiness' here, as frequently in the Bible, mean not so much the perfection of a man's life as its precondition—dedication to God and adoption by him, cf. Ac 9:13+. By marrying one of God's people a pagan is brought into a special relationship with the true God and with his Church.

c. That is, the Christian partner.

d. This is known as 'the Pauline privilege'.

e. Var. 'us'.

f. Spiritually slaves to their outlook and conventions.

g. Lit. 'because of the present (or imminent) distress'.

h. Lit. 'in the flesh', not however referring, as in 7:2 9, to concupiscence.

i. Lit. 'should not use it to the full'.

j. In the classical world a father made what arrangements he thought fit for his daughter. Some interpreters see in this passage a reference to the practice of a man and woman living together under vows of strict chastity, for which there may be some evidence though only from a later date. In this case, read 'virgin' for 'daughter' in vv. 36-38.

k. She must marry a Christian.

l. Var. 'of Christ'.

8 a. The frequent feasts and public ceremonies in antiquity were always accompanied by sacrifice. Portions of the sacrificial food *(eidolytha)* went to the gods, the priests and the donors. What remained was either eaten at a sacred meal or sold in the markets. This situation provided several difficulties for Christians: could they take part in a sacred meal; buy meat that had been sacrificed to idols; accept invitations to eat in a pagan house? Paul answers these specific difficulties, 10:14-22 and 23-30. In principle, enlightened Christians are completely free to decide for themselves, 8:1-6; 10:15,25,29-30, but they must avoid leading astray other Christians who are not yet emancipated from their pre-conversion ideas, 8:7-13; 10:23-24,28-29. Paul makes no reference to the Decree of Jerusalem, Ac 15:20-29, and does not even seem to have heard about it, Ac 15:1+.

b. In the biblical sense, i.e. 'loved'. Cf. Ho 2:22+.

c. Paul is simply stating a fact. The 'gods' are the mythical gods of Olympus, the 'lords' are divinised human beings.

d. Lit. 'be built up'; ironical, cf. 8:1.

9 a. Though free to do whatever he thinks best about food sacrificed to idols a Christian must be guided by charity. Paul himself, as he goes on to say, had given up out of charity some of his rights as an apostle.

2 Co 3:2 still be an apostle to you who are the seal of my apostolate in the Lord. •My 3
answer to those who want to interrogate me is this: •Have we not every right 4
Lk 8:2-3 to eat and drink?[b] •And the right to take a Christian woman[c] round with us, 5
Mt 12:46+ Jn 1:42 like all the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?
Ac 4:36+; 18:3+ Are Barnabas and I the only ones who are not allowed to stop working? •Nobody 6 7
2 Tm 2:6 ever paid money to stay in the army, and nobody ever planted a vineyard and refused to eat the fruit of it. Who has there ever been that kept a flock and did not feed on the milk from his flock?

These may be only human comparisons, but does not the Law itself say the 8
Dt 25:4 Lk 12:6,24 1 Tm 5:18 same thing? •It is written in the Law of Moses: *You must not put a muzzle on the* 9
ox when it is treading out the corn. Is it about oxen that God is concerned, •or is 10
10:6+ there not an obvious reference to ourselves? Clearly this was written for our sake to show that the ploughman ought to plough in expectation, and the thresher to
Rm 15:27 thresh in the expectation of getting his share. •If we have sown spiritual things 11
for you, why should you be surprised if we harvest your material things? •Others 12
are allowed these rights over you and our right is surely greater? In fact we have
4:12 never exercised this right. On the contrary we have put up with anything rather than obstruct the Good News of Christ in any way. •Remember that the ministers 13
serving in the Temple get their food from the Temple and those serving at the
Mt 10:10p altar can claim their share from the altar itself. •In the same sort of way the Lord 14
directed that those who preach the gospel should get their living from the gospel.

2 Co 11:9 However, I have not exercised any of these rights, and I am not writing all 15
this to secure this treatment for myself. I would rather die than let anyone take
away something that I can boast of.[d] •Not that I do boast of preaching the gospel, 16
Ac 4:20; 9:15-16; 22:14-15; 26:16-18 since it is a duty which has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not
preach it! •If I had chosen this work myself, I might have been paid for it, but 17
as I have not, it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands. •Do you 18
2 Co 11:7 know what my reward is? It is this: in my preaching, to be able to offer the Good News free, and not insist on the rights which the gospel gives me.

10:32-33 Mt 20:26p Rm 6:15+ Ga 4:4-5 So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself the slave of 19
everyone so as to win as many as I could. •I made myself a Jew to the Jews, to 20
win the Jews; that is, I who am not a subject of the Law made myself a subject
of the Law to those who are the subjects of the Law, to win those who are subject
Ga 4:12 to the Law. •To those who have no Law, I was free of the Law myself (though 21
not free from God's law, being under the law of Christ) to win those who have
Rm 15:1 2 Co 11:29 no Law. •For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in 22
order to save some[e] at any cost; •and I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, 23
to have a share in its blessings.

Ga 5:7+ All the runners at the stadium are trying to win, but only one of them gets 24
Ws 5:16 Ph 3:14 the prize. You must run in the same way, meaning to win. •All the fighters at 25
2 Tm 4:7-8 Jm 1:12 1 P 5:4 Rv 2:10; 3:11 the games go into strict training; they do this just to win a wreath that will wither
away, but we do it for a wreath that will never wither. •That is how I run, intent 26
on winning; that is how I fight, not beating the air. •I treat my body hard and 27
make it obey me, for, having been an announcer myself, I should not want to be disqualified.[f]

Heb 4:2-3 **A warning, and the lessons of Israel's history**[a]

Ex 13:21; 14:22 10 I want to remind you, brothers, how our fathers were all guided by a cloud 1
above them and how they all passed through the sea. •They were all 2
Ex 16:4-35+ baptised into Moses[b] in this cloud and in this sea; •all ate the same spiritual 3
Ex 17:5-6 Nb 20:7-11 Ps 114:8 food •and all drank the same spiritual drink,[c] since they all drank from the 4
spiritual rock that followed them as they went,[d] and that rock was Christ. •In 5
Nb 14:16 Jude 5 spite of this, most of them failed to please God and their corpses littered the desert.

Nb 11:4,34 Rm 4:23 Heb 9:9,24 These things all happened as warnings[e] for us, not to have the wicked lusts 6
for forbidden things that they had. •Do not become idolaters as some of them 7

did, for scripture says: *After sitting down to eat and drink, the people got up to* Ex 32:6
8 *amuse themselves.* •We must never fall into sexual immorality: some of them did, Nb 25:1-9 Ws 10:8
9 and twenty-three thousand met their downfall in one day. •We are not to put
10 the Lord[f] to the test: some of them did, and they were killed by snakes. •You Nb 21:5-6 Ac 5:9
must never complain: some of them did, and they were killed by the Destroyer. *Nb 17:6-15 Ex 12:23+* 10:6
11 All this happened to them as a warning, and it was written down to be a lesson *Rm 15:4*
12 for us who are living at the end of the age.[g] •The man who thinks he is safe must *Ga 6:1*
13 be careful that he does not fall. •The trials that you have had to bear are no
more than people normally have. You can trust God not to let you be tried Si 15:11-20 *1:9+*
beyond your strength, and with any trial he will give you a way out of it and the Jm 1:13-14 *Mt 6:13; 26:41*
strength to bear it.

Sacrificial feasts. No compromise with idolatry

14 This is the reason, my dear brothers, why you must keep clear of idolatry. Rm 14:1
15 I say to you as sensible people: judge for yourselves what I am saying. •The
16 blessing-cup[h] that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the 11:23-26+ Lv 3:1+
17 bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ. •The fact that there Mt 26:26-27
is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body 12:12+ Ep 4:4
18 because we all have a share in this one loaf. •Look at the other Israel, the race,[i]
19 where those who eat the sacrifices are in communion with the altar. •Does this
mean that the food sacrificed to idols has a real value, or that the idol itself is
20 real? •Not at all. It simply means that the sacrifices that they offer *they sacrifice to* Dt 32:17 Ps 136:37
demons who are not God. I have no desire to see you in communion with 2 Co 6:14-16
21 demons. •You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You
22 cannot take your share at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons. •Do
we want to make the Lord angry; are we stronger than he is? Dt 4:24

Food sacrificed to idols. Practical solutions

23 'For me there are no forbidden things', but not everything does good. True, 6:12+ Si 37:28
there are no forbidden things, but it is not everything that helps the building to
24 grow. •Nobody should be looking for his own advantage, but everybody for the 10:33 Rm 14:19; 15:2
25 other man's. •Do not hesitate to eat anything that is sold in butchers' shops: Ph 2:4
26 there is no need to raise questions of conscience; •for *the earth and everything* *Ps 24:1*
27 *that is in it belong to the Lord.* •If an unbelever invites you to his house, go if

b. At the expense of the Christian congregations.

c. Lit. 'a sister, a woman (wife?)'. To look after the apostle's needs.

d. Lit. 'I would rather die than... No one shall take away something that I can boast of.' Aposiopesis.

e. Var. (Vulg.) 'all'.

f. In this passage Paul is using contemporary sporting terms.

10 a. Before reverting to the problem of food sacrificed to idols, Paul quotes the O.T. to remind Corinthians about the dangers of idolatry so as to prevent them joining in the actual sacrificial meals, 10:14-22.

b. As Christians are now baptised 'into' Christ (Rm 6:3; Ga 3:27), i.e. to be united with him.

c. Passing through the Red Sea in v. 2 suggests Christian baptism; here manna and water from the rock suggest the Eucharist. Christians took the description in Ex of the liberation from Egypt as a symbol of liberation from sin by Christ, who is symbolised by Moses, cf. Jn 1:21+; 13:1+. This comparison was implied by Jesus when he linked his Eucharist to the Passover-supper, cf. Mt 26:17-29p; 1 Co 5:7. This accounts for the many Exodus references in the Easter liturgy.

d. Allusion to the legend that the rock from which Moses made water flow accompanied the Israelites on their travels through the wilderness. Jewish writers had already tended to identify this rock with Yahweh himself, and had supported this identification with references to Ex 17:6, and to the O.T. use of 'Rock of Israel' as a title for Yahweh, cf. Ps 18:2+. Paul credits the pre-existent Christ with the attributes of Yahweh.

e. Lit. 'types' *(tupoi)*. The purpose in the events, intended by God, was to prefigure in the history of Israel the spiritual realities of the messianic age (which are known as 'antitypes', 1 P 3:21, but cf. Heb 9:24). These 'typological' (or less accurately, 'allegorical', Ga 4:24) meanings in the O.T. narrative, though not consciously intended by the authors are nevertheless valid and necessary for the understanding of scripture, since the pattern of God's working on the physical plane does in fact reflect his eternal purposes fulfilled in the incarnation to become the spiritual realities of the messianic age. Typological meanings of O.T. events are often pointed out by the authors of the N.T. as though the sole purpose of Israel's written history had been to provide types for the instruction of Christians. Paul does this, v. 11 and 9:9; Rm 4:23f; 5:14; 15:4; cf. 2 Tim 3:16, and some books like Jn and Heb are largely based on a typological interpretation of the O.T.

f. Var. 'Christ'.

g. Lit. 'unto whom the ends of the ages have reached'.

h. I.e. the cup of wine for which we thank God, like Christ at the Last Supper.

i. Lit. 'the Israel according to the flesh', i.e. the Israel of history, cf. Rm 7:5, as compared with the Israel 'of God', Ga 6:16, the true Israel, the Christian community.

you want to, and eat whatever is put in front of you, without asking questions just to satisfy conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, 'This food was offered in sacrifice', then, out of consideration for the man that told you, you should not eat it, for the sake of his scruples; 29 his scruples, you see, not your own. Why should my freedom depend on somebody else's conscience? 30 If I take my share with thankfulness, why should I be blamed for food for which I have thanked God?

1 Tm 4:4

Conclusion

Col 3:17 1 P 4:11 9:19-23 1:2+ 10:24+ Rm 15:2 2 Th 3:7+

Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the 31 glory of God. 32 Never do anything offensive to anyone—to Jews or Greeks or to the Church of God; 33 just as I try to be helpful to everyone at all times, not anxious for my own advantage but for the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved.

11 1 Take me for your model, as I take Christ.

C. DECORUM IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

Women's behaviour at services

15:1-3 1 Th 2:13+; 4:1-2 2 Th 2:15 Ep 5:23 3:23 Ac 11:27+ 2 Co 3:18 11:15

You have done well in remembering me so constantly and in maintaining 2 the traditions[a] just as I passed them on to you. 3 However, what I want you to understand is that Christ is the head of every man, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ. 4 For a man to pray or prophesy with his head covered is a sign of disrespect to his head.[b] 5 For a woman, however, it is a sign of disrespect to her head[c] if she prays or prophesies unveiled; she might as well have her hair shaved off. 6 In fact, a woman who will not wear a veil ought to have her hair cut off.[d] If a woman is ashamed to have her hair cut off or shaved, she ought to wear a veil.

Gn 1:26-27 Gn 2:21-23 1 Tm 2:12-13 14:34

A man should certainly not cover his head, since he is the image of God and 7 reflects God's glory; but woman is the reflection of man's glory. 8 For man did not come from woman; no, woman came from man; 9 and man was not created for the sake of woman, but woman was created for the sake of man. 10 That is the argument for women's covering their heads with a symbol of the authority[e] over them, out of respect for the angels.[f] 11 However, though woman cannot do without man, neither can man do without woman, in the Lord; 12 woman may come from man, but man is born of woman—both come from God.

11:5

Ask yourselves if it is fitting for a woman to pray to God without a veil; 13 and whether nature itself does not tell you that long hair on a man is nothing 14 to be admired, 15 while a woman, who was given her hair as a covering, thinks long hair her glory?

4:17; 7:17; 14:33 1:2+

To anyone who might still want to argue: it is not the custom with us, nor in 16 the churches of God.[g]

The Lord's Supper

Now that I am on the subject of instructions, I cannot say that you have done 17 well in holding meetings that do you more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you all come together as a community, there are separate factions among you, and I half believe it—19 since there must no doubt be separate groups among you, to distinguish those who are to be trusted. 20 The point is, when you hold these meetings, it is not the Lord's Supper[h] that you are eating, since when the time comes to eat, everyone is in such a hurry to start his own 21 supper that one person goes hungry while another is getting drunk. 22 Surely you have homes for eating and drinking in? Surely you have enough respect for the community of God not to make poor people embarrassed? What am I to say to you? Congratulate you? I cannot congratulate you on this.

1:2+

23 For this is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you: that
24 on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, •and
thanked God for it and broke it, and he said, 'This is my body, which is for you;[i]
25 do this as a memorial of me'. •In the same way he took the cup after supper,
and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do
26 this as a memorial of me.' •Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat
27 this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death, •and so anyone
who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be behaving
unworthily towards the body and blood of the Lord.
28 Everyone is to recollect himself before eating this bread and drinking this
29 cup; •because a person who eats and drinks[j] without recognising the Body[k]
30 is eating and drinking his own condemnation. •In fact that is why many of you
31 are weak and ill and some of you have died.[l] •If only we recollected ourselves,
32 we should not be punished like that. •But when the Lord does punish us like that,
it is to correct us and stop us from being condemned with the world.
33 So to sum up, my dear brothers, when you meet for the Meal, wait for one
34 another. •Anyone who is hungry should eat at home, and then your meeting
will not bring your condemnation. The other matters I shall adjust when I come.

10:16-17 ||Mt 26:26-29 ||Mk 14:22-25 ||Lk 22:14-20 Ex 12:14 Dt 16:3 *Ex 24:8* Jr 31:31+ Heb 8:6-13 16:22 Rv 22:17,20 Ac 5:9 Dt 8:5+ Rv 3:19

Spiritual gifts[a]

1 12 Now my dear brothers, I want to clear up a wrong impression about
2 spiritual gifts. •You remember that, when you were pagans, whenever
3 you felt irresistibly drawn,[b] it was towards dumb idols? •It is for that reason that
I want you to understand that on the one hand no one can be speaking under the
influence of the Holy Spirit and say, 'Curse Jesus', and on the other hand, no one
can say, 'Jesus is Lord' unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

1 Th 5:20 Ga 4:8 Jn 14:26+ 1 Jn 4:1-3 Ac 2:21+, 36+ Rm 10:9 Ph 2:11

The variety and the unity of gifts

4 There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; •there are all sorts of
5 service to be done, but always to the same Lord; •working in all sorts of different
6 ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them.[c] •The
particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.
8 One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom[d] given him by the Spirit; another
9 may have the gift of preaching instruction[e] given him by the same Spirit; •and
another the gift of faith[f] given by the same Spirit; another again the gift of healing,
10 through this one Spirit; •one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy;[g]

Ep 4:5 1 P 4:10 12:28-30 Ac 1:8+ Rm 12:6-8 *1:5* Rm 12:3 Ac 11:27+

11 a. I.e. the teaching of Christ and the apostles.
b. Greek pun on word *kephalē*, 'head', 'leader'. A Christian who prayed with head covered insulted Christ his leader; he should not hide Christ's glory but reflect it 'with uncovered face', cf. 2 Co 3:18.
c. I.e. her husband, since she seemed to be claiming equality with her husband. A woman's veil was a sign of subjection, v. 10.
d. Ironical: having begun by removing the veil, she may as well go all the way and shave her head as well. Cf. v. 15.
e. Lit. 'a power', or 'authority'.
f. Apparently a reference to angels as being guardians of public order in public worship.
g. This puts a stop to any discussion.
h. The supper commemorating Christ's last supper with his disciples during which he instituted the Eucharist. Before the liturgical meal the Corinthians held this ordinary meal, the earliest form of the *agape*. Paul disapproves of this custom, v. 34, and condemns its abuses, vv. 21-22.
i. Var. 'This is my body, broken for you'.
j. Add. 'unworthily'.
k. The Body of the Lord.
l. Lit. 'fallen asleep'. Evidently Paul considers the sickness and death of some Corinthians to have been a punishment for irreverence to 'the body and blood of the Lord'.

12 a. The spiritual gifts *(charismata)* granted by the Holy Spirit to some members of the community witnessed to the Spirit's presence and helped the Church to function while its hierarchy was still in a rudimentary state. There were so many gifts, and some were so eccentric and noisy, that they tended to produce disorder. Hence Paul's admonitions: 1. All these gifts come from the Spirit. 2. All are given for the benefit of the community. 3. Their respective values are to be judged by their usefulness to the community. 4. The gift of prophecy *(prophetela)* is vastly superior to the gift of tongues *(glossolalia)* of which the Corinthians are so proud. 5. Finally, it is better to have charity than any of the *charismata*.
b. Allusion to the frenzies and orgies of some pagan cults.
c. Note again the trinitarian formulation, cf. 6:11; 2 Co 13:13+.
d. Probably the gift of preaching the central Christian truths about God and God's life in us: this is the 'perfect teaching' of Heb 6:1. Cf. also 1 Co 2:6-16.
e. The gift of preaching the elementary Christian truths: 'the elementary teaching concerning Christ' of Heb 6:1.
f. An unusually intense faith, cf. 13:2.
g. On 'prophecy' cf. Ac 11:27+.

another the gift of recognising spirits;[h] another the gift of tongues[i] and another
Ac 2:4+ 1 Jn 4:1-3 the ability to interpret them. •All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, 11
who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.

The analogy of the body[j]

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit 12
6:15; 10:17 Rm 12:4-5 Ep 4:25 Col 3:15 because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ.[k] •In 13
Ga 3:28 Ep 4:4-6 Col 3:11 the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as
citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. •If the foot 14 15
were to say, 'I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body', would that
mean that it stopped being part of the body? •If the ear were to say, 'I am not 16
an eye, and so I do not belong to the body', would that mean that it was not a part
of the body? •If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? 17
If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. •If 18 19
all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? •As it is, the parts are many 20
but the body is one. •The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you', nor can 21
the head say to the feet, 'I do not need you'.

What is more, it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest 22
which are the indispensable ones; •and it is the least honourable parts of the 23
body that we clothe with the greatest care. So our more improper parts get
decorated •in a way that our more proper parts do not need. God has arranged 24
the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, •and so 25
that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be
Rm 12:15 equally concerned for all the others. •If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with 26
it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

12:7-11 Rm 12:6-8 Ep 4:11 Now you together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it. 27
In the Church, God has given the first place to apostles, the second to prophets, 28
Ac 11:27+ Rm 1:1+ Jm 3:1+ the third to teachers;[l] after them, miracles, and after them the gift of healing;
helpers,[m] good leaders,[n] those with many languages. •Are all of them apostles, 29
or all of them prophets, or all of them teachers? Do they all have the gift of
miracles, •or all have the gift of healing? Do all speak strange languages, and 30
all interpret them?

The order of importance in spiritual gifts. Love

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is 31
better than any of them.

Rm 8:31; 14:15 Col 1:8 **13** If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love,[a] 1
I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. •If I have the gift of 2
Mt 7:22 prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything,
Mt 17:20 Jm 2:14-17 and if I have faith in all its fulness, to move mountains, but without love, then
Mt 6:2 I am nothing at all. •If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even 3
let them take my body to burn it,[b] but am without love, it will do me no good
whatever.

Rm 13:8-10 1 Th 5:14-15 Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful 4
Rm 12:9-10 or conceited; •it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not 5
resentful. •Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; 6
Pr 10:12 it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. 7

13:13+ Ac 11:27+ Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time 8
Ac 2:4+ will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue
for ever; and knowledge—for this, too, the time will come when it must fail.
For our knowledge is imperfect[c] and our prophesying is imperfect; •but once 9 10
perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. •When I was a child, I used 11
to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am
2 Co 5:7 a man, all childish ways are put behind me. •Now we are seeing a dim reflection 12

in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known.[d]
13 In short,[e] there are three things that last:[f] faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Jn 3:2
Nb 12:8
Ws 3:9
Rm 5:4
Ga 5:6
Ep 1:15; 4:2
Col 1:4
Phm 5

Spiritual gifts: their respective importance in the community

Ac 2:4+; 11:27+

1 14 You must want love more than anything else; but still hope for the spiritual
2 gifts as well, especially prophecy. •Anybody with the gift of tongues speaks
to God, but not to other people; because nobody understands him when he
3 talks in the spirit about mysterious things. •On the other hand, the man who
prophesies does talk to other people, to their improvement, their encouragement
4 and their consolation. •The one with the gift of tongues talks for his own
benefit, but the man who prophesies does so for the benefit of the community.
5 While I should like you all to have the gift of tongues, I would much rather you
could prophesy, since the man who prophesies is of greater importance than the

1 Th 5:20

Nb 11:29

h. The gift of knowing if *charismata* were spiritual, natural, or evil.

i. On the charisma of 'tongues' *(glossolalia)* cf. Ac 2:4+.

j. Paul uses the classical analogy of society as a single body with many parts but his concept of the Body of Christ goes back to the memory of his own conversion, cf. Ac 9:4f; Ga 1:15f, to faith in Jesus whose body, raised from the dead and given life by the Spirit, Rm 1:4+, became the 'first-fruits' of a new creation, 1 Co 15:23. The words spoken by the Lord at Paul's conversion, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting', imply that Christians are identified with the risen Christ. In Paul's writings, Christians are bodily united with the risen body, Rm 8:11, by baptism, 1 Co 12:13; cf. Rm 6:4+, and the Eucharist, 1 Co 10: 16f, which make them parts of Christ's body, 1 Co 6:15, united in such a way that he and they together form the Body of Christ (what is now called 'the mystical body'), 1 Co 12:27; Rm 12:4f. This rather realistic teaching of 1 Co is taken up later on and developed in the Letters of the Captivity, where the basic idea remains the same, i.e. humans are reconciled to God by becoming parts of, Ep 5:30, Christ's body which was physically dead but is now spiritually alive, Ep 2:14-18, Col 1:22. The stress however is on the unity of the Body that brings all Christians together in one Spirit, Ep 4:4; Col 3:15, and on the identification of the Body with the Church, Ep 1:22f; 5:23; Col 1:18,24. Having thus personified the body, Ep 4:12f; Col 2:19, Paul asserts that Christ is its Head, Ep 1:22; 4:15f; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19 (cf. 1 Co 12:21). This assertion probably developed from the concept of Christ as Head of all Powers, Col 2:10. Eventually, in its widest sense, Paul includes in his concept of the Body the entire cosmos as unified under the Lord Christ, Ep 1:23+. Cf. Jn 2:21+.

k. The way a human body gives unity to all its component parts is the way Christ, as unifying principle of his Church, gives unity to all Christians in his Body.

l. The regular teachers appointed for each separate church, cf. Ac 13:1+.

m. Lit. 'helpings': voluntary gifts to works of charity.

n. Administrators and guides of the churches.

13 a. Love *(agape)* has no possessiveness and is not a desire for satisfaction: it wants to satisfy the other. The supreme charity is God's love for us, 1 Jn 4:19, that made him give his Son so that sinners might be reconciled, Rm 5:8; 8:32-39; 2 Co 5:18-21; Ep 2:4-7; cf. Jn 3:16f; 1 Jn 4:9-10, and become not only God's chosen ones, Ep 1:4, but God's sons, 1 Jn 3:1. This love is attributed to God (the Father), Rm 5:5; 8:39; 2 Co 13:11,13; Ph 2:1; 2 Th 2:16; cf. 1 Jn 2:15, but as it is identical with God's nature, 1 Jn 4:7f,16, it is found in the Son, Rm 8:35,37,39; 2 Co 5:14; Ep 3:19; 1 Tm 1:14; 2 Tm 1:13, so the Son loves the Father as the Son is loved by the Father, Ep 1:6; Col 1:13; cf. Jn 3:35; 10:17; 14:31, and as the Father loves us, so the Son loves the human race, Jn 13:1,34; 14:21; 15:9, which he was sent to save, 2 Co 5:14f; Ga 2:20; Ep 5:2,25; 1 Tm 1:14f; cf. Jn 15:13; 1 Jn 3:16; Rv 1:5. This is the same love that the Holy Spirit, Rm 15:30; Col 1:8, gives Christians, Rm 5:5; cf. Ga 5:22, to help them to carry out, Rm 8:4, the essential commandment of the Law, which is love of God and neighbour, Mt 22: 37-40p; Rm 13:8-10; Ga 5:14. To love friends, and enemies, Mt 5:43-48p, is not only the necessary consequence of God's love for us, but actually proves that God loves us, 1 Jn 3:17; 4:20f, and it is the new commandment laid down by Christ, Jn 13:34f; 15:12,17; 1 Jn 3:23; etc., and constantly emphasised by his disciples, Rm 13:8; Ga 5:13f; Ep 1:15; Ph 2:2f; Col 1:4; 1 Th 3:12; 2 Th 1:3; Phm 5:7; cf. Jm 2:8; 1 P 1:22; 2:17; 4:8; 1 Jn 2:10; 3:10f,14; etc. This is how Paul loves the Christians of his own churches, 2 Co 2:4; 12:15; etc., and how they love him, Col 1:8; 1 Th 3:6; etc. Love presupposes sincerity, humility, selflessness and self-sacrifice, Rm 12:9f; 1 Co 13:4-7; 2 Co 6:6; Ph 2:2f, service, Ga 5:13; cf. Heb 6:10, mutual help, Ep 4:2; cf. Rm 14:15; 2 Co 2:7f. Love shows itself in the way we behave, 2 Co 8:8-11,24; cf. 1 Jn 3:18, and the way we obey the Lord's commands, Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 5:2f, etc., and give effect to our faith, Ga 5:6; cf. Heb 10:24. Love holds the community together, Col 3:14; cf. 2 P 1:7, and it 'covers up many sins', 1 P 4:8; cf. Lk 7:47. Since love of neighbour springs from love of God, its motive cannot be fear, Rm 8: 28-39; cf. 1 Jn 4:17f. Nor can we be charitable without truth, Ep 4:15, cf. 2 Th 2:10, and it is this that enables us to make moral judgements, Ph 1:9, and gives us spiritual understanding of the divine mystery, Col 2:2; cf. 1 Jn 4:7, and spiritual knowledge of the otherwise unknowable love of Christ, Ep 3:17-19; cf. 1 Co 8:1-3; 13:8-12. Since Christ, Ep 3:17, and the whole Trinity, 2 Co 13:13+; cf. Jn 14:15-23; 1 Jn 4:12, live in the soul that has this love, it fosters the theological virtues, cf. Rm 1:16+; 5:2+, in any person where it is the dominant characteristic, 1 Co 13:13. Love is the only eternal virtue. 1 Co 13:8, and will only be perfect in the vision, 1 Co 13:12; cf. 1 Jn 3:2, when God gives his lovers the gifts he has promised, 1 Co 2:9; Rm 8:28; Ep 6:24; 2 Tm 4:8; cf. Jm 1:12; 2:5.

b. Var. 'I may give all my goods to the poor so that I can boast of it'.

c. Lit. 'in part'.

d. I.e. by God.

e. Or 'Meanwhile'.

f. Or 'In short, then, we are left with these three things'. This association of the three theological virtues, which is found earlier in 1 Th 1:3 and which was probably in use before Paul's time, recurs frequently in his letters, though the order varies: 1 Th 5:8; 1 Co 13:7,13; Ga 5:5f; Rm 5:1-5; 12:6-12; Col 1:4-5; Ep 1:15-18; 4:2-5; 1 Tm 6:11; Tt 2:2. Cf. Heb 6:10-12; 10:22-24; 1 P 1:3-9,21f. Faith and charity are associated in 1 Th 3:6; 2 Th 1:3; Phm 5, faith and fortitude in 2 Th 1:4, love and fortitude in 2 Th 3:5. Cf. 2 Co 13:13.

man with the gift of tongues, unless of course the latter offers an interpretation so that the church may get some benefit.

Now suppose, my dear brothers, I am someone with the gift of tongues, and I come to visit you, what use shall I be if all my talking reveals nothing new, tells you nothing, and neither inspires you nor instructs you? •Think of a musical instrument, a flute or a harp: if one note on it cannot be distinguished from another, how can you tell what tune is being played? •Or if no one can be sure which call the trumpet has sounded, who will be ready for the attack? It is the same with you: if your tongue does not produce intelligible speech, how can anyone know what you are saying? You will be talking to the air. •There are any number of different languages in the world, and not one of them is meaningless,[a] •but if I am ignorant of what the sounds mean, I am a savage to the man who is speaking, and he is a savage to me. •It is the same in your own case: since you aspire to spiritual gifts, concentrate on those which will grow to benefit the community. 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

That is why anybody who has the gift of tongues must pray for the power of interpreting them. •For if I use this gift in my prayers, my spirit may be praying but my mind is left barren.[b] •What is the answer to that? Surely I should pray not only with the spirit but with the mind as well? And sing praises not only with the spirit but with the mind as well? •Any uninitiated person will never be able to say Amen to your thanksgiving, if you only bless God with the spirit, for he will have no idea what you are saying. •However well you make your thanksgiving, the other gets no benefit from it. •I thank God that I have a greater gift of tongues than all of you, •but when I am in the presence of the community I would rather say five words that mean something than ten thousand words in a tongue. 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

2 Co 1:20

Rm 15:2

Brothers, you are not to be childish in your outlook. You can be babies as far as wickedness is concerned, but mentally you must be adult. •In the written Law it says:[c] *Through men speaking strange languages and through the lips of foreigners, I shall talk to the nation, and still they will not listen to me, says the Lord.* •You see then, that the strange languages are meant to be a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while on the other hand, prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. •So that any uninitiated people or unbelievers, coming into a meeting of the whole church where everybody was speaking in tongues, would say you were all mad; •but if you were all prophesying and an unbeliever or uninitiated person came in, he would find himself analysed and judged by everyone speaking; •he would find his secret thoughts laid bare, and then fall on his face and worship God, declaring that *God is among you indeed.* 20 21 22 23 24 25

Rm 16:19
Ep 4:14
Mt 10:16

Is 28:11-12

Ac 2:4,13

Is 45:14
Zc 8:23

Regulating spiritual gifts

So, my dear brothers, what conclusion is to be drawn? At all your meetings, let everyone be ready with a psalm or a sermon or a revelation, or ready to use his gift of tongues or to give an interpretation; but it must always be for the common good. •If there are people present with the gift of tongues, let only two or three, at the most, be allowed to use it, and only one at a time, and there must be someone to interpret. •If there is no interpreter present, they must keep quiet in church and speak only to themselves and to God. •As for prophets, let two or three of them speak, and the others attend to them. •If one of the listeners receives a revelation, then the man who is already speaking should stop. •For you can all prophesy in turn, so that everybody will learn something and everybody will be encouraged. •Prophets can always control their prophetic spirits, •since God is not a God of disorder but of peace. 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33

As in all the churches of the saints, •women are to remain quiet at meetings since they have no permission to speak; they must keep in the background as the Law itself lays it down. •If they have any questions to ask, they should ask 34 35

11:16+
Ac 9:13+
11:3,9
Gn 3:16
1 Tm 2:11-12

their husbands at home: it does not seem right for a woman to raise her voice at meetings. 11:5

36 Do you think the word of God came out of yourselves? Or that it has come
37 only to you? •Anyone who claims to be a prophet or inspired ought to recognise 2:16
38 that what I am writing to you is a command from the Lord. •Unless he recognises 7:40 *15:34*
this, you should not recognise him.[d]
39 And so, my dear brothers, by all means be ambitious to prophesy, do not
40 suppress the gift of tongues, •but let everything be done with propriety and in order.

III. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD[a]

The fact of the resurrection

1 **15** Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, the gospel 1Th2:13+; 4:14
2 that you received and in which you are firmly established; •because the gospel will save you only if you keep believing exactly what I preached to you—believing anything else will not lead to anything.
3 Well then, in the first place, I taught you what I had been taught myself, 11:2+; 23 Lk 1:2
4 namely that Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the scriptures; •that he *Ac 2:23+*
was buried; and that he was raised to life on the third day, in accordance with Mt 28:10+ Lk 24:34f
5 the scriptures; •that he appeared first to Cephas and secondly to the Twelve.
6 Next he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time,
7 most of whom are still alive, though some have died; •then he appeared to
8 James, and then to all the apostles; •and last of all he appeared to me too; it was Ac 12:17+ *9:1* Rm 1:1+
as though I was born when no one expected it.[b]
9 I am the least of the apostles; in fact, since I persecuted the Church of God, Ep 3:8 1 Tm 1:15-16
10 I hardly deserve the name apostle; •but by God's grace that is what I am, and *Ac 8:3+* Ga 1:13-14
the grace that he gave me has not been fruitless. On the contrary, I, or rather
11 the grace of God that is with me, have worked harder than any of the others; •but 2 Co 11:23f 1 Tm 1:14
what matters is that I preach what they preach, and this is what you all believed.
12 Now if Christ raised from the dead is what has been preached,[c] how can 6:14
13 some of you be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? •If there is no
14 resurrection of the dead, Christ himself cannot have been raised, •and if Christ Ac 2:24+
has not been raised then our preaching is useless and your believing it is useless; Ac 25:19
15 indeed, we are shown up as witnesses who have committed perjury before God, Ac 1:8+; 26:16
16 because we swore in evidence before God[d] that he had raised Christ to life. •For
17 if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised, •and if Christ has not been Rm 4:24-25; 10:9
18 raised, you are still in your sins. •And what is more serious, all who have died in
19 Christ have perished. •If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are the most unfortunate[e] of all people.
20 But Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who Rm 8:11+ Col 1:18 1 Th 4:14 *Rm5:12-21+*
21 have fallen asleep. •Death came through one man and in the same way the

14 a. Lit. '...sounds in the world but not one soundless'.

b. This prayer of ecstatic utterance is so freed by 'the spirit' that it contains nothing limited enough to be grasped by the 'mind'.

c. The quotation is very free.

d. Or, he is unnoticed by God who does not acknowledge him as his own. Var. 'if he refuses to recognise this, well let him' (Paul losing patience). For a similar way of putting an end to discussion, cf. 11:16; Ph 3:15.

15 a. Christ's resurrection, of which the apostles are witnesses, vv. 2-8, cf. Ac 1:8+, is the decisive proof, vv. 12-28, of the future resurrection of all, which is something the O.T. first of all suspects and hopes for, Ps 16:10+; Jb 19:25+; Ezk 37:10+, but eventually asserts quite plainly, 2 M 7:9+. This is why the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of faith, vv. 12-19. The risen Christ can be called the first-fruit, v. 20, not only heralding but causing the resurrection of all Christians, vv. 20-28, cf. Rm 8:11+.

b. An allusion to the abnormal, sudden and *surgical* nature of Paul's birth into the apostolic family. He makes no distinction between the sort of apparition that took place on the Damascus road and the sort of apparitions of Jesus that took place between the resurrection and the ascension.

c. Paul is talking to those who believe Christ rose from the dead. To believe this and to lead a Christian life necessarily imply belief in the resurrection of the dead.

d. Or 'through God'.

e. 'This life' has become for Christians a state from which life in Christ, through the resurrection, will deliver them. If there is no resurrection, they have lost their deliverance. Note that the possibility of the soul's immortality without the resurrection of the body is not considered.

15:45-49 Si 25:24 resurrection of the dead has come through one man. 22 •Just as all men die in Adam,
1 Th 4:16 so all men will be brought to life in Christ; 23 •but all of them in their proper order:
Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming[f] of Christ, those who belong
Ep 1:22 to him. 24 •After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God
the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power.[g]
Ps 110:1 Rv 20:14; 21:4 Ps 8:6 Rm 6:9 25 For he must be king *until he has put all his enemies under his feet* 26 •and the last
of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be *put under his feet.*
—Though when it is said[h] that *everything is subjected,* this clearly cannot include 27
Ph 3:21 the One who subjected everything to him. 28 •And when everything is subjected to
Rm 9:5+ Ep 4:6 Col 3:11 him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected
all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

29 If this were not true, what do people hope to gain by being baptised for
the dead?[i] If the dead are not ever going to be raised, why be baptised on their
behalf? 30 •What about ourselves? Why are we living under a constant threat?
2 Co 4:10-12 Ph 1:26 Ws 2:6 2 Co 1:8 Is 22:13 Lk 12:19 31 I face death every day, brothers, and I can swear it by the pride that I take in you
in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 •If my motives were only human ones, what good would
it do me to fight the wild animals at Ephesus?[j] 33 •You say: *let us eat and drink
today; tomorrow we shall be dead.* You must stop being led astray: 'Bad friends
ruin the noblest people'.[k] 34 •Come to your senses, behave properly, and leave sin
14:38 alone; there are some of you who seem not to know God at all; you should be
ashamed.

The manner of the resurrection

Ga 6:8 35 Someone may ask, 'How are dead people raised, and what sort of body do they
Jn 12:24 have when they come back?' 36 •They are stupid questions. Whatever you sow in the
ground has to die before it is given new life 37 •and the thing that you sow is not
what is going to come; you sow a bare grain, say of wheat or something like that,
and then God gives it the sort of body that he has chosen: each sort of seed gets 38
its own sort of body.

39 Everything that is flesh is not the same flesh: there is human flesh, animals'
flesh, the flesh of birds and the flesh of fish. 40 •Then there are heavenly bodies and
there are earthly bodies; but the heavenly bodies have a beauty of their own and
Dn 12:3 the earthly bodies a different one. 41 •The sun has its brightness, the moon a different
brightness, and the stars a different brightness, and the stars differ from each
other in brightness. 42 •It is the same with the resurrection of the dead: the thing
that is sown is perishable but what is raised is imperishable; 43 •the thing that is
sown is contemptible but what is raised is glorious; the thing that is sown is weak
2:14-15+ 2 Co 5:1 Heb 4:12+ Jude 19+ but what is raised is powerful; 44 •when it is sown it embodies the soul, when it is
raised it embodies the spirit.[l]

If the soul has its own embodiment, so does the spirit have its own embodiment.
Gn 2:7 The first *man,* Adam, as scripture says, *became a living soul;*[m] but the last Adam 45
15:20-28+ has become a life-giving spirit. 46 •That is, first the one with the soul, not the spirit,
and after that, the one with the spirit. 47 •The first man, being from the earth, is
Dn 7:13 earthly by nature; the second man is from heaven. 48 •As this earthly man was, so
Rm 8:29+ Ph 3:21 are we on earth; and as the heavenly man is, so are we in heaven. 49 •And we, who
have been modelled on the earthly man, will be modelled on the heavenly man.

Jn 3:5-6 50 Or else, brothers, put it this way: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom
6:10+ of God: and the perishable cannot inherit what lasts for ever. 51 •I will tell you
something that has been secret: that we are not all going to die, but we shall all
1 Th 4:15-17 be changed.[n] 52 •This will be instantaneous, in the twinkling of an eye, when the
Nb 10:3+ Jl 2:1+ Mt 24:31+ 2 Co 5:1-5 last trumpet sounds. It will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable,
and we shall be changed as well,[o] 53 •because our present perishable nature must
put on imperishability and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

A hymn of triumph. Conclusion

When this perishable nature has put on imperishability,[p] and when this 54

mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of scripture[q] will come
55 true: *Death is swallowed up in victory.* •*Death, where is your* victory? *Death, where* Is 25:8 *Ho 13:14* Rv 20:14 *Rm 7:7+* Heb 6:1+ *Jn 16:33*
56 *is your sting?* •Now the sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law.
57 So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
58 Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain.

CONCLUSION

Commendations. Greetings

1 16 Now about the collection made for the saints:[a] you are to do as I told the Ac 9:13+ Rm 15:25f
2 churches in Galatia to do. •Every Sunday,[b] each one of you must put *Ga 2:10* *Mt 28:1*
aside what he can afford, so that collections need not be made after I have come.
3 When I am with you, I will send your offering to Jerusalem by the hand
4 of whatever men you give letters of reference to; •if it seems worth while for me Ac 20:4
to go too, they can travel with me.
5 I shall be coming to you after I have passed through Macedonia—and I am Ac 19:21; 20:1
6 doing no more than pass through Macedonia—•and I may be staying with you, 2 Co 8:1
perhaps even passing the winter, to make sure that it is you who send me on my
7 way wherever my travels take me. •As you see, I do not want to make it only
a passing visit[c] to you and I hope to spend some time with you, the Lord permit-
8 9 ting. •In any case I shall be staying at Ephesus until Pentecost •because a big 2 Co 2:12 Col 4:3
and important door[d] has opened for my work and there is a great deal
of opposition.
10 If Timothy comes, show him that he has nothing to be afraid of in you: like 4:17
11 me, he is doing the Lord's work, •and nobody is to be scornful of him. Send 1 Tm 4:12 2 Tm 1:7

f. *Parousia* (presence), a Greek word adopted by early Christians to indicate the glorious coming of Christ on his 'day', 1 Co 1:8+, at the end of time, Mt 24:3+; cf. also 1 Th 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:32; 2 Th 2:1; Jm 5:7,8; 2 P 1:16; 3:4,12; 1 Jn 2:28. In 2 Th 2:8,9 the same word is used to indicate the coming of the Lawless One. Cf. the similar terms 'revelation', 1 Co 1:7+, and 'appearing', 1 Tm 6:14+.

g. All forces hostile to the sovereignty of God, cf. 1 Co 2:6; Ep 1:21; Col 1:16; 2:15; 1 P 3:22.

h. When the whole cosmos has been subjected to him, Jesus will go to the Father and say his task is complete. The translation '*scripture* says' is incorrect.

i. What this practice was is unknown: Paul does not say if he approved of it or not: he uses it merely for an *ad hominem* argument.

j. What episode Paul is referring to is unknown.

k. Quoted from Menander's *Thais:* it may have become a popular proverb.

l. Lit. It is sown a physical *(psychikon)* body, it is raised a spiritual *(pneumatikon)* body. In Paul, as in the O.T., *psyche* (Hebr. *nephesh;* cf. Gn 2:7) is what gives life to animals, to the human body, 1 Co 15:45; or it is the actual 'life' of the body, Rm 16:4; Ph 2:30; 1 Th 2:8; cf. Mt 2:20; Mk 3:4; Lk 12:20; Jn 10:11; Ac 20:10; etc., its 'living soul', 2 Co 1:23. The term can also mean any human being, Rm 2:9; 13:1; 2 Co 12:15; Ac 2:41,43, etc. As it only gives natural life, 1 Co 2:14; cf. Jude 19, it is less important than *pneuma* by which a human life is divinised by a process that begins through the gift of the Spirit, Rm 5:5+; cf. 1:9+, and is completed after death. Greek philosophers thought of the higher soul (the *nous*) escaping from 'the body', to survive immortally. Christians thought of immortality more in terms of the restoration of the whole person, involving a resurrection of the body effected by the Spirit or divine principle which God withdrew from human beings because of sins, Gn 6:3, but restored to all who are united to the risen Christ, Rm 1:4+; 8:11, who is the 'heavenly' man and life-giving Spirit, 1 Co 15:45-49. The 'body' is no longer *psychikon* but *pneumatikon*, it is incorruptible, immortal, 1 Co 15:53, glorious, 1 Co 15:43; cf. Rm 8:18; 2 Co 4:17; Ph 3:21; Col 3:4, no longer subject to the laws of matter, Jn 20:19,26; it does not even answer the description of matter, Lk 24:16. *Psyche* can be used in a wider sense as the opposite of the body to indicate what it is in a human being that behaves and feels, Ph 1:27; Ep 6:6; Col 3:23; cf. Mt 22:37p; 26:38p; Lk 1:46; Jn 12:27; Ac 4:32; 14:2; 1 P 2:11; etc., or even to indicate the spiritual and immortal soul, Mt 10:28, 39p; Ac 2:27; Jm 1:21; 5:20; 1 P 1:9; Rv 6:9; etc.

m. Something that is alive because it has a *psyche* giving it a merely natural life, subject to decay and corruption.

n. The Vulg. reading 'we all die but we shall not all be changed' is incorrect.

o. I.e. those who will be alive at the time, among whom Paul could theoretically have been included, cf. 1 Th 5:1+.

p. Om. 'When this perishable nature has put on imperishability'.

q. A free quotation.

16 a. On this collection see Rm 15:26-28; Ga 2:10; 2 Co 8:9; Ac 24:17. The 'saints' (cf. 2 Co 8:4) are the Christians in Jerusalem who from the earliest days stood in need of help. Ac 11:29-30. Paul was very anxious to have this collection made, since he regarded it as a sign and a pledge of unity between the churches he had founded and those of the Judaeo-Christians.

b. Lit. 'First day of the week', i.e. 'The Lord's Day', cf. Ac 20:7; Rv 1:10; Mt 28:1.

c. An alternative translation 'This time, I do not want to pay you a passing visit'; this would presuppose a short visit recently made, which is hardly likely.

d. The same image is used in 2 Co 2:12; Col 4:3; it indicates Paul's missionary opportunities, cf. Rv 3:8.

him happily on his way to come back to me; the brothers and I are waiting for
Ac 18:24+ him.[e] •As for our brother Apollos, I begged him to come to you with the brothers 12
but he was quite firm that he did not want to go yet[f] and he will come as soon
as he can.

Be awake to all the dangers; stay firm in the faith; be brave and be strong. 13
Let everything you do be done in love. 14

1:16 There is something else to ask you, brothers. You know how the Stephanas 15
Rm 16:5-6 family, who were the first-fruits of Achaia, have really worked hard to help the
Ph 2:29-30 saints. •Well, I want you in your turn to put yourselves at the service of people 16
1 Th 5:12-13 like this, and anyone who helps and works with them. •I am delighted that 17
Heb 13:17 Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus[g] have arrived; they make up for your
absence. •They have settled my mind, and yours too; I hope you appreciate men 18
like this.

Ac 18:2+ All the churches of Asia[h] send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, with the 19
Rm 16:5+ church that meets at their house, send you their warmest wishes, in the Lord.
2 Co 13:12 All the brothers send your their greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. 20
Ga 6:11+ This greeting is in my own hand—Paul. 21
Col 4:18
11:27 If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse on him. 'Maran atha.'[i] 22
Ph 4:5 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 23
My love is with you all in Christ Jesus. 24

16 e. The phrase is ambiguous: either Paul and the 'brothers' of Ephesus are waiting for Timothy, or Paul expects Timothy and the 'brothers' who are his travelling companions (of whom Erastus was one, Ac 19:22).

f. In case his presence aggravated party feeling among his own supporters, 1:12; 3:4-6; 4:6.

g. Probably these had brought the letter from the Corinthians to Paul, 7:1.

h. The Roman province is meant.

i. These Aramaic words ('the Lord is coming') had passed into liturgical use: they expressed the hope that the *parousia* would not be long delayed. An alternative reading is *Marana tha* (Lord, come!), Rv 22:20. Cf. Rm 13:12; Ph 4:5; Jm 5:8; 1 P 4:7.

2 CORINTHIANS

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

INTRODUCTION

Address and greetings. Thanksgiving

Rm 1:1+

1 1 From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from
Timothy, one of the brothers, to the church of God at Corinth and to all the Ac 16:1+ 1 Co 1:2+
2 saints in the whole of Achaia. •Grace and peace to you from God our Father and Ac 9:13+
the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a gentle Father and
4 the God of all consolation, •who comforts us in all our sorrows, so that we can
offer others, in their sorrows, the consolation that we have received from God
5 ourselves. •Indeed, as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so, through Christ, Ph 1:20+ Col 1:24+
6 does our consolation overflow. •When we are made to suffer, it is for your
consolation and salvation. When, instead, we are comforted, this should be a
consolation to you, supporting you in patiently bearing the same sufferings as
7 we bear. •And our hope for you is confident, since we know that, sharing our
sufferings, you will also share our consolations.

8 For we should like you to realise, brothers, that the things we had to undergo[a] Ac 20:19 1 Co 15:32
in Asia were more of a burden than we could carry, so that we despaired of
9 coming through alive. •Yes, we were carrying our own death warrant with us, 4:7 Rm 1:4+; 4:17; 8: 11+
and it has taught us not to rely on ourselves but only on God, who raises the
10 dead to life. •And he saved us from dying, as he will save us again; yes, that is our
11 firm hope in him, that in the future he will save us again. •You must all join in the Rm 15:30+
prayers for us: the more people there are asking for help for us, the more will be
giving thanks when it is granted to us. 4:15; 9:12

I. SOME RECENT EVENTS REVIEWED

Why Paul changed his plans

12 There is one thing we are proud of, and our conscience tells us it is true: that 1:17 Jm 3:15
we have always treated everybody, and especially you, with the reverence[b] and
sincerity which come from God, and by the grace of God, we have done this
13 without ulterior motives. •There are no hidden meanings in our letters besides 1 Co 1:17; 2:1f
14 what you can read for yourselves and understand. •And I hope that, although
you do not know us very well yet, you will have come to recognise, when the day 1 Co 1:8+
of our Lord Jesus comes, that you can be as proud of us as we are of you. Ph 1:26; 2: 16; 4:1

15 Because I was so sure of this, I had meant to come to you first, so that you 1 Th 2:19-20
16 would benefit doubly;[c] •staying with you before going to Macedonia and coming
back to you again on the way back from Macedonia, for you to see me on my way
17 to Judaea.[d] •Do you think I was not sure of my own intentions when I planned

1 a. It is not known what incident this refers to.
b. Var. 'single-mindedness'.
c. Var. 'to give you a double pleasure'.
d. Paul must therefore have changed the plan mentioned in 1 Co 16:5-6.

this? Do you really think that when I am making my plans, my motives are
1:12 Rm 7:5+ ordinary human ones, and that I say Yes, yes, and No, no, at the same time?
Mt 5:37 1 Co 1:9 I swear by God's truth, there is no Yes and No about what we say to you. 18 •The 19
Son of God, the Christ Jesus that we proclaimed among you—I mean Silvanus[c]
Ac 16:1+; 18:5 and Timothy and I—was never Yes and No: with him it was always Yes, 20 •and
however many the promises God made, the Yes to them all is in him. That is
1 Co 14:16 Rv 3:14+ why it is 'through him' that we answer Amen to the praise of God. 21 •Remember
13:13+ it is God himself who assures us all, and you, of our standing in Christ, and has
1 Jn 2:20,27 Rm 5:5+; anointed us, 22 •marking us with his seal and giving us the pledge, the Spirit, that
6:4+ Ep 1:13-14 we carry in our hearts.

Rm 1:9 By my life, I call God to witness that the reason why I did not come to Corinth 23
after all was to spare your feelings. 24 •We are not dictators over your faith, but are
fellow workers with you for your happiness; in the faith you are steady enough.
2 Well then, I made up my mind not to pay you a second distressing visit.[a] 1
I may have hurt you, but if so I have hurt the only people who could give me any 2
pleasure. 3 •I wrote as I did[b] to make sure that, when I came, I should not be dis-
tressed by the very people who should have made me happy. I am sure you all
know that I could never be happy unless you were. 4 •When I wrote to you, in deep
distress and anguish of mind, and in tears, it was not to make you feel hurt but
to let you know how much love I have for you.

Someone has been the cause of pain; and the cause of pain not to me, but to 5
some degree—not to overstate it—to all of you. 6 •The punishment already imposed
by the majority on the man in question[c] is enough; 7 •and the best thing now is to
Col 3:13 2 Th 3:14 give him your forgiveness and encouragement, or he might break down from so
much misery. 8 •So I am asking you to give some definite proof of your love for
him. 9 •What I really wrote for, after all, was to test you and see whether you are
completely obedient. 10 •Anybody that you forgive, I forgive; and as for my
forgiving anything—if there has been anything to be forgiven, I have forgiven
it for your sake in the presence of Christ. 11 •And so we will not be outwitted by
Ep 4:27 Satan—we know well enough what his intentions are.

From Troas to Macedonia. The apostolate: its importance

1 Co 16:9+ When I went up to Troas to preach the Good News of Christ, and the door 12
was wide open for my work there in the Lord, 13 •I was so continually uneasy in
7:6 Ga 2:1 Ti 1:4 mind at not meeting brother Titus[d] there, I said good-bye to them and went
on to Macedonia.

Thanks be to God who, wherever he goes, makes us, in Christ, partners of his 14
Col 2:15 triumph,[e] and through us is spreading the knowledge of himself, like a sweet smell,
everywhere. 15 •We are Christ's incense to God for those who are being saved and
1 Co 1:18 for those who are not; 16 •for the last, the smell of death that leads to death, for the
first the sweet smell of life that leads to life. And who could be qualified for work
like this? 17 •At least we do not go round offering the word of God for sale, as many
other people do. In Christ, we speak as men of sincerity, as envoys of God and
in God's presence.

5:12; 10:12f; 11:18f Ac 18:27 3 Does this sound like a new attempt to commend ourselves to you? Unlike 1
other people, we need no letters of recommendation either to you or from
1 Co 9:2 you, 2 •because you are yourselves our letter, written in our[a] hearts, that anybody
can see and read, 3 •and it is plain that you are a letter from Christ, drawn up by
Ex 24:12+ us, and written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on stone
Jr 31:33 Ezk 11:19; 36:26 tablets but on the tablets of your living hearts.

Before God, we are confident of this through Christ: 4 5 •not that we are qualified
Jn 3:27 in ourselves to claim anything as our own work: all our qualifications come from
Ep 3:7 Col 1:23,25 God. 6 •He is the one who has given us the qualifications to be the administrators
of this new covenant, which is not a covenant of written letters but of the Spirit:
Rm 2:29; 7:5+ the written letters bring death, but the Spirit gives life. 7 •Now if the administering
Ex 32:16; 34:29-35 of death, in the written letters engraved on stones, was accompanied by such a

brightness that the Israelites could not bear looking at the face of Moses, though Heb 3:2
8 it was a brightness that faded, •then how much greater will be the brightness that
9 surrounds the administering of the Spirit! •For if there was any splendour in
administering condemnation, there must be very much greater splendour in
10 administering justification. •In fact, compared with this greater splendour, the
11 thing that used to have such splendour now seems to have none; •and if what
was so temporary had any splendour, there must be much more in what is going
to last for ever.

12 Having this hope, we can be quite confident; •not like Moses, who put a veil 1 Th 2:2
13 over his face so that the Israelites would not notice the ending of what had to
14 fade.[b] •And anyway, their minds had been dulled; indeed, to this very day, that 2 Tm 3:15
same veil is still there when the old covenant is being read, a veil never lifted, since Rm 10:4
15 Christ alone can remove it.[c] •Yes, even today, whenever Moses is read, the veil is Ex 34:34 Rm 11:7-10
16 over their minds. •It will not be removed until they turn to the Lord. •Now this
17 Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. •And
18 we, with our unveiled[d] faces reflecting like mirrors[e] the brightness of the Lord,[f] all 4:6+ Rm 8:29+ 1 Co 11:5+ 2 P 1:4 1 Jn 3:2 Rv 21:23
grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image[g] that we reflect; this
is the work of the Lord who is Spirit.

1 4 Since we have by an act of mercy been entrusted with this work of adminis- Rm 1:16
2 tration, there is no weakening on our part. •On the contrary, we will have
none of the reticence of those who are ashamed, no deceitfulness or watering 1 Th 2:4-5
down the word of God; but the way we commend ourselves to every human
3 being with a conscience is by stating the truth openly in the sight of God. •If our
gospel does not penetrate the veil, then the veil is on those who are not on the
4 way to salvation; •the unbelievers whose minds the god of this world[a] has blinded, Ep 2:2 2 Th 2:10 *Jn 14:7* Rm 8:29+
to stop them seeing the light shed by the Good News of the glory of Christ, who
5 is the image of God. •For it is not ourselves that we are preaching, but Christ 1 Tm 1:11
6 Jesus as the Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. •It is the same
God that said, 'Let there be light shining out of darkness', who has shone in our Gn 1:3 Jn 8:12+ *Rm 3:23+* Heb 1:3
minds to radiate the light of the knowledge of God's glory, the glory on the face
of Christ.

The trials and hopes of the apostolate

7 We are only the earthenware jars[b] that hold this treasure, to make it clear 1:9; 12:9 1 Co 1:27
8 that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us. •We are in
difficulties on all sides, but never cornered; we see no answer to our problems, 6:4-10 1 Co 4:9-13
9 but never despair; •we have been persecuted, but never deserted; knocked down,
10 but never killed; •always, wherever we may be, we carry with us in our body Col 1:24+
the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus, too, may always be seen in our body.
11 Indeed, while we are still alive, we are consigned to our death every day, for the 6:9 1 Co 15:31

e. Silvanus is the disciple called Silas in Ac.

2 a. An allusion to a painful visit which Paul must have made to Corinth before writing 2 Co, see Introduction to the Letters of St Paul.

b. An allusion to the 'severe letter' of 2:3,4,9; 7:8,12; see Introduction.

c. The man who had given offence to Paul or to Paul's representative, see Introduction.

d. A Christian of pagan birth, possibly converted by Paul, Tt 1:4, whom he accompanies on Paul's second journey to Jerusalem, Ga 2:1. He was commissioned by Paul to visit Corinth and to settle its problems; in this he was entirely successful, 2 Co 7:5-7. Soon afterwards Paul sent him to Corinth to organise the collection. We meet him again in Crete (63-64) controlling the communities Paul had founded there after his release from the first Roman captivity. It was from there that Paul wrote to Titus asking him to meet him again at Nicopolis in Epirus, Tt 3:12. During Paul's second Roman captivity (66-67) Titus was in Dalmatia, 2 Tm 4:10. Titus with his shrewdness and his strong, well-balanced character, seems to have made an admirable colleague for Paul.

e. Like a victorious general making his solemn entry into Rome, God passes triumphantly through the world with his apostles in his train. Cf. Col 2:15.

3 a. Var. 'your'.

b. Free interpretation, in the rabbinic style, of Ex 34:33-35.

c. Alternative translation 'nor is it revealed to them that this covenant has been abolished by Christ'.

d. As that of Moses had been.

e. Or 'contemplating'.

f. The 'brightness of the Lord' is the glory of Jesus, being 'the glory on the face of Christ', 4:6.

g. The contemplation of God in Christ gives the Christian a likeness to God, Rm 8:29+, cf. 1 Jn 3:2.

4 a. Satan, cf. Ep 2:2. See Lk 4:6, Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

b. Perhaps 'bodies of clay', cf. 1 Th 4:4, alluding to Gn 2:7.

sake of Jesus, so that in our mortal flesh the life of Jesus, too, may be openly shown. •So death is at work in us, but life in you. 12

But as we have the same spirit of faith that is mentioned in scripture— 13
Ps 116:10 *I believed, and therefore I spoke*—we too believe and therefore we too speak,
Rm 1:4+; 8:11+ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus to life will raise us with Jesus in our 14
turn, and put us by his side and you with us. •You see, all this is for your benefit, 15
1:11 so that the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving there will be, to the glory of God.

Rm 7:22+ That is why there is no weakening on our part, and instead, though this outer 16
man of ours may be falling into decay, the inner man is renewed day by day.
Ws 3:5 Mt 5:11-12 Rm 8:18 1 P 5:10 Yes, the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the 17
carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them. •And 18
Rm 8:24-25 Heb 11:1,3 so we have no eyes for things that are visible, but only for things that are invisible; for visible things last only for a time, and the invisible things are eternal.

Is 38:12 2 P 1:14 *1 Co 15:44-49* **5** For we know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there 1
is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands,
Ph 3:20 Col 3:3-4 *Rm 8:23* 1 Co 15:51-53 1 Th 4:15 in the heavens. •In this present state, it is true, we groan as we wait with longing 2
to put on our heavenly home[a] over the other; •we should like to be found wearing 3
clothes and not without them.[b] •Yes, we groan and find it a burden being still 4
in this tent, not that we want to strip it off, but to put the second garment over it
1:22+ Rm 8:23 and to have what must die taken up into life. •This is the purpose for which 5
God made us, and he has given us the pledge of the Spirit.

1 P 1:1+,17 We are always full of confidence, then, when we remember that to live in the 6
body means to be exiled from the Lord, •going as we do by faith and not by sight 7
Rm 8:24 1 Co 13:12 Ph 1:21-23 —we are full of confidence, I say, and actually want to be exiled from the body 8
and make our home with the Lord.[c] •Whether we are living in the body or exiled 9
Mt 25:19,31f Rm 14:10 from it, we are intent on pleasing him. •For all the truth about us will be brought 10
Jn 5:27 Heb 11:6+ out in the law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did in the body, good or bad.

The apostolate in action

And so it is with the fear of the Lord in mind that we try to win people over. 11
God knows us for what we really are, and I hope that in your consciences you
3:1+ Ph 1:26 know us too. •This is not another attempt to commend ourselves to you: we are 12
simply giving you reasons to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer ready for the people who can boast more about what they seem than what they are.
If we seemed out of our senses, it was for God; but if we are being reasonable 13
Rm 8:32 Ga 2:20 now, it is for your sake.[d] •And this is because the love of Christ overwhelms us 14
Rm 6:4-11 when we reflect that if one man has died for all, then all men should be dead;
Rm 14:9 1 Tm 2:6 and the reason he died for all was so that living men should live no longer for 15
Rm 6:11+; 7:1+ themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life for them.

Rm 7:5+ From now onwards, therefore, we do not judge anyone by the standards of the 16
Rm 1:3; 9:5 flesh. Even if we did once know Christ in the flesh,[e] that is not how we know him
Is 43:19 *Mt 9:16* Ep 2:10 Heb 8:13 *Rm 5:10* now. •And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation;[f] the old creation 17
has gone, and now the new one is here.[g] •It is all God's work. It was God who 18
reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this
Jn 3:17 reconciliation. •In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to 19
himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. •So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though 20
God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name
Is 53:5-8 Rm 8:3 Ga 3:13 1 P 2:24 1 Jn 3:5 is: be reconciled to God. •For our sake God made the sinless one into sin,[h] so 21
that in him we might become the goodness of God. **6** As his fellow workers, we 1
beg you once again not to neglect the grace of God that you have received. •For 2
Is 49:8 he says: *At the favourable time, I have listened to you; on the day of salvation I came to your help.* Well, now is the favourable time; this is the day of salvation.[a]

We do nothing that people might object to, so as not to bring discredit on our function as God's servants. •Instead, we prove we are servants of God by great fortitude in times of suffering: in times of hardship and distress; •when we are flogged, or sent to prison, or mobbed; labouring, sleepless, starving. •We prove we are God's servants by our purity, knowledge, patience and kindness; by a spirit of holiness, by a love free from affectation; •by the word of truth and by the power of God; by being armed with the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left, •prepared for honour or disgrace, for blame or praise; taken for impostors while we are genuine; •obscure yet famous; said to be dying and here are we alive; rumoured to be executed before we are sentenced; •thought most miserable and yet we are always rejoicing; taken for paupers though we make others rich, for people having nothing though we have everything.

8:21 4:8-10 1 Co 4:9-13 Ga 5:22 10:4 Ep 6:11+ 1 Co 7:29-3 4:11 Rm 8:32

Paul opens his heart. A warning

Corinthians, we have spoken to you very frankly;[b] our mind has been opened in front of you. •Any constraint that you feel is not on our side; the constraint is in your own selves. •I speak as if to children of mine: as a fair exchange, open your minds in the same way.

7:3 Ga 4:19

[c]Do not harness yourselves in an uneven team with unbelievers. Virtue is no companion for crime. Light and darkness have nothing in common. •Christ is not the ally of Beliar,[d] nor has a believer anything to share with an unbeliever. The temple of God has no common ground with idols, and that is what we[e] are—the temple of the living God. We have God's word for it: *I will make my home among them and live with them; I will be their God and they shall be my people.* •Then *come away from them and keep aloof, says the Lord. Touch nothing that is unclean, and I will welcome you •and be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Almighty Lord.*

Dt 22:10 Jn 8:12+ Dt 13:14+ 1 Co 3:16-17 Lv 26:11-12 Nb 5:3 Ezk 37:27 Is 52:11 Jr 51:45 *2 S 7:14* Is 43:6 Jr 31:9

With promises like these made to us, dear brothers, let us wash off all that can soil either body or spirit, to reach perfection of holiness in the fear of God.

Keep a place for us in your hearts. We have not injured anyone, or ruined anyone, or exploited anyone. •I am not saying this to put any blame on you; as I have already told you, you are in our hearts—together we live or together

6:11-13

5 a. That is, to be given our 'spiritual body', 1 Co 15:44+, without having to suffer death and corruption, v. 4.

b. That is to say, on the supposition that we are still alive when Christ returns in glory. Paul wants to be of the number of those who will live to see the coming of the Lord and whose bodies will be transformed without having to die. Over the 'natural body' they will, as it were, 'put on' the 'spiritual body', 1 Co 15:44,53,54, which will be 'absorbed' by the former.

c. Here and in Ph 1:23 Paul has in mind a union of Christians with Christ on the death of each individual. This does not contradict the biblical doctrine of the final universal resurrection, Rm 2:6+; 1 Co 15:44+, but this expectation of happiness for the soul that has left the body after death betrays the influence of Greek thought, an influence already making itself felt in the Judaism of the period, cf. Lk 16:22; 23:43; 1 P 3:19+. Cf. also the texts referring to ecstatic states when the soul is 'out of the body', 2 Co 12:2f; cf. Rv 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10.

d. Paul is taxed with 'folly'; he retorts that this is in God's cause. But he adds that he can be 'reasonable' when he wishes, for the sake of his children in Christ.

e. Paul seems to be protesting against the restriction of the apostolic privilege to those who had known Jesus in his earthly life, cf. Rm 1:1+; 1 Co 1:12+.

f. God who created all things through Christ, cf. Jn 1:3, has restored his work, deformed by sin, by re-creating it in Christ, Col 1:15-20+. The central figure of this 'new creation', here and Ga 6:15—which extends to the whole universe, Col 1:19+; cf. 2 P 3:13; Rv 21:1—is the 'new man' created in Christ, Ep 2:15+, to lead a new life, Rm 6:4, of virtue and holiness, Ep 2:10; 4:24+; Col 3:10+. Cf. the 'new birth' of baptism, Rm 6:4+.

g. Var. 'all is new'

h. By a kind of legal fiction God identified Jesus with sin so that he might bear the curse incurred by sin, Ga 3:13; Rm 8:3.

6 a. There is an intermediary period, Rm 13:11+, between the time of Christ's coming, Rm 3:26+, and his return, 1 Co 1:8+. This period is the 'day of salvation', a time allowed for conversion, Ac 3:20f; it is granted to the 'remnant', Rm 11:5, and to the pagans, Rm 11:25; Ep 2:12f; cf. 2 Co 8:14; Lk 21:24. Though the duration is uncertain, 1 Th 5:1+, this time of pilgrimage must be regarded as being short, 1 P 1:17; 1 Co 7:26-31; cf. Rv 10:16; 12:12; 20:3, and full of trials, Ep 5:16; 6:13, and sufferings which are a prelude to the glory to come, Rm 8:11. The end is at hand, 1 P 4:7; cf. Rv 1:3+ and 1 Co 16:22; Ph 4:5; Jm 5:8, the day approaches, Rm 13:11, and it is necessary to be on the watch, 1 Th 5:6; cf. Mk 13:33, and to use the time well that remains, Col 4:5; Ep 5:16, for one's own salvation and that of others, Ga 6:10, leaving the final vindication to God, Rm 12:19; 1 Co 4:5.

b. Lit. 'our mouth is open to (or: for) you'.

c. 6:14–7:1 is a warning against the infiltration of pagan practices which would split the church and cut it off from its founder. This section is some-what alien to the context, cf. Introduction.

d. Var. 'Belial'.

e. Var. 'you'.

we die. •I have the very greatest confidence in you, and I am so proud of you that 4
Col 1:24 in all our trouble I am filled with consolation and my joy is overflowing.

Paul in Macedonia; he is joined by Titus

Even after we had come to Macedonia, however, there was no rest for this 5
body of ours.[a] Far from it; we found trouble on all sides: quarrels outside, mis-
givings inside. •But God comforts the miserable, and he comforted us, by the 6
2:13 arrival of Titus, •and not only by his arrival but also by the comfort which he 7
1 Th 3:6 had gained from you. He has told us all about how you want to see me, how sorry
you were, and how concerned for me, and so I am happier now than I was before.
Heb 12:11 But to tell the truth, even if I distressed you by my letter,[b] I do not regret it. 8
I did regret it before, and I see that that letter did distress you, at least for a time;
but I am happy now—not because I made you suffer, but because your suffering 9
led to your repentance. Yours has been a kind of suffering that God approves,
and so you have come to no kind of harm from us. •To suffer in God's way 10
means changing for the better and leaves no regrets, but to suffer as the world
knows suffering brings death. •Just look at what suffering in God's way has 11
brought you: what keenness, what explanations, what indignation, what alarm!
Yes, and what aching to see me, what concern for me, and what justice done![c]
In every way you have shown yourselves blameless in this affair. •So then, though 12
I wrote the letter to you, it was not written for the sake either of the offender
or of the one offended;[d] it was to make you realise, in the sight of God, your own
concern for us. •That is what we have found so encouraging. 13

With this encouragement, too, we had the even greater happiness of finding
Titus so happy; thanks to you all, he has no more worries; •I had rather boasted 14
to him about you, and now I have not been made to look foolish; in fact, our
boasting to Titus has proved to be as true as anything that we ever said to you.
His own personal affection for you is all the greater when he remembers how 15
1 Co 2:3+ willing you have all been, and with what deep respect you welcomed him. •I am 16
2 Th 3:4 very happy knowing that I can rely on you so completely.

II. ORGANISATION OF THE COLLECTION

Why the Corinthians should be generous

11:8-9 8 Now here, brothers, is the news of the grace of God which was given in the 1
1 Co 16:5 churches in Macedonia; •and of how, throughout great trials by suffering, 2
their constant cheerfulness and their intense poverty have overflowed in a wealth
of generosity. •I can swear that they gave not only as much as they could afford, 3
but far more, and quite spontaneously, •begging and begging us for the favour 4
1 Co 16:1+ of sharing in this service to the saints •and, what was quite unexpected, they 5
offered their own selves first to God and, under God, to us.

Because of this, we have asked Titus, since he has already made a beginning, 6
to bring this work of mercy to the same point of success among you. •You 7
1 Co 1:5 always have the most of everything—of faith, of eloquence, of understanding, of
keenness for any cause, and the biggest share of our affection[a]—so we expect
you to put the most into this work of mercy too. •It is not an order that I am 8
giving you; I am just testing the genuineness of your love against the keenness of
Mt 5:3+; 8:20 others. •Remember how generous the Lord Jesus was:[b] he was rich, but he 9
Ph 2:6-7 9:15 became poor for your[c] sake, to make you rich out of his poverty. •As I say, I am 10
1 Co 1:5 Heb 12:2 only making a suggestion; it is only fair to you, since you were the first, a year
ago, not only in taking action but even in deciding to. •So now finish the work 11
and let the results be worthy, as far as you can afford it, of the decision you made
so promptly. •As long as the readiness is there, a man is acceptable with whatever 12
he can afford; never mind what is beyond his means. •This does not mean that 13
to give relief to others you ought to make things difficult for yourselves: it is

14 a question of balancing •what happens to be your surplus now against their present need, and one day they may have something to spare that will supply
15 your own need. That is how we strike a balance: •as scripture says: *The man who gathered much had none too much, the man who gathered little did not go short.*

Rm 15:26-27
Ex 16:18

The delegates recommended to the Corinthians

16 I thank God for putting into Titus' heart the same concern for you that I have
17 myself. •He did what we asked him; indeed he is more concerned than ever, and
18 is visiting you on his own initiative. •As his companion we are sending the
19 brother[d] who is famous in all the churches for spreading the gospel. •More than that, he happens to be the same brother who has been elected by the churches to be our companion on this errand of mercy that, for the glory of God, we have
20 undertaken to satisfy our impatience to help. •We hope that in this way there
21 will be no accusations made about our administering such a large fund; •for *we*
22 *are trying to do right* not only *in the sight of God* but *also* in the sight of *men*. •To accompany these, we are sending a third brother,[e] of whose keenness we have often had proof in many different ways, and who is particularly keen about this,
23 because he has great confidence in you. •Titus, perhaps I should add, is my own colleague and fellow worker in your interests; the other two brothers, who are
24 delegates of the churches, are a real glory to Christ. •So then, in front of all the churches, give them a proof of your love, and prove to them that we are right to be proud of you.

12:18

Pr 3:4 LXX
Rm 12:17

1 9 There is really no need for me to write to you[a] on the subject of offering
2 your services to the saints, •since I know how anxious you are to help; in fact, I boast about you to the Macedonians, telling them, 'Achaia has been ready
3 since last year'. So your zeal has been a spur to many more. •I am sending the brothers all the same, to make sure that our boasting about you does not prove to have been empty this time, and that you really are ready as I said you would
4 be. •If some of the Macedonians who are coming with me found you unprepared, we should be humiliated—to say nothing of yourselves—after being so confident.
5 That is why I have thought it necessary to ask these brothers to go on to you ahead of us, and make sure in advance that the gift you promised is all ready, and that it all comes as a gift out of your generosity and not by being extorted from you.

Blessings to be expected from the collection

6 Do not forget: thin sowing means thin reaping; the more you sow, the more
7 you reap. •Each one should give what he has decided in his own mind, not
8 grudgingly or because he is made to, for *God loves a cheerful giver*. •And there is no limit to the blessings which God can send you—he will make sure that you will always have all you need for yourselves in every possible circumstance, and
9 still have something to spare for all sorts of good works. •As scripture says: *He was free in almsgiving, and gave to the poor: his good deeds will never be forgotten.*
10 The one who provides *seed for the sower and bread for food* will provide you with
11 all the seed you want and make *the harvest of your good deeds* a larger one, •and, made richer in every way, you will be able to do all the generous things which,
12 through us, are the cause of thanksgiving to God. •For doing this holy service is not only supplying all the needs of the saints, but it is also increasing the

Pr 11:24-25
Tb 4:16
Pr 22:8 LXX
Ps 112:9
Is 55:10
Ho 10:12

7 a. Emphasising the 'weak' side of Paul, cf. Rm 7:5+.
b. The 'severe letter', cf. 2:3+.
c. I.e. to the guilty man. Paul is enumerating the effects his 'severe letter' had on the Corinthians, cf. 2:5-8.
d. Probably one of Paul's envoys.
8 a. Var. 'the charity towards us which unites us to you'.
b. Lit. 'the generosity (or perhaps 'grace') of the Lord Jesus'.
c. Var. 'our'.
d. Possibly Luke.
e. Identity unknown.
9 a. Since Paul has just written of this at some length, it is possible that ch. 9 was a short note to the churches of Achaia, being inserted here subsequently to follow the instructions on the same subject addressed to the church of Corinth in ch. 8, cf. Introduction.

1:11 amount of thanksgiving that God receives. 13 •By offering this service, you show
1 Co 16:1+ them what you are, and that makes them give glory to God for the way you accept
Ac 2:42 and profess the gospel of Christ, and for your sympathetic generosity to them
and to all. 14 •And their prayers for you, too, show how they are drawn to you on
8:9 account of all the grace that God has given you. 15 •Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift![b]

III. PAUL'S APOLOGIA

Paul's reply to accusations of weakness

Mt 11:29 1 Co 2:3 Ph 2:3 10 This is a personal matter; this is Paul himself appealing to you by the 1
gentleness and patience of Christ—I, the man who is so humble when he
is facing you, but bullies you when he is at a distance.[a] 2 •I only ask that I do not
1 Co 4:21 have to bully you when I come, with all the confident assurance I mean to show
when I come face to face with people I could name who think we go by ordinary
Rm 7:5+ human motives. 3 •We live in the flesh, of course, but the muscles that we fight
6:7 with are not flesh. 4 •Our war is not fought with weapons of flesh, yet they are
1 Co 1:25 Ep 6:11 strong enough, in God's cause,[b] to demolish fortresses. We demolish sophistries,
Is 2:11-18 and the arrogance that tries to resist the knowledge of God; every thought is 5
our prisoner, captured to be brought into obedience to Christ. 6 •Once you have
Rm 1:5+ given your complete obedience, we are prepared to punish any disobedience.

1 Co 1:12 Face plain facts.[c] Anybody who is convinced that he belongs to Christ must 7
11:23 go on to reflect that we all belong to Christ no less than he does. 8 •Maybe I do
13:10 Jr 1:10 boast rather too much about our authority, but the Lord gave it to me for building
you up and not for pulling you down, and I shall not be ashamed of it. 9 •I do not
want you to think of me as someone who only frightens you by letter. 10 •Someone
Si 11:2 said, 'He writes powerful and strongly-worded letters but when he is with you
you see only half a man and no preacher at all'. 11 •The man who said that can
remember this: whatever we are like in the words of our letters when we are
absent, that is what we shall be like in our actions when we are present.

His reply to the accusation of ambition

3:1+ We are not being so bold as to rank ourselves, or invite comparison, with 12
Pr 27:2 Ga 6:4 certain people who write their own references. Measuring themselves against
themselves, and comparing themselves to themselves, they are simply foolish.
We, on the other hand, are not going to boast without a standard to measure 13
Rm 15:19f against:[d] taking for our measure the yardstick which God gave us to measure
Col 1:25 with, which is long enough to reach to you. 14 •We are not stretching further than
we ought; otherwise we should not have reached you, as we did come all the
Rm 15:20-21 way to you with the gospel of Christ. 15 •So we are not boasting without any measure,
about work that was done by other people; in fact, we trust that, as your faith
grows, we shall get taller and taller, when judged by our own standard.[e] 16 •I mean,
we shall be carrying the gospel to places far beyond you, without encroaching on
Jr 9:22-23 Si 10:19-24 anyone else's field, not boasting of the work already done. 17 •*If anyone wants to*
1 Co 1:31 *boast, let him boast of the Lord.* 18 •It is not the man who commends himself that
can be accepted, but the man who is commended by the Lord.

Paul is driven to sound his own praises

11 I only wish you were able to tolerate a little foolishness from me. But of 1
Dt 4:24+ course: you are tolerant towards me.[a] 2 •You see, the jealousy that I feel
Ep 5:27 for you is God's own jealousy: I arranged for you to marry Christ so that I might
Rv 21:2,9 give you away as a chaste virgin to this one husband. 3 •But the serpent, with his
Gn 3:1-6 cunning, seduced Eve, and I am afraid that in the same way your ideas may get
corrupted and turned away from simple[b] devotion to Christ. 4 •Because any newcomer has only to proclaim a new Jesus, different from the one that we preached,

or you have only to receive a new spirit, different from the one you have already received, or a new gospel, different from the one you have already accepted—and you welcome it with open arms. •As far as I can tell, these arch-apostles have nothing more than I have. •I may not be a polished speechmaker, but as for knowledge, that is a different matter; surely we have made this plain, speaking on every subject in front of all of you.[c]

Ga 1:6-9
12:11
1 Co 2:1-5

Or was I wrong, lowering myself so as to lift you high, by preaching the gospel of God to you and taking no fee for it? •I was robbing other churches living on them so that I could serve you. •When I was with you and ran out of money, I was no burden to anyone; the brothers who came from Macedonia provided me with everything I wanted. I was very careful, and I always shall be, not to be a burden to you in any way, •and by Christ's truth in me, this cause of boasting will never be taken from me in the regions of Achaia. •Would I do that if I did not love you? God knows I do. •I intend to go on doing what I am doing now—leaving no opportunity for those people who are looking for an opportunity to claim[d] equality with us in what they boast of. •These people are counterfeit apostles, they are dishonest workmen disguised as apostles of Christ. •There is nothing unexpected about that; if Satan himself goes disguised as an angel of light, there is no need to be surprised when his servants, too, disguise themselves as the servants of righteousness. They will come to the end that they deserve.

Ac 18:3+
1 Co 9:18
8:1-2
Ph 4:15
1 Co 9:15
Rv 2:2
Rv 2:2

As I said before, let no one take me for a fool; but if you must, then treat me as a fool and let me do a little boasting of my own. •What I am going to say now is not prompted by the Lord,[e] but said as if in a fit of folly, in the certainty that I have something to boast about. •So many others have been boasting of their worldly achievements, that I will boast myself. •You are all wise men and can cheerfully tolerate fools, •yes, even to tolerating somebody who makes slaves of you, makes you feed him, imposes on you, orders you about and slaps you in the face. •I hope you are ashamed of us for being weak[f] with you instead!

Rm 7:5+
3:1+

But if anyone wants some brazen speaking—I am still talking as a fool—then I can be as brazen as any of them, and about the same things.[g] •Hebrews, are they? So am I. Israelites? So am I. Descendants of Abraham? So am I. •The servants of Christ? I must be mad to say this, but so am I, and more than they: more, because I have worked harder, I have been sent to prison more often, and whipped so many times more, often almost to death. •Five times I had the thirty-nine lashes from the Jews; •three times I have been beaten with sticks; once I was stoned; three times I have been shipwrecked and once adrift in the open sea for a night and a day.[h] •Constantly travelling, I have been in danger from rivers and in danger from brigands, in danger from my own people and in danger from pagans; in danger in the towns, in danger in the open country, danger at sea and danger from so-called brothers. •I have worked and laboured, often without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty and often starving; I have been in the cold without clothes. •And, to leave out much more, there is my daily preoccupation: my anxiety for all the churches. •When any man has had scruples, I have had scruples with him; when any man is made to fall, I am tortured.

Ac 22:3
Rm 11:1
Ga 1:13-14
Ph 3:4-6
10:7
Ac 20:19
1 Co 15:10
2 Tm 3:11
Dt 25:2-3
Ac 16:22
Ac 14:19
1 Co 4:11
1 Co 9:22
Rm 9:1-3

If I am to boast, then let me boast of my own feebleness. •The God and Father of the Lord Jesus—bless him for ever—knows that I am not lying. •When I was

b. The redemption.

10 a. Allusion to the sarcastic remarks of Paul's opponents, cf. v. 10.
b. Or 'in the sight of God'.
c. Or 'You see only what is superficial'.
d. Var. 'Oh no; by measuring ourselves against ourselves and comparing ourselves with our own selves, we will do no unmeasured boasting'.
e. An alternative translation: 'rather it is our hope that, as your faith grows, we shall more and more increase in your esteem, though always according to the standard laid down for us'.

11 a. Or possibly 'Please be tolerant with me'.
b. Add 'and pure'.
c. Or 'on every subject and in every way'.
d. Paul's selflessness is a guarantee of his apostolic mission; his opponents dare not claim the same for themselves.
e. Var. 'God'.
f. Var. 'I say it to our shame that we are weak'.
g. The needs of controversy oblige Paul on several occasions to appeal, as he does here, to his past life as a faithful Jew: Ga 1:13,14; Rm 11:1; Ph 3:4-6; cf. Ac 22:3f; 26:4-5.
h. For the most part nothing further is known of these hardships.

Ac 9:22-25 in Damascus, the ethnarch of King Aretas put guards round the city to catch
Jos 2:15 me, •and I had to be let down over the wall in a hamper, through a window, in 33
order to escape.

12 Must I go on boasting, though there is nothing to be gained by it?[a] But 1
I will move on to the visions and revelations I have had from the Lord.
I know a man in Christ who, fourteen years ago, was caught up—whether still in 2
the body or out of the body, I do not know; God knows—right into the third
Ex 33:20+ heaven.[b] •I do know, however, that this same person—whether in the body or 3
out of the body, I do not know; God knows—•was caught up into paradise and 4
heard things which must not and cannot be put into human language. •I will 5
boast about a man like that, but not about anything of my own except my weaknesses. •If I should decide to boast, I should not be made to look foolish, because 6
I should only be speaking the truth; but I am not going to, in case anyone should
begin to think I am better than he can actually see and hear me[c] to be.

In view of the extraordinary nature of these revelations, to stop me from 7
Rm 9:2 getting too proud I was given a thorn in the flesh,[d] an angel of Satan to beat me
Mt 26:39, 42,44 and stop me from getting too proud![e] •About this thing, I have pleaded with the 8
4:7 Is 40:29 Lord three times for it to leave me, •but he has said, 'My grace is enough for 9
4:7 Rm 1:16; 5:3 you: my power is at its best in weakness'. So I shall be very happy to make my
weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me, •and 10
Col 1:24 that is why I am quite content with my weaknesses, and with insults, hardships,
Ph 4:13 persecutions, and the agonies I go through for Christ's sake. For it is when I am
weak that I am strong.

I have been talking like a fool, but you forced me to do it: you are the ones 11
who should have been commending me. Though I am a nobody, there is not
11:5 1 Co 15:10 a thing these arch-apostles have that I do not have as well. •You have seen, done 12
Ac 1:8+ Rm 15:19 among you, all the things that mark the true apostle unfailingly produced: the
1 Co 2:4 1 Th 1:5 signs, the marvels, the miracles. •Is there anything of which you have had less than 13
the other churches have had, except that I have not myself been a burden on
Ac 18:3+ you? For this unfairness, please forgive me.[f] •I am all prepared now to come to 14
13:1 you for the third time, and I am not going to be a burden on you: it is you I want,
not your possessions. Children are not expected to save up for their parents, but
parents for children. •I am perfectly willing to spend what I have, and to be 15
expended, in the interests of your souls. Because I love you more, must I be loved
the less?[g]

All very well, you say: I personally put no pressure on you, but like the cunning 16
fellow that I am, I took you in by a trick. •So we exploited you, did we, through 17
8:18-22 one of the men that I have sent to you? •Well, Titus went at my urging, and I sent 18
the brother that came with him. Can Titus have exploited you? You know that
he and I have always been guided by the same spirit and trodden in the same
tracks.

Paul's fears and anxieties

All this time[h] you have been thinking that our defence is addressed to you, 19
but it is before God that we, in Christ, are speaking; and it is all, my dear
brothers, for your benefit. •What I am afraid of is that when I come I may find 20
you different from what I want you to be, and you may find that I am not as you
Rm 1:29+ would like me to be; and then there will be wrangling, jealousy, and tempers
roused, intrigues and backbiting and gossip, obstinacies and disorder. •I am 21
afraid that on my next visit, my God may make me ashamed on your account
and I shall be grieving over all those who sinned before and have still not repented
of the impurities, fornication and debauchery they committed.

12:14 Dt 19:15 Mt 18:16 1 Tm 5:19 13 This will be the third time[a] I have come to you. *The evidence of three, or at* 1
least two, witnesses is necessary to sustain the charge. •I gave warning when 2
I was with you the second time and I give warning now, too, before I come, to
those who sinned before and to any others, that when I come again, I shall have

3 no mercy. •You want proof, you say, that it is Christ speaking in me: you have
4 known him not as a weakling, but as a power among you? •Yes, but he was
crucified through weakness, and still he lives now through the power of God. Rm 1:4+
So then, we are weak, as he was, but we shall live with him, through the power Rm 8:11+ 1 Co 1:25
of God, for your benefit.[b]
5 Examine yourselves to make sure you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do
you acknowledge that Jesus Christ is really in you? If not, you have failed the
6 7 test, •but we, as I hope you will come to see, have not failed it. •We pray to God
that you will do nothing wrong: not that we want to appear as the ones who have
8 been successful—we would rather that you did well even though we failed. •We
9 have no power to resist the truth; only to further it. •We are only too glad to be Ac 4:20
weak provided you are strong.[c] What we ask in our prayers is for you to be made
10 perfect. •That is why I am writing this from a distance, so that when I am with
you I shall not need to be strict, with the authority which the Lord gave me for
building up and not for destroying. 10:8 Jr 1:10

CONCLUSION

Recommendations. Greetings. Final good wishes

11 In the meantime, brothers, we wish you happiness; try to grow perfect; help Ph 3:1
one another. Be united; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with
you.
12 Greet one another with the holy kiss.[d] All the saints send you greetings. Rm 16:16 1 Co 16:20
13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the *1:21* 1 Co 2:10 Ep 2:18; 4:6 Ph 2:1
Holy Spirit be with you all.[e]

12 a. Lit. 'Must there be boasting—there is nothing to be gained by it however'; var. 'There is nothing to be gained by boasting; however, I shall pass on...'

b. That is, to the highest heaven.

c. Or 'about me'.

d. Perhaps a disease with severe and unforeseeable attacks; perhaps the resistance of Israel, Paul's brothers 'according to the flesh', to the Christian faith.

e. Om. 'or I might get too proud'. Possibly also the beginning of v. 7 'and for fear... make me too proud' should be read as the conclusion of v. 6. The clause is awkwardly phrased and the text critically uncertain.

f. A good example of Paul's irony.

g. Var. '...souls, even if, loving you the more, I must be loved the less'.

h. Var. 'Once again'.

13 a. The first time was when the church was founded; the second was the distressing visit referred to in 2 Co 2:1; see Introduction.

b. Lit. 'towards you', omitted by some authorities.

c. When the Corinthians are living a fully Christian life they are 'strong', and Paul, not having to rebuke them, is 'weak'; he has no need to exercise his power as an apostle, he as it were 'fails' in the test.

d. The liturgical greeting which symbolises Christian brotherhood. Rm 16:16; 1 Co 16:20; 1 Th 5:26.

e. This trinitarian formula, probably derived from liturgical usage, cf. also Mt 28:19, is echoed in many passages of the epistles where the several functions of the three Persons are referred to as the various contexts suggest: Rm 1:4+; 15:16,30; 1 Co 2:10-16; 6:11,14,15, 19; 12:4-6; 2 Co 1:21f; Ga 4:6; Ph 2:1; Ep 1:3-14; 2:18, 22; 4:4-6; Tt 3:5f; Heb 9:14; 1 P 1:2; 3:18; 1 Jn 4:2; Rv 1:4f; 22:1; cf. Ac 10:38; 20:28; Jn 14:16,18,23. Note in 1 Co 6:11; Ep 4:4-6 the triple formulations emphasising the trinitarian thought. Cf. also the trio of theological virtues in 1 Co 13:13+.

GALATIANS

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH IN GALATIA

Address[a]

Rm 1:1+ 1:11f 1 From Paul to the churches of Galatia, and from all the brothers who are here with me, an apostle who does not owe his authority to men or his appointment to any human being but who has been appointed by Jesus Christ and by God the Rm 1:4+ Father who raised Jesus from the dead. 2 •We wish you the grace and peace of 3 God our Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 •who in order to rescue us from 1 Tm 2:6 1 Jn 5:19 this present wicked world[b] sacrificed himself for our sins, in accordance with Rm 16:27+ the will of God our Father, 5 •to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A warning[c]

2 Th 2:2 6 I am astonished at the promptness with which you have turned away from the Mt 9:16 2 Co 11:4 5:10 one who called you and have decided to follow a different version of the Good News. 7 •Not that there can be more than one Good News; it is merely that some troublemakers among you want to change the Good News of Christ; 8 •and let me warn you that if anyone preaches a version of the Good News different from the one we have already preached to you, whether it be ourselves or an angel Rm 9:3+ from heaven, he is to be condemned.[d] 9 •I am only repeating what we told you 1 Co 11:2+ before: if anyone preaches a version of the Good News different from the one 1 Th 2:4 you have already heard, he is to be condemned. 10 •So now whom am I trying to please—man, or God? Would you say it is men's approval I am looking for?[e] If Rm 1:1 I still wanted that,[f] I should not be what I am—a servant of Christ.

I. PAUL'S APOLOGIA

God's call

1:1 11 The fact is,[g] brothers, and I want you to realise this, the Good News I preached is not a human message 12 •that I was given by men, it is something Mt 16:17 I learnt only through a revelation of Jesus Christ.[h] 13 •You must have heard of Ac 8:1-3+ 2 Co 11:12+ my career as a practising Jew, how merciless I was in persecuting the Church of Mk 7:3f Ac 26:4-5 God, how much damage I did to it, 14 •how I stood out among other Jews of my generation, and how enthusiastic I was for the traditions of my ancestors.

Is 49:1 Jr 1:5 Lk 1:15 15 Then God, who had specially *chosen* me while I was *still in my mother's* 16 *womb*, called me through his grace and chose •to reveal his Son in me,[i] so that Mt 16:17 Ac 9:3-19+ Rm 1:1+ I might preach the Good News about him to the pagans. I did not stop to discuss this with any human being, 17 •nor did I go up[j] to Jerusalem to see those who were already apostles before me, but I went off to Arabia[k] at once and later went Ac 9:23-30+ straight back from there to Damascus. 18 •Even when after three years I went up 2:9 Ac 12:17+ to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days, 19 •I did not see any of the other apostles; I only saw James, the brother of the Lord,[l] 20 •and I

21 swear before God that what I have just written is the literal truth. •After that Rm 1:9+
22 I went to Syria and Cilicia, •and was still not known by sight to the churches of Ac 9:30; 11:25-26
23 Christ in Judaea, •who had heard nothing except that their one-time persecutor
24 was now preaching the faith he had previously tried to destroy; •and they gave glory to God for me.

The meeting at Jerusalem

Ac 11:30+; 15:1+

1 2 It was not till fourteen years[a] had passed that I went up to Jerusalem again.
2 I went with Barnabas and took Titus with me. •I went there as the result of Ac 4:36+
a revelation, and privately I laid before the leading men the Good News as I 2 Co 2:13+
proclaim it among the pagans; I did so for fear the course I was adopting or had Ph 2:16
3 already adopted would not be allowed.[b] •And what happened? Even though Titus
4 who had come with me is a Greek, he was not obliged to be circumcised.[c] •The
question came up only because some who do not really belong to the brotherhood
have furtively crept in to spy on the liberty we enjoy in Christ Jesus, and want Rm 6:15+
5 to reduce us all to slavery. •I was so determined to safeguard for you the true
meaning of the Good News, that I refused even out of deference to yield to
6 such people for one moment.[d] •As a result, these people who are acknowledged
leaders—not that their importance matters to me, since God has no favourites— Dt 10:17+ Ac 10:34
7 these leaders, as I say, had nothing to add to the Good News as I preach it.[e] •On
the contrary, they recognised that I had been commissioned to preach the Good Ac 15:3f,12 Rm 15:17-19
News to the uncircumcised just as Peter had been commissioned to preach it to 1 Tm 2:7
8 the circumcised. •The same person whose action had made Peter the apostle of
9 the circumcised had given me a similar mission to the pagans. •So, James, 1:19+ Ac 12:17+
Cephas and John,[f] these leaders, these pillars, shook hands with Barnabas and Ep 3:8 *Rv 3:12*
me as a sign of partnership: we were to go to the pagans and they to the
10 circumcised.[g] •The only thing they insisted on was that we should remember to 1 Co 16:1+
help the poor, as indeed I was anxious to do.

1 a. This opening is shorter and less friendly than in any other letter: there is not a single word of praise for the Galatians. In vv. 1 and 4, Paul brings in the two main themes of his letter: 1. he is a true apostle, ch. 1-2. 2. he brings the Good News that we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ, and that Christians are therefore free, ch. 3-5.

b. The present world as opposed to the 'world to come' of the messianic era. It coincides with the rule of Satan, Ac 26:18, 'god of this world', 2 Co 4:4, cf. Ep 2:2; Jn 12:31, and with the rule of sin and law, Ga 3:19. By dying and rising Christ has freed us from these forces and made us members of his kingdom, of God's kingdom, Rm 14:17; Col 1:13; Ep 5:5, though we will not be completely freed till we also rise from the dead at the *parousia*, cf. Rm 5-8.

c. This warning takes the place of the thanksgiving with which Paul's letters usually begin, Rm 1:1+.

d. Lit. *anathema*, cf. Rm 9:3+.

e. It appears that the Judaisers accused Paul of trying to make the pagan's conversion easier by not insisting on circumcision. But on this occasion at least, he retorts, he cannot be suspected of a conciliatory attitude.

f. As once he did, i.e. before his conversion when he preached circumcision.

g. Var. 'But' or 'Now'.

h. The two aspects of revelation, i.e. 'as made by Christ' and 'about Christ' v. 16. This should not be taken as meaning that Paul received all his doctrine without human intermediaries, and much less that on the Damascus road all was revealed to him at once. He is referring to the doctrine that it is not obeying the Law that saves, but having faith: this is the only topic of discussion here.

i. Others translate 'reveal his Son to me'. Paul is not denying that his vision was real, 1 Co 9:1; 15:8; cf. Ac 9:17; 22:14; 26:16, he is stressing the inwardness of this real vision and relating this inwardness to his call as apostle of the gentiles.

j. Var. 'leave for', 'go to'.

k. Probably the kingdom of the Nabataean Arabs to the S. of Damascus, 1 M 5:25+, where Paul took refuge from Aretas, 2 Co 11:32.

l. Lit. 'but only James...' Others translate 'except James', either identifying this James with the son of Alphaeus, Mt 10:3p, and taking him for one of the Twelve, or else understanding 'apostle' in the wider sense, cf. Rm 1:1+.

2 a. Reckoning from the last meeting with Peter or else, preferably, from Paul's conversion. It is possible that the 'three years' of 1:18 and the 'fourteen' of 2:1 are no more than one-and-a-half and twelve-and-a-half respectively, since it was customary to count even the last few days or the first few days of a year as a whole year.

b. Lit. 'for fear I was running or had run to no purpose'. Paul is not having second thoughts about the truth of his gospel, he is concerned that when new churches are founded they should keep in touch with the mother church; this is why he felt the collection for the 'poor' in Jerusalem to be important, cf. 1 Co 16:1+; see v. 10.

c. Paul insisted that Timothy be circumcised since his mother was a Jewess, Ac 16:3, cf. 1 Co 9:20: a Jew being defined as one whose mother is Jewish.

d. Lit. 'we did not yield...' By omitting 'not', the Old Latin version makes Paul admit that he gave way for a moment. Om. 'out of deference'.

e. Lit. 'laid down nothing more for me', cf. v. 2.

f. 'James, Cephas and John'; var. 'James, Peter and John', or 'James and John'.

g. This distinction is not racial but geographical: 'the circumcised' (lit. 'the circumcision') refers primarily to the Jews in Palestine, and when Paul went among the gentiles the resident Jews were his first concern, Ac 13:5+.

Ac 15:1 **Peter and Paul at Antioch**

When Cephas came to Antioch, however, I opposed him to his face, since 11
Ac 10:1,28; 15:24 he was manifestly in the wrong.[h] •His custom had been to eat with the pagans,[i] 12
but after certain friends of James arrived he stopped doing this and kept away
from them altogether for fear of the group that insisted on circumcision. •The 13
other Jews joined him in this pretence, and even Barnabas felt himself obliged
to copy their behaviour.

When I saw they were not respecting the true meaning of the Good News, 14
I said to Cephas in front of everyone, 'In spite of being a Jew, you live like the
pagans and not like the Jews, so you have no right to make the pagans copy
Jewish ways.

The Good News as proclaimed by Paul[j]

Ac 10:28 Rm 3:22 Ph 3:9 'Though we were born Jews and not pagan sinners,[k] •we acknowledge that 15 16
what makes a man righteous is not obedience to the Law, but faith in Jesus
Christ. We had to become believers in Christ Jesus no less than you had, and
now we hold that faith in Christ rather than fidelity to the Law is what justifies
Ps 143:2 Rm 3:20+ us, and that *no one can be justified* by keeping the Law. •Now if we were to 17
admit that the result of looking to Christ to justify us is to make us sinners like
the rest, it would follow that Christ had induced us to sin, which would be
absurd. •If I were to return to a position I had already abandoned, I should be 18
Rm 6:11+; 7:1+ admitting I had done something wrong. •In other words, through the Law I am 19
dead to the Law,[l] so that now I can live for God. I have been crucified with
Rm 8:10-11 Ph 1:21 Col 3:3-4 Christ, •and I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who 20
lives in me.[m] The life I now live in this body[n] I live in faith: faith in the Son of
2 Co 5:14 Ep 5:2,25 God[o] who loved me and who sacrificed himself for my sake. •I cannot bring 21
5:2 Jn 15:13 myself to give up God's gift:[p] if the Law can justify us, there is no point in the
death of Christ.'

II. DOCTRINAL MATTERS

Rm 1:16+ **Justification by faith**

3 Are you people in Galatia mad? Has someone put a spell on you, in spite 1
1 Co 2:2 of the plain explanation you have had of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?[a]
Let me ask you one question: was it because you practised the Law that you 2
4:6 Rm 5:5+ received the Spirit, or because you believed what was preached to you? •Are you 3
foolish enough to end in outward observances[b] what you began in the Spirit?
Have all the favours you received been wasted?[c] And if this were so, they would 4
Ac 1:8+ most certainly have been wasted. •Does God give you the Spirit so freely and 5
work miracles among you because you practise the Law, or because you believed
what was preached to you?

Gn 15:6 Rm 4:3 Jm 2:23 *Si 44:19-21* Take Abraham for example: *he put his faith in God, and this faith was* 6
considered as justifying him. •Don't you see that it is those who rely on faith who 7
are the sons of Abraham? •Scripture foresaw that God was going to use faith 8
to justify the pagans, and proclaimed the Good News long ago when Abraham
Gn 12:3+ Ac 3:25 was told: *In you all the pagans will be blessed.* •Those therefore who rely on 9
faith receive the same blessing as Abraham, the man of faith.

Rm 7:7+ **The curse brought by the Law**

Ac 15:10 On the other hand, those who rely on the keeping of the Law are under a 10
Dt 27:26 Rm 4:15 5:3 Jm 2:10 curse, since scripture says: *Cursed be everyone who does not persevere in observing*
everything prescribed in the book of the Law. •The Law will not justify anyone 11
Hab 2:4 Rm 1:17 in the sight of God, because we are told: *the righteous man finds life through faith.*
Lv 18:5 Rm 3:24 *Ws 14:7* Is 53:5 The Law is not even based on faith,[d] since we are told: *The man who practises* 12
these precepts finds life through practising them. •Christ redeemed us from the 13

curse of the Law by being cursed for our sake,[e] since scripture says: *Cursed be* Dt 21:23 Ac 5:30+
14 *everyone who is hanged on a tree.* •This was done so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might include the pagans, and so that through faith we might Rm 5:5+ Ep 1:3 Heb 6:12
receive the promised Spirit.[f]

The Law did not cancel the promise

15 Compare this, brothers, with what happens in ordinary life. If a will has
16 been drawn up in due form, no one is allowed to disregard it or add to it. •Now
the promises were addressed to Abraham *and to his descendants*—notice, in Gn 12:7+ Mt 1:1+; 21:38 Rm 8:16
passing, that scripture does not use a plural word as if there were several
17 descendants, it uses the singular: to his posterity,[g] which is Christ. •But my
point is this: once God had expressed his will in due form, no law that came
four hundred and thirty years later could cancel that and make the promise Gn 15:13 Ex 12:40
18 meaningless.[h] •If you inherit something as a legal right, it does not come to you
as the result of a promise, and it was precisely in the form of a promise that God Rm 11:6
made his gift to Abraham.

The purpose of the Law Rm 7:7+

19 What then was the purpose of adding the Law? This was done to specify Rm 5:20
crimes,[i] until the posterity came[j] to whom the promise was addressed. The Law
20 was promulgated by angels,[k] assisted by an intermediary. •Now there can only Ac 7:38,53+ Heb 2:2 Gal 4:3+ Col 2:15+
21 be an intermediary between two parties, yet God is one.[l] •Does this mean that
there is opposition between the Law and the promises of God? Of course not.
We could have been justified by the Law if the Law we were given had been Ps 14:1-3 Rm 3:9-20, 23
22 capable of giving life, •but it is not: scripture makes no exceptions when it says
that sin is master everywhere. In this way the promise can only be given through Rm 11:32
faith in Jesus Christ and can only be given to those who have this faith.[m]

b. Peter's conduct was not in itself blameworthy, and in different circumstances Paul was to do the same, Ac 16:3; 21:26; 1 Co 8:13; Rm 14:21; cf 1 Co 9:20. But on this occasion such a policy suggested that the only true Christians were converted Jews who observed the Law, and threatened to produce two separate communities that could not even meet to celebrate the Eucharist. Peter's behaviour should have advertised his real attitude but instead of that he disguised it, v. 13.

i. Converts from paganism, so also in v. 14, as opposed to the 'circumcised' who are converted Jews.

j. Paul is not only speaking to Peter but more particularly to all the Judaisers, e.g. those of Antioch and still more those of Galatia.

k. This is slightly ironical, though Paul never doubted that Israel kept a privileged position. Rm 1:16; 3:1; 9:4-5, even when unfaithful, Rm 11:12f.

l. So laconic as to be obscure: there have been various explanations 1. Christians, crucified with Christ, are dead with Christ and therefore, like Christ, dead to the Mosaic Law, cf. Rm 7:1f—and indeed in virtue of that Law, Ga 3:13; this is why Christians already share the life of the risen Christ, Rm 6:4-10; 7:4-6 with notes. 2. Christians only renounced the Law for a deeper obedience to the O.T., Ga 3:19,24; Rm 10:4. 3. Christians are only dead to the Mosaic Law in obedience to a higher law, the law of faith and of the Spirit, Rm 8:2.

m. The living acts of a Christian become somehow the acts of Christ.

n. Lit. 'in the flesh'. Though still physically alive, Rm 7:5+, Christians are already spiritually alive, cf. Ep 3:17; on this paradox, cf. Rm 8.

o. Var. 'faith in God and in Christ'.

p. By returning to the Law, cf. 3:18.

3 a. The foundation of everything Paul teaches is the idea that we are redeemed because Christ died and rose again, cf. 1 Co 15:3f

b. Reference to being circumcised as urged by Judaising preachers.

c. Others translate 'Have you suffered so much and all to no purpose?'

d. Laws expect to be obeyed in every point, v. 10 and 5:3; cf. Jm 2:10, but do nothing, of themselves, to assure this, cf. Ac 15:10; Rm 7:7+.

e. To free the human race from the curse God laid on it for defying the law, Christ made himself answerable for the curse, cf. Rm 8:3+; 2 Co 5:21+; Col 2:14+. The somewhat remote analogy between the crucified Christ and the criminal of Dt 21:23 is used merely to illustrate this doctrine.

f. Lit. 'the promise of the Spirit'. Var. 'the blessing of the Spirit'.

g. Lit. 'It does not say "And to posterities" as if there were several people, but "And to your posterity" as if there were one'. The use in scripture of a collective capable of indicating an individual enables Paul to illustrate his argument with a verbal pun.

h. God would have contradicted himself had he replaced a scheme of salvation based on a spontaneous promise (compared to a will in v. 15) with one based on a bilateral contract, v. 20. He could not have made the fulfilment of the promise depend on the observance of a law, as this would have been to make the promise a promise no longer, vv. 21f. The Law was given for quite a different purpose, vv. 19,24.

i. On the meaning of this terse statement, lit. 'on account of crimes', cf. Rm 7:7+.

j. Lit. 'Why then the Law? It was added on account of crimes until that posterity came...' Var. 'Why then the law of works? It was added until that posterity came...'

k. In Jewish tradition angels were present at Sinai when the Law was given. The 'intermediary' is Moses, cf. Ac 7:38+.

l. The Law was given through an intermediary; the promise came directly from God.

m. Justification is a free gift; to receive this gift a person must first recognise that it is not the payment of a debt.

The coming of faith

Before faith came, we were allowed no freedom by the Law; we were being 23
Rm 3:22; 10:4 looked after till faith was revealed. •The Law was to be our guardian until the 24
Christ came and we could be justified by faith. •Now that that time has come 25
4:5-7 Jn 1:12 we are no longer under that guardian, •and you are, all of you,[n] sons of God 26
Rm 8:14f,29 Rm 6:4+; 13:14+ Ep 4:24 through faith in Christ Jesus. •All baptised in Christ,[o] you have all clothed 27
yourselves in Christ, •and there are no more distinctions between Jew and 28
Rm 10:12 1 Co 12:13 Col 3:11 Jn 17:21f Heb 6:12 Jm 2:5 Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.[p]
Merely by belonging to Christ you are the posterity of Abraham, the heirs he 29
was promised.

Sons of God

Rm 4:1+ Heb 9:16 4 Let me put this another way:[a] an heir, even if he has actually inherited 1
everything, is no different from a slave for as long as he remains a child.
He is under the control of guardians and administrators until he reaches the 2
Col 2:8 age fixed by his father. •Now before we came of age we were as good as slaves to 3
Ep 1:10 the elemental principles of this world,[b] •but when the appointed time[c] came, 4
Rm 1:3 God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, •to redeem the 5
Rm 3:24+ subjects of the Law and to enable us to be adopted as sons.[d] •The proof that you 6
Rm 8:15-17 are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts: the Spirit
Jn 15:15 that cries, 'Abba, Father', •and it is this that makes you a son, you are not a 7
slave any more; and if God has made you son, then he has made you heir.
1 Co 12:2 1 Co 8:4-5 1 Th 1:9 1 Co 13:12 Once you were ignorant of God, and enslaved to 'gods' who are not really 8
gods at all; •but now that you have come to acknowledge God—or rather, now 9
that God has acknowledged you[e]—how can you want to go back to elemental
Col 2:16,20 things like these, that can do nothing and give nothing, and be their slaves? •You 10
and your special days and months and seasons and years! •You make me feel I 11
Ph 2:16 have wasted my time with you.

A personal appeal

1 Co 9:21 2 Th 3:7+ Brothers, all I ask is that you should copy me as I copied you.[f] You have 12
Ac 16:6+ never treated me in an unfriendly way before; •even at the beginning, when that 13
illness[g] gave me the opportunity to preach the Good News to you, •you never 14
showed the least sign of being revolted or disgusted by my disease that was such
Mt 10:40+ a trial to you; instead you welcomed me as an angel of God, as if I were Christ
Jesus himself. •What has become of this enthusiasm you had? I swear that you 15
would even have gone so far as to pluck out your eyes and give them to me. •Is it 16
telling you the truth that has made me your enemy? •The blame lies on the way 17
they have tried to win you over: by separating you from me, they want to win
you over to themselves. •It is always a good thing to win people over[h]—and 18
I do not have to be there with you—but it must be for a good purpose, •my 19
1 Co 4:14-15 2 Co 6:13 1 Th 2:7-8 Phm 10 children! I must go through the pain of giving birth to you all over again, until
Christ is formed in you. •I wish I were with you now so that I could know exactly 20
what to say; as it is, I have no idea what to do for the best.

The two covenants: Hagar and Sarah

You want to be subject to the Law? Then listen to what the Law says.[i] •It 21 22
Gn 16:15; 21:2 says, if you remember, that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave-girl, and one
by his free-born wife. •The child of the slave-girl was born in the ordinary way;[j] 23
Gn 17:16 the child of the free woman was born as the result of a promise. •This can be 24
1 Co 10:6+ regarded as an allegory: the women stand for the two covenants. The first who
comes from Mount Sinai, and whose children are slaves, is Hagar—•since Sinai 25
Jn 8:32f is in Arabia[k]—and she corresponds to the present Jerusalem,[l] that is a slave like
Ps 87:5 Rv 21:2 her children. •The Jerusalem above, however, is free and is our mother, •since 26 27
Is 54:1 scripture says: *Shout for joy, you barren women who bore no children! Break into shouts of joy and gladness, you who were never in labour. For there are more sons of*

28 *the forsaken one than sons of the wedded wife.* •Now you, my brothers, like Isaac,
29 are children of the promise, •and as at that time the child born in the ordinary
30 way persecuted the child born in the Spirit's way, so also now.[m] •Does not
scripture say: *Drive away that slave-girl and her son; this slave-girl's son is not to*
31 *share the inheritance with the son* of the free woman? •So, my brothers, we are
the children, not of the slave-girl, but of the free-born wife.

Gn 21:9 1 P 3:6 *1 Th 2:14+* Gn 21:10 Jn 8:35

III. EXHORTATION

Christian liberty

Rm 6:15+

1 5 When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free.[a] Stand firm, therefore,
2 and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. •It is I, Paul, who tell you
this: if you allow yourselves to be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to
3 you at all. •With all solemnity I repeat my warning: Everyone who accepts
4 circumcision is obliged to keep the whole Law. •But if you do look to the Law
to make you justified, then you have separated yourselves from Christ, and have
5 fallen from grace. •Christians are told by the Spirit to look to faith for those
6 rewards that righteousness hopes for,[b] •since in Christ Jesus whether you are
circumcised or not makes no matter—what does matter is having faith.
7 You began your race well:[c] who made you less anxious to obey the truth?
8 9 You were not prompted by him who called you! •The yeast seems to be spreading
10 through the whole batch of you. •I feel sure that, united in the Lord, you[d] will
agree with me, and anybody who troubles you in future will be condemned,
11 no matter who he is. •As for me, my brothers, if I still preach circumcision,[e]
why am I still persecuted? If I did that now, would there be any scandal of the
12 cross? •Tell those who are disturbing you I would like to see the knife slip.[f]

Jn 8:36 Mt 11:29 Ac 15:10 2:21 3:10 Jm 2:10 *Rm 8:23,25* 1 Co 7:19 6:15 1 Co 13:13+ Jm 2:14 *1 Co 9:24* Ph 2:16 *Qo 10:1* 1 Co 5:6 *Ph 2:1-5* 1 Co 3:17 *1:7* 1 Co 1:23 Ph 3:2

Liberty and charity

13 My brothers, you were called, as you know, to liberty; but be careful, or this
liberty will provide an opening for self-indulgence. Serve one another, rather, in

Rm 6:15+ 1 P 2:16 Jude 4

n. All, i.e. not only 'we', who are Jews, but 'you', who are pagans.

o. Faith and baptism are not being contrasted: one involves the other, cf. Rm 6:4+.

p. Var. 'you are all of Christ Jesus'.

4 a. A further comparison, again taken from the law courts. Though the Jews are chosen as the heir presumptive, yet they are only slaves, v. 3, to the Law; a Christian who wants to submit to this slavery is going back to a state of childhood, cf. v. 9.

b. Reference to the elements that make up the physical universe, cf. v. 9; Col 2:8,20; Paul uses the phrase to indicate both the Law that minutely regulated the use of these elements, v. 10; Col 2:16, and the spirits that used the Law, Ga 3:19+; Col 2:15+, to dominate the universe, Col 2:18+

c. Lit. 'fulness of time'; the phrase indicates how when the messianic age comes it will fill a need felt for centuries, rather like filling up a jug. Cf. Ac 1:7+ and Mk 1:15; 1 Co 10:11; Ep 1:10; Heb 1:2; 9:26; 1 P 1:20.

d. The two aspects of redemption, negative and positive: the slave attains freedom by becoming a son. First and foremost the adoption to sonship is not simply a legal right to inherit, v. 7, but the real and inward giving of the Spirit, v. 6

e. The Galatians were converted by God who 'knew' them before they 'knew' him.

f. Probably by refusing to practise the Law's ritual, cf. 1 Co 9:21.

g. This probably prolonged Paul's stay in Galatia, and he took the opportunity to preach the Good News.

h. Var. 'Be won over to what is good'.

i. I.e. the witness of the scriptures, cf. Rm 3:19+; to inherit the promise it is not enough just to be a descendant of Abraham, cf. Mt 3:9; it is not enough to be descended from Abraham like Ishmael, it is necessary to be descended as the result of promise, like Isaac, v. 23; it is necessary to be a spiritual descendant, not just a genealogical one, v. 29; thus Isaac's birth prefigured the rebirth of Christians, v. 28; cf. Rm 9:6f. This basic argument is embellished with other more contrived comparisons.

j. Lit. 'according to the flesh', i.e. in the ordinary course of nature, cf. Rm 7:5+, without God working a miracle to fulfil his promise.

k. 'since Sinai is in Arabia'; var. 'Hagar stands for Sinai in Arabia' (or 'in Arabic').

l. I.e. enslaved to the Law, as opposed to the messianic Jerusalem, cf. Is 2:2, long barren, now a mother, v. 27; cf. Is 54:1-6.

m. Having demonstrated the Ishmael-Jews, Isaac-Christians, parallel, Paul makes two observations, vv. 29 and 30. According to some Jewish traditions Ishmael 'persecuted' Isaac, and according to the sacred text itself, Sarah sees Ishmael as her son's rival and demands Hagar's expulsion, Gn 21:9.

5 a. Human beings must choose either Christ or the Law as author of salvation. Some witnesses (Vulg.) join these words with the preceding verse 'with the freedom by which Christ has made us free'.

b. Or else 'The righteousness that was hoped for'.

c. One of Paul's favourite images, cf. 2:2; 1 Co 9:24-26; Ph 2:16; 3:12-14; 2 Tm 4:7; Heb 12:1.

d. Or else 'I have confidence in the Lord that you'.

e. As Paul's enemies apparently claimed, cf. 1:10; 2:3+.

f. Lit. 'I wish that those who are disturbing you might go even further (than circumcision) and castrate themselves'. Perhaps alluding to castration in the cult of Cybele, the sarcasm resembling that of Ph 3:2.

works of love, •since the whole of the Law is summarised in a single command: 14
Love your neighbour as yourself. •If you go snapping at each other and tearing 15
each other to pieces, you had better watch or you will destroy the whole
community.

Let me put it like this: if you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger 16
of yielding to self-indulgence, •since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, 17
the Spirit is totally against such a thing, and it is precisely because the two are
so opposed that you do not always carry out your good intentions. •If you are 18
led by the Spirit, no law can touch you. •When self-indulgence is at work the 19
results are obvious: fornication, gross indecency and sexual irresponsibility;
idolatry and sorcery; feuds and wrangling, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels; 20
disagreements, factions, •envy;[g] drunkenness, orgies and similar things. I warn 21
you now, as I warned you before: those who behave like this will not inherit the
kingdom of God. •What the Spirit brings is very different: love, joy, peace, 22
patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, •gentleness and self-control.[h] There 23
can be no law against things like that, of course. •You cannot belong to Christ 24
Jesus unless you crucify all self-indulgent passions and desires.

Since the Spirit is our life, let us be directed by the Spirit. •We must stop 25 26
being conceited, provocative and envious.

On kindness and perseverance

6 Brothers, if one of you misbehaves, the more spiritual of you who set him 1
right should do so in a spirit of gentleness, not forgetting that you may be
tempted yourselves. •You should carry each other's troubles and fulfil[a] the 2
law of Christ. •It is the people who are not important who often make the 3
mistake of thinking that they are. •Let each of you examine his own conduct; 4
if you find anything to boast about, it will at least be something of your own, not
just something better than your neighbour has. •Everyone has his own burden 5
to carry.

People under instruction should always contribute something to the support 6
of the man who is instructing them.

Don't delude yourself into thinking God can be cheated: where a man sows, 7
there he reaps: •if he sows in the field of self-indulgence he will get a harvest of 8
corruption out of it; if he sows in the field of the Spirit he will get from it a
harvest of eternal life. •We must never get tired of doing good because if we 9
don't give up the struggle we shall get our harvest at the proper time. •While 10
we have the chance,[b] we must do good[c] to all,[d] and especially to our brothers
in the faith.

Epilogue

Take good note of what I am adding in my own handwriting and in large 11
letters.[e] •It is only self-interest that makes them want[f] to force circumcision on 12
you—they want to escape persecution for the cross of Christ—•they accept 13
circumcision but do not keep the Law themselves; they only want you to be
circumcised so that they can boast of the fact. •As for me, the only thing I can 14
boast about is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is
crucified to me, and I to the world.[g] •[h]It does not matter if a person is circumcised 15
or not; what matters is for him to become an altogether new creature. •Peace 16
and mercy to all who follow this rule, who form the Israel of God.[i]

I want no more trouble from anybody after this; the marks on my body are 17
those of Jesus.[j] •The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, my 18
brothers. Amen.

Rm 13:8-10+ *Lv 19:18*
Rm 8:5f
Rm 7:14f Jm 4:1
Rm 8:14 *Mt 7:17* Rm 1:29+ 1 Co 3:3+ Ep 5:3 Jm 1:21
1 Co 6:10
2 Co 6:6 Ep 5:9 1 Tm 4:12 2 P 1:5-7 *1 Co 13:4-7* 1 Tm 1:9 *Rm 6:6* Col 3:5 *Rm 8:14* *Ph 2:3*
Mt 18:15 2 Th 3:14-15 2 Tm 2:25 Jm 4:19f *1 Co 10:12* *Jn 13:34* Rm 8:2 *1 Co 4:7*
Rm 14:12
Rm 15:27
Jb 13:9 Ho 8:7 *Dt 30:15-20* Jb 15:35 Pr 11:18 Jn 3:6 Rm 6:21-22 1 Co 15:35-49
1 Th 5:15
Rm 16:17
1 Co 16:21 Col 4:18 *Col 2:18*
Rm 2:21f
Rm 3:27+
5:6+
1 Co 7:19 2 Co 5:17+
Ps 125:5

g. Add. (Vulg.) 'murders'. Cf. Rm 1:29.
h. Add. 'chastity'.

6 a. 'fulfil'; var. 'you will fulfil'.
b. Possibly alluding to the time that still remains before the *parousia*, cf. 2 Co 6:2+.
c. 'we must do good'; var. 'we do good'.
d. The good act of a Christian is done out of love, and so is concerned with others, 5:14; in this way he gives witness in public, cf. Rm 12:17-18, and as he is specially noticed by Christians, Rm 14:15, he helps to 'build up' the Church, Rm 14:18-19.
e. As usual, Paul adds a few words in his own hand, cf. 2 Th 3:17; 1 Co 16:21-24; Col 4:18 and possibly Rm 16:17-20. Large letters were used for emphasis.
f. Lit. 'It is those who want to make a fair show in the flesh who want. . .'
g. This present sinful world, cf. 1:4; 4:5; 1 Co 1:20; 2 Co 4:4; Ep 2:2, etc.; Jn 1:10+.
h. Add. 'In Christ Jesus'.
i. The Christian community, the true Israel, cf. 3:29; Rm 9:6-8, as opposed to the Israel 'according to the flesh', 1 Co 10:18
j. The marks of ill-treatment suffered for Christ, cf. 2 Co 6:4-5; 11:23f.

EPHESIANS

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

Address and Greetings

Rm 1:1+ Ac 9:13+

1 From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, to the saints[a] 1
who are faithful to Christ Jesus: •Grace and peace to you from God our 2
Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION AND OF THE CHURCH

God's plan of salvation

Tb 13:1 Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 3
Ga 3:14 who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.[b]
Ex 15:16 Jn 17:24 1 P 1:20 5:27 Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, 4
to be holy and spotless, and to live through love[c] in his prseence,
1 Co 1:8+ 1 Jn 3:1 Jn 1:12 Rm 8:29 determining that we should become his adopted sons,[d] through Jesus Christ 5
for his own kind purposes,
to make us praise the glory of his grace,[e] 6
his free gift to us in the Beloved,[f]
Rm 3:24+ ||Col 1:13-14 Heb 1:3 in whom, through his blood, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins.[g] 7
2:7 Such is the richness of the grace
which he[h] has showered on us 8
in all wisdom and insight.
Rm 16:25+ He has let us know the mystery of his purpose,[i] 9
the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from the beginning
Mk 1:15 Ga 4:4+ to act upon when the times had run their course to the end:[j] 10
that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head,
Col 1:16,20 everything in the heavens and everything on earth.[k]
Dt 7:6+ Col 1:12 And it is in him[l] that we were claimed as God's own,[m] 11
chosen from the beginning,
Is 46:10 under the predetermined plan of the one who guides all things
Rv 4:11 as he decides by his own will;
chosen to be, 12
Ps 66:2 for his greater glory,
the people who would put their hopes in Christ before he came.
Now you too,[n] in him, 13
Ac 1:4 ||Col 1:5; 2:9 Heb 6:12 have heard the message of the truth and the good news of your salvation,
and have believed it;
4:30 2 Co 1:22 Ac 2:33+ Rm 5:5+ and you too have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise,[o]

14 the pledge of our inheritance
which brings freedom for those whom God has taken for his own,[p]
to make his glory praised.

2 Co 1:22+
Rm 3:24+
Ps 66:2

The triumph and the supremacy of Christ

15 That will explain why I, having once heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus,
16 and the love that you show[q] towards all the saints, •have never failed to remember
17 you in my prayers and to thank God for you. •May the God of our
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit[r] of wisdom and perception
18 of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. •May he enlighten
the eyes of your mind[s] so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what
19 rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit •and how infinitely great is
the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength
20 of his power •at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and
21 to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, •far above every Sovereignty,
Authority, Power, or Domination,[t] or any other name that can be named, not
22 only in this age but also in the age to come. •*He has put all things under his feet,*
23 and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church; •which is his
body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.[u]

‖Col 1:3-4,9
Phm 4-5
Ac 9:13+
1 Co 13:13+
3:14,16
Ex 24:16+
1 Jn 5:20
Heb 3:1
Ac 9:13+
3:20
1 P 1:5
Is 52:13
Col 2:12
Ac 2:33+
1 P 3:22
Col 1:16; 2:15
Ph 2:9
Ps 8:6
1 Co 15:24-25
Col 1:18+; 19+

Salvation in Christ a free gift

1 2 2 And you were dead, through the crimes and the sins •in which you used to live
when you were following the way of this world, obeying the ruler who governs
3 the air,[a] the spirit who is at work in the rebellious. •We[b] all were among them

‖Col 2:13; 3:7
Heb 6:1+
6:12+
Jn 12:31
2 Co 4:4

1 a. Add. 'who are at Ephesus'. The words 'at Ephesus' were probably not part of the original text. The words 'who are' could be part of a very early addition. Some critics think they are authentic, that they were followed by a blank to be filled in with the name of whichever church was being sent the letter.

b. All the way through the letter, 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12, Paul reverts to this opening reference to heaven. The spiritual blessings listed in the following verses must wait till the end of the world before they can be fully realised in heaven where they have been formulated since all eternity.

c. First blessing: through their union with the glorified Christ the faithful already enjoy, in a hidden sort of way, the eternal happiness to which the chosen are called. 'Love' here is primarily the love God has for us, and that leads him to 'choose' us and to call us to be 'holy', cf. Col 3:12; 1 Th 1:4; 2 Th 2:13; Rm 11:28, but does not exclude our love for God that results from and is a response to his own love for us, cf. Rm 5:5.

d. Second blessing: Jesus Christ, the only Son, is both the source and the model of the way God has chosen for us to become holy, i.e. by adopting us as his heirs, cf. Rm 8:29.

e. The word 'grace' *(charis)* as it is used here emphasises not so much the interior gift that makes a human being holy, as the gratuitousness of God's favour and the way he manifests his glory, cf. Ex 24:16f. These are the two themes that run through this account of God's blessings: their *source* is God's liberality, and their *purpose* is to make his glory appreciated by creatures. Everything comes from him, and everything should lead to him.

f. Var. (Vulg) 'his beloved Son'.

g. Third blessing: our redemption by an event in time, i.e. the death of Jesus.

h. God the Father.

i. Fourth blessing: the revelation of the 'mystery', Rm 16:25f.

j. Lit. 'for a dispensation of the times' fullness', cf. Ga 4:4f.

k. The main theme of this letter is how the whole body of creation, having been cut off from the Creator by sin, is decomposing, and how its rebirth is effected by Christ reuniting all its parts into an organism with himself as the head, so as to reattach it to God. The human (Jew and pagan) and the angelic worlds are brought together again through the fact that they were saved by a single act, cf. 4:10f.

l. Christ.

m. Fifth blessing: the Jews are chosen to be the human share allotted to God, and are to be his witness until the coming of the Messiah. Paul, being a Jew, here uses 'we'.

n. Sixth blessing: the pagans are called to share the salvation that had, till then, been reserved for the Jews; that they will be saved is proved by the fact that they receive the Spirit as was promised.

o. Paul completes his trinitarian account of God's plan with the Spirit, since the giving of the Spirit shows the plan has reached its final stage. Nevertheless, though this gift has already begun, it is only given in a hidden way while the unspiritual world lasts, and will only be given fully when the kingdom of God is complete and Christ comes in glory.

p. Lit. 'the setting free of that (enslaved people) which has been acquired' i.e. by God, and at the cost of the life of his Son. This is one of the occasions when Paul widens an O.T. concept (like 'blessing', 'saint', 'choice' 'adoption', 'redemption', 'share', 'promise') by applying it to the Church as the new Israel and the body of the saved.

q. Om. 'and the love that you show'.

r. This gift is what technically would be called (actual) grace.

s. Lit. 'heart': used in the Bible for the seat of knowledge as well as of love.

t. Names traditional in Jewish literature for angelic hierarchies.

u. Lit. 'fills all in all'. The Church, as the body of Christ 1 Co 12:12f, can be called the fulness (*pleroma;* cf. *infra* 3:19; 4:13) in so far as it includes the whole new creation that shares (since it forms the setting of the human race) in the cosmic rebirth under Christ its ruler and head, cf. Col 1:15-20f. The adverbial phrase 'all in all' is used to suggest something of limitless size, cf. 1 Co 12:6; 15:28; Col 3:11.

2 a. Air is the habitat of demons and of their ruler Satan.

b. Paul writes as a Jew.

Rm 2;3:9,23 too in the past, living sensual lives, ruled entirely by our own physical desires
5:6 and our own ideas; so that by nature we were as much under God's anger as the
Rm 1:18; 2:8 rest of the world. •But God loved us with so much love that he was generous 4
Ex 34:6+ Rm 5:8 with his mercy: •when we[c] were dead through our sins, he brought us to life 5
||Col 2:13 Rm 8:11+ with Christ[d]—it is through grace that you have been saved—•and raised us up 6
Col 2:12; 3:1-4 with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.[e]
Dt 9:6 Ps 22:30-31 This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in 7
Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. •Because it is by grace that you 8
Dt 8:17-18 Rm 1:16+ have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from
God; •not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. 9
2 Co 5:17+ We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the 10
beginning he had meant us to live it.

Reconciliation of the Jews and the pagans with each other and with God

Do not forget, then, that there was a time when you[f] who were pagans 11
physically, termed the Uncircumcised by those who speak of themselves as the
Circumcision by reason of a physical operation, •do not forget, I say, that 12
Col 1:21,27 you had no Christ[g] and were excluded from membership of Israel, aliens with
Rm 9:4-5 *no part in the covenants with their Promise;[h] you were immersed in this world,*
2:17 without hope[i] and without God.[j] •But now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be 13
Ps 148:14 so far apart from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ.[k]
Is 9:5 For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken 14
Ga 3:28+ down the barrier which used to keep them apart,[l] actually destroying in his
Col 2:14+ own person the hostility •caused by the rules and decrees of the Law.[m] This 15
was to create one single New Man[n] in himself out of the two of them and by
Col 3:14-15 restoring peace •through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body[o] and 16
reconcile them with God. In his own person he killed the hostility. •Later he 17
Is 57:19 Zc 9:10 came[p] to bring the good news of peace, *peace to you who were far away and peace*
4:4 *to those who were near at hand.* •Through him, both of us have in the one Spirit[q] 18
3:12+ our way to come to the Father.
2 Co 13:13+ Ex 12:48+ Ps 122:3-4 So you[r] are no longer aliens or foreign visitors: you are citizens like all the 19
Ac 9:13+ Is 28:16 saints, and part of God's household. •You are part of a building that has the 20
Rm 15:20 1 Co 3:10f apostles and prophets[s] for its foundations, and Christ Jesus himself for its main
2 Co 6:16 4:11-12 cornerstone. •As every[t] structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple 21
Rv 21:14 1 Co 3:16+ in the Lord; •and you too, in him, are being built into a house where God lives, 22
1 P 2:5 in the Spirit.

||Col 1:24-29 **Paul, a servant of the mystery**

4:1 Ph 1:13 Col 4:18 2 Tm 2:9 3 So I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you pagans...•You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace[a] he meant ½
for you, •and that it was by a revelation[b] that I was given the knowledge of the 3
Rm 16:25+ mystery, as I have just described it very shortly. •If you read my words, you will 4
1 Co 7:40 2 Co 11:5f have some idea of the depths that I see in the mystery of Christ. •This mystery 5
4:11 Jn 14:26+ that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets[c]
was unknown to any men in past generations; •it means that pagans now share 6
2:12-19 the same inheritance,[d] that they are parts of the same body, and that the same
promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel. •I have 7
2 Co 3:6 Col 1:23 been made the servant of that gospel by a gift of grace from God who gave it to
1 Th 2:4 1 Co 15:8f me by his own power. •I, who am less than the least of all the saints, have been 8
Ga 2:8 Ph 4:13 entrusted with this special grace, not only of proclaiming to the pagans the
Col 1:29 infinite treasure of Christ •but also of explaining[e] how the mystery is to be 9
dispensed. Through all the ages, this has been kept hidden in God, the creator
1 Co 2:7-9+ 1 P 1:12 of everything. Why? •So that the Sovereignties and Powers should learn[f] 10
only now, through the Church, how comprehensive God's wisdom really is,
1:4 exactly according to the plan which he had had from all eternity in Christ Jesus 11
2:18 Rm 5:1 our Lord. •This is why we are bold enough to approach God in complete 12

13 confidence, through our faith in him; •so, I beg you, never lose confidence just because of the trials that I go through on your account: they are your glory.[g]

Col 1:22▲ Heb 4:16▲ 1 P 3:18▲ *Col 1:24* 2 Tm 1:8

Paul's prayer

14 15 This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father,[h] •from whom every family,[i] whether spiritual or natural, takes its name:

1:17

16 Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit

2 P 1:3

17 for your hidden self to grow strong, •so that Christ may live in your hearts

Ac 1:8+ *Jn 14:23* Rm 7:22+ *Col 1:23; 2:7* *Ac 9:13+* Col 2:2

18 through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, •you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and

19 the depth;[j] •until, knowing the love of Christ,[k] which is beyond all knowledge,[l] you are filled with the utter fulness of God.[m]

Col 2:9+

20 Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more[n] than we

1:19f Ph 2:13

21 can ask or imagine; •glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

c. 'We' here means both the pagans, cf. vv. 1-2, and the Jews, cf. v. 3. V. 3 is a parenthesis.

d. 'with Christ'; var. 'in Christ'. 'it is through grace'; var (Vulg) 'through whose grace'.

e. Here as in Col 2:12; 3:1-4 the use of the past tense shows that the resurrection and triumph of Christians in heaven is considered as actually existing, whereas the future tense in Rm 6:3-11; 8:11,17f treats it as something that has still to take place. Treating the eschatological reality as already existing is a characteristic of Paul's letters written from prison.

f. The description of this past that Paul now gives is meant to apply to all pagans in a general way—not specifically to those he is writing to.

g. I.e. you had no Messiah.

h. The successive covenants made by God with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses David etc.; cf. Ex 19:1+; Lv 26:42,45; Si 44-45; Ws 18:22; 2 M 8:15; Rm 9:4.

i. Hope of a Messiah, which was hitherto confined to Israel, 1:12.

j. The pagans had many gods but not the one true God, 1 Co 8:5f.

k. The crucifixion of Christ that brought together Jews and pagans vv. 14-15, and reconciled both with the Father vv. 16-18.

l. The wall separating the court of the Jews from the court of the pagans in the Temple, cf. Ac 21:28f.

m. The Mosaic Law gave the Jews a privileged status and separated them from pagans. Jesus abolished this Law by fulfilling it once for all on the cross, Col 2:14+.

n. This New Man is the prototype of the new humanity that God recreated (2 Co 5:17+) in the person of Christ, the second Adam (1 Co 15:45), after killing the sinfully corrupt race of the first Adam in the crucifixion (Rm 5:12f; 8:3; 1 Co 15:21). This New Adam has been created in 'the goodness and holiness of the truth' 4:24, and he is unique because in him the boundaries between any one group and the rest of the human race all disappear, Col 3:10f; Ga 3:27f.

o. This 'single Body' is both the physical body of Jesus that was executed by crucifixion, Col 1:22+, and the Church or 'mystical' body of Christ in which, once they are reconciled, all the parts function in their own place, 1 Co 12:12+.

p. Through the apostles who in his name preached the Good News of salvation and peace.

q. The one Spirit that gives life to the single body (of Christ who is one with his Church) is the Holy Spirit who has changed the form of the body now it has risen, and by doing so has come down on each of the parts of which it is made up. The trinitarian structure of this section is repeated in v. 22.

r. Paul inserts vv. 14-18 (how Christ has united pagans and Jews) between his contrasting descriptions of pagans before (vv. 11-13) and after (19-22) conversion.

s. The N.T. prophets, cf. 3:5; 4:11; Ac 11:27+, together with the apostles, are the witnesses to whom the divine plan was first revealed and who were the first to preach the Good News, cf. Lk 11:49; Mt 23:34; 10:41. This is why the Church as well as being founded on Christ, 1 Co 3:10f, is also said to be founded on them.

t. 'every'; var. 'the entire'.

3 a. V. 1 (continued in v. 15) break off abruptly, the parenthetical development of vv. 2-14 being suggested by the mention of pagans in v. 1. On the grace of being the apostle of the pagans, cf. 3:7f; Rm 1:5; 15:15f; 1 Co 3:10; Ga 2:9.

b. Cf. 2 Co 12:1,7. The immediate reference is to what was revealed to Paul on the way to Damascus, cf. Ga 1:16; Ac 9:15; 22:21; 26:16-18.

c. The N.T. prophets, cf. 2:20+. The O.T. prophets had only an obscure and imperfect knowledge of the mystery of the Messiah, cf. 1 P 1:10-12; Mt 13:17.

d. I.e. as the Judaeo-Christians, cf. 2:19.

e. Var. (Vulg) 'showing clearly to all'.

f. The evil spirits were unaware of God's plan for salvation and so they persuaded human beings to crucify Christ, 1 Co 2:8; and it is only the existence of the Church that makes them aware of it now, cf. 1 P 1:12.

g. Var. 'our glory'.

h. Add. (Vulg) 'of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

i. A play on the Greek words for 'father' and 'family' *(pater: patria)*: *patria* is used for any social group descended from a common ancestor and the one ancestor common to human beings and angels is God, the supreme Father.

j. Stoics used this expression to mean the totality of the cosmos. Paul uses it to suggest the cosmic function of Christ in the rebirth of the world. It could be referred to the size of the mystery of salvation, or preferably to Christ's universal love on which (next verse) the mystery depends. Cf. 1:17-19,23; 2:7; 3:8; Col 2:2f.

k. This love for us that Christ proved by accepting death, 5:2,25; Ga 2:20, is identical with the love the Father has, 2:4,7; 2 Co 5:14,18-19; Rm 8:35,37,39. Cf. 1 Co 13:1+.

l. The love of God cannot be 'grasped' (v. 18, using a philosophical term technical in Greek) but can be 'known' by a mystic's awareness of it through love, cf. 1:17f; 3:3f; Ho 2:22+; Jn 10:14+. This awareness is something deeper than scientific knowledge, cf. 1 Co 13, and is more like knowing that one is loved by the other than knowing the other that one loves, cf. Ga 4:9; even awareness of this sort however can never 'grasp' this sort of love.

m. Lit. 'in order that you may be filled to all the fulness *(pleroma)* of God'. (Var. 'in order that all the fulness of God may be filled'.) Christ who is filled with the divine life fills Christians with it, Col 2:9, and in this way a Christian enters both the Church and the new cosmos which he helps to build and which is the fulness of the total Christ, 1:23; 2:22; 4:12-13; Col 2:10+.

n. Var. (Vulg) 'can do all'.

II. EXHORTATION

A call to unity[a]

||Co 3:12-14
I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you therefore to lead a life worthy of your 1
1 Co 13:13+ Pb 1:27 Col 3:14-15 vocation. •Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, 2
gentleness and patience. •Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the 3
Rm 12:5 1 Co 10:17; 12:12+ peace that binds you together. •There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all 4
1 Co 1:13; 8:6; 12:4-6 2 Co 13:13+ called into one and the same hope when you were called. •There is one Lord, one 5
faith, one baptism, •and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and 6
within all.[b]

Rm 12:6
Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace,[c] given as 7
Christ allotted it. •It was said that he would: 8

Ps 68:18 Ac 2:33
> *When he ascended to the height, he captured prisoners,*
> *he gave gifts to men.*[d]

1 P 3:19+
When it says, 'he ascended', what can it mean if not that he descended[e] right 9
down to the lower regions of the earth?[f] •The one who rose higher than all the 10
heavens to fill all things[g] is none other than the one who descended. •And to 11
1 Co 12:28+ some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some,
Tt 1:5+ evangelists; to some pastors and teachers;[h] •so that the saints together[i] make 12
2:21; 4:16 a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. •In this way we 13
Col 1:23+; 3:11 1:23+ are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until
we become the perfect Man,[j] fully mature with the fulness of Christ himself.

1 Co 14:20
Then we shall not be children any longer, or tossed one way and another and 14
carried along by every wind of doctrine, at the mercy of all the tricks men play
Col 2:4,8 Tb 4:6 and their cleverness in practising deceit. •If we live by the truth and in love, we 15
||Col 2:19 shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head •by whom the whole body 16
is fitted and joined together, every joint[k] adding its own strength, for each
separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has
built itself up, in love.

The new life in Christ

In particular, I want to urge you in the name of the Lord, not to go on living 17
Rm 1:18-32 Col 1:21 the aimless kind of life that pagans live. •Intellectually they are in the dark, 18
1 P 1:18; 4:3 and they are estranged from the life of God, without knowledge because they
have shut their hearts to it. •Their sense of right and wrong once dulled,[l] they 19
have abandoned themselves to sexuality and eagerly pursue a career of indecency
of every kind.[m] •Now that is hardly the way you have learnt from Christ, •unless 20 21
||Col 3:9-10 you failed to hear him properly when you were taught what the truth is in Jesus.
Col 3:5 You must give up your old way of life; you must put aside your old self, which 22
gets corrupted by following illusory desires. •Your mind must be renewed by a 23
2:15+ Col 3:10+ spiritual revolution •so that you can put on the new self that has been created in 24
God's way, in the goodness and holiness of the truth.[n]

Zc 8:16 Col 3:9 So from now on, there must be no more lies: *You must speak the truth to one* 25
1 Co 12:12+ Ps 4:4 LXX *another*, since we are all parts of one another. •*Even if you are angry, you must not* 26
Mt 5:22 2 Co 2:11 *sin:* never let the sun set on your anger •or else you will give the devil a foothold. 27
Ac 18:3+; 20:34-35 1 Th 4:11 Anyone who was a thief must stop stealing; he should try to find some useful 28
manual work instead, and be able to do some good[o] by helping others[p] that are
Mt 15:11 Jm 3:10-12 in need. •Guard against foul talk; let your words be for the improvement of 29
others, as occasion offers, and do good to your listeners, •otherwise you will 30
Is 63:10 1:13+ Rm 1:29+ Col 3:8 only be grieving the Holy Spirit of God who has marked you with his seal for
you to be set free when the day comes.[q] •Never have grudges against others, or 31
lose your temper, or raise your voice to anybody, or call each other names,
Mt 6:12, 14-15p Col 3:13 or allow any sort of spitefulness. •Be friends with one another, and kind, 32
forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you[r] in Christ.

1 2 5 Try, then, to imitate God, as children of his that he loves, •and follow Christ
by loving as he loved you, giving himself up in our place *as a fragrant offering*
3 *and a sacrifice to God.* •Among you there must be not even a mention of
fornication or impurity in any of its forms, or promiscuity: this would
4 hardly become the saints! •There must be no coarseness, or salacious talk and
5 jokes—all this is wrong for you; raise your voices in thanksgiving instead. •For
you can be quite certain that nobody who actually indulges in fornication
or impurity or promiscuity—which is worshipping a false god[a]—can inherit
6 anything of the kingdom of God. •Do not let anyone deceive you with empty
arguments: it is for this loose living that God's anger comes down on those who
7 8 rebel against him. •Make sure that you are not included with them. •You were
9 darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, •for
the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth.
10 11 Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, •having nothing to do with the futile
12 works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. •The things which are done
13 in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; •but anything
14 exposed by the light will be illuminated •and anything illuminated turns into
light.[b] That is why it is said:[c]

Mt 5:48
2 Th 3:7+
Ga 2:20
1 Jn 3:16
Ex 29:18
Ps 40:6
Ga 5:19+
Ac 9:13+

Mt 6:24
1 Co 6:9-10
Col 3:5
Heb 13:4-5
Col 2:4,8
||Col 3:6
4:18
Jb 24:13
Jn 8:12+
2 Co 4:6; 6:14
Col 1:12-13
1 Th 5:4-8

Jn 3:20-21

> Wake up from your sleep,
> rise from the dead,
> and Christ will shine on you.[d]

Is 26:19; 60:1
Heb 6:4; 10:32

15 So be very careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent and not like
16 senseless people. •This may be a wicked age, but your lives should redeem it.
17 18 And do not be thoughtless but recognise what is the will of the Lord. •Do not
drug yourselves with wine, this is simply dissipation; be filled with the Spirit.
19 Sing the words and tunes of the psalms and hymns when you are together,
20 and go on singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts, •so that always and
everywhere you are giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our
Lord Jesus Christ.

Col 4:5
Col 1:9
Pr 23:31 LXX
||*Col 3:16-17*
1 Th 5:18

4 a. Paul lists three different threats to the Church's unity: arguments between Christians vv. 1-3, diversity of service in the Church vv. 7-11, unorthodox teaching vv. 14-15. These threats are all averted by applying the principle of unity in Christ, vv. 4-6,12-13,18.

b. Var. (Vulg) 'within all of us'.

c. Charisms or special graces given to individuals for the benefit of the whole community, cf. 1 Co 12:1+.

d. Following rabbinic practice Paul quotes this text for the sake of two phrases: 'he ascended' vv. 9-10, and 'he gave gifts' v. 11, which he interprets as the ascension of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit.

e. Add. (Vulg) 'first of all'.

f. Lit. 'into the lower parts of the earth'. The most appropriate interpretation is that 'the earth' is itself the 'lower region' to which Christ descended to give 'the gifts' to mankind, and Paul's argument is that 'these gifts can only be from the one who ascended'. But the phrase can be taken to mean the subterranean kingdom of the dead, Nb 16:33f, to which Christ descended before the resurrection, 1 P 3:19f.

g. By ascending through all the cosmic spheres and taking possession of them all one after another, Christ becomes the head of the whole *pleroma* or total cosmos, 1:10+, and makes the entire universe acknowledge him as 'Lord', cf. 1:20-23; Col 1:19; Ph 2:8-11.

h. Paul limits his list to charisms that relate to teaching and which are the only ones that apply in this context, vv. 13-15.

i. The particular 'saints' Paul mentions here seem to be missionaries and other teachers, cf. 3:5, but may include all the faithful in so far as they all help to build up the Church, cf. Ac 9:13+.

j. This does not refer primarily to the individual Christian. The sense is collective. It can be taken as referring to Christ himself, the New Man, the archetype of all who are reborn 2:15+, or else (and this sense is to be preferred) as referring to the total Christ, i.e. the whole body, 1 Co 12:12+, made of head v. 15; 1:22; Col 1:18, and the rest of the body v. 16; 5:30.

k. Var. (Vulg) 'each member'.

l. Var. (Vulg) 'Being devoid of hope'.

m. Or 'sexuality and every kind of indecency and greed'.

n. Each human being should 'put on the New Man', Ep 2:15+ (here, as in v. 22, translated 'self'), so as to be re-created in him, cf. Ga 3:27; Rm 13:14. In some places Paul talks in the same way about the 'new creature', 2 Co 5:17+.

o. Lit. 'working the good thing with his own hand'. 'Good' and '(own) hand' are omitted or interchanged in various readings: the original text may have been ambiguous.

p. Var. (Vulg) 'for building up the faith'.

q. The one Holy Spirit that keeps the one body of Christ united, 4:4; 1 Co 12:13, is 'grieved', cf. 4:30; Is 63:10, by anything that harms the unity of the body.

r. 'you'; var. 'us'. The same in 5:2.

5 a. 'promiscuity'; lit. 'greed', apparently sexual greed in this context. Uncontrolled greed treats all creatures with the worship due to God and so turns them into idols.

b. The wrong sort of way to talk about sexual immorality is the way that leaves the subject in a dangerous obscurity, v. 3. To talk about it in such a way, however, that it is recognised for what it is will lead to its being corrected; this sort of light is the light of Christ that puts an end to darkness.

c. This (like 1 Tm 3:16) seems to be an extract from an early Christian hymn. On baptism as an enlightening, cf. Heb 6:4; 10:32 (cf. Rm 6:4+).

d. Var. 'and you will touch Christ'.

The morals of the home

Ps 87:5 ‖Col 3:18 1 P 3:1-7 Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. 21 •Wives should regard their 22 husbands as they regard the Lord, 23 •since[e] as Christ is head of the Church and 1 Co 11:3 saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; 24 •and as the Church 1:22-23 5:2 submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything. 25 •Husbands ‖Col 3:19 1 P 3:7 should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself Rm 6:4+ Tt 3:5-7 for her •to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form 26 2 Co 11:2 of words, •so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no 27 Col 1:22 Rv 19:7-8; 21:2,9-11 speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless.[f] 28 •In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. 29 •A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, 30 •because it is 1 Co 12:12+ Gn 2:24 Mt 19:5p his body—and we are its living parts.[g] 31 •*For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body.* 32 •This Rm 16:25+ mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.[h] 33 •To sum up; you too, each one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife respect her husband.

Pr 6:20 Si 3:1-6 ‖Col 3:20-21 Ex 20:12 6 Children, be obedient to your parents in the Lord[a]—that is your duty. 1 2 •The first commandment that has a promise attached to it is: *Honour your father and mother*, 3 •and the promise is: *and you will prosper and have a long life in the land.* Pr 13:24+ And parents, never drive your children to resentment but in bringing them up 4 correct them and guide them as the Lord does.

‖Col 3:22-4:1 Tt 2:9-10 Slaves, be obedient to the men who are called your masters in this world, 5 with deep respect[b] and sincere loyalty, as you are obedient to Christ: 6 •not only Rm 6:15+ 1 P 2:18 when you are under their eye, as if you had only to please men, but because you are slaves of Christ and wholeheartedly do the will of God. 7 •Work hard and willingly, but do it for the sake of men. 8 •You can be sure that everyone, whether a slave or a free man, will be properly rewarded by the Lord for whatever work he has done well. 9 •And those of you who are employers, treat your slaves in the same spirit; do without threats, remembering Jb 31:15 that they and you have the same Master in heaven and he is not impressed by one Dt 10:17+ person more than by another.

The spiritual war

Rm 13:12 2 Co 6:7; 10:4 Jm 4:7 Finally, grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of his power. 10 •Put God's 11 Mt 16:17+ armour on[c] so as to be able to resist the devil's tactics. 12 •For it is not against human 1 P 5:8-9 enemies that we have[d] to struggle, but against the Sovereignties and the Powers who originate the darkness in this world, the spiritual army of evil in the heavens.[e] That is why you must rely on God's armour, or you will not be able to put up any 13 resistance when the worst happens, or have enough resources to hold your ground.

Is 11:5; 59:17 Ws 5:18 1 Th 5:8 Is 49:3,9; 52:7 1 Jn 2:14+ Is 59:17 Heb 4:12 So stand your ground, with *truth buckled round your waist*, and *integrity* 14 *for a breastplate*, 15 •wearing for shoes on your feet *the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace* 16 •and always carrying the shield of faith so that you can use it to put out the burning arrows of the evil one. 17 •And then you must accept *salvation from God to be your helmet* and receive the word of God from the Spirit to use as a sword.

Lk 18:1+ ‖Col 4:2-4 Pray all the time, asking for what you need, praying in the Spirit on every 18 possible occasion. Never get tired of staying awake to pray for all the saints; Rm 15:30+ and pray for me to be given an opportunity to open my mouth[f] and speak 19 Rm 16:25+ without fear and give out the mystery of the gospel[g] 20 •of which I am an ambassador in chains; pray that in proclaiming it I may speak as boldly as I ought to.

Personal news and final salutation

I should like you to know, as well, what is happening to me and what I am 21 ‖Col 4:7 doing; my dear brother Tychicus, my loyal helper in the Lord, will tell you

22 everything. •I am sending him to you precisely for this purpose, to give you
news about us and reassure you.
23 May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ grant peace, love and faith to
24 all the brothers. •May grace and eternal life be with all who love our Lord
Jesus Christ.[h]

e. By drawing a parallel between a human marriage and the marriage of Christ to his Church, vv. 23-32, these two concepts are made to illumine each other. Christ is the husband of the Church because he is her head and because he loves the Church as much as a man loves his own body when he loves his wife. Having established this, the comparison naturally suggests an ideal for human marriage. The symbol of Israel as the wife of Yahweh is common in the O.T., Ho 1:2+.

f. It was customary in the Middle East, at the time this letter was written, for the 'sons of the wedding' to escort the bride to her husband after she had bathed and dressed. As applied mystically to the Church, Christ washes his bride himself in the bath of baptism, and makes her immaculate (note the mention of a baptismal formula) and introduces her to himself.

g. Add. (Vulg) 'made from his flesh and blood'.

h. Paul makes this Gn text a prophecy of the marriage of Christ and the Church: a mystery, like that of the salvation of the pagans, that has been hidden but is now revealed, cf. 1:9f; 3:3f.

6 a. Om. 'in the Lord'.

b. Lit. 'fear and trembling', cf. 1 Co 2:3+.

c. God in the O.T. arms himself against his enemies, cf. Is 11:4-5; 59:16-18; Ws 5:17-23. These are the arms of Yahweh with which, Paul says, the Christian is to arm himself.

d. Var. 'you have'.

e. These are the spirits who were thought to move the stars and, consequently, the universe. They lived in 'the heavens', 1:20f; 3:10; Ph 2:10, or in 'the air', 2:2, i.e. the space between the surface of the earth and the heaven where God lives. Some of them are among the 'elemental principles of the world', Ga 4:3. They disobeyed God and want to enslave the human race to themselves in sin 2:2. We used to be their slaves but Christ came to free us, 1:21; Col 1:13; 2:15,20, and if Christians are armed with the power of Christ, they will be able to fight them.

f. Lit. 'that I may be given speech in opening of my mouth', Hebraism, cf. Ezk 3:27; 29:21; Ps 51:15; cf. Col 4:3.

g. Om. 'of the gospel'.

h. Or 'May grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in eternal life'. Add. (Vulg.) 'Amen'. cf. Ph 4:23.

PHILIPPIANS

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI

Address

Ac 16:1+ Rm 1:1+ *Ac 9:13+*

1 From Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ 1
Jesus, together with their presiding elders and deacons.[a] •We wish you the 2
grace and peace of God our Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and prayer

1 Th 1:2 *1:18,25; 2:2,29; 3:1; 4:1, 4.10* 1 Th 5:16 *1:10; 2:16* 1 Co 1:8+

I thank my God whenever I think of you; and •every time I pray for all of you, I 3 4
pray with joy,[b] •remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News[c] 5
from the day you first heard it[d] right up to the present. •I am quite certain that 6
the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day
of Christ Jesus comes. •It is only natural that I should feel like this towards 7

1:30 Ep 3:2 Rm 1:9 Col 1:9-10 Phm 6

you all, since you have shared the privileges which have been mine: both my
chains and my work defending and establishing the gospel. You have a permanent
place in my heart, •and God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ 8
Jesus loves you. •My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more 9
and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your
perception •so that you can always recognise what is best.[e] This will help you to 10

1:6 Heb 5:14 *3:9+* Jn 15:1 Heb 12:11 Jm 3:18

become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, •when you 11
will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory
and praise of God.

Paul's own circumstances

I am glad to tell you, brothers, that the things that happened to me[f] have 12
actually been a help to the Good News.

Ep 3:1 2 Tm 2:9

My chains, in Christ, have become famous not only all over the Praetorium[g] but 13
everywhere, •and most of the brothers have taken courage in the Lord from these 14
chains of mine and are getting more and more daring in announcing the Message[h]
without any fear. •It is true that some of them are doing it just out of rivalry 15

2:20-21

and competition, but the rest preach Christ with the right intention, •out of 16
nothing but love, as they know that this is my invariable way of defending the
gospel. •The others, who proclaim Christ for jealous or selfish motives, do not 17
mind if they make my chains heavier to bear. •But does it matter? Whether 18
from dishonset motives or in sincerity, Christ is proclaimed; and that makes me

1:4+ *Jb 13:16* LXX Ac 16:7 2 Tm 4:17 *1 Co 6:20* 2 Co 1:5 *Ga 2:20* Col 3:3f

happy; •and I shall continue being happy, because I know *this will help to save* 19
me, thanks to your prayers and to the help which will be given to me by the
Spirit of Jesus. •My one hope and trust is that I shall never have to admit defeat, 20
but that now as always I shall have the courage for Christ to be glorified in my
body,[i] whether by my life or by my death. •Life to me, of course, is Christ, but 21
then death would bring me something more; •but then again, if living in this 22
body means doing work which is having good results—I do not know what

23 should choose. •I am caught in this dilemma: I want to be gone and be with 2 Co 5:6-9
24 Christ,[j] which would be very much the better, •but for me to stay alive in this
25 body is a more urgent need for your sake. •This weighs with me so much that I feel 2:24
sure I shall survive and stay with you all,[k] and help you to progress in the faith
26 and even increase your joy in it; •and so you will have another reason to give 1:4+; 2:16
praise to Christ Jesus on my account when I am with you again. 1 Co 15:31
2 Co 1:14; 5:12
1 Th 2:19

Fight for the faith

27 Avoid anything in your everyday lives[l] that would be unworthy of the gospel Ep 4:1
of Christ, so that, whether I come to you and see for myself, or stay at a distance Col 1:10
1 Th 2:12
and only hear about you, I shall know that you are unanimous in meeting the *Col 2:5*
28 attack with firm resistance, united by your love for the faith of the gospel •and Ac 4:32
quite unshaken by your enemies. This would be the sure sign that they will lose
29 and you will be saved. It would be a sign from God •that he has given you the
30 privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well. •You and Mt 5:11
2 Th 1:4-7
I are together in the same fight as you saw me fighting before and, as you will *1:7*
Col 1:24+
have heard, I am fighting still.[m] 1 Th 2:2

Preserve unity in humility

1 2 If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all,[a] 2 Co 10:1; 13:13+
2 or the Spirit[b] that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, •then Ga 5:10
be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose Rm 15:5
and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely 1:4+
3 happy.[c] •There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody Ac 20:19
Rm 12:3,10
is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, 1 Co 1:10f
Ga 5:26
4 so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other *1 Co 10:24*
5 people's interests instead. •In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus:[d] Jn 13:15

6 His state was divine,[e] Jn 1:1f; 17:5
yet he did not cling Col 1:15-20
to his equality with God[f] Heb 1:3

1 a. The word '*episcopos*' ('overseer', 'supervisor' or 'shepherd') has not yet acquired the same meaning as 'bishop', cf. Tt 1:5f. The 'deacons' are their assistants, Ac 6:1-6.

b. Joy is one of the chief characteristics of this letter; cf. 1:18,25; 2:2,17,28,29; 3:1; 4:1,4,10.

c. Not only by sending money, 4:14-16, but by suffering for the Good News, 1:29-30.

d. Since the day they were converted, cf. Ac 16:12-40.

e. The ability to see what is morally good is one of the consequences of mutual love.

f. I.e. Paul's arrest and imprisonment awaiting trial.

g. If Paul is writing from his house-arrest in Rome, this must refer to members of the Praetorian Guard (who were quartered just outside the city wall). If Paul is writing from Ephesus or Caesarea, he is referring to the staff of the Praetorium which was the name of the official residence of the governor in each of those cities.

h. Add. 'of God' (Vulg.) or 'of the Lord'.

i. By baptism and Eucharist a Christian is so closely united to Christ, cf. 1 Co 6:15; 10:17; 12:12f,27; Ga 2:20; Ep 5:30, that his life, sufferings and death can be attributed mystically to Christ living in him and being glorified in him, cf. 1 Co 6:20; Rm 14:8. This union would be particularly close in the case of an apostle like Paul, cf. Col 1:24; 2 Co 4:10f.

j. As in 2 Cor 5:8+, this supposes that the (good) Christian who dies is with Christ at once without any temporal gap between death and 'last judgement'.

k. This presentiment (it was no more than that, cf. 2:17) was not mistaken, cf. Ac 20:1-6 and the Pastoral Letters, unlike what he had thought was a last farewell to the Ephesians, Ac 20:25.

l. Lit. 'Live your city-life (i.e. ordinary social life) worthily of the gospel'. The New City of God's kingdom has Christ for its ruler, the gospel for its law, and the Christians as its free citizens, cf. 3:20; Ep 2:19.

m. The first reference is to the persecution Paul had to put up with when he was with them in Philippi, Ac 16:19f; 1 Th 2:2; the second is to his present imprisonment awaiting trial.

2 a. Lit. 'If there is any exhortation in Christ, if there is any incentive in love'; this is a very friendly but a very powerful appeal, in the name of all that is holiest.

b. Almost certainly meant to be taken as a trinitarian reference: in this case 'love' is appropriated to the Father, cf. 2 Co 13:13+.

c. This urgent plea for unity suggests that internal divisions threatened the peace of the church of Philippi, cf. 1:27; 2:14; 4:2. Note how Paul keeps insisting that he is addressing all of them, 1:1,4,7,25; 2:17,26; 4:21.

d. Vv. 6-11 are a hymn, though whether composed or only quoted by Paul is uncertain. Each stanza deals with one stage of the mystery of Christ: divine pre-existence, *kenosis* in the Incarnation, his further *kenosis* in death, his glorification, adoration by the cosmos, new title of Lord. This hymn is concerned solely with the historical Christ in whose personality godhead and manhood are not divided; Paul nowhere divorces the humanity and divinity of Jesus, though he does distinguish his various stages of existence, cf. Col 1:13f.

e. Lit. 'Who subsisting in the form of God': here 'form' means all the attributes that express and reveal the essential 'nature' of God: Christ, being God, had all the divine prerogatives by right.

f. Lit. 'did not deem being on an equality with God as something to grasp' or 'hold on to'. This refers not to his equality by nature 'subsisting in the form of God', and which Christ could not have surrendered, but to his being publicly treated and honoured as equal to God

2 Co 8:9 Rv 5:12 *Mt 20:28*
but emptied himself[g] 7
to assume the condition of a slave,[h]
Rm 8:3 Ga 4:4 Heb 2:17
and became as men are;[i]
and being as all men are,[j]
Is 49:4 1 P 5:6 *Mt 26:39f* Rm 5:19 Heb 5:8; 12:2
he was humbler yet, 8
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
Is 52:13 Mt 23:12 Jn 10:17f Ep 1:20-23
But God raised him high[k] 9
and gave him the name[l]
which is above all other names[m]
so that *all beings* 10
Ep 4:10+
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,[n]
Is 45:23 Rm 14:11
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim[o] 11
Ac 2:36+ Rm 1:4; 10:9 1 Co 12:3
Jesus Christ as Lord,[p]
to the glory of God the Father.[q]

Work for salvation

2 Co 7:15
So then, my dear friends, continue to do as I tell you, as you always have; 12
not only as you did when I was there with you, but even more now that I am no
1 Co 2:3+
longer there; and work for your salvation 'in fear and trembling'. •It is God, 13
Ac 17:28 Ep 2:10; 3:20 Heb 13:21 *Dt 32:5*
for his own loving purpose, who puts both the will and the action into you.
Do all that has to be done without complaining or arguing •and then you will 14 15
be innocent and genuine, *perfect children of God among a deceitful and underhand*
Mt 5:14-16
brood, and you will shine in the world like bright stars •because you are offering 16
1:26+ 1 Co 1:8+ *Ga 2:2;* 4: 11; 5:7+ *Rm 1:9+* 2 Tm 4:6
it the word of life. This would give me something to be proud of for the Day
of Christ, and would mean that I had not run in the race and exhausted myself
for nothing. •And then, if my blood has to be shed as part of your own sacrifice 17
and offering—which is your faith[r]—I shall still be happy and rejoice with all of
1:4+
you, •and you must be just as happy and rejoice with me. 18

The mission of Timothy and Epaphroditus

Ac 16:1+
I hope, in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy to you soon, and I shall be 19
reassured by having news of you. •I have nobody else like him here, as whole- 20
1:15-17
heartedly concerned for your welfare: •all the rest seem more interested in 21
themselves than in Jesus Christ. •But you know how he has proved himself by 22
working with me on behalf of the Good News like a son helping his father.
That is why he is the one that I am hoping to send you, as soon as 23
1:25-26 Heb 13:19
I know something definite about my fate. •But I continue to trust, in the Lord, 24
that I shall be coming soon myself.
4:18
It is essential, I think, to send brother Epaphroditus back to you. He was sent 25
as your representative to help me when I needed someone to be my companion
in working and battling, •but he misses you all and is worried because you heard 26
about his illness. •It is true that he has been ill, and almost died, but God took 27
pity on him, and on me as well as him, and spared me what would have been one
grief on top of another. •So I shall send him back as promptly as I can; you will 28
be happy to see him again, and that will make me less sorry. •Give him a most 29
1:4+ 1 Co 16:16
hearty welcome, in the Lord; people like him are to be honoured. •It was for 30
Christ's work[s] that he came so near to dying, and he risked his life to give me the
help that you were not able to give me yourselves.
1:4+ 2 Co 13:11
3 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.[a] 1

The true way of Christian salvation

It is no trouble to me to repeat what I have already written to you, and as far
Ga 5:12
as you are concerned, it will make for safety. •Beware of dogs![b] Watch out for 2
2:17+ Jr 4:4+
the people who are making mischief. Watch out for the cutters.[c] •We are the 3

real people of the circumcision, we who worship in accordance with the Spirit of God;[d] we have our own glory from Christ Jesus without having to rely on a
4 physical operation.[e] •If it came to relying on physical evidence, I should be fully qualified myself. Take any man who thinks he can rely on what is physical: I am
5 even better qualified. •I was born of the race of Israel and of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrew parents,[f] and I was circumcised when I was eight days
6 old. As for the Law, I was a Pharisee; •as for working for religion, I was a persecutor of the Church; as far as the Law can make you perfect, I was faultless.
7 But because of Christ, I have come to consider all these advantages that I had
8 as disadvantages. •Not only that, but I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish
9 if only I can have Christ •and be given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and
10 based on faith.[g] •All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection
11 and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death. •That is the
12 way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead.[h] •Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture
13 the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me.[i] •I can assure you my brothers, I am far from thinking that I have already won. All I can say is that I forget the
14 past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; •I am racing for the finish, for
15 the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus. •We who are called 'perfect'[j] must all think in this way.[k] If there is some point on which you
16 see things differently, God will make it clear to you; •meanwhile, let us go forward on the road that has brought us to where we are.[l]

17 My brothers, be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us.

Rm 2:25-29▲ 2 Co 11: 21+▲ Col 2:11▲
Rm 7:5+
Ac 22:3
Gn 17:10+
Mt 3:7+ Ac 23:6 *Ac 8:1,3+*
Rm 10:3
Rm 1:16+ Ga 2:16 *Rm 1:4+*
Rm 6:4+; 8:11+17
2:16 Ga 5:7+
Lk 9:62
1 Co 9:25+ Heb 3:1
2 Th 3:7+

which was a thing that Jesus (unlike Adam, Gn 3:5,22, who wanted to be seen to be like God) could and did give up in his human life.

g. 'He emptied himself': this is not so much a reference to the fact of the incarnation, as to the way it took place. What Jesus freely gave up was not his divine nature, but the glory to which his divine nature entitled him, and which had been his before the incarnation, Jn 17:5, and which 'normally' speaking would have been observable in his human body (cf. the transfiguration, Mt 17:1-8). He voluntarily deprived himself of this so that it could be returned to him by the Father, cf. Jn 8:50,54, after his sacrifice vv. 9-11.

h. 'slave' as opposed to '*Kyrios*' v. 11, cf. Ga 4:1; Col 3:22f. Christ as man led a life of submission and humble obedience, v. 8. This is probably a reference to the 'servant' of Is 52:13-53:12, cf. Is 42:1+.

i. Not just 'a human being' but a human being 'like others', sharing all the weaknesses of the human condition apart from sin.

j. Lit. 'And in fashion found as a man'.

k. Lit. 'super-raised him': by the resurrection and ascension.

l. Named him 'Lord', v. 11; or, at a deeper level, gave him the ineffable and divine name which, through the triumph of the risen Christ, can now be expressed by the title *Kyrios*, Lord: cf. Ac 2:21+; 3:16+.

m. Greater even than the angels, cf. Ep 1:21; Heb 1:4; 1 P 3:22.

n. The three cosmic divisions that cover the entire creation, cf. Rv 5:3,13.

o. Var. 'and every tongue will acclaim'.

p. Om. 'Christ'. This proclamation is the essence of the Christian creed, Rm 10:9; 1 Co 12:3; cf. Col 2:6. The use of Is 45:23 (in which this homage is addressed to Yahweh himself) is a clear indication of the divine character that is meant to be understood by the title *Kyrios*, cf. Jn 20:28; Ac 2:36+.

q. Vulg. interpretation is 'proclaim that Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father'.

r. Libations were common to both Greek and Jewish sacrifices: Paul merely applies this custom metaphorically to the spiritual worship of the new creation, cf. 3:3; 4:18; Rm 1:9+.

s. Var. 'the Lord's work', or, 'the work'.

3 a. Paul interrupts the conclusion of the letter to add a long postscript.

b. Term of abuse applied by Jews to pagans, Mt 15:26 and possibly 7:6, and which Paul ironically applies to non-Christian Jews.

c. Lit. 'for the gash'. Paul uses this term *(katatomē)* as a contemptuous pun on 'circumcision' *(peritomē)*, implying a comparison between physical circumcision and the self-inflicted gashes in pagan cults, cf. 1 K 18:28, cf. Ga 5:12.

d. Var. (Vulg.) 'we who worship God in spirit'.

e. Lit. 'without trusting in the flesh', which covers all those outer observances of the old Law, of which circumcision is the most typical example, cf. Rm 7:5+.

f. His parents were Pharisees, Ac 23:6, of the tribe of Benjamin, Rm 11:1. Paul spoke Aramaic, Ac 21:40, unlike the hellenist Jews, Ac 6:1+.

g. The differences between these two sorts of perfection form the entire subject of Paul's letters to the Christians of Galatia and Rome.

h. Paul is not referring to the general resurrection of both saved and damned, Jn 5:29, but to the true resurrection of the saints who are separated from the 'spiritually' dead to life with Christ, Lk 20:35+.

i. Lit. 'but I follow (to see) if indeed I may grasp, inasmuch as I was grasped by Christ Jesus', i.e. the prize which he not only strives to grasp but for which also he was grasped on the road to Damascus.

j. Christians who are mature, cf. 1 Co 2:6+, but who are not totally perfect, v. 12.

k. 'must all think'; var. 'all think'.

l. Var. (Vulg.) 'let us be united in our convictions (cf. 2:2) and let us follow the same rule of life', cf. Ga 6:16.

Ac 20:19 I have told you often, and I repeat it today with tears, there are many who are 18
behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ. •They are destined to be lost. 19
Rm 16:18 They make foods into their god[m] and they are proudest of something they ought
Jn 3:12 to think shameful;[n] the things they think important are earthly things. •For us, 20
Heb 11:13-16 our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting
1 Tm 1:1+
Ac 3:20-21
Rm 8:23 for, the Lord Jesus Christ, •and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours 21
1 Co 15:23-28,47-49 into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which
Col 3:1-4 he can subdue the whole universe.

1:4+ 4 So then, my brothers and dear friends, do not give way but remain faithful 1
1 Th 2:19-20 in the Lord. I miss you very much, dear friends; you are my joy and my
crown.

Last advice

I appeal to Evodia and I appeal to Syntyche to come to agreement with each 2
other, in the Lord; •and I ask you, Syzygus,[a] to be truly a 'companion' and to 3
help them in this. These women were a help to me when I was fighting to defend
the Good News—and so, at the same time, were Clement and the others who
Dn 12:1 worked with me. Their names are written in the book of life.

1:4+ I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is 4
1 Co 16:22+ Tt 3:2 your happiness. •Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very 5
Mt 6:25-34 near. •There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, 6
Jn 14:27 Col 3:15 asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, •and that peace of God, which 7
is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your
thoughts,[b] in Christ Jesus. •Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that 8
is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that
we love and honour,[c] and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy
1 Th 2:13+ 2 Th 3:7+ of praise. •Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been 9
taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be
with you.

Thanks for help received

1:4+ It is a great joy to me, in the Lord, that at last you have shown some concern 10
for me again; though of course you were concerned before, and only lacked an
opportunity. •I am not talking about shortage of money: I have learnt to manage 11
Heb 13:5 on whatever I have, •I know how to be poor and I know how to be rich too. 12
I have been through my initiation and now I am ready for anything anywhere:
2 Co 12:9-10 Ep 3:8 full stomach or empty stomach, poverty or plenty. •There is nothing I cannot 13
Col 1:29 master with the help of the One[d] who gives me strength. •All the same, it was 14
good of you to share with me in my hardships. •In the early days of the 15
Ac 16:12f 2 Co 11:9 Good News, as you people of Philippi well know, when I left Macedonia, no other
church helped me with gifts of money.[e] You were the only ones; •and twice 16
Ac 17:1 since my stay in Thessalonika you have sent me what I needed. •It is not your 17
1 Tm 6:19 gift that I value; what is valuable to me is the interest that is mounting up in
your account. •Now for the time being I have everything that I need and more: 18
2:25 I am fully provided now that I have received from Epaphroditus the offering
Gn 8:21+ 2:17 that you sent, *a sweet fragrance*—the sacrifice that God accepts and finds
Heb 13:16 pleasing. •In return my God will fulfil[f] all your needs, in Christ Jesus, as lavishly 19
Rm 16:27+ as only God can. •Glory to God, our Father, for ever and ever. Amen. 20

Greetings and final wish

Ac 9:13+ My greetings to every one of the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are 21
with me send their greetings. •All the saints[g] send their greetings, especially those 22
of the imperial household.[h] •May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with 23
your spirit.[i]

m. The dietary laws loomed large in the Jewish practice of religion, Lv 11, cf. Rm 14; 16:18; Ga 2:12; Col 2:16,20f; Mt 15:10-20p; 23:25-26; Ac 15:20.

n. Lit. 'they glory in their shame', where 'shame' may be only the traditional euphemism for the circumcised member.

4 a. 'Syzygus' means yoke-fellow, mate, second of a pair, colleague, companion, cf. Phm 10-11.

b. Var. 'your bodies'.

c. Add. 'everything there is of knowledge', or 'of discipline' (Vulg.).

d. 'the One', var. 'Christ'.

e. Paul always refused all payments however legitimate; the one exception was what he received from his beloved Christians of Philippi, cf. Ac 16:15; 18:3+; 2 Co 11:8.

f. Var. (Vulg.) 'may my God fulfil'.

g. All the Christians of the place from which Paul is writing.

h. The 'household' of Caesar was a wide term that covered anybody employed in the service of the emperor, either in Rome or in any of the chief towns of the empire.

i. Add. 'Amen'.

COLOSSIANS

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE

PREFACE

Address

Rm 1:1+ Ac 9:13+
1 From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our 1
brother Timothy •to the saints in Colossae, our faithful brothers in Christ: 2
Grace and peace to you from God our Father.[a]

Thanksgiving and prayer

‖Ep 1:15-16 ‖Phm 4-5
We have never failed to remember you in our prayers and to give thanks for 3
you to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, •ever since we heard about 4
1 Co 13:13+ your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you show towards all the saints
1 P 1:3 because of the hope which is stored up for you in heaven. It is only recently that 5
1:23 ‖Ep 1:13 *Ac 14:3; 20:24,32* 2 Co 6:1
you heard of this, when it was announced in the message of the truth. The Good
News •which has reached you is spreading all over the world and producing the 6
same results as it has among you ever since the day when you heard about God's
grace and understood what this really is. •Epaphras, who taught you, is one of 7
our closest fellow workers and a faithful deputy for us as Christ's servant,[b] •and 8
1 Co 13:1+ it was he who told us all about your love in the Spirit.

‖Ep 1:15 Ep 5:17 Ph 1:9 Phm 6 *3:10+* Ph 1:27
That will explain why, ever since the day he told us, we have never failed to 9
pray for you, and what we ask God is that through perfect wisdom and spiritual
understanding you should reach the fullest knowledge of his will. •So you will 10
be able to lead the kind of life which the Lord expects of you, a life acceptable
to him in all its aspects; showing the results in all the good actions you do and
increasing your knowledge of God. •You will have in you the strength, based on 11
Ws 5:5+ Ep 1:11-13; 5:8 1 P 1:4; 2:9
his own glorious power, never to give in, but to bear anything joyfully, •thanking 12
the Father who has made it possible for you to join the saints and with them
Ac 26:18 *Jn 8:12+*
to inherit the light.[c]

‖Ep 1:6-7 Rm 3:24+ Heb 1:3+
Because that is what he has done: he has taken us out of the power of darkness 13
and created a place for us in the kingdom of the Son that he loves, •and in him, 14
we gain our freedom,[d] the forgiveness of our sins.

I. FORMAL INSTRUCTION

Christ is the head of all creation[e]

1:18+ Gn 1:1-2 Ps 89:27 Ws 7:26 Zc 12:10 Jn 1:3,18 Rm 8:29 Heb 1:3,6
He is the image of the unseen God 15
and the first-born of all creation,
for in him were created 16
all things in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and everything invisible,
Ep 1:10,21+
Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignties, Powers—
Rm 11:36 1 Co 8:6
all things were created through him and for him.

17 Before anything was created, he existed,
and he holds all things in unity.
18 Now the Church is his body,
he is its head.[f] 1:15,24 Ep 1:22-23; 5:23f

As he is the Beginning,
he was first to be born from the dead, 1 Co 15:20 Rv 1:5
so that he should be first in every way; *Rm 8:29*
19 because God wanted all perfection 2:9+ Ep 1:23
to be found in him[g]
20 and all things to be reconciled through him and for him,[h] Ep 1:10; 2:14,16
everything in heaven and everything on earth,[i]
when he made peace
by his death on the cross.

The Colossians have their share in salvation

21 Not long ago, you were foreigners and enemies,[j] in the way that you used to Ep 2:1f; 4: 18-19
22 think and the evil things that you did; •but now he has reconciled you, by his *2:13* Ep 2:14-16
death and in that mortal body.[k] Now you are able to appear before him holy, 1 Co 1:8+
23 pure and blameless—•as long as you persevere and stand firm on the solid base Ep 5:27+
of the faith, never letting yourselves drift away from the hope promised by the 1:5f Mk 16:15
Good News, which you have heard, which has been preached to the whole human Ac 2:5 2 Co 3:6
race,[l] and of which I, Paul, have become the servant. Ep 3:17 *Ep 3:7*

Paul's labours in the service of the pagans

24 It makes me happy to suffer for you, as I am suffering now, and in my own 2:1 Mt 5:11
body to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for *1:18+* 2 Co 1:5
25 the sake of his body, the Church.[m] •I became the servant of the Church when God *Rm 15:19* 2 Co 3:6

1 a. Add. (Vulg.) 'and the Lord Jesus Christ'.

b. Lit. 'A faithful servant of Christ on behalf of us'; var. (Vulg.) 'on behalf of you'.

c. Lit. 'Thanking the Father (for) having made you (var. 'us') fit for the part of the lot of the saints in the light'; var. 'for having called you (var. 'us') to...' The 'lot of the saints' is what all holy people are to inherit, i.e. the 'salvation' that had been thought of as a bequest made exclusively to Israel. Now, non-Jews are called to share it, cf. Ep 1:11-13. The word 'saints' (lit. 'holy ones') here can mean either Christians, i.e. people called to live the 'life of light' while still living on earth, Rm 1:7f, cf. Jn 8:12f, or it can mean the angels who live with God in the eschatological 'light', cf. Ac 9:13+.

d. Lit. 'In whom we have the redemption'. Add. (Vulg.) 'by blood', cf. Ep 1:7.

e. In this poem Paul introduces two ways in which Christ can claim to be the 'head' of everything that exists: 1. he is the head of creation, of all that exists naturally, vv. 15-17; 2. he is head of the new creation and of all that exists supernaturally through having been saved, vv. 18-20. The subject of the poem is the pre-existent Christ, but considered only in so far as he was manifest in the unique historic person that is the son of God made man, cf. Ph 2:5+. It is as the incarnate God that Jesus is the 'image of God', i.e. his human nature was the visible manifestation of God who is invisible, cf. Rm 8:29+, and it is as such, in this concrete human nature, and as part of creation, that Jesus is called the 'first-born of creation'—not in the temporal sense of having been born first, but in the sense of having been given the first place of honour.

f. On the Church as Christ's body, cf. 1 Co 12:12f; he is called the 'head' of his own body both in a temporal sense (v. 18, i.e. he was the first to rise from the dead) and in a spiritual sense (v. 20, i.e. he is the leader of all the saved).

g. Lit. 'because (God) wanted the *pleroma* to dwell in him'. The exact meaning of the word *pleroma* (i.e. the thing that fills up a gap or hole, like a patch, cf. Mt 9:16) is not certain here. Some writers have thought it must mean the same as in 2:9 (the fulness of divinity that filled Jesus), but since vv. 15-18 have already dealt with the divinity of Jesus, it seems likely that the reference here is to the biblical concept of the entire cosmos as filled with the creative presence of God, cf. Is 6:3; Jr 23:24; Ps 24:1; 50:12; 72:19; Ws 1:7; Si 43:27 etc. This concept was also widespread in the Graeco-Roman world. Paul teaches that the incarnation and resurrection make Christ head not only of the entire human race, but of the entire created cosmos, so that everything that was involved in the fall is equally involved in the salvation, cf. Rm 8:19-22; 1 Co 3:22f; 15:20-28; Ep 1:10; 4:10; Ph 2:10f; 3:21; Heb 2:5-8. Cf. 2:9+.

h. I.e. through and for Christ, cf. the parallel 'through him and for him' of v. 16. Alternatively, it could read 'God wanted everything... to be reconciled to himself, through him who made peace...', cf. Rm 5:10; 2 Co 5:18f.

i. This reconciliation of the whole universe (including angels as well as human beings) means, not that every single individual will be saved, but that all who are saved will be saved by their collective return to the right order and peace of perfect submission to God. Any individuals who do not join this new creation through grace will be forced to join it, cf. 2:15; 1 Co 15:24-25 (the heavenly spirits) and 2 Th 1:8-9; 1 Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:21; Rm 2:8; Ep 5:5 (men).

j. The context suggests that there is a closer parallel with Ep 4:18f (foreigners to God and therefore God's enemies) than with Ep 2:12 (foreigners in Israel).

k. 'he', i.e. the Father. The human, mortal body is that of his Son (lit. 'flesh body'); this provides the locus where the reconciliation takes place. Into this body the entire human race is effectively gathered, cf. Ep 2:14-16, because Christ has assumed its sin, 2 Co 5:21. The 'flesh' body is the body as affected by sin, 2 Co 5:21; cf. Rm 8:3; 7:5+; Heb 4:15.

l. Lit. 'to all creation under the sky'.

m. Lit. 'all that is lacking from the sufferings of Christ... Church'. Jesus suffered in order to establish the

made me responsible for delivering God's message to you, •the message which 26
Rm 16:25+ was a mystery hidden for generations and centuries and has now been revealed to
his saints. •It was God's purpose to reveal it to them and to show all the rich glory 27
3:4 of this mystery to pagans. The mystery is Christ among you, your hope of glory:[n]
Ep 2:12
1 Th 4:13 this is the Christ we proclaim, this is the wisdom in which we thoroughly train 28
1 Co 2:6
Ep 4:13+ everyone and instruct everyone, to make them all perfect in Christ. •It is for 29
Ph 4:13 this I struggle wearily on, helped only by his power driving me irresistibly.
2 Th 1:11

Paul's concern for the Colossians' faith

1:24 2 Yes, I want you to know that I do have to struggle hard for you, and for 1
1 Th 2:17 those in Laodicea, and for so many others who have never seen me face to
face. •It is all to bind you together in love and to stir your minds, so that your 2
Ep 3:18-19 understanding may come to full development, until you really know God's
Pr 2:4-5 secret[a] •in which[b] all the jewels of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. 3
Is 45:3
Ep 4:14; 5:6 I say this to make sure that no one deceives you with specious arguments.[c] 4
1 Co 5:3-4 I may be absent in body, but in spirit I am there among you, delighted to find you 5
Ph 1:27
1 Th 2:17 all in harmony and to see how firm your faith in Christ is.

II. A WARNING AGAINST SOME ERRORS

Live according to the true faith in Christ, not according to false teaching

Ep 4:21 You must live your whole life according to the Christ you have received— 6
Heb 2:9
Ac 2:22+ Jesus the Lord; •you must be rooted in him and built on him and held firm by the 7
Ep 3:17
1 Th 2:13+ faith you have been taught, and full of thanksgiving.
Mt 15:2 Make sure that no one traps you and deprives you of your freedom[d] by some 8
Ga 4:3+
Ep 4:14; 5:6 secondhand, empty, rational philosophy based on the principles of this world
instead of on Christ.

Christ alone is the true head of men and angels

1:19+ *In his body lives the fulness of divinity,[e] and in him you too find your own* 9
Jn 1:16
Ep 1:13; 3: fulfilment, •in the one who is the head of every Sovereignty and Power.[f] 10
19; 4:12-
13 In him you have been circumcised, with a circumcision not performed by 11
Jr 4:4+
Rm 2:25-29 human hand, but by the complete stripping of your body of flesh.[g] This is cir-
Ph 3:3
Rm 6:3-4+ cumcision according to Christ.[h] •You have been buried with him, when you 12
Rm 1:4+; were baptised; and by baptism, too, you have been raised up with him through
8:11+
Ep 1:19f; your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. •You were dead, 13
2:6+
1:22 because you were sinners and had not been circumcised: he[i] has brought you[j]
||Ep 2:1.5f to life with him, he has forgiven us[k] all our sins.
Ep 2:15 He has overridden the Law, and cancelled every record of the debt that we 14
had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross;[l] •and so he got 15
Is 53:12 rid of the Sovereignties and the Powers, and paraded them in public, behind him
1 P 3:22
2 Co 2:14 in his triumphal procession.[m]

Against the false asceticism based on 'the principles of this world'

Rm 14:3-4 From now onwards, never let anyone else decide what you should eat or drink, 16
Ga 4:3+
1 Tm 4:3 or whether you are to observe annual festivals, New Moons or sabbaths. •These 17
Heb 9:10
Heb 10:1 were only pale reflections of what was coming: the reality is Christ.[n] •Do not be 18
taken in by people who like grovelling[o] to angels and worshipping them;[p] people
Ga 6:12 like that are always going on about some vision they have had,[q] inflating them-
selves to a false importance with their worldly outlook. •A man of this sort 19
||Ep 4:15-16 is not united to the head,[r] and it is the head that adds strength and holds the
whole body together, with all its joints and sinews—and this is the only way in
which it can reach its full growth in God.
Ga 4:3+ If you have really died with Christ to the principles of this world, why do you 20
still let rules dictate to you, as though you were still living in the world? •'It is 21

forbidden to pick up this, it is forbidden to taste that, it is forbidden to touch
22 something else'; •all these prohibitions are only concerned with things that perish by their very use—an example of *human doctrines and regulations*!
23 It may be argued that true wisdom is to be found in these, with their self-imposed devotions, their self-abasement, and their severe treatment of the body; but once the flesh starts to protest, they are no use at all.[e]

1 Co 6:13; 8:8
Is 29:13
Mt 15:9
2 Tm 3:5

Life-giving union with the glorified Christ

1 3 Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand.
2 Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth,
3 because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God.
4 But when Christ is revealed—and he is your[a] life—you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.[b]

Ep 2:6+
Ph 3:20
Ac 2:33+
2:12
Ph 1:21
1:27
1 P 5:1
1 Jn 3:2
Rm 8:19

reign of God, and anyone who continues his work must share this suffering. Paul is not saying that he thinks his own sufferings increase the value of the redemption (since that value cannot be increased) but that he shares by his sufferings as a missionary in those that Jesus had undergone in his own mission, cf. 2 Co 1:5; Ph 1:20+. These are the sufferings predicted for the messianic era, Mt 24:8+; Ac 14:22+; 1 Tm 4:1+, and are all part of the way in which God had always intended the Church to develop; Paul feels that being the messenger Christ has chosen to send to the pagans, he has been specially called on to experience these sufferings.

n. Previously, when it had seemed (to the Jews) that pagans could never be saved, as salvation was restricted to 'Israel', pagans had seemed to be without a Messiah and consequently to be deprived of all hope, Ep 2:12. The 'mystery' or secret of God that had now been revealed was that the pagans too were, and had been, all called to be saved through union with Christ, and so to reach eternal glory, cf. Ep 2:13-22; 3:3-6.

2 a. Var. 'the mystery of Christ', cf. 4:3; Ep 3:4; or 'God's mystery of Christ', or 'the mystery of God the father, of Christ', or 'the mystery of God the Father, and of Christ', etc.

b. 'in which' i.e. in the 'mystery' that revealed what till then had been 'hidden', namely the 'infinite wisdom' of God, cf. Rm 16:25+; 1 Tm 3:16+. That it is Christ who is revealed in the mystery, 1:27, is of course true, and he himself is also the Wisdom of God, 1 Co 1:24,30, and he is also the Mystery, 1 Co 2:7, that is hard to understand Ep 3:8 19.

c. This will be developed in v. 8f.

d. To deny Christ after he has liberated them from the tyranny of 'darkness' 1:13f, by going back to error, would be nothing but a new slavery cf. Ga 4:8f; 5:1.

e. The word *pleroma* here cf. 1:19+, is defined as the 'divinity' that is actually 'filling' Christ now in his body; in other words, the risen Christ, through his incarnation and resurrection, unites the divine and the created. The former is what he is by his pre-existence and his present glory; the latter is, as human, what he has assumed directly, and as cosmic, what he assumed indirectly through being human. In this way he himself is the *pleroma* of all possible categories of being.

f. A Christian shares this *pleroma* of Christ by being part of it, i.e. part of Christ's body cf. (text and notes) 1:19: Ep 1:23; 3:19; 4:12-13 and as a consequence of this he is raised to be higher than even the highest grade of angel. The following verses develop these two ideas: disciples of Christ share his triumph, vv. 11-13, over even the highest grade of angel, vv. 14-15.

g. Surgical circumcision removes only a piece of skin.

h. The 'circumcision' instituted by Christ, i.e baptism.

i. God the Father.

j. 'you'; var. 'us'.

k. 'us'; var 'you'.

l. The Law was able to do nothing about a sinner except condemn him to death, Rm 7:7+· this death sentence is what God had carried out on his own Son in order to suppress it for the rest of the world and it was for this very reason that God's Son was 'made sin' 2 Co 5:21, 'subject to the Law', Ga 4:4, and 'cursed' by the Law, Ga 3:13. In the person of his Son, whom he allowed to be executed, God nailed up and destroyed our death warrant, as well as all the charges it made against us.

m. The tradition is that the Law was brought down to Moses by angels, Ga 3:19+, and by honouring them as the lawgivers, cf. v. 18, people have been distracted from the true creator. Now that God has brought the régime of that Law to an end, by means of the crucifixion, these angelic powers have lost the one thing that had given them power, and so they too must acknowledge that Christ has triumphed over them.

n. Lit. 'but the body is Christ'—a pun on the word *soma* ('body') as being both that which is more real than any shadow or reflection, and the body of the risen Christ which is what gives reality to our eschatological hope, and which is the first evidence that the new creation has already begun.

o. Or 'Do not let people take the liberty of looking down on you just because they grovel...'

p. Dietary and cultic practices, v. 16, are only superstitious worries about material things and the 'spirits' that are supposed to control them, cf. Ga 4: 3f

q. Var. (Vulg.) 'they have not (in fact) had'. Paul is explaining where the teachers at Colossae have gone wrong, which is either because they attach a false importance to their 'visions' or, at a more general level, because they think their own completely unspiritual ideas are what religion is about.

r. Christ, Ep 4:15.

s. Lit. these things 'are not in any honour for satisfaction of the flesh'; this may mean either that they are of no real value in subduing 'the flesh', or else 'they are of no value and only help to satisfy the flesh'.

3 a. Var. 'our'.

b. Through union with Christ in baptism, 2:12, his followers already live the identical life he lives in heaven, cf. Ep 2:6+, but this spiritual life is not manifest and glorious as it will be at the *parousia*.

III. EXHORTATION

General rules of Christian behaviour

Rm 6:11f
Ga 5:24
Ep 4:22
Rm 1:29+
||Ep 5:6
Rm 1:18+
||Ep 2:2-3
Tt 3:3
Ep 4:31
Ep 4:25
Rm 6:6
||Ep 4:22-24
Gn 1:26-27
Gn 11:1
1 Co 12:13;
15:28
Ga 3:27-28
Ep 4:13
||Ep 4:1-2,32
1 Th 5:15
Mt 6:14;
18:21-35
2 Co 2:7
Ep 4:32+
Rm 13:8-
10+
1 Co 13:1+
Ep 2:16;
4:3-4
Ph 4:7
1 Co 12:12+
Ep 4:29
Ac 16:25
||Ep 5:19-20
1 Co 10:31

That is why you must kill everything in you that belongs only to earthly life:[c] 5
fornication, impurity, guilty passion, evil desires and especially greed, which is
the same thing as worshipping a false god; •all this is the sort of behaviour that 6
makes God angry.[d] •And it is the way in which you used to live when you were 7
surrounded by people doing the same thing, •but now you, of all people, must 8
give all these things up: getting angry, being bad-tempered, spitefulness, abusive
language and dirty talk; •and never tell each other lies. You have stripped off 9
your old behaviour with your old self, •and you have put on a new self which will 10
progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its
creator;[e] •and in that image there is no room for distinction between Greek 11
and Jew, between the circumcised or the uncircumcised, or between barbarian
and Scythian, slave and free man. There is only Christ: he is everything and he
is in everything.[f]

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed 12
in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. •Bear 13
with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has
forgiven you; now you must do the same. •Over all these clothes, to keep them 14
together and complete them, put on love. •And may the peace of Christ reign 15
in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one
body. Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ,[g] in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach 16
each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts
sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God;[h] •and never say or do anything 17
except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through
him.

The morals of the home and household[i]

||Ep 5:21-
6:9
1 P 3:1-7
Tt 2:5
Ep 6:1
Rm 6:15+
1 Co 7:21-23
Ep 6:5
1 Tm 6:1
Tt 2:9-10
Phm 16
1 P 2:18
Jb 31:15
Ep 6:5
Phm 16

Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord. •Husbands, 18 19
love your wives and treat them with gentleness. •Children, be obedient to your 20
parents always, because that is what will please the Lord. •Parents, never drive 21
your children to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.

Slaves, be obedient to the men who are called your masters in this world; 22
not only when you are under their eye, as if you had only to please men, but
wholeheartedly, out of respect for the Master.[j] •Whatever your work is, put 23
your heart into it as if it were for the Lord and not for men, •knowing that the 24
Lord will repay you by making you his heirs.[k] It is Christ the Lord that you are
serving; •anyone who does wrong will be repaid in kind and he does not favour 25
one person more than another. 4 Masters, make sure that your slaves are given 1
what is just and fair, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

The apostolic spirit

Rm 12:12
||Ep 6:18-20
1 Th 5:6
Rm 15:30+
1 Co 16:9+
2 Th 3:1
Heb 13:18
1 Co 5:12+
||Ep 5:15
2 Co 6:2+
Ep 5:16

Be persevering in your prayers and be thankful as you stay awake to pray. 2
Pray for us especially, asking God to show us opportunities for announcing the 3
message and proclaiming the mystery of Christ,[a] for the sake of which I am in
chains; •pray that I may proclaim it as clearly as I ought. 4

Be tactful with those who are not Christians and be sure you make the best 5
use of your time with them. •Talk to them agreeably and with a flavour of wit,[b] 6
and try to fit your answers to the needs of each one.

Personal news

Ac 20:4+
||Ep 6:21

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a brother I love very much, 7

8 and a loyal helper and companion in the service of the Lord. •I am sending him
to you precisely for this purpose: to give you news about us[c] and to reassure you.
9 With him I am sending Onesimus, that dear and faithful brother who is a fellow Phm 10f
citizen of yours. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

Greetings[d] and final wishes Phm 23f

10 Aristarchus, who is here in prison with me, sends his greetings, and so does Ac 19:29
Mark, the cousin of Barnabas—you were sent some instructions about him; Ac 12:12+ 2 Tm 4:11
11 if he comes to you, give him a warm welcome—•and Jesus Justus adds his greet-
ings. Of all those who have come over from the Circumcision, these are the only
ones actually working with me for the kingdom of God. They have been a great
12 comfort to me. •Epaphras, your fellow citizen, sends his greetings; this servant
of Christ Jesus never stops battling for you, praying that you will never lapse but Rm 15:30
13 always hold perfectly and securely to the will of God. •I can testify for him that
14 he works hard for you, as well as for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. •Greetings
from my dear friend Luke, the doctor, and also from Demas. 2 Tm 4:10-11
15 Please give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea and to Nympha and the
16 church which meets in her house. •After this letter has been read among you, Rm 16:5 *1 Th 5:27*
send it on to be read in the church of the Laodiceans; and get the letter[e] from
17 Laodicea for you to read yourselves. •Give Archippus this message, 'Remember Phm 2
the service that the Lord wants you to do, and try to carry it out'.
18 Here is a greeting in my own handwriting—PAUL. Remember the chains I 1 Co 16:21 Ga 6:11 Ep 3:1+ 2 Th 3:17 Phm 19 *Phm 9*
wear. Grace be with you.[f]

c. At the mystical level of union with Christ in heaven, participation in his death and resurrection through baptism is instantaneous and total, 2:12f,20; 3:1-4; Rm 6:4+, but at the practical level of life on earth, this union has to be grown into gradually. Already 'dead' in theory, the Christian must experience death and rebirth daily, constantly, by 'killing' the old and sinful self.

d. Add. (Vulg.) 'with those who resist him', cf. Ep 5:6.

e. The human race, that was to have been the 'image of God', Gn 1:26+, lost its way trying to locate the 'knowledge of good and evil' outside and apart from the will of God, Gn 2:17+, and became the slave of sin and sinful urges, Rm 5:12+. This is the 'old self (man)' that must die, Rm 6:6; Ep 4:22; the 'new self' is reborn in Christ, Ep 2:15+, who is the true image of God, Rm 8:29+. In this way the human race can both recover its original purity and reach true moral certitude, 1:9; Heb 5:14.

f. The new creation will not be divided into races and religions and cultures and social classes in the way the present creation has been since the Fall; the whole world will be reunited in Christ.

g. Var. 'of the Lord', or 'of God'; possibly the text originally read 'the Word', cf. Ph 1:14; 2:30.

h. These 'inspired songs' could be charismatic improvisations suggested by the Spirit during liturgical assembly; cf. 1 Co 12:7f; 14:26.

i. Paul christens these simple precepts of ordinary morality by introducing his phrase 'in the Lord' which must be taken here as meaning 'according to the Christian way of life'. These Christian applications are further developed in Ep 5:22f.

j. 'your masters... the Master': Paul uses the same word each time, i.e. Christ is the master equally of both slave and slave-owner.

k. That a master should name a slave as his heir, cf. Mt 21:35-8; Lk 15:19; Ga 4:1-2, is one of the most impressive proofs of how different the new creation 'in Christ' is, cf. Rm 8:15-17; Ga 4:3-7; Phm 16.

4 a. Var. 'of God', cf. 2:2.

b. Lit. 'seasoned with salt', a classical Greek cliché. Cf. Mk 9:50.

c. Var. (Vulg.) 'to get your news'.

d. On Aristarchus, cf. Ac 19:29. On Mark, cf. Ac 12:12+. 'Jesus Justus' is not mentioned anywhere else; his surname was quite common among Jews and Jewish converts, cf. Ac 1:23; 18:27. Epaphras, born at Colossae (and therefore not the same person as Epaphroditus who came from Philippi, Ph 2:25; 4:18) had been sent by Paul to evangelise Colossae, his own native town, Col 1:7. Luke is the evangelist and author of Ac: he had joined Paul towards the end of his third journey, Ac 20:5f, had been with him till they reached Rome, Ac 27:1f, and now, with Paul under arrest, he is still by his side, cf. Phm 24, as he will be again after Paul has been arrested a second time, 2 Tm 4:11. On Demas, cf. Phm 24; 2 Tm 4:10. Who the woman called Nympha was (or man, if the correct spelling is Nymphas) is unknown. Archippus, v. 17, is probably the son of Philemon, Phm 2; what the service was the Lord wanted him to do is not known.

e. Paul expected his letters to be read in public to the assembled brothers, 1 Th 5:27, and then passed on to neighbouring churches, cf. 2 Co 1:1. The letter that was to be brought back from Laodicea to Colossae was probably the one that Paul wrote to Ephesus.

f. Add. (Vulg.) 'Amen', cf. Ph 4:23.

1 THESSALONIANS

THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONIKA

Rm 1:1+ 2 Th 1:1-2

Address

Ac 15:22+; 16:1+

1 From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace.[a] 1

2 Th 1:3

Thanksgiving and congratulations

Ph 1:3 5:8 1 Co 13:13+ Rv 2:2

We always mention you in our prayers and thank God for you all, •and 2 3
constantly remember before God our Father how you have shown your faith in
action, worked for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Th 2:13

We know, brothers, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, 4

Ac 20:18 1 Co 2:4 2 Co 12:12 *Ac 1:8+*

because when we brought the Good News[b] to you, it came to you not only as 5
words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction. And you
observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your

Ac 17:1-9 2 Th 3:7+ *3:3* Rm 14:17 Ga 5:22 *2 Th 1:4*

instruction, •and you were led to become imitators of us, and of the Lord; and 6
it was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the gospel, in spite of the
great opposition all round you. •This has made you the great example to all 7
believers in Macedonia and Achaia •since it was from you that the word of the 8

Rm 1:8

Lord started to spread—and not only throughout Macedonia and Achaia, for
the news of your faith in God has spread everywhere. We do not need to tell other
people about it: •other people tell us how we started the work among you, how 9

Ac 3:19+ Ga 4:8 *2:19-20;* 4:16-17; 5:9 *Mt 3:7+* Rm 2:5f; 5:9

you broke with idolatry when you were converted to God and became servants
of the real, living God; •and how you are now waiting for Jesus, his Son, whom 10
he raised from the dead, to come from heaven to save us from the retribution[c]
which is coming.

Paul's example in Thessalonika

2 You know yourselves, my brothers, that our visit to you has not proved 1
ineffectual.

Ac 16:19-40

We had, as you know, been given rough treatment and been grossly insulted 2

Ph 1:30 *Ac 13:46+* 2 Co 3:12

at Philippi, and it was our God who gave us the courage to proclaim his Good
News to you in the face of great opposition. •We have not taken to preaching 3
because we are deluded, or immoral, or trying to deceive anyone; •it was God 4

Ep 3:7 1 Tm 1:11

who decided that we were fit to be entrusted with the Good News, and when we

Jr 11:20 2 Co 4:2; 5:9 Ga 1:10 *Rm 1:9*

are speaking, we are not trying to please men but God, *who can read* our *inmost thoughts*. •You know very well, and we can swear it before God, that never at 5
any time have our speeches been simply flattery, or a cover for trying to get money;

Jn 5:41,44

nor have we ever looked for any special honour from men, either from you or 6
anybody else, •when we could have imposed ourselves on you with full weight, 7
as apostles of Christ.[a]

1 Co 3:2 Ga 4:19 *Rm 9:3* Ga 2:20+

Instead, we were unassuming.[b] Like a mother feeding and looking after her own
children, •we felt so devoted and protective towards you, and had come to love 8

you so much, that we were eager to hand over to you not only the Good News
9 but our whole lives as well. •Let me remind you, brothers, how hard we used to
work, slaving night and day so as not to be a burden on any one of you while
10 we were proclaiming God's Good News to you. •You are witnesses, and so
is God, that our treatment of you, since you became believers, has been impeccably
11 right and fair. •You can remember how we treated every one of you as a father
12 treats his children, •teaching you what was right, encouraging you and appealing
to you to live a life worthy of God, who is calling[c] you to share the glory of his
kingdom.

4:11 Ac 18:3+ 2 Th 3:7-9
Ac 20:18 2 Co 4:4
1 Co 4:15 Phm 10 *Ph 1:27*
Mt 4:17+ 2 Tm 2:10 1 P 5:10

The faith and the patience of the Thessalonians

13 Another reason why we constantly thank God for you is that as soon as you
heard the message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what
it really is, God's message[d] and not some human thinking; and it is still[e] a living
14 power among you who believe it. •For you, my brothers, have been like the
churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judaea, in suffering the same
15 treatment from your own countrymen as they have suffered from the Jews,[f] •the
people who put the Lord Jesus to death, and the prophets too. And now they have
been persecuting us, and acting in a way that cannot please God and makes them
16 the enemies of the whole human race, •because they are hindering us from
preaching to the pagans and trying to save them. They never stop trying *to finish off the sins they have begun*, but retribution[g] is overtaking them at last.

1 Co 11:2+; 15:1 *Ep 1:13* Ph 4:9 *Rm 1:16* Heb 4:12 *1 Co 1:2+* 2 Th 3:7+
Mt 23:29-37 Ac 2:23-24+
Gn 15:16 2 M 6:14 Mt 23:32

Paul's anxiety

17 A short time after we had been separated from you—in body but never in
thought, brothers—we had an especially strong desire and longing to see you face
18 to face again, •and we tried hard to come and visit you; I, Paul, tried more than
19 once, but Satan prevented us. •What do you think is our pride and our joy? You
are; and you will be *the crown* of which we shall be *proudest* in the presence of our
20 Lord Jesus when he comes; •you are our pride and our joy.

3:10 Col 2:1,5 Rm 1:10-11
2 Th 2:9+
Ezk 16:12; 23:42 Pr 16:31 1 Co 9:25+ Ph 2:16 *1:10+* 1 Co 15:23+ 2 Co 1:14+

Timothy's mission to Thessalonika

1 3 When we could not bear the waiting any longer, we decided it would be best
2 to be left without a companion at Athens, and •sent our brother Timothy,
who is God's helper[a] in spreading the Good News of Christ, to keep you firm and
3 strong in the faith •and prevent any of you from being unsettled by the present
4 troubles. As you know, these are bound to come our way: •when we were with
you, we warned you that we must expect to have persecutions to bear, and that
5 is what has happened now, as you have found out. •That is why, when I could
not stand waiting any longer, I sent to assure myself of your faith: I was afraid

Ac 17:14-16+ *1 Co 3:9* 2 Co 6:1 *1:6*
Mt 16:24p Ac 14:22 Rm 8:36 2 Th 1:5 2 Tm 3:12 Heb 10:32,36

1 a. Add. 'from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ', cf. 2 Th 1:2.

b. Var. 'the Good News of God', or 'of our God'. The Good News is more than a proclamation, it is the whole new economy of salvation.

c. Lit. 'wrath'. Vv. 9-10 seem to give an extremely condensed summary of Paul's characteristic 'proclamation'. The two main elements of the Good News as preached by Paul were: his emphasis on monotheism, and the prominence he gives to the return of the risen Lord, cf. Rm 1:1-4,20f; 1 Co 1:18,21; Ga 1:3f; 3:1; Ac 14:15-17; 17:21-31, etc.

2 a. Lit. 'being able to be with weight as apostles of Christ'; interpreted morally, this can mean that Paul could have insisted on his own dignity and prestige, or that materially he could have expected to have been fed and kept at their expense, cf. 2:9; 2 Th 3:8; 2 Co 11:9.

b. Lit. 'babies'; var. 'gentle'.

c. Var. 'called you'.

d. A brief summary of the apostolic tradition: the message is first 'received', 4:1; 2 Th 3:6; 1 Co 15:1; Ga 1:9; Ph 4:9; Col 2:6, or 'heard', Rm 10:17+; Ep 1:13; Ac 15:7, etc. It then penetrates the mind or heart Rm 10:8-10, where if it is welcomed, 1:6; 2 Th 2:10; 2 Co 11:4; Ac 8:14, etc. Mk 4:20, it proves that the hearer acknowledges that God has been speaking through his missionary, 4:1f; 2 Co 3:5; 15:3.

e. Or 'has become'; God acts through his message that has been welcomed by the believer, cf. 1:8; 2 Th 3:1.

f. The harsh tone of vv. 15-16 gives a good idea of how bitter the atmosphere was in Jerusalem, Mt 5:12; 21:33-46; 23:29-37; Ac 2:23+, owing to the way Paul upset the Jewish community by preaching to pagans v. 16; cf. Ac 13:5+. Later on Paul was able to take a more balanced attitude than he takes here, by frequent references to the special position of God's chosen people, cf. Rm 9:11; Ga 4:21-31. He tried hard to reconcile convert pagan with Jewish Christian, cf. 1 Co 16:1+; Ep 2:11-22.

g. Lit. 'the wrath'; add 'of God'.

3 a. Om. 'who is God's helper', var. 'who is God's slave' or 'God's slave and our helper'.

the Tempter[b] might have tried you too hard, and all our work might have been wasted.

Paul thanks God for good reports of the Thessalonians

2 Th 1:3; 2:15+; 2 Co 7:7

However, Timothy is now back from you and he has given us good news of 6
your faith and your love, telling us that you always remember us with pleasure
and want to see us quite as much as we want to see you. •And so, brothers, your 7
faith has been a great comfort to us in the middle of our own troubles and sorrows;
now we can breathe again, as you are still holding firm in the Lord. •How can we 8 9
2 Th 2:15; Rv 2:9-10 thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel before our God on your account?
2:17 We are earnestly praying night and day to be able to see you face to face again and 10
make up any shortcomings[c] in your faith.

2 Th 2:16-17 May God our Father himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, make it easy for us 11
5:15; Rm 12:17; Ga 6:10; 2 Th 1:3; Tt 3:2; 5:23; Zc 14:5; 1 Co 1:8+; 15:23+ to come to you. •May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you 12
love one another and the whole human race[d] as much as we love you. •And may 13
he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our
God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes *with all his saints.*[e]

Live in holiness and charity

2 Th 3:6; 2:13+; Rm 12:1-2; 1 Co 11:2+

4 Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus[a] to make 1
more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life
that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it.[b] •You 2
have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus.

5:18; Mt 6:10; Ep 1:4; 1 Co 6:12-20 What God wants is for you all to be holy.[c] He wants you to keep away from 3
fornication, •and each one of you to know how to use the body that belongs to 4
him[d] in a way that is holy and honourable, •not giving way to selfish lust like *the* 5
Jr 10:25; Ps 79:6; Dt 32:35; Ps 94:1-2 *pagans who do not know God.* •He wants nobody at all ever to sin by taking advan- 6
tage of a brother in these matters; the Lord always punishes sins of that sort, as
Jn 17:19 we told you before and assured you. •We have been called by God to be holy, 7
Lk 10:16; Ezk 37:14; 2 Th 2:13; Is 54:13; Jr 31:33-34 not to be immoral; •in other words, anyone who objects is not objecting to a 8
human authority, but to God, *who gives you his* Holy *Spirit.*[e]

Jn 6:45; 13:34+; 1 Jn 4:7; 2 Th 1:3; 2:9; Ac 18:3+; Ep 4:28; 2 Th 3:6-12; 1 Co 5:12+ As for loving our brothers, there is no need for anyone to write to you about 9
that, since you have learnt from God yourselves to love one another, •and in fact 10
this is what you are doing with all the brothers throughout the whole of
Macedonia. However, we do urge you, brothers, to go on making even greater
progress •and to make a point of living quietly, attending to your own business 11
and earning your living, just as we told you to, •so that you are seen to 12
be respectable by those outside the Church, though you do not have to depend
on them.

The dead and the living at the time of the Lord's coming[f]

Ep 2:12; Col 1:27

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died,[g] to make 13
sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope.
Rm 1:4+; 8:11+; 10:9+; 1 Co 15:1+,20; 1 Co 15:51; 1 Co 15:23; Mt 24:30-31+; 1 Co 15:52+; 2 Th 1:7f We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those 14
who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. •We can tell you this from 15
the Lord's own teaching,[h] that any of us[i] who are left alive until the Lord's coming
will not have any advantage over those who have died. •At the trumpet of God, 16
the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will
come down from heaven;[j] those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise,
and then those of us who are still alive[k] will be taken up in the clouds, together 17
with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord for ever.[l]
With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another. 18

Watchfulness while awaiting the coming of the Lord[a]

Dn 2:21; Ac 1:8+; Mt 24:36,43; 2 P 3:10

5 You will not be expecting us to write anything to you, brothers, about 'times 1
and seasons',[b] •since you know very well that the Day of the Lord is going to 2

3 come like a thief in the night. •It is when people are saying, 'How quiet and peaceful it is' that the worst suddenly happens, as suddenly as labour pains come on a pregnant woman; and there will be no way for anybody to evade it.
4 But it is not as if you live in the dark, my brothers, for that Day[c] to overtake
5 you like a thief. •No, you are all sons of light and sons of the day: we do not belong
6 to the night or to darkness, •so we should not go on sleeping, as everyone else
7 does, but stay wide awake and sober. •Night is the time for sleepers to sleep and
8 drunkards to be drunk, •but we belong to the day and we should be sober; let us put on faith and love for a *breastplate*, and the hope of *salvation* for a *helmet*.
9 God never meant us to experience the Retribution, but to win salvation through
10 our Lord Jesus Christ, •who died for us so that, alive or dead,[d] we should still live
11 united to him. •So give encouragement to each other, and keep strengthening one another, as you do already.

Rv 3:3▲ *Jr 6:14*
Jr 4:31+ Mt 24:8+ Lk 21:34-35
Ep 5:8-9 *Jn 8:12+*
Mt 24:42+ Rm 13:12-13 1 P 1:13; 4:7; 5:8 *Ep 6:11*
1:3 Is 59:17 1 Co 13:13+ *1:10+*
4:14+
Ep 2:20

Some demands made by life in community

12 We appeal to you, my brothers, to be considerate to those who are working
13 amongst you and are above you in the Lord as your teachers. •Have the greatest respect and affection for them because of their work.
14 Be at peace among yourselves. •And this is what we ask you to do, brothers: warn the idlers, give courage to those who are apprehensive, care for the weak and
15 be patient with everyone. •Make sure that people do not try to take revenge;
16 you must all think of what is best for each other and for the community. •Be
17 18 happy at all times; •pray constantly; •and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

1 Co 16:16 1 Tm 5:17 Tt 1:5+ Heb 13:17 *Ga 6:6*
Rm 14:1 2 Th 3:6-12 *Ex 21:25+* Mt 5:38f Rm 12:17 Col 3:12-13 *Ph 1:4+* *Ep 5:20*
4:3

b. 'Tempter', i.e. 'Satan' as in 2:18, cf. Mk 1:13.

c. This would refer to gaps in their knowledge of Christian doctrine, as well as gaps in their code of Christian behaviour, cf. Rm 14:1; 2 Co 10:15; Ph 1:25.

d. Brotherly love of one another in the Christian community is only the beginning of charity; it has to spread to love for the whole human race.

e. Add. 'Amen'. Holiness, 4:3+, begins with brotherly love but will not be perfect till the *parousia*. In this context 'saints' can refer to the chosen, the saved or the angels, Ac 9:13+.

4 a. Paul speaks 'in' (v.1) 'by' (v.2) or 'in the name of' Christ, cf. 4:15; 2 Th 3:6,12. His doctrine on moral behaviour which is based on the earliest Christian teaching invests ordinary day-to-day life with a new depth; it has the seal of Christ on it, Col 3:18+.

b. Om. 'and as you are already living it'.

c. It is the will of God, cf. Mt 6:10, that makes people holy, vv. 3,7; 2 Th 2:13; Ep 1:4. It is God who makes them holy, 5:23; 1 Co 6:11. Christ has made himself our 'holiness', 1 Co 1:30. The Holy Spirit is involved in making us holy, v.8; 2 Th 2:13; 1 Co 6:11.

d. Lit. 'each one of you to 'know' (or 'be able') to possess the vessel of himself in sanctification and honour'. 'Vessel' means 'wife' in 1 P 3:7 and many rabbinic texts, but it means 'body' in 5:23; cf. Rm 12:1; 1 Co 6:19.

e. Ezekiel foretold that the Spirit would be given to the messianic people: this reference draws attention to the continuity between the church of Thessalonika and the giving of this gift to the early Christian community, Ac 2:16f,33,38 etc. On the gift of the Spirit to the spirit of each believer, cf. Rm 5:5+.

f. The converts in Thessalonika had obviously been worried about this and uncertain what the Christian position was. Replying to their questions Paul affirms the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection so as to strengthen the faith and hope of all the converts.

g. Lit. 'we do not wish you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning the sleeping'. The euphemism was common in the O.T., the N.T., and in Greek literature: the natural concomitant was to call the resurrection (to new life or from death) an 'awakening'.

h. No precise reference in the written gospels can be given for this saying of Jesus, but cf. Mt 24 with vv. 15-17. Perhaps Paul is relying here on the authority he had been given by the vision on the Damascus road. cf. Dn 7:1,13,16.

i. 'us'; Paul includes himself among those who will be present at the *parousia*; more by aspiration, however, than by conviction, cf. 5:1+.

j. The trumpet, voice and clouds were traditional signs that accompanied manifestations of God, cf. Ex 13:32+; 19:16+, and they were adopted as conventional elements of apocalyptic literature, cf. Mt 24:30f+; 2 Th 1:8+.

k. Om. '(we) who are still alive'.

l. Of all the details given here: that the dead will answer the summons by returning to life, that they and the living will be taken to meet the Lord, and that they will accompany him to the judgement with which the eternal kingdom begins, the essential one is the last: eternal life with Christ, cf. 5:10; 2 Th 2:1. That is to be the 'salvation', the 'glory', the 'kingdom' that Jesus shares among his chosen followers.

5 a. Paul asserts that he has no idea when the Last Day will come, and he merely repeats what the Lord said, Mt 24:36p; Ac 1:7, about having to stay awake till it comes, Mt 24:42p,50; 25:13. The Day of the Lord, 1 Co 1:8+, will come like a thief, cf. Mt 24:43p, so it is necessary to stay awake, v.6, cf. Rm 13:11; 1 Co 16:13; Col 4:2; 1 P 1:13; 5:8; Rv 3:2f; 16:15. It will come soon, 2 Co 6:2+. At first Paul expected he would live to see the Last Day, 1 Th 4:17; cf. 1 Co 15:51; he later realised he might die before it, 2 Co 5:3; Ph 1:23, and he warns people it will not come as soon as they thought, 2 Th 2:1f. More than anything, the prospect of how long it would take to convert the pagans, Rm 11:25, made it certain that the Last Day would not come for a very long time, cf. Mt 25:19; Lk 20:9; 2 P 3:4.

b. 'about times and seasons': a cliché, cf. Ac 1:7+, underlying which is the idea of God as outside time and yet as controlling it and its divisions, Ac 17:26.

c. Mention of 'the Day' without further qualification, 1 Co 1:8+, helps Paul to introduce the mention of light and day and contrast 'wakefulness' with the dark, night and sleep (in a different sense from 4:13f), and also make the contrast between Christians (sons of the light) and others (sons of darkness), cf. Jn 8:12+.

d. Lit. 'awake or asleep' in same sense as 4:14-17: all the faithful will share in the final salvation.

1 Co 12:1+
1 Co 12:10+
Jb 1:1,8; 2:3

Never try to suppress the Spirit •or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; 19 20
think before you do anything—hold on to what is good •and *avoid every* form of 21 22
evil.

Closing prayer and farewell

Is 11:6+
2 Th 3:16
3:13+

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept 23
safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body,[e] for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Co 1:9+
2 Th 3:3
2 Th 3:1

God has called you and he will not fail you. 24

Pray for us, my brothers. 25

Rm 15:30+
2 Co 13:12+

Greet all the brothers with the holy kiss. •My orders, in the Lord's name, 26 27

Col 4:16

are that this letter is to be read to all the[f] brothers.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.[g] 28

5 e. Paul seems to have developed no coherent system of anthropology: this is the only place he mentions a tripartite division of body (cf. Rm 7:24+), soul (cf. 1 Co 15:44+) and spirit (which can be taken in two ways: as the divine presence in a human being, giving him new life in union with Christ, Rm 5:5+, or more probably as the innermost depths of the human being, open and awake to the Spirit, cf. Rm 1:9+).

f. Vulg. inserts 'holy'.

g. Add. (Vulg.) 'Amen'.

2 THESSALONIANS

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONIKA

Address

1 Th 1:1

1 1 From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in Thessalonika which is in
2 God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; •wishing you grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ac 15:22+; 16:1+

Thanksgiving and encouragement. The Last Judgement

3 We feel we must be continually thanking God for you, brothers; quite rightly, because your faith is growing so wonderfully and the love that you have for one
4 another never stops increasing; •and among the churches of God we can take special pride in you for your constancy and faith under all the persecutions and
5 troubles you have to bear. •It all shows that God's judgement is just, and the purpose of it is that you may be found worthy of the kingdom of God; it is for the sake of this that you are suffering now.

1 Th 1:2

1 Th 3:6-12
1 Th 3:12; 4:9-10
Ac 14:22
1 Co 1:2+
1 Th 1:7-8; 2:19-20

Mt 4:17+
1 Th 2:14; 3:4+

6 7 God will very rightly repay with injury those who are injuring you, •and reward you, who are suffering now, with the same peace as he will give us,[a] when the Lord
8 Jesus appears from heaven with the angels of his power. •He will come *in flaming fire*[b] to impose the penalty on *all who do not acknowledge God* and *refuse to accept*
9 the Good News of our Lord Jesus.[c] •It will be their punishment to be lost eternally, excluded *from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength*
10 *on that day* when he comes *to be glorified among his saints* and *seen in his glory* by all who believe in him;[d] and you are believers, through our witness.[e]

Ph 1:28
Rv 14:13

1 Co 1:7+
Ex 3:2
Is 66:15
Jr 10:25
Is 66:4
Rm 1:5+

Is 2:10
Is 2:11-17; 49:3; 66:5
Ps (LXX) 68: 34; 89:7

11 Knowing this, we pray continually that our God will make you worthy of his call, and by his power fulfil all your[f] desires for goodness and complete all that
12 you have been doing through faith; •because in this way *the name* of our Lord Jesus Christ *will be glorified* in you and you in him, by the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ph 2:13

Is 66:5; 24:15
Jn 17:10,24

The coming of the Lord and the prelude to it[a]

1 2 To turn now, brothers, to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we
2 shall all be gathered round him: •please do not get excited too soon or alarmed by any prediction or rumour or any letter claiming to come from us,

Mt 24:31+
1 Co 15:23
1 Th 4:15-17

3:17

1 a. Paul often compares his own situation with that of the churches he is writing to, cf. 1 Th 2:3; 1 Co 4:8; Ph 1:30, etc.

b. Heaven, cf. 1 Th 4:16, the angels, cf. Mt 13:39, 41,49; 16:27p; 24:31; 25:31; Lk 12:8f (and probably the 'saints' of 1 Th 3:13), the 'fire' of various theophanies, cf. Ex 13:22+; 19:16+, are all conventional elements of apocalyptic literature, cf. 1 Th 4:16+.

c. I.e. both pagans, 1 Th 4:5, and Jews, Rm 10:16.

d. Paul here seems to be thinking of angels (the 'saints', cf. Ac 9:13+) and Christians ('those who believe').

e. Vv.6-10 form a parenthesis, v.11 follows on from v.5.

f. Or 'his'

2 a. In 1 Th 4:13-5:11 Paul avoided suggesting anything that would indicate when the *parousia* would take place, cf. 1 Th 5:1+. Obviously replying to further questions, Paul does not now repeat all he said, about what would happen to the living and the dead: all he is concerned with is to emphasise that the coming is not imminent, and that it cannot take place till certain specific signs have preceded it.

1 Co 1:8+ Ga 1:6 implying that the Day of the Lord has already arrived. •Never let anyone 3
deceive you in this way.

Rv 13:1-8 It cannot happen until the Great Revolt[b] has taken place and the Rebel, the
Lost One, has appeared. •This is the Enemy,[c] the one who claims to be so much 4
Dn 11:36 *greater than all* that men call 'god', so much greater than anything that is worship-
Is 14:13 Ezk 28:2 ped, that *he enthrones himself* in *God's* sanctuary and claims that he is God.
Surely you remember me telling you about this when I was with you? •And you 5 6
Rv 20:3 know, too, what is still holding him back[d] from appearing before his appointed
Rv 17:5 time. •Rebellion is at its work already, but in secret,[e] and the one who is holding 7
it back has first to be removed •before the Rebel appears openly.[f] The Lord[g] 8
Is 11:4 Ps 33:6 *will kill him with the breath of his mouth* and will annihilate him with his glorious
Rv 19:11-21 appearance at his coming.

Ep 2:2 Rv 13:13-17 But when the Rebel comes, Satan will set to work:[h] there will be all kinds of 9
Mt 24:12 Jn 8:44 miracles and a deceptive show of signs and portents, •and everything evil that 10
Heb 3:13 can deceive those who are bound for destruction because they would not grasp
1 K 22:22 Is 6:10 the love of the truth which could have saved them. •The reason why God 11
is sending a power to delude them and make them believe what is untrue •is 12
Jn 3:19; 9:39 to condemn all who refused to believe in the truth and chose wickedness
instead.[i]

Encouragement to persevere[j]

But we feel that we must be continually thanking God for you, brothers whom 13
1 Th 1:4-5 the Lord loves, because God chose you from the beginning[k] to be saved by the
1 Th 4:3+,8 1 P 1:2 sanctifying Spirit and by faith in the truth. •Through the Good News that we 14
brought he called you to this so that you should share the glory of our Lord Jesus
1 Th 3:6,8 1 Co 11:2+ Christ. •Stand firm, then, brothers, and keep the traditions that we taught you, 15
whether by word of mouth or by letter.[l] •May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and 16
1 Th 3:11-13 God our Father who has given us his love and, through his grace, such inexhaust-
ible comfort and such sure hope, •comfort you and strengthen you in everything 17
good that you do or say.

Ps 147:15 Ep 6:19f Col 4:3 1 Th 5:25 Heb 13:18 Rm 10:16 Mt 6:13 1 Th 5:24 1 Jn 2:14+ 2 Co 7:16 3 Finally, brothers, pray for us; pray that the Lord's message may spread 1
quickly, and be received with honour as it was among you; •and pray that we 2
may be preserved from the interference of bigoted and evil people, for faith is not
given to everyone. •But the Lord is faithful, and he will give you strength and 3
guard you from the evil one,[a] •and we, in the Lord, have every confidence that 4
you are doing and will go on doing all that we tell you. •May the Lord turn your 5
1 Co 13:13+ hearts towards the love of God and the fortitude of Christ.

Against idleness and disunity

1 Th 4:1,11-12; 5:14 2:15+; 3:14 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we urge you, brothers, to keep away from 6
any of the brothers who refuses to work or to live according to the tradition we
passed on to you.

Ac 18:3+ 1 Co 11:1 Ga 4:12 1 Th 2:9+ Mt 6:11 You know how you are supposed to imitate us:[b] now we were not idle when 7
we were with you, •nor did we ever have our meals at anyone's table without 8
paying for them; no, we worked night and day, slaving and straining, so as not to
Mt 10:10 be a burden on any of you. •This was not because we had no right to be, but in 9
order to make ourselves an example for you to follow.

We gave you a rule when we were with you: not to let anyone have any food if 10
he refused to do any work.[c] •Now we hear that there are some of you who are 11
living in idleness, doing no work themselves but interfering with everyone else's.
Gn 3:19 In the Lord Jesus Christ, we order and call on people of this kind to go on quietly 12
working and earning the food that they eat.

Ga 6:9 3:6 1 Co 5:5,9-11 2 Co 2:7 Ga 6:1 1 Th 5:14 Mt 18:15-18 My brothers, never grow tired of doing what is right. •If anyone refuses to obey 13 14
what I have written in this letter, take note of him and have nothing to do with
him, so that he will feel that he is in the wrong; •though you are not to regard him 15
as an enemy but as a brother in need of correction.

Prayer and farewell wishes

16 May the Lord of peace himself give you peace all the time and in every way.[d] Jn 14:27 1 Th 5:23
The Lord be with you all.
17 From me, PAUL, these greetings in my own handwriting, which is the mark Ga 6:11+ Col 4:18
18 of genuineness in every letter; this is my own writing. •May the grace of our Lord 2:2
Jesus Christ be with you all.[e]

b. The way this Revolt *(apostasia)* is mentioned here shows that the Thessalonians had already been told something about it. The word is used here in its usual sense of 'secession' or 'defection' but with a specifically religious reference. Ac 5:37; 21:21; Heb 3:12. It seems that the rebels are not only those who have never belonged to Christ but also those who have given up the faith, cf. 1 Tm 4:1; 2 Tm 3:1; 4:3f; etc.

c. The apostasy will be due to a being who is given three names. He is the 'Rebel' (lit. 'man of lawlessness' or 'man of sin'). He is a being destined to be lost (lit. 'son of perdition') v.10; Jn 17:12; cf. 1 Th 5:5. He is the enemy of God and is described here in terms reminiscent of the description of Antiochus Epiphanes in Dn 11:36. Later on in Christian tradition, based on Dn, he is called the Antichrist, cf. 1 Jn 2:18; 4:3; 2 Jn 7. Unlike Satan, whose tool he is, and who is already at work in 'secret' (lit. 'the mystery') v.7, the lawless one is represented as a person who will be revealed at the 'end of time', and whose power will persecute and seduce Christians. On the final 'test', that will only come to an end with the *parousia* of Christ, cf Mt 24:24; Rv 13:1-8.

d. We do not know what Paul refers to when he talks about a cause that delays the *parousia* of Christ. All he says is that it is something, v.6, or someone, v.7 that can 'delay' it. This person or power blocks the coming of Christ by preventing the manifestation of the Messiah's enemy who must precede the coming of the Messiah himself.

e. Rebellion (lit. 'lawlessness') is going on, but it is underground, secretly preparing for the great revolt. When the obstacle, whatever it is, is removed, lawlessness (or the lawless one) will work unmasked.

f. The revealing of the Rebel, vv. 6-8, is the counterpart of the revealing of Christ, 1:7; 1 Co 1:7, in the same way as his *parousia* is the counterpart of Christ's *parousia*, v.8. The enemy of God becomes the enemy of Christ, but Christ will conquer his enemy.

g. Add. 'Jesus'

h. The Rebel is the instrument through which Satan works, cf. 1 Th 2:18, and whom he endows with superhuman power rather as Christ endows his followers with his own Spirit. Cf. the Dragon and the Beast, Rv 13:2,4.

i. Truth and untruth here have a religious as well as an intellectual reference because they involve the whole of human life and activity, cf. 1 Jn 3:19.

j. This passage, 2:13-3:5, is very closely linked to the description of the *parousia*. Having corrected the false ideas of the Thessalonians, Paul goes on to describe the positive consequences of his conception.

k. Var. 'as first-fruits'.

l. What Paul taught them when he was in Thessalonika and what he had written to them since he returned from there, 2:2,5; 1 Th 3:4; 4:2,6; 5:27, include, in the message of the Good News, cf. 1 Th 2:13+, the principles on which a Christian should lead his life, cf. 1 Th 4:1; 1 Co 11:2,23-25.

3 a. Or perhaps 'from evil'. Christians will be tempted but not beyond their powers of resistance, 1 Co 10:13.

b. By imitating Paul, 1 Co 4:16; Ga 4:12; Ph 3:17, Christians will be imitating Christ, 1 Th 1:6; Ph 2:5; cf. Mt 16:24; 1 P 2:21; 1 Jn 2:6, who is himself the one that Paul is imitating, 1 Co 11:1. Christians must also imitate God, Ep 5:1 (cf. Mt 5:48), and they must imitate each other, 1 Th 1:7; 2:14; Heb 6:12. Behind this community of life is the idea of a model of doctrine, Rm 6:17, that has been received by tradition, v.6; 1 Co 11:2+; 1 Th 2:13+. The leaders who transmit the doctrine must themselves be 'models' v.9; Ph 3:17; 1 Tm 1:16; 4:12; Tt 2:7; 1 P 5:3, whose faith and life are to be imitated, Heb 13:7.

c. This may have been laid down by Jesus but it may have been a proverb; it has been called the golden rule for Christian work.

d. Var. (Vulg.) 'everywhere'.

e. Add. 'Amen', cf. 1 Th 3:13; 5:28.

1 TIMOTHY

THE FIRST LETTER FROM PAUL TO TIMOTHY

Address

Rm 1:1
Ph 3:20
Tt 1:3
Ac 16:1

1 From Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus appointed by the command[a] of God our 1
saviour[b] and of Christ Jesus our hope, •to Timothy, true child of mine in the 2
faith; wishing you grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Christ
Jesus our Lord.

Suppress the false teachers

As I asked you when I was leaving for Macedonia, please stay at Ephesus, to 3
insist that certain people stop teaching strange doctrines •and taking notice of 4
4:7; 6:4,20
2 Tm 2:14,
16,23; 4:4
Tt 1:14; 3:9
myths and endless genealogies;[c] these things are only likely to raise irrelevant
doubts instead of furthering the designs of God[d] which are revealed in faith.
The only purpose of this instruction is that there should be love, coming out 5
of a pure heart, a clear conscience and a sincere faith. •There are some people 6
who have gone off the straight course and taken a road that leads to empty
speculation; •they claim to be doctors of the Law but they understand neither 7
the arguments they are using nor the opinions they are upholding.

The purpose of the Law

Rm 7:7,
12f+
We know, of course, that the Law[e] is good, but only provided it is treated 8
Ga 5:23
like any law,[f] •in the understanding that laws are not framed for people who 9
are good.[g] On the contrary, they are for criminals and revolutionaries, for the
Rm 1:29+
irreligious and the wicked, for the sacrilegious and the irreverent; they are for
people who kill their fathers or mothers and for murderers, •for those who are 10
Rv 18:13
immoral with women or with boys or with men, for liars and for perjurers—and
6:3
Tt 1:9,13
Jn 1:14
2 Co 4:4
1 Th 2:4
Tt 1:3; 2:13
for everything else that is contrary to the sound teaching[h] •that goes with the 11
Good News of the glory of the blessed God, the gospel that was entrusted to me.

Paul on his own calling

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, and who judged 12
me faithful enough to call me into his service •even though I used to be 13
Ac 8:3+
a blasphemer and did all I could to injure and discredit the faith. Mercy, however,
Ac 3:17+
was shown me, because until I became a believer I had been acting in ignorance;
Jn 16:2
1 Co 15:10
3:1; 4:9
Mt 9:13p
Tt 3:8
2 P 3:15
1 Co 15:9
and the grace of our Lord filled me with faith and with the love that is in Christ 14
Jesus. •Here is a saying that you can rely on[i] and nobody should doubt: that 15
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I myself am the greatest of them;
and if mercy has been shown to me, it is because Jesus Christ meant to make 16
2 Th 3:7+
me the greatest evidence of his inexhaustible patience for all the other people
6:16
Tb 13:6
Ps 145:13
Rm 16:27+
Col 1:15
who would later have to trust in him to come to eternal life. •To the eternal 17
King, the undying,[j] invisible and only God, be honour and glory for ever and
ever. Amen.

Timothy's responsibility

18 Timothy, my son, these are the instructions that I am giving you: I ask you
to remember the words once spoken over you by the prophets,[k] and taking them 4:14+
19 to heart to fight like a good soldier •with faith and a good conscience for your 2 Tm 4:7
weapons. Some people have put conscience aside and wrecked their faith in
20 consequence. •I mean men like Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed 2 Tm 2:17; 4:14
over to Satan to teach them not to be blasphemous. 1 Co 5:5+

Liturgical prayer

1 2 My advice is[a] that, first of all, there should be prayers offered for everyone Ba 1:11
2 —petitions, intercessions and thanksgiving—•and especially for kings and Rm 13:1-7+ Tt 3:1
others in authority,[b] so that we may be able to live religious and reverent lives
3 4 in peace and quiet. •To do this is right, and will please God our saviour: •he 1:1+
5 wants everyone to be saved[c] and reach full knowledge of the truth. •For there Ezk 18:23+ Jn 8:32
is only one God, and there is only one mediator between God and mankind, 2 Tm 3:7 *Heb 8:6+ 6:13+*
6 himself a man, Christ Jesus, •who sacrificed himself as a ransom for them all. Mt 20:28p
7 He is the evidence of this, sent at the appointed time,[d] and •I have been named 2 Co 5:15 Ga 1:4
a herald and apostle of it and—I am telling the truth and no lie—a teacher of Ep 5:2 *Rm 3:26* 2 Tm 1:11
the faith and the truth to the pagans. *Ac 9:15*
8 In every place, then, I want the men to lift their hands up reverently Ga 2:7
in prayer, with no anger or argument.

Women in the assembly

9 Similarly, I direct that women are to wear suitable clothes and to be dressed 1 P 3:2-4
quietly and modestly, without braided hair or gold and jewellery or expensive Is 3:16f
10 clothes; their adornment is •to do the sort of good works that are proper for
11 women who profess to be religious. •During instruction, a woman should be 1 Co 14:34-35
12 quiet and respectful. •I am not giving permission for a woman to teach or to *Gn 3:16*
13 tell a man what to do. A woman ought not to speak, •because Adam was Si 25:24 1 Co 11:3, 8-12
14 formed first and Eve afterwards, •and it was not Adam who was led astray but *Gn 2:18,21f; 3:12-13*
15 the woman who was led astray and fell into sin. •Nevertheless, she will be saved
by childbearing,[e] provided she lives a modest life and is constant in faith and
love and holiness. 1 Co 13:13+

The elder-in-charge Tt 1:6-9

1 3 Here is a saying that you can rely on: To want to be a presiding elder[a] is to 1:15+
2 want to do a noble work. •That is why the president must have an impeccable 2 Tm 2:24

1 a. Var. 'the promise'.

b. Paul hardly ever uses the title 'saviour' in his other letters, Ep 5:23; Ph 3:20, but in the Pastoral Letters he makes use of it both when referring to the Father, 1 Tm 2:3; 4:10; Tt 1:3; 2:10; 3:4, and when referring to Christ, 2 Tm 1:10; Tt 1:4; 3:6.

c. Genealogies of O.T. patriarchs and heroes constructed by Jewish writers in the same style as those in the *Book of Jubilees*.

d. Var. (Vulg.) 'the building-up of God's house'.

e. The 'Law of Moses'.

f. Lit. 'Now the Law is good if anyone uses it lawfully', i.e. without asking it to be more than it claims to be.

g. Seen as a penal code, the aim of the Law is to make provision not for the righteous, but for offenders, by threatening, accusing and punishing them.

h. One characteristic of the Pastoral Letters is this insistence on 'sound doctrine', cf. 6:3; 2 Tm 1:13; 4:3; Tt 1:9,13; 2:1,8.

i. Lit. 'faithful is the word (or 'saying')'; this is one of the characteristic phrases of the Pastoral Letters, cf. 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tm 2:11; Tt 3:8.

j. Lit. 'incorruptible' or 'imperishable'; var. (Vulg.) 'immortal'.

k. Here and in 4:14 Paul reminds Timothy of the part played by the 'prophets' when the college of elders laid their hands on his head, Ac 13:1-3; 11:27+.

2 a. 'My advice is'; var. 'Advise'.

b. Nero was emperor when this was written: the end of the verse probably reflects Paul's apprehensions about what the future would bring. On Paul's political loyalty, cf. Rm 13:1-7.

c. This is a statement with enormous theological implications, and it provides the correct interpretation of some passages in the letter to the Christians at Rome, cf. Rm 9:18,21.

d. Cf. 6:13. By his willingness to die for the whole human race Christ showed the human race that God wanted everybody to be saved. He was the Father's 'witness' all through his life, but never so supremely as at the moment of his execution. (The Greek word for 'witness' is the same as for 'martyr'.)

e. It is not clear whether Paul is implying that women are saved by the 'one-body' relationships with their marriage partners or whether childbearing itself, as the mediation of life and the bringing up of children, constitutes a vocation. He may quite easily have been thinking specifically of the 'false teachers' who condemned marriage, 4:3.

3 a. The word *'episcopos'* ('overseer', 'supervisor' or 'president') has not yet acquired the same meaning as 'bishop', cf. Tt 1:5f+.

3:12 Tt 2:6+ character. He must not have been married more than once, and he must be temperate, discreet and courteous, hospitable and a good teacher; •not a heavy 3
drinker, nor hot-tempered, but kind and peaceable. He must not be a lover of
3:12 money. •He must be a man who manages his own family well and brings his 4
children up to obey him and be well-behaved: •how can any man who does not 5
1 Co 1:2+ understand how to manage his own family have responsibility for the church
of God? •He should not be a new convert, in case pride might turn his head 6
and then he might be condemned as the devil was condemned. •It is also 7
1 Co 5:12+ necessary that people outside the Church should speak well of him, so that he
never gets a bad reputation and falls into the devil's trap.

Ac 6:1-6 **Deacons**

In the same way, deacons must be respectable men whose word can be 8
1 P 5:2 trusted, moderate in the amount of wine they drink and with no squalid greed
Rm 16:25+ for money. •They must be conscientious believers in the mystery of the faith. 9
They are to be examined first, and only admitted to serve as deacons if there 10
is nothing against them. •In the same way, the women[b] must be respectable, 11
3:2,4 not gossips but sober and quite reliable. •Deacons must not have been married 12
more than once, and must be men who manage their children and families
well.• Those of them who carry out their duties well as deacons will earn a 13
high standing for themselves and be rewarded with great assurance in their
work for the faith in Christ Jesus.

The Church and the mystery of the spiritual life

At the moment of writing to you, I am hoping that I may be with you soon; 14
Tt 1:7 but in case I should be delayed, I wanted you to know how people ought to behave 15
1 Co 1:2+ Ep 2:20+ Heb 3:6 in God's family—that is, in the Church of the living God, which upholds the
Rm 16:25+ truth and keeps it safe. •Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is very 16
deep indeed:

Jn 1:14 Rm 1:3-4 He[c] was made visible in the flesh,
attested by the Spirit,
Jn 16:10 Ep 3:10 1 P 1:12 seen by angels,
proclaimed to the pagans,
believed in by the world,
Mk 16:19 Ac 1:2,11 taken up in glory.[d]

False teachers

Mt 24:23-24 Ac 20:29-30 2 Tm 3:1; 4:3 4 The Spirit has explicitly said that during the last times[a] there will be some 1
who will desert the faith and choose to listen to deceitful spirits and doctrines
Tt 1:10 Heb 1:1-2 that come from the devils; •and the cause of this is the lies told by hypocrites 2
2 P 2:1; 3:3 1 Jn 2:18; 4:1 whose consciences are branded as though with a red-hot iron:[b] •they will say 3
Col 2:16-23 marriage is forbidden, and lay down rules about abstaining from foods which
2:4 Gn 9:3 God created to be accepted with thanksgiving by all who believe and who know
Gn 1:31+ 1 Co 10:25f, 30f the truth.[c] •Everything God has created is good, and no food is to be rejected, 4
Mt 15:11f provided grace is said for it: •the word of God and the prayer make it holy. 5
Rm 14:14,20 If you put all this to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus and 6
2 Tm 2:15 show that you have really digested the teaching of the faith and the good doctrine
1:4+ which you have always followed. •Have nothing to do with godless myths and 7
old wives' tales. Train yourself spiritually. •'Physical exercises are useful enough, 8
but the usefulness of spirituality is unlimited, since it holds out the reward of
1:15+ life here and now and of the future life as well'; •that is a saying that you can 9
rely on and nobody should doubt it. •I mean that the point of all our toiling and 10
1:1+ battling is that we have put our trust in the living God and he is the saviour of
the whole human race but particularly of all believers. •This is what you are to 11
enforce in your teaching.

12 Do not let people disregard you because you are young, but be an example
to all the believers in the way you speak and behave, and in your love, your faith
13 and your purity. •Make use of the time until I arrive by reading to the people,
14 preaching and teaching. •You have in you a spiritual gift which was given to
you when the prophets spoke and the body of elders laid their hands on you;[d]
15 do not let it lie unused. •Think hard about all this, and put it into practice, and
16 everyone will be able to see how you are advancing. •Take great care about what
you do and what you teach; always do this, and in this way you will save both
yourself and those who listen to you.

1 Co 16:11 Ga 5:22 2 Th 3:7+ Tt 2:7-8,15 *6:11* Ga 5:22+ 1:18+ Mt 9:18; 19:13 Lk 4:40 Ac 6:6; 8:17; 9-12; 19:6; 28:8 2 Tm 1:6; 2:2 Heb 6:2

Pastoral practice

1 5 Do not speak harshly to a man older than yourself, but advise him as you
2 would your own father; treat the younger men as brothers •and older women
as you would your mother. Always treat young women with propriety, as if they
were sisters.

Lv 19:32 Tt 2:2

Widows

3 Be considerate to widows; I mean those who are truly widows.[a] •If a widow
4 has children or grandchildren, they are[b] to learn first of all to do their duty to
their own families and repay their debt to their parents, because this is what
5 pleases God. •But a woman who is really widowed and left without anybody
can give herself up to God and consecrate all her days and nights to petitions
6 and prayer. •The one who thinks only of pleasure is already dead while she
7 is still alive: •remind them of all this, too, so that their lives may be blameless.
8 Anyone who does not look after his own relations, especially if they are living
with him, has rejected the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Lk 2:37 Rv 3:1

9 Enrolment as a widow is permissible only for a woman at least sixty years
10 old who has had only one husband. •She must be a woman known for her good
works and for the way in which she has brought up her children, shown hospi-
tality to strangers and washed the saints' feet,[c] helped people who are in trouble
11 and been active in all kinds of good work. •Do not accept young widows because
if their natural desires get stronger than their dedication to Christ, they want
12 to marry again, •and then people condemn them for being unfaithful to their
13 original promise.[d] •Besides, they learn how to be idle and go round from house
to house; and then, not merely idle, they learn to be gossips and meddlers in
other people's affairs, and to chatter when they would be better keeping quiet.
14 I think it is best for young widows to marry again[e] and have children and a home

Jn 13:14 Ac 9:13+ 1 Co 7:8

b. This instruction is probably intended for the deaconesses, cf. Rm 16:1, rather than for the wives of deacons.

c. He, i.e. Christ: many authorities (e.g. Vulg.) read 'It', i.e. the 'mystery', cf. Col 2:3+. Paul is quoting part of an early Christian hymn, cf. 6:15-16; 2 Tm 2:11-13; Ph 2:6-11. Also cf. Ep 1:3-14; 5:14; Col 1:15-20.

d. 'attested (lit. 'justified') by the Spirit': the holiness and divinity of Christ were proved by the fact that he rose in glory, cf. Rm 1:4+. 'Taken up in glory', i.e. at the ascension.

4 a. On the crisis that will characterise the 'last times' cf. 2 Th 2:3-12; 2 Tm 3:1; 4:3-4; 2 P 3:3; Jude 18. Also cf. Mt 24:6fp; Ac 20:29-30. As, eschatologically, the 'last times' have already begun, Rm 3:26+, we are already living in this final epoch of crisis, cf. 1 Co 7:26; Ep 5:6; 6:13; Jm 5:3; 1 Jn 2:18; 4:1,3; 2 Jn 7; Mt 26:41.

b. Lit. 'Having been marked with a red-hot branding iron on their own conscience', i.e. branded like runaway slaves.

c. The rejection of marriage was to be one of the hallmarks of Gnosticism: dietary regulations were more specifically Jewish.

d. Lit. 'a spiritual gift given by means of prophecy with imposition of hands by the body of elders'. The 'imposition of hands' can be the rite for transmitting grace or a charism, Heb 6:2, or it can be the gesture used when blessing, Mt 19:15, or curing, Mt 9:18p; Mk 6:5; 7:32; 8:23-25; 16:18; Lk 4:40; 13:13; Ac 9:12, 17; 28:8, or imparting the Holy Spirit to the newly baptised, Ac 1:5+. It can also be the rite for consecrating a person for a particular public function, Ac 6:6; 13:3, as in this passage and 5:22+; 2 Tm 1:6. Since the day on which he received the imposition of hands, Timothy has had a permanent charism ('grace-gift') that consecrates him to his ministry. For the part played by the 'prophets', cf. 1 Tm 1:18.

5 a. Three categories of widows are mentioned here: those who do not need assistance from the Church since they have relations to look after them, v. 4; those who are 'true widows' because they have no one to look after them, and whom the Church is obliged to help, vv. 3-5,16; and those who (whether helped by the Church or not) are called by the Church to fulfil certain official functions. Widows in this third category have to satisfy quite severe regulations, vv. 9-15.

b. Var. (Vulg.) 'she is'.

c. The normal courtesy then shown to guests.

d. Lit. 'for setting aside (their) first faith', i.e. their vow or promise to consecrate themselves to God.

e. Made wiser by experience, Paul modifies what he had said, 1 Co 7:8,40.

Tt 2:8 to look after, and not give the enemy any chance[f] to raise a scandal about them;
there are already some who have left us to follow Satan. •If a Christian woman 15 16
has widowed relatives, she should support them and not make the Church bear
the expense but enable it to support those who are genuinely widows.

Tt 1:5+ **The elders**

The elders who do their work well while they are in charge are to be given 17
1 Th 5:12+ double consideration,[g] especially those who are assiduous in preaching and
Dt 25:4 teaching. •As scripture says: *You must not muzzle an ox when it is treading out* 18
Lk 10:7
1 Co 9:9 *the corn;* and again: *The worker deserves his pay.*[h] •Never accept any accusation 19
3 Jn 8
Dt 19:15 brought against an elder unless it is supported *by two or three witnesses.* •If any 20
Mt 18:16
2 Co 13:1 of them are at fault, reprimand them publicly, as a warning to the rest. •Before 21
God, and before Jesus Christ and the angels he has chosen, I put it to you as a
duty to keep these rules impartially and never to be influenced by favouritism.
Do not be too quick to lay hands on any man,[i] and never make yourself an 22
accomplice in anybody else's sin; keep yourself pure.

Si 31:28 You should give up drinking only water and have a little wine for the sake 23
of your digestion and the frequent bouts of illness that you have.

The faults of some people are obvious long before anyone makes any 24
complaint about them, while others have faults that are not discovered until
Mt 5:16 afterwards. •In the same way, the good that people do can be obvious; but even 25
Mt 10:26p when it is not, it cannot be hidden for ever.

Slaves

Rm 2:24+; 6:15+ 1 Co 7:21-22 6 All slaves 'under the yoke' must have unqualified respect for their masters, 1
so that the name of God and our teaching are not brought into disrepute.
Ep 6:5-8 Col 3:22-25 Tt 2:6+, 9-10 Slaves whose masters are believers are not to think any the less of them because 2
they are brothers; on the contrary, they should serve them all the better,
since those who have the benefit of their services are believers and dear to
God.[a]

The true teacher and the false teacher

This is what you are to teach them to believe and persuade them to do.
1:10+ Anyone who teaches anything different, and does not keep to the sound teaching 3
which is that of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine which is in accordance with
1:4+ true religion, •is simply ignorant and must be full of self-conceit—with a craze 4
for questioning everything and arguing about words. All that can come of this
Rm 1:29+ is jealousy, contention, abuse and wicked mistrust of one another; •and unending 5
disputes by people who are neither rational nor informed and imagine that
religion is a way of making a profit. •Religion, of course, does bring 6
Tb 4:21 large profits, but only to those who are content with what they have. •We brought 7
Jb 1:21
Qo 5:14 nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it; •but as long as we 8
Ps 49:17
have food and clothing, let us be content with that. •People who long to be rich 9
are a prey to temptation; they get trapped into all sorts of foolish[b] and dangerous
ambitions which eventually plunge them into ruin and destruction. •'The love 10
Mt 6:24 Tt 1:11 of money is the root of all evils'[c] and there are some who, pursuing it, have
wandered away from the faith, and so given their souls any number of fatal
wounds.

2 Tm 4:1 **Timothy's vocation recalled**

2 Tm 2:22 But, as a man dedicated to God, you must avoid all that. You must aim to 11
1 Co 13:13+ Ga 5:22+ be saintly and religious, filled with faith and love, patient and gentle. •Fight the 12
Tt 2:2 2 Tm 4:7 good fight of the faith and win for yourself the eternal life to which you were
called when you made your profession and spoke up for the truth[d] in front of
many witnesses. •Now, before God the source of all life and before Jesus Christ, 13
2:6+ Jn 18:36-37 who spoke up as a witness for the truth in front of Pontius Pilate,[e] I put to you

14 the duty •of doing all that you have been told, with no faults or failures, until
the Appearing[f] of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Tm 4:1,8 Heb 9:28

15 who at the due time will be revealed
by God, the blessed and only Ruler of all,
the King of kings and the Lord of lords, Dt 10:17 2 M 13:4
16 who alone is immortal, *Ps 136:3* Rv 17:14
whose home is in inaccessible light, *1 Jn 1:5+*
whom no man has seen and no man is able to see: Ex 33:20+ Jn 1:17-18+
to him be honour and everlasting power. Amen. 1:17

Rich Christians

17 Warn those who are rich in this world's goods that they are not to look down
on other people; and not to set their hopes on money, which is untrustworthy, Lk 12:17-21 Jm 1:10
but on God[g] who, out of his riches, gives us all that we need for our happiness.
18 Tell them that they are to do good, and be rich in good works, to be generous
19 and willing to share—•this is the way they can save up a good capital sum for Mt 6:20 Ph 4:17
the future if they want to make sure of the only life that is real.

Final warning and conclusion

20 My dear Timothy, take great care of all that has been entrusted to you.[h] Have 1:4+ 2 Tm 1:12, 14; 2:2; 3:14
nothing to do with the pointless philosophical discussions and antagonistic
21 beliefs of the 'knowledge' which is not knowledge at all; •by adopting this, some Tt 2:1
have gone right away from the faith. Grace be with you.[i]

f. Lit. 'so as to give no occasion for reviling to the one who opposes'; this could refer to Satan, but Paul may be referring to unfriendly, anti-Christian neighbours.

g. Lit. 'let them be deemed worthy of being paid double honour' (or 'doubly paid').

h. Var. 'his keep', cf. Mt 10:10.

i. I.e. to confer a function in the Church, cf. 4:14+. Some writers have considered this a reference to a gesture made when absolving sinners.

6 a. Or 'and dear brothers'.

b. 'trapped', var. (Vulg.) 'trapped by the devil in their own temptations'. 'foolish'; Vulg. 'useless'.

c. A contemporary proverb.

d. When had Timothy 'spoken up for the truth'? Perhaps at his baptism, or possibly when he was consecrated to the ministry.

e. When he declared himself to be the messianic King and the revealer of Truth, Jn 18:36-37. This is the great example of how a follower of Christ should proclaim his faith, whether at his baptism or when faced with persecution.

f. The word 'epiphany' ('appearing', used in 2 Th 2:8 with reference to the Great Rebel) is adopted in the Pastoral Letters in preference to '*parousia*' ('Coming', 1 Co 15:23+), or 'apocalypse' ('revealing', 1 Co 1:7+), as the technical term here; 2 Tm 4:1,8; Tt 2:13; Heb 9:28, both for the manifestation of Christ in his eschatological triumph, and also, 2 Tm 1:10; cf. Tt 2:11; 3:4, for his manifestation in the results of his action as saviour.

g. Var. (Vulg.) 'the living God'.

h. The faith that has been entrusted to him: this is one of the main themes of the Pastoral Letters.

i. 'you', plural; var. (Vulg.) 'you' singular. Add. (Vulg.) 'Amen'.

2 TIMOTHY

THE SECOND LETTER FROM PAUL TO TIMOTHY

Greeting and thanksgiving

Rm 1:1+ Ac 16:1+
1 From Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus in his design 1
to promise life in Christ Jesus; •to Timothy, dear child of mine, wishing you 2
grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rm 1:9+ Ph 3:5
Night and day I thank God, keeping my conscience clear and remembering 3
my duty to him as my ancestors did, and always I remember you in my prayers;
4:9,21
I remember your tears[a] •and long to see you again to complete my happiness. 4
Then I am reminded of the sincere faith which you have; it came first to live in 5
Ac 16:1
your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I have no doubt that it
3:14-15
is the same faith in you as well.

The gifts that Timothy has received

That is why I am reminding you now to fan into a flame the gift that God 6
Ac 4:20-21 Rm 8:15
gave you when I laid my hands on you. •God's gift was not a spirit of timidity, 7
1 Tm 4:14+ 1:16
but the Spirit of power, and love, and self-control. •So you are never to be 8
Lk 9:26 Rm 1:16; 5:3f Ep 3:13
ashamed of witnessing to the Lord, or ashamed of me for being his prisoner;
but with me, bear the hardships for the sake of the Good News, relying on the
Tt 3:5 Rm 8:28
power of God •who has saved us and called us to be holy[b]—not because of 9
anything we ourselves have done but for his own purpose and by his own grace.
This grace had already been granted to us, in Christ Jesus, before the beginning
Rm 16:25 Tt 2:11; 3:4 Rm 6:9; 8:2 Heb 2:14-15 1 Tm 2:7
of time, •but it has only been revealed by the Appearing[c] of our saviour Christ 10
Jesus. He abolished death, and he has proclaimed life and immortality through
the Good News; •and I have been named its herald, its apostle and its teacher.[d] 11
It is only on account of this that I am experiencing fresh hardships here 12
now;[e] but I have not lost confidence, because I know who it is that I have put
1 Tm 6:20+
my trust in, and I have no doubt at all that he is able to take care of all that
1 Co 1:8+
I have entrusted to him[f] until that Day.
1 Tm 1:10+
Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me, in the 13
1 Tm 6:20+
faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. •You have been trusted to look after 14
Rm 5:5+
something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.
As you know, Phygelus and Hermogenes and all the others from Asia refuse 15
to have anything more to do with me. •I hope the Lord will be kind to all the 16
4:19
family of Onesiphorus, because he has often been a comfort to me and has never
1:8+
been ashamed of my chains. •On the contrary, as soon as he reached Rome, he 17
really searched hard for me and found out where I was. •May it be the Lord's 18
will that he shall find the Lord's mercy on that Day.[g] You know better than
anyone else how much he helped me at Ephesus.

How Timothy should face hardships

3:14 1 Tm 4:14; 6:12
2 Accept the strength, my dear son, that comes from the grace of Christ Jesus. 1
You have heard everything that I teach in public; hand it on to reliable 2
people so that they in turn will be able to teach others.

3 Put up with your share of difficulties, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.[a]
4 In the army, no soldier gets himself mixed up in civilian life, because he must 4:8
5 be at the disposal of the man who enlisted him; •or take an athlete—he cannot 1 Co 9:25+
6 win any crown unless he has kept all the rules of the contest; •and again, it is
7 the working farmer who has the first claim on any crop that is harvested. •Think 1 Co 3:6-9 Heb 6:7 *1 Co 9:7,10*
over what I have said, and the Lord will show you how to understand it all.
8 Remember the Good News that I carry, 'Jesus Christ risen from the dead, Ac 13:22-23 Rm 1:3,4
9 sprung from the race of David'; •it is on account of this that I have my own
hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal—but they cannot chain Ep 3:1 Ph 1:13-18 *Col 1:24+*
10 up God's news. •So I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen, so that
in the end they may have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the eternal 1 Th 2:12
glory that comes with it.
11 Here is a saying that you can rely on:[b] 1 Tm 1:15+

If we have died with him, then we shall live with him. Rm 6:5+
12 If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him. Ac 14:22 Rm 8:17 *Mt 10:33*
If we disown him, then he will disown us.
13 We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful, Rm 3:3 1 Co 1:9+ *Nb 23:19+* Tt 1:2 Heb 6:18
for he cannot disown his own self.

The struggle against the immediate danger from false teachers

14 Remind them of this; and tell them in the name of God[c] that there is to be
no wrangling about words: all that this ever achieves is the destruction of those 1 Tm 1:4+
15 who are listening. •Do all you can to present yourself in front of God as a man
who has come through his trials, and a man who has no cause to be ashamed 1 Tm 4:6-7
of his life's work and has kept a straight course with the message of the truth.
16 Have nothing to do with pointless philosophical discussions—they only lead
17 further and further away from true religion. •Talk of this kind corrodes like
18 gangrene, as in the case of Hymenaeus and Philetus, •the men who have gone 1 Tm 1:20
right away from the truth and claim that the resurrection has already taken
place.[d] Some people's faith cannot stand up to them.
19 However, God's solid foundation stone is still in position, and this is the Ep 2:20+
inscription on it: '*The Lord knows those who are his own*' and 'All who *call on* Nb 16:5,26 *Is 26:13*
the name of the Lord must avoid sin'.[e]
20 Not all the dishes in a large house are made of gold and silver; some are
made of wood or earthenware: some are kept for special occasions and others Is 29:66+ Rm 9:21
21 are for ordinary purposes. •Now, to avoid these faults that I am speaking about
is the way for anyone to become a vessel for special occasions, fit for the Master
himself to use, and kept ready for any good work.
22 Instead of giving in to your impulses like a young man, fasten your attention 1 Tm 6:11
on holiness, faith, love and peace, in union with all those who call on the Lord Ga 5:22+
23 with pure minds. •Avoid these futile and silly speculations, understanding that 1 Tm 1:4+
24 they only give rise to quarrels; •and a servant of the Lord is not to 1 Tm 3:2f Tt 1:7
engage in quarrels, but has to be kind to everyone, a good teacher, and patient.

1 a. When Paul left Timothy at Ephesus, 1 Tm 1:3.
b. Lit. 'and called us with a holy call': this may be taken in two ways here: the calling of Christians to salvation, cf. Rm 1:6-7; 8:28; 1 Co 1:2,24; Col 3:15; Ep 1:18; 4:4; Ph 3:14; etc, or (by metonymy) the state ('vocation') to which Christians have been called.
c. The 'Appearing' ('epiphany'), cf. 1 Tm 6:14+, here refers to the incarnation and redemption.
d. Add. (Vulg.) 'to the pagans'.
e. The second imprisonment at Rome.
f. Either Christian doctrine (by keeping it intact, 1 Tm 6:20+) or the good that Paul has done and his consequent merit, cf. 1 Tm 6:19; 2 Tm 4:7f.
g. 'Lord' can be taken in either case as a reference either to the Father or to the Son.

2 a. Vv. 4-6 are three short parables: the soldier, the athlete, the farm labourer.
b. Vv. 11-13 are part of a Christian hymn, cf. 1 Tm 3:16+.
c. Var. (Vulg.) 'the Lord'.
d. The Greek mind found the resurrection particularly hard to accept, Ac 17:32; 1 Co 15:12. Hymenaeus and Philetus may well have given it a purely spiritual interpretation by analogy with the mystical resurrection that occurs in baptism, Rm 6:4+; Ep 2:6+.
e. Details about a building were often inscribed on its foundation stone: as the building here is the Church, the foundation stone could be either Christ himself, 1 Co 3:11, or the apostles, Ep 2:20, cf. Rv 21:14, or faith in the unbreakable promise of God, cf. 2 Tm 2:13.

Is 42:3 Mt 12:20 Ga 6:1 He has to be gentle when he corrects people who dispute what he says, never 25
forgetting that God may give them a change of mind so that they recognise the
1 Jn 2:14+ truth and •come to their senses, once out of the trap where the devil caught 26
them and kept them enslaved.

The dangers of the last days

1 Tm 4:1+ 3 You may be quite sure that in the last days there are going to be 1
Rm 1:29+ some difficult times. •People will be self-centred and grasping; boastful, 2
arrogant and rude; disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious; •heartless 3
and unappeasable; they will be slanderers, profligates, savages and enemies of
everything that is good; •they will be treacherous and reckless and demented 4
by pride, preferring their own pleasure to God. •They will keep up the outward 5
Mt 7:15; 24:4f,24 Col 2:23 appearance of religion but will have rejected the inner power of it.[a] Have nothing
to do with people like that.

Tt 1:11 Of the same kind, too, are those men who insinuate themselves into families 6
in order to get influence over silly women who are obsessed with their sins and
Ac 17:21 follow one craze after another •in the attempt to educate themselves, but can 7
Jn 8:32 1 Tm 2:4 never come to knowledge of the truth. •Men like this defy the truth just as 8
Jannes and Jambres defied Moses:[b] their minds are corrupt and their faith
spurious.•But they will not be able to go on any longer: their foolishness, like 9
that of the other two, must become obvious to everybody.

1 Co 4:9 You know, though, what I have taught, how I have lived, what I have aimed 10
1 Co 13:13+ at; you know my faith, my patience and my love; my constancy •and the 11
Ac 14:5,22 2 Co 11:23f persecutions and hardships that came to me in places like Antioch, Iconium and
Lystra—all the persecutions I have endured; and the Lord has rescued me from
Ac 14:22+ Rm 8:36 every one of them. •You are well aware, then, that anybody who tries to live 12
1 Th 3:4-5 *Tt 1:10* in devotion to Christ is certain to be attacked; •while these wicked impostors 13
will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and deceived themselves.

2:2 1 Tm 6:20+ You must keep to what you have been taught and know to be true; remember 14
1:5 Ac 16:1 *2 Co 3:14-18* who your teachers were,[c] •and how, ever since you were a child, you have known 15
the holy scriptures—from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation
Rm 15:4 1 Co 10:6+ 2 P 1:20-21 through faith in Christ Jesus. •All scripture is inspired by God and can[d] profit- 16
ably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and
teaching them to be holy. •This is how the man who is dedicated to God 17
becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work.

1 Tm 6:11f

A solemn charge

Ac 10:42+ 1 P 4:5 *1 Tm 6:14+* 4 Before God and before Christ Jesus who is to be judge of the living and the 1
dead, I put this duty to you, in the name of his Appearing and of his kingdom:
proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, 2
Ac 20:21 correct error, call to obedience—but do all with patience and with the intention
1 Tm 4:1+ of teaching. •The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound 3
1 Tm 1:10+ teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole
series of teachers according to their own tastes; •and then, instead of listening 4
1 Tm 1:4+ to the truth, they will turn to myths. •Be careful always to choose the right 5
course; be brave under trials; make the preaching of the Good News your life's
work, in thoroughgoing service.

Paul in the evening of his life

Ph 2:17+ As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation,[a] and the time 6
Ac 20:24 1 Co 9:24 has come for me to be gone. •I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run 7
1 Tm 1:18; 6:12 the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; •all there is to come now is the 8
2:4-5 crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge,
1 Co 9:25+ will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed
1 Tm 6:14+ for his Appearing.

Final advice

9 10 Do your best to come and see me as soon as you can. •As it is, Demas has deserted me for love of this life and gone to Thessalonika, Crescens has gone
11 to Galatia[b] and Titus to Dalmatia; •only Luke[c] is with me. Get Mark[d] to come
12 and bring him with you; I find him a useful helper in my work. •I have sent
13 Tychicus to Ephesus. •When you come, bring the cloak I left with Carpus in
14 Troas, and the scrolls, especially the parchment ones. •Alexander the coppersmith has done me a lot of harm; *the Lord will repay him for what he has done.*
15 Be on your guard against him yourself, because he has been bitterly contesting everything that we say.
16 The first time I had to present my defence,[e] there was not a single witness to support me. Every one of them deserted me—may they not be held accountable
17 for it. •But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was
18 *rescued from the lion's mouth.* •The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to[f] his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1:4 *Phm 24* Col 4:14 Col 4:10 Tt 3:12+ 1 Tm 1:20 Ps 28:4; 62:12 Pr 24:12 Mt 10:19f Ph 1:19f Col 4:3f Ps 22:21 Dn 6:17 Rm 16:27+

Farewells and final good wishes

19 20 Greetings to Prisca and Aquila, and the family of Onesiphorus. •Erastus
21 remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus ill at Miletus. •Do your best to come before the winter.

Greetings to you from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.
22 The Lord[g] be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

1:16 Ac 18:2+; 19:22; 20:4 Rm 16:23 1:4

3 a. This is reminiscent of the 'false prophets' foretold in Mt 7:15; 24:4-5,24. A fresh outbreak of irreligion is one of the characteristics of the 'last times', cf. 1 Tm 4:1+.

b. Paul gets the names that he gives these magicians (who are mentioned in Ex 7:11-13,22, etc.) from Jewish tradition in which Jannes and Jambres (or 'Mambres'), represented as the leaders of the Egyptian magicians, are said to be the disciples (or even sons) of Balaam, Nb 22:2+.

c. Var. (Vulg.) 'who your teacher was'. These teachers were Lois, Eunice, 1:5, and, above all, Paul himself.

d. Or (less probably) 'all scripture that is inspired by God can...' (Vulg.). This important affirmation about the inspiration of the O.T., cf. 2 P 1:21, probably includes some Christian writings also, 1 Tm 5:18.

4 a. Libations of wine, water or oil were poured over the victims not only in pagan sacrifices but also in Jewish ones, cf. Ex 29:40; Nb 28:7.

b. Var. 'Gaul'. At that time the name 'Galatia' was still given both to the Roman province in Asia, and to the country of the Gauls.

c. Luke the evangelist, cf. Col 4:14.

d. Mark the evangelist, Ac 12:12+. His old quarrel with Paul, Ac 15:37-39, seems to have been forgotten.

e. At some recent hearing of his case.

f. Or 'and keep me safe for'.

g. Add. (Vulg.) 'Jesus Christ', and (at end) 'Amen'.

TITUS

THE LETTER FROM PAUL TO TITUS

Address

Rm 1:1+ 1 From Paul, servant of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ to bring those whom 1
1 Tm 2:4+ God has chosen to faith and to the knowledge of the truth that leads to true
Nb 23:19 religion; •and to give them the hope of the eternal life that was promised so long 2
Heb 6:18+ ago by God. He does not lie •and so, at the appointed time, he revealed his 3
2 Tm 2:13 decision, and, by the command of God our saviour, I have been commissioned to
Ac 1:7+ proclaim it. •To Titus, true child of mine in the faith that we share, wishing you 4
Rm 3:26 grace and peace from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our saviour.
1 Tm 1:1+, 11
2 Co 2:13+

1 Tm 3:1-7 The appointment of elders

Ac 11:30+ The reason I left you behind in Crete was for you to get everything organised 5
Rm 12:8 there[a] and appoint elders[b] in every town, in the way that I told you: •that is, each 6
Ep 4:12+ of them must be a man of irreproachable character; he must not have been married
1 Th 5:12 more than once, and his children must be believers and not uncontrollable or
1 Tm 5:17+ liable to be charged with disorderly conduct. •Since, as president, he will be God's 7
Heb 13:7+ representative, he must be irreproachable: never an arrogant or hot-tempered
Jm 5:14+ man, nor a heavy drinker or violent, nor out to make money; •but a man who 8
1 Tm 3:15 is hospitable and a friend of all that is good; sensible, moral, devout and
Heb 3:2f self-controlled; •and he must have a firm grasp of the unchanging message of the 9
2 Tm 2:24 tradition, so that he can be counted on for both expounding the sound doctrine
1 P5:2 and refuting those who argue against it.
1 Tm 1:10+

Opposing the false teachers

1 Tm 4:1 And in fact you have there a great many people who need to be disciplined, 10
2 Tm 3:13 who talk nonsense and try to make others believe it, particularly among those
2 Tm 3:6 of the Circumcision. •They have got to be silenced: men of this kind ruin whole 11
1 Tm 6:10 families, by teaching things that they ought not to, and doing it with the vile motive
of making money. •It was one of themselves, one of their own prophets, who 12
said,[c] 'Cretans were never anything but liars, dangerous animals and lazy': •and 13
that is a true statement. So you will have to be severe in correcting them, and
1 Tm 1:4+, 10 make them sound in the faith •so that they stop taking notice of Jewish myths 14
and doing what they are told to do by people who are no longer interested in the
truth.

Mt 15:11, 18-20p; 23:25-26p To all who are pure themselves, everything is pure; but to those who have been 15
Rm 14:14-20 corrupted and lack faith, nothing can be pure—the corruption is both in their
minds and in their consciences. •They claim to have knowledge of God but the 16
things they do are nothing but a denial of him; they are outrageously rebellious
and quite incapable of doing good.

Some specific moral instruction

1 Tm 6:20+ 2 It is for you, then, to preach the behaviour which goes with healthy doctrine. 1
1 Tm 5:1-2; 6:11 The older men should be reserved, dignified, moderate, sound in faith and 2

love and constancy. •Similarly, the older women should behave as though they were religious, with no scandalmongering and no habitual wine-drinking—they are to be the teachers of the right behaviour •and show the younger women how they should love their husbands and love their children, •how they are to be sensible and chaste, and how to work in their homes, and be gentle, and do as their husbands tell them, so that the message of God is never disgraced. •In the same way, you have got to persuade the younger men to be moderate •and in everything you do[a] make yourself an example to them of working for good: when you are teaching, be an example to them in your sincerity and earnestness •and in keeping all that you say so wholesome that nobody can make objections to it; and then any opponent will be at a loss, with no accusation to make against us. Tell the slaves that they are to be obedient to their masters and always do what they want without any argument; •and there must be no petty thieving—they must show complete honesty at all times, so that they are in every way a credit to the teaching of God our saviour.

1 Co 13:13+
Ep 5:22
Col 3:18
1 Tm 2:12
1 Tm 6:1
2 Th 3:7+
1 Tm 4:12
1 P 5:3+
1 Tm 1:10+
1 Tm 5:14+
Ep 6:5-8
Col 3:22+
1 Tm 6:1+
Phm 18-19
1 Tm 1:1+

The basis of the Christian moral life

You see, God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race •and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, •while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus.[b] •He sacrificed himself for us in order to *set us free from all wickedness* and *to purify a people so that it could be his very own* and would have no ambition except to do good.

Now this is what you are to say, whether you are giving instruction or correcting errors; you can do so with full authority, and no one is to question it.

3:4
2 Tm 1:10+
1 Jn 2:16
1 Tm 1:11+
1 Tm 2:6+
Ps 130:8
Rm 3:24+
Ex 19:5
Dt 7:6+
Ep 5:25-27
1 Tm 4:12

General instruction for believers

3 Remind them that it is their duty to be obedient to the officials and representatives of the government; to be ready to do good at every opportunity; •not to go slandering other people or picking quarrels, but to be courteous and always polite to all kinds of people. •Remember, there was a time when we too were

Rm 13:1-7
1 Tm 2:2+
1 P 2:13-14
Ph 4:5
1 Th 3:12
Rm 1:29+;
3:21-26
1 Co 6:11
Ep 2:3-10
Col 3:7
1 P 4:3

1 **a.** As usual, Paul had begun the work of evangelisation and then left it to be completed by others, cf. 1 Co 3:6,10; Col 1:7+; Rm 15:23+.

b. In the earliest days each Christian community was governed by a body of elders ('presbyters', whence English word 'priests') or prominent people. This was the case both in Jerusalem (Ac 11:30; 15:2f; 21:18) and in the Dispersion (Ac 14:23; 20:17; Tt 1:5) and it merely continued both the ancient practice of the O.T., Ex 18:13f; Nb 11:16; Jos 8:10; 1 S 16:4; Is 9:14; Ezk 8:1, 11 etc., and the more recent practice of the Jews, Ezr 5:5; 10:14; Jdt 6:16; Lk 7:3; 22:66; Ac 4:5 etc., cf. Josephus, Philo etc. These *'episcopoi'* (supervisors, overseers, watchers, guardians) who are not yet 'bishops' and who are mentioned in connection with the *'diaconoi'* (servants, attendants, assistants, deputies, ministers; 'deacons': Ph 1:1; 1 Tm 3:1-13; the Apostolic Fathers) seem in some passages, Tt 1:5,7; Ac 20:17,28, to be identical with the elders. The Greek word *episcopos*, taken over from the pagan world probably as an equivalent for a semitic title (cf. the *Mebaqqer* of the Essenes, and cf. Nb 4:16; 31:14; Jg 9:28; 2 K 11:15,18; 12:11, etc.) indicated the duty of an officer, while *presbyteros* indicated the status or dignity of the same officer. The *episcopoi* in the college of presbyters may have taken turns to carry out their official duties, cf. 1 Tm 5: 17. It is quite certain that Christian *presbyteroi* or *episcopoi* were not merely concerned with the practical side of organising things; they had to teach, 1 Tm 3:2; 5:17; Tt 1:9, and govern, 1 Tm 3:5; Tt 1:7. They were appointed by the apostles, Ac 14:23, or their representatives, Tt 1:5, by the imposition of hands, 1 Tm 5:22, cf. 1 Tm 4:14+; 2 Tm 1:6; their powers derived from God, Ac 20:28, and were charismatic, 1 Cor 12:28. The word *episcopos* eventually replaced analogous titles like *'proistamenos'* (official) Rm 12:8; 1 Th 5:12, *poimen* (pastor, shepherd) Ep 4:11, *'hegoumenos'* (guide, leader) Heb 13:7,17,24. These heads of the local community who developed into our priests *(presbyteroi)* and bishops *(episcopoi)* were helped by *diaconoi* (deacons). The transformation of a local assembly ruled by a body of bishops or presbyters, into an assembly ruled by a single bishop set over a number of priests (a stage reached by the time of Ignatius of Antioch, died c. 107 A.D.) must have involved the intermediate stage when a single *episcopos* in each community was given the same powers over that local community which had previously been exercised over several communities by the apostles or their representatives like Timothy or Titus.

c. Quotation attributed to the Cretan poet Epimenides of Knossos (6th c. B.C.): first half quoted by Callimachus of Alexandria (early 3rd c. B.C.)

2 **a.** Or '... to be moderate in everything they do; make...' The virtue of being 'sensible' or 'moderate', cf. 1:8, was extremely Greek: here it sums up all the possible virtues of young people, but Paul urges moderation frequently all through the Pastoral Letters, cf. 1 Tm 2:9,15; 3:2; 2 Tm 1:7; Tt 2:2,5,12.

b. This verse is regularly accepted by the Fathers as a statement of the divinity of Christ, cf. Rm 9:5+, but possibly translate '... God, and of our saviour Christ Jesus'. For Christ as 'the brightness of the glory of the Father', cf. Heb 1:3+.

ignorant, disobedient and misled and enslaved by different passions and luxuries; we lived then in wickedness and ill-will, hating each other and hateful ourselves.

2:11
1 Tm 1:1+
2 Tm 1:10+
Rm 6:1
2 Tm 1:9
Jn 3:5
Rm 5:5; 6:4+
2 Co 13:13+
Ep 5:26
1 Tm 1:1+
Rm 3:24; 8:17.24

But when the kindness and love of God our saviour for mankind were revealed, 4
it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have 5
done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us,
by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit
which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. 6
He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking 7
forward to inheriting eternal life.[a] •This is doctrine that you can rely on. 8

Personal advice to Titus

1 Tm 1:15+

I want you to be quite uncompromising in teaching all this, so that those who
now believe in God may keep their minds constantly occupied in doing good
works. All this is good, and will do nothing but good to everybody. •But avoid 9
1 Tm 1:4+ pointless speculations, and those genealogies, and the quibbles and disputes about
the Law—these are useless and can do no good to anyone. •If a man disputes 10
Mt18:15-17p what you teach, then after a first and a second warning, have no more to do with
him:[b] •you will know that any man of that sort has already lapsed and condemned 11
himself as a sinner.

Practical recommendations, farewells and good wishes

Ac 20:4+
2 Tm 4:12

As soon as I have sent Artemas or Tychicus to you, lose no time in joining 12
me at Nicopolis, where I have decided to spend the winter. •See to all the travelling 13
Ac 18:24+ arrangements for Zenas the lawyer and Apollos, and make sure they have every-
thing they need. •All our people are to learn to occupy themselves in doing good 14
works for their practical needs as well,[c] and not to be entirely unproductive.

All those who are with me send their greetings. Greetings to those who love 15
us in the faith. Grace[d] be with you all.

3 a. The effects of baptism are: rebirth, free forgiveness by Christ, reception of his Holy Spirit, cf. Rm 5:5+, and the immediate enjoyment of all rights as heir to eternal life (the presence of the Holy Spirit being a pledge of this, cf. 2 Co 1:22).

b. Lit. 'Avoid any heretical man after one or two warnings'; Paul uses a contemporary philosophical term; etymologically a 'heretic' is someone who instead of being open to all truth chooses what truths he will believe; groups of people who agree on the same choice are 'sects' (offshoots of parent bodies).

c. Lit. 'for urgent needs' or 'for the necessities of life'. This is perhaps a postscript to 3:8: they must learn to do good works not only for the good of their souls but also for a living; they are not to be parasites on society.

d. Add. 'of the Lord', or (Vulg.) 'of God'. Vulg. adds 'Amen' at the end.

PHILEMON

THE LETTER FROM PAUL TO PHILEMON

Address

Rm 1:1+

1 From Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus and from our brother Timothy; to our Ac 16:1+
2 dear fellow worker Philemon, •our sister[a] Apphia, our fellow soldier Archippus Col 4:17 2 Tm 2:3
3 and the church that meets in your house; •wishing you the grace and the peace Rm 16:5+
of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and prayer

||Ep 1:15-16 ||Col 1:3f

4 I always mention you in my prayers and thank God for you, •because I hear
5 of the love and the faith which you have for the Lord Jesus and for all the saints. 1 Co 13:13+ *Ac 9:13+*
6 I pray that this faith will give rise to a sense of fellowship that will show you all Ph 1:9-11
7 the good things that we are able to do for Christ.[b] •I am so delighted, and com- Col 1:9-11 *2 Jn 4-6*
forted, to know of your love; they tell me, brother, how you have put new heart
into the saints.

The request about Onesimus

8 Now, although in Christ I can have no diffidence about telling you to do
9 whatever is your duty, •I am appealing to your love instead, reminding you that
this is Paul writing, an old man now and, what is more, still a prisoner of Christ Ep 3:1; 4:1 Col 4:18
10 Jesus. •I am appealing to you for a child of mine, whose father I became[c] while 1 Co 4:16 Ga 4:19 Col 4:9
11 wearing these chains: I mean Onesimus. •He was of no use to you before, but he 1 Th 2:11
12 will be useful[d] to you now, as he has been to me. •I am sending him back to you,
13 and with him—I could say—a part of my own self.[e] •I should have liked to keep
him with me; he could have been a substitute for you, to help me while I am in the
14 chains that the Good News has brought me. •However, I did not want to do
anything without your consent; it would have been forcing your act of kindness,
15 which should be spontaneous. •I know you have been deprived of Onesimus for
16 a time,[f] but it was only so that you could have him back for ever, •not as a slave Rm 6:15+ Ep 6:5-9 Col 3:22-4:1
any more, but something much better than a slave, a dear brother; especially
dear to me, but how much more to you, as a blood-brother as well as a brother
17 in the Lord.[g] •So if all that we have in common means anything to you, welcome
18 him as you would me; •but if he has wronged you in any way or owes Tt 2:10
19 you anything,[h] then let me pay for it. •I am writing this in my own handwriting: Col 4:18+

a. Var. 'our beloved Apphia', or 'our beloved sister Apphia'.

b. Lit. 'that the fellowship of your faith may become effectual in a full knowledge of every good thing in us for Christ'; i.e. faith unites a person not only to Christ but to all who are his brothers through their union with Christ. Faith and love go together, v. 5, and Paul expects that faith will produce practical results. 'effectual'; var. (Vulg.) 'manifest'. 'we are able'; var. (Vulg.) 'you are able'.

c. He became his 'father' by converting him, cf. 1 Co 4:15; Ga 4:19.

d. A pun: 'Onesimus' means 'useful', cf. Ph 4:3.

e. 'And with him ...'; var. (Vulg.) 'and I ask you to welcome him as though he were myself', cf. v. 17.

f. 'Deprived' of him by God who allowed the slave to escape only so that everyone might subsequently benefit.

g. Lit. 'as a brother both in the flesh and in the Lord'.

h. It seems that Onesimus had not only run away but had stolen something from Philemon as well.

I, Paul, shall pay it back—I will not add any mention of your own debt to me,
which is yourself.[i] •Well then, brother, I am counting on you, in the Lord; put 20
new heart into me, in Christ. •I am writing with complete confidence in your 21
compliance, sure that you will do even more than I ask.

A personal request. Good wishes

There is another thing: will you get a place ready for me to stay in? I am hoping 22
Heb 13:19 through your prayers to be restored to you.
Col 4:10+ Epaphras, a prisoner with me in Christ Jesus, sends his greetings; •so do my 23 24
2 Tm 4:10 colleagues Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke.
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.[j] 25

i. Philemon must have been one of Paul's converts. j. Add. 'Amen', cf. Ph 4:23.

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO A JEWISH-CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

PROLOGUE

The greatness of the incarnate Son of God

1 At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our
2 ancestors through the prophets; but •in our own time, the last days, he has
spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything[a]
3 and through whom he made everything there is.[b] •He is the radiant light of God's
glory and the perfect copy of his nature,[c] sustaining the universe by his powerful
command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to
4 take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. •So he is now as far
above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

2 Ch 36:15
Jn 1:3
Ga 4:4+
1 Tm 4:1+
Mt 4:3+
Jn 1:18+; 10:34
Ws 7:22+
2 Co 4:6,18
Col 1:15+, 17
Ep 1:7
Col 1:14
Ac 2:33+
Ph 2:9-11+

I. THE SON IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS

Proof from the scriptures

5 God has never said to any angel: *You are my Son, today I have become your*
6 *father;* or: *I will be a father to him and he a son to me.* •Again, when he brings the
7 First-born into the world,[d] he says: *Let all the angels of God worship him.* •About
8 the angels, he says: *He makes his angels winds and his servants flames of fire,*[e] •but
to his Son he says: *God, your throne shall last for ever and ever;* and: *his*[f] *royal*
9 *sceptre is the sceptre of virtue; •virtue you love as much as you hate wickedness.*
This is why God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness, above all your
10 *rivals.*[g] •And again: *It is you, Lord, who laid earth's foundations in the beginning,*
11 *the heavens are the work of your hands; •all will vanish, though you remain, all*
12 *wear out like a garment; •you will roll them up like a cloak, and* like a garment[h]
they will be changed. But yourself, you never change and your years are unending.

Ps 2:7
Ac 13:33+
2 S 7:14
Col 1:15+
Dt 32:43
Ps 97:7
Ps 104:4
Ps 45:6-7
Ps 102:25-27

1 a. To be a son implies having the right to inherit, cf. Mt 21:38, Ga 4:7. Here, however, God is credited with the handing over of the whole creation because the inheritance in question is messianic and eschatological.

b. Lit. the 'aeons', hebraism for the whole of creation.

c. These two metaphors are borrowed from the *sophia* and *logos* theologies of Alexandria, Ws 7:25-26; they express both the identity of nature between Father and Son, and the distinction of person. The Son is the brightness, the light shining from its source, which is the bright glory, cf. Ex 24:16+, of the Father ('Light from Light'). He is also the replica, cf. Col 1:15+, of the Father's substance, like an exact impression made by a seal on clay or wax, cf. Jn 14:9.

d. Either at the *parousia* or, more probably, at the incarnation.

e. The author, thinking perhaps of the theophany on Sinai, 2:2+, takes this LXX text as a description of the nature of angels, subtle and changeable and therefore inferior to that of the Son reigning from his eschatological throne.

f. Var. 'your', cf. Ps 45 LXX.

g. Following Middle Eastern custom the psalm attributes divinity to the King-Messiah by hyperbole: here it is attributed literally, cf. v. 3. The divine Messiah is to reign for ever.

h. Vulg. omits. 'like a garment'.

Ps 110:1 Ac 2:33-35+ God has never said to any angel: *Sit at my right hand and I will make your enemies* 1
a footstool for you. •The truth is they are all spirits whose work is service, sent to 1
Tb 5:4+ Ps 91:11 Mt 4:11; 18:10; 26:53 Lk 1:26 help those who will be the heirs of salvation.[i]

An exhortation

2 P 3:17 12:25 Ac 7:38,53+ Ga 3:19+; 4:3+ Ac 10:37 Ac 1:8+ 2 We ought, then, to turn our minds more attentively than before to what we 1
have been taught, so that we do not drift away. •If a promise that was made 2
through angels[a] proved to be so true that every infringement and disobedience
brought its own proper punishment, •then we shall certainly not go unpunished 3
if we neglect this salvation that is promised to us. The promise was first announced
by the Lord himself, and is guaranteed to us by those who heard him;
God himself confirmed their witness with signs and marvels and miracles of all 4
kinds, and by freely giving the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Redemption brought by Christ, not by angels

Col 2:15+ He did not appoint angels to be rulers of the world to come, and that world is 5
what we are talking about. •Somewhere there is a passage that shows us this. It 6
Ps 8:4-6 LXX runs: *What is man that you should spare a thought for him, the son of man that you* 7
should care for him? •For a short while you made him lower than the angels; you 8
crowned him with glory and splendour.[b] *•You have put him in command of every-*
1 Co 15:25 Ep 1:20-23 Ph 3:21 *thing.* Well then, if he has *put him in command of everything*, he has left nothing
which is not under his command. At present, it is true, we are not able to see that
Ph 2:6-11 *everything has been put under his command,*[c] •but we do see in Jesus one who was 9
for a short while made lower than the angels and is now *crowned with glory and*
splendour because he submitted to death;[d] by God's grace[e] he had to experience
death for all mankind.

As it was his purpose to bring a great many of his sons into glory, it was appro- 10
Rm 11:36 1 Co 8:6 12:2 Is 53:4 5:9+ Jn 17:19 priate that God, for whom everything exists and through whom everything exists,
should make perfect, through suffering, the leader who would take them to their
salvation.[f] •For the one who sanctifies, and the ones who are sanctified, are of the 11
Ac 3:15+ Ps 22:22 Jn 17:6 Is 8:17 Is 8:18 same stock;[g] that is why he openly calls them *brothers* •in the text: *I shall announce* 12
your name to my brothers, praise you in full assembly; or the text: *•In him I hope;* 13
or the text: *Here I am with the children whom God has given me.*

Mt 16:17+ Jn 12:31+ Rm 6:9 Rm 5:12f Since all the *children* share the same blood and flesh, he too shared equally 14
in it, so that by his death he could take away all the power of the devil,[h] who had
power over death, •and set free[i] all those who had been held in slavery all their 15
lives by the fear of death. •For it was not the angels that he took to himself; he 16
Is 41:8-9 took to himself *descent from Abraham.* •It was essential that he should in this way 17
Rm 8:3,29 Ph 2:7 3:1+; 4:15; 5:7+ Mt 4:1 Rm 3:25 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10 become completely like his brothers so that he could be a compassionate and
trustworthy high priest of God's religion, able to atone for human sins. •That is, 18
because he has himself been through temptation he is able to help others who are
tempted.

II. JESUS THE FAITHFUL AND MERCIFUL HIGH PRIEST

Christ higher than Moses

2:17; 7:26; 8:1; 10:21; 11:16; 12:22 Ep 1:18 Ph 3:14 4:14; 10:23 Nb 12:7Lxx 2 Co 3:7f 3 That is why all you who are holy brothers and have had the same heavenly 1
call should turn your minds to Jesus, the apostle and the high priest[a] of our
religion. •He was *faithful* to the one who appointed him, just like *Moses*, who 2
stayed faithful *in all his house;* •but he has been found to deserve a greater glory 3
than Moses. It is the difference between the honour given to the man that built
the house and to the house itself. •Every house is built by someone, of course; 4
but God built everything that exists. •It is true that Moses was *faithful in the* 5
house of God, as a servant, acting as witness to the things which were to be
1:2+; 10:21 1 Co 3:9 divulged later; •but Christ was faithful as a son, and as the master in the house. 6

And we are his house, as long as we cling to our hope with the confidence that we glory in.[b] Ep 2:19f▲ 1 Tm 3:15▲

How to reach God's land of rest

7 8 The Holy Spirit says: *If only you would listen to him today;* •*do not harden* Ps 95:7-11
your hearts, as happened in the Rebellion, on the Day of Temptation in the
9 *wilderness,* •*when your ancestors challenged me and tested me, though they had*
10 *seen what I could do* •*for forty years. That was why I was angry with that generation*
11 *and said: How unreliable these people who refuse to grasp my ways!* •*And so, in* Nb 14:21-23
12 *anger, I swore that not one would reach the place of rest I had for them.* •Take care,
brothers, that there is not in any one of your community a wicked mind, so unbe- 2 Th 2:3
13 lieving as to turn away from the living God. •Every day, as long as this 'today'
lasts, keep encouraging one another so that none of you is *hardened* by the lure of 10:25 *2 Th 2:10*
14 sin, •because we shall remain co-heirs with Christ only if we keep a grasp on our
15 first confidence right to the end. •In this saying: *If only you would listen to him*
16 *today; do not harden your hearts, as happened in the Rebellion,* •those who
rebelled after they had *listened* were all the people who were brought out of Egypt
17 by Moses. •And those who made God *angry for forty years* were the ones who
18 sinned and whose *dead bodies were left lying in the wilderness.* •Those that he Nb 14:29 1 Co 10:10
swore would never reach the place of rest he had for them were those who had been
19 disobedient. •We see, then, that it was because they were unfaithful that they
were not able to reach it.

1 4 Be careful, then: the promise of *reaching the place of rest he had for them* still Ex 33:14
2 holds good, and none of you must think that he has come too late for it.[a] •We
received the Good News exactly as they did; but hearing the message did them no 1 Co 10:1-3
3 good because they did not share the faith of those who listened.[b] •We, however,[c]
who have faith, shall reach a place of rest, as in the text: *And so, in anger, I swore* Ps 95:11
that not one would reach the place of rest I had for them. God's work was undoubt-
4 edly all finished at the beginning of the world; •as one text says, referring to the
5 seventh day: *After all his work God rested on the seventh day.* •The text we are Gn 2:2
6 considering says: *They shall not reach the place of rest I had for them.* •It is estab- Ps 95:11
lished, then, that there would be some people who would reach it, and since those
7 who first heard the Good News failed to reach it through their disobedience, •God
fixed another day when, much later, he said 'today' through David in the text Ps 95:7f
already quoted: *If only you would listen to him today; do not harden your hearts.*
8 If Joshua had led them into this place of rest, God would not later on have spoken Dt 31:7 Jos 22:4
9 so much of another day. •There must still be, therefore, a place of rest reserved Rv 14:13

1. Compared with the Son, angels are only servants employed to save human beings.

2 a. The Law, given through the intermediary of angels, cf. Gn 3:19+, and sanctioned by severe penalties.

b. Vulg. adds 'You have made him lord over the work of your hands'.

c. The first Christians, despised and persecuted, were still waiting for the coming of God's reign on earth, 2 P 3:4. Although Christ had already entered his glory, his reign on earth has to continue in time till he has conquered all his enemies (1:13) before his full and final triumph.

d. Christ is glorified because he has suffered and this triumph shows that God accepts the redemptive nature of his death.

e. 'God's grace'; rare var. 'without God' which may have been a gloss meant to emphasise that the Messiah could suffer only in his human, not in his divine, nature; but it could be an allusion to what Jesus cried out from the cross (Mt 27:46), or it could be taken as meaning that Christ died for all, but not for God, cf. 1 Co 15:27.

f. By dying and fulfilling the will of God, Christ becomes the one perfect saviour, responsible for the entry of human beings into the glory of God.

g. From the context, the translation could read 'form a single whole'.

h. Sin and death are related because both derive from Satan whose reign is the opposite of the reign of Christ.

i. By his resurrection, which is the guarantee to believers that they will rise, Rm 8:11+.

3 a. Christ is both 'apostle', i.e. someone 'sent' by God to the human race, cf. Jn 3:17,34; 5:36; 9:7; Rm 1:1+; 8:3; Ga 4:4, and high priest representing the human race before God, cf. 2:17; 4:14; 5:5,10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21.

b. Add. unwavering right till the end'.

4 a. This 'comparison between Moses and Jesus, 3:1f; cf. Ac 7:20-44+; Jn 1:21+, can be extended to the relationship between Israelites and Christians. Since the Israelites refused to believe God's promise and so never reached the peace of the promised land, 3:7-19, this promise (which cannot be empty, because it was made by God) is still open to Christians who are invited to reach the peace of the spiritual promised land, of which the earthly promised land was only a type.

b. E.g. Joshua and Caleb, cf. Nb 13-14. Var. 'because (the message) was not accompanied by faith in what they heard'.

c. 'however'; var. 'therefore'. 'a place of rest', var. 'the place of rest'.

for God's people,[d] the seventh-day rest, •since to *reach the place of rest* is to *rest* 10
after your work, as God did after his. •We must therefore do everything we can 11
to *reach this place of rest*, or some of you might copy this example of disobedience
and be lost.

The word of God and Christ the priest

Is 49:2
1 Th 2:13+
1 P 1:23
Rv 1:16
Rm 1:9+
1 Co 15:44+
Ep 6:17
Jb 34:21-22
Ps 139:2-3
Ws 1:6
3:1; 9:11.
24; 10:22
Dn 13:42
2:17-18;
5:7+
Jn 8:46
Rm 8:3
2 Co 5:21
10:19+
Ep 3:12

The word of God[e] is something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged 12
sword but more finely: it can slip through the place where the soul is divided from
the spirit, or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret emotions and
thoughts. •No created thing can hide from him; everything is uncovered and open 13
to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves.

Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme high priest who has gone 14
through to the highest heaven, we must never let go of the faith that we have
professed. •For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling 15
our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that
we are, though he is without sin. •Let us be confident, then, in approaching the 16
throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in
need of help.

Jesus the compassionate high priest

8:3

5 Every high priest has been taken out of mankind and is appointed to act for 1
men in their relations with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins; and so
he can sympathise with those who are ignorant or uncertain because he too lives 2
7:27
Lv 9:7; 16:6
Jn 3:27
in the limitations of weakness. •That is why he has to make sin offerings for 3
himself as well as for the people. •No one takes this honour on himself, but each 4
Ex 28:1
one is called by God, as Aaron was. •Nor did Christ give himself the glory of 5
Ps 2:7
becoming high priest, but he had it from the one who said to him: *You are my*
Ps 110:4
son, today I have become your father, •and in another text: *You are a priest of* 6
5:7; 4:15
Mt 26:36fp
Jn 12:27
the order of Melchizedek, and for ever. •During his life on earth,[a] he offered up 7
prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to
save him out of death,[b] and he submitted so humbly that[c] his prayer was heard.
Ph 2:8
2:10+; 7:28
Jn 17:19
Rm 1:5+
6:20
Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; •but having been 8 9
made perfect,[d] he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation
and was acclaimed by God with the title of high priest *of the order of Melchizedek.* 10

III. THE AUTHENTIC PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

Christian life and theology

On this subject we have many things to say, and they are difficult to explain 11
Si 37:28
1 Co 3:1-3
because you have grown so slow at understanding. •Really, when you should by 12
this time have become masters, you need someone to teach you all over again the
elementary principles of interpreting God's oracles; you have gone back to needing
1 P 2:2
milk, and not solid food. •Truly, anyone who is still living on milk cannot digest 13
1 Co 2:6+
the doctrine of righteousness[e] because he is still a baby. •Solid food is for mature 14
Ph 1:10+
Col 3:10+
men with minds trained by practice to distinguish between good and bad.

The author explains his intention

6 Let us leave behind us then[a] all the elementary teaching about Christ and 1
concentrate on its completion, without going over the fundamental doctrines
9:14
Ep 2:1+
Mt 3:2+
Ac 2:38+
Rm 1:16+;
2:6+
again: the turning away from dead actions[b] and towards faith in God; •the teaching 2
about baptisms[c] and the laying-on of hands; the teaching about the resurrection
of the dead and eternal judgement. •This, God willing, is what we propose to do. 3
1 Tm 4:14+
10:32+
Ep 5:14
Rm 5:5+
10:26-31;
12:17
As for those people who were once brought into the light, and tasted the gift 4
from heaven, and received a share of the Holy Spirit, •and appreciated the good 5
message of God and the powers of the world to come •and yet in spite of this 6

have fallen away[d]—it is impossible for them to be renewed a second time. They cannot be repentant if they have wilfully crucified the Son of God and openly
7 mocked him. •A field that has been well watered by frequent rain, and gives the crops that are wanted by the owners who grew them, is given God's blessing;
8 but one that grows brambles and thistles is abandoned, and practically cursed. It will end by being burnt.

1 Jn 5:16▲
2 Tm 2:6
Gn 3:17-18

Words of hope and encouragement

9 But you, my dear people—in spite of what we have just said, we are sure you
10 are in a better state and on the way to salvation. •God would not be so unjust as to forget all you have done, the love that you have for his name or the services
11 you have done, and are still doing, for the saints.[e] •Our one desire is that every one of you should go on showing the same earnestness to the end, to the perfect
12 fulfilment of our hopes, •never growing careless, but imitating those who have the faith and the perseverance to inherit the promises.

10:32-34
Ep 1:15p
2 Th 3:7
Ga 3:14,29
Ep 1:13-14

13 When God made the promise to Abraham, he *swore by his own self*, since it
14 was impossible for him to swear by anyone greater: •*I will shower blessings on*
15 *you and give you many descendants.* •Because of that, Abraham persevered and
16 saw the promise fulfilled. •Men, of course, swear an oath by something greater than themselves, and between men, confirmation by an oath puts an end to all
17 dispute. •In the same way, when God wanted to make the heirs to the promise thoroughly realise that his purpose was unalterable, he conveyed this by an oath;
18 so that there would be two unalterable things[f] in which it was impossible for God to be lying, and so that we, now we have found safety, should have a strong
19 encouragement to take a firm grip on the hope that is held out to us. •Here we have an anchor for our soul,[g] as sure as it is firm, and reaching right *through*
20 *beyond the veil* •where Jesus has entered before us and on our behalf, to become a high *priest of the order of Melchizedek, and for ever.*

Gn 22:16f
Rm 4:20
Nb 23:19+
2 Tm 2:13
Tt 1:2
Lv 16:2
Mt 27:51p
9:3; 10:20
Jn 14:3
5:10
Ps 110:4

d. God's people, resting in Canaan after the Exodus, is taken as a figure of God resting in heaven after the creation: the new covenant calls those who are faithful to its terms to share God's beatitude.

e. All that God has revealed through the prophets or through his Son, 1:1-2; 2:1-4; 3. Since the promises and threats of the message are still 'alive' and in force, they make it impossible for human beings to avoid declaring their true intentions, i.e. they 'judge' them.

5 a. Lit. 'in the days of his flesh' (on the word 'flesh' cf. Rm 7:5+). The emphasis of this section is on humanity: a priest must be human since he represents human beings and he must share their sufferings since he must feel compassion for them, cf. 2:17-18; 4:15. Jesus suffered in this way all through his life on earth, and especially in his agony and death.

b. Not saved from dying, since that was the whole purpose of his life, Jn 12:27f, but rescued from death after dying, Ac 2:24f. God transformed his death by raising him to glory after it, Jn 12:27f; 13:31f; 17:5; Ph 2:9-11; Heb 2:9.

c. Lit. 'because of his *eulabeia*' (i.e. religious awe). It was because the prayer of Christ in Gethsemane was a prayer of total submission to the will of his Father, Mt 26:39,42, that it was heard and answered.

d. Having totally succeeded in his task of being priest and victim.

e. 'The doctrine of righteousness' like 'God's oracles' can mean either the O.T., cf. 2 Tm 3:16, or the whole body of doctrine. Here it seems to mean all that Christ taught about the righteousness of God as applied to mankind, Rm 3:21-26, and especially about his own priesthood of mediation, prefigured by Melchizedek, the 'king of righteousness', 7:2.

6 a. In spite of the difficulties his readers will have, the author is going to try and stimulate them by formulating the difficult doctrine already mentioned in 5:11.

b. Anything done without faith and the divine life is called a 'dead' action because it is done in the context of sin, Rm 1:18-3:20, which leads to death, Rm 5:12,21; 6:23; 7:5; 1 Co 15:56; Ep 2:1; Col 2:13; cf. Jm 1:15; Jn 5:24; 1 Jn 3:14.

c. Not only Christian baptism, cf. Ac 1:5+; Rm 6:4+, but all the washings, lustrations and purificatory rites then practised, including the 'baptism of John' Ac 18:25; 19:1-5.

d. The irreparable apostasy of rejecting Christ and not believing in the power of his sacrifice to save.

e. The same phrase is used, Rm 15:25,31; 2 Co 8:4; 9:1,12, about a collection for the church in Jerusalem. The 'saints' are all Christians, but especially members of the mother church at Jerusalem and in particular the apostles, cf. Ac 9:13+.

f. I.e. the promise and the oath of God who 'does not lie', Tt 1:2.

g. Anchor: symbol of stability in the classical world, adopted in Christian iconography of 2nd c. as a symbol of hope.

A. CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD HIGHER THAN LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

Melchizedek[a]

Gn 14:18+ Ps 110:4+ Gn 14:17-20

7 You remember that *Melchizedek, king of Salem, a priest of God Most High,* 1
went to meet Abraham who was on his way back after defeating the kings, and
blessed him; •and also that it was to him that Abraham gave *a tenth of all that* 2
he had. By the interpretation of his name, he is, first, 'king of righteousness' and
also *king of Salem,* that is, 'king of peace'; •he has no father, mother or ancestry, 3
1:2+ and his life has no beginning or ending; he is like the Son of God. He remains
Jn 7:27 a priest for ever.

Melchizedek accepted tithes from Abraham

Gn 14:20 Now think how great this man must have been, if the patriarch *Abraham paid* 4
him a tenth of the treasure he had captured.[b] •We know that any of the descendants 5
Dt 14:22+ of Levi who are admitted to the priesthood are obliged by the Law to take tithes
from the people, and this is taking them from their own brothers although they
too are descended from Abraham. •But this man, who was not of the same 6
descent, took his tenth from Abraham, and he gave his blessing to the holder of
the promises. •Now it is indisputable that a blessing is given by a superior to an 7
inferior. •Further, in the one case it is ordinary mortal men who receive the 8
tithes, and in the other, someone who is declared to be still alive. •It could be said 9
that Levi himself, who receives tithes, actually paid them, in the person of
Gn 14:17 Abraham, •because he was still in the loins of his ancestor when *Melchizedek* 10
came to meet him.

From levitical priesthood to the priesthood of Melchizedek[c]

Now if perfection had been reached through the levitical priesthood because 11
the Law given to the nation rests on it, why was it still necessary for a
Ps 110:4 new priesthood to arise, one *of the same order as Melchizedek* not counted as being
8:6f 'of the same order as' Aaron? •But any change in the priesthood must mean a 12
change in the Law as well.

8:4 So our Lord, of whom these things were said, belonged to a different tribe, 13
Gn 49:10 Mt 1:1f; 2:6 Rm 1:3 Rv 5:5 the members of which have never done service at the altar; •everyone knows he 14
came from Judah, a tribe which Moses did not even mention when dealing with
priests.

The abrogation of the old Law

This[d] becomes even more clearly evident when there appears a second 15
Rm 1:4+ Melchizedek, who is a priest •not by virtue of a law about physical descent,[e] but 16
Jr 33:18 by the power of an indestructible life. •For it was about him that the prophecy 17
Ps 110:4 was made: *You are a priest of the order of Melchizedek, and for ever.* •The 18
earlier commandment is thus abolished, because it was neither effective nor useful,
10:1; 11:40 Rm 7:7+ since the Law could not make anyone perfect; but now this commandment is 19
10:19+ replaced by something better—the hope that brings us nearer to God.

Christ's priesthood is unchanging

What is more, this was not done without the taking of an oath. The others, 20
indeed, were made priests without any oath; •but he with an oath sworn by the 21
Ps 110:4 one who declared to him: *The Lord has sworn an oath which he will never retract:*
8:6-13 *you are a priest, and for ever.*[f] •And it follows that it is a greater covenant for 22
which Jesus has become our guarantee. •Then there used to be a great number of 23
those other priests, because death put an end to each one of them; •but this one, 24
9:24; 10:19+ Nb 18:1 because he remains *for ever,* can never lose his priesthood. •It follows, then, that 25

his power to save is utterly certain, since he is living for ever to intercede for all who come to God through him. Rm 8:34▲ 1 Jn 2:1▲ Rv 1:18▲

The perfection of the heavenly high priest

26 To suit us, the ideal high priest would have to be holy, innocent and uncontaminated, beyond the influence of sinners, and raised up above the 27 heavens; •one who would not need to offer sacrifices every day, as the other high priests do for their own sins and then for those of the people, because he has done 28 this once and for all[g] by offering himself. •The Law appoints high priests who are men subject to weakness; but the promise on oath, which came after the Law,[h] appointed the Son who is made perfect *for ever.* 3:1+ Ex 29:1 1 Jn 3:5-6 *9:25-28* *5:3; 9:7,12;* 10:11-14 Rm 6:10 5:9

B. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE WORSHIP, THE SANCTUARY AND THE MEDIATION PROVIDED BY CHRIST THE PRIEST

The new priesthood and the new sanctuary

1 8 The great point of all that we have said is that we have a high priest of exactly this kind. He has his place *at the right* of the throne of divine 2 Majesty in the heavens, •and he is the minister of the sanctuary and of the true 3 *Tent* of Meeting which *the Lord*, and not any man, *set up.*[a] •It is the duty of every high priest to offer gifts and sacrifices, and so this one too must have something 4 to offer. •In fact, if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there 5 are others who make the offerings laid down by the Law •and these only maintain the service of a model or a reflection of the heavenly realities. For Moses, when he had the Tent to build, was warned by God who said: *See that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.* 3:1+ Ps 110:1 Ac 2:33+ Nb 24:6 LXX *5:1* 7:13f 9:23; 10:1 Ac 7:44 Rv 11:19 Ex 25:40

Christ in the mediator of a greater covenant

6 We have seen that he has been given a ministry of a far higher order, and to the same degree it is a better covenant of which he is the mediator,[b] founded on 7:12,22; 9:15; 12:24 1 Tm 2:5 1 Jn 2:1

7 a. Melchizedek the priest-king: an O.T. type of Christ. Gn 14 is oddly silent about any ancestors or descendants of Melchizedek and this suggested the idea that he represented the eternal priesthood, vv. 1-3, cf. vv. 15-17 and Ps 110:4+. He was superior to Abraham in so far as Abraham offered him, Gn 14:20, a tithe of everything that had been captured, so *a fortiori*, the argument goes, he was superior to all the descendants of Abraham, including the Levites, v. 4f.

b. The tithe paid to levitical priests, Dt 14:22+, was both the stipend for their ministry at the altar and acknowledgement that as priests they were members of a higher class than those who paid. Levi (in the person of Abraham) could only have paid his tithe if Melchizedek were a priest of an even higher class than himself.

c. The argument here is based on Ps 110:4. This text prophesies that the King-Messiah will not be descended from Levi, but will be an eternal priest in the same sense as Melchizedek. This implies that when Christ comes, his sort of priesthood will replace the levitical priesthood, and this in turn will necessitate a new law since the old one was only concerned with the levitical priesthood, vv. 12, 16f, 21.

d. What has been said in v. 12.

e. Lit. 'a law of a carnal commandment', namely the law that restricted the priesthood of Levi to his physical descendants, cf. Nb 1:47f; 3:5f; Dt 10:8f; 18:1f; 33:8f.

f. Add 'of the order of Melchizedek'.

g. The one and only sacrifice of Christ is the centre of salvation history, Ac 1:7+. It closes a long epoch of preparation, 1:1f; cf. Rm 10:4; it occurs at 'the appointed time', Ga 4:4+, Rm 3:26+, and it begins the eschatological epoch. Though the Last Day, 1 Co 1:8+; Rm 2:6+, will follow, 2 Co 6:2+, only at some unspecified, 1 Th 5:1+, time in the future; salvation for the human race has been in essence certain from the moment when, in the person of Christ, it died to sin and rose to live again. Heb makes a special point of how the whole of this hope flows from the absolutely unique, unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ, 7:27; 9:12,26, 28; 10:10; cf. Rm 6:10; 1 P 3:18. Being unrepeatable, 10:12-14, this sacrifice is different from all others in the O.T. that had to be repeated again and again because they were unable actually to save anyone.

h. Cf. the promise made before the Law was given, Ga 3:17.

8 a. The argument so far has been to prove that what Christ is, i.e. an eternal and perfect priest, is superior to what the levitical priests are, since they are all mortals and sinners, ch. 7; now the argument goes on to show that what Christ does is equally superior to what the levitical priests do: Christ's sanctuary is better because it is in heaven; 8:1-5, cf. 9:11f, while the one on earth is only a copy of it, Ex 25:40; and the covenant brought by the mediation of Christ is a better covenant, vv. 6-13, cf. 9:15f.

b. Technically Christ is the one and only true mediator: he is true man and true God, Col 2:9, and so the one and only intermediary, Rm 5:15-19; 1 Tm 2:5, cf. 1 Co 3:22-23; 11:3, between God and the human race. He unites them and reconciles them, 2 Co 5:14-20. Through him come grace, Jn 1:16-17; Ep 1:7, and complete revelation, Heb 1:1-2. In heaven he continues to intercede for those who are faithful to him, 7:25+.

better promises. •If that first covenant had been without a fault, there would have 7
been no need for a second one to replace it. •And in fact God does find fault with 8
them; he says:

Jr 31:31-34
Mt 26:28+ 1 Co 11:25
See, the days are coming—it is the Lord who speaks—
when I will establish a new covenant
with the House of Israel and the House of Judah,
but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors 9
on the day I took them by the hand
to bring them out of the land of Egypt.
They abandoned that covenant of mine,
and so I on my side deserted them. It is the Lord who speaks.
10:16-17
No, this is the covenant I will make 10
with the House of Israel
when those days arrive—it is the Lord who speaks.
I will put my laws into their minds
and write them on their hearts.
Then I will be their God
and they shall be my people.
There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, 11
or brother to say to brother,
'Learn to know the Lord'.
No, they will all know me,
the least no less than the greatest,
since I will forgive their iniquities 12
10:17
and never call their sins to mind.

2 Co 5:17
Rv 21:4-5
By speaking of a *new* covenant, he implies that the first one is already old. Now 13
anything old only gets more antiquated until in the end it disappears.

Christ enters the heavenly sanctuary

Ex 25:26+; 26:31
9 The first covenant also[a] had its laws governing worship, and its sanctuary, 1
a sanctuary on this earth. •There was a tent which comprised two 2
compartments: the first, in which the lamp-stand, the table and the presentation
6:19
loaves were kept, was called the Holy Place;[b] •then beyond the second veil, an 3
innermost part which was called the Holy of Holies •to which belonged the gold 4
Ex 30:1+
Ex 25:10+
Ex 16:1+
Nb 17:25
altar of incense,[c] and the ark of the covenant, plated all over with gold. In this
were kept the gold jar containing the manna, Aaron's branch that grew the buds,
Ex 24:12+
and the stone tablets of the covenant. •On top of it was the throne of mercy, and 5
Ex 25:17+, 18+
outspread over it were the glorious cherubs. This is not the time to go into
greater detail about this.

Lv 16:1
Under these provisions, priests are constantly going into the outer tent to 6
Ex 30:10
carry out their acts of worship, •but the second tent is entered only once a year, 7
7:27+
Lv 17:11+
and then only by the high priest who must go in by himself and take the blood to
offer for his own faults and the people's. •By this, the Holy Spirit is showing that 8
10:20
no one has the right to go into the sanctuary as long as the outer tent remains
1 Co 10:6+
standing; •it is a symbol for this present time.[d] None of the gifts and sacrifices 9
11:40+
offered under these regulations can possibly bring any worshipper to perfection
Col 2:16-17
in his inner self; •they are rules about the outward life, connected with foods and 10
drinks and washing at various times, intended to be in force only until it should
be time to reform them.

But now Christ has come, as the high priest of all the blessings which were to 11
4:14; 9:24; 10:20
Ac 7:48
come.[e] He has passed through the greater, the more perfect tent, which is better
than the one made by men's hands because it is not of this created order; •and he 12
7:27+
has entered the sanctuary[f] once and for all, taking with him not the blood of goats
Mt 26:28
Rm 3:24+
and bull calves, but his own blood, having won an eternal redemption for us.
10:4
Nb 19:2-10,
The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer are sprinkled on those who 13

have incurred defilement and they restore the holiness of their outward lives;
14 how much more effectively the blood of Christ, who offered himself as the
perfect sacrifice to God through the eternal Spirit,[g] can purify our inner self from
dead actions so that we do our service to the living God.

17-20▲ Ps 51:7▲ *10:10+* 2 Co 13:13+ 1 P 1:18-19 *6:1+* *12:28* Rm 1:9+

Christ seals the new covenant with his blood[h]

15 He brings a new covenant, as the mediator, only so that the people who were
called to an eternal inheritance may actually receive what was promised: his death
16 took place to cancel the sins that infringed the earlier covenant. •Now wherever
17 a will is in question, the death of the testator must be established; •indeed, it only
becomes valid with that death, since it is not meant to have any effect while the
18 testator is still alive. •That explains why even the earlier covenant needed
19 something to be killed in order to take effect, •and why, after Moses had
announced all the commandments of the Law to the people, he took the calves'
blood, the goats' blood and some water, and with these he sprinkled the book
20 itself and all the people, using scarlet wool and hyssop; •saying as he did so: *This*
21 *is the blood of the covenant that God has laid down for you.* •After that, he sprinkled
22 the tent and all the liturgical vessels with blood in the same way. •In fact,
according to the Law almost everything has to be purified[i] with blood; and if
23 there is no shedding of blood, there is no remission. •Obviously, only the copies
of heavenly things can be purified in this way, and the heavenly things themselves
24 have to be purified[j] by a higher sort of sacrifice than this. •It is not as though
Christ had entered a man-made sanctuary which was only modelled on the real
one; but it was heaven itself, so that he could appear in the actual presence of God
25 on our behalf. •And he does not have to offer himself again and again, like the
high priest going into the sanctuary year after year with the blood that is not his
26 own, •or else he would have had to suffer over and over again since the world
began. Instead of that, he has made his appearance once and for all,[k] now at the
27 end of the last age, to do away with sin by sacrificing himself. •Since men only
28 die once, and after that comes judgement, •so Christ, too, offers himself only once
to take the faults of many on himself, and when he appears a second time, it will
not be to deal with sin but to reward with salvation those who are waiting for
him.[l]

8:6+ Ga 4:1-7 Ex 24:6-8+ 10:29 Ex 24:8 Mt 26:28p Lv 17:11+ 8:5 4:14; 7:25; 9:11f Ac 7:48 *1 Co 10:6+* 7:25+ 7:27+ Jn 1:29 Ga 4:4+ 1 P 3:18+ *10:10* 1 Tm 6:14+ *Is 53:12* Ac 3:20-21 Ph 3:20-21

9 a. Om. 'also'.

b. In the desert Tent-Sanctuary, Ex 25-26 (cf. the Temple of Solomon, 1 K 6) a curtain hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, Ex 26:33. Only the high priest ever went into the Holy of Holies and he did so only once a year on *yom kippur*, the Day of Atonement. Cf. Lv 16:1+.

c. Ex 30:6; 40:26 says that the incense altar, Ex 30:1+, was in the Holy Place: Heb may be following a different liturgical tradition, or the sense may be that the place of the altar of incense was immediately in front of the curtain of the inner sanctuary.

d. The spiritual meaning of this ceremonial arrangement is that under the old covenant the people had no access to God. Under the new covenant, Christ himself is the way to the Father, Jn 14:6; cf. Heb 10:19+. The abrogation of the old worship can thus be appropriately symbolised by the Temple curtain splitting wide open at the death of Jesus, Mt 27:51p.

e. Var. 'blessings already won'.

f. In his ascension Christ 'passed through' all the successive heavenly spheres that form the 'Holy Place' of the celestial Tent, and so came into the presence of God in the celestial 'Holy of Holies'.

g. Var. 'the Holy Spirit', cf. Rm 1:4+.

h. This section is parallel to 8:6-13: it shows that the death of Christ was essential for him to act as mediator. It does this by making use of a pun: the Greek word *diathēkē* can mean 'pact', as in vv. 15, 18-20, or 'last will and testament', as in vv. 16-17; this makes it possible for the author to argue that a 'pact' or covenant suggests the death of a 'testator'. All pacts were sealed with the shedding of blood. Ex 24:6-8.

i. E.g. the altar, Lv 8:15; 16:19; the priests, Lv 8:24-30; the Levites, Nb 8:15; the sinful people, Lv 9:15-18; a mother, Lv 12:7-8, etc.; one exception, cf. Lv 5:11.

j. The 'purification' of the sanctuary, whether the earthly or the heavenly one, does not necessarily imply any previous 'impurity': it is a consecratory and inaugural rite.

k. The sacrifice of Christ is unique, 7:27+: being offered 'at the end of the last age' (lit. 'at the completion of the aeons'), i.e. the end of human history, there is no need for it to be repeated, since it wipes out sin, not with non-human ('alien') blood, but with Christ's own blood, cf. 9:12-14, so its effect is unconditional.

l. The first coming of Christ gave him a direct relationship to sin, Rm 8:3; 2 Co 5:21. The second coming of Christ will, since the redemption is complete, have no connection with sin. Christians wait for this *parousia* that will take place at the Judgement, 1 Co 1:8+; Rm 2:6+.

SUMMARY: CHRIST'S SACRIFICE SUPERIOR TO THE SACRIFICES OF THE MOSAIC LAW

The old sacrifices ineffective

8:5; 10:11 Col 2:17 7:19 Rm 7:7+ 10:19+; 11:40+

10 So, since the Law has no more than a *reflection* of these realities, and no finished picture of them, it is quite incapable of bringing the worshippers to perfection, with the same sacrifices repeatedly offered year after year. 1 2 •Otherwise, the offering of them would have stopped, because the worshippers, when they had been purified once, would have no awareness of sins. 3 •Instead of that, the sins are recalled year after year in the sacrifices. 4 •Bulls' blood and goats' blood are useless for taking away sins, 5 •and this is what he said, on coming into the world:

Ps 40:6-8 LXX

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.
You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin; 6
then I said, 7
just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,
'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'

Notice that he says first: *You did not want* what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: *the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin,* and *you took no pleasure* in them; 8 •and then he says: *Here I am! I am coming to obey your will.* He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. 9 •And this *will* was for us to be made holy by the *offering* of his *body* made once and for all by Jesus Christ. 10

1 S 15:22 Jn 6:38 Mt 26:39; 42p 9:14,28; 10:12,14 Jn 10:17-18 Ep 5:2 7:27+

The efficacy of Christ's sacrifice

10:1-4

All the priests stand at their duties every day, offering over and over again the same sacrifices which are quite incapable of taking sins away. 11 12 •He, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and then taken his place for ever, *at the right hand of God,* 13 •where he is now waiting *until his enemies are made into a footstool for him.* 14 •By virtue of that one single offering, he has achieved the eternal perfection of all whom he is sanctifying. 15 •The Holy Spirit assures us of this; for he says, first:

7:27+; 10:10+ Ps 110:1 Ac 2:33+ 10:10; 11:40+ Jn 17:19+

8:10 Jr 31:33-34

This is the covenant I will make with them 16
when those days arrive;

and the Lord then goes on to say:

8:12

I will put my laws into their hearts
and write them on their minds.
I will never call their sins to mind, 17
or their offences.

When all sins have been forgiven, there can be no more sin offerings. 18

IV. PERSEVERING FAITH

The Christian opportunity

4:16; 7:19, 25; 10:1 6:19-20; 9:8,11-12 Jn 14:6 3:1+,6; 4:14 Zc 6:11-12 Rm 6:4+ 1 P 3:21

In other words, brothers, through the blood of Jesus we have the right to enter 19 the sanctuary,[a] 20 •by a new way which he has opened for us, a living opening through the curtain, that is to say, his body. 21 •And we have the *supreme high priest* over all *the house of God.* 22 •So as we go in, let us be sincere in heart and filled with faith, our minds sprinkled and free from any trace of bad conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 •Let us keep firm in the hope we profess, because

24 the one who made the promise is faithful. •Let us be concerned for each other, 3:2; 4:14; 11:11
25 to stir a response in love and good works. •Do not stay away from the meetings 1 Co 1:9+
of the community, as some do, but encourage each other to go; the more so as you 3:13
see the Day[b] drawing near. 1 Co 1:8+

The danger of apostasy

26 If, after we have been given knowledge of the truth, we should deliberately 6:4-6; 12:17
27 commit any sins, then there is no longer any sacrifice for them.[c] •There will be
left only the dreadful prospect of judgement and of *the raging fire* that is to *burn* Is 26:11 LXX
28 *rebels.* •Anyone who disregards the Law of Moses is ruthlessly *put to death on the* Dt 17:6
29 *word of two witnesses or three;* •and you may be sure that anyone who tramples
on the Son of God, and who treats *the blood of the covenant* which sanctified him 6:6; 9:20 Ex 24:8
as if it were not holy, and who insults the Spirit of grace, will be condemned to a
30 far severer punishment. •We are all aware who it was that said: *Vengeance is* Dt 32:35-36
31 *mine; I will repay.* And again: *The Lord will judge his people.* •It is a dreadful thing Mt 12:31-32p
to fall into the hands of the living God. Mt 10:28p

Motives for perseverance

32 Remember all the sufferings that you had to meet after you received the 6:4,10 Ep 5:14
33 light,[d] in earlier days; •sometimes by being yourselves publicly exposed to insults 1 Co 4:9
and violence, and sometimes as associates of others who were treated in the same
34 way. •For you not only shared in the sufferings of those who were in prison,[e] but 13:3
you happily accepted being stripped of your belongings, knowing that you owned Mt 5:11,40
35 something that was better and lasting. •Be as confident now, then, since the reward Mt 6:20
36 is so great. •You will need endurance to do God's will and gain what he has Lk 21:19 Ac 14:22+ 1 Th 3:4
promised.

37 Only *a little while now, a very little while,* Is 26:20 LXX
and the one that is coming will have come; he will not delay. *Lk 21:28*
38 *The righteous man will live by faith,* Hab 2:3-4 LXX
but if he draws back, my soul will take no pleasure in him. Rm 1:17

39 You and I are not the sort of people who *draw back*, and are lost by it; we are
the sort who keep *faithful* until our souls are saved. Lk 21:19 1 P 1:9

The exemplary faith of our ancestors Si 14

1 **11** Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the Rm 1:16+; 4:20; 8:24-25
2 existence of the realities that at present remain unseen.[a] •It was for faith 2 Co 4:18
that our ancestors were commended.
3 It is by faith that we understand that the world was created by one word from Gn 1 Rm 1:20
God, so that no apparent cause can account for the things we can see.[b]
4 It was because of his faith that Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain, 12:24
and for that he was declared to be righteous when *God* made acknowledgement Gn 4:4
of *his offerings*. Though he is dead, he still speaks by faith. Gn 4:10 Jb 16:18+ Mt 23:35

10 a. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and he could do so only once a year. From now on, all who are faithful will be able to reach God through Christ. Cf. 4:16; 7:19,25; 10:1; Rm 5:2; Ep 1:4; 2:18; 3:12; Col 1:22.

b. When Christ returns at the end of history, cf. 1 Co 1:8+. This verse may refer to the signs preceding the *parousia*, particularly to the disturbances that prelude the destruction of Jerusalem, itself one of the 'visitations' of the Lord.

c. The sin of apostasy or deliberate revolt against God, cf. 6:6+. The fire, v. 27, is the traditional weapon God uses in anger, Is 26:11; Mt 3:11-12; Mk 9:48-49+; Rv 11:5.

d. 'Enlightenment' or 'illumination' in N.T. as in patristic writers always refers to baptism, 6:4; Ep 5:14 (cf. Rm 6:4+).

e. Var. 'of my chains', referring to Paul's imprisonment, Ph 1:7; Col 4:18.

11 a. Var. 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for (heaven) and the conviction of things unwanted (hell)'. The Jewish Christians to whom he is writing have been discouraged by persecution, so the author emphasises that it is only what is future and what is invisible that concerns hope. This verse was adopted as a theological definition of faith, i.e. the anticipated and assured possession of heavenly realities, cf. 6:5; Rm 5:2; Ep 1:13f. The examples taken from the lives of O.T. saints are meant to illustrate how faith is the source of patience and strength.

b. Creation seen with the eye of faith reveals 'unseen reality': before creation everything real existed in God from whom everything comes.

Sl 44:16 Gn 5:24 It was because of his faith that Enoch was taken up and did not have to 5
experience death: *he was not to be found because God had taken him.* This was
because before his assumption it is attested that *he had pleased God.* •Now it is 6
Rm 2:7; 10:14 Ex 3:14 + Jr 29:12-14 impossible to please God without faith, since anyone who comes to him must
believe that he exists and rewards those who try to find him.[c]
Gn 6:8-22 Mt 24:37-39 1 P 3:20 2 P 2:5 It was through his faith that Noah, when he had been warned by God of 7
something that had never been seen before, felt a holy fear and built an ark to save
his family. By his faith the world was convicted,[d] and he was able to claim the
Rm 1:16+ righteousness which is the reward of faith.

Gn 12:1-4 Rm 1:5+ It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to *set out* for a country that was 8
the inheritance given to him and his descendants, and that *he set out* without
Gn 23:4; 26:3; 35:12 knowing where he was going. •By faith he arrived, *as a foreigner,* in the Promised 9
Land, and lived there as if in a strange country, with Isaac and Jacob, who were
13:14 Rv 21:10-22 heirs with him of the same promise. •They lived there in tents while he looked 10
forward to a city founded, designed and built by God.

10:23 Gn 17:19; 21:2 Rm 4:19-21 It was equally by faith that Sarah, in spite of being past the age, was made able 11
to conceive, because she believed that he who had made the promise would be
faithful to it. •Because of this, there came from one man, and one who was 12
Gn 22:17 Ex 32:13 Dn 3:36 LXX already as good as dead himself, *more descendants than could be counted, as many*
as the stars of heaven or the grains of sand on the seashore.

All these died in faith, before receiving any of the things that had been 13
Jn 8:56 promised, but they saw them in the far distance and welcomed them, recognising
Gn 23:4 Ps 39:12; 119:19 that they were only *strangers and nomads on earth.* •People who use such terms 14
about themselves make it quite plain that they are in search of their real homeland.
They can hardly have meant the country they came from, since they had the 15
13:14 Ph 3:20 opportunity to go back to it; •but in fact they were longing for a better homeland, 16
their heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God,
3:1 Rv 21:2 since he has founded the city for them.

Gn 22:1-14 Si 44:20-21 Jm 2:21-22 It was by faith that Abraham, *when put to the test, offered up Isaac.* He offered 17
to sacrifice his only son even though the promises had been made to him •and he 18
Gn 21:12 had been told: *It is through Isaac that your name will be carried on.* •He was 19
Rm 4:17-21 1 Co 10:6 confident that God had the power even to raise the dead; and so, figuratively
speaking,[e] he was given back Isaac from the dead.

Gn 27:27f, 39f Gn 48:15f It was by faith that this same Isaac gave his blessing to Jacob and Esau for the 20
still distant future. •By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's 21
Gn 47:31 sons, *leaning on the end of his stick as though bowing to pray.* •It was by faith that, 22
when he was about to die, Joseph recalled the Exodus of the Israelites and made
Gn 50:24-25 the arrangements for his own burial.

Ex 2:2 Ac 7:20 It was by faith that Moses, when he was born, *was hidden by his parents for* 23
three months; they defied the royal edict when they *saw* he was such a *fine* child.[f]
Ex 2:11 It was by faith that, *when he grew to manhood,* Moses refused to be known as the 24
son of Pharaoh's daughter •and chose to be ill-treated in company with God's 25
people rather than to enjoy for a time the pleasures of sin. •He considered that 26
13:13 Ps 89:50f the insults offered to the Anointed[g] were something more precious than all the
treasures of Egypt, because he had his eyes fixed on the reward. •It was by faith 27
Ex 2:15 that he left Egypt and was not afraid of the king's anger; he held to his purpose
Ex 12:11, 22:23 like a man who could see the Invisible. •It was by faith that he kept *the Passover* 28
and sprinkled *the blood* to prevent *the Destroyer* from touching any of the first-
Ex 14:22,27 born sons of Israel. •It was by faith they crossed the Red Sea as easily as dry land, 29
while the Egyptians, trying to do the same, were drowned.

Jos 6:20 It was through faith that the walls of Jericho fell down when the people had 30
Jos 2:11; 6:17 Jm 2:25 been round them for seven days. •It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute 31
welcomed the spies and so was not killed with the unbelievers.

Is there any need to say more? There is not time for me to give an account 32
Jg 4:6; 13:24 of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, or of David, Samuel and the prophets.
These were men who through faith conquered kingdoms, did what is right and 33

34 earned the promises. They could keep a lion's mouth shut, •put out blazing fires Dn 6:23 *Dn 3:49-50*
and emerge unscathed from battle. They were weak people who were given
35 strength, to be brave in war and drive back foreign invaders. •Some came back
to their wives from the dead, by resurrection; and others submitted to torture, 1 K 17:23 2 K 4:36
36 refusing release so that they would rise again to a better life. •Some had to bear *2 M 6:18–7:42*
37 being pilloried and flogged, or even chained up in prison. •They were stoned, Jr 20:2; 37:15f
or sawn in half,[h] or beheaded; they were homeless, and dressed in the skins of
sheep and goats; they were penniless and were given nothing but ill-treatment.
38 They were too good for the world and they went out to live in deserts and
39 mountains and in caves and ravines. •These are all heroes of faith, but they did 1 P 1:10-12
40 not receive what was promised, •since God had made provision for us to have 7:19; 9:9; 10:1,14; 12:23+ 1 P 3:19+
something better, and they were not to reach perfection except with us.[i]

The example of Jesus Christ

1 **12** With so many witnesses in a great cloud on every side of us, we too, then,
should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings
2 so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. •Let us not lose Ga 5:7+
sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of 2:10 Mt 4:3-11p Jn 6:15 2 Co 8:9 Ph 2:6-8 Ps 110:1 Ac 2:33+ Lk 2:34
the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross, disregarding the
shamefulness of it, and *from now on has taken his place at the right* of God's throne.
3 Think of the way he stood such opposition from sinners[a] and then you will not
4 give up for want of courage. •In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to 10:32f
keep fighting to the point of death.

God's fatherly instruction

5 Have you forgotten that encouraging text in which you are addressed as sons? Pr 3:11-12 LXX
My son, when the Lord corrects you, do not treat it lightly; but do not get discouraged
6 *when he reprimands you. •For the Lord trains the ones that he loves and he punishes* Rv 3:19
7 *all those that he acknowledges as his sons.* •Suffering is part of your *training;*[b]
God is treating you as his *sons*. Has there ever been any *son* whose father did not
8 *train* him? •If you were not getting this training, as all of you are, then you would
9 not be *sons* but bastards. •Besides, we have all had our human fathers who
punished us, and we respected them for it; we ought to be even more willing to
10 submit ourselves to our spiritual Father, to be given life. •Our human fathers
were thinking of this short life when they punished us, and could only do what
they thought best; but he does it all for our own good, so that we may share his Lv 17:1+ 2 P 1:4
11 own holiness. •Of course, any punishment is most painful at the time, and far *Jn 16:20* 2 Co 7:8-11
from pleasant; but later, in those on whom it has been used, it bears fruit in peace 1 P 1:6-7
12 13 and goodness. •So *hold up your limp arms and steady your trembling knees* •and Jm 1:2-4 *Is 35:3*
smooth out the path you tread; then the injured limb will not be wrenched, it will Pr 4:26 LXX
grow strong again.

c. The faith that is essential for salvation has two objects; belief in the existence of one personal God, Ws 13:1, who by his very nature cannot be seen, Jn 1:18; Rm 1:20; Col 1:15; 1 Tm 1:17; 6:16; Jn 20:29; 2 Co 5:7, and belief that God will pay a just wage for all effort spent in searching for him; cf. Mt 5:12p; 6:4,6,18; 10:41fp; 16:27; 20:1-16; 25:31-46; Lk 6:35; 14:14; Rm 2:6; 1 Co 3:8,14; 2 Co 5:10; Ep 6:8; 2 Tm 4:8,14; 1 P 1:17; 2 Jn 8; Rv 2:23; 11:18; 14:13; 20:12-13; 22:12.

d. Noah's confidence in what God had said 'convicts' a sinner, cf. Ws 4:16; Mt 12:41.

e. Lit. 'by a parable'. The saving of Isaac from death prefigures the resurrection of all humans and, according to traditional exegesis, the death and resurrection of Christ.

f. Some authorities insert the story of the murdered Egyptian here, cf. Ex 2:11-12; Ac 7:24.

g. In the psalm, God's 'Anointed' who is 'insulted' refers to the people of God, v. 25, consecrated to Yahweh, Ex 19:6+. The author of Heb applies the text to Christ himself on whose account Moses (through faith, since the Messiah was still in the future) suffered. Cf. 10:33; 13:13.

h. Some apocryphal books say this was how king Manasseh had Isaiah executed. Add. 'tempted' (put through ordeals).

i. The eschatological epoch of 'perfection' was inaugurated by Christ, 2:10; 5:9; 7:28; 10:14, and access to the divine life has been made available only by him, 9:11f; 10:19f. The O.T. saints, who could not be 'perfected' by the Law, 7:19; 9:9; 10:1, had thus to wait till the resurrection of Christ before they could enter the perfect life of heaven, 12:23; cf. Mt 27:52f; 1 P 3:19+.

12 a. Lit. 'endured contradictions of sinners against himself'; var. '...against themselves'.

b. To the eyes of faith, the various trials of life are all part of the way God is bringing us up. The argument depends on the biblical concept of education, *mûsar, paideia*, mean 'teaching through hitting, punishing', cf. Jb 5:17; 33:19; Ps 94:12; Si 1:27; 4:17; 23:2.

Unfaithfulness is punished

Ps 34:14 Rm 12:18 Mt 5:8-9 1 Jn 3:2 Dt 29:17 LXX Ac 8:23 Gn 25:33 Gn 27:30-40

Always be wanting peace with all people, and the holiness without which no 14
one can ever see the Lord. •Be careful that no one is deprived of the grace of God 15
and that no *root of bitterness should begin to grow and make trouble;* this can poison
a whole community. •And be careful that there is no immorality, or that any of 16
you does not degrade religion like Esau,[e] *who sold his birthright* for one single
meal. •As you know, when he wanted to obtain the blessing afterwards, he was 17
rejected and, though he pleaded for it with tears, he was unable to elicit a change
of heart.

The two covenants

Ex 19:16,18 Dt 4:11 Ex 20:19 Ex 19:12f Dt 9:19 Rv 14:1; 21:10 Rm 2:6+ 11:40+ 8:6+; 11: 4+ Gn 4:10 2:2-3 Hg 2:6 Ex 19:18 Jg 5:4-5 Ps 68:8 Mt 24:35p 2 P 3:12-13 Rv 21:1 9:14 Rm 1:9+ Dt 4:24 Is 33:14

What you have come to is nothing known to the senses:[d] not a *blazing fire,* 18
or a *gloom* turning to *total darkness,* or a *storm;* •or *trumpeting thunder* or the 19
great voice speaking which made everyone that heard it beg that no more should
be said to them.[e] •They were appalled at the order that was given: *If even an animal* 20
touches the mountain, it must be stoned. •The whole scene was so terrible that 21
Moses said: *I am afraid,* and was trembling with fright. •But what you have come 22
to is Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem where the
millions of angels have gathered for the festival, •with the whole Church in which 23
everyone is a 'first-born son' and a citizen of heaven. You have come to God
himself, the supreme Judge, and been placed with spirits of the saints who have
been made perfect; •and to Jesus, the mediator who brings a new covenant and a 24
blood for purification which pleads more insistently than Abel's. •Make sure that 25
you never refuse to listen when he speaks. The people who refused to listen to the
warning from a voice on earth could not escape their punishment, and how shall
we escape if we turn away from a voice that warns us from heaven? •That time 26
his voice made the earth shake, but now he has given us this promise: *I shall make*
the earth shake once more and not only the earth but *heaven as well.* •The words 27
once more show that since the things being shaken are created things, they are
going to be changed, so that the unshakeable things will be left.[f] •We have 28
been given possession of an unshakeable kingdom. Let us therefore hold on to the
grace that we have been given and use it to worship God in the way that he finds
acceptable, in reverence and fear.[g] •For our *God* is a *consuming fire.* 29

APPENDIX

Final recommendations

Rm 12:13 Gn 18:2f; 19:1f Jg 6:11-24; 13:3-23 Tb 5:4f 10:34 Mt 25:36 Ws 3:13 Ep 5:5-6 Ph 4:12 Dt 31:6 Ps 118:6; 27:1-3 Rm 8:31-39

13 Continue to love each other like brothers, •and remember always to ½
welcome strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels
without knowing it. •Keep in mind those who are in prison, as though you were 3
in prison with them; and those who are being badly treated, since you too are in
the one body. •Marriage is to be honoured by all, and marriages are to be kept 4
undefiled, because fornicators and adulterers will come under God's judgement.
Put greed out of your lives and be content with whatever you have; God himself 5
has said: *I will not fail you or desert you,* •and so we can say with confidence: 6
With the Lord to help me, I fear nothing: what can man do to me?

Faithfulness

Tt 1:5+ 2 Th 3:7+ Ps 102:27 Ep 4:14 1 Co 8:8+ Lv 3:1+ Lv 16:27

Remember your leaders,[a] who preached the word of God to you, and as you 7
reflect on the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. •Jesus Christ is the same 8
today as he was yesterday and as he will be for ever.[b] •Do not let yourselves 9
be led astray by all sorts of strange doctrines: it is better to rely on grace for inner
strength than on dietary laws which have done no good to those who kept them.
We have our own altar[c] from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right 10
to eat. •The bodies of the animals *whose blood is brought into the sanctuary* by the 11

12 high priest *for the atonement of sin are burnt outside the camp,* •and so Jesus too
13 suffered outside the gate to sanctify the people with his own blood.[d] •Let us go to
14 him, then, *outside the camp,* and share his degradation. •For there is no eternal
15 city for us in this life but we look for one in the life to come. •Through him,[e]
let us offer God an unending *sacrifice of praise,* a verbal sacrifice that is offered
16 every time we acknowledge his name. •Keep doing good works and sharing your
resources, for these are sacrifices that please God.

Nb 19:3
10:14
Mt 21:39p
Jn 19:20
Ac 7:58
11:26
11:10,14-16
1 Co 7:29-31
Ph 3:20
Ps 50:14,23
Ho 14:3
Ac 2:21+
Rm 1:9+; 10:9
Ph 4:18

Obedience to religious leaders

17 Obey your leaders and do as they tell you, because they must give an account
of the way they look after your souls; make this a joy for them to do, and not a
18 grief—you yourselves would be the losers. •We are sure that our own conscience
is clear and we are certainly determined to behave honourably in everything we
19 do; pray for us. •I ask you very particularly to pray that I may come back to you
all the sooner.

Ezk 3:18
1 Co 16:16
1 Th 5:12f
Rm 15:30
Ep 6:19
Col 4:3
1 Th 5:25
2 Th 3:1
Ph 2:24
Phm 22

EPILOGUE

News, good wishes and greetings

20 I pray that the God of peace, *who brought* our Lord Jesus *back* from the dead
to become the great Shepherd of the sheep by the blood that sealed an eternal
21 *covenant,* •may make you ready to do his will in any kind of good action; and
turn us all into whatever is acceptable to himself through Jesus Christ, to whom
be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

Is 63:11
Zc 9:11
Ezk 34:1+; 37:26
Jn 10:11
1 P 2:25; 5:4
Ph 2:13
Rm 16:27+

22 I do ask you, brothers, to take these words of advice kindly; that is why I have
written to you so briefly.

23 I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been set free. If he arrives
24 in time, he will be with me when I see you. •Greetings to all your leaders and to
25 all the saints. The saints of Italy send you greetings. •Grace be with you all.

Ac 16:1+

e. Lit. 'or be profane like Esau'. This refers to the sin committed by Esau when he surrendered the position that was his by birth, of being heir to the messianic promises.

d. Lit. 'You have not approached something that can be touched', var. '...a mountain that can be touched', cf. v. 22.

e. As at the theophany on Sinai, when the old covenant was made. The new covenant replaces fear with peace.

f. Cosmic upheavals are traditional metaphors in apocalypses for the time when God intervenes to introduce a new regime, cf. Am 8:9+; 1 Co 1:8+; Mt 24:1+.

g. This is the real conclusion, and an apt one for a letter that lays such emphasis on the liturgy. The 'unshakeable' kingdom summarises vv. 22-24. God reigns over both his angels and his saints in the kingdom of heaven, the eternal and spiritual Jerusalem. From now on Christians are able to enter this kingdom and live there a life that is a eucharistic liturgy.

13 a. The heads of the community.

b. Christ Jesus was the central theme on which the heads of the community preached. They may die but Christ remains, and so it is to him that Christians owe their allegiance.

c. Not the table used for the Eucharist, but either the cross on which Christ was sacrificed, or Christ himself through whom we offer the sacrifice of prayer to God. Non-Christian Jews who still 'served the tabernacle' cannot participate.

d. On the Day of Atonement the high priest went into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it with the blood of animals that had been killed, and the bodies of these animals were burnt outside the camp. This prefigured how Jesus as expiatory victim was to be killed outside the walls of Jerusalem. The lesson drawn from this is that Christians should break with Judaism and think of themselves as exiles from the world.

e. 'Through him', add. 'therefore'.

THE LETTERS TO ALL CHRISTIANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS TO ALL CHRISTIANS

There are seven New Testament letters which are not Pauline and which, in spite of having no other obvious connection, were very soon grouped together. Three of these letters are attributed to John, two to Peter and the other two to James and Jude. They were already given the title 'universal' or 'catholic' by the end of the 2nd century; it is not certain why, possibly because most are addressed to the whole Christian Church and not to particular communities or individuals.

The letter of *James* was generally accepted as canonical in the Church from the 2nd century onwards. Its author is usually identified with the James, 'brother of the Lord', Mt 13:55p; cf. 12:46+, who played an important part in the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem, Ac 12:17+; 15:13-21; 21:18-26; 1 Co 15:7; Ga 1:19; 2:9,12, and who was put to death by Jews about the year 62 (Josephus, Hegesippus). He is obviously not the apostle James, son of Zebedee, Mt 10:2p, martyred by Herod in 44, Ac 12:2, though he could theoretically be identified with the apostle James, son of Alphaeus, Mt 10:3p; even early writers, however, were doubtful and most critics nowadays reject it. Paul's turn of phrase in Ga 1:19 is ambiguous. But even without being one of the Twelve, James, as 'the brother of the Lord', was sufficiently prominent for the apostolic authority of his letter to be accepted from the beginning.

The traditional attribution of the letter to James, 'the brother of the Lord', leader of the Judaeo-Christian community in Jerusalem, is supported by internal evidence. The author was familiar with the Old Testament and with the teachings of Jesus, yet his letter, though it is full of Hebraisms and makes use of parallelism, and is in a didactic style that is characteristically semitic, was obviously written in Greek. It is written, moreover, with such elegance, such a rich vocabulary and with such a skilful use of the 'diatribe', that many critics have found it hard to believe the author was a Galilean. No accurate estimate, however, can be made as to how competent first-century Palestinians were in writing Greek, and James may have been helped by a disciple familiar with the hellenistic world and its culture.

The letter is addressed to the 'twelve tribes of the Dispersion', 1:1, i.e. to the Jewish Christians scattered all over the Graeco-Roman world but concentrated in countries near Palestine like Syria and Egypt. The whole tone of the letter shows that it was intended for Jewish converts and presumes that the readers are familiar with the Old Testament since, unlike Paul and the author of the Hebrews, James hardly ever makes use of direct quotations but argues from the imprecise and rather general allusions that underlie the whole text.

His two chief sources are the Old Testament wisdom literature, on which he bases his moral lessons, and the teaching found in the gospels. Some critics have thought of the letter as an exclusively Jewish product, but, on the contrary, ideas and even characteristic expressions of Jesus can be detected all through it, not so much by explicit quotations from written texts, as by reference to a living, oral tradition. James is a Judaeo-Christian sage who has rethought the maxims of the Jewish Wisdom tradition in the light of his Master's teachings, and is able to re-present them in an original way.

More a sermon than a letter, it probably reflects the regular teaching of Judaeo-Christian assemblies and consists of a series of moral exhortations linked either by a common theme or sometimes by nothing more than verbal assonances. The sort of subjects dealt with are: how to behave in time of trial, 1:1-12; 5:7-11; the origin of temptation, 1:13-18; how to control the tongue, 1:26; 3:1-18; good relations and sympathy with one's neighbour, 2:8,13; 3:13–4:2; 4:11f; the power of prayer, 1:5-8; 4:2f; 5:13-18 etc. In 5:14f is the *locus classicus* on the sacramental (cf. Council of Trent) anointing of the sick.

There are two main themes. The first praises the poor and threatens the rich, 1:9-11; 1:27–2:9; 4:13–5:6, showing a concern for the lowly, God's favoured ones, that follows one Old Testament tradition but particularly the Beatitudes, Mt 5:3+. The second insists that Christians must do good and not be content with a faith that produces nothing, 1:22-27; 2:10-26; this leads on to a section, 2:14-26, that ridicules the preaching of faith completely unrelated to good works, and some have seen this as aimed against Paul. James and Galatians-Romans have many significant points of contact, particularly noticeable in the different ways they interpret Old Testament texts on Abraham. James may be opposing Paul himself or, more probably, certain Christians who drew pernicious conclusions from Paul's teaching. Two points are worth remembering: first, that beneath the clash between their different positions, Paul and James agree on essentials, cf. 2:14+; secondly, that the problem of relating faith to works is inherent in the data of Jewish religion and may have been a traditional topic that James and Paul dealt with independently of each other.

The dating of the letter depends on how the problem just mentioned is solved. If James is thinking of what Paul taught in Galatians-Romans, it must be dated after 57/58; if not, it could be dated before the judaising crisis (about 49), which would account for its primitive Christology. In either case it must be dated before the First Letter of Peter which is indebted to James.

Jude who calls himself 'brother of James', v. 1, is also, it appears, one of the 'brothers of the Lord', Mt 13:55p. There is no reason to identify him with the apostle of the same name, Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13; cf. Jn 14:22, especially as he refers to himself as being outside the apostolic body, v. 17. Nor is it likely that an anonymous author would have adopted the name, since Jude was not sufficiently prominent to lend authority to a letter. Our hypothesis is that after his brother James had been executed in 62 A.D., Jude followed his example and warned the Jewish Christians against new threats to their faith. If this is so, his anonymous readers are those for whom James wrote, and his Greek, which is accurate, with semitic turns of phrase, may be accounted for as in the case of James. The letter was accepted as canonical by many of the churches as early as 200, though its use of two apocryphal sources, the Book of Enoch in vv. 6,14f,

and the Assumption of Moses in v. 9, had prompted certain hesitations; but to quote contemporary Jewish writings is hardly equivalent to recognising their inspiration.

Jude's purpose in writing this letter is to denounce the false teachers who are a danger to Christian faith. He threatens them with the divine punishments familiar from Jewish tradition, vv. 5-7, and also seems to base his description of their false teaching on the same traditions, v. 11. He nowhere states precisely what these doctrines were, so they cannot be identified with second-century Gnosticism. He accuses them of irreligion and immorality, in particular of blasphemies against the Lord Christ and the angels, vv. 4,8-10. These may have been part of the syncretistic tendencies denounced in Colossians, the Pastoral Letters and Revelation.

The letter must be dated fairly late in the 1st century: the apostles are quoted as belonging to the past, vv. 17f; the faith is now something fixed and 'handed on once for all', v. 3; and the author appears to be acquainted with Paul's letters. It is true that 2 Peter borrows from Jude and is therefore later, but the 'Second Letter of Peter' could have been written after Peter's death (cf. *infra*). The limits seem to be between 70 and 80.

Two of these 'universal' letters are attributed to *Peter*. 1 Peter introduces the name of the apostle in the opening verse, 1:1, and has never been doubted in any part of the Church. Clement of Rome seems to have used it; Polycarp certainly did, and since the time of Irenaeus it has been expressly attributed to Peter. The apostle writes from Rome (Babylon, 5:13), and calls Mark, who is with him, his 'son'. Very little is known about Peter's last years; according to tradition he went to Rome and was martyred there under Nero (in 64 or possibly 67). His letter is addressed to the Christians 'of the Dispersion', and names five provinces, 1:1, which represent practically the whole of Asia Minor. From what he says, 1:14,18; 2:9f; 4:3, it seems that most of them were converted pagans, though there may have been some Judaeo-Christians among them. He was obviously obliged to send them a letter in Greek—James had done the same with less reason—and though Peter's Greek is unsophisticated it is too accurate and unforced for a fisherman from Galilee. Unlike the letter from James, the name of a disciple and secretary is mentioned who may have helped: this is Silvanus, 5:12, usually identified with the Silvanus who had been a companion of Paul, Ac 15:22+.

The purpose of the letter is to help its readers' faith in a time of trial. Some critics think this may refer to a persecution under Domitian or Trajan, which would date the letter much later than Peter; but the allusions in the letter are not strong enough to make this conclusion inevitable, since it seems that this 'time of trial' could refer rather to the personal malice and spiteful calumnies caused by the strictly moral life led by converts among those whose sins they no longer shared, 2:12; 3:16; 4:4,12-16.

Another argument against Petrine authorship is based on the liberal use the letter makes of John, Romans and Ephesians, and on the surprisingly little direct use it makes of the gospel. There are, however, many reminiscences of the gospel but these are so implicit as to constitute an argument against the idea that the author merely wanted to pretend the apostle had written it. There is a tendency perhaps to exaggerate the number of points of contact with James

and Paul. Specifically Pauline themes, e.g. the abolition of the Jewish Law, the Body of Christ, etc., do not appear at all, and though some themes appear that are best known from Paul's letters, yet these are themes common to all early Christian theology, e.g. the redemptive nature of the death of Jesus; faith and baptism, etc. Certain formulae used in primitive preaching and certain items in anthologies of Old Testament quotations are being increasingly identified by critics, and any early writings could well have drawn on these independently. Even the remaining cases where 1 Peter is dependent on Romans or Ephesians need not militate against Petrine authorship, since Peter, feeling his lack of theological gifts, may well have had recourse to Paul's writings, especially as he was writing to people who had felt Paul's influence. It is also worth remembering that Silvanus was a disciple of both apostles and that some scholars detect affinities not only between 1 Peter and Paul but also between 1 Peter and two groups of writings whose climate is Petrine: i.e. Mark and the discourses of Peter in Acts.

If the substance of the letter were in existence before Peter's death in 64 or 67, Silvanus could still have given it its present form many years later. This hypothesis would be more likely if it could be proved that the letter was made up of fragments. It is suggested that, for example, a baptismal homily, 1:13–4:11, is one such fragment, but these identifications remain very tentative.

Though a very practical letter, it is also a valuable summary of apostolic theology. The dominating theme is fortitude in trial, for which Christ himself is the model, 2:21-25; 3:18; 4:1. Christians must suffer patiently like him when their trials are due to their faith and to their saintly lives, 2:19f; 3:14; 4:12-19; 5:9, i.e. if, in return for evil, they offer: charity, obedience to civil authority, 2:13-17, and gentleness to all, 3:8-17; 4:7-11,19. There is one obscure passage, 3:19f, cf. 4:6; the 'preaching' of Christ can be taken as an announcement either of salvation or of punishment; the 'spirits in prison' can be taken either as the wicked who were drowned in the Flood or as the fallen angels of biblical and apocalyptic tradition. On either view, this passage refers the 'preaching' to the moment Jesus died and is the chief source for the doctrine of the Descent into Hell.

The Second Letter of Peter claims to have been written by the apostle himself. He is named in the opening address, 1:1, the prediction of Peter's death is made by Jesus to the author himself, 1:14, who also claims to have witnessed the transfiguration, 1:16-18, and who alludes to a former letter that is obviously meant to be 1 Peter.

The purpose of the letter is twofold: to warn against false teachers, ch. 2, and to allay anxiety due to the delay of the *parousia*, ch. 3. It is possible that both these difficulties existed before Peter's death, but other considerations make Petrine authorship doubtful and suggest a later date. The vocabulary is notably different from 1 Peter; the whole of ch. 2 is obviously a free repetition of Jude; an accepted Pauline corpus seems to be already in existence, 3:15f; the apostolic body is referred to, with the prophets, as a thing of the past and as if the author did not belong to it. These difficulties caused early writers to hesitate, and there is no sure evidence that the letter was accepted at all before the 3rd century, and some, according to Origen, Eusebius and Jerome, explicitly refused to accept it. Most critics nowadays also reject the Petrine authorship, though the writer may have had some claim to represent Peter: perhaps he belonged to

a group of Peter's disciples, perhaps he filled out one of Peter's writings with ideas from the letter of Jude. This is what we should call forgery but what in those days literary convention found admissible.

The letter has been definitely accepted by the Church as canonical, and Christians accept it as an authoritative document from the apostolic age. The doctrine it teaches supports this: note especially the vocation of all Christians to the 'share in the divine nature', 1:4; the way scriptural inspiration is defined, 1:20f; the assurance that eventually the *parousia* will come though no one can know when; the prediction of a new world free of all injustice after the old world has been destroyed by fire, 3:3-13.

For the three letters of *John* cf. the Introduction to the Gospel and Letters of Saint John.

THE LETTER OF JAMES

Address and greetings

Ac 12:17+ *Ac 26:7* 1 P 1:1 *Jn 7:35*

1 From James, servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Greetings[a] to the 1
twelve tribes of the Dispersion.[b]

Trials a privilege

Mt 5:11+ 1 P 4:13-14 *Heb 12:11* 1 P 1:6-7 *Rm 5:3-5* Mt 5:48

My brothers, you will always have your trials but, when they come, try to treat 2
them as a happy privilege; •you understand that your faith is only put to the 3
test to make you patient, •but patience too is to have its practical results[c] so that 4
you will become fully-developed, complete, with nothing missing.

1 K 3:7f Pr 2:6+ Ws 8:21f *Mt 7:7;* 21:21p Is 57:20

If there is any one of you who needs wisdom, he must ask God, who 5
gives to all freely[d] and ungrudgingly; it will be given to him. •But he must ask 6
with faith, and no trace of doubt, because a person who has doubts is like the
waves thrown up in the sea when the wind drives. •That sort of person, in two 7 8
minds, wavering between going different ways, must not expect that the Lord
will give him anything.

Jr 9:22-23 Is 40:6-7

It is right for the poor brother to be proud of his high rank,[e] •and the rich 9 10
one to be thankful that he has been humbled, because riches last no longer than
the flowers in the grass; •the scorching sun comes up,[f] and *the grass withers, the* 11
flower falls; what looked so beautiful now disappears. It is the same with the rich
man: his business goes on; he himself perishes.

Dn 12:12 Rm 8:28 Ws 5:15-16 1 Co 9:25+

Happy the man who stands firm when trials come. He has proved himself, 12
and will win the prize of life, the crown that the Lord[g] has promised to those who
love him.

Temptation

Pr 19:3 Si 15:11-20 1 Co 10:13 Rm 7:8-10, 23 *Rm 5:12;* 6:23 Heb 6:1+

Never, when you have been tempted, say, 'God sent the temptation'; God 13
cannot be tempted to do anything wrong, and he does not tempt anybody.
Everyone who is tempted is attracted and seduced by his own wrong desire. 14
Then the desire conceives and gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it too 15
has a child, and the child is death.

Mt 7:11 Jn 3:3,27 Jn 8:12+ 1 Jn 1:5 *Jn 1:12-13* 1 P 1:23+ Rv 14:4

Make no mistake about this, my dear brothers: •it is all that is good, 16 17
everything that is perfect, which is given us from above; it comes down[h] from the
Father of all light;[i] with him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow of a
change. •By his own choice he made us his children by the message of the truth[j] 18
so that we should be a sort of first-fruits of all that he had created.

True religion

Pr 10:19; 14:17 Si 5:11 Mt 5:22 1 P 2:1-2 *Ga 5:19+*

Remember this, my dear brothers: be *quick to listen* but *slow* to speak and 19
slow to rouse your temper; •God's righteousness is never served by man's anger; 20
so do away with all the impurities and bad habits that are still left in you—accept 21

and submit to the word which has been planted in you and can save your souls. Jn 3:11+
22 But you must do what the word tells you, and not just listen to it and deceive Mt 7:24-27p
23 yourselves. •To listen to the word and not obey is like looking at your own features Lk 8:21
24 in a mirror and then, •after a quick look, going off and immediately forgetting Rm 2:13
25 what you looked like. •But the man who looks steadily at the perfect law of 1 Jn 3:17f
freedom[k] and makes that his habit—not listening and then forgetting, but actively Ps 19:7
putting it into practice—will be happy in all that he does. Mt 5:17
Jn 13:17
Rm 7:12; 6:15+; 8:2

26 Nobody must imagine that he is religious while he still goes on deceiving
himself and not keeping control over his tongue; anyone who does this has the 3:2f
27 wrong idea of religion. •Pure, unspoilt religion, in the eyes of God our Father[l]
is this: coming to the help of orphans and widows when they need it, and keeping Ex 22:21+
oneself uncontaminated by the world.

Respect for the poor

1 2 My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord,[a]
2 with the making of distinctions between classes of people. •Now suppose a man
comes into your synagogue,[b] beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at
3 the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, •and you take notice of the
well-dressed man, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats'; then you tell the
4 poor man, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest'. •Can't
you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned
yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?

5 Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world 1 Co 1:26-29
that God chose, to be rich in faith[c] and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he Zp 2:3+
6 promised to those who love him. •In spite of this, you have no respect for anybody Rv 2:9
who is poor. Isn't it always the rich who are against you? Isn't it always their Jc 1:12
7 doing when you are dragged before the court? •Aren't they the ones who insult Mt 4:17+
8 the honourable name to which you have been dedicated?[d] •Well, the right thing Ga 3:29
to do is to keep the supreme law of scripture: *you must love your neighbour as* Is 52:5
9 *yourself;* •but as soon as you make distinctions between classes of people, you are Rm 13:8-10
committing sin, and under condemnation for breaking the Law. Lv 19:18
Mt 22:39p
Pr 24:23+
Dt 1:17

10 You see, if a man keeps the whole of the Law, except for one small point Dt 27:26
11 at which he fails, he is still guilty of breaking it all. •It was the same person who Mt 5:19
said, '*You must not commit adultery*' and '*You must not kill*'. Now if you commit Ga 3:10; 5:3
murder, you do not have to commit adultery as well to become a breaker of the Ex 20:13-14
Dt 5:17-18

1 a. Lit. 'Be joyful' or 'Rejoice', a normal Greek greeting. 'Happy privilege' v. 2 (lit. 'all joy deem it') is in Greek a pun on the greeting formula.

b. In O.T. days the 'Dispersion' (*diaspora*) was used to describe the Jews who had emigrated from their country, cf. Ps 147:2; Jdt 5:19; cf. Jn 7:35. Here the reference is to the Jewish Christians living in the Graeco-Roman world, cf. Ac 2:5-11.

c. James, in the tradition of the Jews, believes the essence of religion is its practical value in actions, cf. 2:14+.

d. Lit. 'uncompoundedly' i.e. simply, or unreservedly.

e. It is a theme of the O.T. that the poor, cf. Zp 2:3+, will be rewarded, 1 S 2:7-8; Ps 72:4,12, etc., and this theme is developed in the gospels, cf. Lk 1:52, Lk 6:20, etc., to show their reward in terms of the kingdom of heaven. This privilege of the poor is recognised in the early Church; it is barred to the rich unless they reduce themselves to the same humble state, cf. Mt 5:3+.

f. Or 'As soon as the sun, with a scorching wind'.

g. Om. 'the Lord'. Vulg. reads 'God'.

h. Om. (Vet. Lat.) 'from above'.

i. Lit. 'the Father of the lights', i.e. the maker of the stars, Gn 1:14-18, and source of spiritual light, cf. 1 P 2:9; 1 Jn 1:5. The imagery following this phrase is suggested by astronomy. Var. 'no such thing as alteration due to the movement of a shadow'.

j. Lit. 'He deliberately teemed us forth by a word of truth'. This 'word of truth' is everything God has revealed to the human race, it is also called the law of freedom or the supreme Law, cf. 1:21-25; 2:8.

k. This reflects the Jewish concept of human freedom as flowing from obedience to the Law; Paul, however, had a different concept of Christian freedom as something flowing from the Christian's release from obedience to the Law, cf. Rm 6:15+; 7:1+.

l. Cf. Mt 6:9; 1 Co 15:24; Ep 5:20. The O.T. uses the phrase in Dt 32:6; cf. Is 63:16; Si 23:1,4; Ws 2:16.

2 a. Lit. 'our Lord Jesus Christ of glory', cf. 1 Co 2:8+.

b. James is writing to Jewish Christians; it is possible they may even have still been attending Jewish synagogues, or it may be his word for the Christian 'assembly' for liturgical services.

c. I.e. poor in money, rich in faith, cf. 1:9+; this letter is not concerned to advocate social reform since it emphasises that the poor already have the truest wealth.

d. Lit. 'blaspheming the good name invoked over you (or: that you bear)'. In the O.T. the name of Yahweh pronounced over someone dedicated him to the divine protection, Am 9:12; Is 43:7; Jr 14:9. In the N.T. the only means of salvation is the name of Jesus invoked, e.g. at baptism, Ac 2:21+.

Law. •Talk and behave like people who are going to be judged by the law of 12
Mt 6:14-15; 18:35 Lk 6:36f Rm 6:15+ 1 Jn 4:18 freedom, •because there will be judgement without mercy for those who have 13
not been merciful themselves;[e] but the merciful need have no fear of judgement.

Faith and good works[f]

2:24 Rm 4:1 Ga 5:6 Mt 25:41-45 1 Co 13:3 1 Jn 3:17 Mt 7:21 Take the case, my brothers, of someone who has never done a single good 14
act but claims that he has faith. Will that faith save him? •If one of the brothers 15
or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on,
and one of you says to them, 'I wish you well; keep yourself warm and 16
eat plenty', without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is
that? •Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead.[g] 17

This is the way to talk to people of that kind:[h] 'You say you have faith and I 18
have good deeds; I will prove to you that I have faith by showing you my good
deeds—now you prove to me that you have faith without any good deeds to show.
Mt 8:29+ You believe in the one God—that is creditable enough, but the demons have the 19
same belief, and they tremble with fear. •Do realise, you senseless man, that faith 20
Rm 4:1+ without good deeds is useless.[i] •You surely know that Abraham our father was 21
Gn 22:9 Heb 11:17 justified by his deed, because he *offered his son Isaac on the altar*? •There you see 22
it: faith and deeds were working together; his faith became perfect by what he did.[j]
Gn 15:6 Rm 4:3 Ga 3:6 This is what scripture really means when it says: *Abraham put his faith in God,* 23
and this was counted as making him justified; and that is why he was called 'the
friend of God'.

2:14+ You see now that it is by doing something good, and not only by believing, 24
that a man is justified. •There is another example of the same kind: Rahab the 25
Jos 2:4f Heb 11:31 prostitute, justified by her deeds because she welcomed the messengers[k] and
showed them a different way to leave. •A body dies when it is separated from the 26
spirit, and in the same way faith is dead if it is separated from good deeds.

Uncontrolled language

Mt 12:36; 23:8 1 Co 12:28+ 3 Only a few of you, my brothers, should be teachers, bearing in mind that 1
those of us[a] who teach can expect a stricter judgement.

1:26 Pr 10:19; 13:3;18:21 Si 14:1 Si 5:9-15; 28:13-26 After all, every one of us does something wrong, over and over again; the 2
only man who could reach perfection would be someone who never said anything
wrong—he would be able to control every part of himself. •Once[b] we put a bit 3
into the horse's mouth, to make it do what we want, we have the whole animal
under our control. •Or think of ships: no matter how big they are, even if a gale 4
is driving them, the man at the helm can steer them anywhere he likes by
controlling a tiny rudder. •So is the tongue only a tiny part of the body, but it can 5
proudly claim that it does great things. Think how small a flame can set fire to a
Pr 16:27; 26:18-21 Si 5:13; 28:22 huge forest; •the tongue is a flame like that. Among all the parts of the body, the 6
tongue is a whole wicked world in itself:[c] *it infects the whole body; catching fire*
Mt 5:22+; 15:18 Gn 1:26+; 9:2 itself from hell, it sets fire to the whole wheel of creation.[d] •Wild animals and birds, 7
reptiles and fish can all be tamed by man, and often are; •but nobody can tame the 8
Ps 140:3 tongue—it is a pest that will not keep still, full of deadly poison. •We use it to 9
Gn 1:27+ bless the Lord and Father,[e] but we also use it to curse men who are made in God's
image: •the blessing and the curse come out of the same mouth.[f] My brothers, 10
Ep 4:29 this must be wrong—•does any water supply give a flow of fresh water and salt 11
Mt 7:16 water out of the same pipe? •Can a fig tree give you olives, my brothers, or a 12
vine give figs? No more can sea water give you fresh water.

Real wisdom and its opposite

Ep 4:1-2 If there are any wise or learned men among you, let them show it by their good 13
lives, with humility and wisdom in their actions. •But if at heart you have the 14
bitterness of jealousy, or a self-seeking ambition, never make any claims for
yourself or cover up the truth with lies —•*principles of this kind are not* 15
2 Co 1:12 *1 Co 3:3* the wisdom that comes down from above: they are only earthly, animal and

16 devilish. •Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and
17 wicked things of every kind being done; •whereas the wisdom that comes down 1:5+ Ws 7:22 1 Co 13:4-7
from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly
and considerate;[g] it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is
18 there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. •Peacemakers, when they work for Mt 5:9 Ph 1:11 Heb 12:11
peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.

Disunity among Christians

1 4 Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely
2 in the desires fighting inside your own selves? •You want something and you Rm 7:23 Ga 5:17 1 P 2:11
haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot
satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force.[a] Why you don't have what you
3 want is because you don't pray for it; •when you do pray and don't get it, it Ps 66:18 Mt 6:5-13, 33 Rm 8:26
is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge
your own desires.

4 You are as unfaithful as adulterous wives;[b] don't you realise that making
the world your friend is making God your enemy? Anyone who chooses the world Mt 6:24p 1 Jn 2:15-17
5 for his friend turns himself into God's enemy. •Surely you don't think scripture *Rm 8:26*
is wrong when it says: the spirit which he sent to live in us wants us for himself Gn 2:7
6 alone?[c] •But he has been even more generous to us, as scripture says: *God opposes* 1 P 5:5-9 *Pr 3:34* LXX *Ep 6:11 Zc 1:3 Ml 3:7 1:8*
7 *the proud but he gives generously to the humble.* •Give in to God, then; resist the
8 devil, and he will run away from you. •The nearer you go to God, the nearer he
will come to you. Clean your hands, you sinners, and clear your minds, you
9 waverers. •Look at your wretched condition, and weep for it in misery; be
10 miserable instead of laughing, gloomy instead of happy.[d] •Humble yourselves Mt 23:12
before the Lord and he will lift you up.

11 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who slanders a brother, or Lv 19:6 Mt 7:1-5
condemns him, is speaking against the Law and condemning the Law. But if you
condemn the Law, you have stopped keeping it and become a judge over it.
12 There is only one lawgiver[e] and he is the only judge and has the power to acquit Dt 32:39+ Mt 10:28p Lk 12:5 Rm 14:4
or to sentence. Who are you to give a verdict on your neighbour?[f]

e. 'Judgement' (i.e. 'condemnation') is merciless to anyone who does not show mercy. 'the merciful ... judgement'; lit. 'mercy triumphs over judgement'. Cf. Mt 18:35.

f. The different points of view of James and Paul, Rm 3:20-31; Ga 2:16; 3:2,5,11f; Ph 3:9, are not wholly irreconcilable. Paul is anxious to rule out the view that a human being can earn salvation without having faith in Christ, since such a reliance on self-made sanctity would be contradicted by the radical sinfulness of unredeemed man, Rm 1:18-3:20; Ga 3:22, and would make faith in Christ superfluous, Ga 2:17; cf. Rm 1:16+. But Paul does not deny that the saint who has been made holy by grace must show his faith by actually loving, Ga 5:6; cf. 1 Th 1:3; 2 Th 1:11; Phm 6, and in this way obeying the Law, Rm 8:4, i.e. the Law or commandment of Christ and his Spirit, Ga 6:2; Rm 8:2, which is the commandment to love, Rm 13:8-10; Ga 5:14. It is perfectly true, however, that in order to teach the same truth as Paul, James in a different context and under different circumstances explains the case of Abraham in a completely different way from Paul.

g. Lit. 'it is dead by itself'.

h. The same opponents as in vv. 14 and 16.

i. Var. (Vulg.) 'dead', cf. vv. 17 and 26.

j. Unlike most Jews, James does not consider Abraham's faith (trust in God) as constituting a 'good deed' in itself; however closely he relates the two things, James makes a clear distinction between having faith and doing something as a result of that faith.

k. 'messengers'; var. 'spies', cf. Heb 11:31.

3 a. Var. (Vulg.) 'you'.

b. Lit. 'Now if (var. 'Behold' as, lit. in v. 4) we put bits into horses' mouths'.

c. Lit. 'the tongue ... is the *kosmos* of wickedness' i.e. 'it is the world of wickedness', or alternatively 'it is the ornament of wickedness'.

d. Lit. 'inflaming the wheel (var. course) of nature' (i.e. of the world) 'and being inflamed by Gehenna'.

e. 'Lord and Father', var. (Vulg.) 'God and Father'.

f. The antithesis 'bless-curse' is common in the O.T., Gn 12:3; 27:29; Nb 23:11; 24:9; Jos 8:34.

g. Vulg. adds 'in harmony with good'.

4 a. Alternative translation (corr.) 'You crave things you don't have, you are envious and jealous of things you cannot have, you squabble and fight' (lit. 'fight and go to war'). 'War' here is not the internal spiritual struggle of a Christian, cf. Rm 7:23; 1 P 2:11, and it seems to be more than just a heated argument between Christians, it seems to mean coming to real blows.

b. Lit. 'You adulteresses, don't you know that friendship of the world is enmity of God?' The imagery of Israel the unfaithful wife of Yahweh is traditional in the O.T., Ho 1:2+, cf. Mt 12:39; Mk 8:38; 2 Co 11:2.

c. Lit. 'the spirit he has made to dwell in us yearns for our love'; or 'he yearns intensely over the spirit he has made to dwell in us'. This text, now lost, seems to have inspired Rm 8:26-27 as well. It is because God has shared his Spirit with us, that we want what God wants and that God answers our prayers, cf. Mt 18: 19-20; Jn 14:13+.

d. Cf. Is 32:11f; Mi 2:4; Jr 4:13f; Ze 11:2f.

e. Var. 'There is only one: the lawgiver ...'

f. Lit. 'And who are you the one judging your neighbour?' cf. 2:4. To believe yourself qualified to judge (=punish) a neighbour breaks the golden rule, 2:8, of love. Cf. Rm 2:1.

A warning for the rich and the self-confident

Pr 27:1 Mt 6:34 Lk 12:19-20
Here is the answer for those of you who talk like this: 'Today or tomorrow, 13
we are off to this or that town; we are going to spend a year there, trading, and
make some money'. •You never know what will happen tomorrow: you are no 14
Jb 14:2+ more than a mist that is here for a little while and then disappears. •The most 15
Ac 18:21 Rm 1:10 1 Jn 2:16+ you should ever say is: 'If it is the Lord's will, we shall still be alive to do this or
that'. •But how proud and sure of yourselves you are now! Pride of this kind is 16
always wicked. •Everyone who knows what is the right thing to do and doesn't 17
do it commits a sin.

Lk 6:24
5 Now an answer for the rich. Start crying, weep for the miseries that are 1
coming to you. •Your wealth is all rotting, your clothes are all eaten up by 2
Si 29:10-12 Mt 6:19-21 Pr 16:27 Pr 11:4,28 moths. •All your gold and your silver are corroding away, and the same corrosion 3
will be your own sentence, and eat into your body. It was a burning fire that you
Lv 19:13 Dt 24:14-15 stored up as your treasure for the last days.[a] •Labourers mowed your fields, and 4
you cheated them—listen to the wages that you kept back, calling out; realise
Ex 22:22 that the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. •On earth 5
you have had a life of comfort and luxury; in the time of slaughter[b] you went
Ws 2:10-20 on eating to your heart's content. •It was you who condemned the innocent and 6
killed them; they offered you no resistance.

A final exhortation

1 Co 15:23+ 1 P 2:19+ Dt 11:14
Now be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how 7
patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn
Mt 24:33p Rm 2:6+ 2 Co 6:2+ Rv 1:3 rains[c] and the spring rains! •You too have to be patient; do not lose heart, 8
because the Lord's coming will be soon. •Do not make complaints against one 9
another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves; the Judge is
already to be seen waiting at the gates. •For your example, brothers, in sub- 10
Mt 5:11-12p 1:2-3,12 mitting with patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord;
remember it is those who had endurance that we say are the blessed ones. You 11
Jb 42:10-17 Ps 103:8 have heard of the patience of Job, and understood the Lord's purpose, realising
that *the Lord is kind and compassionate.*

Si 5:10; 23:9 Mt 5:34-37
Above all, my brothers, do not swear by heaven or by the earth, or use any 12
oaths at all. If you mean 'yes', you must say 'yes'; if you mean 'no', say 'no'.
Otherwise you make yourselves liable to judgement.

If any one of you is in trouble, he should pray; if anyone is feeling happy, he 13
Tt 1:5+ should sing a psalm. •If one of you is ill, he should send for the elders 14
Mk 6:13 of the church, and they must anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord[d] and
Ac 3:16+ pray over him. •The prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise 15
Gn 18:16 Ps 32 him up again; and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. •So confess 16
Pr 28:13+ Si 4:26 your sins to one another, and pray for one another, and this will cure you;[e] the
1 Jn 1:8-10 Ex 32:11+ 1 K 17:1; 18:1,42 heartfelt[f] prayer of a good man works very powerfully. •Elijah was a human 17
being like ourselves—he prayed hard for it not to rain, and no rain fell for
Lk 4:25 Rv 11:6 three-and-a-half years; •then he prayed again and the sky gave rain and the earth 18
gave crops.

Mt 18:15 Ga 6:1
My brothers, if one of you strays away from the truth, and another brings 19
him back to it, •he may be sure[g] that anyone who can bring back a sinner from 20
Pr 10:12 1 P 4:8 the wrong way that he has taken will be saving a soul from death and *covering
up a great number of sins.*

5 a. Eschatologically the misfortunes of the rich will be apparent only at the Judgement, 5:7-9. We however are already living in the last days, cf. 2 Co 6: 2+.

b. Not a reference to Judgement day, but to the extreme violence to which, once, the innocent had been subjected, v. 6, while the rich were living at ease, v. 5.

c. 'rains', var. 'fruits'.

d. Om. 'of the Lord'. The tradition that these prayers and this anointing with oil in the name of the Lord, and for the purpose of helping the sick and forgiving their sins, are the origin of the Church's 'sacrament of the sick' (or Holy Unction), was endorsed by the Council of Trent.

e. This mutual confession and prayer for each other, instead of being only recommendations to the sick, v. 15, are here urged on all Christians. Nothing special however may be deduced about sacramental confession.

f. Var. (Vulg.) 'assiduous'.

g. Var. 'you can be sure'.

1 PETER

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER

Address. Greetings

1 1 Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, sends greetings to all those living among
foreigners[a] in the Dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and
2 Bithynia, who have been chosen, •by the provident purpose of God the Father,
to be made holy by the Spirit, obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his
blood.[b] Grace and peace be with you more and more.

Jn 7:35
2 Co 5:6
Jm 1:1+
Rm 8:29
Ep 1:4
2 Th 2:13
Ex 24:8
Mt 26:28+

Introduction. The salvation of Christians

3 Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy
has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that
4 we have a sure hope •and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt
or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens.
5 Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which has
6 been prepared is revealed at the end of time.[c] •This is a cause of great joy for you,
even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of
7 trials; •so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and
proved like gold—only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even
though it bears testing by fire—and then you will have praise and glory and
8 honour. •You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him,
you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because
9 you believe; •and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that
is, the salvation of your souls.

1:23
Jn 3:5
1 Jn 2:29; 3:9
Mt 6:19-20p
Rm 1:4+
Col 1:5,12; 3:3-4
Ep 1:19f
1 Jn 3:2
Jn 16:20
Jm 1:2-3
Heb 12:11
Ml 3:2-3
1 Co 3:13
Rm 2:7
1 Jn 4:20
Heb 10:39

The hope of the prophets

10 It was this salvation that the prophets were looking and searching so hard for;
11 their prophecies were about the grace which was to come to you. •The Spirit of
Christ which was in them[d] foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glories that
would come after them, and they tried to find out at what time and in
12 what circumstances all this was to be expected. •It was revealed to them that the
news they brought of all the things which have now been announced to you, by
those who preached to you the Good News through the Holy Spirit sent from
heaven, was for you and not for themselves. Even the angels long to catch a
glimpse of these things.

Ac 11:27+
Heb 11:39
2 P 1:20
Is 52:13-53:12
Lk 18:31+
Ac 1:7+; 2:23+
Mt13:16-17p
Rm 16:25+
Ep 3:10+

1 a. They are in an alien environment that does not make the practice of religion easy. This is also true of Christians in general. The Christian's city is heaven, Ph 3:20; Col 3:1-4; Heb 13:14; he is an exile on earth, 2 Co 5:6; 1 P 1:17; he is a foreigner here, Ps 39:12; 119:19; Heb 11:13; 1 P 1:1; 2:11, on an exodus to the heavenly promised land, Heb 3:1-4:11.

b. Trinitarian formula, cf. 2 Co 13:13+.

c. Lit. 'at the last time', cf. 1:20.

d. By saying the prophets are inspired by the pre-existing Christ, cf. 1 Co 10:4,9, the author makes clear the unity of the O.T. and the N.T.

A call to sanctity and watchfulness

Lk 12:35-40 1 Th 5:6
Free your minds, then, of encumbrances; control them, and put your trust 13
in nothing but the grace that will be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.
Rm 6:19
Do not behave in the way that you liked to before you learnt the truth; make 14
Mt 5:48 Ac 9:13+ 1 Jn 3:3 Lv 17:1+; 19:2 Dt 10:17+ Heb 11:6+
a habit of obedience: •be holy in all you do, since it is the Holy One who has 15
called you, •and scripture says: *Be holy, for I am holy.* 16
2 Co 5:6 Is 52:3 1 Co 6:20; 7:23
If you are acknowledging as your Father one who has no favourites and judges 17
everyone according to what he has done, you must be scrupulously careful as long
as you are living away from your home. •Remember, the ransom that was *paid* 18
to free you from the useless way of life your ancestors handed down was not paid
in anything corruptible, neither in *silver* nor gold, •but in the precious blood of a 19
Jn 1:29+ Jn 17:24 Ga 4:4
lamb without spot or stain, namely Christ;[e] •who, though known since before 20
the world was made, has been revealed only in our time, the end of the ages, for
Rm 1:16+
your sake. •Through him you now have faith in God, who raised him from the 21
Rm 1:4+ Rm 8:11+
dead and gave him glory for that very reason—so that you would have faith and
hope in God.

Love

Rm 1:5+
You have been obedient to the truth and purified your souls until you can 22
Jn 17:17 Rm 12:9 Jn 3:11+ Jm 1:18 1 Jn 3:9; 5:1 1 P 1:3
love like brothers, in sincerity; let your love for each other be real and from the
heart[f]—•your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting 23
word of the living and eternal God.[g] •*All flesh is grass and its glory like the wild* 24
Is 40:6-8
flower's. The grass withers, the flower falls, •*but the word of the Lord remains for* 25
ever. What is this word? It is the Good News that has been brought to you.

Integrity

Mt 19:14 Jm 1:21 1 Co 3:2 Heb 5:12
2 Be sure, then, you are never spiteful, or deceitful, or hypocritical, or envious 1
and critical of each other. •You are new born, and, like babies, you should 2
be hungry for nothing but milk—the spiritual honesty which will help you to
Ps 34:8
grow up to salvation—•now that you have *tasted the goodness of the Lord.* 3

The new priesthood

Mt 21:42p Ac 4:11 Ep 2:20-22 Ex 19:6+ Rm 1:9+
He is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; 4
set yourselves close to him •so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the 5
spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living
Is 28:16 Rm 9:33; 10:11
stones making a spiritual house. •As scripture says: *See how I lay in Zion a precious* 6
cornerstone that I have chosen and *the man who rests his trust on it will not be disap-*
pointed. •That means that for you who are believers, it is precious; but for 7
Ps 118:22
unbelievers, *the stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone,* •*a* 8
Is 8:14f
stone to stumble over, a rock to bring men down. They stumble over it because they
do not believe in the word; it was the fate in store for them.[a]
Is 43:20-21 Ex 19:5-6+ Rm 3:24+ Ep 1:14+ Ac 26:18 Col 1:12-13 Ho 1:6-9; 2:3,25
But you are *a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set* 9
apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his
wonderful light. •Once you were *not a people* at all and now you are the People 10
of God; once you were *outside the mercy* and now *you have been given mercy.*

The obligations of Christians: towards pagans

Ps 39:12 Ga 5:24 Jm 4:1 Is 10:3 Mt 5:16
I urge you, my dear people, while you are *visitors and pilgrims,* to keep your- 11
selves free from the selfish passions that attack the soul. •Always behave 12
honourably among pagans so that they can see your good works for themselves
and, when the day of reckoning comes, give thanks to God for the things which
now make them denounce you as criminals.

Rm 13:1-7 Tt 3:1
Towards civil authority

For the sake of the Lord, accept the authority of every social institution: the 13
emperor, as the supreme authority, •and the governors as commissioned by him 14

15 to punish criminals and praise good citizenship. •God wants you to be good
16 citizens, so as to silence what fools are saying in their ignorance. •You are slaves
of no one except God, so behave like free men, and never use your freedom as an Ga 5:13
17 excuse for wickedness. •Have respect for everyone and love for our community; Jude 4
fear God and honour the emperor. Pr 24:21 Mt 22:21D

Towards masters

18 Slaves must be respectful and obedient to their masters, not only when they Ep 6:5-8+
19 are kind and gentle but also when they are unfair. •You see, there is some merit[b] 3:14; 4:14 Jm 5:7-11
in putting up with the pains of unearned punishment if it is done for the sake of
20 God •but there is nothing meritorious in taking a beating patiently if you have
done something wrong to deserve it. The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing
it patiently when you are punished after doing your duty.

21 This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered[c] for you Mt 16:24 2 Th 3:7+
22 and left an example for you to follow the way he took. •He had not done anything Jn 8:46
23 wrong, and *there had been no perjury in his mouth.* •He was insulted and did not *Is 53:9 Mt 5:39*
retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his
24 trust in the righteous judge. •He was *bearing our faults* in his own body on the Rm 12:19 *Is 53:12*
cross, so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness; *through his wounds* *Rm 6:11,18* 2 Co 5:21
you have been healed. You had *gone astray like sheep*[d] but now you have come *Is 53:5,6*
back to the shepherd and guardian[e] of your souls. Ezk 34:1+

In marriage

1 3 In the same way, wives should be obedient to their husbands. Then, if there Ep 5:22-24 Col 3:18
are some husbands who have not yet obeyed the word, they may find them- 1:25
2 selves won over, without a word spoken, by the way their wives behave, •when 1 Co 7:12-16
3 they see how faithful and conscientious they are. •Do not dress up for show: Is 3:16f+
4 doing up your hair, wearing gold bracelets and fine clothes; •all this should be 1 Tm 2:9-15
inside, in a person's heart,[a] imperishable: the ornament of a sweet and gentle
5 disposition—this is what is precious in the sight of God. •That was how the holy
women of the past dressed themselves attractively—they hoped in God and were
6 tender and obedient to their husbands; •like Sarah, who was obedient to Abraham, Gn 18:12 LXX
and called him her *lord.* You are now her children, as long as you live good lives Ga 4:28
and do not give way to fear or worry.

7 In the same way, husbands must always treat their wives with consideration Ep 5:25-33 Col 3:19
in their life together, respecting a woman as one who, though she may be the
weaker partner, is equally an heir[b] to the life of grace. This will stop anything
from coming in the way of your prayers.

Towards the brothers

8 Finally: you should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the Rm 12:14-18 Mt 5:39,44
9 brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing.[c] •Never pay back one wrong
with another, or an angry word with another one; instead, pay back with a
blessing. That is what you are called to do, so that you inherit a blessing yourself. Lk 6:28
10 Remember: *Anyone who wants to have a happy life and to enjoy prosperity must* Ps 34:12-16
11 *banish malice from his tongue, deceitful conversation from his lips; •he must never*
12 *yield to evil but must practise good; he must seek peace and pursue it. •Because the*

e. Or 'by the precious blood of the Christ, this spotless lamb'.
f. Var. 'from a pure heart'.
g. Or 'the living and eternal Word of God'.

2 a. Lit. 'to this indeed they were appointed'. By rejecting the Good News the Jews have lost their prerogatives which have been transferred to Christians, 3:9. The O.T. quotations in vv. 6-10 reflect the need of the earliest Christians to find scriptural explanations for the unbelief of Israel.

b. Add. 'in the sight of God'.
c. Var. 'died', cf. 3:18.
d. Var. 'you were like stray sheep'.
e. The *'episcopos'*, i.e. the inspector or overseer, cf. Tt 1:5+.

3 a. Lit. 'should be the hidden man (self) of the heart'.
b. '(she) is equally an heir', var. 'you are equally heirs', 'the life of grace', lit. 'the grace of life'; var. 'her own form of the grace of life', cf. 4:10.
c. 'be self-effacing' (lit. 'have a humble disposition'); Vulg. 'be modest and humble'.

face of the Lord frowns on evil men, but the eyes of the Lord are turned towards the virtuous.

In persecution

No one can hurt you if you are determined to do only what is right; •if you 13 14
Mt 5:10 Is 8:12-13 do have to suffer for being good, you will count it a blessing. *There is no need to*
LXX Mt 10:26-31 Pr 3:25 *be afraid or to worry about them.*[d] •Simply *reverence*[e] *the Lord*[f] Christ in your 15
hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for
the hope that you all have. •But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear 16
conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ
may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. •And if it is the will of 17
God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing
wrong.

The resurrection and 'the descent into hell'

Rm 5:6; 6:10 2:21-24 Is 53:11 Ac 3:14+ Rm 1:3-4+ Heb 9:26-28 2 P 3:9 Gn 7:7 2 P 2:5 Col 2:12-13 Rm 6:4+ Ac 2:33+ Ep 1:20-21 Col 2:15+
Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins,[g] died for 18
the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was
raised to life, •and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison.[h] 19
Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a 20
small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently,
that these spirits refused to believe. •That water is a type of the baptism[i] which 21
saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt[j] but a pledge[k]
made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand,[l] now that he has made the 22
angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

2:21 Rm 6:2,7 Rm 7:14f 1 Jn 2:16-17 Ep 4:17-18 Tt 3:3 Rm 1:29+ Ac 10:42 2 Tm 4:1 3:19+ Rm 1:9+ 2 Co 5:5+
4 Think of what Christ suffered in this life, and then arm yourselves with the 1
same resolution that he had: anyone who in this life has bodily suffering has
broken with sin, •because for the rest of his life on earth he is not ruled by human 2
passions but only by the will of God. •You spent quite long enough in the past 3
living the sort of life that pagans live, behaving indecently, giving way to your
passions, drinking all the time, having wild parties and drunken orgies and
degrading yourselves by following false gods. •So people cannot understand why 4
you no longer hurry off with them to join this flood which is rushing down to
ruin,[a] and then they begin to spread libels about you. •They will have to answer 5
for it in front of the judge who is ready to judge the living and the dead. •And 6
because he is their judge too, the dead had to be told the Good News as well,[b] so
that though, in their life on earth, they had been through the judgement that
comes to all humanity, they might come to God's life in the spirit.

The revelation of Christ is close

1:5-7; 4:17 2 Co 6:2+ Pr 10:12 Jm 5:20 Rm 12:6-8 1 Co 12:4-11 1 Co 10:31 Rm 9:5 Rm 16:27+
Everything will soon come to an end, so, to pray better, keep a calm and sober 7
mind. •Above all, never let your love for each other grow insincere, since *love* 8
covers over many a sin. •Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling. 9
Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible 10
for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others. •If 11
you are a speaker, speak in words which seem to come from God;[c] if you are a
helper,[d] help as though every action was done at God's orders; so that in
everything God may receive the glory, through Jesus Christ, since to him alone
belong all glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

Recapitulation

3:14 1:7 Mt 5:11-12 Rm 5:3-5 1:21 Col 3:4 Jm 1:2-3
My dear people, you must not think it unaccountable that you should be tested 12
by fire. There is nothing extraordinary in what has happened to you. •If you can 13
have some share in the sufferings of Christ, be glad, because you will enjoy a much
greater gladness when his glory is revealed. •It is a blessing for you when they 14
insult you for bearing the name of Christ, because it means that you have the

15 Spirit of glory,[e] the Spirit of God resting on you. •None of you should ever deserve
16 to suffer for being a murderer, a thief, a criminal or an informer; •but if anyone
of you should suffer for being a Christian, then he is not to be ashamed of it; he Ac 11:26+
17 should thank God that he has been called one. •The time has come for the judge-
ment to begin at the household of God; and if what we know now is only the Jr 25:29 Lk 23:31
beginning, what will it be when it comes down to those who refuse to believe God's
18 Good News? •*If it is hard for a good man to be saved, what will happen to the wicked* Pr 11:31 LXX
19 *and to sinners*? •So even those whom God allows to suffer must trust themselves
to the constancy of the creator and go on doing good.

Instructions: to the elders

1 5 Now I have something to tell your elders:[a] I am an elder myself, and a witness[b] Ac 11:30+ 20:28+
to the sufferings of Christ, and with you I have a share in the glory that is Col 3:4
2 to be revealed.[c] •Be the shepherds of the flock of God that is entrusted to you:
watch over it, not simply as a duty but gladly, because God wants it;[d] not for 1 Tm 3:8 Tt1:7
3 sordid money, but because you are eager to do it. •Never be a dictator over any
group that is put in your charge, but be an example that the whole flock can 1 Co 4:16+ Tt 2:7-8
4 follow.[e] •When the chief shepherd appears, you will be given the crown of *Ezk 34:1+* 1 Co 9:25+
unfading glory.

To the faithful

5 To the rest of you I say: do what the elders tell you,[f] and all wrap yourselves 1 Jn 2:12-14
in humility to be servants of each other, because *God refuses the proud and will* Jn 13:14 *Pr 3:34* LXX *Jb 22:29*
6 *always favour the humble.* •Bow down, then, before the power of God now, and he
7 will raise you up on the appointed day;[g] •*unload* all *your worries on to him*, since Ph 2:8-9 Jm 4:6-10 *Ps 55:22*
8 he is looking after you. •*Be calm but vigilant*, because your enemy the devil[h] is Mt 6:25f *Ps 22:13*
9 prowling round like a roaring lion, looking for someone to eat. •Stand up to him, Ep 6:11
strong in faith and in the knowledge that your brothers all over the world are
10 suffering the same things. •You will have to suffer only for a little while: the God Rm 8:18 2 Co 4:17

d. Om. 'or to worry about them'.

e. Lit. 'sanctify'.

f. 'The lord'; var. 'God'. 'hope', add. 'and faith'. The allusion is to local persecutions.

g. 'sins', Vulg. 'our sins', Om. 'to God'.

h. Probably alludes to the descent of Christ to Hades, cf. Mt 16:18+, between his death and resurrection, Mt 12:40; Ac 2:24,31; Rm 10:7; Ep 4:9; Heb 13:20. He went there 'in spirit', cf. Lk 23:46, or (better) 'according to the spirit', Rm 1:4+, his 'flesh' being dead on the cross, Rm 8:3f. The 'spirits in prison' to whom he 'preached' (or 'proclaimed') salvation are identified by some writers as the chained demons mentioned in the Book of Enoch (some texts are corrected so as to make Enoch, and not Christ, preach to them). These spirits have thus been put under the authority of Christ as *Kyrios* v. 22, cf. Ep 1:21f; Ph 2:8-10, and this subjection to him is to be confirmed later on, 1 Co 15:24f. Other writers suggest these were the spirits of people drowned in the Flood as a punishment but who are now summoned by God's 'patience' to eternal life, cf. 4:6. Mt 27:52f is a similar episode of liberation by Christ between his death and resurrection, only here it is the saints, the holy ones who were waiting for him, that are liberated, cf. Heb 11:39f; 12:23, and are given the freedom of the holy (the heavenly) city. The descent of Christ to Hades is one of the articles in the 'Apostles' Creed'.

i. Lit. 'by water, to which the antitype is the baptism' i.e. that which was prefigured by the 'type' (cf. 1 Co 10:6+). Here the 'type' of baptism is Noah's Flood.

j. As so few were saved from drowning, the Flood is taken to symbolise the O.T. purificatory rites that were, almost without exception, limited to an *external* 'bodily' purity, whereas the baptism by which a person is reborn can have no limits to its efficacy.

k. The 'pledge' (alternative translation' the request') made by a convert at his baptism.

l. Add. (Vulg.) 'submitting to death so that we might inherit eternal life'.

4 a. Lit. 'rush with them to the same "unsafe uppouring" (i.e. "flood of no-salvation" or "flood of debauchery")'; this dangerous flood destroys the good, unlike Noah's Flood that destroyed the wicked, cf. 3:20.

b. For the proclamation of the Good News to the dead cf. 3:19+. Some exegetes interpret this as meaning the 'spiritually dead', e.g. those who are persecuting the Christians to whom the letter is being written.

c. As in impromptu spiritual prophecies and in *glossolalia*, cf. 1 Co 14:2-19; Ac 11:27+ with Ac 2:4+.

d. This could possibly refer to liturgical service.

e. Add. 'and power'. Add. at end of verse '(the Spirit) blasphemed by them but honoured by you'.

5 a. These elders are to be identified with the 'presbyters' of Tt 1:5+, cf. note on 5:5 where 'elders' means 'older people'.

b. This can mean either that as an apostle, 1:1, he witnessed the Passion of Jesus, or that through his own sufferings he is a witness to Christ.

c. At the *parousia*, cf. 1:5,13; 4:7,17; 5:10.

d. Om. 'watch over it' and 'because God wants it'.

e. Lit. 'Nor as lording it over those allocated (i.e. to you) but becoming examples of the flock'; var. 'Be examples to the flock'. Add. (Vulg.) 'with all your heart'.

f. Lit. 'Likewise younger people submit yourselves to older people'; the 'younger people' here are not adolescents as opposed to 'older people', cf. Tt 2:6, but the body of the faithful as opposed to the 'presbyters' or elders, 5:1+.

g. Add. (Vulg.) 'of his coming', cf. 2:12.

h. The word *diabolos* (lit. 'one who passes to another information against a third party') may be translated 'accuser'; it is applied to the devil in its legal sense of 'prosecutor'.

1 Th 2:12; 5:24; 4:11 of all grace who called you to eternal glory in Christ will see that all is well again:
he will confirm, strengthen and support you.[i] •His[j] power lasts for ever and ever. 11
Amen.

Last words. Greetings

Ac 15:22+ I write these few words to you through Silvanus, who is a brother I know I can 12
trust, to encourage you never to let go this true grace of God to which I bear
witness.

Rv 17:5; 2 Jn 1+ Your sister in Babylon, who is with you among the chosen,[k] sends you 13
Ac 12:12+ greetings; so does my son, Mark.

2 Co 13:12+ Greet one another with a kiss of love.[l] 14
Peace to you all who are in Christ.[m]

5 i. 'called you', var. (Vulg.) 'called us'. 'in Christ', add. (Vulg.) 'Jesus'. Om. (Vulg.) 'strengthen'.
j. Add. 'glory and'.
k. Lit. 'the co-chosen *(feminine)* in Babylon greets you'; var. (Vulg.) 'The co-chosen church'. The reference is to the church at Rome.
l. Var. (Vulg.) 'holy kiss', cf. Rm 16:16; 1 Co 16:20.
m. Add. (Vulg.) 'Jesus. Amen.'

2 PETER

THE SECOND LETTER OF PETER

Greetings

1 1 From Simeon Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ; to all who treasure Ac 15:14+
the same faith as ourselves, given through the righteousness of our God and
2 saviour Jesus Christ.[a] •May you have more and more grace and peace as you ||Jude 2
come to know our Lord[b] more and more. 1:8
Ph 3:10
Col 2:6

A call to Christian living, and its reward

3 By his divine power, he has given us all the things that we need for life and for Ep 3:16-19
true devotion, bringing us to know God himself, who has called us by his own
4 glory and goodness.[c] •In making these gifts, he has given us[d] the guarantee of Jn 1:14+
something very great and wonderful to come: through them[e] you will be able to Ws 2:33
share the divine nature and to escape corruption in a world that is sunk in vice.[f] Jn 1:10+,12
Ac 17:28+
2 Co 3:18
5 But to attain this,[g] you will have to do your utmost yourselves, adding goodness 1 Jn 2:15f; 5:19
6 to the faith that you have, understanding to your goodness, •self-control to your Ga 5:22+
understanding, patience to your self-control, true devotion to your patience,
7 kindness towards your fellow men to your devotion, and, to this kindness, love.
8 If you have a generous supply of these, they will not leave you ineffectual or
unproductive: they will bring you to a real knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1:2
9 But without them[h] a man is blind or else short-sighted; he has forgotten how
10 his past sins were washed away. •Brothers, you have been called and chosen: work
all the harder to justify it.[i] If you do all these things there is no danger that you will 2 Th 1:11
11 ever fall away. •In this way you will be granted admittance into the eternal 1 Jn 3:6+
kingdom[j] of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

The apostolic witness

12 That is why I am continually recalling the same truths to you, even though you ||Jude 5
13 already know them and firmly hold them. •I am sure it is my duty, as long as 1 Jn 2:21
14 I am in this tent, to keep stirring you up with reminders, •since I know the time *Ws 9:15*
Is 38:12
for taking off this tent is coming soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ foretold to me. 2 Co 5:1
15 And I shall take great care that after my own departure you will still have a *Jn 21:18-19*
means to recall these things to memory.

1 a. Or 'of our God and of the saviour Jesus Christ'.
b. Lit. 'through knowing our Lord'; var. 'through knowing God and Jesus (or Jesus Christ) our Lord'. All through this letter it is Christ who is proposed as the object of a Christian's knowledge, 1:3,8; 2:20; 3:18.
c. 'glory' here refers to the miracles done by Jesus as a sign of his divinity, cf. Jn 1:14+, but in particular it refers to the transfiguration, 2 P 1:16-18. 'goodness' could refer to his powers both natural and miraculous.
d. 'us', var. 'you'. What has been promised is something that concerns the 'Day of the Lord', cf. 3:4,9-10,12-13.
e. I.e. as a result of the glory and goodness of Christ. Var. (Vulg.) 'through it'.
f. Var. (Vulg.) 'the corruption of the vice that is in the world'.
g. Lit. 'For this very reason'; var. (Vulg.) 'But you'.
h. This is the same sort of warning against Gnosticism that is given in the Johannine letters, cf. 1 Jn 1:8+. Gnostics claimed to know God without keeping his commandments.
i. Add. (Vulg.) 'by good deeds'.
j. This, like 1:4; 3:4,9-10, looks forward to the *parousia*.

3:4+ Mt 17:1+ *1 Co 15:23+* It was not any cleverly invented myths that we were repeating[k] when we brought you the knowledge of the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; 16
Lk 9:31-32p Jn 1:14 we had seen his majesty for ourselves.[l] 17 He was honoured and glorified by God
Mt 17:5p the Father, when the Sublime Glory itself spoke to him and said,[m] 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour'. 18 We heard this ourselves, spoken from heaven, when we were with him on the holy mountain.[n]

The value of prophecy

So we have confirmation of what was said in prophecies;[o] and you will be 19
right to depend on prophecy and take it as a lamp for lighting a way
Lk 1:78 Rv 2:28+ through the dark until the dawn comes and the morning star rises in your minds.
At the same time, we must be most careful to remember that the interpretation 20
of scriptural prophecy is never a matter for the individual. 21 Why? Because no
2 Tm 3:16 1 P 1:10-12 *Ac 3:21* prophecy ever came from man's initiative. When men spoke for God it was the Holy Spirit that moved them.

False teachers

3:3+ Dt 13:2-6 Mt 24:24 Jude 4 *Rm 3:24+* 2 As there were false prophets in the past history of our people, so you too will 1
have your false teachers, who will insinuate their own disruptive views and
disown the Master who purchased their freedom. They will destroy themselves
Is 52:5 Ac 9:2+ Rm 2:24 very quickly; 2 but there will be many who copy their shameful behaviour and the
Way of Truth will be brought into disrepute on their account. 3 They will eagerly
try to buy you for themselves with insidious speeches, but for them the Condemnation, pronounced so long ago, is at its work already, and Destruction is not
Gn 6:1-2 Mt 8:29 Jude 6 asleep.[a] 4 When angels sinned, God did not spare them: he sent them down to the
underworld and consigned them to the dark underground caves to be held there
Gn 6:17 Si 44:17 Heb 11:7 1 P 3:20 till the day of Judgement. 5 Nor did he spare the world in ancient times:[b] it was
only Noah he saved, the preacher of righteousness, along with seven others, when
he sent the Flood over a disobedient world. 6 The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah,
Gn 19 Ws 10:6 Mt 10:15p ||Jude 7 these too he condemned and reduced to ashes; he destroyed them completely,[c] as
a warning to anybody lacking reverence in the future; 7 he rescued Lot, however,
a holy man who had been sickened by the shameless way in which these vile people
behaved— 8 for that holy man, living among them, was outraged in his good soul
by the crimes that he saw and heard of every day. 9 These are all examples of how
2 Th 1:5-10 the Lord can rescue the good from the ordeal, and hold the wicked for their
Rm 2:6+ ||Jude 8 punishment until the day of Judgement, 10 especially those who are governed by
their corrupt bodily desires and have no respect for authority.[d]

The punishment to come

Such self-willed people with no reverence are not afraid of offending against
||Jude 9-10 the glorious ones,[e] 11 but the angels in their greater strength and power make no
complaint or accusation against them in front of the Lord.[f] 12 All the same, these
Ps 49:12-14 people who only insult anything that they do not understand are not reasoning
beings, but simply animals born to be caught and killed, and they will quite
certainly destroy themselves by their own work of destruction, 13 and get their
reward of evil for the evil that they do. They are unsightly blots on your society:
men whose only object is dissipation all day long,[g] and they amuse themselves
||Jude 12 deceiving you even when they are your guests at a meal; 14 with their eyes always
looking for adultery,[h] men with an infinite capacity for sinning, they will seduce
any soul which is at all unstable. Greed is the one lesson their minds have learnt.
Nb 22:2+ ||Jude 11 Rv 2:14-15 They are under a curse. 15 They have left the right path and wandered off to follow
the path of Balaam son of Beor,[i] who thought he could profit best by sinning,
Nb 22:28-33 until he was called to order for his faults. 16 The dumb donkey put a stop to that
||Jude 12-13 prophet's madness when it talked like a man. 17 People like this are dried-up rivers,
fogs swirling in the wind, and the dark underworld is the place reserved for them.
||Jude 16 With their high-flown talk, which is all hollow, they tempt back the ones who 18

have only just escaped from paganism,[j] playing on their bodily desires with
19 debaucheries. •They may promise freedom[k] but they themselves are slaves, slaves
to corruption; because if anyone lets himself be dominated by anything, then Jn 8:34 Rm 6:16-17
20 he is a slave to it; •and anyone who has escaped the pollution of the world once
by coming to know our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ, and who then allows
himself to be entangled[l] by it a second time and mastered, will end up in a worse Mt 12:45p
21 state than he began in. •It would even have been better for him never to have Ezk 3:20
learnt the way of holiness, than to know it and afterwards desert the holy rule
22 that was entrusted to him. •What he has done is exactly as the proverb rightly 1 Co 11:2+
says: *The dog goes back to his own vomit* and: When the sow has been washed, it Pr 26:11
wallows in the mud.

The Day of the Lord; the prophets and the apostles

1 3 My friends, this is my second[a] letter to you, and in both of them I have tried
2 to awaken a true understanding in you by giving you a reminder: •recalling to ||Jude 17
you what was said in the past by the holy prophets and the commandments of the
Lord and saviour which you were given by the apostles.

3 We must be careful to remember[b] that during the last days[c] there are bound Ezk 12:22 1 Tm 4:1+
to be people who will be scornful, the kind who always please themselves what ||Jude 18
4 they do, and they will make fun of the promise •and ask, 'Well, where is this 1:16; 2:1
coming? Everything goes on as it has since the Fathers[d] died, as it has since it Is 5:19
5 began at the creation.' •They are choosing to forget[e] that there were heavens Gn 1:2,6-9
at the beginning, and that the earth was formed by the word of God out of
6 water and between the waters, •so that the world of that time was destroyed by Gn 7-9 Mt 24:38-39
7 being flooded by water. •But by the same word, the present sky and earth are Is 51:6 Mt 3:12+
destined for fire, and are only being reserved until Judgement day so that all Rm 2:6+
sinners may be destroyed.

8 But there is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the
Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and *a thousand years is like a day.* Ps 90:4
9 The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be Hab 2:2-3
called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and Ezk 18:23 Rm 2:4-5
10 everybody to be brought to change his ways.[f] •The Day of the Lord will come 1 P 3:20 *Mt 24:43p*
like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire 1 Th 5:2 *Mt 24:29+* Rv 20:11
and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up.[g]

Conclusion and doxology

11 Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and Ac 3:19-20

k. Lit. 'not following myths that have been cleverly devised'; this is another warning against Gnostics who had a doctrine of the *parousia* based not on logical proofs, but on an elaborate mythological system, cf. 3:4f.

l. At the transfiguration.

m. Lit. 'For receiving from God (the) Father honour and glory such a voice being borne to him by the magnificent glory'; var. (Vulg.) '...out of the magnificent glory'.

n. 'holy mountain' should perhaps be taken as a suggestion that the mountain of transfiguration was the antitype of Sinai.

o. Lit. 'We have more firm the prophetic word'. The transfiguration is a preliminary glimpse of scripture prophecy being fulfilled.

2 a. These false teachers have already been condemned, cf. Jude 4.

b. The antediluvian world.

c. Lit. 'he reduced to ashes and condemned them to extinction'; om. 'to extinction'.

d. The authority of Christ, cf. 2:1; Jude 4,8.

e. Lit. 'glories'; the angels.

f. 'in front of the Lord'; om. (Vulg.).

g. Lit. 'deeming daytime luxury to be pleasure', var. 'happy to give themselves up to debauchery in broad daylight'.

h. Lit. 'eyes full of adultery'; var. (Vulg.) '...of an adulteress'.

i. 'Beor', misspelt in most MSS Bosor or even Beorsor.

j. Lit. 'from those who live in error'. The reference is to the 'unstable souls' of 2:14; many of them copy the shameful behaviour of the false teachers, 2:2.

k. Liberty, for the Gnostics, included freedom from any moral restrictions, cf. Jude 4.

l. This refers to those who have been seduced by the false teachers not to the teachers themselves.

3 a. Alludes probably to 1 P.

b. The prediction that follows seems to be based more on the teaching of the apostles than on O.T. prophecy, cf. Ac 20:29; 2 Tm 3:1-5. If fits into Jude 18 better than it fits in here.

c. That heretics should exist is itself a proof that the last days are near.

d. Either the patriarchs or the Christians of the first generation.

e. The inference is that the false teachers proved the impossibility of the *parousia* from the unchangeableness of the universe.

f. God's mercy is an alternative explanation for the alleged delay of the *parousia*, cf. Ws 11:23f; 12:8+.

g. 'burnt up', corr.; 'uncovered' (Greek). This destruction of the world by fire was, in Graeco-Roman times, a common topic for philosophers.

saintly lives 12 while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky
Is 34:4; 51: 6+ Rm 8:21 Heb 12:27+ Rv 20:11+ Is 65:17; 66:22 Rv 21:1,27 will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. 13 What we are waiting
for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where right-
Is 60:21 Rm 8:19+ eousness will be at home. 14 So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your
‖Jude 24 1 Tm 1:15-16 best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace. 15 Think of
our Lord's patience as your opportunity to be saved: our brother Paul, who is so
dear to us, told you this when he wrote to you with the wisdom that is his special
gift. 16 He always writes like this when he deals with this sort of subject, and this
makes some points[h] in his letter hard to understand; these are the points that
uneducated and unbalanced people distort, in the same way as they distort the rest
Heb 2:1 of scripture[i]—a fatal thing for them to do. 17 You have been warned about this,
my friends; be careful not to get carried away by the errors of unprincipled
people, from the firm ground that you are standing on. 18 Instead, go on growing
in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. To him
Rm 16:27+ be glory, in time and in eternity. Amen.

3 h. About the *parousia*, presumably, since that is the subject under discussion.

i. This implies that the letters of Paul were considered canonical.

1 JOHN

THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN

INTRODUCTION

The incarnate Word

1 1 Something which has existed since the beginning, 2:13
that we have heard, Jn 1:1-5
and we have seen with our own eyes; Ac 22:15+
that we have watched Jn 20:20,25, 27
and touched with our hands: Lk 24:39
the Word, who is life— Jn 1:1+; 3: 11+
this is our subject.
2 That life was made visible:
we saw it and we are giving our testimony, Jn 1:14+; 15:27
telling you of the eternal life 5:20
which was with the Father and has been made visible to us.
3 What we have seen and heard 2:3,19,24,29
we are telling you Ac 4:20; 26: 16
so that you too may be in union[a] with us,
as we are in union Ac 2:42f
with the Father
and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 Co 1:9
4 We are writing this to you to make our own[b] joy complete. Jn 15:11; 16:22-24
2 Jn 12

I. WALK IN THE LIGHT

5 This is what we have heard from him, 3:11
and the message that we are announcing to you:
God is light; there is no darkness in him at all. Dn 2:22
Jn 8:12+
6 If we say that we are in union with God[c] 1 Tm 6:16
Jm 1:17
while we are living in darkness,
we are lying because we are not living the truth. Jn 3:21
7 But if we live our lives in the light,
as he is in the light,
we are in union with one another,[d]

1 a. Lit. 'have fellowship' (so also in v. 7). This union is the idea most central to John's mysticism, Jn 14:20; 15:1-6; 17:11,20-26; union between all Christians results from the union created by Christ between each Christian and God. This union is referred to in different ways: a Christian lives 'in' God and God lives 'in' him, 1 Jn 2:5,6,24,27; 3:6,24; 4:12,13,15, 16; a Christian is begotten by God, has new life from him, 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,18; the Christian is from God, is his child, 2:16; 3:10; 4:4-6; 5:19; the Christian knows God, 2:3,13,14; 3:6; 4:7,8 (on knowledge and presence cf. Jn 14:17; 2 Jn 1-2). This union with God shows itself in a person's faith and in his love for the brothers, cf. 1:7+.

b. 'our own', var. (Vulg.) 'your'.

c. Lit. 'him'. In this translation the pronoun has been rendered 'God', or 'Christ', where it seemed necessary for the sense.

d. God is in Christians, 1:3+, as the principle of their new life. Since God is light, 1:5, virtue, 2:29, and love, 4:8,16, whoever lives in union with God must live a life of light, virtue and love, and keep God's commandments, especially the commandment to love all human beings, 2:10,11; 3:10; 4:8,16. Faith and love are thus the visible evidence of true union with God, 1:6,7; 2:3,6; 3:6,10,17,24; 4:6,8,13,16,20.

Mt 26:28p
Rm 3:24+ 25+
Rv 1:5
and the blood of Jesus, his Son,
purifies us from all sin.

First condition: break with sin

Pr 20:9
Qo 7:20
Si 8:5
If we say we have no sin in us, 8
we are deceiving ourselves
and refusing to admit the truth;[e]

Pr 28:13+
Jm 5:16+
but if we acknowledge our sins, 9
then God who is faithful and just

Ps 32:1+
Mt 6:12p
will forgive our sins and purify us
from everything that is wrong.

To say that we have never sinned 10
is to call God a liar
and to show that his word is not in us.

2 I am writing this, my children, 1

3:6+
to stop you sinning;
but if anyone should sin,

Heb 7:25; 8:6+
Jn 14:16
Ac 3:14+
4:10
we have our advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ, who is just;

Rm 3:25+
he is the sacrifice that takes our sins away, 2
and not only ours,

Jn 4:42+
but the whole world's.

Second condition: keep the commandments, especially the law of love

1:3+,7+
Jn 10:14+
We can be sure that we know God 3
only by keeping his commandments.

4:20
Anyone who says, 'I know him', 4
and does not keep his commandments,
is a liar,
refusing to admit the truth.[a]

Jn 14:21,23
But when anyone does obey what he has said, 5

3:17
God's love comes to perfection in him.[b]
We can be sure
that we are in God

Jn 13:15,34
Ep 5:2
2 Th 3:7+
only when the one who claims to be living in him 6
is living the same kind of life as Christ[c] lived.

My dear people, 7
this is not a new commandment that I am writing to tell you,

3:11
Dt 6:5
Mt 22:37-40
2 Jn 5
but an old commandment
that you were given from the beginning,
the original commandment which was the message brought to you.

Jn 13:34+
Yet in another way, what I am writing to you, 8
and what is being carried out in your lives as it was in his,
is a new commandment;

Rm 13:12
because the night is over

Jn 1:5; 8:12
and the real light is already shining.

Anyone who claims to be in the light 9
but hates his brother
is still in the dark.

Jn 12:35-36
But anyone who loves his brother is living in the light 10

Pr 4:19
Qo 2:14
and need not be afraid of stumbling;

unlike the man who hates his brother and is in the darkness, 11
not knowing where he is going,

Mt 15:14p
because it is too dark to see.

Third condition: detachment from the world

12 I am writing to you, my own children, — 1 P 5:5+
whose sins have already been forgiven through his name; — 1:7; 2:2; Ac 3:16+
13 I am writing to you, fathers, — 1 Co 6:11
who have come to know the one
who has existed since the beginning; — 1:1; Jn 1:1
I am writing to you, young men,
who have already overcome the Evil One; — Ep 6:16
14 I have written[d] to you, children,
because you already know the Father;
I have written to you, fathers,
because you have come to know the one
who has existed since the beginning;
I have written to you, young men,
because you are strong and God's word has made its home in you, — Jn 3:11+
and you have overcome the Evil One.[e] — Mt 6:14+; Jn 5:38
15 You must not love this passing world — Jn 1:10+
or anything that is in the world.
The love of the Father cannot be — Jn 5:42+
in any man who loves the world, — Rm 8:7-8; 2 P 1:4+
16 because nothing the world has to offer
—the sensual body, — Mt 6:24p; Jm 4:4
the lustful eye, — *Pr 27:20*
pride in possessions—[f] — Jm 4:16
could ever come from the Father
but only from the world;
17 and the world, with all it craves for, — 1 Co 7:31; 1 P 4:2
is coming to an end;
but anyone who does the will of God — Pr 10:25; Is 40:8; Mt 7:21
remains for ever.

Fourth condition: be on guard against the enemies of Christ

18 Children, these are the last days; — 1 Tm 4:1+
you were told that an Antichrist[g] must come, — 2 Th 2:4+
and now several antichrists have already appeared; — 4:1; 2 Jn 7
we know from this that these are the last days.
19 Those rivals of Christ came out of our own number, but they had never really belonged;[h] — 2 Co 6:14-18
if they had belonged, they would have stayed with us; — 1:3+
but they left us, to prove that not one of them
ever belonged to us.
20 But you have been anointed[i] by the Holy One, — Lv 17:1+; Is 6:3+; Jn 14:26+; 2 Co 1:21
and have all received the knowledge.[j]

e. This is possibly an allusion to the sect that called themselves 'spirituals', *pneumatikoi*, and who were the forerunners of the Gnostics of the 2nd c. who looked down on other people as being either *psychikoi* or *hylikoi*, i.e. either incompletely or not at all liberated from matter.

2 a. Add. 'of God'.

b. Lit. 'in him the love of God has been perfected (reached its goal)': this refers more to God's love for us than to our love for him.

c. Lit. 'as That One': Jesus is repeatedly referred to in this way. 3:3,5,7,16; 4:17, cf. Jn 2:21; 19:35.

d. Var. (Vulg.) 'I am writing to you (now)'. The second clause ('I have written to you, fathers ... beginning') is omitted by Vulg.

e. The devil is still the Tempter as in Gn 3:1-6; Jb 1:6+, who incites human beings to wickedness, 1 Jn 3:8+. Christians, however, having 'known' the Son, the Son lives in them, 1:3+, and 'clothes' them in light, virtue and love, 1:7+; and as this protects them from the devil, 5:18; Jn 17:15, and prevents them from sinning, 3:6,9, it constitutes their victory over the devil, 2:13,14, and over this transient world, 4:4; 5:4,5; cf. Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:33; Mt 6:13.

f. Lit. 'the ostentation of living'.

g. 'an Antichrist' var. 'The Antichrist'.

h. Though they seemed to belong to the community, they lacked the spirit of Christ.

i. In the O.T. the chrism that was to anoint the Messiah (the 'anointed') was identified, Is 11:2; 61:1, with the (holy) Spirit or Breath of Yahweh. Christians share in this anointing that teaches them the true *gnosis* or knowledge.

j. Var. 'you know all things'.

2 P 1:12
2 Jn 1:2
3:19+
It is not because you do not know the truth that I am writing to you 21
but rather because you know it already
and know that no lie can come from the truth.[k]
The man who denies that Jesus is the Christ— 22
he is the liar,
2 Th 2:4+ 2 Jn 7
he is Antichrist;
and he is denying the Father as well as the Son,[l]
because no one who has the Father can deny the Son, 23
Jn 14:7-9; 17:6+
and to acknowledge the Son is to have the Father as well.
Keep alive in yourselves what you were taught in the beginning:[m] 24
as long as what you were taught in the beginning is alive in you,
1:3+
you will live in the Son
and in the Father;
Jn 5:24; 6: 40,68; 17:2
and what is promised to you by his own promise 25
is eternal life.
This is all that I am writing to you about the people who are 26
trying to lead you astray.
22:20
But you have not lost the anointing that he gave you, 27
and you do not need anyone to teach you;[n]
Jr 31:34 Jn 14:26+
the anointing he gave teaches you everything;
you are anointed with truth, not with a lie,
and as it has taught you, so you must stay in him.
Live in Christ, then, my children, 28
4:17
so that if he appears, we may have full confidence,
2 Th 1:9
and not turn from him in shame
Mt 24:3+ 1 Co 15:23+
at his coming.
You know that God is righteous— 29
1:3+,7+
then you must recognise that everyone whose life is righteous
has been begotten by him.

II. LIVE AS GOD'S CHILDREN

3 Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, 1
Jn 1:12 Rm 8:14-17, 37-39 Ep 1:5
by letting us be called God's children;
and that is what we are.[a]
Jn 15:21; 16: 3; 17:25
Because the world refused to acknowledge him,
therefore it does not acknowledge us.
My dear people, we are already the children of God 2
but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed;
Rm 8:29 Ph 3:21 Col 3:4
all we know is, that when it is revealed
we shall be like him
because we shall see him as he really is.

First condition: break with sin

Surely everyone who entertains this hope 3
2:6 Mt 5:48+
must purify himself, must try to be as pure as Christ.[b]
Anyone who sins at all 4
breaks the law,
because to sin is to break the law.
Jn 1:29+
Now you know that he appeared in order to abolish sin,[c] 5
Jn 8:46 Heb 7:26
and that in him there is no sin;
1:3+; 2:14+ Mt 7:18
anyone who lives in God does not sin,[d] 6
and anyone who sins
has never seen him or known him.
My children, do not let anyone lead you astray: 7

to live a holy life
is to be holy just as he is holy;
8 to lead a sinful life is to belong to the devil,[e] 3:12
since the devil was a sinner from the beginning. Gn 3:15 Jn 8:44
It was to undo all that the devil has done
that the Son of God appeared. 3:5 Jn 12:31-32
9 No one who has been begotten by God sins; 3:6+
because God's seed[f] remains inside him,
he cannot sin when he has been begotten by God. 2:14+

Second condition: keep the commandments, especially the law of love

10 In this way we distinguish the children of God 1:7+; 4:6
from the children of the devil: 3:8+
anybody not living a holy life
and not loving his brother 3:23
is no child of God's.
11 This is the message 1:5
as you heard it from the beginning: 2:7
that we are to love one another; Jn 13:34
12 not to be like Cain, who belonged to the Evil One 3:8+
and cut his brother's throat; Gn 4:8 Jn 8:44 Jude 11
cut his brother's throat simply for this reason,
that his own life was evil and his brother lived a good life.
13 You must not be surprised, brothers, when the world hates you; Mt 24:9 Jn 15:18-21
14 we have passed out of death and into life, Jn 5:24; 11:26
and of this we can be sure
because we love our brothers.
15 If you refuse to love, you must remain dead; Heb 6:1+
to hate your brother is to be a murderer,
and murderers, as you know, do not have eternal life in them.
16 This has taught us love— 2:6
that he gave up his life for us; Mt 20:28 Jn 15:12-13 Ep 5:2
and we, too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers.
17 If a man who was rich enough in this world's goods Dt 15:7,11 Jm 2:16
saw that one of his brothers was in need,
but closed his heart to him,
how could the love of God be living in him? 2:5; 4:12 Jn 5:42
18 My children,
our love is not to be just words or mere talk, Mt 7:21 Jm 1:22
but something real and active;
19 only by this can we be certain[g]

k. Or 'and because you know that the lies cannot have come from truth'.

l. Probably a reference to Cerinthus who taught that Jesus was an ordinary human being who was 'possessed' by the Messiah at his baptism in the Jordan; this Messiah ascended before the Passion of Jesus. Another possible reference to his teaching is in 5:6—the belief in baptism ('water') but not the sacrificial death ('blood').

m. The apostolic teaching concerning the mystery of Christ.

n. Christians are taught by the apostles, 1:3,5; 2:7,24, but merely hearing what is said is not enough, the message must penetrate them and this it cannot do except through the grace of the Holy Spirit, cf. 2:20+.

3 a. Om. 'and that is what we are'; var. (Vulg.) 'and may we become precisely that'.

b. Lit. 'as That One'.

c. Lit. 'sins'; var. 'our sins'.

d. Because God, living in the Christian, is present with all his divine power for life. John is talking in general terms, ignoring people's momentary lapses, 1:7—2:1; all he is giving is a schematic contrast between the two 'worlds', cf. 3:9; 5:18.

e. Having used expressions like: of God, from Truth, child of God, to show how a Christian lives under the influence of God living in him, John now uses expressions like: of the devil, 3:8; of the Evil One, 3:12, from, or of, the impermanent world, 2:16; 4:5, children of the devil, to indicate those who live under the influence of the devil and allow themselves to be seduced by him.

f. The 'seed' of God could be a reference to Christ, cf. Ga 3:16; 1 Jn 5:13, but some commentators take it as a reference to the Spirit, cf. 2:20-27, or to the seed of divine life introduced into us by God.

g. Lit. 'we shall be certain'; var. (Vulg.) 'we are certain'.

2:21+ Jn 18:37 2 Jn 4
that we are children of the truth[h]
and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence,
whatever accusations it may raise against us, 20
4:4 because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything.[i]
My dear people, 21
if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience,
we need not be afraid in God's presence,
5:15 Mt 7:7-11p Jn 14:13-14
and whatever we ask him, 22
we shall receive,
because we keep his commandments
Jn 8:29
and live the kind of life that he wants.
His commandments are these: 23
that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ
5:3
and that we love one another
Jn 13:34; 15:17
as he told us to.
Whoever keeps his commandments 24
1:3+
lives in God and God lives in him.
1:7+ Jn 14:21-23 4:13
We know that he lives in us
by the Spirit that he has given us.

Third condition: be on guard against the enemies of Christ and against the world

1 Co 12:10+
4 It is not every spirit, my dear people, that you can trust; 1
test them, to see if they come from God,
2:18 Mt 24:24
there are many false prophets, now, in the world.
1 Tm 4:1+ Jude 4 1 Co 12:3 1 Th 5:21
You can tell the spirits that come from God by this: 2
every spirit which acknowledges that Jesus the Christ has come in the flesh
is from God;
but any spirit which will not say this of Jesus[a] 3
is not from God,
2:22 2 Th 2:4+
but is the spirit of Antichrist,
whose coming you were warned about.
Well, now he is here, in the world.
Children, 4
2:14+
you have already overcome these false prophets,
because you are from God and you have in you
3:20
one who is greater than anyone in this world;
3:8+
as for them, they are of the world, 5
and so they speak the language of the world
and the world listens to them.
1:3+ Jn 8:47; 10:26+
But we[b] are children of God, 6
and those who know God listen to us;
those who are not of God refuse to listen to us.
3:10 Jn 14:17
This is how we can tell
the spirit of truth from the spirit of falsehood.[c]

III. LOVE AND FAITH

Love

My dear people, 7
let us love one another
1 Th 4:9
since love comes from God
1:3+
and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.
1:7+
Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, 8

because God is love.[d] 4:16
9 God's love for us was revealed
when God sent into the world his only Son Gn 22:12 Mt 21:37 Jn 3:16
so that we could have life through him;
10 this is the love I mean: Dt 7:8 Ws 6:16 Rm 8:31f
not our love for God,
but God's love for us when he sent his Son Rm 5:8
to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away. 2:2 Rm 3:25+
11 My dear people,
since God has loved us so much, Mt 18:33
we too should love one another.
12 No one has ever seen God;[e] Ex 33:20+ Jn 1:18; 6:46
but as long as we love one another
God will live in us 1:3+
and his love will be complete in us.
13 We can know that we are living in him 1:7+
and he is living in us
because he lets us share his Spirit.[f] 3:24 Rm 5:5+
14 We ourselves saw and we testify
that the Father sent his Son Jn 3:17
as saviour of the world. Jn 4:42+
15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God,
God lives in him, and he in God.
16 We ourselves have known and put our faith in
God's love towards ourselves. Jn 17:6+
God is love 4:7-8
and anyone who lives in love lives in God, 1:3+
and God lives in him.
17 Love will come to its perfection in us
when we can face the day of Judgement without fear; 2:28 Rm 8:15 Jm 2:13
because even in this world
we have become as he is. 2:6+; 3:2-3
18 In love there can be no fear, 2 Th 3:7+ 2 Tm 1:7
but fear is driven out by perfect love:
because to fear is to expect punishment,
and anyone who is afraid is still imperfect in love.[g]
19 We are to love, then,
because he loved us first. 4:9-10
20 Anyone who says, 'I love God', 2:4
and hates his brother,

h. In the O.T. 'truth' (contrasting with unrighteousness and evil) often means the rightness of a life morally well lived in accordance with the will of Yahweh, in fidelity to Yahweh. This is the way John uses the word. As there is a double commandment to fidelity and love, 3:23, people are said to 'belong to truth' if they believe, 2:21,22, and love, 3:19; they are said to live 'in union with (walk according to) truth' 2 Jn 4-6, 3 Jn 3-6, to *'do the truth'*, Jn 3:21 *(to perform or act* it, as opposed to committing sin, doing wrong), cf. Jn 18:37; 4:24.

i. The person whose conscience (lit. 'heart') reproaches him will find that God as a judge is both more acute and more lenient than his conscience, providing (it is understood) that charity has been practised. Another translation could be 'In the presence of God we shall prove to our conscience, if it has been accusing us, that God is greater than our conscience is, and that he knows everything'.

4 a. Var. (Vulg.) and strongly supported 'which dissolves (or breaks, splits, divides) Jesus'.

b. 'we' i.e. the authorised preachers, and particularly the apostles.

c. Lit. 'From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error'; the theme of the two spirits, which also occurs in Essene (Qumran) literature, was destined to have a considerable influence on early Christian thought. All people are torn between the two 'worlds', cf. 3:8+; 3:19+, and in varying degrees all are inspired by the spirit of each of these 'worlds'. *For John the spirit of truth comes from God*, 3:24; 4:13, cf. Jn 14:26+.

d. The idea that God loves Israel was one of the great poetic inspirations of the O.T., cf. Is 54:8+. The fact that God sent his only Son to save the world proves that God is love.

e. This is directed against the *pneumatikoi* who held that by intuition a human being can 'reach' God.

f. It is God himself who through his Spirit produces charity in us.

g. It is impossible to combine the love of a son with the fear of a slave.

is a liar,
since a man who does not love the brother that he can see
1 P 1:8 cannot love God, whom he has never seen.
Mt 22:36-40 Jn 14:15,21; 15:17 So this is the commandment that he has given us, 21
that anyone who loves God must also love his brother.

5

1:3+ Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ 1
has been begotten by God;
Jn 8:42 1 P 1:23 and whoever loves the Father that begot him
loves the child whom he begets.[a]
We can be sure that we love God's children 2
Rm 13:9 Ga 5:14 if we love God himself and do what he has commanded us;
this is what loving God is— 3
3:23 2 Jn 6 keeping his commandments;
Dt 30:11 Mt 11:30 and his commandments are not difficult, 4
because anyone who has been begotten by God
Jn 16:33 has already overcome the world;
2 14+ this is the victory over the world—
our faith.

Faith

Who can overcome the world? 5
Only the man who believes that Jesus is the Son of God:[b]
Jn 19:34 Jesus Christ who came by water and blood,[c] 6
Jn 4:1+ not with water only,
but with water and blood;
Jn 1:33+ with the Spirit as another witness—
2:20,27 Jn 14:26+ since the Spirit is the truth—
so that there are three witnesses,[d] 7
the Spirit, the water and the blood, 8
and all three of them agree.[e]
We accept the testimony of human witnesses, 9
Jn 5:32,37 but God's testimony is much greater,
and this is God's testimony,
given as evidence for his Son.
Everybody who believes in the Son of God 10
has this testimony inside him;
Jn 3:33 and anyone who will not believe God
is making God out to be a liar,
because he has not trusted
the testimony God has given about his Son.
Jn 3:11+ This is the testimony: 11
1:2; 5:20 Jn 1:4; 5: 21,26 God has given us eternal life
and this life is in his Son;
anyone who has the Son has life, 12
anyone who does not have the Son does not have life.

Conclusion

I have written all this to you 13
so that you who believe in the name of the Son of God
Jn 1:12; 20:31 may be sure that you have eternal life.

ENDING[f]

Prayer for sinners

Mt 7:7p We are quite confident that if we ask him for anything, 14

and it is in accordance with his will, 3:22 Jn 14:13-14; 15:7
he will hear us;
15 and, knowing that whatever we may ask, he hears us,
we know that we have already been granted what we asked of him.
16 If anybody sees his brother commit a sin
that is not a deadly sin,
he has only to pray, and God will give life to the sinner
—not those who commit a deadly sin; Jn 15:22-24
for there is a sin that is death,[g] Mt 12:31
and I will not say that you must pray about that.
17 Every kind of wrong-doing is sin,
but not all sin is deadly.[h]

Summary of the letter

18 We know that anyone who has been begotten by God 1:3+,13+
does not sin, 3:6+
because the begotten Son of God[i] protects him, Jn 1:13
and the Evil One does not touch him. 2:14+ Jn 17:15
19 We know that we belong to God,
but the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One.
20 We know, too, that the Son of God has come,
and has given us the power Jr 24:7 Ep 1:17
to know the true God.[j]
We are in the true God, Jn 17:3
as we are in his Son, Jesus Christ. 5:12
This is the true God,
this is eternal life. 1:2
21 Children, be on your guard against false gods.[k]

5 a. To believe the truth is to be begotten by God and to love God as Father and so also to love all God's other children.

b. This argument is based on two previous ones; whoever believes is begotten by God, v. 1, and to be begotten by God is to be the conqueror of the 'world', v. 4.

c. The water and the blood that came from his side when Jesus was pierced on the cross, cf. Jn 19:34 and note. These were the 'evidence', for the original eyewitnesses, but they are also the witness for all Christians as the type of the baptism and the sacrificial death of Jesus which are operative in their own lives. The three components of the new life 'in Christ' are: the death (the blood), the resurrection, baptism (the water) and the gift of the Spirit.

d. Vulg. vv. *7-8* read as follows 'There are three witnesses *in heaven: the Father the Word and the Spirit, and these three are one; there are three witnesses on earth:* the Spirit the water and the blood'. The words in italics (not in any of the early Greek MSS, or any of the early translations, or in the best MSS of the Vulg. itself) are probably a gloss that has crept into the text.

e. See note c on v. 6. The three witnesses support each other; the water of baptism is accompanied by the Spirit, and the Spirit came through the 'blood' of the death of Jesus. The writer probably intends another warning here, against the doctrine of Cerinthus—that the Spirit which came on Jesus at his baptism (water) left him before his death (blood).

f. As in the gospel, cf. Jn 21, the conclusion is followed by a postscript.

g. The sin against the Spirit, against truth, cf. Mt 12:31+.

h. Lit. 'and there is a sin that is not to death'; Vulg. omits 'not'.

i. Jesus, cf. Jn 1:13,18.

j. Lit. 'the True'; he is the only true God and the only one known for what he is in truth, i.e. Life and Love.

k. Lit. 'idols', as in paganism, but also the 'idols of the heart' (Qumran) that deflect human beings from their faith and true love. Vulg. adds 'Amen'.

2 JOHN

THE SECOND LETTER OF JOHN

1 P 5:13
3 Jn 1
1 Jn 2:21
Jn 14:17

From the Elder:[a] my greetings to the Lady, the chosen one,[b] and to her 1
children, she whom I love in the truth—and I am not the only one, for so do all
who have come to know the truth—•because of the truth that lives in us and will 2
be with us for ever. •In our life of truth and love, we shall have grace, mercy and 3
peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

The law of love

Phm 7
3 Jn 3

It has given me great joy to find that your children have been living the life of 4
truth[c] as we were commanded by the Father. •I am writing now, dear lady, not to 5
1 Jn 3:19+
1 Jn 2:7-11
give you any new commandment, but the one which we were given at the beginning, and to plead: let us love one another.

1 Jn 5:3

To love is to live according to his commandments: this is the commandment 6
which you have heard since the beginning,[d] to live a life of love.

The enemies of Christ

1 Jn 2:18
1 Jn 4:2-3

There are many deceivers about in the world, refusing to admit that Jesus 7
Christ has come in the flesh. They are the Deceiver; they are the Antichrist.
1 Jn 2:22
Watch yourselves, or all our work[e] will be lost and not get the reward it deserves. 8
If anybody does not keep within the teaching of Christ[f] but goes beyond it,[g] he 9
1 Jn 2:23-24
cannot have God with him: only those who keep to what he taught can have the
Jude 4
Father and the Son with them. •If anyone comes to you bringing a different 10
doctrine, you must not receive him in your house or even give him a greeting.
To greet him would make you a partner in his wicked work. 11

3 Jn 13f

There are several things I have to tell you, but I have thought it best not to 12
trust them to paper and ink. I hope instead to visit you and talk to you personally,
1 Jn 1:4
so that our joy[h] may be complete.

Greetings to you from the children of your sister,[i] the chosen one. 13

a. The elders were the leaders in each community, cf. Tt 1:5+. Here the title refers to John the apostle, the outstanding leader of the communities of Asia Minor.

b. The 'Chosen Lady' or 'Sovereign Lady', figurative reference to one of the local churches under the jurisdiction of the Elder.

c. Lit. 'walk in the truth'.

d. Or 'you must obey that commandment as you learnt it at the beginning'.

e. Var. (Vulg.) 'your work'.

f. Teaching either by, or about, Christ.

g. Teaching pure speculation as apostolic doctrine, cf. Tt 3:9; 1 Tm 2:16, etc.

h. Var. (Vulg.) 'your joy'.

i. The church (perhaps Ephesus) from which the letter is being written.

3 JOHN

THE THIRD LETTER OF JOHN

1 From the Elder: greetings to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2 Jn 1+
2 My dear friend, I hope everything is going happily with you and that you are as
3 well physically as you are spiritually. •It was a great joy to me when some brothers 2 Jn 4
came and told of your faithfulness to the truth, and of your life in the truth.
4 It is always my greatest joy[a] to hear that my children are living according to 1 Jn 3:19+
the truth.
5 My friend, you have done faithful work in looking after these brothers, even
6 though they were complete strangers to you.[b] •They are a proof to the whole
Church of your charity and it would be a very good thing if you could help them
7 on their journey in a way that God would approve. •It was entirely for the sake
of the name[c] that they set out, without depending on the pagans for anything; Mt 18:5p
Jn 8:24 1
8 it is our duty to welcome men of this sort and contribute our share to their work *Mt 10:10,41*
1 Tm 5:18
for the truth.

Beware of the example of Diotrephes

9 I have written a note[d] for the members of the church, but Diotrephes, who
10 seems to enjoy being in charge of it, refuses to accept us.[e] •So if I come, I shall
tell everyone how he has behaved, and about the wicked accusations he has been
circulating against us. As if that were not enough, he not only refuses to welcome
our brothers, but prevents the other people who would have liked to from doing
11 it, and expels them from the church. •My dear friend, never follow such a bad
example, but keep following the good one; anyone who does what is right is a 1 Jn 1:3+.
7+
child of God, but the person who does what is wrong has never seen God.

Commendation of Demetrius

12 Demetrius[f] has been approved by everyone, and indeed by the truth itself. 1 Jn 5:6
We too will vouch for him and you know that our testimony is true. Jn 19:35;
21:24

Epilogue

13 There were several things I had to tell you but I would rather not trust them 2 Jn 12
14 to pen and ink. •However, I hope to see you soon and talk to you personally.
15 Peace be with you; greetings from your friends; greet each of our friends by name.

a. 'Joy', var. (Vulg.) 'privilege'.
b. Probably missionaries sent by the apostle to the communities of Asia Minor.
c. The name of the Lord; i.e. the Good News or gospel which carries the name of Jesus Christ to the pagans.
d. Perhaps 2 Jn.
e. Lit. 'Diotrephes loving being (or anxious to be) their leader is not receiving us'; by rejecting John's missionaries they reject John himself.
f. Either a leading member of that community or one of the missionaries recommended to Gaius.

THE LETTER OF JUDE

Address

Ac 12:17+ From Jude, servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James; to those who are 1
called, to those who are dear to[a] God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ,
2 P 1:2 wishing you all mercy and peace and love. 2

The reason for this letter

My dear friends, at a time when I was eagerly looking forward to writing to 3
you about the salvation that we all share,[b] I have been forced[c] to write to you
Ac 9:13+ now and appeal to you to fight hard for the faith which has been once and for all
||2 P 2:1 entrusted to the saints. •Certain people have infiltrated among you, and they 4
are the ones you had a warning about, in writing, long ago, when they were
Ga 5:13 1 P 2:16 1 Jn 4:1 2 Jn 10 condemned[d] for denying all religion, turning the grace of our God into immorality,
and rejecting our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.[e]

The false teachers: the certainty of their punishment

1 Co 6:3 ||2 P 1:12 *Nb 14:26-35* 1 Co 10:5 ||*2 P 2:4* I should like to remind you—though you have already learnt it once and for 5
all[f]—how the Lord[g] rescued the nation from Egypt, but afterwards he still
destroyed the men who did not trust him. •Next let me remind you of the angels 6
Gn 6:1-2 who had supreme authority but did not keep it and left their appointed sphere;[h]
he has kept them down in the dark, in spiritual chains, to be judged on the great
Gn 19 2 P 2: 6-9 Mt 10:15p day. •The fornication of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other nearby towns was 7
equally unnatural,[i] and it is a warning to us that they are paying for their crimes
in eternal fire.

Their violent language

||2 P 2:10-12 Nevertheless, these people[j] are doing the same: in their delusions they not 8
only defile their bodies and disregard authority,[k] but abuse the glorious angels
Dt 34:6+ Dn 10:13+ as well. •Not even the archangel Michael, when he was engaged in argument 9
Zc 3:2+ with the devil about the corpse of Moses,[l] dared to denounce him in the language
of abuse; all he said was, 'Let the Lord correct you'. •But these people abuse 10
anything they do not understand; and the only things they do understand—just
by nature[m] like unreasoning animals—will turn out to be fatal to them.

Their vicious behaviour

Gn 4:8 ||2 P 2:15 1 Jn 3:12 *Nb 22:2+* Rv 2:14 *Nb 16* *Pr 25:14* ||2 P 2:13, 17-18 May they get what they deserve, because they have followed Cain; they have 11
rushed to make the same mistake as Balaam and for the same reward; they have
rebelled just as Korah did—and share the same fate. •They are a dangerous 12
obstacle[n] to your community meals, coming for the food and quite shamelessly
only looking after themselves. They are like clouds blown about by the winds and
bringing no rain, or like barren trees which are then uprooted in the winter and so

13 are twice dead; •like wild sea waves capped with shame as if with foam; or like Is 57:20
14 shooting stars[o] bound for an eternity of black darkness. •It was with them in
mind that Enoch, the seventh patriarch from Adam, made his prophecy when he
said, 'I tell you, the Lord will come with his saints in their tens of thousands, Dn 7:10 Rv 5:11
15 to pronounce judgement on all mankind and to sentence the wicked for all the
wicked things they have done, and for all the defiant things said against him by
16 irreligious sinners'.[p] •They are mischief-makers, grumblers governed only by ||2 P 2:18
their own desires,[q] with *mouths full of boastful talk*, ready with flattery for other Dn 7:8,20
people when they see some advantage in it. Lv 19:15

A warning

17 But remember, my dear friends, what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ ||2 P 3:2-3
18 told you to expect. •'At the end of time,' they told you 'there are going to be 1 Tm 4:1+
people who sneer at religion and follow nothing but their own desires for
19 wickedness.' •These unspiritual and selfish people are nothing but mischief- 1 Co 15:44+
makers.[r]

The duties of love

20 But you, my dear friends, must use your most holy faith as your foundation 1 Co 3:9-17 Ep 2:20-22
21 and build on that, praying in the Holy Spirit; •keep yourselves within the love
of God and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you eternal life.
22 23 When there are some who have doubts, reassure them; •when there are some
to be saved from the fire, pull them out; but there are others[s] to whom you must
be kind with great caution, keeping your distance even from outside clothing
which is contaminated by vice.

Doxology

24 Glory be to him who can keep you from falling and bring you safe to his ||2 P 3:14
25 glorious presence, innocent and happy.[t] •To God, the only God, who saves us
through Jesus Christ our Lord, be the glory, majesty, authority and power, which Rm 16:25-27+ Rv 5:13
he had before time began, now and for ever. Amen.

a. 'To those who are', var. 'to the nations who are'. 'dear to'; var. 'made holy by'.

b. 'the salvation that we all share'; Vulg. 'your salvation'.

c. By the danger these heretics represent.

d. Lit. 'For certain men crept in who long ago have been written beforehand for this judgement'; var. 'for this sin'.

e. Var. 'rejecting God, the only Master and our Lord Jesus Christ'.

f. The faith entrusted 'once and for all', v. 3, to the saints must never be changed.

g. God the Father, cf. 2 P 2:4. Var. (Vulg.) 'Jesus', i.e. a reference to Christ in his divine pre-existence, cf. 1 Co 10:4.

h. They let themselves be seduced by the 'daughters of men', Gn 6:1-2; the subject is elaborated in the *Book of Enoch*.

i. Lit. 'Like Sodom... in the same way fornicating and going after alien flesh'. They lusted not after human beings, but after the strangers who were angels, Gn 19:1-11. The apocryphal *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, like Jude 6-7, also compares the sin of the angels with the sin of the Sodomites.

j. The heretics living at the same time as Jude. Om. (Vulg.) 'in their delusions'.

k. 'disregard authority', lit. 'despise sovereignty'; var. 'sovereignties', i.e. the angels, cf. Ep 1:21; Col 1:16.

l. Almost certainly a reference to the apocryphal *Assumption of Moses*

m. Their lack of knowledge results from the fact that they do not possess the Spirit, they know nothing except what they have learnt through their unaided natural powers.

n. Lit. 'They are reefs to your agapēs' (cf. 1 Co 11: 20+). 'reefs': var. (Vulg.) 'blots'. 'agapēs': var. 'deceits', cf. 2 P 2:13. These heretics were still taking part in the life of the Church: all that had happened to them so far was that they had been noticed.

o. In Jewish apocrypha, e.g. the *Book of Enoch*, 'stars' often stand for 'angels'.

p. *Enoch* 1:9, probably quoted from memory.

q. Suggested by *Enoch* 5:5.

r. Lit. 'There are the ones who make divisions (Vulg. 'who separate themselves', i.e. from the Church), *psychikoi* not having the Spirit'. The heretics are like 'animals' because they act irrationally or on impulse, v. 10; the central human quality they lack is openness to the Spirit, cf. Rm 1:9+.

s. 'When there are some who have doubts, be kind to them, save them, pull them out of the fire; but there are others...'

t. Vulg. adds 'at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

THE BOOK OF
REVELATION

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Greek title of this book is 'Apocalypse of John', and the word 'apocalypse' is a transliteration of the Greek word for revelation: any writing under this title claims to include a revelation of hidden things, imparted by God, and particularly a revelation of events hidden in the future. It is not easy to draw an exact dividing line between prophecy and apocalypse, and the writers of apocalyptic are in some ways the successors of the prophets; but we can at least make the distinction that the Old Testament prophets characteristically received the message by 'hearing the word of God' and passed it on by word of mouth, whereas the author of a written apocalypse was given his revelation in a vision and passed it on in writing.

The language of apocalyptic writing is richly symbolic, and the importance of the visions which are described is never in their immediate literal meaning. It can be taken as a rule that every element in this kind of writing has symbolic value—persons, places, animals, actions, objects, parts of the body, numbers and measurements, stars, constellations, colours and garments—and if we are not to misunderstand or distort the writer's message, we must appreciate the imagery at its true value and do our best to translate the symbols back into the ideas which he intended them to convey. There are parts of the text in which this will involve our distinguishing a direct allegorical interpretation of the images that are used. There are other parts, however, in which no single interpretation can be confidently adopted, since a single group of images will be found to draw its meaning from various different associations.

Apocalyptic writing became very popular in some Jewish circles (including the Essenes of Qumran) in the two centuries before Christ. The visions of prophets like Ezekiel and Zechariah paved the way, and apocalypse as a literary form was already fully developed by the time of Daniel and in the many apocryphal writings about the beginning of the Christian era. The New Testament includes only one apocalypse; its author says he was called John, 1:9, and that at the time of writing he was an exile for his Christian faith on the island of Patmos. A tradition as early as Justin and widespread by the end of the 2nd century (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, the Canon of Muratori) identified this John with the apostle, author of the fourth gospel. On the other hand, it is almost certain that the churches of Syria, Cappadocia and even Palestine did not include the Revelation in the canon of scripture until the 5th century; evidently they did not believe it to be the work of an apostle. At the beginning of the 3rd century a priest of Rome, Caius by name, attributed it to Cerinthus the heretic, though this may have been merely an attempt to justify his attack on it. Internal evidence shows that the Revelation of John has

some affinity with the other Johannine writings, but as it is so sharply distinguished from them by language, style, and some theological positions, notably its view of the *parousia*, it is impossible to identify the author of Revelation as it stands with the author of the rest of the Johannine literature. In spite of that, Revelation is clearly Johannine in inspiration: it was written inside the apostle's immediate circle and is pervaded by his doctrine. Of its canonicity there can be no doubt; as for its date the most common opinion is that it was written in the reign of Domitian, about 95; others, with some justification, believe that parts of it at least were composed as early as Nero's time, shortly before 70.

Whatever its precise date, we cannot understand the Revelation without taking into account the historical conditions that gave birth to it. It is first and foremost a tract for the times, like the apocalypses (particularly Daniel) that preceded it and on which it draws. It was written during a period of disturbance and bitter persecution to increase the hope and determination of the infant Church. Jesus had said, 'Be brave: I have conquered the world', Jn 16:33; how therefore could God permit this mortal attack on his own Church? John's answer begins by recalling the classical themes of the prophets, notably that of the 'Great Day' of Yahweh (cf. Am 5:18+). When the Chosen People had been enslaved to the Assyrians, Chaldaeans, and Greeks, when they had been scattered abroad and nearly annihilated by persecution, the prophets had promised: the day is coming, and soon, when God will liberate his people from their oppressors, and restore their independence, and help them to conquer their enemies after he has punished them and brought them to the point of extinction. When John wrote the Revelation, the Church, the new chosen race, had just been decimated by persecution, ch. 13; 6:10-11; 16:6; 17:6; Rome and its empire (the Beast) was only a tool, but a tool wielded by Satan, ch. 12; 13:2,4, the great and only real enemy of Christ and his people. In the opening vision John describes God as emperor, enthroned in heaven; he is master of human destiny, ch. 4, and to the Lamb he gives the scroll that foretells the doom of the persecutors, ch. 5; the vision then proclaims a foreign invasion (the Parthians) and its familiar concomitants, war, famine, plague, ch. 6. During this, God's faithful will be preserved, 7:1-8; cf. 14:1-5, and eventually rejoice triumphantly in heaven, 7:9-17; cf. 15:1-5. God, however, wants to save their enemies as well, so instead of destroying them immediately, he warns them, as he had warned Egypt and its Pharaoh, by a series of plagues, ch. 8-9; cf. 16. The persecutors are only hardened in their evil determination, and God is forced to destroy them, ch. 17. Their aim was to corrupt the world and get it to worship Satan (an allusion to emperor-worship in pagan Rome). After this comes a lament over fallen Babylon (Rome), ch. 18, and hymns of victory in heaven, 19:1-10. There is a second vision of the destruction of the Beast (persecuting Rome), this time by Christ in glory, 19:11-21, that begins an era of prosperity for the Church, 20:1-6, which is to end in a new assault by Satan, 20:7f, followed by the annihilation of the Enemy, the resurrection and judgement of the dead, 20:11-15, and ultimately by the definitive establishment of the kingdom of perfect happiness in heaven when death itself has been destroyed, 21:1-8. A final vision glances back to the period just before this consummation, and describes the beauty of the new Jerusalem, or Church, on earth, 21:9f.

The significance of the Revelation is wider than this primary, basic, meaning

derived by historical interpretation: the book is interested in the unchanging realities, to which faith is always open in any period of history. God's promise to be 'with his people', cf. Ex 25:8+, protecting them and saving them, had always been the foundation of their confidence in him in the Old Testament, and it is this presence that has now been perfected by the marriage of God and his new chosen people in the person of his Son, Immanuel (God-with-us). The promise of the risen Christ, 'I shall be with you always, yes, to the end of time', is what gives life to the Church, Mt 28:20. As a result, those who are faithful to Jesus have nothing to fear: they may suffer a while for him but in the end they will triumph over Satan and his schemes. The Revelation is an epic of Christian hope, the victory song of the persecuted Church.

As it stands, the text of Revelation presents many difficulties: repetitions, interruptions in the sequence of visions, and passages obviously divorced from their context. Many explanations for this have been suggested: that Revelation was compiled from diverse sources, that whole chapters have been accidentally misplaced, etc. The following hypothesis was first suggested in 1949 (cf. *Revue Biblique*, 1949, 507-541); it is that the strictly prophetic part of Revelation, ch. 4-22, is made up of two different apocalypses written by the same author at different times and later fused into one by some author. It is suggested that the two originally separate texts are as follows:

	Text I	Text II
Prologue: The small book		10:1-2a,3-4,8-11
Satan attacks the Church	12:1-6,13-17	12:7-12
The Beast attacks the Church		13
Proclamation and preludes of the Great Day of wrath	4-9; 10:1-2b,5-7; 11:14-18	14-16
The Great Day of wrath:		
Babylon's wickedness described	17:1-9,15-18	17:10,12-14
Babylon's fall	18:1-3	(cf. 14:8)
The elect preserved		18:4-8
Lament for Babylon	18:9-13,15-19,21,24	18:14,22-23
Canticles of triumph	19:1-10	18:20 (cf. 16:5-7)
The messianic kingdom	20:1-6	
The eschatological war	20:7-10	19:11-21
The Judgement	20:13-15	20:11-12
The Jerusalem to be	21:9-22:2 and 22:6-15	21:1-4; 22:3-5; 21:5-8
Appendix: The two witnesses		11:1-13,19

The letters to the seven churches, ch. 1-3 which were certainly intended to be read as an introduction to the two prophecies, must originally also have existed as separate text.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Prologue

Dn 2:28 22:6f,16 19:10+ 22:7 Lk 11:28 2 Co 6:2+

1 This is the revelation given by God to Jesus Christ[a] so that he could tell his servants[b] about the *things which are* now *to take place* very soon; he sent his angel to make it known[c] to his servant John, •and John has written down everything he saw and swears it is the word of God guaranteed by Jesus Christ.[d] Happy[e] the man who reads this prophecy, and happy those who listen to him, if they treasure all that it says, because the Time[f] is close.

I. THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES OF ASIA

Address and greeting[g]

1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5 Ex 3:14+ *Ps 89:27,37* Is 55:4 *Ex 19:6* 1 P 2:9 *Rm 16:27+* Dn 7:13 *Zc 12:10,14* Mt 24:30+ Jn 19:37 1:4; 21:6; 22:13

From John, to the seven churches of Asia: grace and peace to you from him who is, who was, and who is to come,[h] from the seven spirits in his presence before his throne, •and from Jesus Christ, *the faithful witness, the First-born* from the dead, *the Ruler of the kings of the earth.*[i] He loves us and has washed away[j] our sins with his blood, •and made us a *line of kings, priests to serve*[k] his God and Father; to him, then, be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen. •It is he who *is coming on the clouds;* everyone will see him, even *those who pierced him,* and *all the races of the earth will mourn over him.* This is the truth. Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega'[l] says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

The beginning of the vision

Rm 5:3 2 Tm 2:12 1:20 *Dn 7:13* *Dn 10:5* Dn 7:9 Dn 10:6 Ezk 43:2 *2:1,12;* 3:1; 19:15 Heb 4:12

My name is John, and through our union in Jesus I am your brother and share your sufferings, your kingdom, and all you endure. I was on the island of Patmos[m] for having preached God's word and witnessed for Jesus; •it was the Lord's day and the Spirit possessed me, and I heard a voice behind me, shouting like a trumpet, •'Write down all that you see in a book, and send it to the seven churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea'. •I turned round to see who had spoken to me, and when I turned I saw seven golden lamp-stands •and, surrounded by them, a figure *like a Son of man,*[n] dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with a *golden girdle.* •*His head* and *his hair* were *white as white wool* or as snow, *his eyes* like a *burning* flame, *his feet like burnished bronze* when it has been refined in a furnace, and *his voice like the sound of the ocean.* •In his right hand he was holding seven stars, out of his mouth came a sharp sword, double-edged, and his face was like the sun shining with all its force.

Jg 13:20 Ezk 1:28+ Dn 8:18; 10:15-19

When I saw him, I fell in a dead faint at his feet, but he touched me with his right hand and said, 'Do not be afraid; it is I, *the First* and *the Last;* I am the

18 Living One,[o] •I was dead and now I am to live for ever and ever, and I hold the
19 keys of death and of the underworld.[p] •Now write down all that you see of present
20 happenings[q] and *things that are still to come.* •The secret of the seven stars you
have seen in my right hand, and of the seven golden lamp-stands is this: the seven
stars are the angels[r] of the seven churches, and the seven lamp-stands are the
seven churches themselves.

1:8+ Is 44:6; 48:12 Heb 7:25 Dn 2:28 Hab 2:2

1:12; 16:5

1. Ephesus

1 2 'Write to the angel of the church in Ephesus[a] and say, "Here is the message
of the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and who lives
2 surrounded by the seven golden lamp-stands: •I know all about you: how hard
you work and how much you put up with. I know you cannot stand wicked men,
and how you tested the impostors who called themselves apostles[b] and proved
3 they were liars. •I know, too, that you have patience, and have suffered for my
4 name[c] without growing tired. •Nevertheless, I have this complaint to make;
5 you have less love now than you used to. •Think where you were before you fell;
repent, and do as you used to at first, or else, if you will not repent, I shall come
6 to you and take your lamp-stand from its place.[d] •It is in your favour, nevertheless,
7 that you loathe as I do what the Nicolaitans are doing. •If anyone has ears
to hear, let him listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches: those who
prove victorious I will feed *from the tree of life set in* God's *paradise.*"[e]

1:16

1:12 *1 Th 1:3*

2 Co 11:13, 15

2:15+ 13:9 Mt 13:9

22:2 Gn 2:9 Pr 3:18

2. Smyrna

8 'Write to the angel of the church in Smyrna and say, "Here is the message of

1 **a.** Lit. 'A revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him'.

b. 'His servants' may possibly be the prophets in the early Church, cf. 10:7; 11:18; 22:6; Ac 11:27+; and Am 3:7, among whom John includes himself, cf. 19:10 and 22:9; but the same word is regularly used for all followers and disciples of Christ and 19:10 suggests that no firm distinction is made between 'prophets' and other 'witnesses to Jesus' such as evangelists and martyrs.

c. Lit. 'He conveyed through signs sent by his messenger': ambiguous, the angel could be sent by Jesus, cf. 19:10; 22:6-20, or by God, in which case the angel would be the Messiah himself, cf. 14:14,15 and 1:13.

d. Lit. 'the Word of God and the witness of Jesus Christ'.

e. First of the seven beatitudes in the Apocalypse, cf. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14.

f. When Jesus returns; cf. 3:11; 22:10,12,20 and 1:7.

g. This section makes use of many O.T. allusions to suggest the King-Messiah's glorious return, solemn enthronement and future reign over God's people in fulfilment of the promise made to David. This is basically what the whole book is about.

h. Common title in Jewish literature, developed from the name revealed to Moses: 'I am who am', Ex 3:14+.

i. The Messiah is the 'witness' to the promise that was made to David, 2 S 7:1+; Ps 89; Is 55:3-4; Zc 12:8, both in his person and in his work; as he fulfils this promise he is the efficacious Word, God's 'Yes', Rv 3:14; 19:11,13; 2 Co 1:20. Not only is he heir to David, Rv 5:5; 22:16, but by his resurrection he is the 'First-born', Col 1:18, who will reign over the universe when his enemies have been destroyed, Dn 7:14; Rv 19:16.

j. Var. 'released us from'.

k. Lit. 'He made us a kingdom and priests for': those who turn to the Messiah and whose sins he forgives, vv. 5 and 7, will be a family of king-priests, Ex 19:6+: kings because they will rule over all the nations, Dn 7:22,27; Is 54:11-17; Zc 12:1-3; cf. Rv 2:26; 5:10; 20:6; 22:5; priests because in union with Jesus the messianic Priest they will consecrate the universe to God in a sacrifice of praise.

l. The beginning and end, originator and goal, of all things: Is 41:4; 44:6; Rv 21:6; 22:13. 'the Almighty': '*pantokrator*' lit. 'the All-Ruler', a stock rendering of 'Lord of Hosts' ('Yahweh Sabaoth').

m. Deported there for being a Christian proselytiser. Patmos (10 miles x 5 miles) was used by Romans as a penal colony.

n. The Messiah as eschatological Judge (cf. Dn 7:13, also 10:6). The long robe symbolises his priesthood (cf. Ex 28:4; 29:5; Zc 3:4), the golden girdle his royalty, cf. 1 M 10:89, the white hair his eternity (cf. Dn 7:9), the burning eyes (to probe minds and 'hearts', cf. Rv 2:23) his divine knowledge, the feet of bronze (cf. Dn 2:31-45) his permanence; the brightness of his legs and face, and the strength of his voice symbolise the fear inspired by his majesty. In his power (his 'right hand') he holds the seven churches (the 'stars', cf. v. 20); he is prepared to sentence faithless Christians to death (the 'double-edged sword'), cf. 19:15+; 2:16; and Is 49:2; Ep 6:17; Heb 4:12. One or other of his attributes as Judge is used, at the beginning of each of the seven letters, to suggest the situation of the particular church addressed.

o. The one who has life 'in himself', cf. Jn 5:21,26; 1:4.

p. Lit. 'death and Hades'. Hades was the place of the dead, the Gk word corresponding to the *sheol* of the O.T., cf. Nb 16:33+. Christ has the power to release souls from Hades, Jn 5:26-28.

q. 'present happenings' refers to the letters of ch. 2 and 3; 'things that are still to come': the revelations of ch. 4-22.

r. Jews held that not only the physical universe was controlled by angels, cf. Rv 7:1; 14:18; 16:5, but also human beings (both individuals and communities), cf. Ex 23:20+. Each church here is thought of as under the control of an angel appointed to be responsible for it.

2 **a.** Metropolis of the province of Asia; the other six churches of the letters that follow were located in the same province.

b. Probably the Nicolaitans of v. 6, see 2:15+. Cf. 2 Co 11:5,13.

c. Allusion to some previous persecution.

d. Ephesus will cease to be the religious capital.

e. Var. (Vulg.) 'the paradise of my God'.

1:17-18+ Is 44:6; 48:12 Jm 2:5 *the First* and *the Last*, who was dead and has come to life again: 9 •I know the trials
you have had, and how poor you are—though you are rich[f]—and the slanderous
accusations that have been made by the people who profess to be Jews[g] but are
3:9 Jn 8:37-44 Si 2:1 really members of the synagogue of Satan. 10 •Do not be afraid of the sufferings
that are coming to you: I tell you, the devil is going to send some of you to prison
Dn 1:12,14 Lk 22:31-33 1 Co 9:25+ *to test you*, and you must face an ordeal for *ten days*.[h] Even if you have to die,
keep faithful, and I will give you the crown of life for your prize. 11 •If anyone has
ears to hear, let him listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches: for those
20:6,14; 21:8 who prove victorious there is nothing to be afraid of in the second death."

3. Pergamum

'Write to the angel of the church in Pergamum and say, "Here is the message 12
1:16; 19:15 of the one who has the sharp sword, double-edged: 13 •I know where you live,
in the place where Satan is enthroned, and that you still hold firmly to my name,
and did not disown your faith in me even when my faithful witness, Antipas, was
killed in your own town, where Satan lives.[i]

Nevertheless, I have one or two complaints to make: some of you are 14
Nb 22:2+ followers of Balaam, who taught Balak to set a trap for the Israelites[j] so that
Nb 25:1-2 1 Co 8:10 2 P 2:1 2:6 *they committed adultery*[k] *by eating food that had been sacrificed to idols*; 15 •and
among you, too, there are some as bad who accept what the Nicolaitans teach.[l]
You must repent, or I shall soon come to you and attack these people with the 16
sword out of my mouth. 17 •If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to what the
Spirit is saying to the churches: to those who prove victorious I will give the
3:12+; 19:12 Is 62:2; 65: 15 hidden manna and a white stone[m]—a stone with *a new name* written on it,
known only to the man who receives it."

4. Thyatira

'Write to the angel of the church in Thyatira and say, "Here is the message 18
1:14-15 of the Son of God who has eyes like a burning flame and feet like burnished
bronze: 19 •I know all about you and how charitable you are; I know your faith and
devotion and how much you put up with, and I know how you are still making
progress. 20 •Nevertheless, I have a complaint to make: you are encouraging the
woman Jezebel[n] who claims to be a prophetess, and by her teaching she is luring
my servants away to commit the adultery of eating food which has been sacrificed
2:14 to idols. 21 •I have given her time to reform but she is not willing to change her
adulterous life. 22 •Now I am consigning her to bed, and all her partners in adultery
to troubles that will test them severely, unless they repent of their practices;[o]
and I will see that her children[p] die, so that all the churches realise that it is I who 23
Jr 11:20+; 17:10 *search heart and loins and give each one of you what your behaviour deserves.*
Ps 62:12 Ac 1:24 But on the rest of you in Thyatira, all of you who have not accepted this teaching 24
3:8-11 or learnt the secrets of Satan,[q] as they are called, I am not laying any special
duty; 25 26 •but hold firmly on to what you already have[r] until I come. 26 •To those who
12:5; 19:5 Ps 2:8-9 prove victorious, and keep working for me until the end, *I will give* the
authority over *the pagans* 27 28 •which I myself have been given by my Father, *to rule*
1:6+; 19:15 *them with an iron sceptre and shatter them like earthenware.* And I will give him
22:16 Is 14:12 2 P 1:19 the Morning Star.[s] 29 •If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to what the Spirit
is saying to the churches."

5. Sardis

3 'Write to the angel of the church in Sardis and say, "Here is the message 1
1:16 of the one who holds the seven spirits[a] of God and the seven stars: I know all
1 Tm 5:6 about you: how you are reputed to be alive and yet are dead. 2 •Wake up; revive
what little you have left: it is dying fast. So far I have failed to notice anything in
the way you live that my God could possibly call perfect, 3 •and yet do you
remember how eager you were when you first heard the message? Hold on to that.
Mt 24:42-44p Repent. If you do not wake up, I shall come to you like a thief, without telling

you at what hour to expect me. •There are a few in Sardis, it is true, who have kept their robes from being dirtied, and they are fit to come with me, dressed in white. •Those who prove victorious will be dressed, like these, in white robes;[b] I shall not blot their names out of the book of life, but acknowledge their names in the presence of my Father and his angels. •If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

Mk 13:33▲ 1 Th 5:2▲ *7:14*

20:12+ 1 S 25:29+ Ps 69:28 Mt 10:32 Lk 9:26

6. Philadelphia

'Write to the angel of the church in Philadelphia and say, "Here is the message of the holy and faithful one who *has the key of David*, so that *when he opens, nobody can close, and when he closes, nobody can open*: •I know all about you; and now I have opened in front of you a door that nobody will be able to close[c]— and I know that though you are not very strong, you have kept my commandments and not disowned my name. •Now I am going to make the synagogue of Satan—those who profess to be Jews, but are liars, because they are no such thing—I will make them come and *fall at your feet* and admit that *you are* the people *that I love*. •Because you have kept my commandment to endure trials, I will keep you safe in the time of trial which is going to come for the whole world, to test the people of the world.[d] •Soon I shall be with you:[e] hold firmly to what you already have, and let nobody take your prize away from you. •Those who prove victorious I will make into pillars in the sanctuary of my God, and they will stay there for ever; I will inscribe on them the name of my God[f] and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God in heaven, and my own new name as well.[g] •If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

Lv 17:1+ Is 6:3+ *1:18* Is 22:22 Mt 16:19

2:9+

Is 45:14; 60:14 *Is 43:4*

2 P 2:9

2:25+ 1 Co 9:24-27 2 Co 6:2+

2:17 Ga 2:9 1 Tm 3:15 *7:4* *Ezk 48:35* *21:2f*

2:17+

7. Laodicea

'Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea and say, "Here is the message of the Amen,[h] the faithful, the true witness, the ultimate source of God's creation:[i] I know all about you: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, •but since you are neither, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth. •You say to yourself, 'I am rich, I have made a fortune, and have everything I want', never realising that you are wretchedly and pitiably poor, and

1:5+; 19:11 2 Co 1:20 Jn 1:3

Pr 13:7 Ho 7:9; 12:9 Lk 12:21

f. Smyrna's spiritual wealth contrasts with her poverty.

g. Henceforth the Church of Christ is the true Israel, cf. Ga 6:16; Rm 9:8.

h. I.e. of short duration.

i. Emperor-worship, as well as other forms of paganism, flourished in Pergamum, and is always represented in Rv as the worship of Satan, 'the prince of this world'.

j. According to one Jewish tradition, cf. Nb 31:16, Balaam suggested to Balak that he should persuade Israel to idolatry with the help of the women of Moab, Nb 25:1-3.

k. The prophets used this as a common figure of speech for idolatry, religious infidelity, cf. Ho 1:2+.

l. This doctrine had some affinity with the errors already attacked by Paul in the Captivity Letters (notably in Col); it heralded the gnostic speculations of the 2nd cent., but also tolerated a measure of compromise with pagan cults, e.g. participation in sacred banquets, cf. v. 14.

m. The perspective, as in the other six letters, is eschatological. The manna (hidden, together with the ark, by Jeremiah, 2 M 2:4-8) will be brought out as the food of those who are saved in the heavenly kingdom, cf. 15:8+. The white stone (white is the colour of triumph and joy) alludes to various ancient usages (badges of honour, tablets of discharge or admission) and symbolises entry into the kingdom. The 'new name' signifies the Christian's spiritual rebirth.

n. 'Jezebel'; var. 'your wife Jezebel'. A self-styled prophetess of the Nicolaitan sect; her name is symbolic, cf. 2 K 9:22.

o. Var. 'her practices'.

p. Those who follow her teaching.

q. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans, so called either by the heretics themselves, or, sarcastically, by their opponents, cf. 1 Co 2:10.

r. The true faith in Christ.

s. In Eastern literature the Morning Star is both the symbol of dominion and power and also, as apparently here, of resurrection and triumphant glory. Christ reigns because he rose from the dead, cf. Ac 2:36+; Rm 1:4+; Rv 1:5+, and his faithful will share his reign as they share the glory of his resurrection, on which his worldwide empire is based. In the Roman liturgy, this theme is introduced into the *Exultet* of the Easter Vigil.

3 a. These seven spirits of God are seven angels.

b. A symbol of purity but also of victory and joy.

c. Perhaps the opportunity of spreading the Good News in fresh areas, for which this is a common metaphor, cf. Ac 14:27+, and Paul's letters.

d. Lit. 'all living on the earth', i.e. the pagan world, as always in Rv. This 'testing' is therefore the plagues of 8-9 and 16, from which God's servants will be preserved, cf. 7:1f.

e. The return of Christ in glory.

f. Cf. 2:17; 14:1; 19:12,13; and Is 56:5; 62:2; 65:15. Cf. Is 1:26+.

g. Either a name that will not be known until the *parousia*, or the name 'Word', cf. 19:13.

h. Reference to Is 65:16 where 'God of truth' is literally 'God of Amen'. Cf. Rv 1:5+.

i. Cf. Pr 8:22; Ws 9:1f; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16f; Heb 1:2.

Is 55:1 blind and naked too.[j] •I warn you, buy from me the gold that has been tested in 18
the fire[k] to make you really rich, and white robes to clothe you and cover your
shameful nakedness, and eye ointment to put on your eyes so that you are able
Pr 3:12 1 Co 11:32 Heb 12:4-11 Jn 14:23 to see.[l] •I *am* the one *who reproves and disciplines all those he loves:* so repent 19
in real earnest. •Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears 20
Lk 22:29-30 me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share his meal, side by side with
1:6+; 20:4 Si 2:3 Mt 19:28 him. •Those who prove victorious I will allow to share my throne, just as I was 21
victorious myself and took my place with my Father on his throne. •If anyone has 22
ears to hear, let him listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches." '

II. THE PROPHETIC VISIONS

A. THE PRELUDE TO THE GREAT DAY

God entrusts the future of the world to the Lamb[a]

1:10 4 Then, in my vision, I saw a door open in heaven and heard the same voice 1
speaking to me, the voice like a trumpet, saying, 'Come up here: I will show
Dn 2:28 you *what is to come* in the future'. •With that, the Spirit possessed me and I saw 2
Is 6:1 Ezk 1:26-28 Ex 24:10 Gn 9:12-17 a throne standing in heaven, and the *One* who was *sitting on the throne,* •and 3
the Person sitting there looked like a diamond and a ruby. There was a rainbow
encircling the throne, and this looked like an emerald.[b] •Round the throne in a 4
Is 24:23 circle were twenty-four thrones, and on them I saw twenty-four elders[c] sitting,
8:2.5; 11:19; 16:18 dressed in white robes with golden crowns on their heads. •Flashes of lightning 5
were coming from the throne, and the sound of peals of thunder,[d] and in front
of the throne there were seven flaming lamps burning, the seven Spirits[e] of
Ex 24:10 God. •Between the throne and myself was a sea[f] that seemed to be made of glass, 6
Ezk 1:5-21 like crystal. *In the centre,* grouped round the throne itself,[g] were *four animals*[h]
Ezk 10:14 *with many eyes,* in front and behind. •*The first* animal was like *a lion, the second* 7
like *a bull, the third* animal had *a human face,* and *the fourth* animal was like
Is 6:2 Ezk 1:19; 10:12 a flying *eagle.* •*Each* of the four animals had *six wings* and *had eyes all the way* 8
round as well as inside; and day and night they never stopped singing:

Is 6:3 '*Holy, Holy, Holy*
is the Lord God, the Almighty;
1:4+ he was, he is and he is to come'.[i]

Every time the animals glorified and honoured and gave thanks to the One sitting 9
Dn 4:31 on the throne, *who lives for ever and ever,* •the twenty-four elders prostrated 10
themselves before him to worship the One *who lives for ever and ever,* and threw
down their crowns in front of the throne,[j] saying, •'You are our Lord and our 11
14:7 Ps 115:3 Rm 4:17 Ep 4:11 God, you are worthy of glory and honour and power, because you made all the
universe and it was only by your will that everything was made and exists'.[k]

Is 29:11 Ezk 2:9 Dn 12:4,9 5 I saw that in the right hand of the One sitting on the throne there was *a scroll* 1
that had writing on back and front and was sealed with seven seals.[a] •Then 2
I saw a powerful angel who called with a loud voice, 'Is there anyone worthy
5:13 to open the scroll and break the seals of it?' •But there was no one, in heaven 3
or on the earth or under the earth,[b] who was able to open the scroll and read it.
I wept bitterly because there was nobody fit to open the scroll and read it, •but 4 5
Lk 7:13-15 Gn 49:9 one of the elders said to me, 'There is no need to cry: *the Lion* of the tribe *of*
Is 11:1,10 Rm 15:12 1 Co 5:8 Heb 7:14 *Judah, the Root* of David, has triumphed,[c] and he will open the scroll and the
seven seals of it'.

Then I saw, standing between the throne with its four animals and the circle 6
Jn 1:29+ of the elders, a Lamb that seemed to have been sacrificed;[d] it had seven horns,
4:5+ Zc 4:10 and it had seven eyes,[e] which are the seven Spirits God has *sent out all over the*
world. •The Lamb came forward to take the scroll from the right hand of the 7
One sitting on the throne, •and when he took it, the four animals prostrated 8

themselves before him and with them the twenty-four elders; each one of them was holding a harp and had a golden bowl full of incense made of the prayers
9 of the saints. •They sang a new hymn:

'You are worthy to take the scroll
and break the seals of it,
because you were sacrificed, and with your blood
you bought[f] men for God
of every race, language, people and nation[g]
10 and made them *a line of kings and priests,*
to serve our God and to rule the world'.[h]

11 In my vision, I heard the sound of an immense number of angels gathered round the throne and the animals and the elders; there were *ten thousand times*
12 *ten thousand of them* and *thousands upon thousands,* •shouting, 'The Lamb that was sacrificed is worthy to be given power, riches,[i] wisdom, strength, honour,
13 glory and blessing'. •Then I heard all the living things in creation—everything that lives in the air, and on the ground, and under the ground, and in the sea, crying, 'To the One who is sitting on the throne and to the Lamb, be all praise,
14 honour, glory and power, for ever and ever'. •And the four animals said, 'Amen'; and the elders prostrated themselves to worship.

8:3
9:13+
14:3+
14:4
1:6+
Is 61:6
Ex 19:6
20:4
Dn 7:10
Jude 14-15
Dn 2:20
Ph 2:7-9
5:3
Ps 150:6
Jude 25

The Lamb breaks the seven seals[a]

1 6 Then I saw the Lamb break one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the
2 four animals shout in a voice like thunder, 'Come'. •Immediately a white

Jr 15:2-4
Ezk 5:17;
14:13-21
Zc 1:8-10;
6:1-3

j. Unlike Smyrna,2:9, Laodicea was rich in worldly goods, but spiritually poor.

k. The true riches that are of the spirit.

l. The clothing and the eye ointment are, of course, needed to repair the 'blindness and nakedness' of v.17; but there may be a special point in this as an allusion to the local products for which Laodicea was known.

4 a. God delegates to the Lamb the power of carrying out his decrees against persecuting pagans. The 'Great Day' of God's anger is about to dawn. The vision begins with a view of God's throne and widens to a view of the whole universe.

b. Lit. 'the Enthroned One looked like a jasper stone (diamond) and a *sardion* (ruby) and a rainbow round the throne looked like a *smaragdos* (emerald)'. John is careful not to describe God anthropomorphically; he prefers to give an impression of light. The whole scene draws heavily on Ezk 1 and 10; cf. also Is 6.

c. The elders have a priestly function: they praise and worship God, 4:10; 5:9; 11; 16, 17; 19:4, and offer him the prayers of the faithful, 5:8. The number twenty-four suggests the twenty-four priestly classes of 1 Ch 24:1-9; the thrones indicate that the elders are 'judges' in the New Israel which is the redeemed world; the crowns are the sign that they share God's royal power. It is to be noted that the thrones of the elders make the outer ring of the heavenly court, and in the New Jerusalem which comes down from heaven, ch. 21, the outer walls are composed of twelve foundation stones of apostles and twelve gates which are the twelve tribes of Israel.

d. Thunder is frequently associated with theophanies, cf. Ex 19:16+; Ezk 1:4,13.

e. Not the sevenfold Spirit of mediaeval tradition but the seven 'angels of the presence', cf. 3:1+; 8:2; Tb 12:15, God's messengers, cf. Zc 4:10; Tb 12:14; Lk 1:26; Rv 5:6 and *passim.*

f. Either the 'upper waters' of Gn 1:7; Ps 104:3, or the 'Sea' of 1 K 7:23-26.

g. Lit. 'In the centre of the throne and round the throne'; the text is obscure. 'In the centre of the throne and' is possibly a gloss from Ezk 1:5.

h. The symbolism derives from Ezk 1:5-21. The 'animals' are the four angels responsible for directing the physical world. 'Four' symbolises the universe; their many eyes symbolise God's omniscience and providence. They give unceasing glory to God for his creation. The figures of lion, bull, man, eagle suggest all that is noblest, strongest, wisest, most swift, in the created world. Since Irenaeus, these four creatures have been used as symbols of the four evangelists.

i. The liturgical *Trisagion* or *Sanctus* echoes this doxology. It is said that the Church thus shares in the worship of the heavenly court, but it is also possible that John's vision of heaven reproduces the worship of the Church on earth.

j. The crowns symbolise the government of the world, entrusted to the 'elders' by God. This power comes from God and must go back to him.

k. Lit. 'Through your will they were (var. 'they were not') and they were created': text uncertain.

5 a. A roll of papyrus in which God's hitherto secret decrees are written. The contents are made known in ch. 6-9.

b. In Hades, 1:18+.

c. Over Satan and the world, cf. Jn 3:35+; 1 Jn 2:14+.

d. The Messiah, the Passover lamb sacrificed for the salvation of the Chosen People, cf. Jn 1:29+. The wounds that caused the death of the Lamb are visible, but the Lamb has risen from death, and therefore stands upright. The Messiah, who became a lamb in order to submit as sacrifice, to suffer and to die, is a lion because he conquered death.

e. Symbolising the fulness (number seven) of the Messiah's power (horns) and knowledge (eyes).

f. Var. 'you bought us', 'you bought us for God'. The reading 'us' supposes that the elders are human beings, possibly the O.T. patriarchs. Lit. 'you were killed and you bought for God by your blood'.

g. Cliché for 'the whole world'. Cf. Dn 3:4,7,96.

h. Lit. 'you made them into a kingdom and priests for our God and they will reign on earth' (or 'over pagans'); Vulg. 'you have made us... we shall reign...'

i. Vulg. 'divinity'.

6 a. Ch. 6-9 plus 11:14-18 make one homogeneous whole—a series of symbolic visions heralding and preluding the destruction of the Roman empire. The four horsemen of this first vision are modelled on Zc 1:8-10 and 6:1-3; but they further symbolise the four scourges with which God, through the prophets,

horse appeared, and the rider on it was holding a bow; he was given the victor's crown and he went away, to go from victory to victory.[b]

When he broke the second seal, I heard the second animal shout, 'Come'. 3
And out came another horse, bright red, and its rider was given this duty: to take 4
Ezk21:14-16 away peace from the earth and set people killing each other. He was given a huge sword.[c]

When he broke the third seal, I heard the third animal shout, 'Come'. 5
Immediately a black horse appeared, and its rider was holding a pair of scales;[d]
Lv 26:26 Ezk 4:16f and I seemed to hear a voice shout from among the four animals and say, 'A ration 6
of corn for a day's wages, and three rations of barley for a day's wages, but do not tamper with the oil or the wine'.

When he broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth animal shout, 7
'Come'. •Immediately another horse appeared, deathly pale, and its rider was 8
1:18+ called Plague,[e] and Hades followed at his heels.[f]
Ezk 14:21 They were given authority over a quarter of the earth, *to kill by the sword, by famine, by plague and wild beasts.*

8:3; 14:18; 16:7; 19:2 When he broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar[g] the souls of all the 9
people who had been killed on account of the word of God,[h] for witnessing to it.
Lk 18:7 Dt 32:43 Jb 16:18+; 24:12 Zc 1:12-13 They shouted aloud, 'Holy, faithful Master, how much longer will you wait 10
before you pass sentence and take vengeance for our death on the inhabitants of the earth?'[i] •Each of them was given a white robe,[j] and they were told to be 11
patient a little longer, until the roll was complete and their fellow servants and brothers had been killed just as they had been.

Jl 3:4 Mt 24:29 In my vision, when he broke the sixth seal, there was a violent earthquake 12
and the sun went as black as coarse sackcloth; the moon turned red as blood all
Is 34:4 over, •and *the stars of the sky fell* on to the earth *like figs* dropping from a fig 13
tree when a high wind shakes it; •the *sky disappeared like a scroll rolling up* and all 14
16:20 the mountains and islands were shaken from their places.[k] •Then all the earthly 15
rulers, the governors and the commanders, the rich people and the men of
Is 2:10,19 influence, the whole population, slaves and citizens, took to the mountains *to hide*
Ho 10:8 Is 2:10,18,19 Lk 23:30 *in caves and among the rocks.* •*They said to the mountains* and the rocks, '*Fall on us* 16
and hide us away from the One who sits on the throne and from the anger of
Jl 2:11; 3:4 Rm 1:18 1 Co 1:8+ the Lamb. •For *the Great Day of his anger*[l] has come, *and who can survive it?*' 17
21:12

God's servants will be preserved

Ezk 7:2 7 Next I saw four angels, standing at *the four corners of the earth*, holding the 1
Jr 49:36 Zc 6:5 four winds of the world back to keep them from blowing over the land or the
sea or in the trees. •Then I saw another angel rising where the sun rises, carrying 2
the seal of the living God; he called in a powerful voice to the four angels[a]
3:12; 9:4; 13:16; 22:4 Is 44:5+ Ezk 9:4 =14:1 Ex 12:7-14 whose duty was to devastate land and sea, •'Wait before you do any damage on 3
land or at sea or to the trees, until we have put the *seal on the foreheads* of the
servants of our God'. •Then I heard how many were sealed: a hundred and forty- 4
four thousand,[b] out of all the tribes of Israel.

From the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand had been sealed; from the tribe of 5
Reuben, twelve thousand; from the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand; •from the 6
tribe of Asher, twelve thousand; from the tribe of Naphtali, twelve thousand;
from the tribe of Manasseh, twelve thousand; •from the tribe of Simeon, twelve 7
thousand; from the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand; from the tribe of Issachar,
twelve thousand; •from the tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand; from the tribe of 8
Joseph, twelve thousand; and from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.

The rewarding of the saints

=15:2-5 Gn 15:5 Dn 3:4 After that I saw a huge number, impossible to count, of people from every 9
nation, race, tribe and language;[c] they were standing in front of the throne and in
Jn 12:13 front of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palms in their hands.[d]

10 They shouted aloud, •'Victory to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the
11 Lamb!' •And all the angels who were standing in a circle round the throne, surrounding the elders and the four animals, prostrated themselves before the throne, and touched the ground with their foreheads, worshipping God
12 with these words, 'Amen. Praise and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen.'
13 One of the elders then spoke, and asked me, 'Do you know who these people
14 are, dressed in white robes, and where they have come from?' •I answered him, 'You can tell me, my lord'. Then he said,[e] 'These are the people who have been through the great persecution,[f] and because they have washed their robes white
15 again in the blood of the Lamb, •they now stand in front of God's throne and serve him day and night in his sanctuary; and the One who sits on the throne will
16 spread his tent over them. •*They will never hunger or thirst* again; *neither the*
17 *sun nor scorching wind will ever plague them,* •because the Lamb who is at the throne *will be their shepherd and will lead them to springs of living water*; and God *will wipe away all tears from their eyes.*'[g]

=15:2 Mt 24:21
1:5; 3:4; 22: 14
Is 4:5-6; 25: 4-5
Is 49:10
Is 49:10
=21:3-4; 22: 3-5
Is 25:8

The seventh seal

1 8 The Lamb then broke the seventh seal, and there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.[a]

Hab 2:20
Zp 1:7
Zc 2:17

The prayers of the saints bring the coming of the Great Day nearer

2 Next I saw seven trumpets being given to the seven angels who stand in the
3 presence of God. •Another angel, who had a golden censer,[b] came and stood at the altar.[c] A large quantity of incense was given to him to offer with the prayers
4 of all the saints on the golden altar that stood in front of the throne; •and so from the angel's hand the smoke of the incense went up in the presence of God
5 and with it the prayers of the saints. •Then the angel took the censer and *filled it with the fire* from the altar, which he then threw down on to the earth; immediately there came peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, and the earth shook.

4:5+
Tb 12:15
16:7
5:8; 6:9
Tb 12:12
Ps 141:2
Lv 16:12
Ps 11:6
Ezk 10:2
4:5; 11:19

The first four trumpets

=16:1-9

6 The seven angels that had the seven trumpets now made ready to sound them.
7 The first blew his trumpet and, with that, hail and fire, mixed with blood, were dropped on the earth; a third of the earth was burnt up, and a third of all trees,
8 and every blade of grass was burnt.[d] •The second angel blew his trumpet, and it was as though a great mountain, all on fire, had been dropped into the sea: a third
9 of the sea turned into blood, •a third of all the living things in the sea were

Jl 2:1+
Ex 9:24
Jl 3:3
Jr 51:25
Ex 7:20

threatened a faithless Israel: wild animals, war, famine, plague, cf. Lv 26:21-26; Dt 32:24; Ezk 5:17; 14:13-21; and also Ezk 6:11-12; 7:14-15; 12:16; 33:27.

b. The rider on the white horse (symbol of victory) represents the Parthians, identified by the bow, their favourite weapon. They were the terror of the Roman world in the 1st cent. These are the 'wild beasts' of v. 8 (i.e. victorious pagan nations, cf. Dt 7:22; Ezk 34:28; Jr 15:2-4; 50:17). The Parthian invasion is described in the vision of 9:13f. One tradition identified the rider with the Messiah, as in 19:11-16.

c. Symbol of war.

d. Symbol of famine: food is rationed and sold at a prohibitive price.

e. Lit. 'death', but this word (as in 'the black death') signifies an endemic plague.

f. To swallow up the victims.

g. The altar of holocaust, 1 K 8:64+.

h. The martyrs.

i. The pagan nations.

j. Symbolising triumphant joy.

k. In prophetic writings, these cosmic phenomena are the concomitants of the Day of Yahweh, cf. Am 8:9+. They are to be interpreted therefore not as physical realities but as symbols of God's anger, cf. Mt 24:1+.

l. Var. 'their anger'.

7 a. The angels of v. 1.

b. Twelve (the sacred number) squared and multiplied by one thousand represents the totality of all who have been faithful to Christ (the new Israel, cf. Ga 6:16).

c. All the Christian martyrs now in heaven, v. 14.

d. Palms symbolise victory.

e. For this form of dialogue cf. Zc 6:4-5 and also 4:4-13.

f. Nero's persecution.

g. Common metaphors in the prophetic tradition, used to symbolise eschatological bliss, cf. Ho 2:20+; Is 11:6+; they recur in 21:4.

8 a. The 'coming of Yahweh' is often preceded and heralded by silence, in prophetic literature.

b. This was in the shape of a scoop or shovel, and was also used for carrying the live coals from the altar of holocaust to the altar of incense.

c. The altar of incense, cf. Ex 30:1; 1 K 6:20-21.

d. For the symbolism of these disasters see 6:14+.

killed, and a third of all ships were destroyed. •The third angel blew his trumpet, 10
Is 14:12 and a huge star fell from the sky, burning like a ball of fire, and it fell on a third
Jr 9:14 of all rivers and springs; •this was the star called Wormwood, and a third of all 11
water turned to bitter wormwood, so that many people died from drinking it.
The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon 12
Ex 10:21-23 and a third of the stars were blasted, so that the light went out of a third of them
and for a third of the day there was no illumination, and the same with the night.
14:6 In my vision, I heard an eagle, calling aloud as it flew high overhead, 'Trouble, 13
Ezk 7:5,26 Hab 2:6 trouble, trouble, for all the people on earth at the sound of the other three
trumpets which the three angels are going to blow'.

The fifth trumpet

20:1 9 Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star[a] that had fallen from 1
Is 14:12 heaven on to the earth, and he was given the key to the shaft leading down
Gn 19:28 Ex 19:18 to the Abyss.[b] •When he unlocked the shaft of the Abyss, *smoke poured up* out of 2
the Abyss *like the smoke from a* huge *furnace* so that the sun and the sky were
Ex 10:12,15 Ws 16:9 Jl 1-2 darkened by it, •and out of the smoke dropped locusts which were given the 3
powers that scorpions have on the earth:[c] •they were forbidden to harm any 4
7:3 Ezk 9:6 fields or crops or trees[d] and told only to attack any men who were without God's
seal on their foreheads. •They were not to kill them, but to give them pain for 5
five months, and the pain was to be the pain of a scorpion's sting. •When this 6
Jb 3:21 happens, *men will long for death and not find it anywhere*; they will want to die
and death will evade them.
Jl 2:4 To look at, these locusts were *like horses armoured for battle*; they had things 7
that looked like gold crowns on their heads, and faces that seemed human, •and 8
Jl 1:6 hair like women's hair, and *teeth like lions' teeth.* •They had body-armour like 9
Jl 2:5 iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings sounded like a great charge of
horses and chariots into battle. •Their tails were like scorpions', with stings, 10
and it was with them that they were able to injure people for five months.[e] •As 11
their leader they had their emperor, the angel of the Abyss, whose name in
Hebrew is Abaddon, or Apollyon[f] in Greek.
8:13; 11:14 Ezk 7:5 That was the first of the troubles; there are still two more to come. 12

The sixth trumpet

The sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice come out of the four 13
Ex 30:1-3 horns of the golden altar[g] in front of God. •It spoke to the sixth angel with the 14
=16:12 trumpet, and said, 'Release the four angels that are chained up at the great river
1 Co 1:8 Euphrates'.[h] •These four angels had been put there ready for this hour of this 15
day of this month of this year,[i] and now they were released to destroy a third of
the human race. •I learnt how many there were in their army: twice ten thousand 16
times ten thousand mounted men. •In my vision I saw the horses, and the riders 17
Jb 41:10-13 with their breastplates of flame colour, hyacinth-blue and sulphur-yellow; the
horses had lions' heads, and fire, smoke and sulphur were coming out of their
mouths. •It was by these three plagues, the fire, the smoke and the sulphur coming 18
out of their mouths, that the one third of the human race was killed. •All the 19
horses' power was in their mouths and their tails: their tails were like snakes,
Am 4:6+ and had heads that were able to wound. •But the rest of the human race, who 20
16:9 Is 17:8 escaped these plagues, refused either to abandon *the things they had made with*
Dn 5:4 Ps 135:15-17 *their own hands*—the *idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood* that can
neither see nor hear nor move—or to stop worshipping devils. •Nor did they give 21
up their murdering, or witchcraft, or fornication or stealing.

The imminence of the last punishment

10 Then I saw another powerful angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in 1
a cloud, with a rainbow over his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs
Ezk 2:10 were pillars of fire. •In his hand he had a small scroll, unrolled; he put his right foot 2

3 in the sea and his left foot on the land •and he shouted so loud, it was *like a lion* Am 3:8
4 *roaring*. At this, seven claps of thunder made themselves heard[a] •and when the Ps 29:3-9 Jr 25:30
seven thunderclaps had spoken, I was preparing to write, when I heard a voice
from heaven say to me, 'Keep the words of the seven thunderclaps secret and do 22:10 Dn 8:26; 12:4,9
5 not write them down'.[b] •Then the angel that I had seen, standing on the sea
6 and the land, *raised his right hand to heaven*,[c] •and *swore by the One who lives* Dn 12:7 *Dt 32:40*
for ever and ever, *and made heaven and all that is in it*, and *earth and all it bears*, Ne 9:6 Ezk 12:28
7 and *the sea and all it holds*, 'The time of waiting is over; •at the time when the Ex 20:11
seventh angel is heard sounding his trumpet, God's secret intention[d] will be *Rm 16:25+*
fulfilled, just as he announced in the Good News told to *his servants the prophets*'. Am 3:7

The seer eats the small scroll

8 Then I heard the voice I had heard from heaven speaking to me again. 'Go,'
it said 'and take that open scroll out of the hand of the angel standing on sea
9 and land.' •I went to the angel and asked him to give me the small scroll, and Zc 5:2
he said, 'Take it and eat it; it will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it
10 will taste as sweet as honey'. •So I took it out of the angel's hand, and swallowed Ezk 3:1-3
it; it was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach
11 turned sour.[e] •Then I was told, 'You are to prophesy again, this time about
many different nations and countries and languages and emperors'.

The two witnesses

1 **11** Then I was given a long cane as a measuring rod, and I was told,[a] 'Go and Ezk 40:1-5 Zc 2:5-9
measure God's sanctuary, and the altar, and the people who worship there;[b]
2 but leave out the outer court and do not measure it, because it has been handed
3 over to pagans—they will trample on the holy city for forty-two months.[c] •But Lk 21:24
I shall send my two witnesses to prophesy for those twelve hundred and sixty days, 12:6,14; 13:5 Dn 7:25+
4 wearing sackcloth. •These are the *two olive trees* and the two lamps *that stand* *Zc 4:3,14*
5 *before the Lord of the world*.[d] •Fire can come from their mouths and consume *2 K 1:10* Jr 5:14
their enemies if anyone tries to harm them; and if anybody does try to harm
6 them he will certainly be killed in this way. •They are able to lock up the sky so 1 K 17:1 Jm 5:17
that it does not rain as long as they are prophesying; they are able to turn water *Ex 7:17; 11:10*
into blood and strike the whole world with any plague as often as they like.

9 a. One of the fallen angels, possibly Satan himself, cf. v. 11 and Lk 10:18.

b. Where the fallen angels are imprisoned pending their ultimate punishment.

c. The vision of locusts is suggested by Jl 1-2 which, according to Jerome, the Jews interpreted historically: the four armies of locusts being successive invaders, Assyrian, Persian, Greek, Roman; cf. Jr 51:27. Here the locusts probably indicate the Parthians. Another suggestion is that the locusts symbolise spiritual torments inflicted by demons.

d. Possibly symbols of upright, faithful Christians, cf. 7:1f.

e. Lit. 'They have scorpion-like tails and stings and their authority (power) is to harm people for five months with their tails'; Var. 'they have tails like scorpions, and stings, and in their tails (lies) their power...'

f. Destruction, or ruin.

g. This shows that the pagans are punished in answer to the martyrs' prayer of 6:9,10 (cf. 8:2f).

h. The Parthians lived east of the Euphrates; the sixth plague represents Parthian cavalry. Cf. 6:2+.

i. Lit. 'for the hour and day and month and year'. For the 'Great Day' of wrath, cf. 6:17.

10 a. The voice of God.

b. Because the time of their fulfilment has not yet come. Cf. 22:10.

c. The angel, in contact with air, sea and land, the three regions of the universe, is about to swear by him who made them. Cf. Gn 14:22; Ezk 20:6,15,28; Dt 32:40.

d. The definitive establishment of the kingdom; the sign of this is the destruction of the enemies of God's people, i.e. Babylon, ch. 17, Satan, and the pagan nations, 20:7-10. On the 'mystery' or 'secret' of God in the eschatological sense, cf. Rm 11:25; 2 Th 2:6f and Rm 16:25+. Cf. 2:24, the 'secrets of Satan'.

e. The news is sweet because it announces the Church's victory, bitter because it foretells her suffering.

11 a. Lit. 'A reed like a rod was given to me saying'; var. 'and the angel stood (there) saying'.

b. The Holy City, Jerusalem, symbolises the Church, cf. 20:9, which is about to be persecuted by the Beast (the Roman empire, cf. ch. 13). The Temple of God, which is measured as a sign that it will be spared, symbolises those who will remain faithful to Christ (cf. 14:1-5), the new 'remnant' of Israel, cf. Is 4:3+.

c. This period (three-and-a-half years) taken from Dn, had become the symbol for any persecution, cf. Lk 4:25; Jm 5:17. Here it is the Roman persecution.

d. In Zc the two olive trees symbolise Joshua and Zerubbabel, the religious and the civil leaders of the repatriated community who restored Temple and city after the Exile. Here they probably symbolise the two leaders appointed to build the new Temple, the Church of Christ, namely Peter and Paul, probably martyred in Rome under Nero, v. 8. They are described in terms of Moses and Elijah, the two witnesses of the transfiguration.

When they have completed their witnessing, the beast that comes out of the 7
Dn 7:21 Abyss[e] *is going to make war on them and overcome them* and kill them. •Their 8
corpses will lie in the main street of the Great City[f] known by the symbolic
names Sodom and Egypt, in which their Lord was crucified. •Men out of every 9
people, race, language and nation will stare at their corpses, for three-and-a-half
Jn 16:20 days, not letting them be buried, •and the people of the world will be glad about 10
Est 9:19 it and celebrate the event by giving presents to each other, because these two
prophets have been a plague to the people of the world.'
Ezk 37:5,10 After the three-and-a-half days, *God breathed life into them and they stood up,* 11
and everybody who saw it happen was terrified; •then they heard[g] a loud voice 12
from heaven say to them, 'Come up here', and while their enemies were watching,
2 K 2:11 they went up to heaven in a cloud. •Immediately, there was a violent earthquake, 13
and a tenth of the city collapsed; seven thousand persons[h] were killed in the
earthquake, and the survivors, overcome with fear, could only praise the God
of heaven.

The seventh trumpet

8:13; 9:12 Ezk 7:5 That was the second of the troubles; the third is to come quickly after it.[i] 14

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and voices could be heard shouting 15
1:5+; 12:10 Ps 2; 22:28 Dn 7:14,27 Zc 14:9 in heaven, calling, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our
Lord and his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever'. •The twenty-four elders, 16
enthroned in the presence of God, prostrated themselves and touched the ground
with their foreheads worshipping God •with these words, 'We give thanks to 17
1:4+; 16:5; 19:6 *Ps 2:1,5* you, Almighty Lord God, He-Is-and-He-Was,[j] for using your great power and
beginning your reign. •*The nations were seething with rage* and now the time has 18
19:2 Am 3:7 *19:5* Ps 115:13 come for your own anger, and for the dead to be judged, and for your servants
the prophets, for the saints and for all who worship you, small or great, to be
rewarded. The time has come to destroy those who are destroying the earth.'
Ex 25:8-10+ 2 M 2:5-8 Heb 8:5 *4:5; 8:5* Then the sanctuary of God in heaven[k] opened, and the ark of the covenant 19
could be seen inside it. Then came flashes of lightning, peals of thunder and an
earthquake, and violent hail.

The vision of the woman and the dragon[a]

22:14 Gn 37:9 Sg 6:10 12 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman,[b] adorned with the sun, 1
standing on the moon, and with the twelve stars on her head for a crown.
Gn 3:16 Mi 4:9-10 She was pregnant, and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. •Then 2
Dn 7:7 a second sign appeared in the sky, a huge red dragon which had seven heads
and ten horns, and each of the seven heads crowned with a coronet.[c] •Its tail 4
Dn 8:10 dragged a third of *the stars from the sky and dropped them to the earth,*[d] and the
dragon stopped in front of the woman as she was having the child, so that he could
Is 66:7 eat it as soon as it was born from its mother. •The woman brought *a male child* 5
2:27 Ps 2:9 *1:6+* *into the world,*[e] the son who was *to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre,* and the
child was taken straight up to God and to his throne,[f] •while the woman escaped 6
into the desert,[g] where God had made a place of safety ready, for her to be
11:3+; 12:14 looked after in the twelve hundred and sixty days.

20:2 Dn 10:13+; 12:1 And now war broke out in heaven, when Michael with his angels attacked the 7
dragon. The dragon fought back with his angels, •but they were defeated and 8
driven out of heaven. •The great dragon, the primeval serpent, known as the 9
20:2-3 Gn 3:1-4 Lk 10:19 Jn 12:31 devil or Satan, who had deceived all the world, was hurled down to the earth
and his angels were hurled down with him. •Then I heard a voice shout from 10
heaven, 'Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and
11:15 all authority for his Christ, now that the persecutor, who accused our brothers
day and night before our God, has been brought down. •They have triumphed 11
over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the witness of their martyrdom,
because even in the face of death they would not cling to life. •Let the heavens 12
rejoice and all who live there; but for you, earth and sea, trouble is coming—

because the devil has gone down to you in a rage, knowing that his days are numbered.' 20:3 2 Co 6:2+

13 As soon as the devil found himself thrown down to the earth, he sprang
14 in pursuit of the woman, the mother of the male child, •but she was given a huge pair of eagle's wings to fly away from the serpent into the desert, to the place where she was to be looked after for *a year and twice a year and half a year.*[h] Gn 3:15 Ex 19:4 Is 40:31 *11:3+; 12:6* Dn 7:25+
15 So the serpent vomited water from his mouth, like a river, after the woman,
16 to sweep her away in the current,[i] •but the earth came to her rescue; it opened
17 its mouth and swallowed the river thrown up by the dragon's jaws. •Then the dragon was enraged with the woman and went away to make war on the rest of her children, that is, all who obey God's commandments and bear witness for Jesus.[j] Gn 3:15 14:12

The dragon delegates his power to the beast[k] Dn 7 2 Th 2:3-12

18 1 I was standing[l] on the seashore. 13 Then I saw *a beast emerge from the sea:* =17:3,8 Dn 7:3
2 it had seven heads and ten horns, with a coronet on each of its ten horns, and its heads were marked with blasphemous titles. •I saw that the beast *was like a leopard,* with paws like *a bear* and a mouth like *a lion*; the dragon had handed Dn 7:4-6
3 over to it his own power and his throne and his worldwide authority.[a] •I saw that Jr 27:6 Lk 4:6 one of its heads seemed to have had a fatal wound but that this deadly injury had healed[b] and, after that, the whole world had marvelled and followed the beast.
4 They prostrated themselves in front of the dragon because he had given the beast 17:8; 18:18 Jr 27:6 his authority; and they prostrated themselves in front of the beast, saying, 'Who
5 can compare with the beast?[c] How could anybody defeat him?' •For forty-two 11:3+ months the beast was allowed *to mouth its boasts* and blasphemies and to do Dn 7:8,11; 11:36+
6 whatever it wanted; •and it mouthed its blasphemies against God, against his
7 name, his heavenly Tent and all those who are sheltered there. •It was allowed

e. The emperor Nero, type of Antichrist, cf. 13:1,18; 17:8 with notes.

f. The Great City here is Babylon i.e. Rome, cf. 16:19; 17:18; 18:10,16,18,19; it is called Sodom and Egypt for its two great crimes: refusing God's messengers and oppressing the people of Christ, cf 17:4-6. The words 'in which their Lord was crucified', identifying the Great City with Jerusalem, are probably a gloss suggested by Mt 23:37, or can be justified by the responsibility of Roman authority for the crucifixion.

g. Var. 'I heard'.

h. The figure symbolises people of all classes of society (seven) and in great numbers (thousands).

i. The second disaster was described (the sixth trumpet) in 9:15-19. The third is to be the fall of Babylon (Rome) in ch. 17-18.

j. Add. (Vulg.) 'and he is to come'.

k. As opposed to the Jerusalem Temple referred to in vv. 1 and 2.

12 a. This chapter is made up of two separate visions: the attack of the dragon on the woman and her children, vv. 1-6 and 13-17; the attack of Michael on the dragon, vv. 7-12.

b. The woman is essentially an image of Israel as the mother of the messianic saviour, cf. Mi 4:9-10; Is 66:7; the son born to her is, like Moses, snatched from the dragon of water (in whom Leviathan of the Nile-Pharaoh can be seen) and taken up to the throne, while she herself escapes into the desert for a time of 42 months which recalls the 42 years of Israel's desert wanderings; the earth's swallowing of the dragon's river can be associated with the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. The Messiah is here seen under the type of Moses. The woman's pain in travail may recall the curse of Eve, whose offspring would ultimately wound the serpent, so that Israel is seen as representing all humanity. It does not seem probable that John had Mary in mind or intended any allusion to the physical birth of the Messiah in the incarnation; cf. note to v. 5.

c. I.e. Satan, cf. v. 9 and 20:2; this Hebr. word, rendered diabolos by LXX, in its primary sense means 'Accuser', cf. v. 10 and Zc 3:1-2 and see Jb 1:6+. In Jewish tradition the snake and the dragon symbolised the power of evil, the enemy of God and his people which God is to destroy at the end of time, cf. Jb 3:8+ and 7:12+.

d. Allusion to the fall of the angels seduced by Satan.

e. The Messiah considered simultaneously as an individual person and as head or leader of the new Israel, cf. the 'Son of Man' of Dn 7:13, and the 'Servant of Yahweh' of Is 42:1+.

f. Allusion to the ascension and the triumph of the Messiah that will result in the dragon's fall.

g. Traditional O.T. refuge for the persecuted, cf. Ex 2:15; 1 K 17:2f; 19:3f; 1 M 2:29,30. To exist, the Church must depend not on paganism but on her own divine life, cf. Ex 16; 1 K 17:4,6; 19:5-8; Mt 14: 13,19.

h. Lit. 'a time and times and half a time'. Three-and-a-half years, cf. 11:3+.

i. The Roman empire, like a flood let loose by Satan, cf. Is 8:7-8, will try to engulf the Church, cf. Rv 13.

j. All faithful Christians.

k. This vision is inspired by Dn 7 (persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes). According to Rv 17:10,12-14, the Beast symbolises the Roman empire, type of all forces that are to oppose the Church. The seven heads are a series of successive emperors: the ten crowned horns are ten subject kings.

l. Var. 'he stood' which would join v. 18 to the preceding passage.

13 a. Satan, 'prince of this world', Jn 12:31+, can give imperial power to anybody he chooses, cf. Lk 4:6+.

b. Allusion to the empire recovering after some temporary setback; possibly Julius Caesar's assassination or the disturbances after Nero's death. The risen beast is a caricature of the risen Christ.

c. A parody of the name Michael, 12:7, which means 'Who-can-compare-with-God?'

Dn 7:21 Dn 7:6 *to make war against the saints and conquer them, and given power* over every race, people, language and nation; 8 •and all people of the world will worship it, that is, everybody whose name has not been written down since the foundation of 20:12+ 2:7 the world in the book of life of the sacrificial Lamb. 9 •If anyone has ears to hear, Mt 13:9 Jr 15:2 let him listen: 10 •*Captivity for those who are destined for captivity; the sword for those who are to die*[a] *by the sword.*[c] This is why the saints must have constancy and faith.

The false prophet as the slave of the beast

Then I saw a second beast; it emerged from the ground;[f] it had two horns 11
Mt 7:15 like a lamb, but made a noise like a dragon. 12 •This second beast was servant to the first beast, and extended its authority everywhere, making the world and all its people worship the first beast, which had had the fatal wound and had
Dt 13:2-4 Mt 24:24 2 Th 2:9-10 been healed. 13 •And it worked great miracles, even to calling down fire from heaven on to the earth while people watched. 14 •Through the miracles which it was allowed to do on behalf of the first beast, it was able to win over the people of the world and persuade them to put up a statue in honour of the beast that
15:2 had been wounded by the sword and still lived. 15 •It was allowed to breathe life into this statue, so that the statue of the beast was able to speak, and to have
Dn 3:5-7.15 *anyone who refused to worship the statue of the beast* put to death.[g] 16 •He compelled 7:3; 14:9. 11; 16:2; 19:20; 20: 4 everyone—small and great, rich and poor, slave and citizen—to be branded on the right hand or on the forehead, 17 •and made it illegal for anyone to buy or sell anything unless he had been branded with the name of the beast or with the number of its name.

17:9 There is need for shrewdness here: if anyone is clever enough he may interpret 18 the number of the beast: it is the number of a man, the number 666.[h]

=7:1-8+ **The companions of the Lamb**[d]

2 K 19:30-31 Jl 3:5 Ob 17 Zp 3:12-13 Ac 2:21+ 14 Next in my vision I saw Mount Zion, and standing on it a Lamb[b] who 1 had with him a hundred and forty-four thousand people, all with his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 •I heard a sound coming out of the sky like the sound of the ocean or the roar of thunder; it seemed to be
5:9; 15:3 the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 •There in front of the throne they were Ps 33:3; 98:1 Is 42:10; 43: 19 singing a new hymn[e] in the presence of the four animals and the elders, a hymn that could only be learnt by the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been
Jr 2:2-3 Jm 1:18 redeemed from the world.[d] 4 •These are the ones who have kept their virginity[e] and not been defiled with women; they *follow* the Lamb wherever he goes;[f]
Zp 3:13 they have been redeemed from amongst men to be *the first-fruits for God* and for the Lamb. 5 •They never *allowed a lie*[g] *to pass their lips* and no fault can be found in them.

Angels announce the day of Judgement[h]

8:13 Then I saw another angel, flying high overhead, sent to announce the Good 6
Dn 3:4 News of eternity to all who live on the earth, every nation, race, language and
4:11 Mt 10:28p tribe. 7 •He was calling, 'Fear God and praise him, because the time has come for him to sit in judgement; worship *the maker of heaven and earth and sea* and every
Ex 20:11 water-spring'.

=18:2-3 Is 21:9 Is 51:17+ Jr 25:15 A second angel followed him, calling, '*Babylon has fallen, Babylon the Great has* 8 *fallen,*[i] Babylon which gave the whole world *the wine of* God's *anger* to drink'.[j]

13:15-17+ A third angel followed, shouting aloud, 'All those who worship the beast and 9 his statue, or have had themselves branded on the hand or forehead, 10 •will be made
16:19; 19: 20+; 20: 14+ Gn 19:28 19:3 Is 34:9-10 to drink the wine of God's fury which is ready, undiluted, in his cup of anger; in *fire and brimstone*[k] they will be tortured in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb 11 •and *the smoke* of their torture *will go up for ever* and ever. There will be no respite, *night or day*, for those who worshipped the beast or its statue or accepted branding with its name.' 12 •This is why there must be constancy in the

13 saints who keep the commandments of God and faith in Jesus. •Then I heard a voice from heaven say to me, 'Write down: Happy are those who die in the Lord! Happy indeed, the Spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good deeds go with them.'

12:17 Ac 9:13+ 1:3+ Si 14:19 2 Th 1:7 *Mt 11:28-29* Heb 4:10

The harvest and vintage of the pagans[l]

Jl 4:12-13

14 Now in my vision I saw a white *cloud* and, *sitting on it, one like a son of man* 1:7 Dn 7:13
15 with a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. •Then another angel came out of the sanctuary, and shouted aloud to the one sitting on the cloud, '*Put your sickle in* and reap: harvest time has come and *the harvest* of the earth Jl 4:13 Am 8:2
16 *is ripe*'. •Then the one sitting on the cloud set his sickle to work on the earth, and the earth's harvest was reaped. *Mt 13:36-43* Jn 4:35 Rm 2:6+

17 Another angel, who also carried a sharp sickle, came out of the temple in
18 heaven, •and the angel in charge of the fire left the altar[m] and shouted aloud to 6:9-10; 8:3-5
the one with the sharp sickle, 'Put your sickle in and cut all the bunches off the
19 vine of the earth; all its grapes are ripe'. •So the angel set his sickle to work on 19:15 Is 63:1-6
the earth and harvested the whole vintage of the earth and put it into a huge
20 winepress, the winepress of God's anger, •outside the city,[n] where it was trodden
until the blood that came out of the winepress was up to the horses' bridles as 19:14,21
far away as sixteen hundred furlongs.

The hymn of Moses and the Lamb[a]

1 15 What I saw next, in heaven, was a great and wonderful sign: seven angels were bringing the seven plagues that are the last of all, because they
2 exhaust the anger of God. •I seemed to see a glass lake suffused with fire, and =7:9,14; 13:15-18
standing by the lake of glass, those who had fought against the beast and won, and against his statue and the number which is his name. They all had harps
3 from God, •and they were singing the hymn of Moses,[b] the servant of God, 14:3+ Ex 15
and of the Lamb:

d. Var. 'he who kills by the sword must die...'

e. This seems to mean that God's decrees against the persecutors will be carried out inexorably; their punishment is at hand; cf. 14:11,12; Mt 26:52.

f. This second beast is later called the 'false prophet', 16:13; 19:20; 20:10. Before describing the return of the Son of Man, 14:14-21; cf. 19:11f and Mt 24:30, John describes the activities of the false messiahs (first beast) and false prophets (second beast) foretold by Christ himself, Mt 24:24; cf. 2 Th 2:9.

g. The second beast mimics the Spirit who works miracles in the Church to encourage faith in Christ. Similarly, the first beast had imitated the risen Messiah, 13:3. The Dragon, the first beast and the second beast form a caricature of the Trinity.

h. Var. '616'. In both Greek and Hebr., letters are used for numbers, the value corresponding to the place in the alphabet; by adding up the values of component letters the total 'number of a person's name' is obtained. Some commentators point out that in Hebr. the letters of Caesar Nero add up to 666, and that in Greek the letters of Caesar-God add up to 616 (the alternative reading).

14 a. The followers of the beast who are branded with his name and number, 13:16-17, are now contrasted with the followers of the Lamb marked with his name and the name of his Father. This is the 'remnant' of the new Israel, Is 4:3+, the faithful Christians who have survived persecution and who are to begin the restoration of God's kingdom when its enemies have been destroyed.

b. Var. 'the Lamb'.

c. Moses had celebrated the deliverance from Egypt, Ex 15:1-21; cf. Rv 15:3-5; the new hymn celebrates the new deliverance of God's people and of the new order introduced by the Lamb that was sacrificed.

d. Lit. 'the earth', which is here equivalent to the 'world' of the fourth gospel, cf. Jn 1:10+, i.e. the pagan world, cf. 5:9.

e. Metaphorically. In the O.T. marital infidelity is a metaphor for idolatry, cf. Ho 1:2+, in this case the worship of the beast.

f. Just as Israel followed Yahweh at the Exodus, so the new Israel, newly redeemed, follows the Lamb into the desert, cf. Jr 2:2-3, where the marriage rites are renewed (Ho 2:16-25).

g. I.e. they have not invoked false gods, the beast.

h. Before God's vengeance strikes, the angels appear to exhort the persecutors to repentance by proclaiming the hour of judgement; but the appeal goes unheeded, cf. 16:2,9,11,21. See 15:5+.

i. The tense is the prophetic perfect.

j. Lit. 'who has made all nations drink the wine of anger' corr. 'drink the wine of the anger of her adultery' Greek, as in 18:3. The 'wine of anger' is a familiar image, cf. Is 51:17+, for the divine anger to which Babylon (Rome) has exposed all nations by making them worship her idols.

k. The lake of burning sulphur is where the wicked are punished, cf. 19:20; 20:10; 21:8.

l. The destruction of the pagan nations. The fulfilment of this prophecy is described in 19:11f.

m. Persecutors are annihilated in answer to the martyrs' prayers which are carried to God by the angel who tends the altar fire.

n. The pagans are to be destroyed outside Jerusalem according to Zc 14:2f,12f; Ezk 38-39; cf. Heb 13:11; Lv 4:12+. See also Is 63.

15 a. The hymn of Moses, vv. 2-4, interrupts the development of the vision of the seven cups, just as the symbolic liturgy of 8:3-5 interrupted the vision of the seven trumpets. The severity of the divine punishment is thus vindicated before it is described.

b. The hymn of Ex 15 which celebrated Israel's triumph over Pharaoh. Here the conquerors of the

Ps 92:5; 98:1 'How great and wonderful are all your works,
Lord God Almighty;
Dt 32:4 Ps 145:17 just and true are all your ways,
King of nations.
Jr 10:7 *Who would not revere* and *praise your name, O Lord?* 4
You alone are holy,
Ps 86:9 *and all the pagans will come and adore you*
for the many acts of justice you have shown.'

The seven bowls of plagues[c]

Ex 25:22+ After this, in my vision, the sanctuary, the Tent of the Testimony, opened 5
in heaven, •and out came the seven angels with the seven plagues, wearing pure 6
19:8 white linen, fastened round their waists with golden girdles. •One of the four 7
14:8+ animals gave the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the anger of God
1 K 8:10 Is 6:4 who lives for ever and ever. •*The smoke from the glory* and the power *of God* 8
filled the temple so that no one could go into it[d] until the seven plagues of the
seven angels were completed.

=8:6-12 16 Then I heard a voice from the sanctuary shouting to the seven angels, 1
'Go, and empty the seven bowls of God's anger over the earth'.

The first angel went and emptied his bowl over the earth; at once, on all the 2
13:15-17 people who had been branded with the mark of the beast and had worshipped
Ex 9:8-11 its statue, there came disgusting and virulent sores.

The second angel emptied his bowl over the sea, and it turned to blood, like 3
the blood of a corpse, and every living creature in the sea died.

Ex 7:14-24 The third angel emptied his bowl into the rivers and water-springs and they 4
1:20+ turned into blood. •Then I heard the angel of water say, 'You are the holy 5
1:4+ *11:17* He-Is-and-He-Was, the Just One, and this is a just punishment: •they spilt the 6
=*18:24* Ezk 35:6 blood of the saints and the prophets, and blood is what you have given them
Mt 23:35 *6:9; 8:3-4* to drink; it is what they deserve'. •And I heard the altar itself say, 'Truly, Lord 7
Dn 3:27 =*19:2* God Almighty, the punishments you give are true and just'.

The fourth angel emptied his bowl over the sun and it was made to scorch 8
people with its flames; •but though people were scorched by the fierce heat of it, 9
9:20 Am 4:6+ they cursed the name of God who had the power to cause such plagues, and
they would not repent and praise him.

The fifth angel emptied his bowl over the throne of the beast[a] and its whole 10
Ex 10:21-23 Is 8:22 empire was plunged into darkness. Men were biting their tongues for pain,
Jr 5:3 but instead of repenting for what they had done, they cursed the God of heaven 11
because of their pains and sores.

=9:14 The sixth angel emptied his bowl over the great river Euphrates; all the water 12
dried up so that a way was made for the kings of the East[b] to come in. •Then 13
from the jaws of dragon and beast and false prophet I saw three foul spirits come;
Ex 8:2-3 they looked like frogs •and in fact were demon spirits, able to work miracles, 14
17:13-14; 19:19 going out to all the kings of the world to call them together for the war of the
1 Co 1:8+ 3:3-4,18 1:3+ Great Day of God the Almighty.[c]—•This is how it will be: I shall come like 15
a thief. Happy is the man who has stayed awake and not taken off his clothes
=20:8 so that he does not go out naked and expose his shame.—•They called the 16
kings together at the place called, in Hebrew, Armageddon.[d]

18:4 Is 66:6 *21:6 4:5* The seventh angel emptied his bowl into the air, and a voice shouted from 17
the sanctuary,[e] 'The end has come'. •Then there were flashes of lightning and 18
Dn 12:1 Mk 13:19 peals of thunder and the most violent earthquake *that anyone has ever seen since*
there have been men *on the earth.* •The Great City was split into three parts 19
14:8,10 and the cities of the world collapsed; Babylon the Great was not forgotten:
God made her drink the full winecup of his anger. •Every island vanished and 20
6:14 *Ex 9:22-26* the mountains disappeared;[f] •and hail, with great hailstones weighing a talent 21
each,[g] fell from the sky on the people. They cursed God for sending a plague
of hail; it was the most terrible plague.

B. THE PUNISHMENT OF BABYLON

The famous prostitute

Ezk 16:23

17 1 One of the seven angels that had the seven bowls came to speak to me,
and said, 'Come here and I will show you the punishment given to the
2 famous prostitute[a] *who* rules *enthroned beside abundant waters*,[b] •the one with Jr 51:13
whom all the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and who has made 18:3+ Is 23:17
3 all the population of the world drunk with the wine of her adultery'.[c] •He took Jr 51:7
me in spirit to a desert,[d] and there I saw a woman riding a scarlet beast which Is 21:1f
had seven heads and ten horns[e] and had blasphemous titles written all over it. =13:1
4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and glittered with gold and jewels 18:16
and pearls, and she was holding a gold winecup filled with the disgusting filth Jr 51:7
5 of her fornication; •on her forehead was written a name, a cryptic name:
'Babylon the Great,[f] the mother of all the prostitutes and all the filthy practices 2 Th 2:7
6 on the earth'. •I saw that she was drunk, drunk with the blood of the saints, 1 P 5:13+
and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;[g] and when I saw her, I was completely
7 mystified. •The angel said to me, 'Don't you understand? Now I will tell you
the meaning of this woman, and of the beast she is riding, with the seven heads
and the ten horns.

The symbolism of the beast and the prostitute

8 'The beast you have seen once was and now is not; he is yet to come up =13:3,4
from the Abyss, but only to go to his destruction.[h] And the people of the world,
whose names have not been written since the beginning of the world in the book 20:12+
of life, will think it miraculous when they see how the beast once was and now
9 is not and is still to come. •Here there is need for cleverness, for a shrewd mind; 13:18
the seven heads are the seven hills, and the woman is sitting on them.
10 'The seven heads are also seven emperors.[i] Five of them have already gone,
one is here now, and one is yet to come; once here, he must stay for a short while.
11 The beast, who once was and now is not, is at the same time the eighth and one of
the seven, and he is going to his destruction.
12 '*The ten horns are ten kings*[j] who have not yet been given their royal power Dn 7:24
but will have royal authority only for a single hour and in association with the
13 beast. •They are all of one mind in putting their strength and their powers at the 16:14

beast celebrate the justice of God in punishing the wicked persecutors.

c. Before finally destroying Babylon (Rome), 16:18-19, God sends a series of plagues on the wicked (several are reminiscent of the Egyptian plagues, Ex 7-10) to bring them to repentance; but, like Pharaoh, the wicked are obstinate.

d. According to 2 M 2:4-8 the reappearance of the sacred tent and the manifestation of God's glory as in the time of Moses, Ex 40:34-35, and of Solomon, 1 K 8:10, were to herald the coming of the messianic age and the renaissance of the chosen people. The 'glory' (cf. Ex 24:16+) is the sign of God's presence (cf. the 'silence' of 8:1, and the appearance of the ark of the covenant in 11:19).

16 a. Rome, type of all pagan powers hostile to God.

b. The Parthian kings, dreaded by the Roman world.

c. The work of these evil spirits is foreordained to bring the pagan nations to judgement.

d. I.e. 'the mountains of Megiddo'. The defeat of King Josiah near this town, 2 K 23:29f, made the place symbolise disaster for any armies assembling there, cf. Zc 12:11.

e. Add. '(proceeding) from the throne' or 'from God'.

f. These cosmic phenomena symbolise the powers of this world withering under God's anger.

g. Lit. 'about one talent'.

17 a. Rome, type of any place where evil is supreme. Prostitution symbolises idolatry as in Ezk 16 and 23, cf. Ho 1:2+. See also Rv 14:4+.

b. A literal description of Babylon, metaphorically explained in v. 15.

c. All pagan nations and their kings who have adopted the imperial cult.

d. Where unclean beasts live, cf. Lv 16:8+; 17:7+.

e. The seven heads are Rome's seven hills, v. 9, and the horns ten subject kings, v. 16. The beast, v. 8, is Nero himself; he is dead but will return as the ruler of the subject peoples to avenge himself on Rome, vv. 16-17—a reflection of popular belief that the dead Nero would return, at the head of a Parthian army. This return figures as a parody of Christ's resurrection just as the formula of v. 8, 'he once was and now is not (and he is to come)' echoes the divine name, 'He was, he is, and he is to come'.

f. Babylon is the symbolic name for Rome.

g. Allusion to Nero's persecutions. Like Jerusalem (Ezk 16:36-38 and 23:37-45) Rome is guilty of a double crime: idolatry, v. 4, and murder, v. 6.

h. Two different interpretations of the beast's symbolism are combined, vv. 8,9,15-18 and vv. 10,12-14; these correspond to the two originally distinct texts of Rv (see Introduction).

i. Seven Roman emperors; the sixth, Nero, is now on the throne.

j. The kings of the satellite nations.

19:11-21 beast's disposal, •and they will go to war against the Lamb; but the Lamb is 14
14:4 Dt 10:17 2 M 13:4 1 Tm 6:16 *the Lord of lords and the King of kings*, and he will defeat them and they will
be defeated by his followers, the called, the chosen, the faithful.'
Jr 51:13 Dn 3:4 The angel continued, 'The waters you saw, beside which the prostitute was 15
sitting, are all the peoples, the populations, the nations and the languages. •But 16
the time will come when the ten horns and the beast will turn against the
Ezk 16:37-41; 23:25-29 prostitute, and *strip off her clothes and leave her naked*; then they will eat her
flesh and burn the remains in the fire. •In fact, God influenced their minds to do 17
what he intended, to agree together to put their royal powers at the beast's
11:8+ disposal until the time when God's words should be fulfilled. •The woman you 18
saw is the great city which has authority over all the rulers on earth.'

An angel announces the fall of Babylon

Jr 50 Ezk 43:2 **18** After this, I saw another angel come down from heaven, with great 1
authority given to him; *the earth was lit up with his glory*. •At the top of 2
=14:8 Is 21:9 Jr 50:15 *Is 13:21-22;* 34:11,14 his voice he shouted, '*Babylon has fallen*, Babylon the Great has fallen, and has
become *the haunt of devils* and a lodging for every foul spirit and dirty, loath-
some bird. •All the nations have been intoxicated by the wine of her prostitution;[a] 3
17:2 Jr 51:7 every king in the earth has committed fornication with her, and every merchant
grown rich through her debauchery.'

The people of God summoned away

16:17 Is 48:20; 52:11 Jr 50:8; 51:6 *Jr 51:9* A new voice spoke from heaven; I heard it say, 'Come out, my people, away 4
from her, so that you do not share in her crimes and have the same plagues
to bear. •*Her sins have reached up to heaven*, and God has her crimes in mind: 5
Gn 18:20 *Jr 50:15* *Jr 16:18* *she is to be paid in her own coin.* She must be paid double the amount she exacted. 6
She is to have a doubly strong cup of her own mixture. •Every one of her shows 7
Is 47:8 and orgies is to be matched by a torture or a grief. *I am the queen on my throne,*
she says to herself, and *I am no widow* and shall never be in mourning. •For that, 8
Is 47:9 *within a single day*, the plagues will fall on her: disease and mourning and famine.
She will be burnt right up. The Lord God has condemned her, and he has great
power.'

Ezk 27-28 **The people of the world mourn for Babylon**

Ezk 26:17 There will be mourning and weeping for her by the kings of the earth who 9
have fornicated with her and lived with her in luxury. They see the smoke as she
burns, •while they keep at a safe distance from fear of her agony. They will 10
say:

'Mourn, mourn for this great city,
Babylon, so powerful a city,
doomed as you are within a single hour'.

There will be weeping and distress over her among all the traders of the earth 11
when there is nobody left to buy their cargoes of goods; •their stocks of gold 12
and silver, jewels and pearls, linen and purple and silks and scarlet; all the
sandalwood, every piece in ivory or fine wood,[b] in bronze or iron or marble; •the 13
cinnamon and spices, the myrrh and ointment and incense; wine, oil, flour and
1 Tm 1:10+ corn; their stocks of cattle, sheep, horses and chariots, their slaves, their human
cargo...

Ho 10:5 Am 6:7 'All the fruits you had set your hearts on have failed you; gone for ever, never 14
to return, is your life of magnificence and ease.'

The traders who had made a fortune out of her will be standing at 15
a safe distance from fear of her agony, mourning and weeping. •They will be 16
saying:

'Mourn, mourn for this great city;
for all the linen and purple and scarlet that you wore,

for all your finery of gold and jewels and pearls; 17:4
17 your riches are all destroyed within a single hour'.

All the captains and seafaring men,[c] sailors and all those who make a living Ezk 27:27-29
18 from the sea will be keeping a safe distance, •watching the smoke as she burns,
19 and crying out, 'Has there ever been a city as great as this!' •They will throw dust on their heads and say, with tears and groans:

'Mourn, mourn for this great city
whose lavish living has made a fortune
for every owner of a sea-going ship;
ruined within a single hour.

20 'Now heaven, celebrate her downfall, and all you saints, apostles and prophets: =19:1-2 Dt 32:43 Is 44:23 Jr 51:48
God has given judgement for you against her.'
21 Then a powerful angel picked up a boulder like a great millstone, and as he *Ex 15:5* Jr 51:63-64
hurled it into the sea, he said, 'That is how the great city of Babylon is going Ezk 26:21
to be hurled down, never to be seen again.[d]

22 'Never again in you, Babylon, Is 24:8 Jr 7:34; 16:9 Ezk 26:13
will be heard the song of harpists and minstrels,
the music of flute and trumpet;
never again will craftsmen of every skill be found
or *the sound of the mill* be heard; Jr 25:10
23 never again will shine *the light of the lamp*,
never again will be heard
the voices of bridegroom and bride.
Your traders were the princes of the earth,
all the nations were under your spell.

24 In her you will find the blood of prophets and saints, and all the blood that was =16:5-7 Mt 23:35-37
ever shed on earth.'

Songs of victory in heaven

1 19 After this I seemed to hear the great sound of a huge crowd in heaven,
2 singing, 'Alleluia! Victory and glory and power to our God! •He judges 18:20+ Jr 51:48
fairly, he punishes justly, and he has condemned the famous prostitute who =*16:7* Dn 3:27
corrupted the earth with her fornication; he has avenged his servants that she *6:9;* 11:8
3 killed'. •They sang again, 'Alleluia! *The smoke* of her *will go up for ever* and *14:11*
4 ever.' •Then the twenty-four elders and the four animals prostrated themselves Is 34:10
and worshipped God seated there on his throne, and they cried, 'Amen, Alleluia'.
5 Then a voice came from the throne; it said, 'Praise our God, you servants 11:18
6 of his and *all who, great or small, revere him*'. •And I seemed to hear the voices *Ps 115:13*
of a huge crowd, like the sound of the ocean or the great roar of thunder,
7 answering, 'Alleluia! The reign of the Lord our God Almighty has begun; •let us 11:17
be glad and joyful and give praise to God, because this is the time for the marriage Mt 22:9
8 of the Lamb.[a] •His bride is ready, and she has been able to dress herself in dazzling Ep 5:27+ *15:6*
9 white linen,[b] because her linen is made of the good deeds of the saints.' •The Is 61:10
angel said, 'Write this: Happy are those who are invited to the wedding feast of Mt 22:12 1:3+
the Lamb', and he added, 'All the things you have written are true messages Mt 8:11+; 22:1-14
10 from God'. •Then I knelt at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'Don't *Dn 8:26* 1:1; 22:8-9
do that: I am a servant just like you and all your brothers who are witnesses to 20:4

18 a. 'her prostitution'; var. 'the anger of her prostitution', cf. 14:8. 'have been intoxicated', lit. 'have drunk deep'; var. 'have fallen' or 'she has drunk deep'
b. Lit. 'very valuable wood'; Vulg. 'precious stone'.

c. Lit. 'Everyone who steers, everyone sailing to a place'; Vulg. 'who sail the sea'.

d. V. 21 is continued in v. 24. The description of 18:1-3 is completed here: Babylon is to be destroyed for its idolatry, 18:1-3, cf. 17:4, and for persecuting the Christians, 18:21.

19 a. The wedding of the Lamb symbolises the beginning of the heavenly kingdom described in 21:9f. See Ho 1:2+ and Ep 5:22-23+.
b. Symbol of victorious purity, a gift from God.

Jesus. It is God that you must worship.' The witness Jesus gave is the same as the spirit of prophecy.[c]

C. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PAGAN NATIONS

=20:7-10 **The first battle of the End**[d]

1:5; 3:7,14 2 Th 2:8 Is 11:4 1:14; 2:18 And now I saw heaven open, and a white horse[e] appear; its rider was called 11 Faithful and True; he is *a judge with integrity*, a warrior for justice. •His eyes 12 were flames of fire, and his head was crowned with many coronets;[f] the name Lk 10:22 Is 63:1 written on him was known only to himself; •*his cloak was soaked in blood.*[g] He is 13 Jn 1:1+ 1:16; 14:20 known by the name, The Word of God.[h] •Behind him, dressed in linen of dazzling 14 white, rode the armies of heaven[i] on white horses. •From his mouth came a sharp 15 Ps 2:9 sword[j] to strike the pagans with; he is the one *who will rule them with an iron* 2:27+; 14:19 Is 63:3 *sceptre*, and tread out the wine of Almighty God's fierce anger.[k] •On his cloak and 16 Dt 10:17 2 M 13:4 on his thigh[l] there was a name written: *The King of kings and the Lord of lords.*

Ezk 39:17 I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he shouted aloud to all the birds that 17 were flying high overhead in the sky, 'Come here. *Gather together at the great feast* that God is giving. •*There will be the flesh* of kings for you, and the flesh of 18 great generals and heroes, the flesh of horses and their riders and of all kinds of men, citizens and slaves, small and great.'

17:12-14 Ps 2:2 Dn 7:11 Then I saw the beast, with all the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered 19 together to fight the rider and his army. •But the beast was taken prisoner, 20 Mt 7:15 together with the false prophet who had worked miracles on the beast's behalf 13:16 and by them had deceived all who had been branded with the mark of the beast and worshipped his statue.[m] These two were thrown alive into the fiery lake 14:10+; 20:10,14 of burning sulphur. •All the rest were killed by the sword of the rider, which 21 Ezk 39:20 came out of his mouth, and *all the birds were gorged with their flesh.*

Jn 12:31 **The reign of a thousand years**

9:1+ 20 Then I saw an angel come down from heaven with the key of the Abyss 1
12:7,9 Gn 3:1 in his hand and an enormous chain. •He overpowered the dragon, that 2
Mt 12:28-29 primeval serpent which is the devil and Satan, and chained him up for a thousand
12:12 2 Co 6:2+ years. •He threw him into the Abyss, and shut the entrance and sealed it over him, 3
2 Th 2:6-8+ to make sure he would not deceive the nations again until the thousand years had passed. At the end of that time he must be released, but only for a short while.

Dn 7:22 Mt 19:28 19:10+ Then I saw some thrones, and I saw *those who are given the power to be judges* 4 take their seats on them. I saw the souls of all who had been beheaded for having witnessed for Jesus and for having preached God's word,[a] and those who refused 13:15-17 to worship the beast or his statue and would not have the brand-mark on their 5:10 foreheads or hands; they came to life, and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.[b] •This is the first resurrection; the rest of the dead did not come to life 5 1:3+ until the thousand years were over. •Happy and blessed are those who share 6 2:11+ in the first resurrection; the second death cannot affect them[c] but they will be 1:6+ priests of God and of Christ and reign with him for a thousand years.[d]

=19:11-21 **The second battle of the End**

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 7 and will come out to deceive all the nations in the four quarters of the earth, 8 Ezk 38:2,9, 15 *Gog and Magog*,[e] and mobilise them for war. His armies will be as many as the 16:14-16 Lk 21:24 sands of the sea; •they will come swarming over the entire country[f] and besiege 9 Ac 9:13+ Ezk 38:22 the camp of the saints, which is the city that God loves.[g] But *fire will come down on them from heaven* and consume them. •Then the devil, who misled them, will 10 19:20 be thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet are, and their torture will not stop, day or night, for ever and ever.

The punishment of the pagans Rm 2:6+

11 Then I saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. In his
12 presence, earth and sky vanished, leaving no trace.[h] •I saw the dead, both great 21:1 2 P 3:7,10,12
and small, standing in front of his throne, while the book of life was opened, and 3:5; 13:8; 17:8
other books opened which were the record of what they had done in their lives, *Dn 7:10+* Lk 10:20
by which the dead were judged.[i]
13 The sea gave up all the dead who were in it; •Death and Hades were emptied 1:18+
14 of the dead that were in them; and every one was judged according to the way
in which he had lived. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the burning 19:20; 21:4 1 Co 15:26, 54
15 lake.[j] This burning lake is the second death; •and anybody whose name could
not be found written in the book of life was thrown into the burning lake. 2:11+; 14:10+

D. THE JERUSALEM OF THE FUTURE

The heavenly Jerusalem[a] =7:15-17

1 21 Then I saw *a new heaven and a new earth*;[b] the first heaven and the first Is 65:17 2 P 3:13
2 earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea.[c] •I saw the *Jb 7:12+* Rm 8:19-23
holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as 19:7-8
3 beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband.[d] •Then I heard a loud voice call
from the throne, 'You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make 7:15-17
his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name Ezk 37:27

c. Lit. 'the witness of Jesus'; this is the word of God to which Jesus testifies and which is implanted in every Christian, cf. 1:2; 6:9; 12:17, and which inspires the prophets.

d. After the fall of Babylon, foretold in 14:8 and described in 16:19,20, Christ comes from heaven at the beginning of the Great Day of Yahweh on which all evil will be destroyed, as had been proclaimed in 14:14-20 and 17:12-14.

e. The colour symbolises victory.

f. Because he is King of kings, cf. v. 16.

g. Alluding (cf. v. 15) to Is 63:1. Symbol of the mortal ruin he deals his enemies, cf. Rv 5:5.

h. The rider comes from heaven: God's Word destroying the first-born of Egypt, Ws 18:14-18.

i. The angels, cf. Mt 26:53, or preferably, following 14:5 and 17:14, the white-robed martyrs, cf. 19:8; 3:5,18; 6:11; 16:15 and also Mt 22:11f.

j. Lit. 'a sharp blade issues out of his mouth', symbol of the destroying Word; cf. Is 11:4; Ws 18:16 and also Ho 6:5; Rv 1:16; 2 Th 2:8.

k. The winepress is a common image in prophetic literature for God's destruction of his people's enemies on the Great Day of his revenge; cf. Gn 49:9-12; Jr 25:30; Is 63:1-6; Jl 4:13. On the 'wine of anger', cf. 14:8+ and Is 51:17+.

l. Possibly meaning 'on his sword'; it has also been suggested that we should read 'on his standard', since the similarity of the two words in Hebr. could be responsible for the present reading.

m. This long parenthesis echoes the events described in ch. 13.

20 a. Lit. 'I saw thrones, they sat on them, judgement was given to them, and I saw the souls of those beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the Word of God'. This verse, scarcely intelligible as it stands, must have begun 'I saw the souls...' and must have been completed '...Word of God: they came to life and reigned...' The remainder ('And I saw thrones on which all those took their seats who would not worship the beast and his image or be sealed on their foreheads or their hands') must have belonged to Text II (see Introduction) and should be read between vv. 11 and 12. Cf. Mt 19:28; 1 Co 6:2-3.

b. One interpretation makes this 'resurrection' of the martyrs (cf. Is 26:19; Ezk 37) symbolise the recovery of the Church after the Roman persecution; the 'reign of a thousand years' is then the period of the kingdom of Christ on earth from the end of persecution (the fall of Rome) to the Last Judgement (in 20:11f). According to Augustine and others who follow him, the 'reign of a thousand years' is to be reckoned from Christ's resurrection, and the 'first resurrection' is baptism, cf. Rm 6:1-10; Jn 5:25-28. A literal interpretation of this verse was widespread in the early Church: after the first resurrection, of the martyrs, Christ was to return to reign on earth with his faithful for a thousand years. This literal millenarianism was censured.

c. The first death is on earth, the second 'death' is failure to win eternal life.

d. The messianic rule of Christians on earth is foretold in 5:9-10, and under the symbol of the New Jerusalem, in 21:9-22 and 22:6-15; this second passage has been inserted so that it follows the mention of the Last Judgement, 20:13-15.

e. Ezk 38-39 (see notes) mentions 'Gog, king of Magog', here the two names symbolise all the pagan nations leagued against the Church at the end of time. This is the eschatological combat of Text I and it corresponds to the war of Text II described in 19:11.

f. Palestine.

g. Jerusalem, symbol of the Church, cf. Lk 21:24.

h. At this point part of v. 4 should be inserted (see note to v. 4).

i. The first scrolls unrolled list human deeds, the scroll of life opened last is the list of the predestined, cf. Dn 7:10+; 12:1+; Ac 13:48+.

j. After the Last Judgement death itself will lose its power.

21 a. A vision of heaven, cf. 7:15-17. The opening is suggested by Is (51 and 65 especially).

b. In Is 51:16; 65:17; 66:12, the phrase is merely a symbol of the new messianic age. St Paul, following the lead of Jesus, cf. Mt 19:28, is more realistic: the whole of creation will one day be freed from the dominance of corruption, renewed and transformed by the glory of God, Rm 8:19+.

c. The sea symbolises evil because it was the home of the dragon, cf. Jb 7:12+; it will vanish as it did at the Exodus, but this time for ever, before the triumphant advance of the new Israel, cf. Is 51:9-10; Ps 74:13,14; Jb 26:12-13; Is 27:1.

d. The new and joyful wedding of Jerusalem and her God has taken place, cf. Is 65:18; 61:10; 62:4-6; the Exodus ideal has at last been achieved, cf. Ho 2:16+.

Is 8:8 Is 25:8 is *God-with-them.*[e] •*He will wipe away all tears from their eyes;* there will be no 4
Is 35:10 2 Co 5:17 more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.'
Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: 'Now I am making the whole of 5
Dn 8:26 creation new' he said. 'Write this: that what I am saying is sure and will come
1:8+ true.' •And then he said, 'It is already done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the 6
22:17 Is 55:1 Beginning and the End. I will give water from the well of life free to anybody
who is thirsty;[f] •it is the rightful inheritance of the one who proves victorious; 7
2 S 7:14 and *I will be his God* and *he a son to me.*[g] •But the legacy for cowards, for those 8
=22:15 Rm 1:29+ who break their word, or worship obscenities, for murderers and fornicators, and
for fortune-tellers, idolaters or any other sort of liars, is the second death[h] in
the burning lake of sulphur.'

Ep 5:27 **The messianic Jerusalem**[i]

One of the seven angels that had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues 9
2 Co 11:2 came to speak to me, and said, 'Come here and I will show you the bride that the
Ezk 40:2 Heb 11:10 21:2 Lamb has married'. •*In the spirit, he took me to the top of an enormous high* 10
mountain, and showed me Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down from God out
Is 60:1-2 of heaven.[j] •It *had all the radiant glory of God* and glittered like some precious 11
jewel of crystal-clear diamond. •The walls of it were of a great height, and had 12
twelve gates; at each of the twelve gates there was an angel, and over the gates
7:1-8 Ezk 48:31-35 were written the names *of the twelve tribes of Israel;* •*on the east there were three* 13
gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.
Ep 2:20 The city walls stood on twelve foundation stones, each one of which bore the 14
name of one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel that was speaking to me was carrying a gold measuring rod 15
to measure the city and its gates and wall. •The plan of the city is perfectly 16
square, its length the same as its breadth.[k] He measured the city with his rod and
it was twelve thousand furlongs in length and in breadth, and equal in height.[l]
He measured its wall, and this was a hundred and forty-four cubits high—the 17
Is 54:11-12 angel was using the ordinary cubit. •The wall was built of diamond, and the city 18
of pure gold, like polished glass. •The foundations of the city wall were faced 19
with all kinds of precious stone: the first with diamond, the second lapis lazuli,
the third turquoise, the fourth crystal, •the fifth agate, the sixth ruby, the seventh 20
gold quartz, the eighth malachite, the ninth topaz, the tenth emerald, the eleventh
sapphire and the twelfth amethyst. •The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each 21
gate being made of a single pearl, and the main street of the city was pure gold,
transparent as glass. •I saw that there was no temple in the city[m] since the Lord 22
Jn 2:19-21 God Almighty and the Lamb were themselves the temple, •and the city did not 23
Is 60:1-2, 19-20 need the sun or the moon for light, since it was lit by the radiant glory of God
2 Co 3:18 Is 60:3 and the Lamb was a lighted torch for it. •*The pagan nations will live by its light* 24
Is 60:11 and the kings of the earth will bring it their treasures. •*The gates of it will never* 25
Is 60:3,11 *be shut by day*—and there will be no night there—•and *the nations will come,* 26
Is 35:8; 52:1 Zc 13:1-2 2 P 3:13 *bringing their treasure* and their wealth. •Nothing unclean may come into it: no 27
one who does what is loathsome or false, but only those who are listed in the
Lamb's book of life.

Ezk 47:1-12 Jn 4:1+ 22 Then the angel showed me the river of life, rising from the throne of God 1
and of the Lamb[a] and flowing crystal-clear •down the middle of the city 2
2:7; 22:14 Ezk 47:12 street. *On either side*[b] *of the river were the trees of life, which bear twelve crops*
of fruit in a year, one in each month, and the leaves of which are the cure for the
pagans.

=7:15 Zc 14:11 *The ban will be lifted.*[c] The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in its place 3
1 Co 13:12 1 Jn 3:2 in the city; his servants will worship him, •they will see him face to face, and his 4
name will be written on their foreheads. •It will never be night again and they 5
will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them.
They will reign for ever and ever.

19:9; 21:5 Dn 8:26 The angel said to me, 'All that you have written is sure and will come true: 6

the Lord God who gives the spirit to the prophets has sent his angel to reveal 1:1;22:16 Dn 2:28
7 to his servants *what is soon to take place.* •Very soon now, I shall be with you
again.' Happy are those who treasure the prophetic message of this book. 1:3+
8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I had heard
and seen them all, I knelt at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me, 19:10
9 to worship him; •but he said, 'Don't do that: I am a servant just like you and
like your brothers the prophets and like those who treasure what you have written
in this book. It is God that you must worship.'
10 This, too, he said to me, 'Do not keep the prophecies in this book a secret, 10:4
11 because the Time is close. •Meanwhile let the sinner go on sinning, and Dn 12:10
the unclean continue to be unclean; let those who do good go on doing good,
12 and those who are holy continue to be holy.[d] •Very soon now, I shall be with you Is 40:10
again, *bringing the reward to be given to every man according to what he* Ps 62:12
13 *deserves.* •I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the First and the Last,* the Beginning 1:8+ *Is 41:4;* 44:6
14 and the End. •Happy are those who will have washed their robes clean, so that
they will have the right to feed on the tree of life and can come through the gates 7:14; 12:1+; 22:2 =*21:8*
15 into the city.[e] •These others must stay outside: dogs, fortune-tellers, and Nb 5:1-4
fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters, and everyone of false speech and false Rm 1:29+
life.'

EPILOGUE

16 I, Jesus, have sent my angel to make these revelations to you for the sake of 1:1,11f; 22:6
the churches. I am of David's line, the root of David and the bright star of the 2:28+
morning.
17 The Spirit and the Bride[f] say, 'Come'. Let everyone who listens answer,
'Come'.[g] *Then let all who are thirsty come:* all who want it may *have the water* Is 55:1
of life, *and have it free.* 21:6
1 Co 11:26
18 This is my solemn warning to all who hear the prophecies in this book: if Dt 4:2
anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him every plague mentioned in the
19 book; •if anyone cuts anything out of the prophecies in this book, God will cut
off his share of the tree of life and of the holy city, which are described in the
book.
20 The one who guarantees these revelations repeats his promise: I shall indeed Ac 3:20-21 1 Co 15:23+
be with you soon. Amen; come, Lord Jesus.
21 May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.[h] Amen.

e. Lit. 'and he, God with them, will be their God' Vulg.; var. 'and God himself will be their God' or 'and God himself will be with them'. The *shekinah,* or presence, is an essential part of God's covenant with his people, cf. Ex 25:8 and Jn 1:14+, and is to be real and total after the end of the world, cf. Jl 4:17,21; Zc 2:14; Zp 3:15-17; Is 12:6.

f. In the O.T., fresh, drinking water is a symbol of life, and as such is to be a feature of the messianic age. In the N.T. it is a symbol of the Spirit, cf. Jn 4:1+.

g. The title 'Son of God' was to be conferred on King-Messiah, David's heir, on the day of his enthronement, 2 S 7:14+; hence Jesus was proclaimed 'Son of God' in virtue of his resurrection, Ac 2:36+; Rm 1:4+.

h. Eternal death. The fire, like the water of v. 6, is symbolic.

i. This is Jerusalem on earth during the last or messianic days since the pagan nations have not yet been destroyed, 21:24, and have a chance of conversion, 22:2; but it foreshadows the heavenly Jerusalem that develops from it. The details of the description are mostly from Ezk 40-47.

j. I.e. renewal in these present, messianic times; the transformation of humanity by an act of God.

k. The symbol of (terrestrial) perfection.

l. Symbolic number: twelve (for the new Israel) multiplied by one thousand (for immensity).

m. The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple symbolises the end of the old covenant; there is now a new temple, the Body of Christ; cf. Jn 2:19-21.

22 a. Allusion to the Trinity, since the river of living water is a symbol of the Spirit (Jn 4:1+), cf. Rv 21:6+.

b. Or punctuate 'Down the middle ... on either side'.

c. Vv. 3-5 (Text ID) should be inserted after 21:4. Cf. Introduction.

d. God pursues his design whatever man may do.

e. The Jerusalem described in 21:9f.

f. The Church, wife of the Messiah, cf. 21:10.

g. The appeal is addressed to the Messiah; it is the *Marana tha* refrain of the liturgical assemblies, 1 Co 16:22, expressive of the Christians' longing for the *parousia,* see 1 Th 5:1+.

h. Lit. 'with all'; var. 'with the saints' or 'with all the saints'.

SUPPLEMENTS

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

The columns to the right of the date column deal with Palestinian and biblical history; those to the left deal with general history; but this distinction is less strict from the Christian era onwards. In the right-hand column, extra-biblical writings are in *italics*, and (before the Roman period) extra-biblical facts or those not taken from Josephus are also in *italics*.

The names of rulers, kings, governors and high priests are in SMALL CAPITALS or CAPITALS according to their importance. In the list of the kings of Judah the succession is from father to son unless anything different is indicated. The names of prophets, and of biblical books when mentioned at the time of their composition, are in **bold type**; and the most important of other items are also in **bold type.**

I. THE BEGINNINGS
Gn 1-11

	B.C.	
Prehistoric period: Stone Age		[Bible: popular account of creation]
Protohistoric period:	4000	[Popular account of man's inventions, Gn 4:16f]
Historical period: Writing, properly so called; more widespread use of bronze. Egypt: **Old Kingdom** (Great Pyramids). Capital: Memphis. Mesopotamia: Sumerians, followed by Akkadians	3000	*Palestine: Early Bronze Age*, 3100-2100. The **Canaanites.** Abraham's ancestors as nomads in Mesopotamia

II. THE PATRIARCHS
Gn 12-50

Egypt: **Middle Kingdom:** about 2030-1720. Mesopotamia: Sumerian revival (3rd dynasty of Ur) followed by the growing importance of the **Amorites**	2000	*Middle Bronze Age:* about 2100-1560. *In the 20c. and 21c. Egypt controls the Syro-Palestinian coast but not the interior (Memoirs of Sinuhe the Egyptian).* About 1850: **arrival of** ABRAHAM **in Canaan,** Gn 12
About this time, the *Akkadian poems of Creation* (Enuma elish) *and of the Flood* (Gilgamesh)		
18c. and 17c.: 1st Babylonian dynasty (Amorite): HAMMURABI about 1700 His code. Egypt: the **Hyksos**, about 1720-1560; capital: Tanis	1700	**The patriarchs in Egypt**

III. MOSES AND JOSHUA
Ex / Nb / Dt / Jos

Egypt: **New Kingdom:** 1560-715. Capital: Thebes. THUTMOSE III: 1502-1448 (campaigns in Palestine and Syria)	1500	*Late Bronze Age: about* 1550-1200
	1400	*The el-Amarna Letters; (the Habiru; Puti-hepa king of Jerusalem)*

	B.C.	
AKHNATON (= Amenophis IV): 1377-1358. His exclusive worship of the god Aton. The great hymn to Aton. Capital at Tell el-Amarna		
TUTANKHAMON: 1358-1349	1350	*Alphabetical tablets of Ugarit*
In Asia Minor and northern Syria, the **Hittites**: SHUPPILULIUMA about 1370		
Egypt: 19th dynasty, 1345-1200		
SETI I: 1317-1301		
RAMESES II: 1301-1234. Residence at Pi-Rameses. Struggle with the Hittites followed by an alliance	1300 1250	*Stelae of Seti I and Rameses II, his son, at Beth-shean.* Hebrews as forced labour for the building of Pi-Rameses, Ex 1:11. The **Exodus** between 1250 and 1230. MOSES, the **Law at Sinai**
MENEPTAH: 1234-1225. His fifth year: stele recording a victory over the 'people of Israel'		
Mesopotamia: 13c. and 12c., Assyrian preponderance		Between about 1220 and 1200, JOSHUA invades Palestine. *Excavations at the level of this period show ruins and impoverishment of dwellings and utensils*

IV. FROM THE JUDGES TO SOLOMON 1200-931
Jg / 1 S / 2 S / 1 K 1-11 / 1 Ch / 2 Ch 1-9

Egypt: 20th dynasty, 1200-1085. Rameses III: 1197-1165. Victory over the **'Peoples of the Sea'** who try to force an entry into Egypt	1200	*Iron Age I:* about 1200-900. The *Philistines, repulsed by Rameses III, occupy the Palestinian coast. Use of iron slowly spreads* The JUDGES: about 1200-1025
Mesopotamia: about 1100, Assyrian hegemony under TIGLATH-PILESER I, followed by decline of Assyria and appearance of the **Aramaean kingdoms** (Damascus, Zobah, Hamath, temporarily Babylon, etc.)	1100	About 1125: Deborah and Barak triumph over the Canaanites at Taanach
Egypt: 21st dynasty, 1085-945. Capital: Tanis. Wenamon's journey to Byblos	1050	About 1050: Philistine victory at Aphek and death of Eli SAMUEL appears about 1040. The sanctuary at Shiloh SAUL: about 1030-1010. Resides at Gibeah. Victories over Ammonites and Philistines. Defeat at Gilboa and death of Saul
SIAMON: 975-955	1000	DAVID: about 1010-970. **Capture of Jerusalem** about 1000. Victories over Philistines, Moabites, king of Zobah, Aramaeans of Damascus, Ammonites, Amalekites, Edomites. Alliance with Hamath, 2 S 8
REZIN, king of Damascus, 1 K 11:23f		SOLOMON: about 970-931. Marries Pharaoh's daughter. In his 4th year: **the building of the Temple**, 1 K 6:1. *Excavations at Megiddo have uncovered Solomon's stables*, 1 K 5:6; 10:26. Commercial contacts with Phoenicia and Arabia. Literary activity: proverbs, historiography (2 S 9 - 1 K 2)
PSUSENNES II: 955-950	950	

V. JUDAH AND ISRAEL 931-721
1 K 12-22 / 2 K 1-17 / 2 Ch 10-28 / Am / Ho / Is / Mi

	B.C.	*ISRAEL*	*JUDAH*
Egypt: 22nd dynasty: about 945-725 (Libyan). Capital: Bubastis		*Iron Age II: about* 900-600	
		Assembly at Shechem and **schism**, 1 K 12: about 931	
SHESHONK I: 945-925			
Sheshonk's campaign in Palestine (the Karnak list)		JEROBOAM I: 931-910. Residence at Tirzah. Worship at Dan and Bethel	REHOBOAM: 931-913. In his 5th year, Temple pillaged by Sheshonk, 1 K 14:25f. *(Sheshonk's stele at Megiddo)*
TABRIMMON (son of Hezion) king of Damascus, 1 K 15:18		NADAB: 910-909	ABIJAH: 913-911
BEN-HADAD I (his son), 1 K 15:18	900	BAASHA: 909-886. Massacre of the House of Jeroboam	ASA: 911-870. Struggle against idolatry. Allies with Ben-hadad against Baasha
		ELAH: 886-885	
		ZIMRI: 7 days	
Revival of **Assyria**: ASSURNASIRPAL II: 883-859		OMRI: 885-874. Founds **Samaria**. Controls the territory of Moab	
Egypt's weakness in 9c. and first half of 8c.			
		AHAB: 874-853. Marries Jezebel, daughter of Ittobaal, king of Tyre and Sidon. Temple of Baal. Enlarges his palace. *Samaritan ivories*, cf. 1 K 22:39. **Elijah** and the Yahwist reaction, 1 K 17-19; 21; 2 K 1. Wars against Ben-hadad II, 1 K 20; 22	JEHOSHAPHAT: 870-848. Struggle against idolatry. Allied to Ahab. Controls Edom
BEN-HADAD II, king of Damascus			
SHALMANESER III: 858-824. 853, victory at **Kharkar** on the Orontes over 12 kings, including Adadezer (= Ben-hadad) and Ahab		AHAZIAH: 853-852	
		JEHORAM: 852-841, his brother. Campaigns with the king of Judah against Mesha. **Elisha**, 2 K 2-13. Jehoram defends Ramoth-gilead with Ahaziah of Judah against Hazael. Put to death, with his whole family, by Jehu	
MESHA king of Moab. His stele about 840 (oppression of Omri and Ahab, then defeat of Israel)	850		JEHORAM: 848-841. Marries Athaliah daughter of Ahab. Baal-worship. Edom set free
HAZAEL king of Damascus. 841, defeated by Shalmaneser III who reaches the sea and receives tribute from Jehu and the kings of Tyre and Sidon			AHAZIAH: 841. Killed on Jehu's orders
		JEHU: 841-814. Yahwist reaction. Hazael secures Gilead	ATHALIAH: 841-835. Massacre of the king's sons, except Joash. Jehoiada's plot and death of Athaliah
BEN-HADAD III king of Damascus. Defeated by Shalmaneser III			
ADADNIRARI III: 810-783. 805, receives tribute from Ben-hadad III and the king of Israel	800	JEHOAHAZ: 841-798, son of Jehu. Harassed by Ben-hadad III, 2 K 13:3, cf. 2 K 6:24 +	Joash: 835-796, son of Ahaziah. Repairs the Temple. Hazael captures Gath
		JOASH: 798-783. Death of Elisha. Joash regains lost cities from Ben-hadad, 2 K 13:25. Defeats Amaziah at Beth-shemesh	AMAZIAH: 796-781. Victory over Edom. Defeated by Joash of Israel. Killed at Lachish
783-745, Assyria weak			
Egypt: rivalry between 22nd dynasty (Bubastis) and 23rd (Thebes)	750	JEROBOAM II: 783-743. Re-establishes Israel's boundaries. About 750, **Amos** and, a little later, **Hosea**. *Under Jeroboam or Joash: Samaritan ostraca*	UZZIAH: 781-740 (= Azariah). Re-establishes his authority as far as Elath. Agriculture develops
TIGLATH-PILESER III: 745-727 (= Pulu in Babylon). **Conquered lands reduced to provinces: and populations exchanged**		ZECHARIAH: 743	
		SHALLUM: 743	

		B.C.	
REZIN king of Damascus	MENAHEM: 743-738. Tribute to Pul, 2 K 15:19		740, call of **Isaiah**, Is 6:1
About 738, Tiglath-Pileser III receives tribute from Rezin, Menahem and the princes of the west	PEKAHIAH: 738-737. Killed by Pekah		Jotham: 740-736. First appearance of **Micah**
About 734, T.-Pileser III captures part of Galilee. Ahaz pays him tribute	PEKAH: 737-732. Loses Galilee and Gilead, 2 K 15:29		Ahaz: 736-716 Rezin and Pekah besiege Jerusalem. **Oracle of Emmanuel.** Appeal to T.-Pileser III who takes Damascus and kills Rezin, 2 K 16:9
About 732, T.-Pileser's campaign against Rezin and end of Damascus' independence; he replaces Pekah by Hosea	HOSEA: 732-734. Makes alliance with Egypt		
SHALMANESER V: 726-722	Samaria besieged by Shalmaneser V		
SARGON II: 721-725. In 721, conquers Samaria, deports inhabitants and replaces them with foreign colonists	721, **conquest of Samaria**, deportation of inhabitants, installation of foreign colonists; religious *syncretism*; 2 K 17:5f		

VI. END OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH 721-587
2 K 18-25 / 2 Ch 29-36 / Zp / Na / Hab / Jr / Ezk

Sargon defeats Sibê the Egyptian at Raphia	Egypt: 24th dynasty. Capital: Sais		HEZEKIAH: 716-687. Sargon's army captures Ashdod, Is 20:1. Embassy of Merodach-baladan, 2 K 20:12f
His palace at Khorsabad near Nineveh			
711, Sargon captures Ashdod	BOCCHORIS: 715-709 25th dynasty (Nubian)		
721-711 and 703, the Chaldaean Marduk-apal-iddinna II, king of Babylon			
SENNACHERIB: 704-681	SHABAKA: 710-696		Hezekiah's works at Jerusalem, and *inscription in the tunnel of Siloam*. Sennacherib invades Judaea. Hezekiah's tribute, 2 K 18:13-16
701, victory of Eltekeh over the Ekronites aided by Egyptians and Ethiopians (Nubians). He takes 46 towns from Hezekiah and imposes a tribute		700	Literary activity. Pr 25:1
About 690, campaign in Arabia, as far as Dumah. On his return, capture of Lachish (relief of Nineveh, undated)	SHABATOKA: 696-685 TIRHAKAH, his brother, born about 710 and co-regent about 690. King 685-664		Second (?) campaign of Sennacherib in Palestine, capture of Lachish, threat of Tirhakah, retreat of Sennacherib, 2 K 18:17-19:37
ESARHADDON, 680-669			MANASSEH, 687-642. Pagan cults in the Temple. Captivity in Babylon, 2 Ch 33:11
About 671, Esarhaddon takes Lower Egypt from Tirhakah. Tribute from the kings of the west, among whom, Manasseh			
ASHURBANIPAL: 668-621			
668, tribute from Manasseh. Tirhakah pushed back beyond Thebes			
About 663, his second Egyptian campaign, against Tirhakah; sack of Thebes	TANUTAMON: 664-656 26th dynasty: 663/525. Capital, Sais		

		B.C.	
	PSAMMETICHUS I: 663-609		
The Library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh	About 650, Assyrians driven from Egypt	650	
			AMON: 642-640
			JOSIAH: 640-609
			About 630, **Zephaniah**
			627, call of **Jeremiah, Jr 25:3**
ASHURETILILANI: 625-621	About 625, he checks the **Scythian invasion**		
Babylon: **neo-Babylonian dynasty**, 625-539			622, discovery of **'The Book of the Law'. Religious reform** which spreads to Samaria. Editing of historical documents in the spirit of Dt: 1st revision of the Books of **Joshua, Judges, Samuel** and **Kings**
NEBUPOLASSAR: 625-605			
SHINSHARISHKUN: 620-612, king of Assyria			
612, CYAXARES, king of the Medes, and Nebupolassar take and destroy Nineveh			About 612, **Nahum**
ASHUR-UBALLIT II: 611-606; reigns in Haran			
609, Nebupolassar repulses the army of Neco coming to the aid of Assyria	NECO: 609-593		609, Josiah is killed while opposing Neco's armies
			609, JEHOAHAZ: replaced at the end of three months by his brother:
606, **Assyrian empire ended by Nebupolassar**			JEHOIAKIM: 609-598, at Neco's instigation
NEBUCHADNEZZAR: 604-562			In 605, Nebuchadnezzar, crown prince, defeats Neco at **Carchemish**. Jr 46:2, cf. 2 K 24:1,7; **prophecy of the 70 years of exile**, Jr 25:1,11; Jehoiakim a vassal for 3 years
His building at Babylon. Few texts concerning his campaigns			
		600	About 602, revolt of Jehoiakim and incursion of bands of Chaldaeans and Aramaeans, 2 K 24:2. The prophet **Habakkuk** (?)
			JEHOIACHIN: 598
Tablets naming Jehoiachin in the court records of Nebuchadnezzar			Siege of Jerusalem. After a reign of 3 months, Jehoiachin surrenders to Nebuchadnezzar. **Deportation to Babylon.** Jehoiachin replaced by his uncle:
			ZEDEKIAH: 598-587 (son of Josiah)
	PSAMMETICHUS II: 593-588		Jeremiah and the false prophets. **Ezekiel** predicts the ruin of Jerusalem, Ezk 1-23
588-587, siege of Tyre; lasted 13 years	HOPHRA (Apries): 588-566		589, revolt of Zedekiah. In Dec. or Jan. beginning of the siege of Jerusalem
			Early 587, diversion by Hophra and lifting of siege, Ezk 29; Jr 37:5,11. *Letters of Lachish.* Jeremiah imprisoned
			Defeat of Hophra and renewal of siege

		B.C.	
			Siege of Tyre, Ezk 26f
			June-July 587, **capture of Jerusalem.** Capture of Zedekiah
Nebuzeriddinam heads a list of royal functionaries			One month later, Nebuzaradan destroys the Temple and the city. Fresh deportations
			Gedaliah as governor; assassinated Sept.-Oct. Jeremiah taken to Egypt, Jr 42f
			582/581, fresh deportations, Jr 52:30
568/567, campaign against Amasis	569: AMASIS co-regent. 566-526(?): king		
AVILMARDUK: 561-560			561, Evil-merodach pardons Jehoiachin
NERIGLISSAR: 559-556			
LABASHIMARDUK: 556			
NABONIDUS: 555-538. During his stay at Teima he is replaced by the crown prince BELSHAZZAR			
555, CYRUS king of the **Persians** revolts against his overlord Astyages king of the Medes			
549, Cyrus king of the Medes and Persians		550	**Is 40-55**
546, he captures Sardis (Croesus)			
	525, PSAMMETICHUS III		

VII. FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE PERSIAN PERIOD 538-333
Ezr / Ne / Hg / Zc / Ml

539, armies of Cyrus enter Babylon. He gives back to their original cities the idols carried off to Babylon		
		538, the **Edict of Cyrus.** Return from exile. SHESHBAZZAR high commissioner, Ezr 5:14
The palace of Pasargadae		Autumn of 538, restoration of the altar of holocausts, Ezr 3:3
		Spring 537, foundation of the **Second Temple,** Ezr 3:8; 5:16
CAMBYSES: 529-522. Son of Cyrus. Conquers Egypt which remains under Persian dominion till 400 (27th dynasty)		
DARIUS I: 522-486. Organises the Persian empire: Syria and Palestine form the 5th satrapy and Egypt the 6th		520-515, building of the **Second Temple,** Ezr 6:15; Hg 2:15. High Commissioner ZERUBBABEL; High Priest JOSHUA. The prophets **Haggai** and **Zechariah**
The palace of Persepolis	500	
490, battle of Marathon		498-399, *papyri from the Jewish colony of Elephantine*
XERXES I: 486-465. (Ahasuerus)		
480, he captures Athens but is defeated at Salamis		
ARTAXERXES I LONGIMANUS: 465-423. Revolts in Egypt and Syria		Opposition of the Samaritans to construction of the walls of Jerusalem, Ezr 4:6f
		458, Ezra's mission, if Ezr 7:7 refers to Artaxerxes I
Athens: Pericles		

	B.C.	
	450	445-443, the 1st mission of NEHEMIAH, Ne 2:1; 5:14, and the restoration of the walls. Hostility of Sanballat *(governor of Samaria, according to one of the Elephantine papyri)*, of Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arab
		Under Xerxes and Artaxerxes, **Malachi** and probably **Obadiah**, possibly also **Job**, **Proverbs**, **Song of Songs** and **Ruth** and many **Psalms** (428, Ezra's mission, if we read 37th in place of 7th year in Ezr 7:7f)
XERXES II: 423		Before the death of Artaxerxes: 2nd mission of Nehemiah and the reforms inspired by Deuteronomy, Ne 13:6f
DARIUS II NOTHUS: 423-404		
ARSAMES satrap of Egypt		419, *Rescript of Darius on the Passover (Papyrus of Elephantine)*
		About 410, *the incident at the temple of Yaho at Elephantine*
		Prosperity of the Jews in Babylon (archives of the banking family of Murashu)
ARTAXERXES II MNEMON: 404-358		
410, revolt of Cyrus the Younger and expedition of the Ten Thousand		
About 400, Egypt frees herself. (28th-30th dynasties: 400-342)	400	(398, EZRA'S mission, if Ezr 7:7 refers to Artaxerxes II. The legislation of the Pentateuch, unified by Ezra, is sanctioned by Artaxerxes, Ezr 7:26)
Plato		
ARTAXERXES III OCHUS: 358-338	350	Judaea is formed into a theocratic state with its own coinage *(drachmas inscribed YHD, Judah)*
In 342, reconquest of Egypt (31st dynasty: 342-332)		
PHILIP OF MACEDON. Aristotle		
ARSETIS: 338-336		
DARIUS III CODOMANNUS: 336-330		Before Alexander, the prophet **Joel** and doubtless the work of the Chronicler: the Books of **Chronicles** and **Ezra-Nehemiah**. At the time of Alexander, **Zc 9-14**
ALEXANDER THE GREAT: 336-323		
333, conquest of Syria		End of the Persian period, or beginning of the hellenistic period: **Jonah**, **Tobit**
332, capture of Tyre and Gaza; entry into Egypt		
331, foundation of **Alexandria**		
331, ends the Persian empire by his victory at **Arbela**		
330-326, conquest of the Eastern satrapies and India		
323, he dies in Babylon		

VIII. THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD 333-63
1 M / 2 M / Dn 11

Alexander's generals, the Diadochoi (or 'successors'), quarrel over his empire (319-287)

In Egypt: the LAGIDES	In Syria and Babylonia: the SELEUCIDS	B.C.	
			Judaea ruled by the Lagides until 197
PTOLEMY I SOTER: 323-285			
Foundation of the 'Museum' at Alexandria. At Athens, a little before 300, foundation of the Epicurean and Stoic schools	SELEUCUS I NICATOR: 312-280. 300, foundation of **Antioch** on the Orontes	300	Ptolemy I establishes Jews in Egypt and Seleucus I in Antioch (Josephus)
PTOLEMY II PHILADELPHUS: 285-246	ANTIOCHUS I SOTER: 280-261. Defeats the Galatian invaders of Asia Minor		Ptolemy II orders Greek translation of the Law by the **Seventy** (the 'Septuagint', cf. *apocryphal letter of Aristeas)*
276-273, war with Syria; continues until arrival of the Romans	ANTIOCHUS II THEOS: 261-246		
252, gives his daughter Berenice to Antiochus II who repudiates Laodice, cf. Dn 11:6	About 250, displaced from Upper Asia by the Parthians (the Arsakidae, 250 B.C.-244 A.D.)	250	Active hellenisation in Palestine. Perhaps the Books of **Ecclesiastes** and **Esther**
PTOLEMY III EUERGETES: 246-221	SELEUCUS II CALLINICOS: 246-226		Tobiah the Ammonite *(his building at Araq El-Emir)*
Supremacy of Egypt	Laodice has Berenice and her son assassinated. cf. Dn 11:6		
PTOLEMY IV PHILOPATOR: 221-205	ANTIOCHUS III THE GREAT: 223-187		The victorious Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV offer sacrifices at Jerusalem. (Josephus and 3 Maccabees)
217, victory over Antiochus at Raphia	Numerous campaigns, for the most part successful		
PTOLEMY V EPIPHANES: 205-180			
199-198, Scopas, Ptolemy's general, returns to the offensive	201, he reconquers Palestine; siege and capture of Gaza	200	
Besieged in Sidon, Scopas surrenders, cf. Dn 11:10-16	198, Antiochus defeats Scopas at Panias		

After the defeat at Panias, Egypt plays a minor role

Judaea in subjection to the Seleucids: 197-142. The charter of Antiochus sanctions the theocratic status of the Jewish nation (Josephus; cf. 2 M 4:11)

193, Antiochus III gives his daughter Cleopatra (I) to Ptolemy, cf. Dn 11:17

189-188, Antiochus is defeated at **Magnesia** by the Scipios. Heavy indemnity to pay in annual instalments. His son Antiochus (IV) is a hostage in Rome

187, Antiochus III killed during the pillage of the temple of Bel at Elymais, cf. Dn 11:19

SIMON II, son of Onias II, is high priest. Works undertaken at Jerusalem, Si 50. Ben Sira writes **Ecclesiasticus**

SELEUCUS IV PHILOPATOR: 187-175

In Egypt: PTOLEMY VI PHILOMETOR: 180-145. His mother Cleopatra is regent

ONIAS III, son of Simon II, high priest. Seleucus IV sends Heliodorus to seize the Temple treasure, 2 M 3; Dn 11:20. Onias at Antioch, 2 M 4:5

Enthroned in 172

Hyrcanus the Tobiad is family governor of Amman, cf. 2 M 3:11

Seleucus IV killed by his minister HELIODORUS

	B.C.	
ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES: 175-164/163. Dn 11:21. Brother of Seleucus IV. His son Demetrius (I) a hostage in Rome		Jason high priest, brother of Onias. With support of the king, introduces Greek customs in Jerusalem
		MENELAUS high priest: 172-162. Has Onias killed, 2 M 4:30f; Dn 9:25f; 11:22
170, 1st Egyptian campaign. Antiochus has himself crowned king of Egypt. On his return he pillages the Temple (Polybius)		170, 1st Egyptian campaign. On his return (169), Antiochus pillages the Temple, 1 M 1:16f; 2 M 5:15f; Dn 11:24-28
168, 2nd Egyptian campaign. Antiochus retires under orders from Popilius Laenas, cf. Dn 11:29f		168, 2nd Egyptian campaign, 2 M 5:1
		167-164, **The Great Persecution**
		167, massacres at Jerusalem, 1 M 1:29f; 2 M 5:24f; Dn 11:30. The Syrians build the **Citadel**
		Decree abolishing Jewish practices and establishing the cult of the Olympian Zeus in the Temple, 1 M 1:44f; 2 M 6:1f; Dn 11:31; cf. 8:12 etc.
		25th Chislev 167 (mid-Dec.), the first pagan sacrifice on the new altar, 2 M 10:5; cf. 1 M 1:59
		The priest MATTATHIAS (grandson of Simeon the Hasmonaean) takes refuge in Modin and, with his five sons, gives the signal of revolt. The Hasidaeans join with him. Martyrdom of Eleazar, cf. Dn 11:32f
		166, death of Mattathias. His son JUDAS MACCABAEUS succeeds him: 166-160
165, expedition of Antiochus in Upper Asia		Victories by Judas: at **Emmaus** over Nicanor and Gorgias, 165. Lysias' first campaign
		164, agreement with the king. 25th Chislev (mid-Dec.), purification of the Temple and resumption of the sacrifices *(Encaenia)* a little more than 3 years after the outbreak of the great persecution, cf. Dn 7:25; 12:7; 8:14; 9:27
		The Book of **Daniel** in its present form. The apocryphal Book of *Enoch* is in part anterior
		164-163, expeditions of Judas and his brothers throughout Judaea, 1 M 5; 2 M 10:15-23; 12:10-46 (sacrifice for the dead)

NOTE: If one takes into account the Babylonian tablet, B.M. 35.603, the table must be adjusted as from the Autumn or Winter of 164: the death of Antiochus IV occurs before the purification of the Temple (following the sequence of 2 M 9-10), and the campaign of Antiochus V and Lysias takes place in the autumn of 163. 1 and 2 M follow the autumnal Seleucid cursus (see Calendar), except for 1 M 1:54; 4:52; 9:3,54; 10:21; 16:14; 2 M 1:7,9; 13:1; 14:4 which seem to follow a religious calendar based on a vernal calculation agreeing with the Seleucid cursus of Babylon.

164/163, death of Antiochus IV at Tabae after the sack of the temple of Artemis at Elymais (Polybius)	164/163, death of Antiochus, 1 M 6:1f; 2 M 1:13f; 9:1f
ANTIOCHUS V EUPATOR: 163-162. Son of Antiochus IV, 12 years old. Philip is named regent, but the minister LYSIAS remains in power	
	162, Antiochus V and Lysias rout Judas at **Bethzechariah** and besiege Mount Zion. The arrival of Philip at Antioch forces them to negotiate, 1 M 6:28f; 2 M 13:1,2,9-26; 11:22-26

	B.C.	
DEMETRIUS I SOTER: 162-150. Cousin of Antiochus V, who along with Lysias is put to death by his orders		ALCIMUS high priest. BACCHIDES, governor of Syria, causes the death of sixty Hasidaeans
		160, Nicanor is defeated and killed at **Adasa**, the 'Day of Nicanor', 13th Adar (March)
		Jason of Cyrene writes the work subsequently adapted, about 124, by the author of the **Second Book of Maccabees**, cf. 2:19f and 1:9
		Alliance with Rome
		April 160, Judas defeated and killed at **Beerzeth**: tyranny of the Bacchides
		JONATHAN succeeds his brother: 160-142
		159-152, death of Alcimus and a period of peace
152, Alexander Balas lands at Ptolemais		152, JONATHAN named high priest by the pretender Alexander Balas. Demetrius I vainly tries to outbid him
ALEXANDER BALAS: 150-145	150	150/149, Jonathan named *strategos* and meridarch by Alexander
148, Macedonia becomes a Roman province		
147, Demetrius (II), son of Demetrius I, arrives in Cilicia		About this time, Onias, son of Onias III, founds the Jewish Temple at Leontopolis *(Tel el-Yehudiyeh, in the Delta)*; it survives until about 73 A.D. (Josephus)
146, destruction of Carthage and Corinth		About 146, Apollonius, named governor of Coele-Syria by Demetrius II, is defeated by Jonathan at Gaza
145, near Antioch, Ptolemy VI and Demetrius defeat Alexander Balas, who is killed soon after. Ptolemy dies of his wounds		**The Pharisees** and **Sadducees**. The **Essenes**; the monastery of Qumran, *The Manual of Discipline*
PTOLEMY VII PHYSCON: 145-116		
		Apocryphal writings: *Jubilees*, and part of *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*
DEMETRIUS II: 145-138 and 129-125		Demetrius II confirms the conquests of Jonathan
ANTIOCHUS VI: 145-142. Son of Alexander Balas; put forward by Tryphon, one of Alexander's generals, *against Demetrius who loses Syria*		Antiochus VI names Jonathan governor of Syria and his brother Simon *strategos* of the coast. Jonathan holds the generals of Demetrius in check. Simon captures Bethzur
		143, Tryphon treacherously takes Jonathan prisoner
		SIMON high priest and ethnarch: 143-134. He occupies Jaffa to secure a port, 1 M 14:5
		Tryphon's campaign against Simon suffers a setback. 142, Tryphon has Jonathan killed
142, TRYPHON has Antiochus VI put to death and reigns until 138		142, Simon recognises Demetrius II, who confirms him as high priest and ethnarch. The Jews now autonomous, 1 M 13:41f
		June 141, the Citadel surrenders to Simon
140-138, campaign by Demetrius in Upper Asia: defeated by the Parthian king ARSACES VI and captive until 129		His son John Hyrcanus heads the army
		139, renewal of the Roman alliance

	B.C.	
ANTIOCHUS VII SIDETES: 138-129. Younger brother of Demetrius II. Tryphon is defeated and commits suicide (138)		The sons of Simon rout Cendebaeus, governor of the coast for Antiochus VII
		Feb. 134, Simon killed by his son-in-law Ptolemy. Hyrcanus escapes assassination
113, ATTALUS III, king of Pergamum, bequeathes his states to Rome, which organises province of Asia in 129		JOHN HYRCANUS (I): 134-104. High priest and ethnarch. Here **1 Maccabees** comes to an end (revision completed about 100)
129-64, the successors of Sidetes destroy themselves in family feuds; they have lost control of Palestine		John Hyrcanus conquers Moab and Samaria; destruction of the temple at Gerizim
		ARISTOBULUS I: 104-103. He assumes the title of king
About 84, ARETAS III, king of Nabataea, occupies Coele-Syria	100	ALEXANDER JANNAEUS: 103-76. New conquests. Struggle against the Pharisees
70, TIGRANES, king of Armenia, dominates the whole of Syria		ALEXANDRA: 76-67. Her son HYRCANUS II is high priest: 76-67, and again 63-40. In 67 he succeeds his mother but is soon supplanted by his younger brother
67, the Roman province of Crete-Cyrenaica		
		ARISTOBULUS II: 76-63. King and high priest
66-62, POMPEY in the East. Pontus and Bithynia become Roman provinces		Passover 65, Hyrcanus II and Aretas III besiege Jerusalem, but on instructions from Pompey they retire and are subsequently defeated by Aristobulus II
64, at Antioch, Pompey deposes Philip II, last of the Seleucids, and makes **Syria a Roman province**		Between 100 and 50, the Book of **Judith**

IX. ROMAN PALESTINE TO THE TIME OF HADRIAN 63 B.C.-135 A.D.

63, Pompey at Damascus. Arrogance of Aristobulus and incapacity of Hyrcanus		Summer or autumn 63, **Pompey takes Jerusalem,** names Hyrcanus high priest and sends Aristobulus and his son Antigonus to Rome
		The Idumaean ANTIPATER, minister of Hyrcanus, is the real ruler of Judaea. Rebellion of the last of the Hasmonaeans
CLEOPATRA VII, queen of Egypt: 51-30	50	About 50, in Alexandria, **Wisdom**
48, JULIUS CAESAR defeats Pompey at Pharsalia. Pompey killed in Egypt		*The Psalms of Solomon*
		47, Caesar names HYRCANUS ethnarch (47-41). Herod son of Antipater is named *strategos* of Galilee; the revolt of Hezekiah is suppressed
44, Caesar is assassinated		
41-30, ANTONY in the East		41, Antony names Herod and his brother Phasael as tetrarchs
40, **Parthians** in Syria and Palestine		
End of 40, the Senate declares Herod king		ANTIGONUS: king and high priest, 40-37. Herod flees to Rome. Hyrcanus is mutilated
38, Parthians driven from Syria and Palestine		39-37, struggle between Herod and Antigonus
		Early 37, Herod marries MARIAMNE I, granddaughter of Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II

B.C.

Sosius governor of Syria: 38-37

June(?) 37, **capture of Jerusalem by Sosius and Herod**

31, OCTAVIAN defeats Antony at naval battle of **Actium**

HEROD THE GREAT effectively king: 37-4 B.C.

30, suicide of Antony and Cleopatra. Egypt a Roman province

Herod builds the Antonia, and in 23 the Palace in the upper city. Founds or rebuilds Antipatris, Phaselis, Samaria (Sebaste), the Herodion and Caesarea

29, Octavian, Imperator for life and, in 27, named AUGUSTUS

Syria an imperial province with a legate from Augustus

Numerous wives: in 23, Mariamne II, daughter of the High Priest Simon, son of Boethos. (Mariamne I was put to death in 29 and, some time after 30, her grandfather Hyrcanus)

Herod 'rex socius'

25, Galatia a Roman province

24, Herod is given *Trachonitis, Batanaea* and Auranitis and later Paneas

Winter of 20-19, start of the rebuilding of the Temple

13-11, M. TITIUS legate in Syria. His successor is not known

The Pharisees Hillel and Shammai and their rival schools

About 10(?), SULPICIUS QUIRINIUS (as legate of Syria?) subdues the Homonades of Taurus. Several indications of a census throughout the empire

The census of Lk 2:1f? Cf. the *lapis Venetus* inscription, undated, giving evidence of a census in Apamea (Syria) by order of Quirinius 'legate in Syria'. Cf. Lk 2:2

ARETAS IV succeeds his father Obodas II as king of Nabataea and reigns until 39

9-8, Herod violates the territory of the Nabataeans to capture the brigands of Trachonitis sheltered by the minister Syllaios, who complains to Augustus. Temporary disgrace of Herod

Sentius Saturninus, legate in Syria: 9-6

About the year 7, Herod has Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne I, strangled

According to Tertullian, it is Saturninus who initiates the census of Judaea

More than 6000 Pharisees refuse to take the oath to Augustus on the occasion of a census (?) (which continues that of Quirinius?)

QUINTILIUS VARUS, legate in Syria: 6-4

Birth of JESUS, about 7-6(?)

March of the year 4, the affair of the golden eagle in the Temple. Execution of Antipater, eldest son of Herod. Herod's will in favour of the sons of Malthake the Samaritan (Archelaus and Herod Antipas) and the son of Cleopatra (Philip)

End of March, beginning of April, 4 B.C., **death of Herod** at Jericho. Archelaus takes his body to the Herodion

4, at the Passover (11th April) Archelaus puts down a rebellion at Jerusalem, then goes to Rome to appeal to Augustus for the title of king

SABINUS, procurator for Augustus in Syria

Sabinus comes to Jerusalem to make an inventory of the resources of the kingdom of Herod: sharp opposition and trouble throughout the country. At this time, possibly, the rebellion of Judas the Galilean, cf. Ac 5:37, and of the Pharisee Saddok who urged disobedience to Rome and refusal to pay taxes. (Origin of the **Zealots**, cf. Mt 22:17) Sabinus appeals to Varus who pursues the rebels; 2000 are crucified

End of year 4, Augustus confirms Herod's last will, but omits the title of king for Archelaus

ARCHELAUS ethnarch of Judaea and Samaria: 4 B.C.-6 A.D.

HEROD ANTIPAS tetrarch of *Galilee* and *Peraea*: 4 B.C.-39 A.D.

PHILIP tetrarch of Gaulanitis, Batanaea, Trachonitis, Auranitis and the district of Paneas (Ituraea): 4 B.C.-34 A.D.

The *Assumption of Moses* (apoc.)

	B.C.	
3-2 B.C., the successor to Varus is unknown. Some here place Quirinius as legate		If Quirinus was in fact legate 3-2, he could have continued the census begun by Sabinus and ordered the census of Apamea (the undated *lapis Venetus*)
1/2 A.D.-4, Quirinius is counsellor to young GAIUS CAESAR, grandson of Augustus, during his mission to the East	A.D. 1	Philip the tetrarch builds Julias (Bethsaida). He enriches the shrine of Pan (Paneas, the *Paneion*), which he names Caesarea in honour of Augustus
VOLUSIUS SATURNINUS, legate in Syria: 4-5 A.D.		
6, Augustus deposes Archelaus who is exiled to Vienne (Gaul)		
6-41, **Judaea a procuratorial province** (with Caesarea as the capital)		
6-8, COPONIUS procurator		
6, according to Josephus, QUIRINIUS legate in Syria(?)		6, according to Josephus, Quirinius comes to Judaea to make an inventory of possessions of Archelaus; this could have provoked the rebellion of Judas and Saddok. But for the year 6 Josephus repeats events he has described for the year 4
		ANNAS, son of Seth, high priest: 6(?)-15
		Between 5 and 10, birth of Paul at Tarsus; pupil of Gamaliel the Elder, Ac 22:3, cf. 5:34
14 (19th August), death of Augustus. TIBERIUS emperor: 14-37		
VALERIUS GRATUS procurator: 15-26		Valerius Gratus deposes Annas. Three other high priests follow, then JOSEPH CALLED CAIAPHAS: 18-36
17-19, GERMANICUS, adopted son of Tiberius, in the East		About 17, foundation of Tiberias by Antipas. Under Tiberius, LYSANIAS tetrarch of Abilene, Lk 3:1 *and inscriptions*
18, Cappadocia a Roman province		
26-36, PONTIUS PILATE procurator		
		About 27, Herod Antipas, married to the daughter of Aretas, marries Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod (son of Mariamne II)
The 15th year of Tiberius, Lk 3:1: 19th August 28 or 18th August 29, but according to the Syrian calculation: Sept.-Oct. 27 to Sept.-Oct. 28		Autumn of 27, the preaching of JOHN THE BAPTIST and the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Cf. Lk 3:2+
		28, Passover. Jesus in Jerusalem, Jn 2:13. The 46 years of Jn 2:20 begin from 20/19 B.C.
		Beginning of 29, John, imprisoned at Machaerus (Josephus), is beheaded, Mt 14:3
		29, shortly before the Passover, the multiplication of the loaves, Jn 6:1; Mt 14:13
		Feasts of Tabernacles and of the Dedication: Jesus in Jerusalem, Jn 7-10
'(The) Christ condemned to death by Pontius Pilate, under the Emperor Tiberius' (Tacitus, *Annals*)		30, on the eve of the Passover, i.e. 14th Nisan, a Friday, death of Jesus, Jn 19:31f. (The Passover fell on the Saturday, 8th April in 30 and 4th April in 33: the second date is too late, cf. Jn 2:20). Cf. Mt 26:17+
		30, **Pentecost**, outpouring of the Spirit on the Church, Ac 2. The first community, Ac 2:42, etc.
33-34, Philip dies without an heir and Tiberius joins his tetrarchy with the province of Syria		Pontius Pilate has difficulties with the Jews: the incidents of the standards and shields (Philo). Pilate's aqueduct

	A.D.	
		Election of the seven hellenist deacons, Ac 6:1f
L. VITELLIUS, legate in Syria: 35-39. The father of the emperor Vitellius		About 35, Pontius Pilate orders the massacre of the Samaritans at Gerizim
He is given full powers in the East		36, Passover. Vitellius in Jerusalem. He replaces Caiaphas with JONATHAN, son of Annas
36, on the Euphrates, he concludes a pact with Artaban, king of the Parthians. Antipas is with him		36, the troops of Aretas defeat those of Antipas. Tiberius orders Vitellius to attack Aretas
		Autumn of 36, Pontius Pilate is sent to Rome by Vitellius to justify his conduct. He dies a violent death (execution or suicide)
36-37, winter. Vitellius concentrates the legions at Ptolemais		36-37, winter (?), **martyrdom of Stephen** and **dispersion** of part of the community. A little later, **conversion** of PAUL. Cf. Ac 9:1 +
37, March. Death of Tiberius. Vitellius breaks off his campaign against Aretas		37, Passover. Vitellius, on his way to Petra, stops at Jerusalem. He replaces Jonathan with his brother THEOPHILUS, high priest from 37-41
CALIGULA emperor: 37-41		
MARCELLUS procurator		Paul in 'Arabia', then in Damascus, Ac 9:19f; Ga 1:17f
37, Caligula gives AGRIPPA I, son of Aristobulus, the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias, with the title of king. (37-44)		
38, persecution of the Jews in Alexandria. 39, embassy of the Jewish philosopher Philo to Rome (he dies after 41)		
39-42, P. PETRONIUS legate in Syria		About 39, Paul escapes from Damascus, 2 Co 11: 32f, and makes a first visit to the elders of the Church, Ga 1:18f (Cephas and James the brother of the Lord); Ac 9:25f
39, Caligula exiles Antipas to the Pyrenees and gives his tetrarchy to Agrippa I		39, Caligula orders the erection of his statue in the Temple. Thanks to Petronius and Agrippa I the affair drags on until the assassination of Caligula
41-54, CLAUDIUS emperor. Agrippa I, now in Rome, contributes to his success; Claudius concedes him Judaea and Samaria. His brother Herod becomes king of Chalcis (41-48) and marries Berenice (daughter of Agrippa)		The kingdom of Herod the Great is reconstituted. Agrippa builds the 3rd wall of Jerusalem, but at his death it is unfinished. Many buildings, in particular at Berytus (Beirut)
41, Claudius' edict and letter to the Alexandrians		
42-44, VIBIUS MARSIUS legate in Syria		About 43, Paul and Barnabas at **Antioch** which becomes the centre for the hellenistic Christians. PETER in Samaria (Simon the magician) and in the coastal plain (the centurion Cornelius)
44, spring. On the death of Herod Agrippa I, Judaea again becomes a procuratorial province, 44-66		43 or 44, before the Passover, Agrippa I orders the beheading of JAMES, BROTHER OF JOHN (James the Great); during the feast he imprisons Peter. Ac 12
CUSPIUS FADUS procurator 44-46		28th June 45, a rescript of Claudius gives the Jews the custody of the priestly vestments. Herod of Chalcis is named inspector of the Temple, with the right to nominate the high priest. In 47 he nominated Ananias, son of Nebadios (47-59), cf. Ac 23:2f
CASSIUS LONGINUS, the lawyer, legate in Syria: 45-50		

	A.D.	
		Fadus and the false prophet Theudas, cf. Ac 5:36
46-48, TIBERIUS ALEXANDER procurator. Nephew of Philo, but an apostate. At this time, several famines throughout the empire		Between 45 and 49, **1st mission by Paul**: Antioch, Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Lystra, ...Antioch, Ac 13:1f
48-52, VENTIDIUS CUMANUS procurator		About 48, famine in Judaea, worsened by the sabbatical year 47/48. Visit to Jerusalem, by HELEN, queen of Adiabene, a convert to Judaism; she brings relief to the population
AGRIPPA II, son of Agrippa I, king of Chalcis 48-53. In 49 he is named inspector of the Temple, with the right to nominate the high priest		
49, Claudius 'drives from Rome the Jewish agitators stirred up by Chrestos' (Suetonius), cf. Ac 18:2		48-49, prophecy of Agabus and the aid given to the community at Jerusalem by that of Antioch. The **council of Jerusalem**: converts from paganism exempt from the Law, Ac 15:5f; Ga 2:1f
	50	About the year 50, the oral tradition of the gospel is put into written form: the **Aramaic Matthew**, and the complementary **collection**. The **Letter of James** (or about 58)
50-60, UMMIDIUS QUADRATUS legate in Syria		50-52, 2nd mission by Paul: Lystra (Timothy), Phrygia, Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonika, Athens (sermon on the Areopagus)
52 (rather than 51), GALLIO, brother of Seneca, proconsul of Achaia		
		Winter of 50 to summer of 52, Paul in Corinth: the **Letters to the Thessalonians**; and, in the spring of 52, summoned to appear before Gallio. Summer 52, he goes to Jerusalem, Ac 18:22, and then to Antioch
Agrippa II in favour at Rome. Claudius exiles Cumanus		The Jews in their struggle against the Samaritans are supported by Cumanus. He is sent to Rome by Quadratus, who visits Jerusalem, Passover of 52
ANTONIUS FELIX procurator: 52-60. Brother of the freedman Pallas. Marries DRUSILLA, sister of Agrippa II, already married to Aziz, king of Emesa, cf. Ac 24:24		Felix checks brigandage
53, Claudius gives the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias to Agrippa II, in exchange for Chalcis, (53-93)		53-58, 3rd mission by Paul; APOLLOS at Ephesus and then at Corinth
54-68, NERO emperor		54-57, after passing through Galatia and Phrygia, Paul stays at Ephesus for 2¼ years. After 56(?), **Letter to the Philippians**. About Passover 57, **1 Corinthians**. Then a quick visit to Corinth, 2 Co 12:14. Return to Ephesus and **Letter to the Galatians**
55, Nero adds a part of Galilee and Peraea to the kingdom of Agrippa		End of 57, passes through Macedonia. **2 Corinthians**
		Winter 57-58, at Corinth, Ac 20:3, cf. 1 Co 16:6; **Letter to the Romans**
		Passover 58, at Philippi, Ac 20:6, then, by sea, to Caesarea (Philip and Agabus)
		Summer 58, in Jerusalem. JAMES THE BROTHER OF THE LORD heads the Judaeo-Christian community; his **Letter** to the Jews of the Dispersion (or possibly before 49)

	A.D.	
		About 58, Felix disbands the followers of the Egyptian false prophet on the Mount of Olives, cf. Ac 21:38. He has the former High Priest Jonathan assassinated, in spite of the fact that he owed his position to Jonathan
		58, Pentecost. Paul arrested in the Temple and brought before Ananias and the Sanhedrin. Taken to Caesarea, he is brought before Felix
Between 59 and 67, Agrippa II nominates six high priests, among whom ANAN SON OF ANNAS (62)		58-60, Paul a captive at Caesarea, the scene of serious troubles between Jews and Syrians
60-63, CORBULO legate in Syria		60, Paul appears before Felix and appeals to Caesar. He pleads his cause before Agrippa and his sister Berenice
PORCIUS FESTUS, procurator : 60-62		
		Autumn of 60, Paul's voyage to Rome, the storm, he winters in Malta
		61-63, Paul in Rome under military guard. His apostolate, **Letters to Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon** (and **to Philippians?**)
LUCCEIUS ALBINUS procurator : 62-64		62, the High Priest Anan has **James** the brother of the Lord **stoned to death** (after the death of Festus and before the arrival of Albinus). SIMEON, son of Cleophas and of Mary (sister-in-law of the mother of Jesus), succeeded James as head of the church of Jerusalem (Eusebius)
		Anan deposed by Agrippa II
CESTIUS GALLUS legate in Syria: 63-66		63, Paul is set free, and possibly goes to Spain, Rm 15:24f
64, July, burning of Rome and persecution of the Christians		About 64, **1 Peter** and the **gospel of Mark**
		64 (or 67), **martyrdom of Peter** in Rome
64-66, GESSIUS FLORUS procurator. Nominated by influence of Poppaea, the Jewish wife of Nero		About 65, Paul at Ephesus, 1 Tm 1:3; in Crete, Tt 1:5; in Macedonia, whence he sends his **1st Letter to Timothy**, 1 Tm 1:3; and probably **Titus**
		The **Greek gospel of Matthew**; the **gospel of Luke** and the **Acts of the Apostles**: before 70? or about 80?
66, rising of the Alexandrian Jews. Tiberius Alexander, at that time prefect in Egypt, massacres several thousands		Summer 66, in Jerusalem, Florus crucifies some Jews, but a rising compels him to leave the city. Troubles in Caesarea and throughout the country
66-67, spectacular tour of Greece by Nero: he appoints VESPASIAN and his son TITUS to restore order in Palestine		Sept. 66, Jerusalem attacked by Cestius Gallus. He retires with heavy losses. Rebel government
		Exodus of people of importance and doubtless some Christians, cf. Lk 21:20f, who take refuge in Pella (Eusebius)
MUCIANUS legate in Syria: 67-69		67, Vespasian, with 60,000 men, reconquers Galilee (JOSEPHUS, its rebel governor, is taken prisoner)

A.D.

About 67, **Letter to the Hebrews.** Paul, a prisoner in Rome, writes **2 Timothy.** A little later he is beheaded

68, March, in Gaul the revolt of the legate VINDEX

67-68, the Zealots of JOHN OF GISCHALA, escaped from Galilee, are masters of Jerusalem with the Idumaeans. Anan and the leading people are massacred

68, April, GALBA emperor

68, June, suicide of Nero

68, Vespasian occupies the maritime plain and the Valley of the Jordan (destruction of Qumran). On Nero's death the siege of Jerusalem is broken off

69, January, OTHO proclaimed Emperor by the Praetorians and VITELLIUS by the legions in Germany

69, SIMON BARGIORA and the *sicarii* in Jerusalem. Vespasian subdues the rest of Judaea; the *sicarii* hold out in Jerusalem, and in the Herodion, Masada and Machaerus

69, July, Tiberius Alexander supports Vespasian. His lead is followed by all the East

69-79, VESPASIAN emperor. He entrusts the siege of Jerusalem to Titus

70, Passover. Many pilgrims in Jerusalem. **Titus lays siege** to the city with four legions. Tiberius Alexander is second in command

End of 69, Vespasian in sole command of the empire

Capture of the 3rd wall, then of the 2nd. Circumvallation. Capture of the Antonia. Famine

Beginning of August, sacrifices cease

70, 29th August, capture of the Inner Court and **burning of the Temple** (the 10th of Loos, i.e. the 10th of the 5th month, the day when Nebuzaradan set fire to the first Temple, Jr 52:12 and Josephus)

Sacrifice to the standards, in front of the Temple, cf. Mt 24:15. Titus hailed as Imperator

70, Sept., capture of the Upper City and the palace of Herod. The inhabitants killed, sold into slavery or condemned to hard labour

70, end of the year, Judaea an imperial province; under the rule of the legate of the Xth Legion based in Jerusalem. Caesarea a Roman colony

Titus in Syria; many Jews killed in the gladiatorial games

71, summer, triumph of Vespasian and Titus in Rome (with the Temple furnishings): execution of Simon Bargiora. The Arch of Titus

71-72, LUCILIUS BASSUS legate in Judaea

The didrachma formerly subscribed to the Temple is now given to Jupiter Capitolinus

72, foundation of **Flavia Neapolis** (Naplus)

Capture of the Herodion and Machaerus, by L. Bassus

73, FLAVIUS SILVA legate in Judaea

Siege of **Masada** by F. Silva: Eleazar (descendant of Judas the Galilean) and his *sicarii* commit suicide rather than yield (Passover, 73)

A number of *sicarii* take refuge in Egypt, but are handed over to the Romans. Closing of the temple founded by Onias at Leontopolis

Return to Jerusalem of a group **of Judaeo-Christians** (Epiphanius). Rabbi Eleazar re-opens the synagogue of the Alexandrians

Rabbi Johanan ben-Zakkai founds the **Academy of Yabneh** (Jamnia), successor to the Sanhedrin. GAMALIEL II succeeds him; origins of the Mishna

	A.D.	
		70-80, the **Letter of Jude**, then **2 Peter**. *2 Esdras* (apocryphal). About 78, the *Jewish War* (Josephus)
79-81, TITUS emperor		
81-96, DOMITIAN emperor. Brother of Titus		About 93, *The Antiquities of the Jews* (Josephus)
95, has his cousin FLAVIUS CLEMENS condemned to death as a Christian. Exiles his wife, Domitilla, to Pandataria		About 95, John exiled to Patmos. Final text of **Revelation**. *Letter of St Clement*, bishop of Rome, to the Corinthians
96-98, NERVA emperor		**Gospel of John**; then **1 John** (**3 John** and **2 John** are possibly earlier). He opposes Cerinthus and his Docetism
98-117, TRAJAN emperor		
		The *Didache* (end of 1c.?)
CORNELIUS PALMA, legate in Syria, occupies the kingdom of Nabataea, which becomes the **province of Arabia**, capital Bostra (Bozra) (106)	100	At the beginning of Trajan's reign, **death of John at Ephesus**
CLAUDIUS ATTICUS HERODES governor of Judaea in 107		107, **martyrdom of Simeon**, 2nd bishop of Jerusalem. From now until the Second Revolt there are 13 other bishops, likewise Judaeo-Christians
111-113, PLINY THE YOUNGER legate in Bithynia. His letter on the persecution of the Christians and the **rescript of Trajan**		About 110, the seven *letters* of IGNATIUS, bishop of Antioch, and his martyrdom at Rome
114-116, annexation of Armenia, of Assyria and Mesopotamia. **The Roman empire at the height of its power**		A little later, the *Letter to the Philippians* of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna and disciple of John († 156)
		The *Odes of Solomon* (apocryphal)
117, **rising of the Jews** throughout the East and revolt of the new provinces. These are recaptured by the Moor LUSIUS QUIETUS; he is named legate of Judaea		
117-138, HADRIAN emperor. Establishes the frontier of the empire on the Euphrates		Quietus erects the statue of Trajan in front of the altar of the Temple (Hippolytus). He is deposed and subsequently put to death by Hadrian
Hadrian's second tour of the empire, 128-134. At Athens the completion of the temple of the Olympian (or 'Capitoline') Zeus. Antiochus Epiphanes had contributed to its construction		About 130, the *Letter of Barnabas* (apocryphal). At Hierapolis in Phrygia, the bishop PAPIAS. In Alexandria, the gnostic BASILIDES
TINEIUS RUFUS legate in Judaea and PUBLICIUS MARCELLUS legate in Syria		130, Hadrian in Jerusalem. He decides to rebuild the city (Aelia Capitolina) and the Temple, now dedicated to Jupiter
		132-135, **second Jewish rebellion**
		SIMEON BEN KOSEBA *(letters of Murabbaat)* seizes Jerusalem; Eleazar high priest. Ben Koseba acknowledged by RABBI AKIBA as Messiah and as the Star of Nb 24:17, whence his name of Bar Kokeba (Son of the Star). He persecutes the Christians because they refuse to join the revolt
		In spite of the reinforcements of Marcellus, Rufus is overrun by the rebels: Hadrian sends the legate in Britain, JULIUS SEVERUS, and arrives in person
		Beginning of 134, **capture of Jerusalem**

A.D.

After the conquest of nearly 50 strongholds, Severus seizes **Bether**, where Bar Kokeba perishes (August, 135)

The captives are sold at Mamre and Gaza

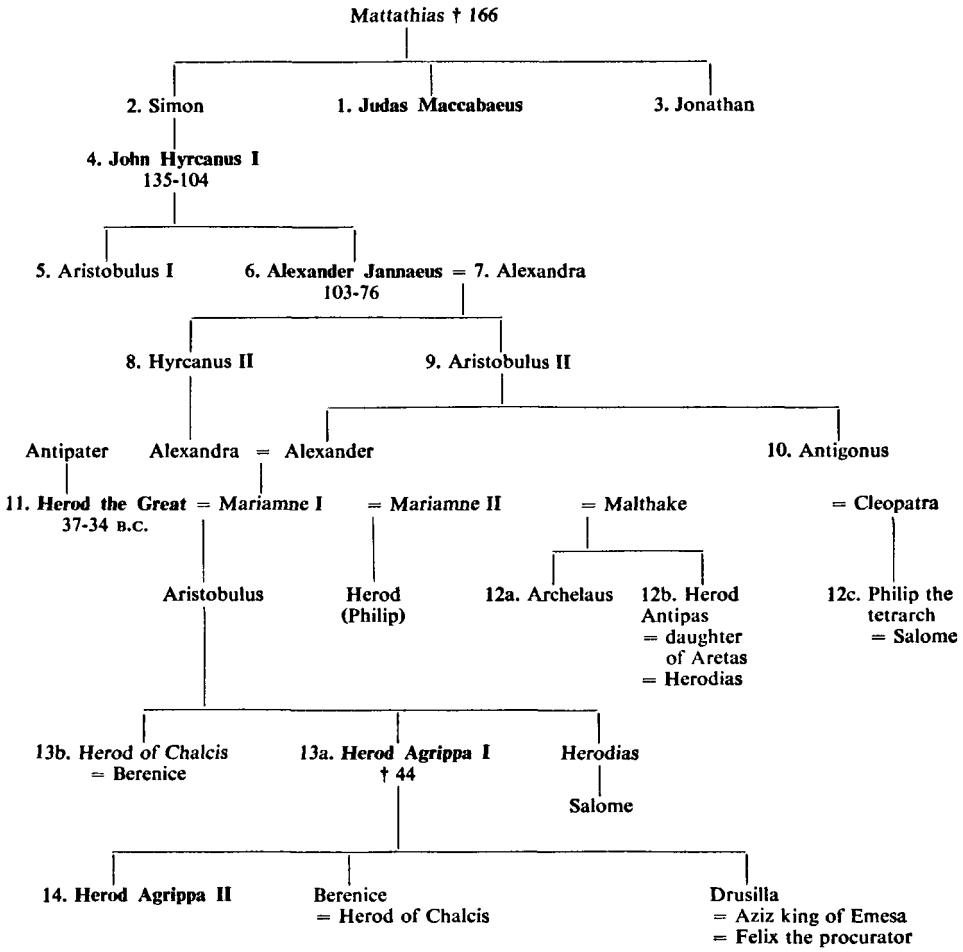
The province of Judaea becomes the **province of Syria-Palestine**. Jerusalem a Roman colony, forbidden to the Jews

135, Rufus builds Aelia (the temple of Jupiter, Juno and Venus on the site of Calvary and the tomb of Christ). **The Temple is made into a sanctuary of Zeus and Hadrian**

The temple of Zeus Hypsistos at Gerizim and the sacred grove of Adonis around the Cave at Bethlehem

The bishop MARK (about 135-155) and the new Christian community. The Judaeo-Christians, dispersed in Transjordania and Syria, in time form the sect of the **Ebionites** (the 'Poor'), with the *Gospel of the Hebrews;* they do not accept the divinity of the Messiah and reject the Pauline Letters

THE HASMONAEAN AND HERODIAN DYNASTIES



= indicates marriages

THE CALENDAR

The year was based upon a dual lunar-solar calculation: 12 months of 29 or 30 days, with a supplementary month every second or third year to correct the lag of the lunar cycle behind the solar cycle. From the 4th century, the Babylonian experts, by spreading the 7 supplementary months over a 19 year cycle, reduced the lag to approximately two hours. This system was adopted by Seleucus I when, on October 1st (Macedonian reckoning) of the year 312, he inaugurated the 'Grecian Age' (cf. 1 M 1:11), which prevailed throughout the East. In Babylon they retained the spring New Year's Day and the seleucid era begins on 1st Nisan 311 (about 3nd April in the Julian Calendar).

With the Jews, the religious calendar also starts in the spring. The Jewish civil calendar by contrast starts in the autumn, but the sequence of the months begins in the spring as with Babylon. 1 K 6:8 has preserved three Phoenician month-names and Exodus an old west-semitic name (Abib). After the Exile the Jews adopted month-names from Babylon (Nisan, Iyyar, etc.), and the intercalary month was placed before Nisan (Ve-Adar). The observation of the new moon of Nisan determines the structure of the entire Jewish calendar, and normally occurred after the spring equinox (in the seleucid period, about 25th March); the interval could be as much as 29 days. The Jewish week was not determined by the phases of the moon—so much so that a feast day upon which work was forbidden, such as the Passover, rarely fell on the Sabbath. As the new moon rises in the evening, the day was reckoned as from one sunset to the next. The day of the full moon of Nisan (Passover) therefore began on the evening of the 14th.

The night was divided into three watches, Ex 14:24; Jg 7:19; 1 S 11:11. The Roman system had four watches, dividing the period from sunrise to sunset into 12 hours, the sixth hour thus falling at midday.

O.T.	BABYLONIAN NAMES	SOLAR MONTHS	MACEDONIAN NAMES	ANNUAL FEASTS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE (cf. Ex 23:14+)
1st	*Nisan* = Abib Ex 13:4 etc.	Mar./Apr.	*Artemisios*	The 14/15th day: Passover Ex 12f; 23:15; 34:18; Dt 16:1f; Lv 23:5; Nb 28:16. Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted 7 days. Offering of the First Sheaf "on the day after the sabbath" Lv 23:11.
2nd	*Iyyar* = *Zif* 1 K 6:1	Apr./May	*Daisios*	
3rd	*Sivan*	May/June	*Panemos*	7 weeks after the Offering of the First Sheaf; feast of Weeks (Harvest, First-fruits, Pentecost), Ex 23:16; 34:22; Dt 16:9f; Lv 23:15f; Nb 28:26; Ac 2:1.
4th	*Tamuz*	June/July	*Loos*	
5th	*Ab*	July/Aug.	*Gorpaios*	
6th	*Elul*	Aug./Sep.	*Hyperberetaios*	
7th	*Tishri* = Ethanim 1 K 8:2	Sep./Oct.	*Dios*	New Moon: Day of Acclamation Lv 23:23f; Nb 29:1f (*Rosh hashanah* or the Jewish New Year). 10th day: *Yom hakkippurim*. Day of Atonement, Lv 16; 23:26f; Nb 29:7f. The Fast, cf. Ac 27:9.
7th				From the 15th day to the 23rd; feast of Tabernacles or *Scenopegie* (the Greek title), Dt 16:13; Lv 23:33f; Nb 29:12f; Jn 7:2. It is both a "feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year" Ex 23:16, and the "turn of the year" i.e. an autumnal New Year's day as in Canaan, Ex 34:22.
8th	Marheshvan = Bul 1 K 6:38	Oct./Nov.	*Apellaios*	
9th	*Chisley*	Nov./Dec.	*Audunaios*	25th day: The Dedication (of the Temple) with an octave, 1 M 4:52; 2 M 10:5; Jn 10:22. The Hebrew title is *Hannuccah* or the feast of Lights according to Josephus
10th	*Tebet*	Dec./Jan.	*Peritios*	
11th	*Shebat*	Jan./Feb.	*Dystros*	
12th	*Adar*	Feb./Mar.	*Xanthikos*	13th day: Day of Nicanor, 1 M 7:49; 2 M 15:36. 14/15th day: Feast of *Purim* or Lots, Est 9:21f, or the Day of Mordecai, 2 M 15:36.

MEASURES AND MONEY

TABLES OF APPROXIMATE EQUIVALENTS

I. DISTANCE

	RATIO	INCHES	CENTIMETRES
amma (cubit)	1	18	45
zereth (span)	1/2	8.8	22
tofah (palm)	1/6	3	7.2
esba (finger)	1/24	0.8	2

The old cubit of Ezekiel measured 7 palms or handbreadths (= 21 ins/52.5 cms), cf. Ezk 40:5 note f; the man's measuring rod was 6 old cubits = 10 ft 4 ins/315 cms. The N.T. has, besides the cubit, the arm-span of approximately 6 ft/1.84 metres, and the *stadion* of approximately 202 yds/185 metres. The Roman mile was 8 stadia or some 1616 yds/1.48 km. The *schoinos* of 2 M 11:5 equals 30 stadia, or about 3½ modern miles/5.55 km.

II. CAPACITY (Dry)

	RATIO	BUSHELS/GALLONS	LITRES
homer/cor	10	12½ bus.	450
lethech	5	6¼ bus.	225
ephah	1	1¼ bus.	45
seah (measure)	1/3	3⅓ U.K. gal. 4 U.S. gal.	15
issaron (tenth of a measure)	1/10	1 U.K. gal. 1¼ U.S. gal.	4.5

(Liquid)

	RATIO	GALLONS		LITRES
		U.K.	U.S.A.	
cor	10	100	120	450
bath	1	10	12	45
hin	1/6	1⅔ pints	2 quarts	7.5
kab	1/18	4½	2½ fl. ozs	2.5
log	1/72	1	20	0.6

The *artabē* in Dn 14:3 (LXX) is a Persian measure of about 12⅓ (U.K.)/14¾ (U.S.) gallons or 56 litres. In the N.T. there are: the 'measure' *(metrētē)* of 8⅔ (U.K.)/10½ (U.S.) gallons or 39.4 litres which is equivalent to *bath*; the 'sixth' *(sextarius* or *xestes)* of ¾ (U.K.) pint/15 (U.S.) fl. ozs or 0.46 litres as an equivalent to the *log*; the *modion* in 2 (U.K.)/2⅓ (U.S.) gallons or 8.75 litres which is two thirds of the *seah*; and the *choinix* of Rv 6:6 which is 2 (U.K.) pints/1$^{1}/_{6}$ (U.S.) quarts or 1.1 litres. The N.T. also uses the words *seah*, *cor*, and *bath* in Greek forms.

III. WEIGHT

	RATIO	LBS/OZS	KILOGRAMS
kikkar (talent)	3000	75 lbs	34.272
maneh (mina)	50	1¼ lbs	0.571
shekel	1	0.39 ozs	0.0114
beqa (half-shekel)	1/2	0.19 ozs	0.0057
gerah	1/20	0.02 ozs	0.0006

The mina of Ezk 45:12 is 60 shekels (1½ lbs or 0.685 kg.). The N.T. has the Roman pound (Lat. *libra* = Gr. *litra*) of approximately 11½ ozs/0.326 kg.

IV. MONEY

1. BEFORE DARIUS I. Coinage first appeared in the 7c. B.C. in Anatolia and then in Greece. Prior to this date the value of metal was gauged only by its weight. The *gold drachmas* of Ne 7:69 = Ezr 2:69, are probably the Attic half-staters (see table of monetary equivalents). The *silver mina* mentioned at the same place was only money of account, and was possibly the Babylonian *maneh* of about 1 lb or 0.505 kg.

2. DARIUS, soon after 515 B.C., issued the *gold daric* having the weight of the Babylonian shekel of ⅓ oz. or 8.41 grams (Ezr 8:27), and a *silver shekel* one twentieth of the value of the gold coin and thus weighing $^1/_6$ oz. or 5.60 grams, since gold was valued at 13.3 times as much as silver. It is this shekel that is mentioned in Ne 5:15, whereas the shekel of Ne 10:33 is regarded only in terms of weight[a]. The minting of silver coinage seems to have been permitted throughout the Persian empire; silver coins have been found in Palestine with the inscription YHD = Judah.

3. HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIOD. Alexander extended the Attic system throughout his empire, with a gold to silver value ratio of 10 to 1. Later the Romans introduced their currency; they reckoned large suns in *sesterces* (see table). In the East, reckonings continued to be made in talents and minas i.e. in equivalents of 6000 and 100 drachmas.

MONETARY EQUIVALENTS

GREEK MONEY	WEIGHT		VALUE RATIO		WEIGHT		ROMAN MONEY
	OZS	GRAMS	GR.	RM.	GRAMS	OZS	
Attic **stater** (= gold standard). Weight = two silver drachmas:	0.3	8.6	20[b]	25	7.8	0.27	gold **aureus**[c], under Augustus
Attic silver **tetradrachma:** In Syria, under the empire: Sometimes called stater, Mt 21:27; 26:15 (D), cf. Zc 11:12	0.6 ±0.5[a]	17.4 ±14.	4 3				
Attic silver **didrachma:** Under the empire, Mt 17:24	0.3 ±0.25	8.6 ±7.	2 1½				
Attic **drachma** (= silver standard): Under Antiochus IV, 2 M 12:43: Under the empire:	0.15 ±0.14 0.12	4.36 ±4. 3.5	1 3/4		4.55 3.85 3.41	0.16 0.13 0.12	silver **denarius**[c], appears 269 B.C.; good quality alloy up to 3c. From 216 B.C. up to Nero. From Nero onwards.
				1/4	25.4	0.9	latten alloy **sesterce**; under Augustus = 4 as (weight one ounce).
Attic silver **obol:**	0.025	0.72	1/6	1/8	12.4	0.44	latten alloy **dipondium**; under Augustus = 2 as (Lk 12 and Vulg)
				1/16	10.8	0.38	**as** or **assarius** (= bronze standard) originally a Roman pound i.e. 12 ounces or 327 grams. Under Augustus.
Attic bronze **chalkos:** Under Antiochus IV	0.3 ±0.21	8.6 ±6.	1/48	1/32	4.5	0.16	bronze **semis**, under Augustus.
Attic bronze **lepton:** one seventh of the chalkos; sometimes called obol, chalkos, etc. Mk 12:42; Lk 12:59 = Mt 5:26			1/336	1/64	3.1	0.11	bronze **quadrans**, under Augustus. In the East, coinage of small values was locally minted by the ruling dynasty, by procurators or by cities, in rough conformity with the chalkos and as.

Silver coinage in Palestine during the Graeco-Roman Period (issued only during the First and Second Revolts):

FIRST REVOLT, 66-70 A.D.:			SECOND REVOLT, 133-135 A.D.:	
tetradrachmas	0.49 oz./14 gr.	inscribed 'shekel of Israel'	tetradrachmas	0.49 oz./14 gr.
didrachmas	0.25 oz./7 gr.	inscribed 'half shekel'	denarii	restruck
drachmas	0.12 oz./3.35 gr.	inscribed 'quarter shekel'		

NOTES

a. The tetradrachma represents a unit of the same order as the ancient shekel-pound. The didrachma annual levy for the Temple corresponds to the half-shekel of Ex 30:13 and to the third-of-a-shekel of Ne 10:33. The rabbis stipulated that these should conform to the standard of Tyre whose staters (tetradrachmas) had a high reputation.

b. Before Alexander.

c. This gold coin was the equivalent of 0.3225 grams of gold.

INDEX OF BIBLICAL THEMES IN THE FOOTNOTES

Aaronites *see* Priesthood

Abraham *see also:* Patriarchs, Promise
Gn 5a, 6g, 9d, 11d, e, 12a, c, 14a, 15a, c, 17d, 22a, 24a, 46b. *Nb* 1c. *Ps* 45g. *Ws* 71. *Si* 44p. *Lk* 16h, 19b. *Jn* 8k, r. *Rm* 1j, 3i, 4b, c, 9a, c. *Jm* 2f, j

Absolution *see* Forgiveness

Abstinence *see* Fasting

Abyss *see* Water

Acceptance *see* Sacrifice

Accuser *see* Devil

Adam (New Adam) *see also:* Creation, Man, Newness, Woman
Gn 1j, 2c, 3d. *Ws* 1*l*, 10a, c. *Rm* 5h, j. *Ph* 2f. *Ep* 2n

Adoption *see also:* Election, Inheritance, Promise, Son of God, Spirit
Gn 48c. *Ac* 1x. *Ga* 4d. *Ep* 1d

Adultery *see* Prostitution

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Agape *see* Love, Meal

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Ex 24c, 27a, 30a. *Lv* 8a. *Nb* 7c. *1 S* 14p. *1 K* 8p. *2 K* 5c, 16f. *1 Ch* 21f. *Dn* 9o. *Ac* 17o. *Heb* 9c, 13c. *Rv* 6g

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Ancestors *see* Patriarchs

Angel *see also:* Law, Manifestation, Message, Saints, Servant, Sin, Son of God, Transcendence
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Anger *see also:* Devil, Forgiveness, Jealousy, Judgement, Retribution, Wine
Gn 6d, 44b. *1 K* 21b. *Jb* 14g. *Ps* 11d, 76h. *Is* 51j. *Dn* 7p, 8t, v. *Am* 5p. *Na* 1a, d, e. *Mt* 3g. *Rm* 1n, 9g, 12g. *Rv* 14j, 16f

Anointing (Anointed of Yahweh, Anointed one, Chrism) *see also:* Christ, Consecration, High Priest, Kingship, Name, Messiah, People of God, Priesthood, Saul, Son of God
Ex 28h, 30c. *Lv* 8a. *1 S* 9m, 16d, 26a. *2 S* 2c, 5a, f. *1 K* 19g. *2 K* 9a. *Ps* 20b, 23c, 28c, 78n, 84g, 89j, 132f. *Is* 45a. *Zc* 4g. *Mt* 4m. *Jn* 12b. *Ac* 4h, j, 11*l*, 26j. *Rm* 8o. *Heb* 11g. *Jm* 5d. *1 Jn* 2i

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Body of Christ (Mystical Body) *see also:* First-fruits, Temple, Vine
Mt 26s. *Jn* 1y, 2j. *Rm* 5f, 7c. *1 Co* 12j, k. *Ep* 1k, u, 2o, q, 4k, j, p. *Ph* 2g. *Col* 1f, k, m, 2f, n

Book of Life *see* Predestination

Branch *see also:* David, Messiah, Remnant
Nb 17d. *Ps* 72l. *Is* 4c, d, 45e. *Jr* 23a. *Zc* 3m, 6j

Bread (Azymes) *see also:* Eucharist, First-fruits, Manna, Meal, Passover
Ex 12a, k, 23d. *Lv* 23c. *Jos* 5e. *1 S* 21d. *Ps* 105c. *Ws* 16i. *Ho* 9g. *Mt* 14d, 26f. *Jn* 2h, 6d, i, j, o. *1 Co* 5d

Breath *see also:* Spirit
2 K 4g. *Ps* 6b. *Qo* 1c. *Jn* 20j

Bride (— of Yahweh, — of Christ) *see also:* Assembly, Israel, Marriage, Vine, Wisdom
Ps 87a. *Sg* 2f, 6a, c, 7l, 8u. *Ws* 7i. *Mt* 9h, 25a. *Ac* 5b. *Ep* 5e, f. *Rv* 22f

Brotherhood *see also:* Priesthood
1 S 25b. *2 K* 10c. *Ps* 133a. *Am* 1n. *Jn* 2g. *Ac* 1q, 2ee. *2 Co* 13d. *Phm* 6

Brotherly love *see* Love

Burnt offering *see* Sacrifice

Calling *see* Election

Chaos *see also:* Water
Jb 3e, 7g, 9e, 40i. *1 S* 51e. *Ps* 46b, 89e

Charisma (Charism, Gift, Gift of Spirit, Gift of tongues) *see also:* Blessing, Fire, Grace, Justification, Priesthood, Prophecy, Sacrifice, Spirit, Teacher, Witness
Jg 13a. *Jb* 4c, 32e. *Ps* 127a. *Ws* 1j. *Ho* 2p. *Mt* 16c. *Ac* 1e, i, 2c, d, n, t, 8g, 11m, 13a. *Rm* 1j, 3i, 5f. *1 Co* 12a, d, e, h, i, 13f. *Ep* 4c, d, f, h. *1 Tm* 4d. *Tt* 1b. *1 P* 4c. *1 Jn* 5c

Charity *see* Love

Chastity *see* Marriage

Chosen people *see* Election

Chrism *see* Anointing

Christ *see also:* Anointed one, Name
Ac 11*l*, 26j. *Rm* 8o

Christian community *see* Community

Church *see* Assembly

Circumcision (Uncircumcised) *see also:* People of God
Gn 9d, 17e. *Ex* 4e. *Lv* 19h. *Dt* 10c. *Jos* 5b. *1 S* 18i. *Jr* 4c. *Jn* 7h. *Ac* 2g, 10a, b, e, s, 11c, 16b. *Rm* 2a, 10c. *Ga* 2g. *Ph* 3c, e. *Col* 2h

Cloud *see also:* Fire, Glory, Manifestation
Ex 24f. *1 K* 8e. *Ps* 68d. *Si* 14j, 24c, 39g. *Ho* 2k. *Hab* 3g. *Mt* 24p. *Lk* 1s. *Jn* 8b. *Ac* 1*l*

Coming *(parousia) see also:* Day, Eschatology, Fulfilment, Hour, Judgement, Kingdom, Manifestation, Redemption, Resurrection, Revelation
Mt 3d, 10j, 20c, 24b. *Lk* 21a. *Jn* 8b, q, 20h. *Ac* 1h, l, 10o, 17y. *Rm* 3j, m. *1 Co* 1c, e, 15f, 16i. *2 Co* 6a. *Ga* 1b. *Col* 3b. *1 Th* 3e. *2 Th* 2a, c, d, f, i. *1 Tm* 6f. *Heb* 9i, 10b. *1 P* 5c. *2 P* 2j, 3f. *Rv* 8a, 22g

Commandment *see* Law

Communion *see* Sacrifice

Community (Christian —, Fellowship, Messianic —, *Shem*) *see also:* Assembly, Baptism, Body, Election, Flesh, Israel, Jews, Kingdom, Messianic age, People of God, Priesthood, Saints, Worship

Gn 3d, 9f, 10f. *Lv* 4d, 10d, 13a, 24c, e. *Nb* 1a, 15a, 17f, 27b. *Jg* 17f, 21b. *2 Ch* 19c, f. *Ezr* 6l. *Ne* 3q, 12s, 13c. *Ps* 45d, 66a, 118a, 123a. *Lm* 3a. *Ezk* 14a. *Dn* 13c. *Zc* 13d. *Mt* 3d, j, 16g. *Mk* 1g. *Ac* 2cc, ee, jj, kk, 4m, 5b, 6d, f, 8d, 9b, g, 13c, 14n. *Rm* 5d, f, 12b, c. *1 Co* 5c, g, 10i, 12a, 13a. *Ga* 6i. *Ep* 4b. *2 Th* 3b. *Tt* 1b. *1 P* 1a. *1 Jn* 1a. *Rv* 1r

Compassion *see* Love

Confession *see* Repentance

Conscience

Ws 1a. *Ac* 23a. *Rm* 2c, 14a. *1 Jn* 3i

Consecration *see also:* Anointing, Blood, Holiness, Sanctification, Temple, Vow

Lv 17a. *Nb* 7c. *Jg* 9r. *1 S* 9m, 16d. *2 S* 3h. *Ps* 2b, 28c, 93g. *Zp* 1e. *Ac* 9g, 15q. *1 Co* 3f. *1 Tm* 4d. *Heb* 11g. *Jr* 1f. *Rv* 1k

Consultation with Yahweh *see also:* Dreams, Prophecy, Revelation

Ex 28b, 33c. *Nb* 7c. *Jg* 4e. *1 S* 14s. *1 K* 20h. *Pr* 16e. *Si* 34a. *Is* 51j. *Zc* 10b

Conversion *see* Repentance

Covenant (New —, Old —, Promises, *diatheke*) *see also:* Ark, Faithfulness, Hope, Jews, Law, Love, Moses, Mountain, Newness, Noah, People of God, Responsibility, Ritual Observances, Servant, *Shechem*, Witness, Vine

Gn 6g, 8d, 9d, 12a, 13c, 15a, f, 17a. *Ex* 19a, f, 20h, 24a, c, 34a. *Nb* 1c. *Dt* 4g, 26d. *Jos* 24a. *Jg* 8n. *1 K* 8h, 19b. *2 K* 23a. *1 Ch* 29b. *2 Ch* 21b, 23d, 34f. *Est* 4g. *Ps* 5d, 47c. *Pr* 2b. *Sg* 2j, m, 7o, 16i, 45h. *1 S* 11f, 24d, 59j. *Jr* 4c, 31q. *Ezk* 16v, 36f. *Dn* 9u. *Ho* 1b, m, 2s, 3e. *Mi* 2e, 6e, 7s. *Zc* 2l, 8c, 11j, 13d. *Ml* 3b. *Mt* 11g, 13d, 16q, 17c, 20a, 24a, 26h. *Jn* 1q, 8l, 15a. *Ac* 11m. *Rm* 5f, 9c. *Ep* 2h. *Heb* 4d, 8a, 9d, h, 12e. *Rv* 21e

Creation, Creator *see also:* Adam, Incarnation, Newness, Sin, Wisdom, Word

Gn 1a, b, d, 3b, 5a, 6h, 9d. *Jb* 9c, 26c. *Ps* 8f, 19a, 51f, 147a. *Ws* 1i, m, 7i. *1 S* 65i. *Si* 17a, 24d, 36f, 38h, 39g. *Ho* 4a. *Na* 1d. *Hab* 3n. *Ml* 7a. *Mt* 3m. *Jn* 1a, 3e, 4h, 5f. *Ac* 3n, 14j, 17p. *Rm* 5h, 8q, 9d. *1 Co* 12j. *2 Co* 5f. *Ep* 1k, n. *Col* 1e, i, u, 2n, 3f, k, m. *Heb* 11b. *Ph* 2r. *Rv* 21b

Cult *see* Yahwism

Cup (— of wrath, drink the —) *see also:* Passion, Wine

Ps 11d, 75e. *Mt* 20d. *Mk* 10d

Darkness (Night) *see also:* Day of Yahweh, Death, Evil, Hell, Light, Sin

Gn 1b. *Ps* 17d. *Sg* 1f, 3a, 7n. *Ws* 17c. *Am* 5p. *Mt* 27w. *Jn* 1d, 8b. *Ac* 26g. *Rm* 13g. *Col* 2d

David *see also:* Branch, Israel, Jerusalem, Kingship, Messiah, Priesthood, Promise, Prophecy, Son of God

Gn 38a, 49g. *Ex* 30c. *Nb* 24g. *Rt* 4i. *1 S* 8a, 13l, 16d, 23f, 26a. *2 S* 3h, 5f, 6l, 7a, e, 8l, 9a, 12e, 14g, 15g, 19c. *1 K* 21e. *1 Ch* 5a, 12a, 24a. *Ps* 18c, 78a, n, 144b. *Ezk* 34a. *Am* 9l. *Zc* 12d. *Mt* 9m, 22g, 24p. *Ac* 2n, 3q

Day of Yahweh (Great Day, Last Day, Last Times, Latter Days, Visitation) *see also:* Anger, Coming, Darkness, Eschatology, Fire, History, Hour, Judgement, Light, Lord, Messianic age, Return, Salvation, Son of Man, Visitation

Gn 6c, 9a. *Jb* 24a, 34c. *Ps* 9c, 75d. *Ws* 1*l*, 3d, j. *1 S* 2i, 5l, 8o, 40e. *Ezk* 7e. *Jl* 1j, 2b, h, 3a, d, 4a. *Am* 5p, 8j. *Ob* k, t, w. *Zp* 1e, j, 2a. *Ml* 4a. *Mt* 3g, 7e, 16g, 24a, 27w. *Lk* 17e. *Jn* 3l, 8q, r, 14m. *Ac* 1h, 2l. *Rm* 2b, 13g. *1 Co* 1e. *2 Co* 6a. *1 Th* 5a, c. *1 Tm* 3a, 4a. *Heb* 7g. *2 P* 1d, 3c. *Rv* 4a, 6k, 9d, i, k

Deacon, Deaconess *see* Ministry

Death *see also:* Blood, Darkness, Devil, Fall, Fire, Hell, Judgement, Law, Life, Punishment, Resurrection, Sacrifice, Salvation, Saviour, Sin, Witness

Gn 3d, g. *Lv* 10c, 21a. *Nb* 16d, 19a. *Dt* 14a. *1 S* 31g. *2 S* 1b. *Jb* 4h, 7e, 19i, 27h, 38h. *Ps* 6c, 16g, 19g, 49f, 51h, 55e, 73k, 116g. *Qo* 1c, 3c, 12e. *Sg* 8j. *Ws* 1*l*, n, o, q, 2n, 4d, 5c, 16h. *Si* 7i, 11*l*, 38l. *Jr* 16b, 47c. *Ho* 2p. *Jon* 2b. *Mt* 16h, 20g. *Mk* 1i. *Lk* 13h. *Jn* 11b, n, p, 12g, h, 13m, s, t, 16d, e. *Ac* 2n, 9g. *Rm* 5h, i, j, 6b, h, 7b, d, m, 8b, f, 13g. *1 Co* 11*l*. *2 Co* 5a. *Ga* 2l. *Ep* 3k. *Ph* 1i, j, 2d, 3h. *Col* 3c. *Heb* 2d, h, 9h, 11e, 13d. *1 P* 4b. *1 Jn* 5c, e. *Rv* 1n, 1p, 5d, 20c, j

Dedication *see* Vow

Deliverance *see* Redemption, Salvation

Deluge *see* Flood

Desert (Wilderness) *see also:* Exodus

Gn 2d. *Am* 5v. *Ps* 44d, 68a. *Jr* 31a. *Ho* 2k, 11b. *Ac* 7j. *1 Co* 10d. *Rv* 12b, g, 14f

Destruction of Temple *see* Temple

Devil (Adversary, Demons, Dragon, Satan) *see also:* Antichrist, Death, Evil, Fire, Serpent, Sin, Temptation

Gn 3a, c. *Jb* 1g, 3e, 18f. *1 Ch* 21b. *Ps* 109c. *Ws* 2n, 7h. *Si* 21j. *Zc* 3b. *Mt* 4a, b, d, 8j, 12m. *Mk* 1i. *Lk* 4c, 8c. *Jn* 12i, 13e, o, 14j. *Rm* 7g. *1 Co* 5c. *2 Co* 4a. *Ga* 1b. *2 Th* 2c, h. *Heb* 2h. *1 P* 3h, 5h. *1 Jn* 2e, 3e. *Rv* 2i, 12a, b, c, f, 13a, g

Diakonia *see* Ministry

Diaspora *see* Dispersion

Diatheke *see* Covenant

Disciples, Discipleship *see also:* Apostle, Mission, Peter

Mt 5e. *Mk* 8b. *Jn* 1g, 15d, 15f. *Ac* 6a, 9c. *Col* 2f

Disobedience *see* Sin

Dispersion (Diaspora) *see also:* Sin

Gn 10a. *Nb* 9a. *2 Ch* 30c. *Si* 36d. *Jr* 44a. *Tt* 1b. *Jm* 1b

Divination *see also:* Dreams

Si 34a. *1 S* 51j. *Is* 65c. *Zc* 10b

Dominions *see* Powers

Dragon *see* Devil

Dreams *see also:* Consultation, Divination, Manifestation, Revelation

Gn 37c, 40b. *Jg* 7f. *1 K* 3b. *Est* 1c. *Si* 34a, c, e. *Dn* 2a, 7a

Dwelling place of God *see also:* Altar, Heaven, Holy of Holies, Israel, Sanctuary, Tabernacle, Temple

Gn 28c. *Ex* 25c, 26p. *Dt* 4a, 2s, 5f. *Ps* 29g, 68j. *Am* 7m

Ekklesia *see* Assembly

El Shaddai *see* Name

Elders *see* Ministry

Election (Calling, Chosen people) *see also:* Adoption, Community, Jews, Kingship, People of God, Remnant, Saints, Saul, Service, Son of God, Vine

Gn 4c, 9f, 10a, 11e, 12a, 17d, 27a, c, h, 37a. *Ex* 19e. *Nb* 20a, 23c. *1 S* 13i. *2 S* 5f. *2 K* 21f. *2 Ch* 34b. *Ps* 29a, 47a, 67b, 122b. *Ws* 2b. *Sg* 2b. *Is* 43j. *Jr* 24a. *Ezk* 11f. *Ho* 2r. *Am* 3b, 5m, p, 9g. *Mt* 4c, d, l, 13j, 16g, 20a, 21g, 22b, 24a, k, r. *Mk* 1g. *Lk* 1w, 2k. *Ac* 10o. *Rm* 2b, 8r, 11a, g. *Ep* 1c, m. *2 Tm* 1b. *Rv* 5d, 15d

Elijah *see also:* Prophecy, Return

Gn 5c. *1 K* 17a, d, 18b, 19b. *2 K* 1c, 2g. *2 Ch* 21c. *Ps* 49h, 68a. *Si* 48d. *Ml* 4e. *Mt* 16c, 17c, f, 27t. *Lk* 1k. *Jn* 1t

Emmanuel *see* Messiah

Epiphany *see* Manifestation

Episcopos *see* Ministry

Eschatology *see also:* Coming, Day of Yahweh, History, Hope, Kingdom, Light, Messiah, Saints

Jb 9a, 14f. *Ps* 9c, 49g, 149a. *Sg* 1*l*, 2a, 2k, 3h, 5a, 8d. *Dn* 12d. *Ob* cc. *Mi* 4j. *Zc* 14a. *Ml* 4e. *Mt* 3d, 4d, 16g, 24a. *Rm* 13g. *1 Co* 1e. *2 Co* 6a. *Ep* 2e. *1 Tm* 4a, 6f. *Heb* 1a, 7g, 11*l*. *Rv* 1n, 2m, 7g, 10d, 20e

Eternal life *see* Life

Eucharist *see also:* Bread, Flesh, Meal, Passover, Sin, Thanksgiving

Gn 14g. *Ps* 23a. *Mt* 6c, 14d, 26d, f. *Lk* 22e, f, 24h. *Jn* 6d, o, p, 13n, 15a, 19r. *Ac* 2ff, gg, 12j. *Ph* 1i. *Heb* 12g

Evil (Evil one, Evil spirit, Wickedness) *see also:* Darkness, Devils, Freedom, Powers, Sin, Tree

Dt 13b. *1 S* 16f, 24g. *Jb* 1g. *Ps* 51c. *Pr* 21e. *Hab* 1b, e, l, 2e, 3w. *Zc* 5h. *Ml* 2l. *Mt* 16h. *Jn* 1d, 8b. *Rm* 6h. *1 Co* 5d. *1 Jn* 3e, h. *Rv* 12c, 14k, 15c, 21c

Exaltation *see* Glory, Resurrection

Exile *see also:* Exodus, Redemption, Remnant, Salvation

Dt 1b. *1 S* 26c. *2 K* 17m, 20i. *Ne* 1c, d. *Ps* 42a, 51j, 107c. *Sg* 1p, 2f, 4d, 7b. *Is* 4d, 40d, 41*l*. *Jr* 16e, 30a, 50a. *Mi* 4h. *Ac* 3o. *Heb* 13d. *1 P* 1a

Exodus (Passage) *see also:* Baptism, Desert, Exile, History, Miracles, Passion, Passover, Redemption, Restoration, Resurrection, Return, Salvation, Water

Gn 37a, 46b. *Ex* 13c, 14a, 15j. *Jos* 3a, 74g. *Ps* 51j, 66b, 68a, e, 74g, i, 77a, e, 107a, c, 114a. *Sg* 7b. *Ws* 18f. *Si* 39g. *Is* 40d, 41*l*. *Jr* 30a, 31a, 50a. *Ho* 2k, 11b. *Ba* 5b. *Hab* 3g. *Jn* 1n, 13a, 16c. *1 Co* 10c, d. *Heb* 9f. *1 P* 1a. *Rv* 12b, 14f

Expiation *see also:* Sacrifice, Servant

Lv 1b. *Nb* 17b. *2 S* 21i. *Mt* 8f. *Jn* 1w. *Heb* 13d

Face of God *see* Seeing God

Faith (Belief) *see also:* Hope, Humility, Justification, Miracles, Monotheism, People of God, Predestination, Rejection, Revelation, Saints, Sin, Tree, Unbelief

Gn 12a, 15a, c, 22a, 35g. *Jos* 2c. *2 K* 4c. *Pr* 22d. *Si* 38a, 44p. *Is* 7g. *Hab* 2e. *Mi* 5j, 7s. *Mt* 8a, b, 12e, 16k, 22a, 25h, 26k. *Mk* 15e. *Jn* 2f, 3e, g, 6h, l, 8g, 10n, 11f, h, 13m, 14a, f, l, 16a, m, 17h. *Ac* 2x, ii, gg, 3j, 8n, 9g, 13h, hh, 14g, 20m, 21h. *Rm* 1e, j, 3i, q, 4c, f, j, 5d, f, 6b, h, 7b, d, e, 8q, r, 9a, 10b, e, 12b, 14a. *1 Co* 12f, j, 13a, f, 15a. *Ga* 1h, 3o. *2 Th* 3b. *1 Tm* 6e. *2 Tm* 2e. *Phm* b. *Heb* 6b, 11a, b, c, g, 12b. *Jm* 2c, f, j. *1 Jn* 1a, d, 3h, 5a, b, k

Faithful people (God-fearers, Proselyte) *see also:* Assembly, Community, Pagans, People of God, Saints

1 S 56b. *Est* 9e. *Ps* 11a, 15b. *Ws* 1q. *Mk* 9e. *Ac* 2g, 9n, 10b, 11m, 13i, aa, 16l. *1 Co* 1f. *Ep* 4i. *1 Tm* 6e. *Heb* 8b, 10a. *1 P* 5f. *Rv* 7b, 11b

Faithful Servant *see* Servant

Faithfulness (Fidelity) *see also:* Covenant, Faithlessness, Israel, Marriage, Remnant, Service

1 K 8h. *Qo* 7c. *Sg* 7q. *Ps* 119g. *Hab* 2e. *Jn* 1p. *Rm* 1j. *1 Jn* 3h

Faithlessness (Infidelity) *see also:* Faithfulness, Israel, Marriage, Prostitution, Rejection, Remnant, Unbelief

Ezk 16a. *Ps* 73m. *Sg* 8g. *Ws* 14h, i. *Ho* 4i, 9l. *Jn* 8l. *Ac* 7a. *Rm* 9k. *Rv* 1n, 2k, 6a

Fall (Original sin) *see also:* Adam, Death, Sin

Gn 2h, 3d, 4a, 5a, 6a. *Jb* 10d, 20a. *Rm* 5h. *Col* 1g, 3f

Fasting (Abstinence)

1 S 14k, 31g. *1 K* 18m, 21b. *Is* 58c. *Ac* 2gg. *Rm* 14a, g

Father *see also:* Revelation, Son of God

Mt 25g, 26n. *Jn* 1a, 2e, f, 3e, 5e, 10q, 12g, 13q, 14d, 14t, 16f, m, 17b, h. *Ac* 20r. *Rm* 8g, 9d. *Ep* 3i, k. *Ph* 2b. *1 Tm* 1b. *Heb* 1c, 9d. *Jm* 1i. *1 Jn* 5a

Fathers *see* Patriarchs

Fear of Yahweh *see also:* Love, Obedience, Wisdom
Ps 14d, 36f, 90g. *Jb* 28a. *Si* 1h. *Pr* 1a. *Lk* 1g. *1 Co* 2b, 13a. *Heb* 12e. *1 Jn* 4g. *Rv* 1n

Feasts *see also:* Marriage, Messianic banquet
Ex 23d, 34d. *Lv* 23e. *Jg* 21e, g. *2 K* 4d. *Is* 20c, 25b. *Ne* 8j. *Est* 9c. *1 M* 4f. *Ps* 33a, 42d, 67a, 81a, b, 111a. *Si* 32a. *Ba* 1h. *Zc* 14n. *Mt* 22a. *Jn* 3n

Fellowship *see* Community

Fertility *see also:* Pagan gods, Water
Ps 65i. *Ws* 3i. *Ezk* 47b. *Si* 24l. *Sg* 1g, 7p. *Ho* 2f

Fidelity *see* Faithfulness

Fire (Holocaust) *see also:* Altar, *Charisma*, Cloud, Day of Yahweh, Death, Devil, Glory, Jealousy, Manifestation, Messiah, Miracles, Purification, Sacrifice, Sanctification, Spirit, Water
Ex 13f, 24f. *Lv* 6b, 10b. *Nb* 17a, 21d, 31b. *Dt* 4d. *Jg* 6i. *1 K* 18f, i. *Is* 6j. *Am* 7e. *Ml* 4a. *Mt* 3d, h, i. *Mk* 9e. *Lk* 12f. *Ac* 2c. *1 Co* 3d. *2 Th* 1b. *Heb* 10c. *Rv* 21g

First-born *see also:* Israel, Messiah, People of God, Priesthood, Redemption
Gn 22d, 49b. *Ex* 11b, 13b. *Dt* 26a. *Nb* 1a, 3d, 8b, c. *Ws* 18f. *Zc* 12e. *Lk* 2c. *Col* 1e. *Rv* 1i

First-fruits *see also:* Body of Christ, Bread, Newness, Redemption, Resurrection, Sacrifice, Samaritans, Sanctification
Gn 22a. *Ex* 34d. *Lv* 2f. *Dt* 26a. *Ho* 9g. *Jn* 4k. *Rm* 5f. *1 Co* 12j, 15a

Flesh *see also:* Community, Eucharist, Incarnation, Priesthood, Sin
Lv 18b. *Jn* 1m, y, 3r, 6o. *Rm* 1f, 5f, 6c, e, 7d, m, n, 8c. *Col* 1k, 2s. *Heb* 5a

Flood (Deluge, Leviathan) *see also:* Baptism, Justice, Noah, Punishment, Purification, Water
Gn 1d, 5a, 6a, c, 7b. *Jb* 3e, 26j, 40i. *Ps* 2g, h. *Ws* 5e. *Si* 39g. *Na* 1e. *1 P* 3h, i, j, 4a. *Rv* 12i

Forgiveness (Absolution, Binding and loosing, Pardon) *see also:* Anger, Atonement, Day of Atonement, Jerusalem, Mercy, Newness, Sin
Nb 15c. *2 S* 12h. *Jb* 14g. *Ps* 51j, 65c. *Jr* 31q. *Mt* 16i. *Ac* 1e, i, 2w. *1 Tm* 5i. *Tt* 3a. *Rv* 1k

Forty *see also:* Israel, Moses
Ex 24g. *1 S* 4j. *Jon* 3b

Freedom (Free will) *see also:* Assembly, Evil, Law, Slavery
Lv 7a. *Si* 15e. *Rm* 6h, 9f, 14e. *Ga* 1b. *Ep* 1p, 6e. *Jm* 1k

Fulfilment (Fulness, Maturity, *Pleroma*) *see also:* Coming, Happiness, Israel, Law
Ps 19a. *Ob* cc. *Ac* 1h, 3i, 10i, 11g, 13n, 24f, 26a, i. *Rm* 9d. *1 Cor* 1e, 2c, 15h. *Ep* 1u, 3m, 4g. *Ph* 3g, j. *Col* 1g, 2e, f. *Heb* 5d, 11*l*

Fulness *see* Fulfilment

Gentiles *see* Pagans

Gift, — of tongues, — of Spirit *see Charisma*

Given One *see* Vow

Glory (Ascension, Exaltation, Glorification, Glorified Body, Glorified Lord, — of Lord, Majesty, — of Yahweh, *Shekinah*, Triumph) *see also:* Body, Cloud, Fire, Manifestation, Resurrection, Son of Man, Transfiguration
Ex 3e, 24f. *Lv* 10b. *1 S* 4k. *2 Ch* 26g. *Ps* 29a, 49g, 68a, 73k, 85b. *Si* 14j, 44a. *Ezk* 1r. *Mi* 4k. *Mt* 8h, 26u. *Mk* 10c. *Lk* 9k, 24d. *Jn* 1o, y, 2a, b, e, f, h, 3f, g, r, 8i, 11b, 12a, g, j, n, 13e, r, 14t, 16f, 17b, g, 20h. *Ac* 2v, 3c, 6j, 13hh. *Rm* 2b, 3h, 5d, 8e, r, 9c. *1 Co* 2e, 6j, 11b. *2 Co* 2e, 3f. *Ep* 1c, e. *Ph* 1i, 2d, g. *Col* 1n, 2f. *1 Th* 4l. *1 Tm* 3d, 6f. *Tt* 2b. *Heb* 1c, 2d, 9f. *2 P* 1c. *Rv* 1n, 2m, s, 15d, 21b

Glossolalia *see Charisma*

God-fearers *see* Faithful people

Goel *see* Redemption

Good News *see* Gospel

Good Shepherd *see* Shepherd

Good works *see* Works

Gospel (Good News) *see also:* Message, Monotheism, Preaching, Salvation
Jon 4a. *Mt* 4e, 5f. *Mk* 1a. *Ac* 1c, k, 2n, dd, 6d, 10k. *Rm* 1n, 3i. *Ga* 1a. *Ep* 2p, s. *Ph* 1c, 1*l*. *1 Th* 1b, c. *2 Th* 2l. *1 P* 2a, 4b. *3 Jn* 1c. *Rv* 3c

Grace *see also: Charisma*, Justification, Righteousness
Gn 1j. *Jr* 3r. *Mt* 13e. *Jn* 1p, 1q, 19r. *Ac* 13c. *Rm* 3i, 7b, d, e. *Ep* 1e, r, 3a, 4c. *Col* 1i. *1 Tm* 4d. *Heb* 8b. *1 Jn* 2n, 3f

Great Day *see* Day of Yahweh

Hades *see* Hell

Happiness (Joy, Prosperity) *see also:* Blessedness, Blessing, Fulfilment, Law, Life, Light, Messianic age
Ps 49a, 73a, 119b, g, 128a. *Qo* 7c. *Sg* 1e. *Si* 14a, g. *Ho* 2p. *Am* 9l. *Ml* 2l. *Lk* 1i. *Jn* 8c, 15e, 16i. *Ac* 2ii, 9e. *Rm* 5d. *Ph* 1b. *Jm* 1a. *Rv* 2m, 6j

Hardness of Heart (Obstinacy)
1 S 2g. *Ps* 73e. *Is* 6h, 48a. *Am* 4f. *Mt* 13e. *Rm* 9g

Healing *see also:* Life, Miracle, Resurrection, Sabbath
2 Ch 16c. *Mt* 4f, 9b. *Mk* 1i. *Jn* 5d, 7h. *Ac* 9r. *1 Tm* 4d

Heaven *see also:* Dwelling, Jerusalem, Kingdom, Righteousness, Salvation
Gn 1h. *2 M* 2d. *Ws* 9e. *Mt* 3c. *Jn* 16c. *Rm* 13g. *Ep* 1b. *Col* 3b, c. *2 Th* 1b. *Heb* 8a, b, 11i. *1 P* 1a. *Rv* 4i, 9f

Hebrews *see* Jews

Heir-s *see* Inheritance

Hell (Hades, *Sheol*) *see also:* Darkness, Death, Punishment, Refuge
Nb 15d. *1 S* 28f, h. *Jb* 7f, 10i, 14g, j, 19i, 20i, 26d, 38h, 40d. *Ps* 6c, 4g, h. *Pr* 15d. *Sg* 8j. *Si* 21c. *Ws* 1h, q, 16h. *Ezk* 26i. *Mt* 16h, 18d. *Jon* 2b. *Ac* 2q. *Rm* 10d. *Ep* 4f. *1 P* 3h, 4b. *Rv* 1p, 14k

Herem *see* Anathema

Heresy
Jos 8e. *Tt* 3b. *2 P* 3c. *Ac* 24a, *Jude* n, r

Hesed *see* Love

High Places *see* Sanctuary

High Priest *see also:* Anointing, Holy of Holies, Law, Messiah, Priesthood
Ex 28g. *Lv* 4b, c, 21f. *2 Ch* 3a. *2 M* 10c. *Ps* 28c, 84g. *Si* 45h. *Dn* 9o. *Ac* 9c. *Heb* 3a, 10a, 13d

History (— of Salvation, Redemptive —, Saving —) *see also:* Day of Yahweh, Eschatology, Exodus, Messianic age, People of God, Salvation, Saviour
Jdt 5b, d. *Ob* cc. *Mi* 6e. *Na* 1d. *Hg* 2e, s. *Mt* 24a. *Ac* 1h. *Rm* 1k, 15e. *1 Co* 1e. *Heb* 7g

Holiness *see also:* Consecration, Holy of Holies, Jerusalem, Law, Mission, Mountain, Piety, Priesthood, Purification, Righteousness, Saints, Sanctification, Spirit
Lv 4c, 17a, 22c. *Jos* 6c. *Jg* 11f. *2 S* 6a, f. *1 Ch* 9b. *Jb* 6c. *Ps* 29c, g, 46a, 99a. *Sg* 8f. *Ws* 7i, 10m. *Is* 1q, 5i, 6h, 58a, 65d. *Ezk* 44j. *Ho* 2p. *Am* 5d, 7d. *Hg* 2i. *Mk* 1g. *Ac* 3g, 9g, 13x. *Rm* 1j, 6h, 8o. *1 Co* 7b. *Ep* 1c. *1 Th* 4c. *1 Tm* 3d. *Heb* 9b, c, f. *1 P* 3h

Holocaust *see* Fire, Sacrifice

Holy City *see* Jerusalem

Holy of Holies *see also:* Altar, Ark, Dwelling, High Priest, Holiness, Presence of God, Priesthood, Temple
1 K 6b. *2 Ch* 3a. *Is* 66a. *Dn* 9o. *Heb* 9b, f, 10a, 13d

Holy Spirit *see* Spirit

Hope (Trust) *see also:* Apostles, Assembly, Covenant, Eschatology, Faith, Israel, People of God, Sacrifice
Jdt 8c. *Ps* 122a, 131a. *Jr* 52a. *Mi* 7s. *Hg* 2q, s. *Mt* 8b. *Jn* 8f, 14c. *Ac* 13ee. *Rm* 1j, 5f. *Heb* 6g, 7g, 11a, d

Horeb *see* Mountain

Hour (Appointed time, *Kairos*) *see also:* Coming, Day of Yahweh
Jn 2e, 12a. *Rm* 13g

Humanity of Christ *see* Man

Humility *see also:* Faith, Love, Messiah, Word
Ps 76a. *Si* 3h. *Mi* 6f. *Jn* 3e, 9l. *1 Co* 13a

Idolatry, Idols *see also:* Prostitution, Serpent
Jg 3h, 8l, 17c. *1 S* 15d. *2 K* 5e, 9g, 17g, 18c, d, 21c, 23l. *Jdt* 8d. *Ws* 13d, e. *Jr* 5a. *Dn* 14a. *Ho* 1b, 8g, 9e. *Am* 7m. *Mi* 5k. *Ac* 17w. *Ep* 5a. *1 Co* 10a. *1 Jn* 5k. *Rv* 2j, k, 14e, j, 17a, 18d

Image *see* Likeness

Immanuel *see* Messiah

Immorality *see* Uncleanness

Immortality *see* Life

Imposition of Hands *see* Laying-on of Hands

Impurity *see* Uncleanness

Incarnation (*Kenosis*) *see also:* Creation, Flesh, Word
Gn 28b. *Ws* 18k. *Jn* 1a, n, 6o. *Rm* 9d. *1 Co* 10e. *Ph* 2d, f, g. *Col* 1e, g, 2e. *2 Tm* 1c

Indwelling
Jos 6a. *Jn* 14n. *1 Co* 3e

Infidelity *see* Faithlessness

Inheritance (Heir-s) *see also:* Adoption, Promise
2 K 2d. *Mt* 1a, 10d. *Rm* 3j. *Ga* 4a, i. *Col* 3k. *Tt* 3a. *Heb* 1a, 12c. *Rv* 1i

Intercession *see also:* Mediation
Tb 12b. *2 M* 15d. *Jb* 5a, 33l, 42e. *Ps* 99c. *Jr* 42b. *Am* 7c. *Jn* 14r, 17a. *1 Co* 1h

Intervention of God
Ps 77a. *Ws* 5i. *Hab* 3n. *Mt* 3h, 4d, 24a. *Lk* 1bb. *Jn* 8i, 14m. *1 Th* 2e. *Heb* 12f

Investiture *see* Priesthood

Invocation *see* Name

Isaac
Gn 12a, 17g, 22a. *1 S* 1f. *Jn* 8r. *Ga* 4i. *Heb* 11e

Israel *see also:* Assembly, Bride, Community, David, Dwelling, Faithfulness, Faithlessness, First-born, Forty, Fulfilment, Hope, Jerusalem, Judah, Law, Man, Marriage, Messiah, Monotheism, Name, Newness, People of God, Priesthood, Promise, Promised Land, Rejection, Remnant, Restoration, Salvation, Servant, Service, Sin, Son of God, Temple, Twelve, Vine, Virginity, Woman, Yahwism
Gn 9f, 29g, 32d, f, 48e. *Ex* 12n, 15j, 19f. *Nb* 1a, 23c, 27b. *Dt* 32l. *Jos* 1c, e, 11e, 24a. *Jg* 2f, 6a, 8n, 9a, 10a, 11i, 17a, 21a. *1 S* 8d, 26c. *1 K* 16d, 18j. *2 K* 2c, 5c, 6h, 13d, 15i, 17g. *Ezr* 1e, 3a, 9a. *Ps* 29a, 45a, 74j, 106a. *Ne* 13b. *Sg* 1k, o, 4d, f, j, 5h, 6a. *Ws* 1q. *Is* 4d, 5a, 6l, 48a, k, 49h. *Jr* 3b, 10k, 13a, 28d, 30a, 31*l*, 46r. *Lm* 3d. *Ezk* 23h, 37d, 40a. *Ho* 1b, 11a. *Jl* 1j, 4a. *Am* 1n, 7m. *Ob* p, y, cc. *Mi* 5h, 7s. *Hab* 2r. *Zc* 14o. *Mt* 4c, 10j, 19h, 21d, 24r. *Jn* 13a, 15a. *Ac* 7a. *Rm* 3a, 5d, 7e, 9a, c, 9g, k, l, 10f, g. *1 Co* 10e, i. *Ga* 2k, 6i. *Ep* 1p, 5e. *Col* 1c, n. *1 Jn* 4d. *Rv* 2g, 4c, 6a, 7b, 12b, 21c

Israelites *see* Jews

Jacob
Gn 25g, 46b, 48g. *Ws* 10j. *Ho* 12a, h

Jealousy of God *see also:* Anger, Fire, Love
Dt 4d. *Sg* 8i. *Ezk* 8e

Jerusalem (Holy City) *see also:* Ark, David, Forgiveness, Heaven, Holiness, Israel, Kingdom, Name, Newness, People of God, Remnant, Restoration, Saints, Temple, Unity, Worship, Zion
Gn 14g. *Jos* 15b. *2 S* 5f, 6a. *2 K* 20i, 23f. *1 Ch* 9c, 22b. *2 Ch* 1d. *Ne* 1c, d, 11a, b. *Tb* 13a. *Ps* 29c, 42d, 87a, 121a, 122a. *Sg* 1d, 7d, 8l, m. *Is* 1n, r, 2a, 29a, 60g, h, k. *Jr* 3o, 22i, 31t, 33l, 41d. *Lm* 1a. *Ba* 5a. *Ezk* 8d, 24c, 40d. *Mi* 1a, 4f, 4j, 7j. *Hg* 1f. *Zc* 2h, l. *Mt* 4d. 10j, 22a, 24a, t. *Lk* 2k, 13i, 17e, 19g, 21a, *Ac* 1k, 11h. *Rm* 6h. *1 Co* 1e, 8a. *Ga* 4l. *Tt* 1b. *Heb* 10b, 12g. *Rv* 4c, 11b, f, 14n, 20d, g, 21i, 22e

Jesus *see also:* Name
Lk 9h. Ac 1e, 2x, gg, 3j, 4e, 5p, 9e. *Rm* 8o

Jews (Hebrews, Israelites) *see also:* Community, Covenant, Election, Israel, Judah, Law, Pagans, People of God, Promise, Rejection, Salvation, Witness
Mt 21g, 22a, b. *Jn* 1s, 4m, *Ac* 2y, n, 31, 10a, 13e, h, i, y, 15l. *Rm* 1k, 2a, 3a, 11d. *Ep* 1m, 2k, l, m

John the Baptist *see also:* Prophecy
1 S 1f. *Mt* 17f. *Jn* 5e. *Ac* 2n

Joy *see* Happiness

Judah *see also:* Israel, Jews, Remnant
Gn 38a, 49e, g. *Jg* 1i. *2 S* 5a. *2 K* 3c, 16a, c, 17g, 23l, m, q, u, 24a. *Ps* 78a. *Jr* 30a, 50y. *Ob* y. *Ml* 2g

Judge, Judgeship *see also:* Kingship, Law, Messiah, Prophecy
Jg 2f, 3e. *1 S* 7b. *Jb* 9g, 10d. *Ps* 33a, 45d, 58b, 68a, 110f. *Dn* 7h. *Mt* 7a, 19h. *Jn* 5f. *Ac* 2r, 7f, 10p. *1 Co* 1e, 6b. *Jm* 4f. *1 Jn* 3i. *Rv* 1n

Judgement *see also:* Anger, Coming, Day of Yahweh, Death, Kingdom, Law, Mercy, Word
Gn 6c. *Nb* 5b. *1 K* 8j. *Ps* 9c, 49g, 51b, 56e, 75a, d, 119a. *Pr* 16c. *Ws* 4c, g, 5j, 6b. *Si* 11*l*, 17h, 38r. *Is* 5i, 25b. *Jl* 2m, 4a, c, k. *Am* 1b, 5p. *Na* 1e. *Mt* 3d, 4d, 8h, 10l, 16o, 24 a, l, 25h. *Jn* 3e, 8b, 10r. *Ac* 1h, 2m, kk, 10p, 17x. *Rm* 1n, q, 2a, b, 14b. *Ph* 1j. *Heb* 9l. *Jm* 5a. *Rv* 14l, 16c, 20j

Justice *see also:* Flood, Justification, Righteousness
Ex 23a. *1 S* 8c. *Ezr* 9g. *Jb* 17f, 22a, 34d. *Ne* 5b. *Ps* 5d, 17d, 19a, 29h, 76h, 101c, 149a. *Is* 1q, 5i, 6h. *Dn* 9f. *Ho* 2p. *Jl* 2n. *Am* 1c, 5r. *Mi* 6f, p. *Hab* 11c, q. *Ml* 4b. *Mt* 20a, g. *Lk* 3h. *Rm* 1l, n, 4k. *1 Co* 6a. *Heb* 11c. *1 Jn* 1d, 2e

Justification *see also: Charisma,* Faith, Grace, Justice, Law, Love, Righteousness, Saints, Sin, Works
Gn 15c. *Jb* 19i, 33l. *Ps* 51f, 73k. *Hab* 2e. *Ac* 13h, 21h. *Rm* 3q, i, l, 4c, d, 5a, d, m, 7e, h, 9a. *1 Co* 6a. *Ga* 3m

Kairos *see* Hour

Kenosis *see* Incarnation
Ph 2d, g

Kerygma *see* Preaching

Kingdom *see also:* Assembly, Coming, Community, Eschatology, Heaven, Jerusalem, Judgement, Kingship, Law, Messiah, Messianic age, Mystery, Poor, Preaching, Restoration, Resurrection, Saints, Servant, Son of Man, Suffering, Vine, Witness, World
Dt 4g. *Ps* 60a, 85c. *Si* 36f. *Is* 52g. *Dn* 2h. *Am* 5d. *Mi* 4k. *Mt* 3c, j, 4d, e, 5a, c, 8d, 9j, 11c, f, i, 13e, g, j, k, 16g, h, i, o, 19c, 20a, c, 24b, f, p, r, 25a. c, g. *Mk* 4e. *Lk* 17d, 21g. *Jn* 8b, 15a, 21c. *Ac* 1d, e, g, 3m, n, 11g, 26c. *Rm* 13g. *Ga* 1b. *Ep* 1o, 4f. *Ph* 1*l*. *1 Th* 4l. *1 Tm* 6e. *Heb* 2c, 12g. *Rv* 1g, 2m, 5h, 10d, 14a, 19a, 20b

Kingship *see also:* Anointing, David, Election, Judge, Kingdom, Messiah, Priesthood, Prophecy, Saul, Servant, Solomon, Temple
Gn 1a, 14g. *Jg* 9e, f. *1 S* 8a, 9a, i, m, 15a, 20e, 23f, 24i, 26a. *2 K* 9d, 16f. *2 Ch* 6a, 9b, 23d. *Ne* 6c. *Ps* 2b, c, 20b, 28e, 33a, 45a, 47c, 57a, 61c, 72a, 93a, f, 110a. *Qo* 8b. *Sg* 1c, 3h, 8c. *Jr* 3q. *Ezk* 34a. *Mi* 4k. *Zc* 4g, 9k, 14m. *Mt* 4d, 21a, 22a, 24a, 25d. *Mk* 10c. *Jn* 3r, 4m. *1 Co* 15g. *1 Tm* 6e. *Heb* 7e. *Rv* 1g, k

Knowledge, human (Jesus' knowledge) *see also:* Love, Tree, Truth, Wisdom
Ws 2h, 3f. *Is* 11a. *Jr* 31q. *Ho* 2s. *Jn* 1ee, 10g, 17h. *Ac* 11m, 17r, n. *Ep* 1s, 3l. *Col* 3e. *1 Jn* 1a, 2e. *2 P* 1b. *Rv* 1h, 5e

Kyrios *see* Lord

Laity *see* People of God

Lamb (Paschal lamb) *see also:* Messiah, Passion, Passover, Sacrifice
2 Ch 9c. *Jn* 1w, 19r, u. *1 Co* 5d. *Rv* 4a, 5d, 19a

Last Day, Last Times *see* Day of Yahweh

Latter Days *see* Day of Yahweh

Law (Commandments, Lawlessness, Morality, Mosaic —, Pentateuch, Prohibitions) *see also:* Angel, Blood, Covenant, Death, Freedom, Fulfilment, Happiness, High Priest, Holiness, Israel, Jews, Judge, Judgement, Justification, Kingdom, Life, Light, Love, Moses, Newness, Obedience, Pagans, Priesthood, Promise, Prophecy, Purification, Retribution, Revelation, Sabbath, Sacrifice, Saints, Sin, Slavery, Spirit, Wisdom, Witness, Word, Works, Worship
Gn 9d, 12e, 27b. *Ex* 24b. *Lv* 19f, 25b. *Dt* 4c, i, 14c, 22c, d, 31b. *1 K* 13f. *2 K* 21d, 22b, 23f. *2 Ch* 17e, 19c, 23d, 34a. *Ezr* 7d, i. *Ne* 8d, 10a. *Tb* 1d. *Jdt* 11d. *1 M* 1f, j, 2e, 3f. *Jb* 31a, 34d. *Ps* 1a, 7c, 19a, 93a, f, 51g, 119a. *Pr* 24f. *Sg* 8h. *Ws* 1a. *Si* 1*l*, 8e, 14g, 15a, 24f, 29a, 35a, 45h. *Jr* 31q. *Ba* 3b. *Ezk* 20d, 36f. *Ho*

10m. *Ml* 3f. *Mt* 2c, 5a, f, 11k, 13d, 20g, 23f. *Mk* 7b. *Lk* 2g, 13e. *Jn* 1n, 4a, 8b, 13t, 17e. *Ac* 1i, 7l, 10a, s, 13a, b, 15v, 18k, 21g, h. *Rm* 1j, 2a, c, 3g, i, j, 6h, 7a, b, c, d, e, 8c, 9c, 10c, 13c. *Ga* 1h, 2l, 3h, l, 4b, 5a. *Ep* 2m. *Ph* 1e, l. *Col* 2l, m. *1 Th* 4a. *2 Th* 2c, e. *1 Tm* 1f, g. *Heb* 2a, 11i. *Jm* 1j, k, 2f. *1 Jn* 1d

Lawlessness *see* Law

Laying-on of Hands (Imposition —) *see also:* Apostles, Mission, Prophecy

Ex 29b. *Lv* 4a, 24c. *Dn* 13c. *Ac* 1e, 6f, 13c. *1 Tm* 1k, 4d, 5i. *Tt* 1b

Leaven *see* Sacrifice

Leviathan *see* Flood

Levites *see* Priesthood

Libation *see* Sacrifice

Liberation *see* Redemption

Life (Eternal life, Immortality, — of the age to come, Long —, New —) *see also:* Blood, Death, Happiness, Healing, Law, Light, Newness, Resurrection, Righteousness, Salvation, Saviour, Soul, Spirit, Tree, Water, Wisdom, Word

Gn 2e, 3g, 5a, 6b. *Nb* 16d. *Dt* 8a. *2 Ch* 33g *1 M* 7a. *Jb* 6b. *Ps* 6b, 30d, 36f, 49h, 73k, 103b, 104f, 119b. *Qo* 3b, 11b. *Ws* 1*l*, o, 3b. *Si* 48d. *Mt* 4d, 16m. *Jn* 1g, 3e, r, 5n, 6p, r, 8b, 10e, h, j, 13s, 14d. *Ac* 3i, 5g, k, 7l, 13hh, 15v. *Rm* 1j, 4k, 5d, f, 6g, 7m, 8g. *1 Co* 12d, j, 15e, l. *Ga* 2l. *Ep* 3m. *Ph* 1i. *Col* 3b, c. *1 Th* 4l. *Tt* 3a. *Heb* 7g, 11i, 12g. *1 Jn* 1a, d, 2e, 3d, 5j. *Rv* 1o, 20c

Light *see also:* Darkness, Day of Yahweh, Eschatology, Happiness, Law, Life, Messiah, Messianic Age, Redemption Resurrection, Salvation, Wisdom, Witness, Word

Jb 3d, 24a. *Ps* 4e, 17d, 36g, f, 46e, 49g, 57b, 132f. *Sg* 7n. *Ws* 7k. *Dn* 2f. *Mt* 6e. *Jn* 1d, 8b, 9d. *Ac* 13ff, 26g. *Rm* 10f. *1 Co* 1e. *Ep* 5b. *1 Th* 5c. *Heb* 1c. *Jm* 1i. *1 Jn* 1d, 2e

Likeness (Image)

Gn 1a, j, 5b, 9b. *Rm* 8q, 9d. *2 Co* 3g. *Col* 3e

Liturgy *see also:* Apostle, Assembly, Baptism, Community, Priesthood, Repentance, Temple, Thanksgiving

2 Ch 23a. *Ne* 9b, c. *Ps* 29g, 66a, 134a. *Si* 7f. *Ho* 14b. *Jl* 1i. *Ac* 8h. *Rm* 8o, 15e. *1 Co* 10c. *2 Co* 13d, e. *Col* 3h. *Heb* 12g. *Rv* 15a

Logos *see* Word

Lord *(Kyrios) see also:* Day of Yahweh, Messiah, Name, Resurrection, Yahweh

Si 1b. *Mt* 6b, 19g, 26u. *Lk* 1u, v, 7e, 11a. *Jn* 20a. *Ac* 2m, v, 5p, 11g, 17d, 20k. *Rm* 1d, j, 9d. *1 Co* 2e. *Ep* 4g. *2 Tm* 1g. *Ph* 2d, h, l, p. *1 P* 3h. *Rv* 1*l*

Love (*Agape*, Charity, *Hesed*, Brotherly love, Compassion) *see also:* Covenant, Fear of God, Humility, Jealousy, Justification, Knowledge, Law, Messianic age, Neighbour, Obedience, Righteousness, Salvation, Service, Sin, Truth, Wine

Dt 4d, 6c, 22a, 23c. *Jb* 22a. *Ps* 100b. *Pr* 3c. *Sg* 2c. *Ws* 3f, 6l. *Si* 2d, 48d. *Is* 5i, 49h, 54d. *Jr* 2b. *Ho* 1b, 2r, s, 3a. *Jon* 4o. *Mi* 6f. *Mt* 5n, 9f. *Lk* 3h, 10h. *Jn* 3e, 10g, 12g, 13b, t, 15b, f, 16m, 17h. *Ac* 2ee. *Rm* 1f, 3i, 5a, d, e, f, 6h, 14a. *1 Co* 8b, 9a, 12a, 13a, f. *Ga* 6d. *Ep* 1c, 3j, k, l. *Ph* 1e, 2b. *1 Th* 3d. *Phm* b. *Jm* 2f, 4f. *1 Jn* 1a, d, 2b, e, 3h, i, 4d, f, g, 5a, j, k

Majesty *see* Glory

Man (Humanity of Christ, Mankind) *see also:* Adam, Israel, Mediation, Newness, Priesthood, Son of Man, Woman

Gn 1a, j, 2b, i, 3c, 6h, 9a, b. *1 K* 17d, 20o. *Ps* 8f. *Dn* 7k. *Mt* 5a, 24u. *Jn* 7g. *Rm* 8k, q, 13e. *1 Co* 13a, 15l. *Ep* 2n, 3i, 4j, n. *Ph* 2d, i. *Col* 3e. *Heb* 5a, 8b. *Rv* 12b

Manifestation (Appearance, Epiphany, Theophany) *see also:* Angel, Cloud, Coming, Dreams, Fire, Glory, Moses, Mountain, Name, Presence, Revelation, Sign, Transcendence, Transfiguration

Gn 18a, 25e, 46b. *Ex* 9b, 13f, 19j, 25c. *Lv* 10b. *Nb* 22k. *1 K* 19b, e. *Jos* 5f. *Tb* 5a. *Jb* 36j, 38a. *Ps* 18f, 68d, 77e. *Si* 16g. *Is* 40b, c, 50b. *Ezk* 8c. *Mi* 6b. *Hab* 2w, 3g. *Mt* 24a, l, p. *Ac* 1*l*, 2n, 7k. *1 Co* 1c, e. *1 Th* 4j. *2 Th* 1b. *1 Tm* 6f. *2 Tm* 1c. *Heb* 12e. *Rv* 4d, 10a

Manna *see also:* Bread, Meal

Jos 5e. *Ps* 68e, 111c. *Ws* 16i, k. *1 Co* 10c. *Rv* 2m

Many, the *see* Worldwide outlook

Marriage (Chastity, Childbearing, Wedding) *see also:* Bride, Faithfulness, Faithlessness, Feasts, Israel, Messianic banquet, People of God, Virginity

Lv 21b. *Dt* 23a, b. *Jg* 8m. *2 S* 13b. *Ezr* 9a. *Ne* 9a, 13c. *Tb* 3b, 6a, 8d. *Ps* 45a. *Pr* 5c. *Sg* 3k. *Is* 50a. *Ezk* 16a. *Ho* 1b. *Mt* 1e, 4d, 19a, b. *Jn* 3n. *1 Co* 7a, b, d, j, k. *Ep* 5e. *1 Tm* 2e, 4c. *Rv* 14f, 21d

Martyr, Martyrdom *see* Witness

Mary *see* Woman

Maturity of Christian *see* Fulfilment

Meal (*Agape*, Azymes, Paschal —, Passover —, Ritual —, Sacred —) *see also:* Bread, Eucharist, Manna, Messianic banquet, Passover, Sacrifice, Worship

Ex 32d. *Nb* 25d. *Dt* 12c, 15b. *1 S* 9h. *2 Ch* 29g, 31h. *Ps* 22j, 136a. *Pr* 17a. *Ezk* 44a. *Ac* 2ff. *1 Co* 8a, 10c, 11h. *Jude* n

Mediation, Mediator *see also:* Intercession, Man, Moses

Tb 3f. *Jn* 16m. *Ac* 7k. *Heb* 8a, b, 9h

Meeting *see* Mountain

Meek *see* Poor

Melchizedek *see* Priesthood

Mercy *see also:* Forgiveness, Judgement

Si 18c. *Jon* 4a. *Mt* 25h. *Lk* 15b. *Rm* 15b

Message (Messenger) *see also:* Angel, Gospel, Revelation, Word
Jb 33i. *Ps* 147f. *Mt* 1g. *Mk* 1a. *Ac* 15j. *1 Co* 2a

Messenger *see* Message

Messiah (Avenger, Emmanuel) *see also:* Anointed, Branch, David, Eschatology, Fire, First-born, High Priest, Humility, Israel, Judge, Kingdom, Kingship, Lamb, Light, Lord, Messianic age, Miracles, Mission, Moses, Name, Peace, People of God, Poor, Priesthood, Promise, Prophecy, Resurrection, Return, Servant, Shepherd, Sign, Spirit, Suffering, Witness
Gn 3c, 14g, 38a, 49e, g. *Nb* 24g. *Dt* 7b, 18c. *1 S* 2a. *2 S* 7a. *Jb* 19i. *Ps* 33a, 45a, d, 61c, 72i, 78n, 84g, 101b, 110a, f, i, 132f. *Sg* 3h. *Si* 36a, d, f, 42l. *Is* 4c, 7h, k, 9c, 11a, 22l, 45a, 63b. *Ezk* 34a, 36f. *Dn* 7k, 8r. *Ho* 2p. *Mi* 4k, 5b, c. *Zp* 1j, 2e. *Hg* 2f, g. *Zc* 9j, k. *Mt* 2f, 3d, m, 4a, c, d, 9m, 11c, 16k, l, 21a, 22a, g, 24l, 25g, 26k, u. *Mk* 1g, i. *Lk* 1p, q, u, 2i. *Jn* 1u, y, ff, 2f, 3n, 6s, 7j, 10l. *Ac* 1h, 2v, 3n, 4j, 7i, 8e, 13h, w, 17d, 18f. *Rm* 1j, 11b, m. *Ep* 3c. *1 Co* 10d. *Col* 1c, f, g, n, 2e, f, h, n, 3b, c, e, f, j, k. *2 Th* 2d. *Heb* 1g, 11g. *1 Jn* 2i, l. *Rv* 1i, k, n, 3e, 5e, 6b, 19d, 22f

Messianic age *see also:* Community, Day of Yahweh, Happiness, History, Kingdom, Light, Love, Messiah, Messianic banquet, Miracles, Monotheism, Peace, Priesthood, Remnant, Return, Saints, Shepherd, Sign, Spirit, Sufferings, Temple, World
Gn 5a. *Tb* 14b. *Ps* 2a, 45h, 61c, 72f, 85a, 126a, 144a. *Sg* 3k. *Ws* 1*l*. *Ezk* 17g, 34a, 36f. *Ho* 1b, 2p. *Am* 9l. *Hg* 2e. *Zc* 3l, 5c, h, 8a, 9a, 12d, e, 13d, 14h, o. *Ml* 1h. *Mt* 3g, 4f, 8c, j, 11d, 16a, 22a. *Mk* 11a. *Lk* 12g, 19f. *Jn* 7n, 8b, 9e, 10f, 13t, 15e, 16j. *Ac* 2k, n, t, 3o, 9g. *Rm* 3g, h, i. *1 Co* 10e. *Ga* 4c. *Col* 1m. *Rv* 2s, 15d, 20d, 21b

Messianic banquet *see also:* Feasts, Marriage, Meal, Messianic age, Passover
2 Ch 35h, g. *Ps* 22j, 23a. *Mt* 4d, 8c, 25d, 26i. *Rm* 9k

Messianic community *see* Community

Messianic secret *see also:* Mystery
Mt 26u. *Mk* 1i, 4c, 8b. *Jn* 13b

Metanoia *see* Repentance

Ministry (Deacon, Deaconess, *Diakonia*, Elders, *Episcopos*) *see also:* Presbyters, President, Priesthood, Service
Lk 1f. *Ac* 6e, 14n, 15d. *Ep* 4a. *Ph* 1a. *1 Tm* 3a, b, 4d. *Tt* 1b, d. *1 P* 5a. *2 Jn* 1a. *Rv* 4c, 5f

Miracles (Wonders) *see also:* Authority, Exodus, Faith, Fire, Healing, Messiah, Messianic age, Mission, Monotheism, Power, Preaching, Prophecy, Salvation, Sign, Spirit
1 K 18j, 19i. *2 K* 4c, f. *Ps* 74i. *Mt* 4f, 8a, 12j, 16a. *Jn* 1o, 2f, 14g. *Ac* 1i, 2n, 14g, 15k

Mission *see also:* Apostles, Disciples, Holiness, Laying-on of Hands, Messiah, Miracles, Moses, Salvation, Spirit
Mt 3m, 4d, 8a, b, 10a, g, 20f. *Mk* 6b. *Lk* 10c. *Jn* 17h, 21c. *Ac* 1b, i, k, 7a, 8b, 9h, 13e, 18d, 26f, g. *1 Co* 16d. *Ep* 4i

Monotheism (Nature of God) *see also:* Faith, Gospel, Israel, Messianic age, Miracles, Prophecy, Yahwism
Gn 1a, 19a, 35b. *Dt* 6b. *1 K* 18f, j. *Jdt* 8d. *Ws* 14j. *1 S* 41m, 42f, 45p. *Jr* 2i. *Zc* 1i, 14h. *Jn* 8g. *1 Th* 1c. *Heb* 11c

Morality *see* Law

Mosaic Law *see* Law

Mosaic tradition *see* Moses

Moses (Mosaic tradition) *see also:* Covenant, Forty, Law, Manifestation, Mediation, Messiah, Mission, Prophecy, Redemption, Rejection, Salvation, Water
Gn 9d. *Ex* 7c, 24c, 32f, 33b, i. *Nb* 7c, 12d, 20b. *Dt* 4c, 18c. *1 K* 19b. *2 Ch* 8e. *Ps* 45d. *Ws* 6b, 10n, 11a. *Mt* 17c. *Jn* 1u. *Ac* 3e, i, 5k, 6i, 7a, h, k. *Rm* 9c. *1 Co* 10c, d. *2 Co* 3d. *Col* 2m. *Heb* 11g. *Rv* 12b, 14c, 15a, d

Most High *see* Name

Mountain (Horeb, Sinai) *see also:* Covenant, Holiness, Manifestation
Ex 19d, h, j. *1 K* 18f. *Ps* 68d, 77e. *Ho* 12n. *Mi* 6b. *Hab* 3k. *Mt* 26h. *Heb* 12e

Mystery *see also:* Kingdom, Messianic secret, Spirit
Jb 42c. *Ws* 14q. *Mt* 11i. *Jn* 19b. *Ph* 2d. *Col* 1n, 2b

Mystical Body *see* Body of Christ

Name (*El Shaddai*, Invocation, Most High, Person, Title) *see also:* Anointing, Christ, Israel, Jerusalem, Jesus, Lord, Manifestation, Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, Yahweh
Gn 4m, 14g, 17b, d, 31k, 49q. *Ex* 3h, 23i, 33h. *Jg* 13g. *1 S* 1b, 7k, 25g, 45a, d, 89i. *1 K* 8g. *2 Ch* 17a. *Jb* 19i. *Ps* 19g, 45d, 54a, 72l, 79b, 91b, 101b, 103c, 144b. *Sg* 1c, l. *Ezk* 1c. *Si* 50o. *Is* 1r, 14e, 40n, 41f, 42f. *Jr* 23b, 33l. *Ezk* 20c. *Ho* 1e, 2w, 3j. *Zc* 14h. *Mt* 3c, 4c, 16f. *Mk* 14c. *Lk* 9h. *Jn* 2f, 8g, i, 12g, 17h. *Ac* 1e, 2m, s, x, gg, 3j, 4e, 5g, p, 7t, 9e, 11g, m, 13m, 15q, 17d. *Rm* 8o, 9d, 10f, k. *1 Co* 10d. *Ep* 2p. *Ph* 2l. *3 Jn* 1c. *Rv* 1h, l, 2m, 14a, 17e

Nations *see* Pagans

Nature of God *see* Monotheism

Neighbour (Fellow man) *see also:* Love
Lv 19c. *Pr* 3c. *Mt* 5a. *Lk* 10h. *Rm* 6h, 13e. *1 Co* 13a

Newness (New Commandment, Life, Man, Rebirth, Re-creation) *see also:* Adam, Baptism, Covenant, Creation, First-fruits, Forgiveness, Israel, Jerusalem, Law, Life, Man, Vine

Ex 24c. *Dt* 4g. *2 S* 5f. *2 Ch* 29b. *Is* 4d, 11f, 65i. *Jr* 31q. *Ezk* 16v, 36f. *Mi* 4k. *Zc* 13d. *Ml* 3b. *Mt* 3d, m, 9j, 13d, 16q, 19g, 20a, 26h. *Jn* 1q, y, 4h, 5a, 13t. *Lk* 5e. *Ac* 3n, 11m. *Rm* 5f, m, 6b, 7k, m, 8b, q, 9c, d. *Ep* 1k, u, 2h, n, 3j, 4j, n. *1 Co* 12j, 13a. *2 Co* 5f. *Ph* 2r. *Col* 1e, i, u, 2n, 3f, k, m. *Tt* 3u. *Heb* 4d, 8a, 12e, f. *Jm* 2f. *1 P* 3j. *Rv* 2m, 21j

Night *see* Darkness

Noah *see also:* Covenant, Flood, Punishment, Remnant

Gn 5c, 6g, 9d. *Ws* 10f. *Si* 44l. *Na* 1e

Numbers *see* Forty, Seven, Twelve

Obedience *see also:* Fear of Yahweh, Law, Love

1 S 14d, 15d. *Ps* 19e, 40c. *Ws* 6e. *Si* 2d. *Jon* 1e. *Zp* 2e. *Mt* 4a. *Jn* 15b. *Rm* 1e. *1 Co* 13a. *Ga* 2l. *Jm* 1k

Oblation *see* Sacrifice

Obstinacy *see* Hardness of Heart

Offering *see* Sacrifice

Omnipotence *see* Power

Omniscience *see* Wisdom

Oppressed *see* Poor

Oracle *see* Prophecy

Ordination *see* Priesthood

Original sin *see* Fall, Sin

Pagan gods (Baal) *see also:* Fertility, Pagans

Lv 17d. *Dt* 14a. *2 K* 10j. *Jg* 2h, 6a, 8n. *Dn* 9x. *Ho* 2n. *Ac* 14k

Pagans (Gentiles, Nations, Pagan cults) *see also:* Faithful people, Jews, Law, Pagan gods, Sacrifice, Salvation, Service, Sin, Worldwide outlook, Worship

Gn 9f. *Ex* 23j. *Lv* 18g, 19i. *Dt* 22b, 26c. *Jg* 8n. *1 S* 10e. *2 S* 5f. *Ezr* 1c. *Sg* 6e. *Ps* 45f, g, 67b, 72h, 87a. *Is* 4d, 50f. *Jr* 46a. *Dn* 10c. *Mi* 4j, 5h. *Mt* 2e, 21g. *Mk* 11a, 15e. *Lk* 21e. *Ac* 1i, 2g, z, dd, 3l, 9h, 10a, i, q, 11c, g, 13e, ff, 14k, 15a, 16b, 17g, n, o, 22i. *Rm* 1h, j, p, 5d, 9g, k, 10k, 11d, f, m, 15b, l. *1 Co* 7b. *2 Co* 6a. *Ep* 1n, 2i, j, k, r, 3a. *Col* 1c, m, n. *Rv* 3d, 6b, i, 9g, 10d, 14d, l, n, 16c, 20e, 21i

Parable *see also:* Preaching, Teacher

Mt 24w. *Mk* 7e. *Jn* 6i, 10l

Paraclete *see* Spirit

Pardon *see* Forgiveness

Parousia *see* Coming

Paschal lamb *see* Lamb

Paschal meal *see* Meal

Passage *see* Exodus

Passion of Christ (Cross, Crucifixion) *see also:* Cup, Exodus, Lamb, Sacrifice, Suffering, Tree, Witness

Jos 3a. *Ws* 2l. *Zc* 12e. *Mt* 8h, 16k, 20d. *Mk* 10d. *Lk* 9d. *Jn* 13e, o, 16i. *Heb* 2d. *1 P* 5b

Passover (Azymes) *see also:* Bread, Eucharist, Exodus, Lamb, Meal, Messianic banquet, Resurrection, Victim

Ex 12a, f, k, m, 23d. *Lv* 23c. *Nb* 9a. *Jos* 5e. *2 Ch* 34a, 35g, h. *Ps* 68a, 113a. *Ws* 18f, g. *Mt* 26d, f. *Lk* 22e, f. *Jn* 1w, 11p, 13a. *1 Co* 5d

Passover meal *see* Meal

Patience

Lk 13b. *Ac* 1h. *Jm* 1c. *1 P* 3h

Patriarchal period *see* Patriarchs

Patriarchs (Ancestors, Fathers) *see also:* Abraham

Gn 5a, c, g, f. *Ho* 11b. *Hab* 3k

Paul *see also:* Apostle, Peter, Preaching

Rm 1b. *Ga* 1a. *Col* 4d

Peace *(Shalom) see also:* Messiah, Messianic age

Jb 25b. *Ps* 73a, 122a. *Sg* 3h. *Is* 11f. *Jr* 6i. *Ezk* 13b. *Ho* 2p. *Mi* 4k, 5j. *Lk* 10d. *Jn* 14s. *Heb* 12e

Peace offering *see* Sacrifice

Pentateuch *see* Law

Pentecost *see also:* Spirit

Gn 11a. *Ex* 23d. *Ws* 1j. *Jl* 3a. *Ac* 1e, f, 2d 4l, 10q

People of God (Laity) *see also:* Anointing, Assembly, Authority, Circumcision, Community, Covenant, Election, Faith, Faithful people, First-born, History, Hope, Israel, Jerusalem, Jews, Marriage, Messiah, Saints, Service, Vine

Gn 6g. *Dt* 7b, 10c. *Jdt* 1b. *2 M* 5b. *Ps* 28c, 68a, 131a. *Ws* 18f. *Lm* 4a. *Dn* 7j, 8j, 10c. *1 Th* 4e

Persecution *see also:* Suffering

1 M 2a. *Si* 2b. *Dn* 8v, x. *Jn* 15f. *Ac* 2g, 8b. *1 Tm* 6e. *Heb* 11a, c

Person *see* Name

Peter *see also:* Apostle, Disciple, Paul, Rock, Witness

Mt 16f, i, l, 18j. *Jn* 14e, 20b. *Ac* 2h. *1 Co* 1g. *Rv* 11d

Piety *see also:* Holiness

Tb 1d. *Jb* 17f. *Jon* 1e

Pleroma *see* Fulfilment

Poor (*Anawim*, Meek, Oppressed, Poor in spirit) *see also:* Kingdom, Messiah, Rich, Righteousness, Salvation

Ex 30b. *1 K* 21e. *1 S* 2a. *Jdt* 9a. *Est* 9a. *Jb* 19i. *Ps* 9a, 57a. *Ws* 2e, 15f. *Jr* 20h. *Ba* 2a. *Zp* 2e, 3f. *Jr* 5a. *Mt* 5c. *Lk* 1w. *Ac* 18d. *Jm* 1e, 2c. *Rv* 2f

Power (Authority, Omnipotence) *see also:* Miracles, Remnant, Son of Man, Spirit, Wisdom

Gn 10a. *Ex* 27b. *Dt* 28c. *Jb* 26i, 38a. *Ps* 18d, 29a, 74i, 75c, 76h. *Sg* 5i. *Ws* 7i, 12f, 16h. *Si* 38h. *Jr* 20d. *Ezk* 6b. *Dn* 8e. *Am* 4o. *Jon* 1e. *Hab* 3a. *Zp* 1j. *Mt* 8a, j, 26n. *Mk* 5b, 14c. *Jn* 5e, 8j, 10q. *Ac* 1i, 3j, 4n, 5b. *Rm* 1j, 4h. *1 Co* 15g. *Ep* 6e. *1 Jn* 3d. *Rv* 2s

Powers (Dominions) *see also:* Evil, Principalities, World
1 Co 2d, 12j. *Rm* 8s. *Ep* 1t, 3f. *Rv* 16c, f

Praise *see* Sacrifice, Worship

Prayer *see also:* Sacrifice, Sin, Thanksgiving, Witness, Worship
Gn 32d. *Dt* 32k. *1 S* 1g. *1 K* 18f, 21b. *2 K* 4f. *2 Ch* 6a. *Ezr* 6f. *Tb* 3f. *Jdt* 8c. *Est* 4c. *2 M* 12g. *Jb* 16h, 42e. *Ps* 1b, 44e, 55f, 134a, 141a. *Qo* 12f. *Si* 7i, 34f. *Dn* 6b. *Ho* 6a, 14b. *Jl* 1i. *Mt* 6c. *Lk* 3j. *Ac* 29g, 6d, 10c, 13b. *Rm* 5f, 8o. *1 Co* 14b. *2 Co* 3g. *Heb* 5c, 13c. *Jm* 5e

Preaching (*Kerygma*, Proclamation) *see also:* Gospel, Kingdom, Miracles, Parable, Paul, Repentance, Teaching, Witness
Mt 4d, 24a. *Ac* 1d, 2n, s, dd, 5g, 7a, l, 8m, 13h, 14k, 17g, h, n, o, x, 18f, 20l, m, 26a, 28g. *Rm* 1j. *1 Co* 12d, e. *Ph* 2p. *Heb* 13b. *1 P* 3h, 4b

Predestination (Book of Life) *see also:* Faith
Dn 12a. *Ac* 13hh. *Rv* 20i

Presbyters *see* Ministry

Presence of God *see also:* Ark, Holy of Holies, Manifestation, Seeing God, Transcendence, Temple
Gn 5c, 28c. *Nb* 1e. *2 S* 6a. *1 K* 8e, g. *2 Ch* 1d. *Tb* 3f. *Jb* 13g. *Ps* 11e, 27b, 46a. *Sg* 3g. *Si* 14j, 24c. *Is* 6j, 66a. *Jr* 35f. *Ho* 2k. *Zc* 3k. *Mt* 10j. *Lk* 1s. *Jn* 1n, o, 2j. *1 Co* 12a. *Heb* 9f. *1 Jn* 3d. *Rv* 21e

President *see* Ministry

Priesthood (Aaronites, Investiture, Levites, Melchizedek, Ordination, Sadducees, Scribes) *see also:* Ark, Anointing, Authority, Brotherhood, *Charisma*, Community, David, First-born, Flesh, High Priest, Holiness, Holy of Holies, Israel, Kingship, Law, Liturgy, Man, Messiah, Messianic age, Ministry, Prophecy, Redemption, Sacrifice, Service, Sin, Temple, Worship
Gn 14g. *Ex* 28h, i. *Lv* 6d, 8a, b, 10b, 17a, 21e, g, 25e. *Nb* 1a, 3d, 8b, c, 19a. *Dt* 10a. *Jos* 21a. *Jg* 17e. *2 S* 5f, 6f, h, 8i, l. *2 K* 11a, 16f, 23c, h. *1 Ch* 15a, 18c, 23e, g. *2 Ch* 3a, 4a, 5a, 7a, 11a, 13c, 19c, 23a, 26f, 29b, h, 30e, 31f, 34c, 35a. *Ezr* 2h, 6l, 7b, c. *Ne* 8g. *1 M* 5h. *Tb* 6a. *Ps* 16d, 61c, 110a, 133a. *Si* 7f, 15a, 20d, 32a, 39b, c. *Jr* 8d. *Ezk* 44f, g, k. *Dn* 9o, p. *Ho* 4b, f, h. *Zc* 3j, l, i, 4g, 11h. *Mt* 3f. *Jn* 19i. *Ac* 2h, n, ff, gg, 22e, 23c. *Heb* 7a, c, 8a. *Rv* 1k, n, 4c, 5h

Principalities and Powers *see also:* Powers
1 Co 15g. *Ga* 4b. *Ep* 1t

Proclamation *see* Preaching

Prohibitions *see* Law

Promise *see also:* Abraham, Adoption, David, Inheritance, Israel, Jews, Law, Messiah, Resurrection, Righteousness, Salvation, Servant, Son of God
Lv 7b. *1 K* 8h. *Ps* 2b, 56c, 119a, 132a. *Am* 9l. *Mi* 7s. *Mt* 1a, 10d. *Jn* 14c. *Ac* 2y, 3r, g, 13h. *Rm* 1j, l, 3a, g, i, 5d, 7e, 9a, c, l, 15g. *Ga* 3h, l, 4i. *Heb* 12c. *Rv* 1i

Promised Land *see also:* Israel
Gn 11g, 12d, 23a. *Dt* 4i. Jos 24g. *Ps* 68e. *Sg* 4i. *Heb* 4a. *1 P* 1a

Prophecy, Prophet (Oracle, Vision) *see also:* Apostles, Assembly, *Charisma*, Consultation, David, Elijah, John the Baptist, Judge, Kingship, Laying-on of Hands, Law, Messiah, Miracles, Monotheism, Moses, Priesthood, Revelation, Samuel, Seeing God, Servant, Sin, Spirit, Witness
Gn 20b, 49a. *Nb* 12d, 22b, 24a. *Dt* 18d, c. *1 S* 3a, 9a, d, 10e, 15a, b, 23f, 28b. *1 K* 11f, 13c, 18a, d, 19e, 20j, o, p, 21e, 22c, e, f. *2 K* 1c, 2h, 4c, 5e, 6f, g, 8f, g, 9c, 13c, 19a. *2 Ch* 16a, 19a, 20c. *Tb* 4b. *Ps* 74a, 119a. *1 S* 2c, 7h, 11c, 16a, 43q. *Jr* 16a, 19a, 23l, 25e, 28d, f, 30a, 44i, 46q, r, 49o, 50y, 51x, 52a. *Ezk* 3a, 4a, 8b, 24b, c, 36f. *Dn* 8y, 9l, m. *Ho* 1b, 3a, 12p, q, o. *Am* 2e, f, 3d, 5r, 7c, i. *Mi* 3d, 4k, 6f. *Hab* 2b, c. *Zc* 11c. *Mt* 5e, 7d, 16c, 21a, 21g, 22g, 24a, 26h. *Lk* 1aa, 9d, 18d. *Jn* 2f. *Ac* 1i, 2d, n, r, 3q, 9g, 11m, 13g, ff, 21c. *1 Co* 12a. *Ep* 2s, 3c, 5h. *1 Tm* 1k, 4d. *1 P* 1d, 4c. *2 P* 1o. *Rv* 1b, 6a, 13f, 19c

Proselyte *see* Faithful people

Prosperity *see* Happiness

Prostitution (adultery) *see also:* Faithlessness, Idolatry, Worship
Gn 38g. *Lv* 17e, 18e. *Dt* 23d. *Jg* 2k. *Ps* 73m. *Pr* 2b, 5c. *Jr* 2n. *Ho* 1b, 4i. *Am* 2g. *Na* 3c. *Mi* 1d. *Mt* 19b. *Jn* 8m. *Jm* 4b. *Rv* 14e, 17a

Providence
Gn 37a. *Ex* 21d. *1 S* 25i. *2 S* 24b. *Jb* 9k, 38q. *Ps* 127a. *Ws* 14c. *Is* 29k. *Jon* 4a

Psyche *see* Soul

Punishment (Sickness) *see also:* Death, Flood, Hell, Noah, Reward, Sin, Suffering
Gn 13c. *Lv* 20b. *Dt* 1b. *1 K* 17a, 20o. *2 Ch* 28f. *Jdt* 7d, 8e. *2 M* 9a. *Jb* 8c, 20g, 21g, 24a. *Ps* 41d, 51h, 55e. *Ws* 4g, 11n, 17c. *Si* 18c, e, 21c, 22b, 39f. *1 S* 1d, g. *Lm* 4c. *Ezk* 9a, 21b, 29g. *Dn* 13d. *Ho* 4a. *Jl* 2b. *Am* 4f. *Ob* c, k. *Hab* 2j, l. *Zp* 3c. *Ac* 12g. *Rm* 7e. *1 Co* 1e, 5c, 11*l*. *Heb* 12b. *Jm* 4f. *Rv* 14k, 15a

Purification *see also:* Blood, Fire, Flood, Holiness, Law, Remnant, Ritual Observances, Salvation, Uncleanness, Water
Ex 29a. *Lv* 2e, 11a, 12a, 13a, 17a, 18c. *Nb* 5a, 19a. *1 S* 20j, 21e. *2 K* 5b. *2 Ch* 29d. *Ne* 12k. *Jdt* 10b. *Jb* 15c. *Ps* 51e. *Sg* 4d. *Is* 6h. *Am* 7m. *Hg* 2i, k. *Mt* 3d, h, i, 10f. *Lk* 2g. *Jn* 13i, j. *Ac* 10e, 15a, v. *Ep* 5f. *Heb* 9i, j. *1 P* 3j

Qahal *see* Assembly

Raise up *see* Resurrection

Rebirth *see* Newness

Reconciliation
1 Co 13a. *Ep* 2k. *Col* 1k. *Heb* 8b

Re-creation *see* Newness

Redemption (Deliverance, *Goel*, Liberation, Redeemed, Redeemer) *see also:* Coming, Exile, Exodus, First-born, First-fruits, Light, Moses, Priesthood, Saviour, Servant, Son of Man
Gn 22a, 37a. *Nb* 3e, 35a. *Rt* 2f, 4b. *Jb* 19i. *Ps* 17d, 19g, 51c, 119b, 147a. *Is* 41k. *Jr* 32b. *Ho* 3c, 4a. *Na* 3b. *Mt* 4d, 20g, 26h. *Jn* 1w. *Ac* 5j, 7h. *Rm* 3j, 6h, 7b, 8k, 11f. *1 Co* 10c, 15e. *Ga* 3a, e, 4d. *Ep* 1g. *Col* 1m. *2 Tm* 1c. *Heb* 9l. *1 P* 3h. *Rv* 4c, 14c

Redemptive history *see* History

Refuge *see also:* Hell
Ex 21e. *Jos* 20a. *Is* 22a. *Ps* 11a, 44d

Rejection *see also:* Faith, Faithlessness, Israel, Jews, Moses, Salvation, Saul, Sin, Vine
1 S 8d. *Mt* 8b, 10m. *Lk* 4g. *Jn* 8f, t, 14a. *Ac* 3e, 7a, h, 13y, 24f

Remnant *see also:* Assembly, Branch, Election, Exile, Faithfulness, Faithlessness, Israel, Jerusalem, Judah, Messianic age, Noah, Power, Purification, Salvation
Gn 18e. *Dt* 4e. *2 K* 19c, 21f. *Ezr* 1e. *Ne* 1c. *Si* 44l. *Is* 4c, d, l, 6m, 7b. *Jr* 31q. *Am* 3m, 5c, n. *Ob* w. *Mi* 5h. *Hab* 1f. *Zc* 13d. *Mt* 16g, 24k. *Ac* 2k, r. *Rm* 9l, 11a. *2 Co* 6a. *Rv* 11b, 14a

Reparation *see* Sacrifice

Repentance (Confession, Conversion, *Metanoia*) *see also:* Baptism, Liturgy, Preaching, Spirit
Gn 6a. *Lv* 5d, f. *Dt* 1b. *1 K* 20l, 21e. *2 Ch* 7b, 29a. *Ps* 17d, 106a. *Ws* 3c. *Sg* 3b. *Si* 18e. *Is* 6m. *Jr* 1i, 31a. *Ho* 2p, 14b, c. *Jon* 3c, d. *Zp* 2a, 3e. *Mt* 3b. *Lk* 13a. *Jn* 5d, 6j. *Ac* 2n, w, dd, 3l, 9a, 10a, p, 13aa, 14k, 15a, 16b, 17b, x, 20m, 26a. *Rm* 9q, 11d, f, m. *1 Co* 5a, 12j, 15b. *2 Co* 6a. *Ep* 2r. *Phm* c. *Rv* 14h, 15c

Responsibility (collective and individual —) *see also:* Covenant, Sin
Gn 18e, f. *Nb* 27a. *Dt* 7c, 24b, 25a, b, 27c, 32c. *Jdt* 8d. *Jr* 31p, 31q. *Ezk* 3b, 14d, 18g. *Rm* 7i

Rest *see* Sabbath

Restoration *see also:* Exodus, Israel, Jerusalem, Kingdom
Ps 51k, 60a. *Jr* 30a, l. *Ho* 1b. *Am* 9l. *Mi* 7j. *Ac* 3m. *Rm* 16l. *2 Co* 5f. *Rv* 14a

Resurrection (Exaltation, Raise up, Risen Christ, Risen Christians) *see also:* Atonement, Baptism, Body, Coming, Death, Exodus, First-fruits, Glory, Healing, Kingdom, Life, Light, Lord, Messiah, Passover, Promise, Return, Saints, Saviour, Spirit, Witness
Nb 16d. *2 M* 7a, 12g. *Jb* 14g, 19i, 42i. *Ps* 16g, 17d, 49h, 73k, 110b. *Ws* 3b. *Is* 26g. *Ezk* 37d. *Dn* 12b. *Jon* 2b. *Mt* 1a, h, 12j, 19g, 22e, 25f, 26a, u, 28e. *Lk* 9d, 20c, f, 24j. *Jn* 1o, 3e, g, 5d, i, 11h, 12j, 14l, 16e, i, l. *Ac* 1j, 2n, s, v, 3c, n, q, r, s, 5p, 7f, 10m, p, i, 11m, 13n, w, ff, 17y, z, 23c, 26a, c. *Rm* 1d, j, 2b, 3j, 4k, 5d, f, 6b, 7m, 8f, g, 9d, 11f, 13g. *1 Co* 12j, 15a, c, e, l. *2 Co* 5c. *Ga* 2l. *Ep* 2e. *Ph* 2l, 3h. *Col* 1g, 2e, 3c. *1 Th* 4f. *1 Tm* 3d. *2 Tm* 3d. *Heb* 2i, 11d, i. *1 Jn* 5c. *Rv* 2s, 17e, 20b, 21g

Retribution (Retaliation) *see also:* Anger, Law, Revenge, Suffering
Ex 21f. *Lv* 24c. *Nb* 1e. *1 K* 17d. *2 Ch* 11b. *Jb* 4a, 24a, 31r, 34c. *Ps* 5d, 49a, h, 62e, 64a, 109a, 128a. *Qo* 3c, 7c. *Ws* 16a. *Si* 7k, 16i, 21c, 27c. *Lm* 5d. *Ob* s. *Hab* 2h

Return (— of Christ, Second coming) *see also:* Day of Yahweh, Elijah, Exodus, Messiah, Messianic age, Resurrection
Mt 4d, 24a. *Jn* 14t. *Ac* 2l, n. *1 Co* 1e. *2 Co* 5b, 6a. *1 Th* 1c. *Heb* 9l. *Rv* 1g, h, 13f

Revelation (Apocalypse) *see also:* Coming, Consultation, Dreams, Faith, Father, Law, Manifestation, Message, Prophecy, Spirit, Truth, Word
Gn 1a. *Ex* 34c. *Jb* 4c, 33i. *Ps* 119a. *Ws* 4g, 5g. *Ezk* 38a. *Mt* 13c. *Lk* 10f. *Jn* 1a, p, 6j, 16f, 17e. *Ac* 11m. *Ga* 1h. *Ep* 1g, 2s, 3b. *2 Th* 1b. *1 Tm* 6f. *Heb* 4c, 8b, 12f

Revenge *see also:* Retribution
Est 9a. *Ps* 5d. *Jr* 12e. *Rv* 19k

Reward *see also:* Punishment
Ps 25a, 119g. *Si* 39f. *Lk* 6d. *Rm* 2b

Rich *see also:* Poor
Ex 30b. *Si* 31e. *Mt* 5a. *Lk* 12d. *Jm* 5a, b

Righteousness (Uprightness, Virtue) *see also:* Grace, Heaven, Holiness, Justice, Justification, Life, Love, Poor, Promise, Salvation, Sin, Wickedness
Ps 49g, 112b. *Ws* 1a, o, 2e, 2j, l, 8a. *Is* 1q. *Mi* 6e. *Mt* 3j, 21f. *Rm* 4d, f, k, 9a, 10b. *Ep* 1t. *Heb* 5e

Risen Christ, — Christians *see* Resurrection

Ritual meal *see* Meal

Ritual Observances *see also:* Covenant, Purification, Sabbath, Sacrifice, Yahwism
Gn 15f. *Nb* 10a. *Jos* 7c. *Jg* 5b. *1 S* 15d. *1 K* 18e. *Pr* 21a. *Jr* 34e. *Zp* 3i. *Rm* 6h

Ritual Uncleanness *see* Purification

Rock *see also:* Peter
Gn 49q. *Ps* 18c, 141d. *1 Co* 10d

Sabbath (Observance of —, Rest, Sabbatical) *see also:* Healing, Judaism, Law, Ritual Observances, Works, Worship
Gn 1a, 2a, 9d. *Ex* 20e, 31b. *Lv* 25a. *2 Ch* 36g. *Ne* 13c. *Mt* 12a, 28a. *Lk* 13e. *Jn* 5f, 7h, 9f

Sacred meal *see* Meal

Sacred prostitution *see* Prostitution

Sacrifice (Acceptance, Altar, Burnt Offering, Communion, Guilt Offering, Holocaust, Leaven, Libation, Offering, Peace Offering, Praise, Reparation) *see also:* Atonement, *Charisma*, Death, Expiation, Fire, First-fruits, Hope, Lamb, Law, Meal, Pagan, Passion, Prayer, Priesthood, Ritual Observances, Salvation, Sanctification, Sanctuary, Sin, Victim, Worship

Gn 8b, 12a, 22a, 48g. *Ex* 18f, 29c, d, f. *Lv* 1a, b, e, 2a, c, d, f, 3a, c, 4a, d, e, 5f, 6b, c, 7a, 8a, 10d, 14c, 22a, c. *Nb* 8c, 18c, 19a, 22k, 25d. *Dt* 12d, 26a. *Jg* 6g, h, i, 9l, 11i, 13f. *Is* 9h. *1 K* 18m. *2 Ch* 1d, 9c, 13c, 18b, 30e, g. *Ezr* 3e. *Tb* 12b. *2 M* 12g. *Ps* 22j, 40a, 57k, 119l, 141a. *Pr* 17a. *Sg* 4c. *Ws* 18g. *Si* 7i, 50j. *Ezk* 36e, 46b. *Ho* 4h. *Jl* 1f. *Am* 5d. *Jon* 1e. *Zp* 1e. *Ml* 1h. *Mt* 21a. *Mk* 9e. *Jn* 6o, 13i, 17a, 19n, r. *Ac* 3a, 10c, i, 15t. *Rm* 11b, 12a, 15l. *1 Co* 5d, 8a, 10a. *Ph* 2r. *Heb* 7g, 9k, 13c. *2 Tm* 4q. *1 Jn* 5c. *Rv* 1k, 5d, 6g

Sadducees *see* Priesthood

Saints (Holy ones, Holy race) *see also:* Angel, Assembly, Community, Elect, Eschatology, Faith, Holiness, Jerusalem, Justification, Kingdom, Law, Messianic age, People of God, Resurrection, Son of Man

Dn 7h, k, m. *Ws* 5a. *Mk* 1g. *Ac* 9g. *1 Co* 6a, 16a. *Ep* 4i. *Ph* 3h. *Col* 1c. *1 Th* 3e. *2 Th* 1b, d. *Heb* 6e, 11a, i, 12g. *1 P* 3h

Salvation (Deliverance) *see also:* Baptism, Day of Yahweh, Death, Exile, Exodus, Gospel, Heaven, History, Israel, Jews, Life, Light, Love, Miracles, Mission, Moses, Pagans, Poor, Promise, Purification, Rejection, Remnant, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Saviour, Sign, Water, Word, Zion

Gn 3c, 6c, 37a. *Dt* 7b. *Ps* 118j. *Sg* 1e, 2h. *Ws* 16f. *Si* 44l. *Is* 50f. *Ob* t, w, y. *Mi* 7s. *Zp* 2a. *Mt* 3j, 8b, 15i, 16m, 20f. *Mk* 1a. *Lk* 3h, 16j. *Jn* 1a, 3g, 7n, 8c, 11n, 19n. *Ac* 1h, 2kk, 5g, 7a, 7l. *Rm* 1j, l, 2b, 3a, i, 5a, d, 8c, k, 9a, d, 11a, 13g, 16l. *1 Co* 13a. *2 Co* 6a. *Ga* 5a. *Ep* 1k, n, 3f, j. *Col* 1c, g, i, n. *1 Th* 4l. *1 Tm* 2d, e. *2 Tm* 1b. *Heb* 2f, 7g, 11c. *Jm* 2c, f. *1 P* 3h. *1 Jn* 4d. *Rv* 5d

Salvation History *see* History

Samaritans *see also:* First-fruits

2 Ch 28d. *Ne* 1d. *Ps* 78a. *Jn* 4e, k. *Ac* 8d, e

Samuel *see also:* Prophet, Name

1 S 1c, 3a, 9a. *Ps* 45d

Sanctification *see also:* Consecration, Fire, First-fruits, Holiness, Sacrifice

Lv 22a. *Nb* 17a. *Jg* 17c. *Zc* 14o. *Rm* 5f. *1 Co* 7b

Sanctuary (Asylum, High Places, Shrine) *see also:* Dwelling place, Sacrifice, Temple, Tent

Ex 21e. *Jos* 20a. *Jg* 17a, 18g. *2 K* 23f, l. *2 Ch* 18b. *Ne* 6g. *Ps* 42d, 73h. *Ezk* 11f. *Ob* w. *1 Co* 3e

Satan *see* Devil

Saul *see also:* Anointing, Election, Kingship, Rejection

Nb 24d. *Jos* 7c. *1 S* 8a, 9i, 11a, g, 13i

Saving History *see* History

Saviour *see also:* Death, History, Life, Redemption, Resurrection, Salvation

Gn 3d. *Ps* 19g, 33a. *Jn* 4m, 8g, 12l. *Ac* 1e, 2v, 5j, 13n. *Rm* 5h. *1 Tm* 1b, 6f. *Heb* 2e. *Rv* 12b

Scapegoat

Lv 4c, 16d

Scribes *see* Priesthood

Second coming *see* Return

Seeing God (Beatific vision, Face of God, Vision) *see also:* Presence of God, Prophecy, Temple

Gn 32h. *Ex* 33i. *Ps* 11e, 42c. *Dn* 8y. *Ho* 12p. *Hab* 2b, c. *Jn* 6l, 16l. *Ac* 11m. *Rm* 1j. *Rv* 21a

Seeking God

Ps 27b. *Ws* 1c. *Am* 5d. *Heb* 11c

Serpent *see also:* Devil, Evil, Idolatry

Gn 3a. *2 K* 18d. *Jb* 1g, 3e. *Ws* 15h, 16f

Servant of Yahweh (Faithful Servant, Suffering Servant) *see also:* Angel, Covenant, Expiation, Israel, Kingdom, Kingship, Messiah, Promise, Prophecy, Redemption, Service, Suffering

Gn 18e. *Jos* 24e. *Jb* 4e, 31h, 42e. *Ps* 22a, 27b, 28c, 45f, 56c, 67b, 144b. *Is* 1d, 41i, 42a, 50d. *Mt* 3n, 4d, 8f, 16k, 20g, 21g, 26h. *Jn* 1w, 13k, 19n. *Ac* 3c, d, g, 9b, 26f. *Rm* 6h, 11b. *1 Co* 3g. *Ph* 2h. *Rv* 12e

Service *see also:* Election, Faithfulness, Israel, Love, Ministry, Pagans, People of God, Priesthood, Servant of Yahweh

Ps 27b, 28c, 45f, 67b. *Jn* 13k. *Ac* 6e, 9b. *1 Co* 13a. *Ep* 4a

Seven

Ws 7j. *Ac* 13a, c. *Rv* 11b

Shalom *see* Peace

Shechem *see also:* Covenant

Gn 48g. *Jos* 24a, b

Shem *see* Community

Sheol *see* Hell

Shepherd (Good Shepherd, Sheep) *see also:* Messiah, Messianic age

Ps 23a, 78n, 119u. *Ezk* 34a. *Mi* 4d. *Zc* 11c, 13d. *Mt* 9o, 10d. *Jn* 10f

Shrine *see* Sanctuary

Sickness *see* Punishment

Sign *see also:* Manifestation, Messiah, Messianic age, Miracles, Salvation

Ws 8c, 16f. *Si* 42l. *Is* 1r. *Mt* 8a, 24o. *Lk* 1*l*, 11g, h. *Jn* 2f, 11b, 12a, 14g

Sin (Disobedience, Original —) *see also:* Angel, Baptism, Creation, Darkness, Death, Devil, Dispersion, Eucharist, Evil, Faith, Fall, Flesh, Forgiveness, Israel, Justification, Law, Love, Pagans, Prayer,

Priesthood, Prophecy, Punishment, Rejection, Responsibility, Righteousness, Sacrifice, Spirit, Uncleanness, Water, World

Gn 3b, 5a, 10a, 11a. *Nb* 27a. *1 S* 15b. *2 S* 24b. *1 K* 17d, 20o. *2 K* 17g, m. *2 Ch* 11b, 26f, h. *2 M* 12g. *Jb* 1g, 6i, 7k, 9m, 14c, 15c, 22a. *Ps* 6d, 32b, 36b, 41d, 51b, c, h, 65c, 106a. *Qo* 4b, *Ws* 1*l*, 5g, 11n. *Si* 18e, 25h, 40a. *Lm* 4c. *Ho* 2d, 4a. *Am* 5p. *Zc* 5c. *Mt* 3j, 4d, 8b, j, 9b, 16h, 20g, 22a. *Lk* 13a. *Jn* 2f, 5d, 8b, f, 16b. *Ac* 5o. *Rm* 1n, p, 3a, g, i, j, 5h, i, j, 6c, e, g, h, 7b, c, e, g, m, 8b, c, f, q, 12g. *1 Co* 1c, d, 10c, 11*l*, 13a. *2 Co* 5h. *Ga* 1b. *Ep* 1k, 6e. *Ph* 2i. *Col* 1k, 2l, 3e. *2 Th* 2c. *1 Tm* 5i. *Heb* 2h, 6b, 7g, 9l, 11d, 12c. *1 Jn* 2e, 3h, 5g. *Jude* i. *Rv* 15c

Sinai *see* Mountain

Slavery *see also:* Freedom, Law

Ex 1c. *Lv* 25g, h. *Si* 10i, 33k. *Na* 3b. *Jn* 13f. *Rm* 6h, 7b, d. *1 Co* 7f. *Ep* 6e. *Ga* 4a. *Ph* 2h. *Col* 2d, 3e, j, k. *1 Jn* 4g

Solomon *see also:* Kingship

2 S 12h. *2 Ch* 1b, 11b, 20b. *Sg* 3h. *Si* 47f.

Son of God (Children of God, Sons of God, Sonship) *see also:* Adoption, Angel, Anointing, David, Election, Father, Israel, Name, Promise, Son of Man

Gn 6a. *2 S* 7e. *Jb* 1f. *Ps* 29b, 82c, 110f. *Ws* 5a. *Zc* 12e. *Mt* 3h, 4c, 5c, 11j, 16d, 17j. *Mk* 1g, 15e. *Jn* 3e, r, 8c, 10q, r, 12g, 13q, 14d, t, 16c, f, 17b, g, h. *Ac* 2v, 13w, 20r. *Rm* 1d, j, 6h, 7e, 8g, 9c, d. *1 Co* 13a. *Ga* 4d. *Ep* 1d. *Heb* 1a, c. *1 Jn* 1a, 3e, 4d, 5a, b

Son of Man *see also:* Day of Yahweh, Glory, Kingdom, Man, Name, Power, Redemption, Saints, Son of God

Ezk 2b. *Dn* 7k. *Mt* 4c, d, 8h, 9m, 10j, 17c, 24p, s. *Lk* 11h, 17e. *Jn* 3f

Soul (Psyche) *see also:* Body, Life, Spirit

2 M 7a. *Ps* 6b. *Rm* 1f. *1 Co* 15l. *2 Co* 5c. *1 Th* 5e

Spirit (Breath, Holy —, — of man, Paraclete) *see also:* Adoption, Baptism, Body, *Charisma*, Fire, Holiness, Law, Life, Messiah, Messianic age, Miracles, Mission, Mystery, Pentecost, Power, Prophecy, Resurrection, Revelation, Sin, Soul, Teacher, Truth, Water, Wisdom, Witness

Ex 31a. *Nb* 12d. *1 S* 16d, f, g. *1 K* 18b, 19e, 22h. *2 K* 19d. *Jb* 32e. *Ps* 51g, 104f. *Ws* 1e, i, 7i, 9h, 12a. *Si* 24a, b. *Is* 11b, 42c. *Jr* 31q. *Ezk* 36f. *Jl* 3a. *Hab* 1k. *Zc* 5e. *Mt* 3d, h, m, 8j, 12h. *Lk* 4b, 11d, f, 21b. *Jn* 1y, 3l, r, 4a, h, 6g, r, 8f, 9j, 12j, 14g, i, j, r, 15g, 16b, c, d, f, l, 20j. *Ac* 1b, e, i, 2b, n, 8g, 9i, q, 10f, 11m, 13c, 15k, 19c, 21b. *Rm* 1f, 3i, j, 5a, d, e, f, 5b, e, h, 7b, d, m, n, 8b, f, h, o, q, 9a. *1 Co* 5c, 12a, j, 13a, l, 15l. *Ga* 2l, 4d. *Ep* 1n, o, 2q, 4q. *Col* 2p, 3h. *1 Th* 4e, 5e. *2 Th* 2f. *1 Tm* 4d. *Tt* 3a. *Heb* 9f. *Jm* 4c. *1 Jn* 2i, n, 3f, 4c, f, 5c, e, g. *Jude* m, r. *Rv* 13g, 21f

Stumbling block

Mt 18b. *Rm* 14g. *1 Co* 8a

Suffering (Trial) *see also:* Atonement, Kingdom, Messiah, Messianic age, Passion, Persecution, Punishment, Retribution, Servant

Gn 18e. *2 Ch* 11b. *Jdt* 8e. *Jb* 2c, 7e, 14a, 33l, 42e. *Ps* 17d, 22a, 73a, 110i. *Sg* 7n. *Is* 63b. *Ho* 1b. *Hab* 1b, c, l. *Zc* 13d. *Mk* 9e, 10d. *Jn* 16j. *Ac* 3q. *Rm* 5d. *2 Co* 6a. *Ph* 1c, i. *Col* 1m. *Heb* 11g, 12b. *Jm* 5b. *1 P* 5b

Suffering Servant *see* Servant

Tabernacle *see also:* Dwelling, Temple, Tent

Ex 23d, 26a, 27c. *Nb* 1e. *1 Ch* 9d, 15e. *2 Ch* 3b. *Ws* 9e. *Heb* 13c

Teacher, Teaching *see also:* Apostle, Authority, *Charisma*, Parable, Preaching, Spirit

Mt 7b. *Jn* 14r. *Ac* 2n, dd, 13a, g, ff, hh. *1 Co* 11a, 12d, e. *Ep* 4a, h, i

Temple (Destruction of —, Veil of —) *see also:* Altar, Ark, Body of Christ, Consecration, Dwelling, Holy of Holies, Israel, Jerusalem, Kingship, Liturgy, Messianic age, Presence of God, Priesthood, Sanctuary, Seeing God, Tabernacle, Tree, Worship

Ex 26e. *Dn* 9o. *Jos* 9e. *1 K* 6b. *2 K* 11b, e, k, 12c, 16f, j, 22b, 23f. *1 Ch* 22b. *2 Ch* 1c, 2b, 3b, 4a, 8d, 24a, 29e, 34b, 36h. *Ne* 12i. *1 M* 4b, 9l, 10b. *2 M* 3a. *Ps* 29c, g, 42a, c, d, 46a, 47a, 74a, 85b, 93g, 118h, 134a. *Sg* 1d, 3f, 4c, 5j, 8c. *Ws* 3l, 9e. *Si* 24f. *Jr* 8b. *Lm* 2b. *Ezk* 1b, 40l, 47b. *Hg* 2e, g. *Zc* 2h, o, 3k, 6c. *Ml* 2f. *Mt* 10j, 26s, 27v. *Lk* 24n. *Jn* 1n, o, 2h, j. *Ac* 7a, c. *1 Co* 3e, f. *Heb* 9d. *Rv* 11b, d, k, 21m

Temptation, Tempter *see* Devil

Tent *see also:* Sanctuary, Tabernacle, Temple

Ex 25h. *Jg* 7f. *1 K* 8c. *Ps* 42d. *Jn* 1n. *Heb* 9b, f. *Rv* 15d

Testimony *see* Witness

Thanksgiving *see also:* Eucharist, Liturgy, Prayer

2 Ch 7b. *Ps* 33a, 66a, 116f. *Jon* 2b. *Ac* 2gg. *Rm* 8o. *1 Co* 10h

Theophany *see* Manifestation

Throne *see* Ark

Thunder *see* Manifestation

Title *see* Name

Tongues, gift of *see Charisma*

Transcendence (— of God, Yahweh) *see also:* Angel, Manifestation, Presence of God

Gn 1a. *Ws* 1i. *Si* 43i. *Is* 42f. *Ezk* 1b, e. *Ac* 7k

Transfiguration *see also:* Glory, Manifestation, Witness

1 K 19h. *Mt* 16k. *Mk* 5d. *Lk* 9e. *Jn* 1o. *Ac* 6j, 7q. *Ph* 2g. *2 P* 1c, n

Tree, Trees *see also:* Evil, Faith, Knowledge, Life, Passion, Temple
Gn 2e, h. *Zc* 4g. *Ac* 5j. *Rv* 9d, 11d

Trial *see* Suffering

Tribes
Gn 48a, e, 49a, c. *Jos* 13e, 19a, c, 22b, 24a. *Jg* 1b, 4a. *Tb* 6a. *Am* 3a, o

Trinity (Trinitarian formula)
Gn 1h, 18a. *Jn* 5f, 15g. *Rm* 9d. *1 Co* 6e, 12c, 13a. *2 Co* 13e. *Ph* 2b. *Heb* 1c. *1 P* 1b. *Rv* 22a

Triumph *see* Glory

Trust *see* Hope

Truth *see also:* Knowledge, Love, Revelation, Spirit, Witness
Jdt 10c, 11a, b. *Jn* 1p, 14d, r. *Rm* 1j. *1 Co* 12d, e, 13a. *Ep* 2n. *2 Th* 2i. *1 Tm* 6e. *1 Jn* 3e, h, 4c, 5a, g, j. *2 Jn* 1a

Twelve *see also:* Apostle, Israel
Mt 10a, g. *Ac* 13a, 22i. *Rv* 7b, 21*l*

Unbelief (Unbeliever) *see also:* Faith, Faithlessness
Nb 27a. *Jon* 3c. *Jn* 8i, s, 12m, 14r, 16b. *Ac* 14c. *Rm* 11d. *1 P* 2a

Uncircumcised *see* Circumcised

Uncleanness (Immorality, Impurity) *see also:* Purification, Sin
Lv 11a, 15a. *Nb* 9a. *Jb* 14c. *Ps* 51c. *Ho* 9c, l. *Mt* 15f. *Lk* 11*l*. *Ac* 15a, v. *Ep* 5b. *Heb* 9j

Underworld *see* Hell

Unfaithfulness *see* Faithlessness

Union (— with Christ, God, Yahweh) *see also:* Unity
Ps 16g, 73k. *Ho* 1b. *1 Co* 5d, 10b. *2 Co* 5c. *Ph* 1i. *1 Jn* 1d

Unity *see also:* Jerusalem, Union
Gn 10a, 11a. *Ps* 122b. *Ws* 1i. *Jr* 30a, 31c. *Rm* 13e. *1 Co* 12j, k. *Ep* 4a, q. *Heb* 8b

Universalism *see* Worldwide outlook

Unleavened Bread *see* Bread

Uprightness *see* Righteousness

Veil of Temple *see* Temple

Vengeance *see also:* Blood
Ex 12i. *1 K* 2a. *Jb* 16h. *Ps* 5d, 109a, 137d. *Rv* 14h

Victim *see also:* Passover, Sacrifice
Zp 1e. *Mt* 26h. *Jn* 6o. *Heb* 13d

Vine, Vineyard *see also:* Body of Christ, Bride, Covenant, Election, Israel, Kingdom, Newness, People of God, Rejection
Sg 1k. *Is* 5a. *Mt* 21g *Jn* 15a, b.

Virgin, Virginity *(Almah) see also:* Israel, Marriage, Woman
Ex 22c. *Jg* 11*l*. *Is* 7i. *Am* 5a. *Mt* 1i. *Lk* 1r. *1 Co* 7a

Virtue-s *see* Righteousness

Visitation of Yahweh *see also:* Day of Yahweh
Ex 3i. *Am* 3c. *Mt* 10j, 24a. *1 Co* 1e. *Heb* 10b

Vocation *see* Election, Mission

Vow (Dedication) *see also:* Consecration
Lv 27a, b. *Nb* 3b, 6a. *Jg* 11i. *Jn* 9i. *Ac* 18n, 21k

War
Nb 10b, 21f, 31a. *1 S* 4g. *Ps* 19q, 33a. *Jr* 6d. *Jl* 41, m. *Rv* 6a, c

Water (Abyss, Red Sea, Passage) *see also:* Baptism, Chaos, Exodus, Fertility, Fire, Flood, Life, Moses, Purification, Salvation, Sin, Spirit
Gn 1b, d, 6c, 7b. *Ex* 14c. *Lv* 11f. *Nb* 19a, 31b. *1 K* 18i. *2 K* 20j. *Jb* 26c. *Ps* 18e, 46a, 93c, 109g. *Ws* 11d, i, k. *Si* 39g. *Is* 8e. *Ezk* 47b. *Am* 5i. *Jon* 2b. *Na* 1d. *Mt* 3h, m. *Jn* 1y, 2h, j, 3g, 4a, 7q, 9j, e, 19r. *Ac* 1e. *1 Co* 1o, 10d. *1 Jn* 2l, 5c, e. *Rv* 12b, 21f

Wedding, — garment *see* Marriage

Wickedness *see* Evil, Righteousness

Wilderness *see* Desert

Wine *see also:* Anger, Cup, Love
Ps 75e. *Sg* 2c. *Mt* 26f. *1 Co* 10h. *Rv* 19k

Wisdom (God's Knowledge, Omniscience) *see also:* Bride, Creation, Fear of Yahweh: Knowledge, Law, Life, Light, Power, Spirit, Word
Gn 41b. *Dt* 30a. *1 K* 3c. *2 Ch* 1b, 26c. *Tb* 1f. *Jb* 2b, 4c, h, 8c, 15b, 28a, 32e, 40a, 42c. *Ps* 36f, 51d, 73h, 90g, 139a. *Pr* 1e, 4a, 5c, 8a, g. *Sg* 8n. *Ws* 1i, 3h, 6d, h, 7i, 8c, d, 10b, p, 14b. *Si* 1f, l, 4b, 19g, 23g, 24a, b, d, f, h, i, 36f, 38w, 42h. *Jr* 1e. *Ba* 3b. *Ho* 2s. *Zc* 4c. *Lk* 7f, 11n. *Jn* 1a, n, 4a, j, 7p, 8b. *Ac* 1i. *Rm* 9d, 15l. *1 Co* 1i, 8b. *Ep* 1r. *Col* 2b. *Rv* 4h

Witness (Martyrs, Testimony) *see also,* Apostle, Assembly, *Charisma,* Covenant, Death, Jews, Kingdom, Law, Light, Messiah, Passion, Peter, Prayer, Preaching, Prophecy, Resurrection, Spirit, Transfiguration, Truth, Word
2 Ch 23d. *Is* 42a. *Mt* 8b. *Mk* 5d. *Jn* 5e, 8c, 13u, 14r. *Ac* 1i, j, 2n, 7r, 9g, 11m, 13ff, 22e, h. *1 Co* 1h, 2a, 12a, 15a. *Ep* 1m, 2s. *1 Tm* 2d. *1 P* 5b. *1 Jn* 5c. *Rv* 1b, i, 6h

Woman (Mary) *see also:* Adam, Assembly, Israel, Man, Virgin
Gn 2i, 3e. *Rt* 2b. *2 Ch* 8d. *Si* 24a, 25h. *Mt* 1a, i. *Jn* 2b, c, e, 19l. *1 Tm* 2e, 5a. *Rv* 12b

Wonders *see* Miracles

Word (Logos) *see also:* Ark of the Covenant, Creation, Humility, Incarnation, Judgement, Law, Life, Light, Message, Revelation, Salvation, Wisdom, Witness
Dt 8a, 30b. *1 K* 20o. *2 Ch* 3a. *Jb* 28a. *Ps* 19a,

36b, 56c, 119a, 147a. *Ws* 7i, 18k. *Si* 24a, 42h. *Is* 2a, 55e. *Am* 5d. *Hab* 2b, c. *Zc* 1e. *Mk* 4c, d. *Lk* 10j. *Jn* 1a, d, l, n, o, 3e, 6o, 8b. *Ac* 7l. *Rm* 10c. *Jm* 1j. *Rv* 1i, 19c, h, j

Works (Good works) *see also:* Justification, Law, Sabbath

Tb 1d. *Ps* 127a. *Si* 14f. *Hab* 3d. *Mt* 6a, 25g, 26b. *Mk* 4c. *Jn* 2f, 5e, 6h, 8b, 9c, f, 14g. *Rm* 2b, g. *Ga* 2m. *Tt* 3c. *Heb* 6b

World *see also:* Kingdom, Messianic age, Powers, Sin

Qo 4e. *Jn* 1g, 3r, 13t, 15f, 16b, d. *Ac* 13hh. *Rm* 6h, 7b, 8k. *Ga* 1b, 6g. *Heb* 13d. *1 Jn* 3d, e, 4c, 5b. *Rv* 14d

Worldwide outlook (the Many, Universalism) *see also:* Pagans

Ps 22a, 47a, 56e, 65a, 66a, 67b, 68a, 75d, 96c. *Sg* 1b. *Ws* 12d, i, k, 16f. *Is* 2a, 19h, 45i, o, 56b, 60b. *Ho* 2p. *Am* 5p, 8j. *Mi* 4a. *Mk* 11a. *Jn* 4m, 8c, 10h. *Ac* 1f, i, 3o, 5b, 22e. *Rm* 5l. *2 Co* 5f. *Rv* 1k, 4h

Worship (Praise) *see also:* Community, Jerusalem, Law, Meal, Pagans, Prayer, Priesthood, Prostitution, Sabbath, Sacrifice, Temple, Yahwism

Ex 20i, 34f. *Lv* 17a. *Dt* 12b, d. *Jos* 4b, *1 S* 9g, 26c. *2 K* 10f, 17g, m, 23f. *1 Ch* 6b. 21a, 28b. *2 Ch* 1a, 7a, 13c. *Jb* 31q. *Si* 7f, 24f, h, 35a. *Is* 43j. *Hg* 2k. *Jr* 5a, 8o, 41d. *Dn* 9x. *Zp* 1d. *Ml* 1h. *Mt* 26d, f. *Lk* 2f, 4f. *Jn* 2j, 4h, 14d, j. *Ac* 2gg, jj, 6d, 7c, 13b, g, 15v. *Rm* 1f, 8o, 9c, 11b. *Ph* 2d, r. *Heb* 9d, j. *Rv* 1k, 2i, 4i

Wrath *see* Anger

Yahweh (Title) *see also:* Lord, Name, Yahwism

Gn 49q. *Ex* 3h. *1 S* 1b. *1 K* 8g. *Ps* 103c. *Sg* 1c, l. *Ezr* 1c. *Is* 14e, 40n, 41f, 42f. *Jr* 23b, 33l. *Ezk* 20c. *Zc* 14h. *Mk* 14c. *Jn* 8g, i. *Ac* 15q. *Rm* 10k. *1 Co* 10d. *Rv* 1*l*

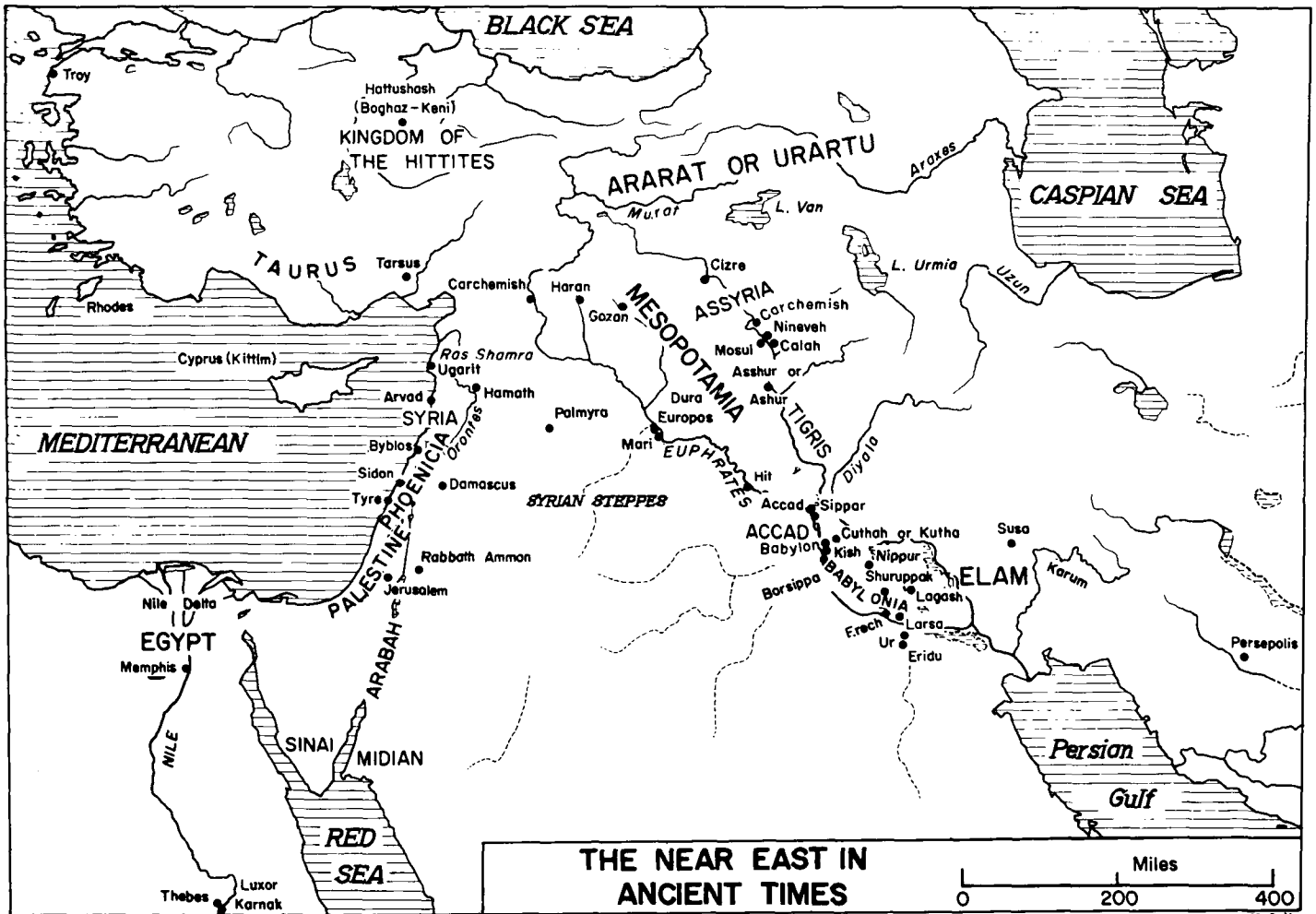
Yahwism (Cult) *see also:* Israel, Monotheism, Ritual Observances, Worship, Yahweh

Jos 22b. *Jg* 17a, d. *1 K* 11c, 14a. *2 K* 11o

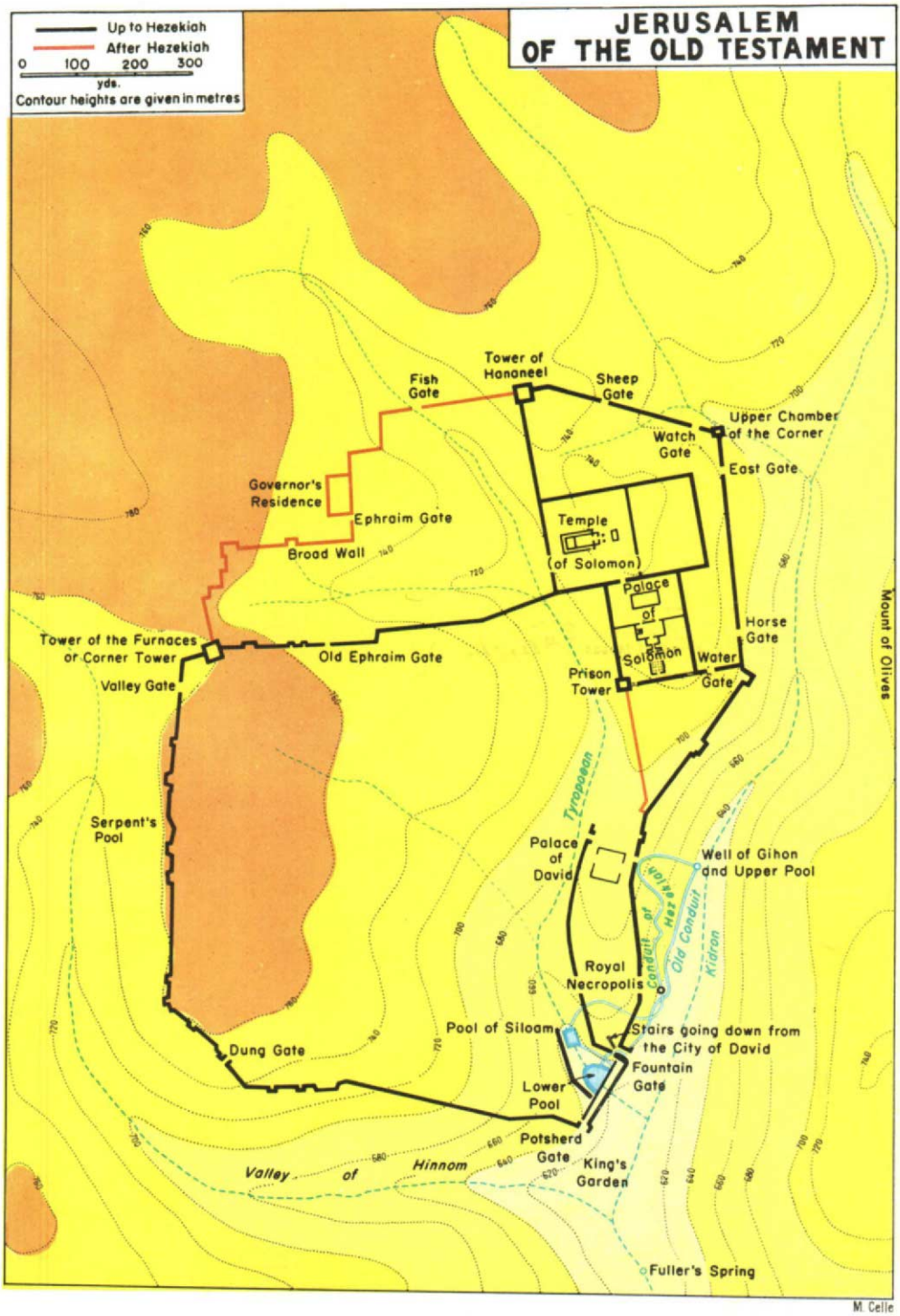
Zion *see also:* Jerusalem, Salvation

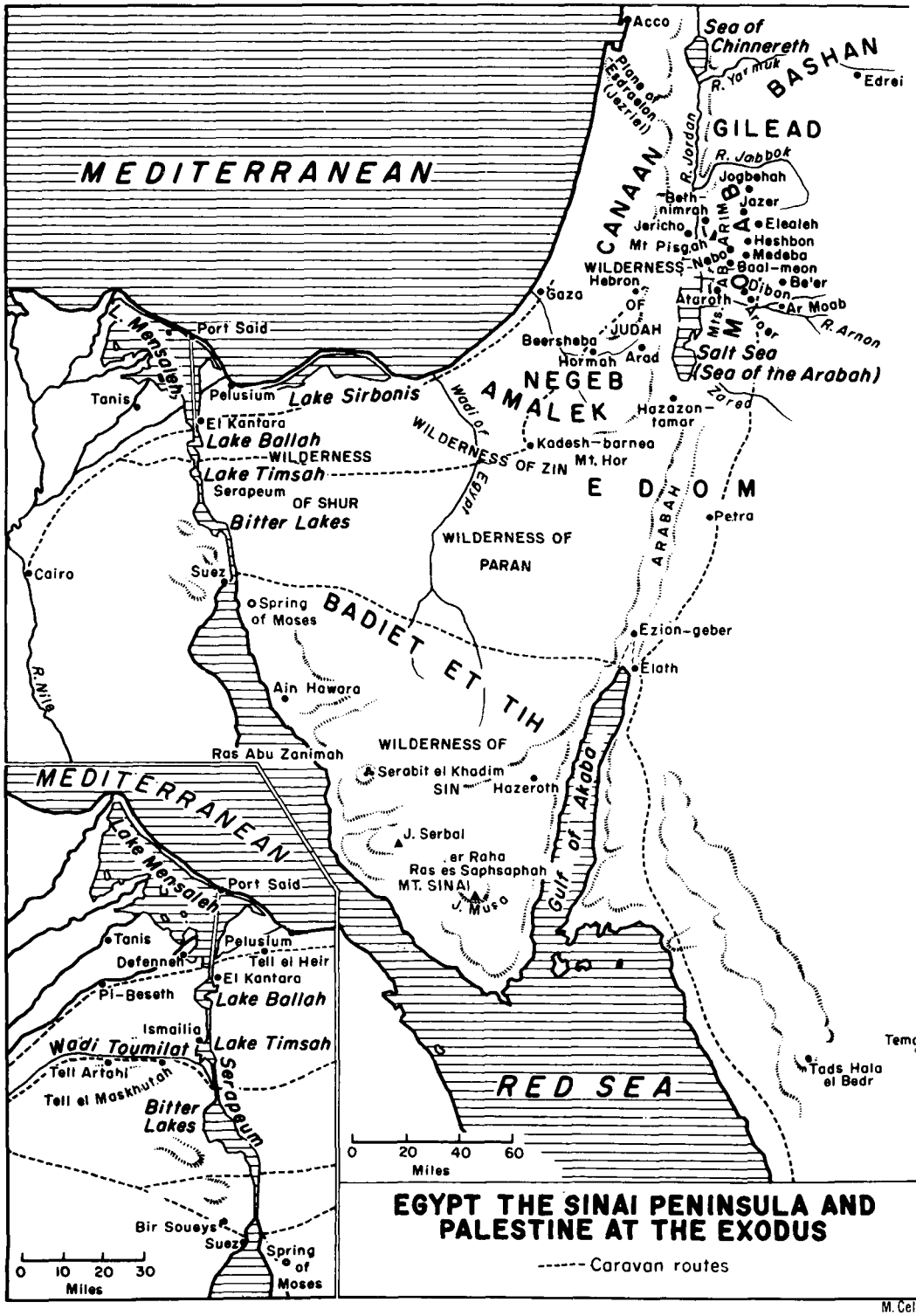
Ps 68j, 78n, 87a, d, e, 122a. *Sg* 1o. *Is* 14m, 28j, 62c. *Jr* 30a, 31c. *Am* 1b. *Ob* t, w. *Mi* 4a, d, j, k, l, 6b

MAPS

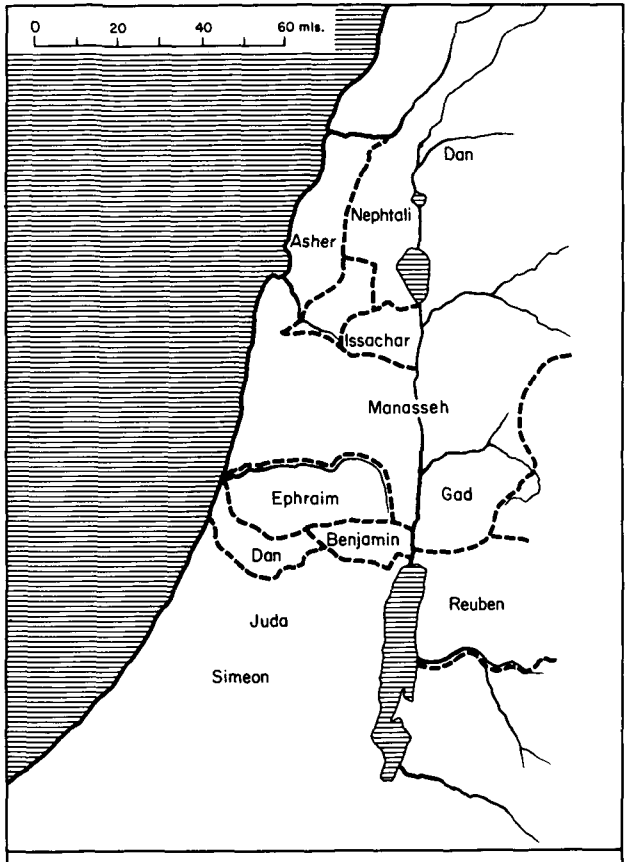

BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
MEDITERRANEAN
Persian Gulf
RED SEA
Troy
Hattushash (Boghaz-Keni)
KINGDOM OF THE HITTITES
ARARAT OR URARTU
Araxes
Murat
L. Van
L. Urmia
Uzun
TAURUS
Tarsus
Rhodes
Carchemish
Haran
Gozan
MESOPOTAMIA
Cizre
ASSYRIA
Carchemish
Nineveh
Calah
Mosul
Asshur or Ashur
Dura
Europos
Mari
EUPHRATES
TIGRIS
Diyala
Hit
Cyprus (Kittim)
Ras Shamra
Ugarit
Hamath
Arvad
SYRIA
Orontes
Palmyra
Byblos
Sidon
Tyre
PHOENICIA
Damascus
SYRIAN STEPPES
Accad
Sippar
ACCAD
Babylon
Cuthah or Kutha
Kish
Nippur
Shuruppak
Lagash
Borsippa
BABYLONIA
Erech
Larsa
Ur
Eridu
ELAM
Susa
Karum
Persepolis
PALESTINE
Rabbath Ammon
Jerusalem
ARABAH
Nile Delta
EGYPT
Memphis
NILE
SINAI
MIDIAN
Thebes
Luxor
Karnak
THE NEAR EAST IN ANCIENT TIMES
Miles
0
200
400
M. Celle

PALESTINE
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
0 10 20 30 mls.
Isohyet 200 Limit of barley cultivation
Isohyet 500 Limit of mediterranean cultivation
THE GREAT SEA
PHILISTINES
PHOENICIANS
ARAMAEANS
BASHAN
GILEAD
AMMON
MOAB
SAMARIA
SHECHEM
JERUSALEM
JERICHO
HEBRON
Lake Semechonitis
Sea of Galilee
Dead Sea
Jordan
Yarmuk
Arnon
Mt. Carmel
Mt. Ebal
Mt. Gerizim
Tyre
Abel-beth-maacah
Kanah
Dan
Kadesh
Hazor
Misrephoth-maim
Achzib
Meron
Ramah
Acco
Beth-anath
Cabul
Aphek
Chinnereth
Gath-hepher
Jokneam
En-dor
Dor
Shunem
Megiddo
Jezreel
Ophrah
Tanak
Spring of Herod
En-ganninim
Beth-shean
Ramath-gilead
Jabesh-gilead
Dothan
Ibleam
Hepher
Bezek
Thebez
Tirzah
Abel-meholah
Tishbeh
Socoh
Zarethan
Zaphon
Penuel
Succoth
Ataroth
Mahanaim
Baal-shalishah
Pirathon
Aphek
Tappuah
Adam
Mispah-gilead
Joppa
Shiloh
Zeredah
Gilgal
Jogbehah
Azor
Ono
Ramathaim
Jeshanah
Jazer
Beth-dagon
Lydda
Hadid
Timnath-serah
Ophrah
Naarah
Bethel
Beeroth
Rock of Rimmon
Beth-nimrah
RABBATH-AMMON
L. Beth-Loron
Ekron
U. Beth-Loron
Mizpah
Ai
Michmash
Jabneel
Gezer
Aijalon
Geba
Gilgal
Abel Shittim
Chephirah
Gibeon
Gibeah
Kiriath-jearim
Anathoth
Eltekeh
Sorek
Eshtaol
Zorah
Beth-haran
Ashdod
Beth-shemesh
Timnah
Beth-haccherem
Beth-jeshimoth
Nebo
Bethlehem
Bamoth-Baal
Medeba
Libnah
Azekah
Socoh
Etam
Baal-meon
Ashkelon
Adullam
Gath
Mareshah
Keilah
Tekoa
Lachish
Beth-zur
Eglon
Beth-tappuah
Adoraim
Gaza
Lachish
Dibon
Aroer
Debir (Kiriathsepher)
Juttah
Ziph
En-gedi
Carmel
Maon
Gerar
Eshtemoa
Ziklag
Arad
Sharuhen
Beersheba
Hormah
Moladah
KIR-HARESETH
Spot heights are given in metres
m. ft.
900 2953
600 1968
400 1312
100 328
0 0
-300 -984
M. Celle

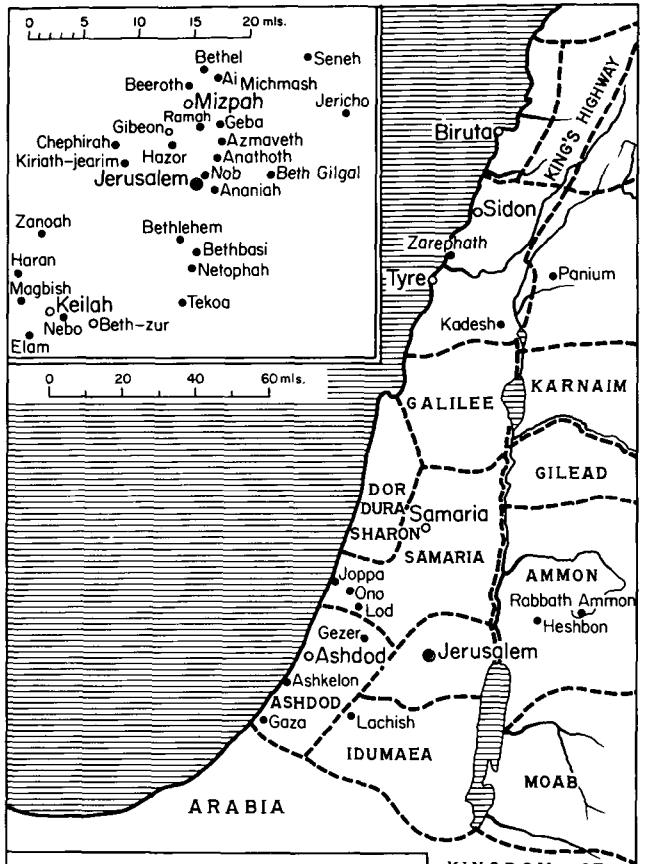

JERUSALEM
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
Up to Hezekiah
After Hezekiah
0 100 200 300
yds.
Contour heights are given in metres
Tower of Hananeel
Fish Gate
Sheep Gate
Upper Chamber of the Corner
Watch Gate
East Gate
Governor's Residence
Ephraim Gate
Broad Wall
Temple (of Solomon)
Palace of Solomon
Horse Gate
Water Gate
Prison Tower
Tower of the Furnaces or Corner Tower
Old Ephraim Gate
Valley Gate
Mount of Olives
Tyropoeon
Serpent's Pool
Palace of David
Well of Gihon and Upper Pool
Old Conduit
Kidron
Royal Necropolis
Pool of Siloam
Stairs going down from the City of David
Dung Gate
Fountain Gate
Lower Pool
Potsherd Gate
King's Garden
Valley of Hinnom
Fuller's Spring
M. Celle


MEDITERRANEAN
Acco
Sea of Chinnereth
R. Yarmuk
BASHAN
Edrei
Plane of Esdraelon (Jezreel)
R. Jordan
GILEAD
R. Jabbok
Jogbehah
Beth-nimrah
Jazer
CANAAN
ABARIM
Jericho
Elealeh
Mt Pisgah
Heshbon
Nebo
Medeba
WILDERNESS
Baal-meon
Hebron
Be'er
Dibon
Gaza
OF
Ataroth
Ar Moab
MOAB
Aroer
R. Arnon
JUDAH
Beersheba
Hormah
Arad
Salt Sea (Sea of the Arabah)
L. Mensaleh
Port Said
NEGEB
AMALEK
Zoreb
Hazazon-tamar
Tanis
Pelusium
Lake Sirbonis
Wadi of
El Kantara
Lake Ballah
WILDERNESS
OF ZIN
Kadesh-barnea
Mt. Hor
Lake Timsah
Serapeum
OF SHUR
EGYPT
E D O M
Bitter Lakes
Petra
WILDERNESS OF PARAN
ARABAH
Cairo
Suez
Spring of Moses
BADIET ET TIH
Ezion-geber
Elath
R. Nile
Ain Hawara
WILDERNESS OF
Ras Abu Zanimah
Serabit el Khadim
SIN
Hazeroth
Gulf of Akaba
J. Serbal
er Raha
Ras es Saphsaphah
MT. SINAI
J. Musa
MEDITERRANEAN
Lake Mensaleh
Port Said
Tanis
Pelusium
Tell el Heir
Defennel
El Kantara
Pi-Beseth
Lake Ballah
Ismailia
Wadi Toumilat
Lake Timsah
Tell Artahi
Serapeum
Tell el Maskhutah
Bitter Lakes
RED SEA
Tads Hala el Bedr
Bir Soueys
Suez
Spring of Moses
0 10 20 30
Miles
0 20 40 60
Miles
EGYPT THE SINAI PENINSULA AND PALESTINE AT THE EXODUS
------ Caravan routes

M. Cel

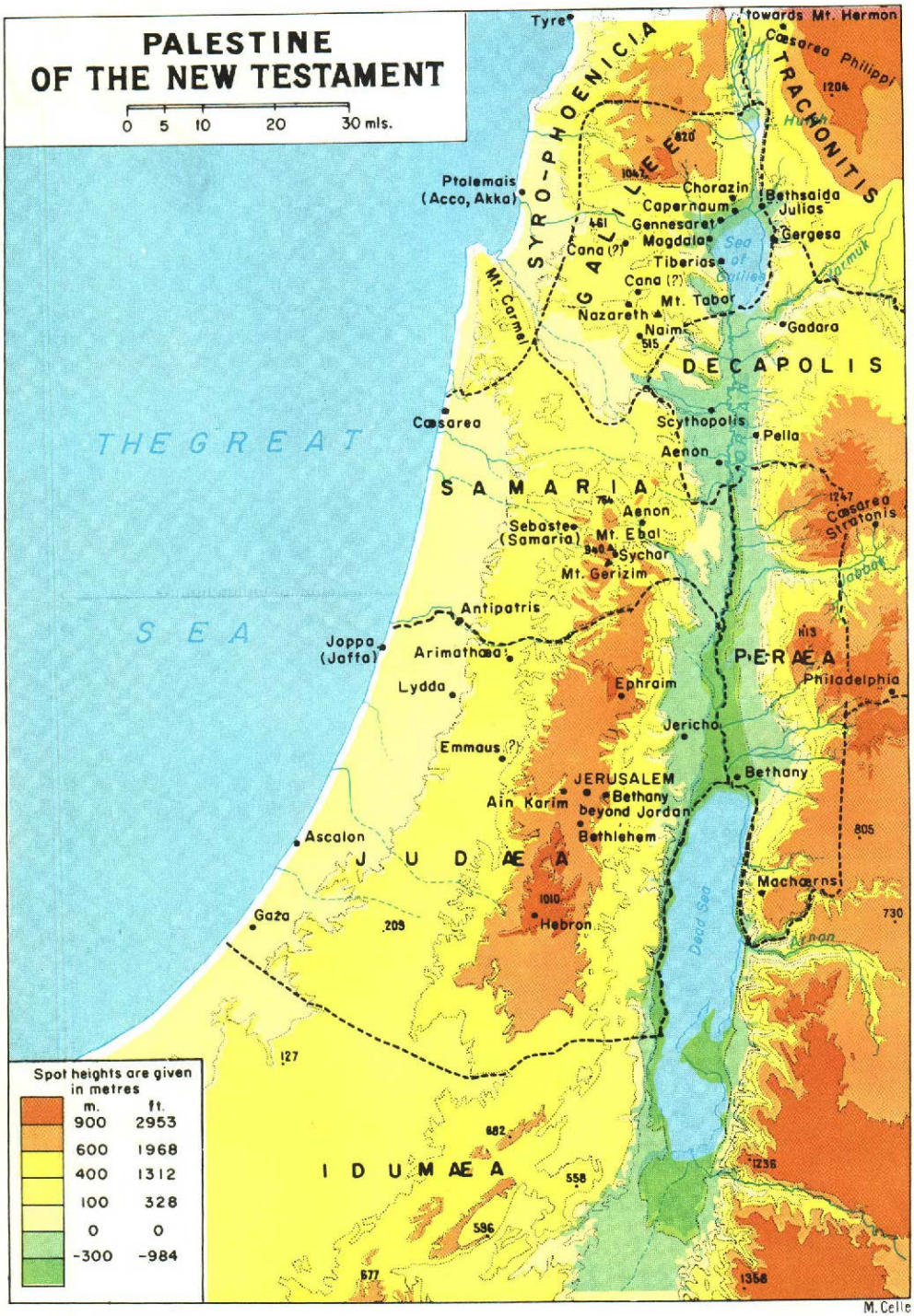


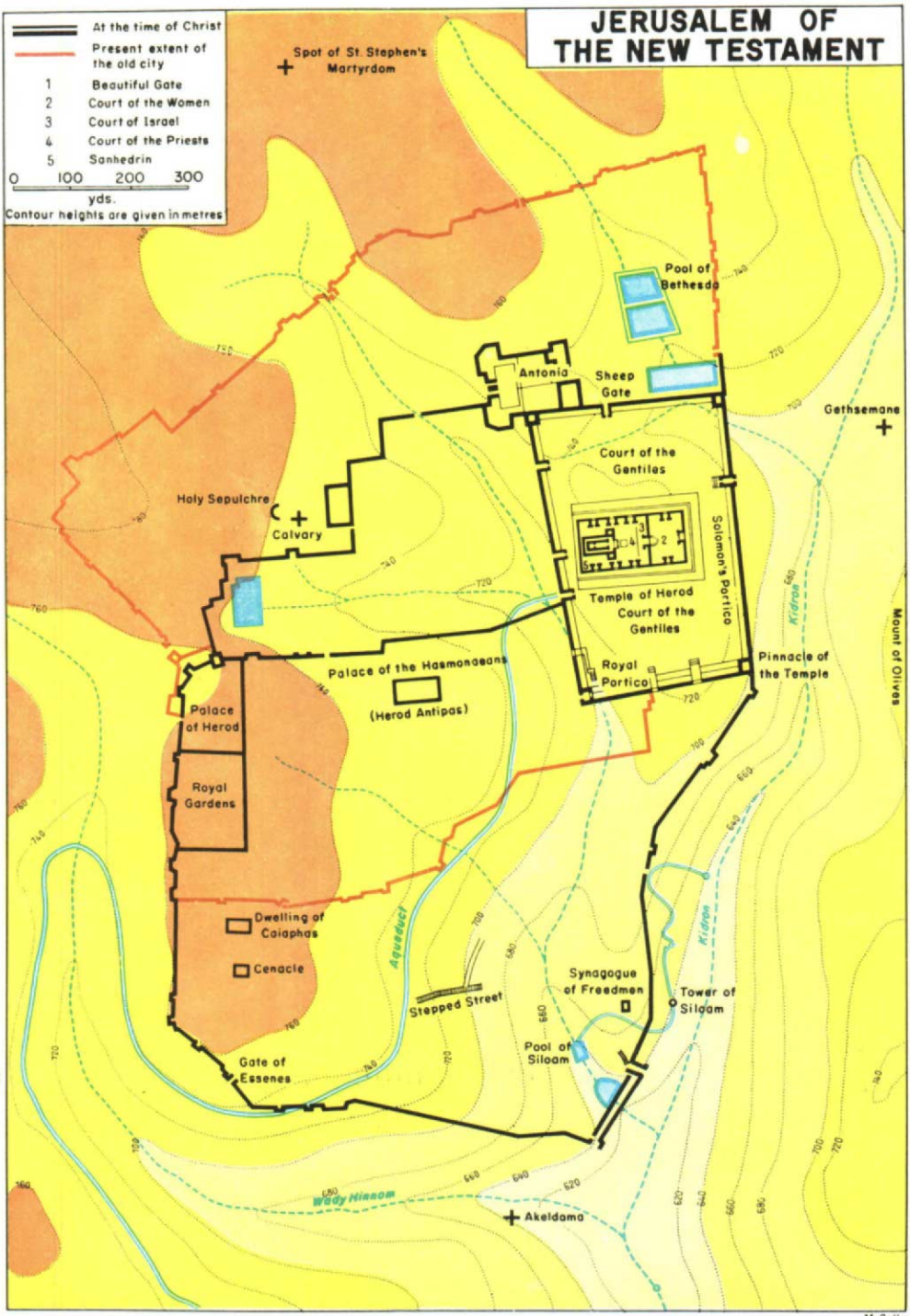
THE TRIBAL AREAS UNDER JOSHUA

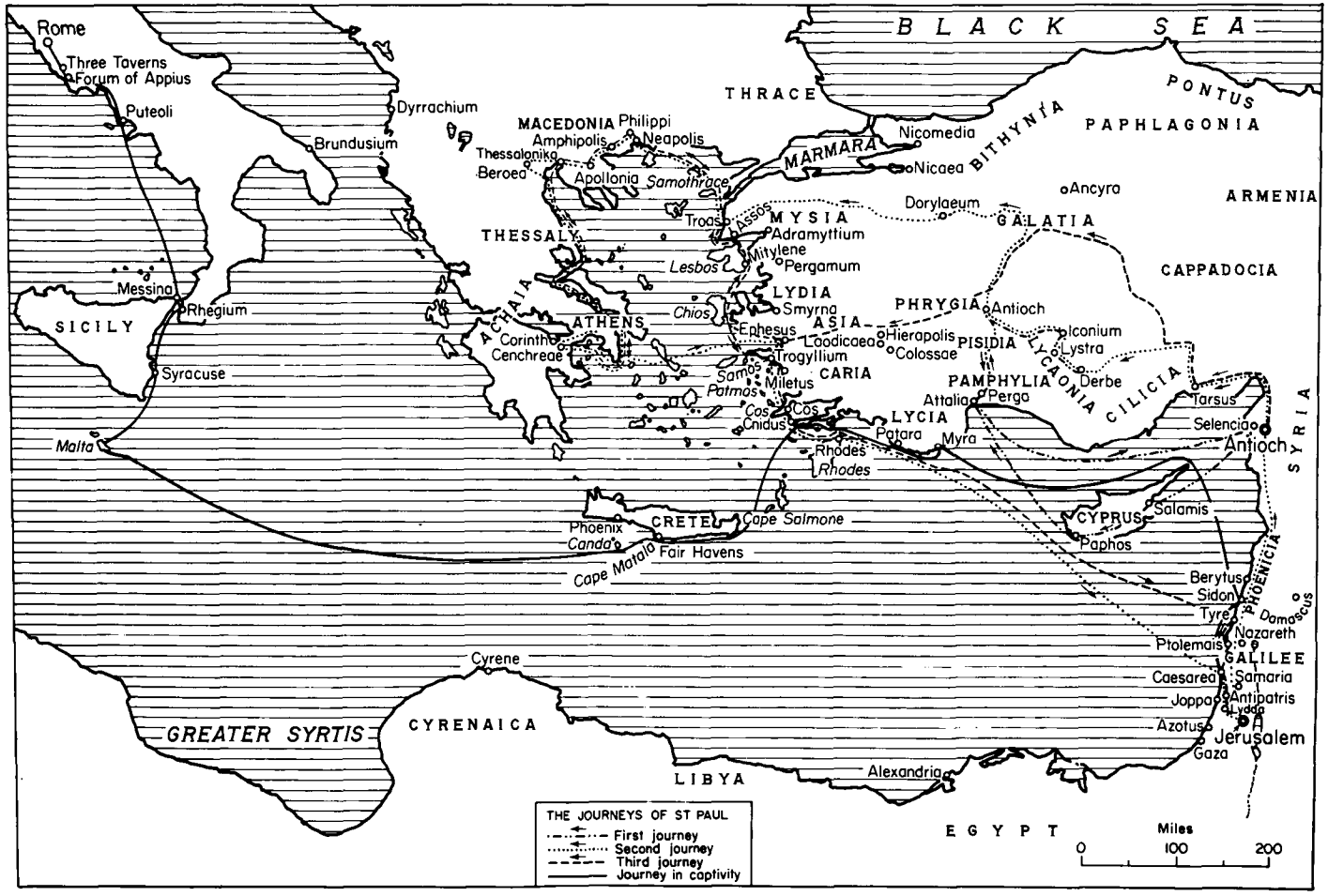


SOUTHERN PART OF THE FIFTH SATRAPY

KINGDOM OF THE NABATEANS


PALESTINE
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
0 5 10 20 30 mls.
Tyre
Towards Mt. Hermon
Cæsarea Philippi
1204
TRACHONITIS
Hulah
SYRO-PHOENICIA
GALILEE
820
1042
Ptolemais
(Acco, Akka)
Chorazin
Bethsaida
Julias
Capernaum
Gennesaret
461
Magdala
Gergesa
Cana (?)
Sea of Galilee
Yarmuk
Tiberias
Cana (?)
Mt. Carmel
Mt. Tabor
Nazareth
Naim
515
Gadara
DECAPOLIS
THE GREAT
Cæsarea
Scythopolis
Pella
Aenon
SAMARIA
784
Aenon
1247
Cæsarea
Stratonis
Sebaste
(Samaria)
Mt. Ebal
340
Sychar
Mt. Gerizim
Jabbok
SEA
Antipatris
Joppa
(Jaffa)
Arimathæa
113
PERAEA
Philadelphia
Lydda
Ephraim
Jericho
Emmaus (?)
JERUSALEM
Bethany
Bethany
beyond Jordan
Ain Karim
Bethlehem
805
Ascalon
JUDÆA
Machærus
1010
Gaza
209
Hebron
730
Arnon
David Sea
127
682
IDUMÆA
1236
558
596
677
1358
Spot heights are given in metres
m. ft.
900 2953
600 1968
400 1312
100 328
0 0
-300 -984
M. Celle


JERUSALEM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
At the time of Christ
Present extent of the old city
1 Beautiful Gate
2 Court of the Women
3 Court of Israel
4 Court of the Priests
5 Sanhedrin
0 100 200 300
yds.
Contour heights are given in metres
Spot of St. Stephen's Martyrdom
Pool of Bethesda
Antonia
Sheep Gate
Gethsemane
Court of the Gentiles
Holy Sepulchre
Calvary
Solomon's Portico
Temple of Herod
Court of the Gentiles
Kidron
Mount of Olives
Palace of the Hasmoneans
(Herod Antipas)
Royal Portico
Pinnacle of the Temple
Palace of Herod
Royal Gardens
Dwelling of Caiaphas
Cenacle
Aqueduct
Stepped Street
Synagogue of Freedmen
Tower of Siloam
Pool of Siloam
Gate of Essenes
Wady Hinnom
Akeldama
M. Celle


Rome
Three Taverns
Forum of Appius
Puteoli
Brundusium
Dyrrachium
Messina
Rhegium
SICILY
Syracuse
Malta
BLACK SEA
THRACE
PONTUS
PAPHLAGONIA
BITHYNIA
MACEDONIA
Philippi
Amphipolis
Neapolis
Thessalonika
Beroea
Apollonia
Samothrace
MARMARA
Nicomedia
Nicaea
Ancyra
ARMENIA
Dorylaeum
GALATIA
Troas
Assos
MYSIA
Adramyttium
THESSALY
Mitylene
Lesbos
Pergamum
CAPPADOCIA
LYDIA
Smyrna
Chios
PHRYGIA
Antioch
ACHAIA
ATHENS
ASIA
Ephesus
Laodicaea
Hierapolis
Colossae
PISIDIA
Iconium
Lystra
Corinth
Cenchreae
Trogyllium
Samos
Patmos
CARIA
Miletus
PAMPHYLIA
Derbe
LYCAONIA
CILICIA
Attalia
Perga
Tarsus
Cos
Cnidus
LYCIA
Selencia
Antioch
Patara
Myra
Rhodes
Rhodes
SYRIA
CRETE
Phoenix
Cape Salmone
CYPRUS
Salamis
Canda
Fair Havens
Paphos
Cape Matala
Berytus
Sidon
PHOENICIA
Tyre
Damascus
Nazareth
Ptolemais
GALILEE
Caesarea
Samaria
Joppa
Antipatris
Lydda
Azotus
Jerusalem
Gaza
Cyrene
GREATER SYRTIS
CYRENAICA
LIBYA
Alexandria
EGYPT
THE JOURNEYS OF ST PAUL
First journey
Second journey
Third journey
Journey in captivity
Miles
0
100
200